

Samuel Bak Museum opens in Vilna

VILNA – Pucker Gallery is pleased to announce the recent opening of a new museum honoring local and internationally renowned artist and Holocaust survivor Samuel Bak of Weston, MA. Born in 1933 in Vilna, Bak demonstrated extraordinary artistic talent from a very early age. As Vilna came under German occupation in 1940, Bak and his family were forced into the Vilna Ghetto. He and his parents were later sent to a labor camp, from which he narrowly escaped. At the end of the war, he and his mother were the only members of his family to survive.

Bak has spent his life using his remarkable talent to explore his experiences as a child of the Holocaust and the basis of human behavior in our world. Throughout his long career, Bak implements in his canvases a visual vocabulary that deals with the atrocities of war. Recurring characters and images emphasize the destruction and fragmentation of his early experiences, while hopefully suggesting a rebuilding from that devastation. The juxtaposition of this intense subject matter with Bak's incredible skill for painting and his surprising palette, is startling. Bak's powerful paintings are not only artistically valuable, but also historically, and culturally significant.

According to Bak, Vilna has a special place in his mundane and creative life. "The city of my birth is forever etched into my soul. Vilna, the Jerusalem of Lithuania had been an essential center of Jewish culture, and a source of Litvak individual pride. Becoming part of my city's cultural landscape is incredibly meaningful," says the artist.

The Samuel Bak Museum is located on the first two floors of the Tolerance Center of the Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum. Bak has already donated over 50 works of art



Samuel Bak



'Face' by Samuel Bak

spanning his artistic career to this institution. In addition to the works from the artist, the Museum will also be accepting works in the coming years.

Nominated by the Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum, Samuel Bak has been named an Honorary Citizen of Vilnius by the Mayor. He is the 15th person to receive this honor, due to his exceptional contributions to Lithuania. Previous recipients include: Ronald Reagan (former U.S. President) and Shimon Peres (former Israeli Prime Minister and President).

It is important to note the

honor for a living artist to have a museum dedicated to them. The Museum is a testament to his story, his life, and educating current and future generations.

An estimated 195,000 Lithuanian Jews died during the World War II German occupation. Today, just 3,000 remain in the country of 2.8 million people.

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