

American Jewish Museum of the JCC of Greater Pittsburgh presents

Emily Newman and the New Chelyuskinites

Fine Perlow Weis Gallery

November 10, 2014–January 8, 2015

Opening Reception: Wednesday, November 12, 6-8 pm

Emily Newman's *The New Chelyuskinites* is equal parts social documentary, tableaux and oral history.

Modeled after the calamitous 1933-34 Russian sea expedition that trapped 111 people on arctic ice for two months after their ship—the Chelyuskin—sank, *The New Chelyuskinites* draws upon the collective memories of the event and its aftermath.

Participants from different generations worked together with Newman to represent the expedition, its shipwreck, what it took for people to survive, the expedition's rescue and their ceremonial decoration. The exhibition includes video and print documentation of participants recreating various stages of the expedition and a small-scale model of the Chelyuskin just before its demise. Built for children to climb and play on, the ship's model aims to prompt the JCC's Russian-American community to relate childhood stories and talk more about Russia and the Soviet Union with AJM visitors.

While a disastrous expedition that occurred 80 years ago in the Arctic Sea might seem a remote topic for consideration today, the launch of the Chelyuskin was an historic undertaking. It signaled noteworthy scientific achievements and beckoned toward unprecedented commercial opportunities. Although technically a failure, the expedition's tenacity and successful rescue shocked the world. Strangely, it was victory of sorts for communism, which was claimed to have been the secret explaining their survival.

The New Chelyuskinites creates a platform for current-day Russians, both here and abroad, to share memories from the Soviet era. Based on two years of collaboration between Newman and participants from Pittsburgh's Russian community, and one year working in St. Petersburg, Russia, the project intertwines individual voices with broader truths about this period in world history.



Entrance at
5738 Darlington Road
Squirrel Hill
412-521-8010
Admission is free

Gallery Hours
Monday-Thursday:
5:30 AM-10 PM
Friday: 5:30 AM-6 PM
Saturday: 8 AM-6 PM
Sunday: 7:45 AM-6 PM

American Jewish
Museum funding
can be found at
jccpgh.org/page/ajm.



All images: Emily Newman, *The New Chelyuskinites*, 2012-2013, photographs, images courtesy of the artist.