

For Immediate Release

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Art in Action at Yeshiva University Museum

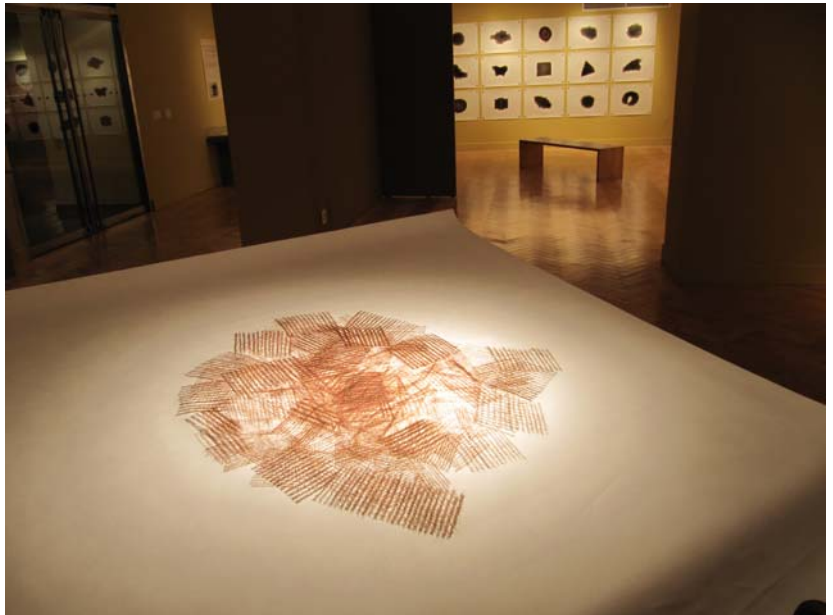
There is a Mirror in My Heart: Reflections on a Righteous Grandfather

A Rare Interactive Audience Experience with Artist Sebastian Mendes

The Yeshiva University Museum is pleased to invite individuals and groups to join artist Sebastian Mendes as he makes art in the context of its powerful new exhibition, ***There is a Mirror in My Heart: Reflections on a Righteous Grandfather***.

Created by Mendes in tribute to his grandfather, Aristides de Sousa Mendes, ***There is a Mirror in My Heart*** brings to life through art a remarkable but little-known story from the first year of WWII. A devout Roman Catholic who was serving as the Portuguese Consul General in Bordeaux, France in 1940, de Sousa Mendes acted against the explicit orders of his government and issued handwritten transit visas to thousands of refugees trapped by the advancing Nazi army. The visas made it possible for bearers to pass through Spain and into Portugal in the hope of traveling on to safer shores. Over several days, in an assembly-line operation, thousands of documents were processed, the Consul signing each one.

Historians have recognized the operation he initiated and led as one of the most successful single rescue acts of the Holocaust. Posthumously named one of the “Righteous Among the Nations” by Yad Vashem and celebrated as his native country’s “greatest hero of the twentieth century,” de Sousa Mendes’s legacy will be introduced to New York audiences through the ingenuity of Mendes’s art and performance.



Over the course of six weeks during the exhibition – from February 11th until March 25th - visitors to the exhibition will be able to serve as witnesses and participants in an in-gallery work of performance-action with Sebastian Mendes, who is serving as the YU Museum’s Artist in Residence. In the gallery the artist will undertake the performance-action of inscribing surnames representing the refugees who received transit visas from his grandfather. The 7 by 7 foot drawing will be created and displayed on a large table designed to evoke the conjoined appearance and function of a massive consular desk and a drawing table.

The artist invites any visitor who knows the name of a Holocaust victim or survivor to add them to Mendes's list of names, whereupon the name will be added to the drawing-in-progress. Visitors will also be able to discuss the work with the artist and join him in reflecting upon the meaning of Aristides de Sousa Mendes's historic action as well as its implication as a work of contemporary art.

This performance-action work has numerous significant components, one of which is the bridging of the gap between the artist and audience, the artwork and the observer. It also represents a rare opportunity to be part of an artwork in progress, and to be a part of a significant and moving personal artistic response to a key historical episode.

These interactive encounters – *Art in Action* – will take place on Fridays at the YU Museum, from 11:00am to 2:00pm, beginning on February 11 and running until March 25th, as well as at other pre-arranged times.

About Sebastian Mendes

Sebastian Mendes, a distinguished artist working in the Northwest United States, is an Associate Professor at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. He has had numerous solo and group exhibitions, residencies and honors, and is recognized as an authority on outdoor sculpture. He is a graduate of St. Martin's School of Art in London, Stanford University, and the University of California at Santa Cruz. In Spring 2011, Sebastian Mendes is Yeshiva University Museum's Artist in Residence, and a Visiting Professor at Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women.

There is a Mirror in My Heart is open through July 24th at the Yeshiva University Museum, located at the Center for Jewish History at 15 West 16th Street.

To arrange a private or group visit with Mr. Mendes please contact Rachel Lazin at rlazin@yum.cjh.org or 212-294-8339.

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