

Artist Charlemagne Palestine Creates Installation of Hundreds of Teddy Bears and Other Plush Toys at The Jewish Museum

First U.S. Museum Exhibition of the Artist's Immersive Plush Toy Installations

New York, NY, March 14, 2017 – The colorful, fantastical world of visual artist, musician, composer, and performer Charlemagne Palestine (b. 1947, Brooklyn, New York) arrives at the Jewish Museum with an immersive installation influenced by childhood experience and by the artist's Brooklyn Jewish roots. ***Charlemagne Palestine's Bear Mitzvah in Meshugahland*** features hundreds of plush toys, including teddy bears, which the artist regards as shamanic representations of the soul. On view from March 17 through August 6, 2017, this is the first U.S. museum exhibition of the artist's monumental plush toy installations. For this presentation, Palestine refers to the teddy bear's invention in Brooklyn, near where he grew up.

Charlemagne Palestine, best known for his avant-garde and experimental music compositions beginning in the 1960s, has been incorporating bears and other plush toys into his installations and performances for decades. The plush toys—either hand-made by the artist or found—are installed in the Museum's Kaplan gallery on the floor and walls, suspended from the ceiling, and perched on pedestals. The exhibition—replete with mirrors, colorful textiles, and lights—includes the artist's life-sized conjoined triplet bears and a work titled "Noah's Ark," a repurposed rowboat filled to the brim with stuffed toys. Visitors to Charlemagne Palestine's "meshugahland," or "crazy land," will also hear the artist's experimental sound recordings.

The teddy bear's invention in 1902 by an immigrant Jewish couple in the same Brooklyn neighborhood where Palestine was born has become a near obsession for the artist. The first bear was hand sewn by Morris and Rose Michtom as a tribute to President Theodore Roosevelt following his much publicized hunting trip during which he refused to shoot a bear cub that had been readied for his aim. The incident was popularized by the prominent illustrator Clifford Berryman's cartoons in the *Washington Post*. The Michtoms, along with the rest of America, became fascinated by the story and thus dubbed the newly invented toy "Teddy's bear." The bear's invention quickly became a commercial and media success.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Charlemagne Palestine will give an organ concert at the Church of the Heavenly Rest on Thursday, March 16, 2017 at 8pm. The artist will perform *Aaa HHeavenlyyy RResttt SSchlingennn BBlängennnn*, his monolithic 80 minute organ riff. Further program and ticket information is available by calling 212.423.3337 or online at TheJewishMuseum.org/calendar.

Now based in Brussels, Belgium, Charlemagne Palestine (born Chaim Moshe Tzadik Palestine) was born in Brooklyn, New York, to Eastern European immigrant parents. He began exploring music and performance at a young age singing in a synagogue choir and ringing carillon bells at St. Thomas Church in Manhattan. From there he began to explore the world of experimental sound, performance, and installation. His compositions are steeped in the rituals of various non-Western cultures, post-minimal music, and Eastern European

sources. He was involved with the New York avant-garde in the 1960s and 1970s, collaborating with artists such as experimental filmmaker and musician Tony Conrad and choreographer Simone Forti before moving to Europe permanently in the 1980s. During the last decade he has created immersive installations mainly in European institutions, including recent projects at the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam and Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna.

Charlemagne Palestine's Bear Mitzvah in Meshugahland is organized by Norman L. Kleeblatt, Susan & Elihu Rose Chief Curator, The Jewish Museum, assisted by Samantha Gainsburg, Curatorial Assistant, The Jewish Museum.

Support

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About the Jewish Museum

Located on the famed Museum Mile, the Jewish Museum is one of the world's preeminent institutions devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary, and offers intellectually engaging, educational, and provocative exhibitions and programs for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Location: 1109 Fifth Avenue at 92nd Street, New York City
Hours: Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, 11am to 5:45pm;
Thursday, 11am to 8pm; and Friday, 11am to 4pm.
Admission: \$15.00 for adults, \$12.00 for senior citizens, \$7.50 for students,
free for visitors 18 and under and Jewish Museum members.
Pay What You Wish on Thursdays from 5pm to 8pm.
Free on Saturdays.
Information: The public may call 212.423.3200 or visit
TheJewishMuseum.org

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Press contact:
Daniela Stigh
212-423-3330 or dstigh@thejm.org

General Press Inquiries:
212-423-3271 or pressoffice@thejm.org

