

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Koffler Gallery and the Institute for Contemporary Culture present *Margins*, an exhibition by New York-based artist Joshua Neustein at the ROM, June 27, 2009 to January 3, 2010.**

**Toronto, Ontario, June 11, 2009** – The **Koffler Centre of the Arts** proudly presents *Margins* at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). Organized by the Koffler Gallery and the Institute for Contemporary Culture (ICC) at the ROM, the exhibition runs from **Thursday, June 27, 2009** to **January 3, 2010**, concurrently with the ROM's major exhibition *Dead Sea Scrolls: Words that Changed the World*.

*Margins* is a newly commissioned installation and the first Canadian exhibition by acclaimed New York-based artist **Joshua Neustein**. Engaging visual art in a poetic reflection on writing, religion and archaeology, Neustein's project shapes a dialogue with the historical and cultural contexts of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Among these ancient manuscripts are the oldest-known copies of the Hebrew Bible, hymns, prayers and other writings providing a link to the origins of Judaic, Christian and Islamic faiths.

"The Koffler is thrilled to be partnering with the ICC to bring this important artist to Canada for the first time," states **Lori Starr**, Executive Director, Koffler Centre of the Arts and Vice President for Culture, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. "Presenting Neustein's work within the context of the ROM's major exhibition will give visitors a contemporary artistic approach to the Dead Sea Scrolls, and help encourage and promote cultural dialogue," adds Starr.

"In *Margins*, Joshua Neustein's deeply thoughtful and personal response to the Dead Sea Scrolls, we understand their continued cultural relevance in the modern world," said **William Thorsell**, Director and CEO of the ROM. "The ICC at the ROM is delighted to co-present this work with the Koffler Gallery, a project that brings the contemporary world into the historical museum."

An off-site project for the Koffler Gallery, *Margins* is the first time the Gallery has partnered with the ICC. Watch for Koffler Gallery exhibitions in unexpected places all around Toronto over the next three years as the Koffler Centre of the Arts prepares for its brand new 40,000 square foot arts and cultural centre scheduled to open on the Sherman Campus in 2012.

Positioning the thematic of the Scrolls within a contemporary discourse, *Margins* references prominent Jewish thinker Edmond Jabès and his critical texts concerned with the nature of writing, of silence, of God, and the Book. Jabès's mysterious meditations, the revealed knowledge of the historical texts and Neustein's own visual vocabulary converge in an installation that conveys the passion and impossibility of writing.

Through drawing, sculptural and textual elements, Neustein's installation re-enacts the emergence of the word piercing the silence with luminous presence. A sumptuous chandelier embedded into the gallery wall radiates as the core of the work — a strange archaeological relic excavated into visibility. Unraveling towards its brightness, transparent acrylic sheets lay collapsed on the floor, bearing shimmering texts. Drawn out by light, handwriting becomes typography, coalescing words into crystallized form. The script escapes the page, crossing margins into the space where writing struggles to uncover the unwritten.

Archaeology unearths dormant traces of history. Writing pushes at the edge of silence to bring forth the unsaid. Similarly, *Margins* explores manifest and concealed ideas of the Dead Sea Scrolls, exposing them to the light of our times.

The Koffler Gallery of the Koffler Centre of the Arts gratefully acknowledges the support of its patrons and members, Cultural Season Sponsor **CIBC Wood Gundy**, the **UJA Federation of Greater Toronto**, the City of Toronto through the **Toronto Arts Council**, the **Ontario Arts Council** and the **Canada Council for the Arts**. *Margins* is generously supported by the **Hal Jackman Foundation**.

**Joshua Neustein**, was born in Poland in 1940 and currently lives and works in New York. He is known primarily for his environmental installations and Post Minimalist torn paper works, as well as his series of large-scale map paintings. After immigrating to Israel in 1964, Neustein made a significant impact on the local cultural scene, being considered among the

founding figures of Environmental and Conceptual Art in the country. In 1995, Neustein represented Israel at the Venice Biennale with a monumental intervention that encased and intruded into the contents of the state's national library transferred overseas. He has exhibited in museums and galleries around the world including the Grey Art Gallery NYU (New York), Chelsea Museum (New York), Jewish Museum (New York), Barbican Arts Centre, (London England), Mary Boone Gallery (New York), Israel Museum (Jerusalem), SECCA (Winston Salem North Carolina), Albright Knox Gallery (Buffalo, New York), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles, California), MOCA (Los Angeles, California), MAK (Vienna Austria), Museo D'Art Contemporani (Barcelona Spain), Museum of Contemporary Art (Tokyo Japan), Rose Art Museum (Waltham, Massachusetts), Tel Aviv Museum (Tel Aviv), and Zacheta National Gallery of Contemporary Art (Warsaw Poland). Gropiusbau Museum (Berlin, Germany).

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Exhibition:** Joshua Neustein, *Margins*, June 27, 2009 to January 3, 2010.

**Artist Talk:** Joshua Neustein will discuss his concurrent Toronto exhibitions *Margins* and *Drawings from Qumran* presented at Julie M. Gallery on **Thursday, June 25, 7 PM** at Julie M. Gallery, The Distillery District, 15 Mill Street, Building 37, Suite 103.

**Location and Hours:** Royal Ontario Museum, Level 3, Centre Block, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto. Monday to Sunday 10 AM—5:30 PM, Friday open late until 9:30 PM. For admission rates, please check [www.rom.on.ca/visit](http://www.rom.on.ca/visit)

**Free Guided Bus Tour:** Departing from the ROM to AGYU, Doris McCarthy Gallery and Blackwood Gallery, **Sunday, September 27, Noon to 5 PM.** RSVP 416.636.1880 x270

## About the Institute for Contemporary Culture

The ICC at the ROM plays a vital role within the Royal Ontario Museum, whose collections embrace many civilizations, as well as the record of nature through the ages. In the context of the ROM's lively documentation of history, the ICC explores current cultural issues through exhibitions of art and architecture, lectures, film series, and informal gatherings. In July, the ICC will present a second faith-based contemporary art installation relating to the Dead Sea Scrolls: *Read*, a 2007 sculpture and sound piece by Pakistani artist Hamra Abbas. The Royal Ontario Museum is an agency of the Government of Ontario. For more information on the ICC, please visit [www.rom.on.ca/about/ficc](http://www.rom.on.ca/about/ficc)

## About the Koffler Centre of the Arts

Koffler Centre of the Arts brings people together through arts and culture to create a more civil, global society. The Koffler's unique mix examines the arts across different disciplines and cultures in a way that strengthens identity while encouraging an appreciation of difference. Expressing the spirit and essence of contemporary culture within a Jewish context, the Koffler reflects a global perspective. Headquartered just north of Sheppard Avenue at 4588 Bathurst Street and serviced by public transportation, the Koffler Centre of the Arts features: the Koffler Gallery with changing contemporary exhibitions (currently programming off-site); the Loggia Gallery with photography exhibitions, student exhibitions and more; fully-equipped studios for ceramics, painting and drawing, dance, and music rehearsals; and the Leah Posluns Theatre. The 2009-2010 season includes major visual arts exhibitions, artist talks, lectures, film, music, dance, and literary performances often presented in partnership with other arts organizations. The Koffler presents the annual Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards and the Jewish Book Fair as part of its growing literary repertoire along with over 65 classes for all ages as part of the Koffler Schools of Dance, Visual Arts, and Music. Koffler Centre of the Arts is an affiliate of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

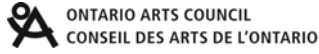
Planning is underway on a brand new 40,000 square foot, architecturally innovative Koffler Centre of the Arts on the Sherman Campus. In July 2009, the Koffler's administrative offices and all classes will open in the new D.H. Gales Family Pavilion of the Prosserman JCC on the Sherman Campus. More information at <http://tomorrowcampaign.com>

## KOFFLER ON THE ROAD!

Watch for Koffler programs off-site around Toronto! As we prepare for our new facility to be completed in 2012, the Koffler Centre of the Arts is continuing to program exhibitions, events and performances both at our current facilities and at various downtown sites in Toronto. Check our website for details and watch out for Koffler events in **your** neighbourhood!

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*Margins* is supported by



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