The 8th Biennial Conney Conference on Jewish Arts

Keynote Speaker; Aimee Rubenstein, curator, writer, artist, and art historian; “Today is Tomorrow’s Archive: Building Scaffolding for Jewish Art”

Pyle Center, 702 Langdon St., Madison, WI 53706, (608) 262-112
Dear Colleagues,

I am happy to welcome you all to the 8th biennial Conney Conference on Jewish Arts. This is an auspicious gathering, as we are noting the 18th year of the Conney Project on Jewish Arts. For Jews, the number 18, or chai is laden with meaning; chai is life, and for artists and scholars of art especially within the context of Jewishness, art and life are intertwined in deeply meaningful ways. So, as I welcome you to this eighteenth year of the Conney Project on Jewish Arts, I am also conscious of what the last few years have presented us within the larger scheme of life. As artists and scholars, we have been given much to think about, much to process and much to address through our work. This year’s Conney Conference creates a space to explore and consider how the arts allow for both a way forward and a thoughtful consideration of traditions and histories. It is also dedicated to the memory of Marv Conney, z”l, whose generosity along with that of his wife, Babe, has provided the support for the Conney Project on Jewish Arts, housed within the Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies.

In a moment in which we are experiencing a generational shift among Jewish identifying artists to a more inclusive and polyvocal, fluid understanding of Jewish identity, the politics and visual culture of Jewishness are foregrounded in astounding new ways. From graphic novels to digital art and highly charged dance and performance, to theater, music and literature, we see both a return to ritual and a search for new narratives of the contemporary Jewish experience. Thus, the field is expanded even while acknowledging its own histories.

While trying to define it, the modernist art critic Harold Rosenberg has referred to, the “ambiguous situation” of Jewish Art.¹ Such ambiguities are the product of resistance; a denial by artists of a singular Jewish visual canon, and of the constituents of an accepted visual culture of Jewishness generally. Staci Boris, who curated The New Authentics: Artists of the Post-Jewish Generation at the Spertus Museum in 2008, alludes to the idea that contemporary Jewish artists are “Free to choose their affiliations, they are Jewish culturally, religiously, spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, partially, biologically, or invisibly”, further expanding Rosenberg’s notion of the “ambiguity” of Jewish art to include a kind of ambiguous Jewishness as well. And as the culture shifts into a postmodern present, a fluid and indeterminate present, Jewish culture itself becomes a space in which issues of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, politics, history, and nationality are transposed into a new visual culture; its art is conceptual and often performative. It poses questions gleaned from a history of wandering; though landscapes, through ideas, through identities, and through texts both sacred and otherwise. Artists of what Boris calls, the Post-Jewish Generation do not lack faith. Perhaps they have given into the hallucinatory effects of faith. As Rosenberg noted, “To be engaged with the aesthetics of self has liberated the Jew as artist.”

Perhaps this “engagement with the esthetics of self” has created a liminal space for the creation of a new version of Jewish Art, one situated within unfamiliar territory.

¹ Rosenberg, Harold, Is There A Jewish Art, first presented as a lecture at The Jewish Museum in New York and subsequently published in Commentary, 1966
Imagine wandering in the desert for 40 years with little food or water. Imagine ethnic cleansing and Holocaust, imagine a biblical degree of trauma that is not, for some, explained by only faith itself. What sort of images might that conjure in the mind of a wanderer if one who asks the right questions?

The idea of epigenetic trauma\(^2\) proposes that we carry the biological traces of our ancestors’ experience. Perhaps the transgenerational effect of such a condition is a rethinking of the world in a new and confusing visual culture, one that looks unfamiliar and even grotesque at times. Yet, we recognize something of ourselves in its aura. The presentations in this year’s Conney Conference cover a multitude of intersectional, intergenerational and empathetic perspectives on what is the very dense and complicated fabric of Jewishness in art writ large. We are here in community to learn from each other with an understanding that art does change lives and that, \textit{L’dor v’dor}, such wisdom passes from generation to generation as a communal obligation that strengthens us all.

I wish to thank my conference co-convenor, Dr. Teryl Dobbs as well as Kel Mur, without whose diligence and design skills, this conference would not be possible. Finally, I wish to offer my great gratitude to Marv and Babe Conney for their generosity and visionary support of the Conney Project on Jewish Arts.

Sincerely,

Douglas Rosenberg
Director, Conney Conference on Jewish Arts

\(^{2}\) Carey, Benedict, Can We Really Inherit Trauma? December 10, 2018, New York Times
This year, in addition to the Conney Conference Presenters selected, we are also honored to present the inaugural Conney Conference Digital Gallery! The work of these artists was curated from proposals to the 2022 Conney Conference.

You can check out the complete digital gallery here: https://conneyproject.wisc.edu/artists/conference/2022/

The 2022 Digital Gallery showcases bodies of work from:

Arie A. Galles
Bruria Finkel
Carol Man
Cheselyn Amato
Cynthia Beth Rubin
Gilah Yelin Hirsch
Jacqueline Kott-Wolle
Dr. Maarten K. van der Heijden
Marcia R. Cohen
Robin Schwartzman
Shalom Gorewitz
Stuart Pimsler
Yitzchock Moully
1:00-1:30
Registration and welcome remarks by Douglas Rosenberg, Director of the Conney Project on Jewish Arts

1:30-2:30
Sara Felder with Yehuda Hyman and Ronit Muszkatblit / “Name Game: A Queer Vaudeville on Jewish Names”
What’s in a name? What’s in a Jewish name? Veteran theatre artists Sara Felder and Yehuda Hyman seek to find out with “Name Game” -- a whimsical and profound investigation into naming, identity and reinventing oneself – while doing that crazy dance in the Zoom box. Name Game is a 42-minute theatrical zoom movie created and performed by Sara Felder and Yehuda Hyman, directed by Ronit Muszkatblit. We are seeking to share Name Game at the Conney Conference and host a discussion on naming, memory and transformation at the intersection of LGBTQ and Jewish history.

2:30-3:00
Shahanna McKinney Baldon / “Highball Holiday Presents The High Holiday Ball: A Multiracial Midwestern Jewish Ska Rocksteady Punk Reclamation Project”
How can the liminal spaces between creative expression and time help map identity? What are new modalities for building multiracial, interfaith coalitions that include fighting antisemitism among their priorities? In this 2022 recording and reunion tour project, Midwest US ska legends Highball Holiday explore these questions and more--sharing an updated take on their original punk-infused 1990’s ska/rocksteady repertoire through a new, decidedly Jewish, decidedly African-American reimagining. The Ball is an intersectional journey of heritage-claiming through a fun-filled, raucous celebration of aging punk rock sensibilities in a 21st century world. Presentation includes a daytime lecture and a nighttime performance.

3:00-3:30
Nina Pick (ZOOM presentation) / “Mah nora ha-makom hazeh: Poems of Trauma and Healing through Somatic Presence”
This presentation features a selection of poems about Jewish ancestral trauma as it lives in the body, and the process of understanding and healing trauma through somatic psychology and embodied spirituality. The poems explore the earth/body as mutually resonating sites of trauma, asking us to listen to the stories that our bodies tell and allowing them to speak of the way that loss — of language, community, culture, and homeland — reverberates in our genes and throughout the generations. The poems offer a vision of embodiment, ecological tending, and ancestral connection as a means of individual and collective healing.
3:30-4:00  
Chelsea Steinberg-Gay / “Kol Isha: Interactive Art, Spontaneous Polyvocality, Performance, Ritual, and Exegetical Inquiry”
In the 2022 work Kol Isha (Woman’s Voice), a woman stands inside a soundproof booth and sings. We cannot hear her, but we can see her through a translucent mehitza of layered soundproof Plexiglas, and we can see the impact of the sound of her voice as it’s recorded by a seismograph, standing adjacent to the soundproof booth. This work probes the halakha behind the prohibition against women singing in ultra-orthodox Judaism, and asks simultaneously: what happens when a voice is silenced? If energy cannot be created or destroyed, what are the consequences of this silencing? Inquiries that intersect with the triptych of intersectional feminist questions: Who speaks? Who listens? Who is heard? Video footage of the work being performed in New York will be accompanied by a presentation of the artist’s technical, exegetical, and theoretical research around the project, documentation of prior versions, and a brief resume of failure.

4:00-4:30  
Community Discussion, followed by a short break

5:00-7:00  
***Welcome Reception at the Pyle Center with refreshments served, including an acoustic performance by Highball Holiday, and the Oxford Handbook of Jewishness in Dance book launch with multiple authors attending in person.
10:00-10:30
Matthew Baigell / “Stories and Narratives in Recent Jewish American Art”
Baigell’s talk “Stories and Narratives in Recent Jewish American Art” outlines the current interest in creating narrative series based on the Hebrew Bible, the Talmud, and the kabbala. The artists involved, part of the first generation of fully assimilated Americans who nonetheless seek inspiration in the ancient texts, have challenged traditional interpretations through their feminist and entirely personal concerns and interests rarely, if ever, seen before the 1970s. They have revolutionized the direction and vastly increased the range and types of subject matter now available to Jewish American artists in ways that distinguish them from earlier generations of artists to the extent that they can be called the first generation of Jewish American artists no longer bound by Eastern European conventions.

10:30-11:00
Laurence Myers Reese / “Btzelem: Towards a Transgender Torah”
B’tzelem... (Made in the Image of...) is a body of work by artist Laurence Myers Reese that works to examine Jewish paradigms of gender through the transgender lens. This paper looks at the Talmud through the lens of a transgender artist, and questions what it means to be a transgender Jew through exploration of text. The resulting artworks of B’tzelem use abstract gestures, texts, and Jewish imagery to create a framework for queer Jewish existence. The art incorporates projected text in site specific places to comment on the placement of transgender individuals in religious spaces. Texts from prominent transgender theologians and the Babylonian Talmud are painted on walls, ceilings and floors to envelop the reader in text, drawing on mystical interpretations of creation and forcing the viewer to grapple with trans.

11:00-11:30
Michele Jaquis / “We are Here, Together”
Michele Jaquis presents her recent body of work - multi-lingual text-based drawings and embroideries, made between 2018-2021. This work has been described as “quiet, persistent screams.” It is both a collaboration with her matrilineal Jewish ancestors and a feminist proclamation of her solidarity with other marginalized groups in an age of increased xenophobia, anti-immigrant, anti-Black and anti-Asian
racism, anti-Semitism, anti-trans legislation, and the recent backlashes against “wokeness” and Critical Race Theory.

11:30-12:00  
Leslie Satin / “Georges Perec's Jewish Bodies: Dancing, Writing, Remembering”  
This presentation on the brilliant Jewish/French/Polish writer Georges Perec (1936-1982) considers autobiography, in language and dance, as a matter of wholes and holes, presence and absence in the artist’s life as well as its multiple restagings. Before “identity politics” and “intersectionality” were terms in our vocabularies and practices, Perec insisted on, resisted, and artfully performed his Jewish identity in his life and work. Satin addresses the Jewish bodies which permeated the consciousness of his writing; the link of embodiment and everyday culture; the absent living bodies of his parents, killed in the Holocaust. Satin will do some of this dancing: recalling Perec’s literary experimentation, using a passage of his words as the point of departure for a choreographic score, sharing a duet with the Perec of her imagination, perhaps growing closer to him through her own Jewish body.

12:00-1:00  
Lunch on your own

1:00-1:30  
Robert Brandwayn / “Memory, Interdisciplinarity and Geographical Diversity in Jewish Latin American Art”  
For a Jew, memory is essence and existence. It is a space that exists in our thoughts and minds, and by its very fragile nature, is subject to the perception and sensitivity of whoever evokes it. Memory must be settled and safeguarded. By using examples from the world of theater, sculpture, music, and the visual arts, this talk pretends to illustrate how many Jewish Latin American artists have produced works that cross the line between the invisible and the visible, embarking on multimedia and interdisciplinary creations that preserve their common memory and have played an important role in shaping the art discourse of their countries. This talk will focus on the work of 3 Colombian-Jewish creators: Feliza Bursztyn, a sculptor; Fanny Mickey, an actress and producer; and Robert Brandwayn, a visual artist and musician.

1:30-2:00  
Liora Ostroff / “A Fence Around the Torah: Safety and Unsafety in Jewish Life”  
This presentation will discuss the exhibition, “A Fence Around the Torah: Safety and Unsafety in Jewish Life” staged at the Jewish Museum of Maryland between December 2021 and February 2022. Through this exhibition, artists, musical performers, and poets highlight the internal conflict over safety and exclusion within Jewish communities and institutions, including personal reflections on queer life and racial justice in Jewish spaces, and dreams for inclusion and solidarity coming from the organized Jewish community. This presentation will explore manifold discussions on safety, unsafety and exclusion in Jewish communities and draw out thematic connections between works in the exhibition.

2:00-2:30  
Rebecca Rossen, PhD / “Representing the Holocaust through Dance: Jasmin Vardimon’s Postmemorial Choreography”  
A man dressed in a suit conducts a Wagnerian symphony in front of a stage filled with hundreds of pieces of clothing. As he continues his mechanistic movements, a group of dancers move desperately through the clothing, performing an increasingly complicated, arduous phrase. As they struggle, a watchtower at the back of the stage begins to glow, bathing this macabre dance in light. This scenario
occurs near the beginning of choreographer Jasmin Vardimon’s “7734” (2010), a dance-theater work that offers a visceral representation of the Holocaust, authoritarianism, memory, trauma, and survival. Vardimon grew up in kibbutz Ein HaHorseh, home to many survivors; she also trained with dancer Yehudit Arnon, a survivor of Auschwitz whose history deeply impacted Vardimon. In this paper, I seek to untangle the complexity of both familial and artistic legacy in “7734”, while making an argument about dance as a powerful forum for investigating transgenerational trauma.

2:30-3:00
The existence of the tombs of the prophets and elders of Judaism in the geography of Iran is a sign of the very old presence of Jews in Iran. About one hundred synagogues in Iranian cities like Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Yazd still survive. Jewish space is present in all these cities. The construction of synagogues followed different patterns that were usually influenced by local or stylistic movements in Persian architecture. This study aims to investigate the architecture of the synagogues and their relationships with the surroundings in the contact with socio-politique challenges.

3:00-4:00
Keynote Speaker: Aimee Rubensteen / “Today is Tomorrow’s Archive: Building Scaffolding for Jewish Art”
How do we (re)construct Jewish art to reflect our own experiences and rituals? There is a certain incompleteness to the traditional, yet amorphous canon of Jewish arts that has led me to create new spaces for contemporary artists exploring Jewishness, womanhood, queerness, and disability. From these artists—and the multitudes of selves between and beyond their identities—Jewish art emerges as a platform for activism and dialogue. Drawing on her experience in archives, exhibitions, publications, and conversations with artists, Rubensteen will focus on the importance of building scaffolding for interdisciplinary projects and multi-sensory performances in person and online. New sites are still needed for artists to traverse through ancestral and contemporary Jewish texts, tastes, and traditions. How do we collectively create and support the ever-evolving body of Jewish art? When today’s art becomes archival material, will it demonstrate our collective communities? With Web3 approaching, what will become of Jewish art in physical and virtual spaces?

4:00-4:30
Community Discussion
Tuesday, March 29
Location: The Pyle Center, Rm 313

Zoom link:
https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/4199386935?pwd=MHloa2N5cDZmRnRVbYQW50ZDF2dz09
Meeting ID: 419 938 6935
Passcode: Highball

9:00-9:15
Registration and welcome remarks by Douglas Rosenberg, Director of the Conney Project on Jewish Arts

9:15-10:00
Roberta Sabbath with Cathy Allen and Shahab Zargari / “Shoah Survivor Choreographic Collaboration: A Docudance Film Exploring the Memories of Four Holocaust Survivors”

Shoah Survivor Choreographic Collaboration: A Docudance Film Exploring the Memories of Four Holocaust Survivors is a project developed by UNLV English Department faculty Dr. Roberta Sabbath in collaboration with four Las Vegas Holocaust survivors and the UNLV Dance Department faculty and filmmaker. The project represents the intersection of oral history, film, dance, storytelling, and epic historical events to create a developing art form: Docudance. Between October 2020 and June 2021, choreographer Cathy Allen, Associate Professor of Dance, and Zargari collaborated with dance students and alumnae to choreograph, perform, capture in film, and interweave footage into epic, filmic narrative. The dance performances and filming took place in the UNLV Dance Studio One, Clark County Wetlands Park, and a local railway car station. Period music includes Klezmer and Yiddish songs. Sperling-Kronberg-Mack Holocaust Resource Center Library of Las Vegas and the Survivor and Second-Generation Survivor Community of Las Vegas provided research and support.

10:00-10:30
Lauren Strauss / “Artists without Borders: Early 20th-century Transnationalism in the Jewish Art World”

This illustrated lecture focuses on a group of young, politically radical Jewish immigrant artists in interwar New York, and the connections between their art, their politics, and their Jewish/Yiddish roots. It argues that today’s discourses about transnationalism and interdisciplinarity in contemporary Jewish art owe a great debt to these young artists from a century ago. They were involved in the best-known radical causes of the day – from supporting the Italian anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti and the African-American Scottsboro “Boys,” to anti-Fascist advocacy in the Spanish Civil War. Despite their resistance to religion, these young artists were steeped in the Yiddish language and culture of their parents. This became an invaluable asset when the artists traveled to the European capitals of modern art. Not only were they involved with Jewish artists throughout the world, but their openness extended to new art styles and movements and different media.
10:30-11:00
Dr. Hannah Kosstrin / “Jewish Dance Migrations: Dege Feder’s Ethiopian Contemporary”
This paper analyzes the dances of Ethiopian-Israeli multimedia artist Dege Feder, who is the artistic director of Beta Dance Company. Feder immigrated to Israel from Ethiopia during the clandestine Operation Moses Aliyah airlift in 1984, an experience that underlies her work. Feder’s movement blends Ethiopian eskesta (shoulder) dancing with contemporary Israeli dance compositional practices. Her work addresses themes of refugees, racism, and women’s kinship. Kosstrin situates her dances within the contexts of structural racism in Israel and the United States which differ due to vectors of Ashkenazi Jews as majority or minority. Kosstrin shows how considering choreographers in Jewish cultural minorities remaps narrow perceptions of Jewish aesthetics to conceive a diverse Jewish diaspora onstage. She argues that the way reception to Feder’s work differs between Israeli and American contexts shows departures in how Jewish audiences conceive themselves as part of a global Jewish community.

11:00-12:00
Honoring Marv and Babe Conney with remarks by Dr. David Conney
And Featured Lecture Honoring Marv & Babe Conney by Ori Soltes / Transcendent and Interdisciplinary: Butterflies in Holocaust and post-Holocaust Imagery”
The butterfly has long represented transformation, celebration, freedom, lightness, the soul, and hope, and occupies a renowned place within Holocaust imagery, due to its role in the visual art produced by children in Terezin—and the poem, “I Never Saw Another Butterfly” written by Pavel Friedman, who perished at Auschwitz at the age of thirteen. Poet and Nobel laureate Nelly Sachs, surviving the Holocaust in Sweden, uses the butterfly to symbolize the indomitable spirit of Hitler’s victims. Half a century later, Lori Laitman turned to the Terezin poems to set Pavel Friedman’s poem to music—offering a third medium resonating with transformation and Jewish survival. These ideas were recently captured in the story for children by Argentinian-born Ariana Mizrahi, The Blue Butterfly of Cochin, reflecting on the Cochin Jews and their emigration from India to Israel. The illustrations by Mumbai-born Siona Benjamin, echo her own transformations. Siona’s soaring multicultural, blue-skinned fereshteh and biblical characters yield organically to the blue butterfly that tells of a Jewish journey from Cochin to the Galilee.

12:00-1:00
Lunch on your own

1:00-1:30
Leora Freedman / “Dramatic Reading of Novel in-progress, A Fictional Jewish Holy Woman in Contemporary Toronto “
What would happen if an orthodox Jewish woman swept to prominence as a wonderworker in present-day Toronto? Cherry Baum, gifted with “second sight” like generations of her female ancestors, decides that now is the time to reveal herself as a holy woman. In this session, Freedman will read brief excerpts from this novel-in-progress and discuss it theoretically. The diversity of voices in Jewish fiction is just starting to include orthodox women whose creations draw from the religious world. The novel portrays a quirky character who is reclaiming inspirational rituals of the past and enacting them in the contemporary moment.
1:30-2:30
David Y. Chack with Casey J. Adler and Alina Taber / “Inherent and Inherited Intersectionality: Teatron Festival of Jewish Theater”
Historically, Jews have been ‘othered’ but have a keen self-consciousness of their liminal state. “....the consciousness Jews have of themselves as occupying an anomalous status: insiders who are outsiders and outsiders who are insiders....(this is not) the first moment...in which the Jews have occupied this liminal zone.” (Insider/ Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism; Biale, Galchinsky, and Heschel:1998) Through this liminality, we will show Jewish intersectionality weaving together social justice issues and how TEATRON is an aesthetic catalyst giving voice to the ‘other’. We are also deeply informed by Levinas’ work. What is necessary, he writes, is response/responsibility. He then demonstrates that indifference or to purport that there is meaning in suffering is a justification for evil and is immoral. (Levinas, “Useless Suffering,” The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other: 1988) Chack and Adler’s presentation will illuminate, how an intersectional Jewish theatre festival joins together with social justice and equity today, and a concept of TEATRON with unique and powerful Jewish perspectives. In other words the inherency of intersectionality is an inherited one.

2:30-3:30
Mason Rosenthal with Dr. Hannah Schwadron / “Ambiguous Play: Nice Jewish Boys and their Toys”
Mason Rosenthal will screen an excerpt from his unreleased web series How Do You Jew? Based on his research into the little-known Jewish history of the American toy industry, HDYJ? is a playful and disorienting blend of fact and fiction that grapples with inheritance: the legacies of late stage capitalism, whiteness complicated by Jewishes, toxic masculinity, and the environmental impact of the post-World War II plastic boom. After the screening, Dr. Hannah Schwadron will engage Rosenthal in a discussion of his work followed by a Q+A with the audience that Dr. Schwadron will facilitate.

3:30-4:15
Maya Ciarrocchi / “Site: Yizkor”
“Site: Yizkor” is a performance and workshop exploring manifestations of loss through text, video, and music. Its source material includes architectural renderings of demolished buildings, memory maps of vanished places, and prose remembrances obtained from extant Yizkor books and project participants. For the Conney Conference, Ciarrocchi will present this work as a performance lecture with readings of text written by previous workshop participants along with sound and projected images. Following the performance, she will invite audience members to write and read aloud personal narratives describing vanished places of personal importance.

4:15-4:45
Community Discussion

7:00-9:00
***Performance at Overture Playhouse Theater Honoring the Legacy of Marv and Babe Conney featuring the work of Choreographers Adam McKinney and Tamara Nadel and a musical performance by Highball Holiday, featuring Shahanna McKinney-Baldon.
Zoom link: https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/4199386935?pwd=MHI0a2N5cDZmRnRVbVpYQW50ZDF2dz09
Meeting ID: 419 938 6935
Passcode: Highball

9:00-9:30
Registration and welcome remarks by Douglas Rosenberg, Director of the Conney Project on Jewish Arts

9:30-11:00
Leora Fridman (Zoom presentation) / “Fear + Expression in Contemporary Jewish Art Practice: A conversation with Hadar Ahuvia, Danielle Durchslag, Rebecca S’manga Frank, Leora Fridman, Mónica Gomery, Maia Ipp, Kendell Pinkney, and Sophia Sobko”
On this panel of working artists across disciplines, we will each give a brief performance or talk on the interlocking themes of Jewishness, art-making and fear, followed by a group discussion. We’ll consider themes including: what are we afraid of in our work? What are we afraid of making? What fears are expressed in our work that feel particularly Jewish, and how? How do fear and anxiety relate when we think about arts-driven careers, Jewishness, and the pursuit of creative life? How do our politics, creative work, healing work and money-earning activities interact? What practices of code-switching, resilience and flexibility are most salient in our work and our communities? Participating artists include Rebecca S’manga Frank, Kendell Pinkney, Hadar Ahuvia, Maia Ipp, Mónica Gomery, Sophia Sobko, Danielle Durchslag, and Leora Fridman, with individual presentations followed by discussion.

11:00-11:30
Mike Wirth (משה) / “Judeo Futurism: A call for Jewish artists to envisage, design and produce the future we desire to live in”
In texts like Futurizing the Jews, Tsvi Bisk and Moshe Dror ask existential questions about the spiritual and secular implications of Jewish identity in the real and virtual worlds. This creates an organic bridge to Jewish creativity, empowering Jewish artists to become more active in designing their futures. To illustrate this renaissance-like Jewish culture wave, I will present examples of my own and other Jewish artists' artwork that contextualize the evolutionary blurring of commercial and fine arts in contrast to the blurring of spirituality, and our digital selves in the actual and digital worlds. This discussion will illuminate new creative spaces and methods for Jewish artists now and in the future.

11:30-12:00
Meirav Ong / “Reinvigorating Ritual through the Recipes of My Ancestors: An Embodied Prayer Practice”
“Reinvigorating Ritual through the Recipes of My Ancestors: An Embodied Prayer Practice” is a multi-modal presentation which argues that an embodied prayer practice is crucial to dismantling systemic discrimination against non-male voices and bodies. By examining grief through Ong’s personal account of Jewish mourning rituals, Genetic Memory, and the lost traditions and practices of women spiritual
leaders and healing practitioners, her presentation seeks after a reparative intervention by and for non-male practices which function as a rejoinder to the powers that both have and continue to define and manage Jewish spiritual practices. This presentation will include visual slides and a short vocalization meditation.

12:00-1:00
Lunch on your own

1:00-1:30
Abra Cohen / “Dance in the Displaced Persons Camps of Europe: Performance and Reception as a Prism of Jewish Identities”
Dance in the Displaced Persons Camps of Europe: Performance and Reception as a Prism of Jewish Identities- Following World War II, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), a Jewish humanitarian aid organization, brought Jewish performers, including dancers, from Mandatory Palestine, Israel, and the diaspora to the displaced persons (DP) camps of Europe as part of their morale-boosting tours. Professional modern dancers toured the camps, performing for and teaching Jewish DPs, with performances aimed at entertaining the internees and boosting their spirits. Through archival photographs, documents, film, and the teaching of movement, this interdisciplinary presentation will explore the dancers’ perceptions of their Jewish identities, how this informed their performance styles, and the reaction of audience members.

1:30-2:00
Jessica Friedman / “Choreographing Blackness, Jewishness, and Questions of Universality: Janet Collins’s Biblical Modern Dances”
African American modern dancer and ballerina Janet Collins’s Spirituals suite (1947) and Genesis (1965) mobilized themes from Judaism and African American Christianity, resulting in a (re)negotiation of race, gender, and religion. Steeped in its Cold War climate, Spirituals was interpreted by critics as displaying a universal spirituality. Collins reembodied Adam in Genesis, casting herself in his role and performing the porosity of racial and gendered bifurcations in resonance with her contemporary social movements. This presentation interrogates how Collins used themes of Blackness and Jewishness, and how her critics interpreted them, to trouble simple claims of cultural particularism or universality. It argues that she, perhaps unintentionally, blurred rigid identity categories in her biblical dances due to her choreography and abstracted corporeality in tandem with critical reception informed by her contemporary milieu.

2:00-2:30
Jônatas Chimen, Dana Blickensderfer, and Suzanne Khalil / “How Digi-Romanticism, Metamodernism, and the Global Pandemic Set (Jewish and non-Jewish) Art Free!”
In this crisis-ridden, COVID-19 era world, it has become imperative that artists embrace the mission to spark deeper conversations and wonderment with one another and their viewers through the designing of new grand narratives and the stark retelling of the plight of The Other. Metamodernism, a movement built of a longing for art to investigate the world around and within oneself, is a manifestation of digi-romantic psyches and tendencies in context of an art world left hungry for raw sincerity and emotional authenticity. It is with this impetus that Jada and The Society of Jewish Artists were founded.

2:30-3:30
Closing Community Discussion
Casey J. Adler
Casey J. Adler is an actor, writer, and theater producer. Television credits include: The Upshaws (Netflix), Penny Dreadful (Showtime), and Bunheads (Freeform). In 2020, he produced the theater festival PICplays, which united acclaimed international artists and academics. The Institute for Jewish Creativity recognized Adler with the Inquiry Fellowship. www.CaseyJAdler.com

Cathy Allen (she/her)
Cathy Allen, Modern Dance choreographer strives to create movement that is engaging and sensitive to the human experience. She wants to leave impressions of a shared reality with the audience. Her choreography is technical yet free. She is inspired by Ohad Naharin from Batsheva Dance Co. The combination of pedestrian movement and gesture with highly technical steps fascinates her. These movement sequences become fragments or episodes of thought and emotion. Her hope, is they become small windows to the soul, letting in light for a moment's glance.

Matthew Baigell (he/him)
Matthew Baigell is professor emeritus of art history at Rutgers University. He has written seven books and many articles on Jewish American art, and co-edited two on modern Jewish art. His most recent book is Jewish Identity in American Art: A Golden Ages Since the 1970s. He has also written extensively on mainstream American art.

Robert Brandwayn (he/him)
With a B.A. in music and international relations from the University of Pennsylvania, and studies in Art from The Ecole du Louvre in Paris, Robert Brandwayn’s work aims to understand how resilience, solidarity, and the creative spirit help migrant groups survive and thrive despite the interruption and longing being a migrant entails. Brandwayn’s works have been exhibited in museums and galleries in many countries including Colombia, Venezuela, China, and the United States. He was the winner of the Guest Artist Award during the New Artist in Japan exhibit at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum in 2019.

David Y. Chack (he/him)
Professor at The Theatre School, DePaul University in Holocaust Theatre; Jewish Representations in Theatre and Performance; Antisemitism in Theatre and Performance; a Fellow with the Taube Center for Jewish Life in Poland; has written for numerous publications, his most recent the Harold Pinter Review. Producing Artistic Director of ShPLeL-Performing Identity in Chicago, Louisville, Los Angeles, and New York which includes TEATRON-Festival of Jewish Theatre. He studied at NYU/Circle-in-the-Square Theatre, Tufts University, and PhD work with his mentor, Elie Wiesel at Boston University.

Jônatas Chimen
Jônatas Chimen, or simply "Jônatas," is a Brazilian-American Symbolist artist, author, academic, and public speaker. His work explores personal and collective identity amidst an ever-changing cultural landscape. The artist's exploration of identity is often drawn from his own family's history of migration, adaptation, and cultural hybridization. For the past 18 years Jônatas has been featured at biennials, museums, art galleries, and art auctions. Jônatas holds a Bachelors of Arts Degree in Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies
from The University of Madison-Wisconsin, and a Master of Fine Arts Degree from Florida International University. Jônatas is a co-founder of Jada Art Movement and a co-founder of the Society of Jewish Artists.

**Maya Ciarrocchi (she/her)**
Maya Ciarrocchi is a New York City-based interdisciplinary artist working across media in drawing, printmaking, video, and performance. Her projects center on the excavation of vanished histories, themes rooted in Queerness, and the experience of her Ashkenazi ancestry. Ciarrocchi has exhibited nationally and internationally and received residencies from the Bronx Museum of the Arts, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, MacDowell, Millay Arts, UCross, and Wave Hill. Her projects received funding from the Bay and Paul Foundation, Bronx Council on the Arts, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Jerome Foundation, Map Fund, Mertz Gilmore, Franklin Furnace Fund, and the Trust for Mutual Understanding.

**Abra Cohen (she/her)**
Abra Cohen is an Art Historian with an interest in Jewish art and dance history. She is an Archivist in the Archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, where she spearheaded the development of the Artifacts and Ephemera Collection. Also, a trained dancer, Cohen has performed with the Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company and the Isadora Duncan Dance Company. She currently freelances with Dances by Isadora, Moving Visions Dance, and Catherine Gallant/DANCE. She holds an MA in Jewish Art & Visual Culture from the Jewish Theological Seminary, and a BA in Art History/ BFA in Dance from the University of Michigan.

**Sarah Felder**
Sara Felder is an Oakland-based theatre artist. She has created and toured solo theatre shows that use humor and circus shtick to activate grass-roots discussion on significant topics. Sara has written for Juggler’s World, Girlfriends Magazine, Theatre Bay Area, The Drama Review and a chapter in Here Come the Brides.

**Leora Fridman (she/her)**
Leora Fridman is author of *My Fault*, selected by Eileen Myles for the Cleveland State University Press First Book Prize, in addition to other books of prose, poetry and translation. Recent and forthcoming work appears in Bookforum, The Millions, The New York Times, and The Believer, among others. Forthcoming books include Static Palace, essays on chronic illness and apocalypse, and Fasci/nation, a book of nonfiction focused on Jewish bodies, play and inherited trauma. She has received honors from organizations including Fulbright, Creative Capital and the Dorot Foundation. She is Visiting Professor of Nonfiction at Saint Lawrence University. More at leorafridman.com.

**Leora Freedman**
Leora Freedman’s first novel, The Ivory Pomegranate, was published by Gefen in Israel, with awards from the President’s Fund and the Committee for the Absorption of Outstanding Immigrant Artists. Her second novel, Parachuting, was published by Sumach Press in Canada. Her most recent novel, The Daughter Who Got Away, published by Yotzeret in the US, was a finalist for the 10th Annual National Indie Excellence Award and was named by Foreword Reviews as a Top 8 women’s fiction release. Leora has a Master of Fine Arts degree in Fiction from the University of Arizona. At present, she is an associate professor of English language at the University of Toronto.

**Jessica Friedman (she/her)**
Jessica Friedman is a PhD candidate in Interdisciplinary Theatre and Drama at Northwestern University. She received a BA in Ethnic Studies from Columbia University. Her research focuses on performances of national identity and female corporeality in modern dance during the 1940s. Jessica is the recipient of a Dance Studies Association Selma Jeanne Cohen award for excellence in research and writing. Her work has been
supported by research fellowships from the New York Public Library, 92nd Street YM-YWHA, and the Renate Voris Fellowship Foundation.

Yehuda Hyman
Yehuda Hyman is a multi-disciplinary theater artist. His plays have been produced at McCarter Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, and many other venues. His essays have been published in Seeing Israeli and Jewish Dance; Dance in America, a Reader's Anthology; Mahol Akshav/Dance Today; The Oxford Handbook of Jewishness in Dance.

Michele Jaquis (she/they)
Michele Jaquis is an interdisciplinary artist who examines the complexities within personal and social relationships, identity, language and communication. Her work has been presented at conferences, alternative spaces, galleries and museums and film/video festivals across the US and abroad. She holds an MFA in sculpture from Rhode Island School of Design and a BFA in sculpture and experimental studio with a minor in psychology from Hartford Art School, University of Hartford. Jaquis is currently an Associate Professor and Director of Interdisciplinary Studies and the Artist Community Teaching Program at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles.

Dr. Hannah Kosstrin (she/her)
Dr. Hannah Kosstrin is a dance historian working across dance, Jewish, and gender studies, and diaspora and migration studies. At The Ohio State University, she is Associate Professor of Dance and affiliate with the Melton Center for Jewish Studies and Slavic Center. Her monograph Honest Bodies: Revolutionary Modernism in the Dances of Anna Sokolow (Oxford UP, 2017) won Finalist for the Jordan Schnitzer Book Award, and her article “Whose Jewishness? Inbal Dance Theater and Cold War American Spectatorship” (American Jewish History, 2020) won the Gertrude Lippincott Award Honorable Mention. Kosstrin serves on the Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women Editorial Board.

Shahanna McKinney-Baldon
Shahanna McKinney-Baldon, M.Ed has been the frontwoman for legendary ska band Highball Holiday since 1993. She is also a longtime educator and thought leader on equity in public education and on diversity in the Jewish community. She holds degrees from UW-Madison and UMass-Amherst in Education, Hebrew, Communications, and Student Services, and currently serves in several roles at UW Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER), including that of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Special Assistant. Additionally, Shahanna is Founding Executive Director at Edot Midwest Jewish Diversity and Racial Justice Collaborative, and Co-Founder/Co-Director for Tiyuv Jews of Color-led, culturally-responsive evaluation. Among her current volunteer activities, Shahanna serves on the Board of Governors for the Reconstructionist movement, and advises for Jewish Federation of North America’s (JFNA’s) Jewish Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force. She comes from a large Wisconsin African-American and Ashkenazi family with Cherokee, Blackfoot, Seminole, and Sephardi roots.

Adam W. McKinney (he/him)
Adam W. McKinney danced professionally with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Béjart Ballet Lausanne, Alonzo King LINES Ballet, Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet, and Milwaukee Ballet Company. He is the Co-Founder/Co-Director of DNAWORKS, an arts and service organization committed to healing through the arts and dialogue. In 2021, DNAWORKS, which is part of the co-convening organizations of Transform 1012 N. Main Street, recently purchased Fort Worth, TX’s former KKK Klavern Auditorium and will transform it into The Fred Rouse Center and Museum for Arts and Community Healing. McKinney is an Assistant Professor of Dance at Texas Christian University.
Kel Mur (she/they)
Kel Mur grew up in New Jersey and graduated Cum Laude with a BA in Fine Art from Monmouth University in 2011. After her undergraduate studies, she relocated to New Orleans to develop her studio practice where she was invited to join Catalyst Collective of New Orleans, an art and social action initiative in New Orleans. Kel Mur earned her MFA at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2020 and currently resides in Madison, WI where she has been recognized as one of the Madison Bridge Work Emerging Artists (2020-21) through Art + Literature Laboratory. Additionally, she is the co-curator of the Collateral Damage Project and Exhibition, the Lead Curator at Arts + Literature Laboratory in Madison, WI, a lecturer in the Art Department at UW-Madison, and a facilitator of the Conney Conference on Jewish Arts.

Ronit Muszkatblit
Ronit Muszkatblit is a multi-disciplinary theater director, a founding director of LABA Global (NY, TLV, Berlin, Berkeley, Buenos Aires) and leads the Arts & Culture program at the 14th Street Y. Directing credits: The Magic Letter (Best Play Haifa Festival,) Waiting for Godot (New Yiddish Rep,) Invisible Story (Print Screen Festival).

Tamara Nadel (she/her)
Tamara Nadel is a founding member, performer, teacher, and Development Director with Ranee and Aparna Ramaswamy’s Ragamala Dance Company, known for large-scale, multidisciplinary works rooted in the South Indian dance form of Bharatanatyam. She has toured extensively with Ragamala, highlighted by the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, Joyce Theater, American Dance Festival, Arts Center at NYU Abu Dhabi (UAE), and National Centre for Performing Arts (Mumbai, India). Tamara is a McKnight Fellow in Dance, and recipient of grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, Jerome Foundation, Brin Jewish Arts Endowment, and Rimon: the Minnesota Jewish Arts Council. mnjewishartists.org/artist/?pu=tamaralynne42

Meirav Ong (she/they)
Meirav Ong (b. 1989) creates sanctuaries for listening to elevate voices marginalized within patriarchal systems of religion through textiles, clay, and ritualized performances. She has exhibited at The Everson Museum in Syracuse, NY among others, and has received grants to the Vermont Studio Center, Penland School of Craft, Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, Chautauqua School of Art among others. Meirav holds a BFA from the University of Michigan and is an MFA Candidate at Cranbrook Academy of Art (’22). Meirav is cofounder of Well of Wills, a feminist collective creating art at the intersection of spirituality and activism based on Lenape lands (Brooklyn, NY).

Liora Ostroff (she/her)
Liora Ostroff (she/her) is a Baltimore-based painter whose work explores themes such as queerness, Jewishness, violence, and the idiosyncrasies of life in Baltimore. Her community at Hinenu: The Baltimore Justice Shtiebl nourishes her art practice and inspires her to explore Jewish notions of justice and art via collaborative writing and performance. As the 2021-2022 Curator in Residence at the Jewish Museum of Maryland, Liora has developed community-responsive programming and curated artistic responses that address safety, unsafety and exclusion in Jewish communities. She graduated from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 2016 with a BFA in painting.

Rebecca Pappas
Rebecca Pappas makes projects that excavate the body as an archive for personal and social memory. Her work has toured nationally and internationally and she has received residencies from Yaddo and Djerassi, and funding from the New England Foundation for the Arts, the Indiana Arts Commission, the Mellon Foundation, the Zellerbach Family Foundation, The Clorox Foundation, and Choreographers in Mentorship Exchange
(CHIME). She is an Assistant Professor of Dance at Trinity College in Hartford, CT and Guest Faculty in the Masters in Social Practice Art at University of Indianapolis.

Nina Pick (she/her)
Nina Pick is an educator, oral historian, and spiritual/somatic counselor. A fellow with the Yiddish Book Center’s Wexler Oral History Project since 2016, she is the author of a poetry book, At the Edge of the Dirac Sea; two chapbooks, À Luz and Leaving the Lecture on Dance; and a forthcoming children's book, Tall Oak and Small Owl. Ordained as a Kohenet, she holds masters degrees in Comparative Literature and Counseling Psychology and a certification in Integrative Somatic Trauma Therapy. www.ninapick.com

Laurence Myers Reese (he/they)
Laurence Myers Reese (he/him, they/them) works in performance, installation, painting, and video. He lives on occupied Southern Paiute lands, in Paradise, NV, where he is a Graduate Assistant and MFA candidate at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. His research investigates the use of the queer body and queer semiotics to navigate and disrupt cis-normative environments. Reese is a co-founder of the Vegas Institute for Contemporary Engagement, a research lab for art and experimentation. His writings are found in Art Focus Oklahoma, South West Contemporary, and Settlers and Nomads.

Douglas Rosenberg (he/him)
Douglas Rosenberg is the founding director of the Conney Project on Jewish Arts and a Professor the Art Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is the Art Editor for the Associations of Jewish Studies publication, Perspectives, and an artist, theorist and the author of Screendance: Inscribing the Ephemeral Image, published by Oxford Press. His chapter, It Was There All Along: Theorizing a Jewish Narrative of Dance and (Post-)Modernism, appears in the groundbreaking new Oxford Handbook of Jewishness in Dance. His films have been exhibited internationally for over 30 years. He was awarded the Oscar G. Brockett Book Prize for Dance Research for The Oxford Handbook of Screendance Studies and his work has been supported by numerous grants and awards including, the NEA, The Rockefeller Foundation, The Soros Foundation and others. His most recent film, Song of Songs, is touring internationally and will be screened at the Ingmar Bergman Center in Fårö, Sweden in July.

Mason Rosenthal (he/him)
Mason Rosenthal is a performance maker and educator raised in Skokie, Illinois. He is a founding co-director of the award-winning Lightning Rod Special. LRS’ recent work includes The Appointment (NYT’ “Best Theater of 2019”). Mason is currently on faculty at Virginia Tech as part of a Post-MFA in Applied Performance. www.masonrosenthal.weebly.com

Rebecca Rossen, PhD (she/her)
Dr. Rebecca Rossen is Associate Professor in the Performance as Public Practice Program in the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Texas at Austin. She’s the author of Dancing Jewish: Jewish Identity in American Modern and Postmodern Dance (Oxford University Press 2014), winner of the Oscar G. Brockett Prize in Dance Research. She is currently writing a book on Holocaust representation in contemporary dance.

Aimee Rubenstein (she/her)
Aimee Rubenstein is a Miami-based curator, writer, artist, and art historian. Aimee curates multisensory art for physical and virtual spaces. She is the founding Art Editor of PROTOCOLS, a cultural and political journal cultivating art and writing from across the global Jewish diaspora. Aimee has curated exhibitions throughout the US, co-founded the contemporary gallery Rojas + Rubenstein Projects in Miami, and worked as an Acquisitions Curator for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. She earned her master’s degree
from the Courtauld Institute of Art in London. Currently, Aimee is co-creating a combinatorial music/analog glitch art NFT collection with her fiancé.

Roberta Sabbath (she hers)
UNLV Religious Studies Coordinator and Visiting Assistant Professor Roberta Sabbath Ph.D. collaborations with UNLV Dance Department include combining choreography and world literature classes as well as choreographing her Veterans’ and Holocaust survivors’ oral histories. Her collection Troubling Topics, Sacred Texts: Readings in Hebrew Bible New Testament, and Qur’an (De Gruyter 2021) builds on Sacred Tropes: Tanakh, New Testament, and Qur’an as Literature and Culture (Brill 2019). Sabbath serves on AAR/SBL Steering Committees and as Jewish Studies Unit Chair, AAR-WR. She teaches Bible as Literature (Hebrew Bible, New Testament, Qur’an), Mythology, World Literature, and Hebrew Bible, Gender, and Sexuality.

Leslie Satin (she/her)
Leslie Satin, choreographer/dancer/performance scholar, is on the Arts Faculty at New York University/Gallatin. She has taught at Bard College, Alvin Ailey American Dance Center/Fordham, SUNY/Empire State College, University of Chichester/UK, Hamidrasha/Israel, Centro Coreográfico do Rio de Janeiro/Brazil, elsewhere. Her dances have been presented in NYC, US, abroad. Satin’s writing about dance and space/site, art, scores, and autobiography appear in Georges Perec’s Geographies (eds. Forsdick/Leak/Phillips); Cultural Memory in Popular Dance: Dancing to Remember, Dancing to Forget (ed. Clare Parfitt); Literary Geographies; Choreographic Practices; Dance Research Journal; Performing Arts Journal. Satin is developing a manuscript joining Perec’s writing to dance. Ph.D./Performance Studies/NYU.

Dr. Hannah Schwadron (she/her)
Hannah Schwadron (MFA, PhD) is Associate Professor of Dance at Florida State University where she teaches critical studies and performance. She is author of The Case of the Sexy Jewess: Dance, Gender, and Jewish Joke-work in US Pop Culture (OUP 2018), which won the de la Torre Bueno Award for first book, as well as several scholarly articles within the growing subfield of Jewish Dance Studies. Whenever possible, she improvises, and this itself is a study in cultural moves and inheritances. She has participated in the Conney Conference Jewish Dance Lab since its inception and is especially grateful for the mixed methods mishpuche it inspires.

Narciss M. Sohrabi
Narciss M.Sohrabi received her Ph.D. in Management of Space and Society from the Paris Nanterre University in 2015, where she is currently a visiting research fellow. She is also the co-supervisor of the TEHRAN Project at The Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture at the University of California, Irvine, where she focuses on researching the architectural and archival history of Iranian religious spaces and monuments. Her PhD dissertation was structured around public space theory and focused on documenting the ways in which geopolitics affects revolution changing and the urbanization processes of Tehran and more generally, cities of the global south in the 20th century. Her research also focuses on public sacred spaces and architectural specifications of minority neighborhoods in Iran such as Iranian Jewish space. She has published extensively in various journals and books.

Ori Soltes (he/him)
Ori Z. Soltes teaches at Georgetown University across a range of disciplines, from art history and theology to philosophy and political history. He is the former Director of the B’nai B’rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum, and has curated more than 85 exhibitions there and in other venues across the country and overseas. He has authored or edited 25 books and several hundred articles and essays. Recent volumes include Our Sacred Signs: How Jewish, Christian and Muslim Art Draw from the Same Source; Growing Up Jewish in India: From the Bene Israel to the Art of Siona Benjamin; and Tradition and Transformation: Three Millennia of Jewish Art & Architecture.
Dr. Lauren B. Strauss (she/her)
Dr. Lauren B. Strauss is Scholar in Residence and Director of Undergraduate Studies in American University’s Jewish Studies Program. She is completing her book Painting the Town Red: Jewish Visual Artists, Yiddish Culture, and Radical Politics in Interwar New York, and she co-edited Mediating Modernity: Challenges and Trends in the Jewish Encounter with the Modern World. Her next book focuses on the Jews of Washington, D.C. Strauss created a museum exhibition on Israel’s history and advises the forthcoming Capital Jewish Museum. She lectures widely, serves on several boards, and is a commentator at Jewish cultural events and in the press.

Chelsea Steinberg Gay (she/her)
Chelsea Steinberg Gay (b. 1986, Brooklyn, NY) is a New York-based multi-disciplinary artist. Steinberg Gay’s works look at how displaced, marginalized communities mobilize religious practices, oral histories, and the occult as modes of protection and perseverance. Recent works include objects, paintings, works on paper, installations, video, sound, and performance. Currently a Master of Fine Art student in Parsons School of Design’s class of 2023, Steinberg Gay holds a Master of Art in Jewish Art and Visual Culture, from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and Bachelor of Fine Art in Sculpture from the State University of New York, Purchase College.

Mike Wirth (נוי)
Mike Wirth is a visual artist, illustrator, and graphic designer, best known for his thoughtful murals and large public art installations that focus on major social justice issues and his identity as a Southern, Jewish-American. Over the past 20 years, Wirth’s murals, published works, and digital museum exhibits have appeared in New York, Miami, Charlotte, NC, and internationally in Croatia, Poland, and Germany. Wirth is an avid educator, serving as director of the New Media Design major at Queens University, and mentoring programs such as Five Sense, Iconic Charlotte: A Civic Symbol Design Initiative, and The Noun Project. He is a founding member and board mentor for the Talking Walls Festival, Charlotte’s first annual, citywide mural and public art festival. In 2021, Wirth was one of 10 artists-in-residence selected for Charlotte’s wildly successful Immersive Van Gogh Exhibition.

Shahab Zargari (he/they)
Filmic awards of UNLV College of Fine Arts Communications Coordinator and Iranian-American filmmaker, Shahab Zargari, include 2016 San Diego Comic-Con International, 2020 Florida Animation Festival, 2021 Silver State Film Festival honors. For the Shoah Project, Zargari filmed, edited, and interwove footage from survivor homes, railway cars, in studio, and Clark County Wetlands Park to form the epic narrative film.

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