Lecture at Hillel Center focuses on exhibit of Salvador Dali’s Aliyah Suite

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The Malcolm Rosenberg Hillel Center in Blacksburg, home to Hillel at Virginia Tech, is hosting this month an exclusive viewing of Salvador Dali’s Aliyah Suite, a set of 25 photo-lithographs commissioned by Samuel Shore in 1968 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the state of Israel.

All are invited on Monday, March 20, at 7 p.m. as Hillel welcomes Professor David R. Blumenthal, Jay and Leslie Cohen Professor of Judaic Studies, proprietor of Aliyah Suite, for a keynote address. Professor Blumenthal, in a lecture titled “Salvador Dali Aliyah: The Rebirth of Israel,” will share his insight into the context of the Aliyah Suite’s commission and elaborate on the historical events that Dali chose to depict. This event is free and open to the public. A reception will follow Professor Blumenthal’s lecture, and no RSVP is required.

The prints, full of references to the Old Testament and modern history, offer a haunting visual depiction of the Holocaust and the circumstances that led to the birth of the Jewish state. A letter by David Ben-Gurion, Israel’s first prime minister, accompanies the collection.

One of the few remaining complete sets of Salvador Dali’s Aliyah Suite, this exhibition is available for public viewing at the Hillel Center Monday through Friday 1 to 5 p.m. through March 27. The Hillel Center is located at 710 Toms Creek Road in Blacksburg. This exhibition is generously funded by the Intercultural Engagement Center at Virginia Tech. The Moss Art Center provided instrumental installation support.

— Submitted by AARP Blacksburg Chapter

Internship engages students in issues related to Israel

Hillel at Virginia Tech is spearheading a new post-Birthright internship for their students. After sending 80 students to Israel during winter break as part of Birthright Israel, Hillel has chosen 14 trip participants to represent the pro-Israel voice at Virginia Tech.

Throughout the semester, the interns participate in discussion-based seminars on topics such as Israel as the home of the Jewish people, prominent figures in Jewish and Israeli history, the Israeli security situation, Israel as a Start-Up Nation, anti-Israel bias on college campuses, diversity in Israel, the U.S-Israeli relationship and more.

“This really helped me learn more about Israel from a Jewish American point of view,” said Tech sophomore Ryan Jewsak. “I really enjoyed engaging with other students and learning about different perspectives of Israel and Jewish identity. During the session, we were asked very thought-provoking and intriguing questions, which allowed us to connect to each other as a group on a very personal level.”

Participating students also took part in an Israeli-themed Birthright reunion Shabbat, and will help organize an Israel booth at the campus’s International Street Fair, and organize an annual Yom Ha’Atzmaut (Israel Independence Day) celebration at the end of April.

The exhibit of Salvador Dali’s Aliyah Suite at the Hillel Center is another part of this initiative.

Submitted by Or Shaked