

Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Miami

Scheduled Event

April 13 2014 at the Jewish Federation 4200 Biscayne Blvd Miami

Time 10: 00 am

About the Speaker :

Erwin Joos, Founder and President of the Eugeen Van Mieghem Foundation and curator of the Eugeen Van Mieghem Museum in Antwerp Belgium

Mr. Joos has spoken at several IAJGS conferences and at a number of JGSs...

His focus is on the art work and how it depicts the Eastern European immigrants leaving on the Red Star Line-- Everyone who has ever heard him has raved--at the conferences.

Lecture's Topic : "The Missing Images"

Eugeen Van Mieghem (1875-1930) and the Jewish Emigrants of the Red Star Line

The city of Antwerp was the New York of the sixteenth century. Together with Venice it was the most important world port of that period. When the protestant city fell in 1585 for the Spanish army the very important Jewish community of Sephardic Jews left mostly for Amsterdam (Holland) and Ferrara (Italy).

Nearly 300 years later the port of Antwerp became again a center of Jewish migration. Between 1873 and 1934, the Red Star Line transported ca. 2.5 million emigrants from Antwerp to North America. Around 1 million of the passengers were Jews who fled chronic poverty and persecution. Sholom Aleichem described the adventures of a Jewish family waiting in Antwerp to leave with the Red Star Line. Some of those leaving became famous like a.o. Golda Meir, Irving Berlin and Albert Einstein. The multicultural city of Antwerp, with its concentration of Hasidic Jews, is today regarded as the last shtetl in modern Europe.

Eugeen Van Mieghem (1875-1930) lived in a tavern opposite the Red Star Line warehouse and he was confronted by the flood of Jewish emigrants on a daily basis. His compassion is reflected in an impressive series of drawings and paintings. He gave the anonymous respect and dignity and became an compassionate observer for the world on his doorstep. Art-critic Grace Glueck wrote recently in The New York Times: "...*Van Mieghem was a fine draftsman and colorist whose long-forgotten work evokes that of van Gogh and Käthe Kollwitz. Now it seems to be slowly returning to art-world memory...*"

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