

For Immediate Release

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FIRST U.S. EXHIBITION OF PREMIER CANADIAN EXPRESSIONIST ARTIST

SAM BORENSTEIN'S BOLD BRUSHWORK BRINGS *THE COLORS OF MONTREAL* TO VIVID LIFE AT THE YESHIVA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

Exhibition on View Through May 8, 2011

February 11, 2011 (New York, NY) –Winter-weary New Yorkers will get a much-needed reprieve from relentless grey vistas with an exhibition of vividly-hued paintings by a 20th-century Canadian Expressionist artist, *Sam Borenstein and the Colors of Montreal*.

From now until May 8th, Yeshiva University Museum will be presenting a rare retrospective of Borenstein's evocative paintings of Montreal streets and Laurentian villages from his career of over 40 years. Bold colors, dynamic brushwork and ecstatic energy are characteristic features of Borenstein's paintings, which capture the settings, personalities and life in and around Montreal, the artist's adopted city.

Borenstein's work shocked the Canadian art world when it was originally exhibited. A practitioner of *plein air* painting, his intense and colorful canvases stand apart from those of his contemporaries, who responded to modernism from a formalist perspective. In his approach to landscape, as well as in his portrait and flower paintings, Borenstein explored the expressive properties of nature through art.

In this exhibition – the first monographic show devoted to the artist outside of Canada – thirty-five of his paintings are displayed, from his portraits and Montreal street scenes of the 1930s and 1940s to his village and country landscapes of the 1950s and 1960s.

Dr. Jacob Wisse, director of the YU Museum said that the institution was thrilled to bring the work of Borenstein to an American audience. "While Sam Borenstein is well-known in Montreal and across Canada, his artwork may come as a great revelation to many New Yorkers," said Wisse, who is from Montreal. "In addition to its aesthetic merit, the exhibition has great historical and cultural value as Borenstein was part of the remarkably vibrant scene of Jewish artists and writers in Montreal between 1930s and 1960s," he said.



Born in Kalvarija, Lithuania, Borenstein (1908 - 1969) immigrated in 1921 with his father and a sister to Montreal, where four of his brothers were already living. They were part of a massive wave of eastern European immigration to Canada in the early decades of the twentieth century – especially in the wake of WWI, when the US began cracking down on immigration of Jews and other east Europeans. The period of Borenstein’s activity in Montreal mirrors a period of blossoming among Jewish institutions and other Jewish artists in the city.

After apprenticing with a furrier and working as a cutter in a garment factory, Borenstein focused full-time on painting. With only minimal formal training, he approached painting with a distinctively modernist sensibility, rejecting traditional narrative, romantic subject matter and academic technique in favor of direct observation of the world and a free and expressive use of paint and color. He also took inspiration from the works of avant-garde European artists, which he saw and admired in museums and galleries.

The exhibition allows New Yorkers an opportunity to see many of Borenstein’s works from private collections, as well as from public institutions in Montreal, including the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery of Concordia University. The artist’s paintings are housed in numerous permanent collections, including the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C.

Sam Borenstein and the Colors of Montreal, organized and presented by Yeshiva University Museum, is a new examination of the artist in the context of his adopted city. It was inspired by the exhibition *Sam Borenstein* organized in 2005 by The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, co-curated by Jacques Des Rochers and Loren Lerner.

For further information on *Sam Borenstein and the Colors of Montreal*, to arrange a private viewing or to set up an interview with Dr. Wisse, please contact Shira Dicker at shira.dicker@sd-media.com or 917-403-3989.

ABOUT YESHIVA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

For more than 35 years, the Yeshiva University Museum has provided culturally diverse exhibitions and programming for the greater metropolitan area and beyond, as well as Yeshiva University students, faculty, and alumni. Its permanent collection includes more than 9,000 objects spanning over 3,000 years of Jewish history. The Museum also emphasizes teaching schoolchildren and adults of diverse backgrounds about Jewish culture through many varieties of interdisciplinary programs. Located at the Center for Jewish History, the Museum occupies four spacious galleries, a children's workshop center, and an outdoor sculpture garden.

Museum Hours:

Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday: 11 am – 5 pm

Monday: 3:30-8:00 pm (FREE)

Wednesday: 11 am – 8 pm (FREE 5 pm – 8 pm)

Friday: 11 am – 2:30 pm (FREE)

Museum Admission:

Adults: \$8 Seniors and Students: \$6

YU Museum Members and Children under 5: Free

Yeshiva University Faculty, Administration and Students: Free (with valid ID)

Location:

Yeshiva University Museum

at the Center for Jewish History

15 West 16th Street, NYC 10011

212-294-8330

www.yumuseum.org

Sam Borenstein, *Laurentian Autumn*, 1960. Oil on canvas. Portnoy Collection