

Joseph Sassoon Semah: On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) V - Between Graveyard and Museum's Sphere



At the end of September 2024, the richly illustrated, English-language publication *Joseph Sassoon Semah: On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) V - Between Graveyard and Museum's Sphere* will be released.

Featuring artworks and texts by Joseph Sassoon Semah, Linda Bouws, A.S. Bruckstein Çoruh / House of Taswir, Guus van Engelshoven, Arie Hartog, Gideon Ofrat, Jom Semah, Lisette Pelsers, David Sperber, Steve Austen, and Rick Vercauteren.

'Between Graveyard and Museum's Sphere' is released on the occasion of the exhibition *'On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) V - Between Graveyard and Museum's Sphere'* (February 4 - June 30, 2024, Museum Het Nieuwe Domein, Sittard), curated by Guus van Engelshoven.

This fifth and final edition of Joseph Sassoon Semah's 'Magnum Opus' marks the culmination of a profound multi-year art manifestation that began in 2015. Together with curator Linda Bouws, Sassoon Semah has embarked on a mission to augment Western art history by filling its 'empty page' with the rich and diverse iconography of Jewish culture. It has been an amazing journey for the last ten years.

Joseph Sassoon Semah takes us on a wondrous journey of exploration. This journey extends from the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, through the lost public space (Jewish Quarter) of Baghdad, the waiting room of his Saba (grandfather) and the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, to spatial architecture based on the typography of the Talmud Bavli.

The title of the publication *'Between Graveyard and Museum's Sphere'* alludes to life in Galut, no motherland or physical cultural heritage to return to (personal graveyard), as well as the Western concept of museum, which already erased the knowledge of the layers of Jewish imagery/meaning that are being used by the Western art production (universal graveyard). Each of Sassoon Semah's artworks serves as a witness to the profound loss, and at the same time reclaiming the lost world and making Jewish culture, symbols, tradition, and identity visible in a different cultural environment. He demands recognition and acknowledgement of the lost knowledge of Judaism; in this way he is trying to liberate himself from his displacement. He offers an alternative reading about the role of the museums and the authority of art history.

About the publication

Metropool International Art Projects

Final editing: Linda Bouws & Joseph Sassoon Semah

Design and layout: KUNSTBURO Geert Schriever

Format: A4, 208 pages, full colour, English

The publication can now be ordered:

Price: € 39.95 plus € 5 shipping costs (within the Netherlands).

To order, transfer payment to: Stichting Metropool Internationale Kunstprojecten, account number NL 42 INGB 0006 9281 68, stating 'On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) V', along with your name and address.

Joseph Sassoon Semah: On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) V - Between Graveyard and Museum's Sphere



Eind september 2024 verschijnt de rijk geïllustreerde, Engelstalige publicatie *Joseph Sassoon Semah: On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) V - Between Graveyard and Museum's Sphere*.

Met veel kunst en teksten van Joseph Sassoon Semah, Linda Bouws (curator, directeur Metropool Internationale Kunstprojecten), A.S. Bruckstein Çoruh / House of Taswir, Guus van Engelshoven (conservator Museum Het Nieuwe Domein, Sittard), Arie Hartog (algemeen directeur Gerhard-Marcks-Haus, Bremen), Gideon Ofrat (kunsthistoricus, curator, criticus), Lisette Pelsers (kunsthistoricus), Jom Semah (kunstenaar), David Sperber (kunsthistoricus, curator, criticus), Steve Austen (international cultural entrepreneur) en Rick Vercauteren (kunsthistoricus en publicist).

Je kunt de publicatie nu bestellen

€ 39.95 en € 5 verzendkosten (in Nederland):

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Gesigneerd en met tekening van Joseph Sassoon Semah

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Over de publicatie

Deze vijfde en laatste editie van Joseph Sassoon Semah's 'Magnum Opus' markeert de culminatie van een diepgaande meerjarige kunstmanifestatie die begon in 2015. Samen met curator Linda

Bouws heeft Sassoon Semah de westerse kunstgeschiedenis aangevuld, door haar 'lege pagina' te voorzien van de rijke en diverse joodse iconografie.

Op het eerste gezicht lijken een begraafplaats en een museumzaal weinig gemeen te hebben. Toch geven ze beide betekenis aan de kunstwerken die Joseph Sassoon Semah (Bagdad, 1948) presenteert in de tentoonstelling *Between Graveyard and Museum's Sphere* (4 februari - 30 juni 2024, Museum Het Nieuwe Domein, Sittard), curator Guus van Engelshoven. Hij neemt ons mee op een wonderlijke verkenningreis. Deze reis strekt zich uit van de Tempel van koning Salomon in Jeruzalem, via de verloren gewaande publieke ruimte (joods kwartier) van Bagdad, de wachtkamer van zijn Saba (grootvader) en het vernietigingskamp Auschwitz-Birkenau, naar de ruimtelijke architectuur gebaseerd op de typografie van de Talmud Bavli.

Elk kunstwerk van Sassoon Semah dient als getuige van het diepe verlies van kennis van de joodse betekenislaag, en tegelijkertijd herovert hij die verloren wereld en maakt de joodse cultuur, symbolen, traditie en identiteit in een andere culturele omgeving zichtbaar.

Hij en de auteurs in de publicatie bieden een alternatieve lezing over zijn kunst en de rol van musea en de autoriteit van de westerse kunstgeschiedenis.

Boek informatie

Metropool Internationale Kunstprojecten

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New Title - Joseph Sassoon Semah: On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) V - Between Graveyard and Museum's Sphere



*Joseph Sassoon Semah:
On Friendship /
(Collateral Damage) V -
Between Graveyard and
Museum's Sphere is due
to be published (June
2024)*

At first glance, a graveyard and a museum space seem to have little in common. Yet they both give meaning to the artworks presented by Joseph Sassoon Semah (Baghdad, 1948) in the exhibition *Between Graveyard and Museum's Sphere*.

Sassoon Semah takes the visitor on a wondrous journey of exploration. This journey extends from the Temple of King Solomon in Jerusalem, through the lost public space (Jewish quarter) of Baghdad, the waiting room of his Saba (grandfather) and the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp, to spatial architecture based on the typography of the Talmud Bavli.

With much art and texts by Joseph Sassoon Semah, Steve Austen, Linda Bouws, A.S. Bruckstein Çoruh / House of Taswir, Guus van Engelshoven, Arie Hartog, Gideon Ofrat, Jom Semah, Lisette Pelsers, David Sperber and Rick Vercauteren.

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On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) V - Between Graveyard And Museum's Sphere



On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) V - Between
Graveyard and Museum's Sphere
Het Nieuwe Domein, Ligne 5, Sittard -
3.2.2024-30-6.2024

At first glance, a cemetery and a museum seem to have little in common. Yet they both give meaning to the artworks Joseph Sassoon Semah presents in the exhibition.

He takes the visitor on a wonderful journey of exploration from King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, through Baghdad's lost public space, the waiting room of his grandfather Sassoon Kadoori (1886-1971), the chief rabbi of Baghdad, and the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp, to spatial architecture based on the Talmud Bavli.

Performance

Joseph Sassoon Semah, Peter Baren, Masja Austen, Emile Schrijver, Ulco Mes, Theresie Tholen, Aletha Steijns, Jom Semah

Camera & Editing: Bob Schoo. www.n-p-n.info

Bijeenkomst & boekpresentatie: Joseph Beuys en de naoorlogse

(kunst)geschiedenis: Een ander perspectief.

Metropool Internationale Kunstprojecten en Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam

Spui25, 5 oktober 2023

<https://spui25.nl/programma/beuys-en-de-naoorlogse-kunstgeschiedenis-een-andere-perspectief>

Joseph Beuys en de naoorlogse (kunst)geschiedenis: Een ander perspectief'.

Met: Felix Rottenberg (moderator), Joseph Sassoon Semah, Linda Bouws (curator), Gregor M. Langfeld (hoogleraar Kunstgeschiedenis, Cultureel Erfgoed en Identiteit), Bas Martejn (Chief Country Officer Netherlands van Deutsche Bank) en Emile Schrijver (algemeen directeur van het Joods Cultureel Kwartier in Amsterdam).

Wat is de betekenis van Joseph Beuys in de context van de naoorlogse westerse kunst?

In de reeks tentoonstellingen, debatten en performances in *On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) IV - How to Explain Hare Hunting to a Dead German Artist [The usefulness of continuous measurement of the distance between Nostalgia and Melancholia]*, (september 2021-februari 2023) hebben Joseph Sassoon Semah en curator Linda Bouws het publiek geïnformeerd over de ontbrekende informatie over Joseph Beuys en de naoorlogse West-Duitse kunstgeschiedenis en -politiek. Een nieuw en conceptueel perspectief op Beuys vereist een bredere discussie in de kunstwereld.

Inleiding: Gregor M. Langfeld

Na WWII kwam het tot een radicale breuk in de kunstopvattingen waarbij de nationaalsocialistische dichotomie tussen 'nazikunst' en 'entartete' kunst als het ware is voortgezet maar de waardering voor beide simpelweg werd omgedraaid. Door deze zwart-witvisie zijn bepaalde kunstvormen en kunstenaars nog altijd merkwaardig taboe of juist gecanoniseerd. Deze presentatie sluit aan bij Joseph Sassoon Semah's kritische reflecties over de mythen en stereotiepe voorstellingen over modernistische kunst die men na de oorlog heeft gecreëerd. Het blijkt dat

het nationaalsocialisme tot op de dag van vandaag in de kunstwereld doorwerkt.

In Berlin, Mizrahi Activists Face An Identity Conflict Over Judicial Protests



*Mati Shoemelof - Portrait:
Joseph Sassoon Semah*

With Netanyahu's visit to Germany, Mati Shemoelof struggles to reconcile the Mizrahi Jews' struggle for a political voice with their role in the rise of the ultra-religious Right.

In January, I received an email from a group of Mizrahi activists in Israel. The Netanyahu government was about to forge ahead with its judicial "reforms" and the email outlined a new Initiative: [A Mizrahi-civil collective regarding the public agenda of the new government.](#)

I knew most of the activists from our mutual activism activities in Israel, from social justice and questions of multiculturalism to the growing social gaps in

Israel. The invitation to join this new collective prompted a major dilemma for me. I had started following Israeli news almost obsessively. The new voices of protest and the hundreds of thousands of Israelis protesting every weekend in the big cities had me glued me to the internet.

However, I also felt reassured that I had made the right move by leaving that place, that I had put the correct geographical distance between me and this extreme right-wing government. But could I just sit and do nothing? Even worse, hardly anyone I knew in Germany, a country loaded with Ashkenazi history, could understand my dilemma.

And then Natan Sznaider, an academic and writer who was born in Germany and moved to Israel when he was 20, wrote an article in the German newspaper [die Taz](#) about the struggle in Israel as one between the Mizrahi and the Ashkenazi Jews. Ok, I thought.

So, I read the policy papers of the collective and tried to understand from afar. Now, I want to spread the messages of the Mizrahi Left and challenge the idea that there are two camps here in Berlin fighting each other.

I edit texts and try to contribute as much as I can to help the collective. But the truth is it's hard for me to contribute much. I am no longer informed like I once was. Then I tell myself that's just an excuse. So, two weeks ago the collective took to [social media](#) and in Hebrew and Arabic put out an [open call for worried citizens to join the collective](#).

We sent our policy paper to politicians and the media and shared it on different channels. We got more than 1853 signatures.

Then we began working with groups of activists in different fields: democracy and protest, education system, culture and media, social justice, housing, public space, transportation and gender and LGBTQ+ rights. And as distant as I am, it is important to me to create a distinct Mizrahi voice in the Israeli media.

Benjamin Netanyahu is using his Mizrahi ministers to undermine the accomplishments of the Mizrahi democratic struggle. [For example, he's cancelled the public housing law that helped lower-income families](#), which is bound to worsen the ongoing and systematic harm inflicted upon marginalised and mostly Mizrahi populations in Israel.

But there is more to my dilemma, as I learned during my online activism. Some of

the opposition discourse on Netanyahu's rule contains racist elements. People on the Left who do not know Mizrahi history are blaming the Mizrahi people for this judicial reform; they don't know how the Mizrahi Left contributed to social justice, democracy, and other important issues.

They also use stereotypes and racism when they criticise Mizrahi ministers and forget that our democratic struggle should be clean from racism.

On the Right there is also a scary process, a steady co-option by right-wing pundits and politicians of the discursive fruits of the Mizrahi struggle. Our collective demands for representation, described as "the second Israel" or "periphery and centre," have turned the discussion over recognition and rights into a confrontation wherein ignorance of Mizrahi history and culture has increased and the profound problems of the present have been silenced.

These right-wing politicians have never participated in the struggles for equality in education, the equitable re-drawing of local council jurisdictions, the expansion of public housing, the prevention of evictions, and the struggle against forced removals of Mizrahi residents of neighbourhoods such as Kfar Shalem, Givat Amal, Abu Kabir, and HaArgazim.

The Mizrahi collective has three main aims: First, we will not be silenced, we will criticise the policies of this government and we will not attempt to silence "the other" within Israeli society.

Second, we will bring our Mizrahi activism to the public to remind Israelis what we gained with former struggles and what we intend to do.

Third, we will use social media to reach out to a younger audience.

This is another moment of important Mizrahi intellectual resistance. We have requested meetings with politicians, we have published a legal paper and sent it to President Herzog with a request for a meeting.

It has also been sent to both the chairman of the Knesset's Constitution, Law and Justice Committee and the Minister of Justice with a demand to stop judicial proceedings, and to adopt the position paper.

This Mizrahi activism empowered me to stand and argue my special point of view, even here in the weekly protests at the Brandenburg Gate, where most of the protesters are Ashkenazim. Now, I am protesting with them against the coup, while continuing to argue for the long history of Mizrahi struggle, a sharp stance

of a Mizrahi Left.

Source:

<https://plus61j.net.au/jewish-world/in-berlin-mizrahi-activists-face-an-identity-conflict-over-judicial-protests/>

Mati Shemoelof is a poet and an author. His writing includes seven poetry books, plays, articles and fiction, which have won significant recognition and prizes. He has written a radio play for German radio WDR. A German edition of his bi-lingual poems was published by AphorismA Verlag.