

Stéphane Mandelbaum was born in Brussels on March 8, 1961 into a family of artists. Suffering from severe dyslexia, drawing was a natural form of expression for him, and one for which he showed an exceptional predisposition. An inexhaustible worker, he has an uncommon thirst for knowledge in all artistic fields.

He draws on his literary, cinematographic and pictorial culture - but also on his family roots - for the iconography that marks the beginning of his work. Fascinated as much by the genius of his predecessors as by their often tragic and transgressive destinies, he depicted Bacon, Picasso, Pasolini, Rimbaud, Pierre Goldman... His assertion of his Jewish identity led him to draw Nazi dignitaries.

During the last two years of his life, he drew inspiration from his daily life, filled with prostitutes, seedy bars and hoodlums.

In his "intimate work", made up of countless A4 sheets, he reveals his imagination, made up of journeys, hold-ups, exhibitions and compulsive enumerations.

Fascinated by transgression, weapons and theft, Stéphane Mandelbaum was unable to resist his demons. He was kidnapped and executed in December 1986 by his accomplices following the theft of a Modigliani that turned out to be a fake. He was 25 years old.

In such a short space of time, he has left us a complex and abundant body of work. While his virtuosity is dazzling, it is through the power of his representations, the strength of the subjects he confronted and his sense of appropriating space that Stéphane Mandelbaum reveals all his originality.

His work remained in the shadows for over thirty years after his death. Today, through institutional exhibitions in Europe, United States and Asia, and its presence in many prestigious private collections, it is finally finding its place in the history of contemporary art.