

For Immediate Release – FALL PREVIEW
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**At Yeshiva University Museum This Fall:
Haunting “Borscht Belt” Photos,
Rarely Seen Historic Synagogue Models**

yumuseum.org // yumuseum.tumblr.com

New York City, July 21 – Yeshiva University Museum (15 W. 16th St., Manhattan) will premiere two visually striking, historically resonant exhibitions this fall.

For your Fall Preview sections, please let us know if we can arrange interviews or provide more images.

WHAT: <i>Echoes of the Borscht Belt: Contemporary Photographs by Marisa Scheinfeld</i>
WHEN: <i>September 10, 2014 – April 12, 2015</i>

In the museum debut of a major photographic talent, Yeshiva University Museum will present Marisa Scheinfeld’s haunting photos of abandoned sites where Borscht Belt resorts once boomed in the Catskill Mountain region of upstate New York.

“Echoes of the Borscht Belt” assembles images Scheinfeld has shot inside and outside structures that once buzzed with life as summer havens for generations of New York Jews.

Scheinfeld, who grew up in the region, began her documentary photo project in 2009; this exhibition marks the first time audiences can see her work on the large scale for which it was conceived.

“Echoes of the Borscht Belt” will also feature original artifacts and ephemera from some of the Borscht Belt’s most beloved hotels and resorts: An ashtray from Grossinger’s, soap from The Nevele, a ski hat from the Concord, postcards from the Jerry Lewis Theater Club at Brown’s, in addition to era photos.

Some of the structures in Scheinfeld’s photographs have already been demolished, making the project even more significant as historical documentary. Nature has encroached into or overtaken the historic sites; many of the interiors have been vandalized or marked by paintballers and graffiti artists. Scheinfeld’s images record all of these developments.

“The Borscht Belt was a haven for an entire cultural and social movement of people,” Scheinfeld notes; “its influences spread to mainstream American culture, entertainment and media. Growing up in Sullivan County, I feel a strong connection to the region and, as a photographer, I felt inclined to document its history, decline and what has come of it. I was drawn to the hotels because of their rich history but found unexpected beauty in their current, changing landscape.”

Dr. Jacob Wisse, director of Yeshiva University Museum, agreed. “The Borscht Belt gets labeled as the birthplace of standup comedy; but it was much more than that. It became an important communal resource for Jews from the 1920s to the 1970s, when many of them couldn’t afford to go – or were banned from going – elsewhere. The Borscht Belt became a community where they formed bonds and could vacation ‘like Americans’. In addition to being beautiful works in themselves, Marisa’s photographs offer a moving reflection on that period.”

The [Forward](#), the leading national Jewish news source, is media sponsor of “Echoes of the Borscht Belt.”

WHAT: *Modeling the Synagogue – from Dura to Touro*

WHEN: *September 21, 2014 – May 17, 2015*

Yeshiva University Museum’s biggest exhibition of the year is a collection of small wonders.

When it was founded in 1973, Yeshiva University Museum commissioned ten scale models of historic synagogues. The models were conceived, designed and constructed under the direction of leading scholars and historians, using the most up-to-date research and architectural information.

The models were built with intricate architectural detail and with materials that richly evoke the original structures and their interiors. This exhibition marks the first time in over two decades that the models will be on display as a group.

Complementing the models will be photographs, maps, architectural plans, correspondence about the conception of the commission, as well as original artifacts, books and manuscripts from the synagogues represented in the exhibition. Another part of *Modeling the Synagogue* will feature a full digital reconstruction of an ancient Sephardi synagogue. The show will bring to life the nature of the modeling process, as well as the culture of each synagogue community and the thematic connections between different structures and communities.

“This exhibition will let people experience not only the beauty and range of the architecture of some of history’s most important synagogues,” says museum director Dr. Jacob Wisse, “but also their communal and religious character.”

The ten synagogues reflect the geographic breadth of the Jewish world across the centuries, from the ancient Mediterranean - Dura-Europos in 3rd-century Syria and Beit Alpha in 6th-century Galilee - to modern America and Europe - Touro in 18th-century Newport and Tempio Israelitico in 19th-century Florence.

ABOUT YESHIVA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

Yeshiva University Museum is dedicated to the presentation and interpretation of the artistic and cultural achievements of Jewish life. The Museum, founded in 1973, is distinguished by its wide-ranging and intellectually rigorous exhibitions and, as the cultural arm of Yeshiva University, by its strong educational mission. As a partner in the thriving Center for Jewish History and a participant in New York’s lively downtown cultural scene, Yeshiva University Museum makes a distinctive and important contribution to Jewish life and to the world of culture and the arts. The Museum’s rich and diverse collections preserve Jewish artifacts, art, texts and material culture for posterity, making objects accessible through exhibitions, educational programs, and research and conservational initiatives.

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