

For Immediate Release

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In *Silk Stones: Works by Rochelle Rubinstein* Yeshiva University Museum Showcases Visual Poet of Transformed Objects

WHAT:	<i>Silk Stones: Works by Rochelle Rubinstein</i>
WHEN:	Through May 6
WHERE:	Yeshiva University Museum, 15 W. 16th Street, NYC, 212-294-8330
COST:	Adults: \$8; seniors and students: \$6. Free for members and children under 5
WEB:	http://yumuseum.tumblr.com/SilkStones or www.yumuseum.org

"My subjects are 'steeped' in my own quirky history and pre-history, and to some extent in our shared Jewish history."
-Rochelle Rubinstein

New York City, March 26, 2012 – In painstakingly rendered and beautifully textured works, Rochelle Rubinstein fuses personal experience, Jewish textual tradition, and bold artistic process. Now, Yeshiva University Museum is showcasing this daring Canadian artist in her second U.S. solo show.

On view through May 6, *Silk Stones: Works by Rochelle Rubinstein* takes its name from Rubinstein's extraordinary use of materials. By combining and manipulating traditional artistic techniques, Rubinstein creates mesmerizing visual effects that play tricks on the eye and emphasize the artist's hand.

Rubinstein uses multiple techniques – printing and painting, carving and piercing, overlapping and erasing – and reworks individual pieces, often returning to them after months or years. The wide range of media in *Silk Stones* includes printed and embroidered silk; carved, printed and painted wood panels; sculptural forms and digital prints.

At the center of *Silk Stones*: two installations built around books. A bookshelf, custom-built in the gallery, holds biblical texts that Rubinstein has refashioned with her own words and images. And hanging from the gallery's ceiling is a mesmerizing ten-foot high installation of richly decorated handmade books, unfolded to reveal deeply personal contents.

Rubinstein's relationship to Judaism inspires and charges her work. "I think back to the beginning of my art-making and am reminded that it was in part an escape from the conformity and rules of my Orthodox upbringing," Rubinstein says. At the same time, the artist's work reveals a steady engagement with Biblical and other Jewish sources.

"Rochelle's work reflects a deeply personal absorption of core Jewish texts and customs," said Dr. Jacob Wisse, director of Yeshiva University Museum. "Viewers will be moved by the direct and sensitive way she interprets and reacts to traditional sources, as they will be the rich beauty of her work and the intensity of her process."

In "Kaddish", one of Rubinstein's most talked-about works, she carved the Jewish mourning prayer obsessively into a wood block after being excluded from saying it at her father's *shiva*. She continued printing, painting, and carving lines into the work for a year, sensing its completion a year later – almost to the day when her period of mourning had ended. Both abstract and familiar, "the work questions whether the body's memory, or the divine or unseen workings of the universe, helped to determine the dramatic and timely finishing act," she says.

Another striking piece, “The Village” depicts a nearly abstract landscape of tiny homes on printed, painted, and carved wood panels. The work was inspired by a Sherpa village in the Himalayas. “I found myself attaching memories of various villages and suburbs from my own life to this piece,” Rubinstein says. “The similarity of the buildings evokes the pressures and limitations of conformity. Embedded in the layers of this work are the beauties of family love and devotion, but also the constraints and punishments of organized religion.”

Rubinstein’s singular vision also infuses “House of Learning” – a structure wrapped in printed, painted, and embroidered silk that resembles rough stone – along with “Wood Camp” and “Silk Camp,” which repurpose aerial photographs of Auschwitz-Birkenau into haunting, semi-recognizable images at once abstract and eloquent.

“Silk Camp,” like much of Rubinstein’s art, is a work in progress; museum visitors will get a rare chance to watch Rubinstein’s extraordinary process in action as she embroiders and embellishes this beautiful work. Over four Wednesdays through the run of the exhibition, she will continue working on “Silk Camp” – on March 28, April 18, April 25, and May 2, from 6-8pm.

The exhibition represents a homecoming of sorts for Rubinstein. In 1974, she became the first art major to graduate from Stern College for Women, the women’s undergraduate college of Yeshiva University.

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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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.