

NEWS RELEASE

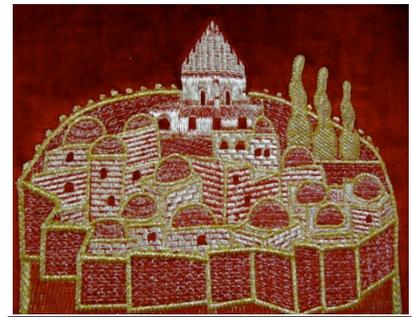
For Immediate Release

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***Old and the New: Mark Podwal's Textiles  
for the Altneuschul in Prague***

*Renowned New York Artist Designs Textiles for Oldest Synagogue in Europe*



**New York, NY (November 18, 2011)** – Before a series of richly designed new textiles is installed in one of the most iconic, oldest and continually active synagogues in Europe, it will be unveiled at Yeshiva University Museum (YU Museum) in the exhibition ***Old and the New: Mark Podwal's Textiles for the Altneuschul in Prague*** from November 27, 2011–January 15, 2012.

The textiles, which include a Torah ark cover, three Torah mantles and covers for the Torah reading and cantor's desks represent the first major commission for the sanctuary of Prague's Altneuschul in over 70 years. Built in 1270, the Altneuschul, or "Old-New Synagogue," is celebrated for its architectural beauty and legendary provenance—myth has it its stones were brought by angels. It is one of the few Gothic synagogues in existence and sits at the center of Prague's Jewish Quarter, a vibrant community famed for its scholars, mystics, writers and intellectuals. Perhaps the most famous of the synagogue's legends is the Prague Golem, believed to lie dormant in the attic of the building to be restored again, if needed, to defend the Jews.

Mark Podwal, an internationally recognized New York-based artist, author and physician, has long been engaged with Prague and its famed Jewish Quarter. The textiles are the latest and most ambitious of his works relating to Prague's Jewish Community.

"With its history, mystical legends and remarkable beauty, the Altneuschul is one of the world's great Jewish monuments—and a living one," said Podwal, who is known for his drawings on *The New York Times* Op-Ed page and is represented in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Jewish Museum in Prague and many others. "To be able to contribute to the ongoing religious and communal function of the synagogue is a humbling honor. It was daunting but exciting to make works that reflect and speak to the character of Prague's broad and rich Jewish fabric."

Complementing the textiles in the exhibition is a detailed historic model of the Altneuschul (part of YU Museum's permanent collection), a selection of complimentary graphic work by the artist, and a short original film that charts Podwal's artistic engagement with Prague and features a behind-the-scenes look at the textiles' creation.

“We are delighted and privileged to unveil Mark’s striking textiles and to give a New York audience the opportunity to appreciate their beauty as objects as well as their rich liturgical and cultural context,” said Jacob Wisse, director of YU Museum. “We think viewers should, and will, appreciate the way a fresh aesthetic vision has been used to complement a historic site, and how the magic of the synagogue’s and its city’s story are brought to life through the exhibition.”

In collaboration with renowned New York textile designers Penn & Fletcher, Podwal used modern technology to create vignettes of the centuries-old Jewish Community. The six embroidered velvet pieces, which will be shipped for their dedication at the synagogue in March of 2012, are presented in the exhibition as they will appear in the Altneuschul sanctuary.

*Old and the New: Mark Podwal’s Textiles for the Altneuschul in Prague* is presented by Yeshiva University Museum in conjunction with the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in New York.

### **Public Programs and Gallery Talks**

#### **Wednesday December 14, 2011 (5-6 p.m.)**

Curator’s tour in the exhibition gallery.

#### **Sunday, December 18, 2011 (2-3 p.m.)**

Artist’s talk in the exhibition gallery.

#### **Monday, December 19, 2011 (6-8 p.m.)**

Public program featuring the artist on the historic, religious and cultural context of the Altneuschul and the Prague Jewish Community.

#### **Wednesday January 11, 2012 (5-6 p.m.)**

Curator’s tour in the exhibition gallery.

### **Location:**

Yeshiva University Museum, 15 W. 16th Street, New York, NY 10011, 212.294.8330,  
[www.yumuseum.org](http://www.yumuseum.org)

### **Hours:**

Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday: 11 a.m.–5 p.m.; Monday: 5–8 p.m. (FREE); Wednesday: 11 a.m.–8 p.m. (FREE 5–8 p.m.); Friday: 11 a.m.–2:30 p.m. (FREE).

### **Admission:**

Adults: \$8; Seniors and Students: \$6; Members and Children under 5: Free; YU Faculty, Administration and Students: Free with valid ID.

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For further information on *Old and the New* or to download images, visit [yumuseum.tumblr.com/OldandNew](http://yumuseum.tumblr.com/OldandNew). To request a tour or interview with the curator or artist, contact Valerie Peters at [vlpcommunications@gmail.com](mailto:vlpcommunications@gmail.com) or 917.328.6787.

### **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.*