A Stitch in Jewish Time:

Provocative Textiles

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION MUSEUM, NEW YORK
Published in conjunction with the exhibition

**A Stitch in Jewish Time: Provocative Textiles**

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Museum

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**Front Cover:**
Andi Arnovitz, *Coat of the Agunah*, 2010
Digital scans of antique *ketubbot*, thread; 62.5” x 58”
Photo: Avshalom Avital

**Back Cover:**
Greg Lauren, *Bar Mitzvah Boy*, 2010
Mixed media; 54” x 18” x 18”
During the spring of 2011 the New York State legislature was engaged in the passage of the Marriage Equality Act. The press and public dialogue were fraught with anger, angst, and vilification against passage as well as passionate supplications in favor of the change. Legal recognition of same-sex relationships already existed in eleven sovereign nations and civil unions and registered partnerships were recognized in an additional twenty-one international countries. Fourteen American state jurisdictions had previously enacted legislation making same sex marriages legal. Why then were so many journalists, television networks, popular pulpits, celebrity spokespersons, and political leaders goading the public and legislators to nullify and protest this humane and long overdue legal action?

The tenor of the rhetoric became increasingly inflamed, echoing the worst fears of persecution and discrimination. Having previously born witness to hatred and depredations in the name of intolerance of religion, race, nationality, gender, age, and class, a surge of spirited individuals representing diverse fields, professions, and talents stood forth and gave positive support to the valiant fighters for justice and comprehension. Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion is itself a leader in the field of sexual understanding with the initiative of the Jeff Herman Virtual Resource Center and the Institute for Judaism and Sexual Orientation and the Kalsman Institute on Judaism and Health located on the Los Angeles campus, the Blaustein Centers for Pastoral Counseling in New York and Jerusalem. The HUC-JIR Museum realized that it too could play a role in making a positive change in public understanding and compassionate support. The Sexuality Spectrum uses the language of fine art to present, celebrate, and yes, mourn individuals whose lives were and are jeopardized by discrimination and prejudice.

Fear of the ‘other’ has been a root cause of wars, persecutions, slavery, and eradication. In defining sexuality as one of the oppressed categories it is necessary to use the correct definitions. All people have sexuality. Gender is merely male or female … a broad umbrella terminology. The rainbow nuances of sexuality are often referred to as LGBTIQ, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer. Add to that Heterosexual, Pansexual, and re-named variants. Gay is the preferred word for men attracted to men, no longer considered a slur. Queer, once a derogative term that referred to all people who did not behave along heterosexual lines, is now the umbrella term used to refer to all LGBTIQ people.

The HUC-JIR Museum staff held numerous focus groups of artists, asking them to share their intimate feelings concerning their lives as LGBTIQ in the community, including their faith-based experiences. We frequently heard incidents of marginalization, isolation, and exclusion. They shared their long years of concealment as well as the wrenching experience of ‘coming out;’ their relationships with family members, employers, and friendships that disintegrated; and the search for life-long partners. Through this process we drew up a list of prevailing injustices and subtle emotional adjustments.

The first creative artwork that came to mind was the riveting, emblematic painting, Pansy Crucifixion by Judy Chicago. A portion of the much larger work, The Holocaust Project, it is a brutal reminder of the persecution, enslavement, and murder of thousands of homosexuals during the Nazi era. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum came forth with a long lost print of a drawing by a camp inmate, Richard Gruene, who perished in the Holocaust because of his sexual orientation.

Addressing issues of ‘hiding in full sight,’ we selected works that alluded to masks, to mirrors, to eyes looking out from concealment. The plight of transgender teenagers was most troubling to us. Rejected by their own families and local welfare institutions, literally thousands of young people continue to migrate to New York City from other parts of the country for the city’s more liberal, humanistic social welfare network. Even there they are harassed, attacked, molested, and murdered. The renowned photographer, Josh Lehrer, in what started as a compassionate outreach effort, created individual portrait Cyanotype prints which very clearly restore to these children their robbed dignity and individuality. Dealing with a similar subject, Joan Roth presents a photograph, Joy/Jay Laden, that of a MTF, a transsexual formerly male, now a female. This portrait of a vibrant, beautiful young woman was formerly the father of three and Gottesman Professor of English at Yeshiva University, an academic position that she still holds. Lilith Magazine featured this photograph as their cover for a groundbreaking issue on transgender issues.

The Sexuality Spectrum

Laura Kruger, Curator
The troubling quotation from the *Talmud, Leviticus* 18:22, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind; it is an abomination," is referenced and refuted in several works. Helene Aylon highlights the phrase with the use of a magnifying lens, and Susan Kaplow together with Trix Rosen created an installation.

In Israel one finds strongly secular Jews and fervent Orthodox believers in public conflict over the issues of perceived homosexuality. Graphic examples of public protest art are included in the works of Hedy Abromowitz and Dorit Dotan. Kobi Israel adds poignant, iconic images of Israeli military personnel as commentary.

Seeking additional pivots of change, we turned to the powerful presence of the *New Yorker* Magazine, namely their magazine covers and stable of cartoonists. Their brave and targeted covers have featured artists whose barbed line drawings capture the winds of change with ironic humor. Cartoonist William Haefeli and the graphic novelist Alison Bechdale are included for their sophisticated insights.

Paranoia, irrationality, fear, and brutal actions by police forces around the country fueled a smoldering powder keg of repression, which erupted on June 28, 1969, when a Greenwich Village tavern, the Stonewall Inn, became the riot site between the New York City Police and the LGBT community. Unquelled, it erupted onto the neighboring streets and was met with harsh repression by the police. This may have been the turning point to organize individuals of diverse opinions and splinter groups into forceful aggregates for social change. November 2, 1969 marked the first ‘pride parade,’ which birthed two powerful social activist groups in support of gay civil rights and as an annual memorial to the victims of the riot and of the AIDS epidemic. In New York, the Gay Rights Parade is now held in June. Joan Roth, a New York photographer and social activist has covered these parades for the past two decades. A number of our artists were at Stonewall and bear witness to this uprising.

Early in 1981 reports emerged from California and New York of small numbers of gay men, diagnosed with a rare form of cancer or pneumonia and sharing the symptom of severely damaged immune systems. All were gay. By 1982, HIV/AIDS cases rapidly spreading throughout the U.S. and Europe, numbered more than 100,000 persons, including heterosexual men and women who had used intravenous drugs or had received contaminated blood transfusions. Although the medical profession and scientific community responded to the growing epidemic, it was not until 1987 that a significant pattern of treatment evolved. In November 1985, a long-time gay rights activist, Cleve Jones of San Francisco, after participating in several candlelight memorial parades, conceived the idea of a memorial quilt. Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone, victims of assassination as well as hundreds of friends and family members were included in the original memorial. In 1990, the * Names Project Memorial Quilt* had spread across the country. The quilt currently numbers over 48,000 panels and will next be exhibited on the Mall in Washington D.C. in July 2012. We are honored to be exhibiting two panels of the quilt, created by John Hirsch and linking the Memorial effort to the continued support of the Reform Movement of Judaism.

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A word of personal thanks to Rabbi Jerome Davidson for his endless support and farsighted actions, to Rabbi Nancy Wiener for her guidance and commitment to integrate this exhibition into students’ pastoral education, and to my deeply involved curatorial associates, Phyllis Freedman and Nancy Mantell.
Yaacov Agam
b. 1928 in Israel; lives in Paris

Selected Collections/Honors: Museum of Modern Art, NY; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; Jan Amos Comenius Medal by UNESCO

Jacob’s Ladder, 1986
Wool tapestry; 72” x 72”
Gift of Denise and Julius Edelman

A contemporary sculptor and experimental artist, Agam is a leading pioneer of kinetic sculpture, which rose to popularity in the 1950s-60s. Influenced by his rabbi and Kabbalist father, Agam focuses his art on visual interpretations of religious beliefs and the theory that spiritual experience is encountered through dynamic movement.

Rina Arbel
b. 1934 in Israel; lives in Tel Aviv

Selected Exhibitions: Barbican, London; Musée des Beaux-Arts d’Angers, France; Jerusalem Theater, Israel

Judean Hills, 1988-89
Wool and cotton tapestry; 52” x 49.5”
Collection of Mildred Weissman

In 1978 Arbel took advantage of the emerging trend of women working with textiles and focused her artistic efforts on weaving tapestries. Her woven works begin as drawings: “I drew a number of paths in free hand on paper, then made transparencies and put them one on top of the other. When it felt ‘right’ I worked on large movement drawings indicating to myself possible coloring, working them until they felt right. These are my paths.”

Andi Arnovitz
b. 1959 in Kansas City, MO; lives in Israel

Selected Exhibitions: International Printmakers Triennale, Paris; Jerusalem Print Workshop; Breman Jewish Museum, GA; Kniznick Gallery, MA

Coat of the Agunah, 2010 [Image on front cover.]
Digital scans of antique ketubbot, thread; 62.5” x 58”

Arnovitz examines the relationship between feminism and Judaism with her use of a traditional female art form – sewing. In Coat of the Agunah (the coat of the “chained” woman), she used the same laborious techniques that women have used for centuries to share their creativity. Both the garment and the technique are commentaries on the relationship between Judaism and the role of the female within it. The garment embodies the suffering of women due to restrictive Orthodox laws prohibiting them to divorce their husbands without special consent.
Helène Aylon
b. 1931 in Brooklyn, NY; lives in New York City

Selected Exhibitions/Honors: Jewish Museum, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; National Endowment for the Arts Award

The Foremother’s Challah Cover, 2009
Embroidery on mesh linen; 24” x 24”

Channeling her Orthodox Jewish background, Aylon takes Hebrew and English texts from the Torah and turns them into installations. The Foremother’s Challah Cover contains an embroidered imaginary vision of ancestors performing traditional female Sabbath rituals.

Michael Berkowitz
b. 1952 in Brooklyn, NY; lives in New York City

Selected Collections/Honors: Jewish Museum, NY; Yeshiva University Museum, NY; National Endowment for the Arts Award; MacDowell Colony Fellowships

Demon Binding Costumes and Mizrach, 2001
Stencil on satin, paint, and fabric; 8’ x 5’ x 3’

Addressing religious issues and the need for ritual, Berkowitz creates amulet costumes that he covers in Hebrew scripture to invoke God’s help with particular issues or problems. These garments request God’s help in subduing personal demons, and draw text from Psalms, including “My soul He restores. He directs me in the path of righteousness for the sake of his name.” (Psalms 23:3)

Doug Beube
b. 1950 in Ontario, Canada; lives in Brooklyn, NY

Selected Collections: Brooklyn Museum, NY; Museum of Arts & Design, NY; Museum of Modern Art, NY; New York Public Library, Byrd Collection, NY

Vest for The New World, 2008
Altered encyclopedia, wire, wax, metal, vinyl; vest fabricated by Shipra Mishra; 20” x 25” x 5”

“Vest for The New World is antithetical to the proverbial suicide vest. Instead of using explosives, which destroy life and kill when the bombs are detonated, the altered books in Vest for The New World, when metaphorically discharged, imaginatively burst into streams of cultural and political fragments so that everyone in the vicinity is struck with either propaganda or wisdom.”
Judy Chicago
b. 1939 in Chicago, IL; lives in Belen, NM

Selected Exhibitions/Honors: Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Brooklyn Museum, NY; National Endowment for the Arts Award

Audrey Cowan
b. 1936 in Cleveland, OH; lives in Santa Monica, CA

Selected Exhibitions: National Museum for Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; Museum of Arts & Design, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA

The Creation, 1984
Woven by Audrey Cowan from Judy Chicago’s cartoons
Modified Aubusson tapestry; 42” x 168”
Collection of The Robert and Audrey Cowan Family Trust

“The image is a narrative that posits a female rather than a male creator, thus manifesting an idea in almost all early creation myths, i.e. that woman is the source of life. In addition to challenging the traditional view of creation (most clearly manifested in Michelangelo’s positing of a male God reaching out a finger to create man), Audrey and I have also transformed the nature of Aubusson tapestry, which is traditionally woven from the back. It was woven from the front so that she [Audrey] can ‘translate’ my design into thread.”

Adam Cohen
b. 1980 in New York City; lives in New York City

Selected Exhibitions: Lyons Weir Gallery, NY; Snyderman-Works Gallery, Philadelphia, PA; LTMH Gallery, NY

Logistics Army Ant, 2009
Embroidery floss on camouflage fabric; 12” x 18”

“Embroidery offers me a way to explore the imagery while still feeling connected to the piece through my hands. The Army Ants Series references the cartoons and comic books I grew up with as well as the current social and political climates. I see them as a way to bring childish fantasy to life while also making light of the way we as humans try to control the environment.”
Shoshana Comet
b. 1923 in Antwerp, Belgium; lives in New York City

Wool tapestry, linen, wood; 76” x 40”

Shoshana Comet escaped from war-torn Belgium and France via Portugal and arrived in the United States in 1941. She took up weaving in 1968 and two years later created Shoah: A Dialogue With God, which confronts the trauma that she and her family experienced during the Holocaust. A tefillin-wrapped arm confronts the flames descending from above, posing the unanswerable question of God’s presence, or absence, during the Shoah.

Rosalyn A. Engelman
b. in Liberty, NY; lives in New York City

Selected Collections/Honors: Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, TX; Nigeran Embassy, Togo; War Tribunal Court, The Hague, Netherlands; Lorenzo de’ Medici “Il Magnifico” Award at the Biennale for Contemporary Art in Florence, Italy

Soldier, 2007-8
Plastic, metal, fabric, acrylic; 72” x 18” x 10”

“My work concerns emotion, process, time, and color in reaction to inner and external stimuli. Often fabric, metal, and other materials are used to achieve my objective. In Soldier, these elements, particularly fabric, are used to create a metaphor for the meaning of war. Fabric, meant to protect and camouflage, reveals and becomes one with the soldier and part of the fabric of her being; symbolic of inner and outer destruction. Soldier asks ‘how?’ and ‘why?’”

Arline Fisch
b. 1931 in Brooklyn, NY; lives in San Diego, CA

Selected Exhibitions/Honors: Contemporary Jewish Museum of San Francisco, CA; National Gallery of Australia; Barbican, London; Fulbright Grants

Grandmother's Lace, 2008
Crocheted silver, color coated copper wire; 12” diameter

The “lace doily” of Grandmother’s Lace references the domestic nature of the Seder. It is surrounded by small colorful cups to contain the ritual foods of the celebration, and is placed on a low pedestal to allow for the placement of matzoh underneath. The somewhat humble and old fashioned technique of crochet suggests the continuity of generations that is at the heart of the Seder.
Robert Forman
b. 1953 in Jersey City, NJ; lives in Hoboken, NJ

Selected Exhibitions/Honors: Brooklyn Museum, NY; National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC; Newark Museum, NJ; National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship; Fulbright Fellowship

Self Portrait Six, 2008
Thread glued to board; 24” x 40”

Overlapping multiple self-portraits and a portrait by his daughter, Forman explains, “My goal is to meld concept and form into one seamless image. Twenty years after I began gluing string I learned of the Huichols, an indigenous Mexican community working in a similar medium. Whether I am comparing notes with artists of another culture or depicting our daily struggles entwined with art, history, and religion, my goal is to document and inspire people with images that linger in their minds long after they’ve walked away from my work.”

Raviv Gat
b. 1959 in Israel; lives in Tel Aviv, Israel

Selected Exhibitions: Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Jewish Museum of Venice, Italy; Gross Gallery, Tel Aviv; Tel Avi’s City Hall

Gola Sangam, 2004
Knitted tablecloth, mixed media installation; 118” x 81”
Collection of the Petach Tikva Museum, Petach Tikva, Israel

For Gat, knitting is a representation of passive traditional femininity as well as a creative outlet to interweave memories and milestones of life. The knitted table installation is characterized by the appearance of a cozy, domestic setting with neatly arranged plates, geometric patterns, and verses of poetry. However, a second look reveals that the table is barren — no chairs, no food — an altar-table. The verses embroidered on the heavy tablecloth and knitted plates reveal voices of prohibitions, anxieties, separations, hatred, yearning, and the torments of love.
Adina Gatt
b. 1940 in Hadera, Israel; lives in Nahariya, Israel

**Selected Exhibitions:** Spertus Museum, Chicago, IL; Gallery Alef, Tel Aviv; Gloria Gallery, Jerusalem

*Omer Counter,* 2010
Silk embroidery on linen; 23.5” x 24.5”

“I wanted to make the *sefira* (counting) of the *omer* an act of joy. One moves the magnet every day, counting the 49 days between Passover and *Shavuot.* The piece is without numbers or words to indicate which day it is and therefore forces one to think and move the piece on one’s own each day. I chose the green color to represent the color of wheat as it begins to sprout. I enjoy looking at it at different times of the day – noticing different color combinations from the various angles of light.”

Temma Gentles
b. 1946 in Toronto, Canada; lives in Toronto, Canada

**Selected Collections:** Beth Tzedec Reuben and Helene Dennis Museum, Toronto; Boston Women’s Archives, MA; Ma’yan: Jewish Women’s Project, NY; Coopers and Lybrand, Toronto

*She Is a Tree of Life,* 2000
Collaboration with Dorothy Ross
Fabrics, trims, beads, appliqué; 39” x 22” x 13”
Collection of Phillip and Sylvia Spertus

“Because Torah, wisdom, and understanding are feminine nouns in Hebrew, the Torah scroll is dressed as a 17th-century Italian bride in the elaborate Baroque manner. The dress is adorned with both female and religious symbols that represent fertility, mitzvot, the matriarchal Women of Valour, the counting of the *omer,* and the evil eye.”

Leslie Golomb
b. 1953 in Pittsburgh, PA; lives in Pittsburgh, PA

**Selection Exhibitions/Honors:** American Print Biennial, MA; Print Center, PA; National Endowment for the Arts Award

Louise Silk
b. 1950; lives in Pittsburgh, PA

**Selection Exhibitions:** Pittsburgh Center of the Arts, PA; Lambert Castle Museum, NJ

*Deez Nights Be All Da Same to Me,* 2003
Silk screened and hand-embroidered commercially dyed cotton; 55” x 68”

*Deez Nights Be All Da Same to Me* places the 1840 silhouette of a Southern Jewish family with a slave at an imagined Passover *Seder.* An African American boy’s journey to freedom is juxtaposed with the Jewish exodus from slavery in ancient Egypt.
Ina Golub
b. 1938 in Newark, NJ; lives in Mountainside, NJ

Selected Collections: Jewish Museum, NY; Yeshiva University Museum, NY; Newark Museum, NJ

Who Is Like You, Oh God, 2008
Mixed fibers, metallic cords, threads, beads, watch crystals; 23” x 15” x 5”

“A fiber sculptured form decorated with beads represents the wall of water that flowed forth when the sea parted for all the Israelites to pass through to the promised land. My free-form Seder plate expresses one of the most important experiences of the Jewish people – the crossing of the Reed Sea. Imagery also refers to the pillars of cloud and fire that guided the journey day and night; the sea pockets of dry land form the major parts of the plate. Spaced through the water and shallows toward the future march the vessels that hold the symbolic food – metaphors for the Israelites on their way to freedom.”

Laurie Gross
b. 1952 in Los Angeles, CA; lives in Santa Barbara, CA

Selected Collections: Central Synagogue, New York, NY; Temple Congregation Ohabai Sholom, Nashville, TN; Temple Beth Shalom, Miami Beach, FL; Westchester Reform Temple, Scarsdale, NY

The Seven Days of Creation, 2007
Designed with Susan Jordan
Jacquard woven and hand embroidered cotton; 10’ x 30’
Commissioned for the Temple Congregation Ohabai Sholom in Nashville, Tennessee.

The textile is split into seven panels and has embroidered imagery depicting God’s creation, beginning with the first day on the far right and ending with the Sabbath on the far left.

Carol Hamoy
b. 1934 in New York City; lives in New York City

Selected Exhibitions: Ellis Island, NY; Neuberger Museum of Art, NY; Mizel Museum, CO; Longyear Museum, Hamilton, NY

Exodus, 2008
Mixed media; 22” x 39” 2.5”

Wings of embroidered gloves evoke the passage to freedom. Hamoy explains, “By constructing works about women and women’s issues, I hope to note the accomplishments and importance of many ‘invisible’ little girls. These little girls became women who comprise approximately fifty-one percent of the population and their ‘voices’ need to be heard. In my use of fabric, lace, and articles of clothing as my media, I maintain the memory of my immigrant family’s participation in the garment industry. By reaching back into my history, I honor their history.”
Rachel Kanter
b. 1970 in Creve Coeur, MO; lives in New York City

Selected Exhibitions: The Jewish Museum, NY; Jewish Cultural Center, Chattanooga, TN; Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning, NY

Sacrifice I: Sheep-Meadowood Farms, Cazenovia, NY, 2008
Vintage feed sacks, cotton, silk; 40” x 16” x 4”

“When I wore a tallit for the first time it felt uncomfortable, like I was wearing my father’s overcoat. A little too big, too masculine, and not mine. If I wanted to wear a tallit, it should be made for me. Using history as a guide, I have created a tallit that is inspired by the four-cornered robe worn by priests in Biblical times and designed using vintage apron patterns of the 20th century. My tallitos are not just a piece of fabric to hold the four tzitzit. They are a means of connecting my story as a woman with my story as a Jew.”

Nancy Koenigsberg
b. 1927 in Philadelphia, PA; lives in New York City

Selected Exhibitions: Barbican, London; Bibliothèque Forney, Paris; Carnegie Museum, CA; Monterey Peninsula Museum of Art, CA; Trenton City Museum, NJ

Blessing II, 1992
Coated copper wire, glass beads; 70” x 48” x 5”

“My work is a synthesis of the technological urban environment and the natural world. The palette and texture represent nature. The materials are those of technology and industrialization. This chuppah was made for the wedding of my daughter, Lisa, and her husband, David. It is composed of copper wire and hundreds of beads. The wire symbolizes the strength of their commitment and the beads the hundreds of wishes for their happiness – and blessings on their life together.”

Jean Pierre Larochette
b. 1942 in Buenos Aires, Argentina; lives in Berkeley, CA

Yael Lurie
b. 1943 in Israel; lives in Berkeley, CA

Selected Exhibitions: Loveland Museum, CO; Tucson Museum of Art, AZ; Salem Art Association, OR; University of Maryland at College Park, MD

A Well of Living Waters, 1999-2002
Designed by Yael Lurie, woven by Jean Pierre Larochette
Aubusson tapestry; 48” x 20”

From the Song of Songs the Hebrew inscription reads: Fountain of Gardens, a Well of Living Water. “A triangle of light descends upon the garden. The feminine (inverted triangles) are juxtaposed by the masculine (ascending triangles). In the fecundity of their union a garden comes into being. In Yael’s design a diamond becomes a series of six pointed stars, which in turn form a large triangular cup containing clouds. From each cloud raindrops feed the garden below.”
**Greg Lauren**
b. 1970 in New York City; lives in New York City

**Selected Exhibitions:** Nate Berkus Association, Chicago, IL; Art Basel Miami, FL; FIAF Gallery, NY; Wooster Gallery, NY

*Bar Mitzvah Boy,* 2010 [Image on back cover.]
Mixed media; 54” x 18” x 18”

Lauren creates paper sculptures of clothing. Believing that fashion is an artistic vehicle for self-expression, the hand-sewn *Bar Mitzvah Boy* not only reflects the creative process and its medium, but also the artist’s personal identity and his conflicted feelings at the time of becoming a bar mitzvah, of wanting to “please, impress my warm loving, Orthodox parents and fulfill an idealized role in my own family.”

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**Peachy Levy**
b. 1930 in Providence RI; lives in Los Angeles, CA

**Selected Collections:** Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA; Temple Isaiah, Los Angeles, CA; University Synagogue, Los Angeles, CA

*Whoever destroys a life it is as if he destroyed an entire world; Whoever saves a life it is as if he saved an entire world,* 2010
Appliqué, beading, couching, knitting; 26” x 48” x 2 ¾”

“I express my passion for Judaism and particularly for Jewish values through Judaic textiles, where I create my own visual *midrashim* and, at the same time, enhance the religious experience for other Jews, *hiddur mitzvah.*” Levy’s belief that her spiritual life is enhanced through her art work is seen in her evocation of the Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 4:8, where she juxtaposes a chaotic, unraveling image with one of order and serenity.

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**Norma Minkowitz**
b. 1937 New York City; lives in Westport, CT

**Selected Collections:** Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; Museum of Arts & Design, NY; Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA

*The Exodus,* 2008
Fiber, mixed media; 26” x 22” x 4.5”

“I used the uterus as a symbol of rebirth and *Exodus.* I also included images of birds as spirits of flight exiting the parting sea. A symbolic *Seder* plate recalling the exodus from Egypt is visible on the front of the sculpture.” Minkowitz’s use of cross hatching and interlacing helps her to imbue mysterious qualities in her work, while still making them look fragile and inviting to the viewer.
Elaine Reichek
b. 1943 in New York City; lives in New York City

Selected Exhibitions:
Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium; Museum of Modern Art, NY; Jewish Museum, NY; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland; Grey Art Gallery, New York University, NY

Shoyn Vider?, 1995
Ink on gelatin silver prints, hand embroidery on silk; 10.5” x 13.5”

Shoyn Vider? (Yet Again?) was commissioned by curator Rafael von Uslar for an exhibition titled Zimmerdenkmäler (Room Memorials) in 1995 at the Museum Bochum in Germany. The occasion for the exhibition was an invitation from the citizens of Bochum officially welcoming back the Jews who were forced to leave during the Holocaust. “The work comments on Germany’s insistence in portraying itself as an agrarian society long after it had become an industrialized nation. Despite being dated 50 years apart (1900/1950), both photographs show the ‘Fatherland’ literally being worked by its women, who are pictured bending over – an extremely telling position. I used the Yiddish phrase because it is tied to the German language but articulates a Jewish point of view.”

Mark Podwal
b. 1945 in Brooklyn, NY; lives in New York City

Selected Collections/Honors:
Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; Jewish Museum, NY; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Officer of the French Order of Arts and Letters

Torah Ark Curtain, 1996
Woven by Les Ateliers Pinton, direction by Gloria F. Ross
Aubusson tapestry; 98” x 65.5”

Collection of the Herbert & Eileen Bernard Museum of Judaica, Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York

“My Torah Ark Curtain for Congregation Emanu-El juxtaposes the iconography of traditional parokhets with visual metaphors such as the Holy Temple wrapped in a Torah scroll. A pair of wings, frequently embroidered on Torah ark valances, traditionally symbolize the cherubim protecting the Ark of the Covenant. The Torah ark valance (kapporet), a short curtain hung on the Torah Ark, above the curtain, first appeared in Eastern Europe at the end of the 17th century. When the rabbi initially saw my sketch of the wings, he interpreted the image as representing the Shekhinah. I very much liked his observation.”

Gloria F. Ross previously collaborated with artists Robert Motherwell, Frank Stella, Louise Nevelson, and her sister, Helen Frankenthaler.

Jacqueline Nicholls
b. 1971 in Nottingham, England; lives in London, England

Selected Exhibitions: Ben Uri Gallery, London; Bash Studios, London; Rivington Gallery, London

The In-Between Yeshiva, 2008
Synamay corsey, ribbon; 24” 16” x 10”

“This Sefer Torah corset is based on a pregnant woman’s shape. In the Talmud in Niddah 30a, the fetus is poetically described as learning Torah from an angel in the womb. On exiting, the angel strikes the baby, forming the indent in the upper lip, causing the baby to forget all the knowledge that it once knew. I have always understood this piece from the fetus’s perspective. Thinking about it from the mother’s point of view – throughout the pregnancy, her body is a place of revelation, a makom torah, a primal beit midrash for the fetus. On Kol Nidrei evening, we mention the Upper and Lower Yeshivot. Well, there is a place in-between these worlds – Yeshiva In-Between.”
Claire Jeanine Satin  
b. 1942 in Brooklyn, NY; lives in Dania Beach, FL

**Selected Collections:** Library of Congress, Washington DC; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities, CA; Museum of Modern Art, NY

*Pentimento LV / Hamsa Azure,* 2003  
Printing on acetate, metallic overprinting, ink, monofilament, glass beads; 11” x 4.5”

Satin is a conceptual book artist, sculptor, and designer of public art installations. Her works have been influenced by composer/visual artist John Cage, and by her parents, especially her father, who taught stenography and stenotyping. Satin states: “The ‘book’ can take on forms that do not involve ordinary ‘reading’ practices such as those found in codices, scrolls, tablets, etc., or ordinary media such as paper, velum, etc. My work becomes a book the instant one recognizes its potential ‘to read’.”

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Lisa Rosowsky  
b. 1965 in Boston, MA; lives in Framingham, MA

**Selected Exhibitions:** Paine Gallery, Massachusetts College of Art; Hebrew College, Newtown, MA; Yale University, CT

*Designated Mourner,* 2008  
Wool crepe, silk, crepe, silk linen, silk velvet, cotton, polyester; 60” high

“Much of my work is centered on my experience as the daughter of a “hidden child” and refugee from the Holocaust. Second-generation themes of repression and loss seem to come up again and again as I sift through memories and stories about a family decimated by the war. I work in a variety of media, but am especially attracted to fabric. The translucency of silk, voile, or gauze, and the images seen both on or through the cloth, are for me like the transience of memory, and the fading into history of the few remaining relatives who can speak of these memories.”

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Rochelle Rubinstein  
b. 1953 in Toronto, Canada; lives in Toronto, Canada

**Selected Collections:** Museum of Modern Art, NY; New York Public Library, NY; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland; Ohel Moshe Museum, Shanghai, China; Yale University, CT

*Oy Oy Lach,* 2006  
Woodblock, softoleum, printed, dyed silk; 48” x 36”

“‘The city of Jerusalem – a wicked prostitute.’ That is how Ezekiel described the beloved city as a rebuke of its wanton citizens. I carved Ezekiel’s words ‘oy oy lach’—woe woe to you—on a printmaking block and added the words ‘oy oy lee’—woe woe to me. These two phrases, printed many times over a woodblock image of a girl in a coat, and then embroidered, are an expression of my solidarity with female suffering and transcendence throughout the ages.”

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Claire Jeanine Satin
Miriam Schapiro
b. 1923 in Toronto, Canada; lives in East Hampton, NY

Selected Collections/Honors: Museum of Modern Art, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; Boston Museum of Fine Arts, MA; Australian National Gallery, Canberra, Australia; John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship; National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship

Twinning of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, 1989
Mixed media collage on canvas; 30.5” x 116”
Courtesy of Flomenhaft Gallery, NY

“I felt that by making a large canvas magnificent in color, design, and proportion, filling it with fabrics and quilt blocks, I could raise a housewife’s lowered consciousness,” says Miriam Shapiro. Twinning of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden combines painting and fabric collage, and is a superb example of femmage, a term that Schapiro coined to describe activities of collage, assemblage, decoupage, and photomontage practiced by women using traditional women’s techniques – sewing, piercing, hooking, cutting, appliquéing, cooking, and the like.

Deidre Scherer
b. 1944 in New York City; lives in Williamsville, VT

Selected Exhibitions: Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield, MA; Baltimore Museum of Art, MD; Brattleboro Museum and Art Center, VT; Williams College Museum of Art, MA

Huddle, 2010
Thread on layered fabric; 38” x 38”

“Over the span of three years, I have nurtured this life-scale piece. Using scissors and machine, I approach the human figure through intricately piecing, layering, and drawing with stitching. The rich patterns of printed material attract me for their pointillist qualities and how the eye is engaged. This piece reveals an intensely packed, intertwined group. Not everyone sees the same figures and many see variations in meaning. For me, fabric has become the perfect vehicle with which to narrate what is multifaceted, often non-verbal and invisible in the human experience.”

Reeva Shaffer
b. 1945 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; lives in Oakton, VA

Selected Exhibitions: William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum, GA; UJA/Federation Gallery, NY; Petroff Gallery, Toronto, Canada; American Jewish Museum, PA; Goldman Gallery, Rockville, MD

In the Beginning, 2010
Nuno felting, needle felting; 84” x 90”

“In the beginning there was chaos. God separated the chaos into the heavens and the firmament.” The center section of this Torah Ark curtain represents all that is to come – life forms of all types. A calligrapher with 18 years experience, Shaffer enhances her creations with Hebrew and English lettering and decoration.
Corinne Soiken Strauss
b. 1946 in New York City; lives in Wainscott, NY

Selected Collections: Skirball Museum, Cincinnati, OH; Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA

Chuppah of Light, 2010
Production assistance by Robert Ostiguy
Hand painted silk; 84” x 76”

“Seven is a sacred number. The Bible is filled with sevens and the Jewish calendar has many sevens. The Torah is divided into seven sections. There are seven wedding blessings, followed by seven days of feasting, and the bride circles the groom seven times under the chuppah. The Star of David is in a design made up of ‘sevens’ with the light being the center star. I wanted this chuppah to be filled with celebratory light and color.”

Jane Trigere
b. 1948 in Dobbs Ferry, NY; lives in South Deerfield, MA

Selected Exhibitions: Yeshiva University Museum, NY; National Yiddish Book Center, Amherst, MA; Philadelphia Museum of Jewish Art, PA

Women of the Balcony IV, 2008
Textile, hats, clay, plastic head forms, paper, glue; 48” x 48” x 48”
Supported by a grant from the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, 2007

“Women of the Balcony IV is the fourth piece in a series honoring German-Jewish refugee women who attended services in Ohav Sholom Synagogue in the Inwood section of Manhattan. I imagined the women really present and I fashioned the brightly colored fabric as their hair, which I covered with hats representing all the decades the synagogue existed. The black and white motif persisted as the faces were layered with from pages from tehinnes, German prayer books designed especially for women.”

Samantha Verrone
b. 1963 in New York; lives in New York City

Selected Exhibitions: University of Wisconsin Gallery of Design, WI; Synagogue for the Arts, NY

Sh’viti Hashem L’Negdi Tamid, 2009
Collage, mixed media on linen; 16” x 20”
Courtesy of Rabbi and Mrs. David Ingber

Sh’viti Hashem l’negdi tamid, Psalm 16:8
“The Sh’viti is a tool that facilitates meditation and contemplation. It is an ancient Jewish art form. It is traditional to see this quote from Tehillim included in such paintings. The psalmist declares that he has ‘leveled out’ any obstructions between him and his Creator.”
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Laurie Wohl
b. 1942 in Washington, DC; lives in New York City

Selected Exhibitions: Philadelphia Museum of Jewish Art, PA; Atelier International, NY; South Bend Regional Museum of Art, IN

Peace Like a River, 2010
Unweaving, fiber art, mixed media; 84” x 48.5” x 7”

“By unweaving the fabric I make manifest what is hidden within the material – liberating the threads to create shape, then ‘reweaving’ through color, textures, and text. Both the movement of the horizontal unwoven areas and the downward motion of the vertical panels suggests the liveliness and endlessness of flowing waters.”

Estelle Kessler Yarinsky
b. 1932 in Brooklyn, NY; lives in Delmar, NY

Selected Exhibitions: Philadelphia Museum of Jewish Art, PA; Flomenhaft Gallery, NY; Albany Institute of History and Art, NY; Nathan D. Rosen Museum, Boca Raton, FL

Gracia, 2002
Hand and machine stitched, appliqué, fiber; 73” x 62”

Yarinsky’s portrayal of Doña Gracia di Nasi, a.k.a. Beatrice de Luna, a wealthy 16th-century converso Jew born in Portugal in 1550, pays homage to Gracia’s tireless efforts in helping less fortunate Jews escape from countries where they were persecuted. Gracia is shown turning from the horrors of the Roman Catholic Spanish Inquisition toward Constantinople, where Jews were welcome. The word quemadero stitched on the lower left means ‘place of burning’ in Spanish. Jews accused of practicing Judaism secretly in Spain were burned alive at the stake. Merchant ships illustrate lines from the Book of Proverbs: “A woman of valor... she is like the merchant ships; she bringeth food from afar.” The cities that Gracia visited on her journey to keep herself and others safe are featured on the border of the quilt, along with her several names; it is thought that her Hebrew name was Hannah.
EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Yaakov Agam
Jacob's Ladder, 1986
Wool tapestry; 12" x 72"
Gift of Denise and Julius Edelman

Rina Arbel
Judean Hills, 1988-89
Wool and cotton tapestry; 52" x 49.5"
Collection of Mildred Weissman

Anni Aronovitz
Coat of the Agunah, 2010
Digital scans of antique ketubbot, thread; 62.5" x 58"
If Only They Had Asked Us, 2010
Japanese paper, Nepali paper, thread, giclée digital prints of Gemara pages; 41" x 26"

Helene Aylon
The Foremothers' Challah Cover, 2009
Embroidery on mesh linen; 24" x 24"

Michael Berkowitz
Demon Binding Costumes and Mizrach, 2001
Stencil on satin, print, fabric; 8" x 5" x 3"

Doug Beueb
Vest for The New World, 2008
Vest fabrication by Shpira Mishra
Altered encyclopedia, wire, wax, metal, vinyl; 20" x 25" x 5"

Zipper Theory: Facing Shame Tomorrow, 2005/2010
Altered books, collage, zippers; 8" x 28" x 2"

Judith Chicago
The Creation, 1984
A collaboration with Audrey Cowan
Modified Aubusson tapestry; 42" x 168"
Collection of The Robert and Audrey Cowan Family Trust

Sewing Circle III: Study for Double Jeopardy, 1990
PrismaColor® on rag paper; 29.75" x 22" From a Private Collection

Adam Cohen
Logistics Army Ant, 2009
Embroidery floss on camouflage fabric; 12" x 18"

Laser Gun Army Ant, 2009
Embroidery floss on camouflage fabric; 10" x 18"

Shoshana Comet
Shoah: A Dialogue With God, 1970
Wool tapestry, linen, wood; 76" x 40" x 3"

Rosalyn A. Engelman
Soldier, 2007-08
Plastic, metal, fabric, acrylics; 72" x 18" x 10"

Arline Fisch
Grandmother's Lace, 2008
Crocheted silver, color coated copper wire; 12" diameter

Geri Forkner and Carol Minarick
And He Dreamed, 2010
Handmade felt with stones; 19" x 13.5" x 7.5"

My Transgression, 2010
Handmade felt with hardware stones, plastic; 26" x 20" x 22"

Robert Forman
Self Portrait Six, 2008
Thread glued to board; 24" x 40"