

the LA story

bill aron

pat berger

tony berlant

joyce dallal

sam erenberg

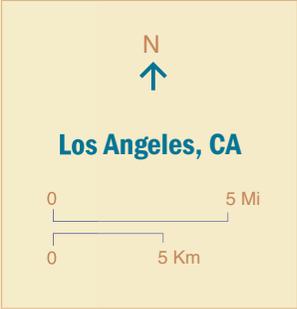
bonita helmer

victor raphael

elena mary siff

ruth weisberg

eugene yelchin



PACIFIC OCEAN

Published in conjunction with the exhibition

The L.A. Story

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Museum

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The L.A. Story

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Title Page:

Bill Aron, *Holocaust Survivors: The Indestructible Spirit – Jack Pariser*, 2007

From a series of 100 images of Holocaust Survivors in Southern California;

A project with Chapman University and The 1939 Club

Digital photograph; 14" x 20"

Back Cover:

Tony Berlant, *The Jew in the Desert (The Journey #81)*, 1981-85.

Printed metal collage; 84" x 141"

Collection of Peter Gould

the L.A. story

Edited and Foreword by Jean Bloch Rosensaft
Essays by Matthew Baigell and Laura Kruger



HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION MUSEUM

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York

foreword

What compels an artist to identify as a Jew through his or her work? What inspires an artist to express a personal sense of Jewish identity, history, or experience? To what extent does this impetus come from within or from external influences that encourage this exploration? How does geography factor into the creative process? What role can the artist play in the vitality of Jewish cultural life today? Many of these questions lie at the heart of this exhibition, which presents the creativity of ten contemporary artists living and working in Los Angeles.

The artists in *The L.A. Story* come from diverse geographical backgrounds, reflect different Jewish ethnic heritages, utilize a broad array of artistic mediums and styles, and tackle a spectrum of subject matter. And yet, they have joined together with others to form the Jewish Artists Initiative of Southern California, an artist-run advocacy organization committed to fostering visual art by Jewish artists – originally conceived in 2003 by the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles in partnership with the University of Southern California Casden Institute and the USC Roski School of Fine Arts.

Ruth Weisberg, Dean of the University of Southern California Roski School of Fine Arts, explains that their goal is to identify the needs of artists whose work is informed by their Jewish identity and to create avenues of support for their work. This exhibition grows out of that mission and reinforces a unique and vital relationship between USC and our institution: HUC-JIR provides the Judaic Studies faculty and courses to serve over 600 USC undergraduate students each year.

The works on view illuminate the Los Angeles perspective on being Jewish and an artist today. The themes and imagery of these works emerge from the crucible of a personal quest for meaning as part of our people and heritage. The artists' statements, amplified by the observations of art historian Matthew Baigell and curator Laura Kruger, provide insights into the dynamic process by which artistic endeavor and personal identity are inseparably bound.

The Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Museum is privileged to present the work of individuals who are committed to integrating Judaism and art in contemporary life. This, in essence, is the heart of our mission as a university art museum situated in a seminary preparing leaders for the Reform Movement and the Jewish people: to preserve the past, vitalize contemporary Jewish engagement, and forge a vision for the Jewish future.

Jean Bloch Rosensaft
Director

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Museum

the L.A. story: contemporary jewish artists

According to a survey in 2000 by the University of Southern California, the Los Angeles Jewish population of 565,000 people of diverse denominations accounts for almost 6% of the city's total population, second only to Roman Catholics. More than 30,000 Iranian Jews are included in these statistics. The report states that "More than 600 separate faith communities have established religious centers" and that Los Angeles has bypassed London and New York as the world's most religiously pluralist metropolitan region.

This exhibition investigates the impact of place and the search for artistic community on the creativity of artists who share a religious, cultural, and spiritual heritage by presenting a selection of work from ten contemporary Los Angeles Jewish artists. Working in diverse styles and mediums, with each expressing an individual voice, their range of subject matter addresses politics, myth, memory, spirituality, surrealism, *Kabbalah*, and historic narrative. Techniques include metal collage, oil painting, drawing, photography and digital manipulation.

A commitment to Jewish issues and values is pervasive and from a personal perspective. The sprawl of Los Angeles impedes a physically close art community and so they meet informally with other Jewish artists to study texts, discuss current issues and world affairs, and maintain a collegial rapport.

At the same time, their physical environment – the endless, cloudless skies, the vast, sere desert and the sea at the edge of the earth – are repeated elements in many of their works.

Bill Aron, in a new body of work, captures the zest for life and the celebration of each moment by individuals, each of whom is a Holocaust survivor. Their searing history and memories are not forgotten but their positive choice of embracing family and life to the fullest is captured by Aron's sympathetic, joyous photographs, titled *Holocaust Survivors: The Indestructible Spirit*.

Memory, history, and persecution are the dominant theme of Eugene Yelchin's masterpiece, *Section Five: USSR Jewish Passport Portraits*. In these stylized images Yelchin forces us to confront the anti-Semitism directed against Russian Jews,

and the resulting internalization of a flawed sense of identity. Ruth Weisberg also remembers the thwarted history of Jewish lives in peril. In her oil on canvas painting, *Harbor*, against a background of the sea, an embracing couple is poised amidst war and separation. *Fire and Water* captures the anxiety of shipboard refugees, Holocaust survivors bound for Eretz Israel but turned away by the British to languish in Cyprus.

Metal collage, the inventive medium for Tony Berlant's *The Jew in the Desert (Journey #81)*, is used to great effect to create an epic desert landscape with writhing, stylized foliage. The desert is a major factor in the lives of all Los Angelenos and this work is a metaphor for creativity turning an arid wasteland into a flourishing garden.

Magical, manipulated computer images overlaid with fused metals are presented like glowing jewels by Victor Raphael. Raphael looks beyond the night sky into distant galaxies to capture these exquisite images.

Bonita Helmer, a student of Kabbalah, studies the skies to approach spirituality through her art. *Prelude* is an exploding galactic image that draws us into its vortex.

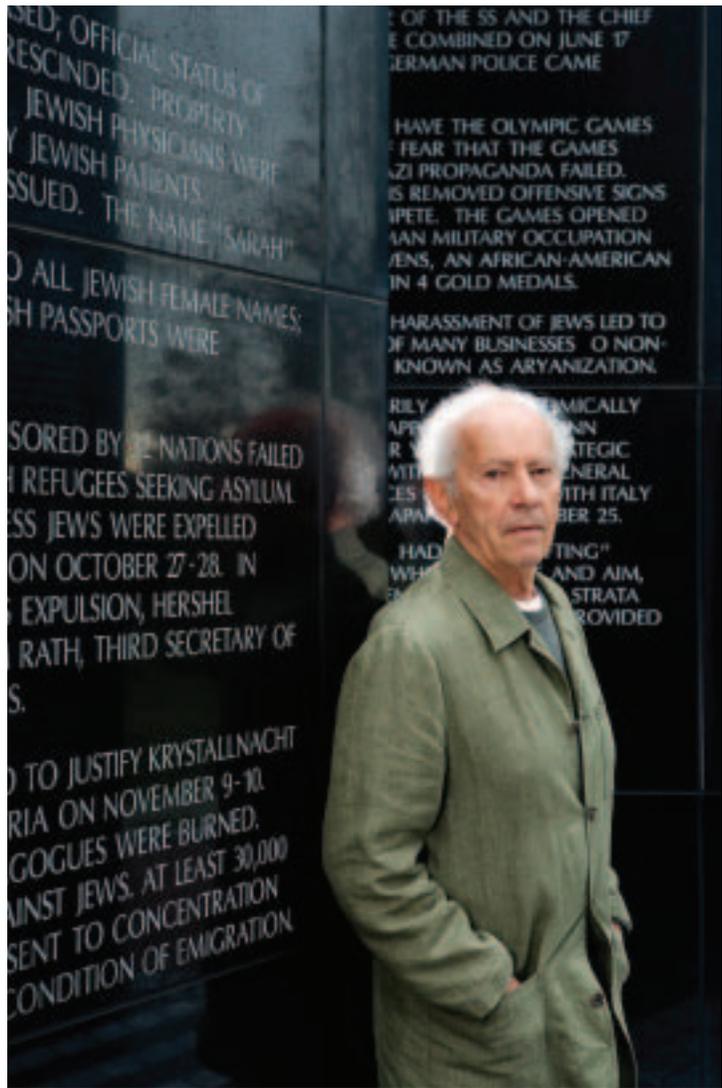
The diorama and surrealist collages by Elena Mary Siff capture this special place called L.A., the land of self-invention, Watts Towers, Hollywood, glamour, glitter, and tinsel. Siff questions reality and discards it in favor of the fantasy of movie memories.

Sam Erenberg playfully expounds on his name and has created silk screen 'memories' of possible relatives, all named in varying spellings of Erenberg. His Los Angeles artist portrait series links these creative individuals together by posing them each holding a volume (made by Erenberg) bearing a title of Roland Barthes's writings.

Joyce Dallal, rightfully concerned with peace in the Middle East and the continued safety of Israel, has massed crumpled texts of various United Nations Resolutions, the contorted paper paralleling the struggle of the peace initiatives.

Pat Berger, painting in a large, narrative scale, brings our thoughts back to the Biblical epoch and connects archetypically women to contemporary Judaism.

The art historian Simon Schama, in his book, *Landscape and Memory*, reminds us that the land shapes our internal lives and imbues art with a distinct sense of place. In his 1991 film, *L.A. Story*, author and actor Steve Martin presented a



Bill Aron

Holocaust Survivors: The Indestructible Spirit - Curt Lowens, 2007
From a series of 100 images of Holocaust Survivors in Southern California;
A project with Chapman University and The 1939 Club
Digital photograph; 20" x 14"

quintessential portrait of Los Angeles. Touching every cultural nerve, he conveys affection for the place, humor for the foibles of the people, admiration for the unfettered freedom to 'do your own thing,' mystic revelations, self-invention, and an acceptance that tomorrow's weather will be the same as today's. Los Angelenos think young, embrace their dreams, and never look back. Some of this private brand of positive thinking has to do with the climate, the landscape, and the proximity to the beach. Steve Martin's character, Harris Telemacher, says, "I have a favorite quote about L.A. by William Shakespeare. He said, 'This other Eden, demi-paradise, this precious stone set in the silver sea, this earth, this realm, this....Los Angeles.'"

Laura Kruger

Curator

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Museum

shifting the center of gravity of jewish american art

Matthew Baigell

It is a truism that artistic styles change the further an artist is removed from his or her cultural or cosmopolitan center. For example, many American colonial paintings were copied from known English examples, but, by comparison, forms appeared stiff, awkward, lacking in grace and depth, and colors were simplified. The same can be said for colonial South American art for which Spain was the cultural center. In an analogous way, if we assume that New York became the center for Jewish American art as a result of the great immigration a century ago, then Jewish-inflected art elsewhere in the country will exhibit signs of difference from its cultural center – in this instance not necessarily in terms of style or quality but rather in attitude and choice of subject matter.

The selection of works by Los Angeles-area artists for this exhibition makes this point abundantly clear. By comparison, an exhibition of works by contemporary New York-based

artists would have to include several examples of biblical and religious scenes in part because the influence of traditional Eastern European Jewish culture on New York-area artists evidently is still quite strong. Not so with the Californians, who appear to be largely free of East Coast influences. I do not mean to say that their work is unique but that they shy away from exploring explicitly traditional Jewish subject matter even as they insist on examining their heritage. In effect, whatever else they are searching for through their art, they are also exploring subjects, attitudes, and approaches that are appropriate to a Jewish American milieu a continent away and a century after the creation of the old cultural core in New York.

To that end, all of the artists are members of the Jewish Arts Initiative. Founded in 2003, it is “an artist-run advocacy organization,” according to its website, “committed to fostering visual art by Jewish artists. . . whose work is informed by their identity.” This is really a very open-ended statement and, as

a result, their art is much more free-wheeling and wide-ranging, that is, quite distinctive from that of the old cultural core. In fact, one might even argue that the center of gravity of Jewish American art has shifted to Los Angeles and that it is currently

the most important center in the country for the production of such art. For those on the East Coast, this exhibition at HUC-JIR marks the first comprehensive look at a group of artists who are in the process of contributing to a broad spectrum of styles and subjects that have already begun to form new chapters in the history of Jewish American art.

Elena Mary Siff’s mixed-media pieces are emblematic of my point in that the cinema rather than the influence of religious forebears has been the most significant source of inspiration for her art. A film major in graduate school, she has always been fascinated by Jewish film producers and directors. She is also the daughter of Philip Francis Siff, formerly the financial adviser to Hollywood notable David O. Selznick. Although her background cannot explain everything about her art – her glittering surfaces might, however, symbolize Hollywood glitter – it does prompt the viewer to imagine that she frames many of her strikingly imaginative flights of fancy as if they were movie stills.



Ruth Weisberg

Fire and Water, 2005

Mixed Media on canvas; 41" x 47 ¼"

Collection of Carol and Arthur Spinner

One can also imagine that a Southern California ambience lay behind Tony Berlant's *tzedakah* (charity) boxes and his collage, *A Jew in the Desert (The Journey #81)*. Their colors are sunshiny bright and the boxes do invoke the custom of giving to charity, but *A Jew in the Desert (The Journey #81)* hints at darker meanings. It describes a landscape cluttered with known and unknown objects that can be seen along the sides of several highways, and the individual, alone in what seems to be an alien, disorganized environment, apparently does not yet know which way to turn for surcease and comfort. He has not found his bearings amidst all of the cacophony.

Pat Berger, in contrast, has found spiritual sustenance in at least two communities, one Jewish and the other feminist. Although secular in outlook, she has been active in Jewish organizations for decades and explores the presence of women in the Bible. Her series, *Women and Plants in the Bible*, dating from the early 1990s, presents "portraits" of women mentioned in the Bible and include plants with which each might be associated. The paintings are invariably set within lush landscapes. Of the two works in the exhibition, *Deborah Giving Judgment* reveals the protagonist engaged in an activity usually associated more with men than women. *Song of Songs: I Am Black but Comely* shows a regal and beautiful woman, Bathsheba, in a verdant setting. Works such as these two combine Berger's sense of Jewish identity with feminism and the kind of agricultural opulence one associates with California, that is they include biblical and cultural/social history set against aspects of the local environment.

As with many other artists, Californians are deeply affected by memories of the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel. Bill Aron has photographed Jewish communities around the world. The intent of his photographs in this exhibition of Holocaust survivors is to show them "in the fullness of their lives; to show that they not only survived Hitler's death machine, but that they prospered. They married, had children, grandchildren; they established economic lives and gave back to their communities. *This* is their ultimate victory." One almost hears Aron shouting *yasher koach* (from strength to strength) after taking each photograph. But these works also connect profoundly to his own father's optimistic belief in the unity of the Jewish people as well as the success of the American Dream.



Victor Raphael
Cone Nebula, 2003
 Chromogenic print (edition of 3); 43 3/8" x 51 1/2"

Ruth Weisberg, one of the most religiously observant of the artists, has previously created works describing the situation of Jews in Hitler's Europe. The weight of that past, therefore, hangs over her paintings concerned with Israeli history. *Water and Fire* recounts a difficult moment during the country's creation in 1948 when the forces of Ben Gurion's Haganah organization attacked a ship, the *Altalena*, carrying arms for Menachem Begin's Irgun fighters. According to Ben Gurion, Israel would have only one army, not an army within an army, and the destruction of the *Altalena* sealed that issue. *Harbor* describes a mysterious couple at Haifa's harbor; the near bodiless man clinging to the woman is either relishing his arrival or delaying his departure. Or he might exist at that juncture between reality and imagination as an image of either a sacred (ideal) or profane (physical) love, a juxtaposition that finds its roots in Renaissance painting. On another level, if the couple symbolizes Israel itself, and we view the painting as a companion piece to *Water and Fire*, then Weisberg is calling into question the way Israel is perceived in reality and in one's idealized imagination. In any event, these works are examples of Weisberg's assertion that she is "particularly nourished by the history of art, the history of the Jewish people, and by the unwritten history of women."

Eugene Yelchin, who emigrated from the Soviet Union to the United States in 1983, cannot take for granted either his Jewish or American identities. The former was denied to him when growing up and is now in the process of creation as is the latter, as well. His paintings in the *Section Five* series are



Eugene Yelchin

Section Five: USSR Jewish Passport Portraits, 2002-2004

6, 7, 8, 10 from a series

Oil on canvas; each 12" x 9"

#7 Collection of David Cohen

part of that process. (Section Five refers to that section of a Soviet passport that states a person's ethnicity.) The faces, modeled by hand, are Yelchin's own, as if he must physically grasp and examine his own countenance before he can identify and admit to himself who he is finally for the first time.

Sam Erenberg's *The Complete Works of Roland Barthes* provides an interesting counterpoint to Yelchin's portraits. (Barthes was a literary theorist and cultural critic.) Various observers of Jewish history have stated that because of the Diaspora and before the existence of the modern state of Israel, the true Jewish home lay not in a place but in the ancient texts, in language. One might imagine, then, that Erenberg intended his homage to Barthes to suggest that a home might be found within the ideas of a modern critic. But all we see are individuals holding copies of Barthes's books. We have no idea if their contents – their language – will explain anything or provide meaning to our lives. We are bereft of anchors – community, tradition, belief, or hoping that particular words have particular meanings – and so Erenberg's works might really be tragic comments on our lives. Or, on the positive side, we are invited to invent our own worlds with our own language that might (or, alas, might not) provide stability and meaning. This is certainly implied in *Modernism: Paris, Mexico City, Los Angeles, Amsterdam*, composed of portraits of famous people whose names are close to Erenberg's – Ilya Ehrenburg, Walter and Louis Arensburg, Sergey Erenburg – whose fictional conversations the artist invites us to invent. In short, the challenge is for us to find order and structure in our universe.

Bonita Helmer is one who, as she has indicated, is searching for the "unseen structure" that cannot be seen but perhaps felt through her study of *Kabbalah* and Buddhism as well

as physics, that is, through mystical as well as scientific systems. Furthermore, she believes that there are answers to these age-old questions. In her art, she tries to bring into balance opposites – dark and light, transparent and solid. In *Prelude*, one of a group of three paintings showing the dissolution of a circle, Helmer brings into play forces of expansion and containment on a cosmic scale, as if neither language nor the environment in which she lives is quite adequate to contain the "unseen structure," the connectedness of things that she is seeking.

Victor Raphael's work cannot be contained by the California environment, either. This is a point worth considering insofar as Jews often lived in cramped quarters in European and American ghettos. Both Helmer and Raphael are concerned rather with cosmic space that extends even beyond the open spaces of the American West – something that might not be a concern of East Coast artists. Their art might be a unique development in the history of Jewish art. In fact, Raphael says that the elements with which he works are light, space, and time in order to explore the relationship between the finite and the infinite. But at the same time, Raphael, like other artists considered here, says that his goal is to ponder our place in the universe, as individuals and presumably as Jews. It would seem that however far the artists roam religiously, spiritually, intellectually, and spatially, they choose not to escape entirely their heritage and so the Jewish Artists Initiative has become an anchor, a place, an idea – a core – that allows us to help define a Jewish art in California.

The author thanks the artists for sharing their thoughts with him through letters and emails.

bill aron

The intent of this project, *Holocaust Survivors: The Indestructible Spirit*, was to go beyond the Holocaust; to show survivors in the fullness of their lives; to show that they not only survived Hitler's death machine, but that they prospered – they married, had children, grandchildren, established economic lives and gave back to their communities. This is their ultimate victory.

Without exception, the experience of meeting with and photographing them is one that moved me to my core. I learned about their singular courage and steadfast determination to stay alive. I learned about their ability to deny death any sort of victory even though the prospect and possibility were ever present. I learned about their absolute faith, whether it was one in a higher power or simply their faith in themselves; whether it was a faith in God, in luck, or in the possibility of a future – a strong faith that sustained them through one of the darkest times in human history. I learned what it means to struggle and to survive and to remain a human being.

The prophet Zechariah proclaims that the people of Israel will prevail “not by might, nor by power, but by spirit alone ... will you survive.” Clearly, it was not by might, nor by power that they prevailed, but by the strength of their enduring spirit.

Born: 1941, Philadelphia, PA

Education: Ph.D., M.A., The University of Chicago

Collections include: Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Chicago Art Institute; International Center of Photography, NY; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Museum of Modern Art, NY; The Jewish Museum, NY; The Museum of the Diaspora, Tel-Aviv, Israel; Hebrew Union College Skirball Museum, Los Angeles

***Holocaust Survivors: The Indestructible Spirit – Sonia and Israel Rosenwald*, 2007**
From a series of 100 images of Holocaust Survivors in Southern California;
A project with Chapman University and The 1939 Club.
Digital photograph; 14" x 20"



pat berger

My work has always alternated between my love of nature and a need for social commentary. In the early 1990s I had an opportunity to combine both into one series, *Women and Their Biblical Environment*. It started when I walked by a church in Ojai that had a Biblical garden, where each plant had a quote from a passage of the Bible. I photographed the plants at that time and throughout the year. Other sources were the Arboretum in Arcadia, U.C.L.A., Palm Desert, and libraries. Scholars such as Dr. Will Kramer and Cal Goodman were very helpful to me in researching the women of the Bible.

Deborah Giving Judgment, 1991
Acrylic on canvas; 60" x 48"



The women and plants both show the nurturing sides of life. Beyond that, the women who are portrayed have had to deal with the same problems and emotions as do the women of today. Some are represented with a quiet strength as in *Song of Songs: I Am Black but Comely* and others as leaders with much insight, as portrayed by *Deborah Giving Judgment*. There are those who suffered and survived, and others who have felt joy, and those who have given in to temptation. The women of history are the women of today.

This series gave me an opportunity to feel my own identity, and to relate to my own spirituality as well as express a statement to women at a time when women's issues were on the forefront. The series showed that women and nature were inextricably connected, because both are nurturing to the earth. It also concentrated on the power and pride of women who were both brave warriors and caring human beings.

Born: 1929, New York, NY

Education: Art Center School of Design;
University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

Collections include: Hebrew Union College Skirball Museum, Los Angeles; Long Beach Museum of Art; San Diego Museum of Art, CA; The Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum, Buffalo, NY; The West Collection, University of Minneapolis Law School, Minneapolis, MN

tony berlant

When Tony Berlant was a child, his family spent a good deal of time exploring the desert around Palm Springs. Occasionally they would continue driving until they found themselves in Arizona, a place of wonderment: the Grand Canyon, the Meteorite Crater, the Petrified Forest, and Native Americans living in a largely traditional way. These childhood excursions influenced Berlant greatly, and his fascination with the area inspired him to become a collector of southwest Native American art – including Navajo blankets, prehistoric ceramics, and kachinas. These objects are geometrized depictions of their world, and they helped shape the way Berlant developed his own work.

Berlant has continued to visit the desert, just a few hours from his studio. The end of the city and the edge of the desert is a symbolic dividing line between the rational and the subjective, the known and the unknown, the conscious and the subconscious. Everything in that zone is filled with pattern, order, and multiple layers of meaning. Berlant has observed that this landscape allows him to experience intense and vibrant associations, which he perceives as a transparent screen hanging between nature and himself. He aims to make these feelings and images visible in his work, considering them more *mindscapes* than landscapes. Paradoxically, the works present a world that is without people, yet is filled with human presence. By attempting to make more-or-less representational images through his technique of collaging found and fabricated printed tin onto wood panels, Berlant creates visions and connections that have a life of their own.

[Excerpted from Kimberly Davis, *Tony Berlant, New Terrain*, L.A. Louver, Venice, California, 2004]

Born: 1941, New York, NY

Education: M.F.A., M.A., B.A., University of California, Los Angeles

Collections include: Art Institute of Chicago; Fort Worth Museum of Contemporary Art; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Phoenix Art Museum; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Yale University Art Museum; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Hebrew Union College Skirball Museum, Los Angeles



The Light That Never Fails, 2003

Tzedakah Box

Found and fabricated printed tin collage on plywood; 8" x 8 3/8" x 6 3/4"
Collection of Sydney J. Levine

Mirror Image, 2003

Tzedakah box

Found and fabricated printed tin collage on plywood; 8" x 8 1/4" x 6 3/4"

joyce dallal

Embryo and *Parallel* are two pieces from a recent series, entitled *UN Resolutions 181, 194, 242 and Various Other Peace Initiatives*, of digital photographs combined with drawing media. Each piece is made up of several separate images that together form what appear to be contiguous forms, although upon close examination it is clear that the images don't match up. The photographs are extreme close-ups of the texts of the various UN Resolutions mentioned in the title and other peace initiatives that have gone into orchestrating the contemporary boundaries and political situations of Israel and Palestine. The struggle to reconcile my Jewish, Iraqi, and American identities has been a major impetus for my work, and this has only intensified in the last fifteen years since the Middle East has come to dominate the media and affect our lives.

Born: 1956, Indianapolis, IN

Education: M.F.A., University of Southern California; B.A. University of California, Los Angeles

Exhibitions include: Façade of the Fairfax Branch of the Los Angeles Public Libraries; collaborative window installations in Los Angeles at Westside Pavilion, The Promenade at Woodland Hills, Sacred Grounds Coffee House in San Pedro, The Cooper Building; Biola University Art Gallery, La Mirada, CA; Hillel at University of Southern California and University of California, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

Embryo: UN Resolutions 181, 194, 242 and Various Other Peace Initiatives, 2007
Inkjet print, charcoal, chalk; 42" x 36"



sam erenberg

The Complete Works of Roland Barthes project began as a memorial to the French writer, Roland Barthes, who died in Paris in 1980. His books have been very influential on my thinking as an artist. I chose to invite twenty-two Los Angeles artists to pose in my studio holding books hand-bound in different colors.

Modernism: Paris, Mexico City, Los Angeles, Amsterdam, a series of print-drawings, began in 1997. I am interested in the spelling of my surname, because my grandfather dropped the letter “h” from my family name, “Erenberg,” after he emigrated from Bielorusia to Chicago in 1898, yet the spelling of our name in European records does not included an “h.” King Edward II of England had a French aunt whose surname was Erenberg. “Ehren” in German means “honor” or “proud.” “Berg” means “mountain.” There is an Arensberg Park in Vienna across the street from the MAK Center. There was an SS Colonel whose name was Von Ehrenburg. What’s in a name?

Born: 1943, Los Angeles, CA

Education: M.F.A., University of California, Santa Barbara; B.A., California State University, Northridge

Collections include: Barry Berkus and Family Collection of Santa Barbara County, Santa Barbara, CA; Bank of America/Security Pacific Bank Collection, San Francisco, CA; Frederick R. Weisman Museum, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA; University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA; University of California Berkeley Art Museum; Bruce Peel Library, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada; Amherst College Library, Amherst, MA; Franklin Furnace Archive; Museum of Modern Art, NY; Grunwald Center for Graphic Arts, UCLA; Armand Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles.



Modernism: Paris, Mexico City, Los Angeles, Amsterdam, 1997-2007

Paris: *Ilya Ehrenburg* [at left, Russian historian and journalist, with Albert Einstein]

Mexico City: *Félipé Ehrenberg* [at left, artist and Mexican Cultural Attaché to Brazil, with unidentified Chilean artist]

Los Angeles: *Louise and Walter Arensberg* [at left, American art collectors, with artist Marcel Duchamp]

Acrylic on screen prints; each 12" x 10 ½"

On loan from the artist and Craig Krull Gallery, Santa Monica, CA

bonita helmer

In recent time there is so much concrete and visible information made accessible to us about the subject of physics and “space,” that I began to wonder if artists have not always intuited these principles. What was once called abstract art can now be referred to as “new landscape painting.” This painting, *Prelude*, is part of a series of paintings based on theories of physics laced with universal symbols and reference to ancient spiritual beliefs found in the *Kabbalah*.

There is still so much to explore in the “new landscape” that I have used a title for this painting that is duplicitous in meaning. *Prelude* has been consciously chosen as a reference to music, which can probably be called the most pure of artistic abstract fields.

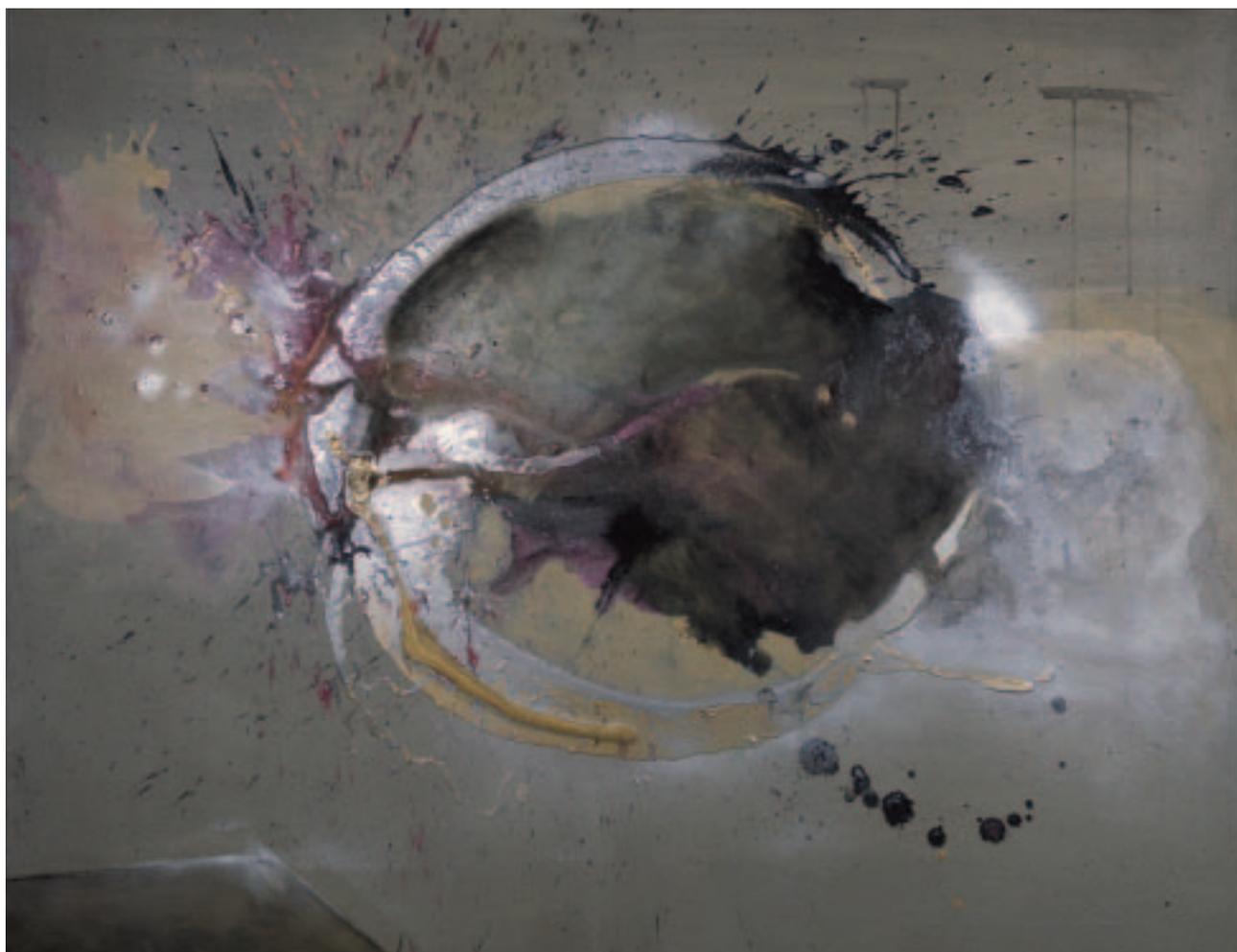
In *Prelude* I refer to beginnings and before beginnings; an all consuming and controversial subject addressed in different ways by different cultures. I find that these many theories are not exclusive and, as an artist, I have found a system of integration between science and spiritual issues. I don't know an answer, but I continue to ask the questions.

Born: Chicago, IL

Education: B.A., Antioch University; University of California, Los Angeles; Otis Art Institute

Exhibitions include: George Bills Gallery, Los Angeles; Architectural Digest – Roche Bobois, Los Angeles; Orange County Museum of Art; University of Judaism, Los Angeles; Zimmer Museum; Armand Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles

***Prelude*, 2006**
Acrylic on canvas; 4' x 5'



victor raphael

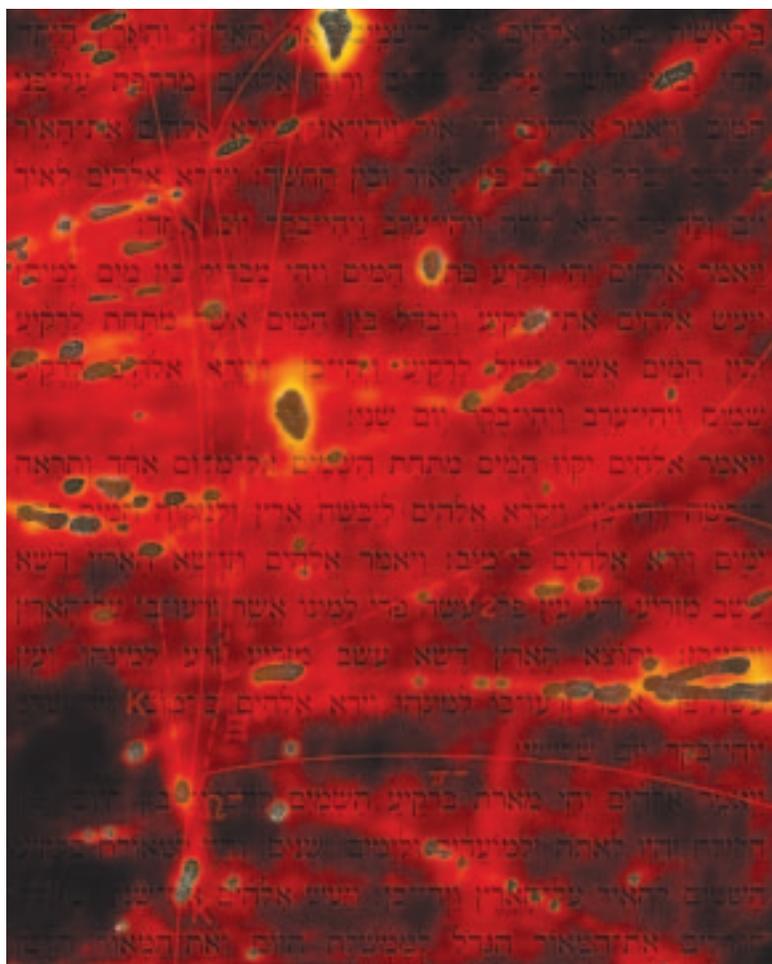
The way we perceive and imagine space has been a continual theme in my work. Light, space, and time are the elements I work with. In my ongoing *Space Field* series I explore the relationship of the finite to the infinite through transforming space images into works that combine photography, painting, printmaking, video, and digital technologies. My intent is to create a personal vision of space that functions outside the scientific context and relates to abstraction and other aspects of the imagination.

My multi-media work begins with a Polaroid photograph. The images can come directly from nature or from the man-made world, but most often they are derived from NASA photos. I next create digital movies from these space photographs. By using lengthy dissolves between the pictures, I merge the images to create a personal vision of space. After these new images are captured with an instant Polaroid camera, I paint on the surface emulsion of the Polaroid print with a glue-size that adheres the gold and metal leaf. The combining of ancient techniques like leafing with photography and computer technology is characteristic of my work. My goal is to inspire a sense of wonder and awe and to ponder our place in the universe. My work explores the relationship between the macro and micro worlds; it is about contradictions and paradox, truth and beauty.

Born: 1950, Los Angeles, CA

Education: B.A., University of California, Los Angeles

Collections include: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles; Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University; Museum of Modern Art, NY; Fisher Gallery, University of Southern California; Monsanto Corporation; Polaroid Corporation; Pollock-Krasner Study Center; Hebrew Union College Skirball Museum, Los Angeles; Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography; U.S. Trust Company; Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art; William Morris Agency



Genesis, 2006

From the collaborative project *From Zero to Infinity* with Clayton Spada
Pigmented Ink on Moab Entrada paper; 31 ½" x 25 ½"

elena mary siff

In my studio, I interpret the mystery, the humor, and the threat of my dreams. Like a beachcomber or a scavenger wondering among the ruins, I collect and juxtapose bits of disparate material, creating my own order. The souvenirs of my travels have been a constant source of inspiration.

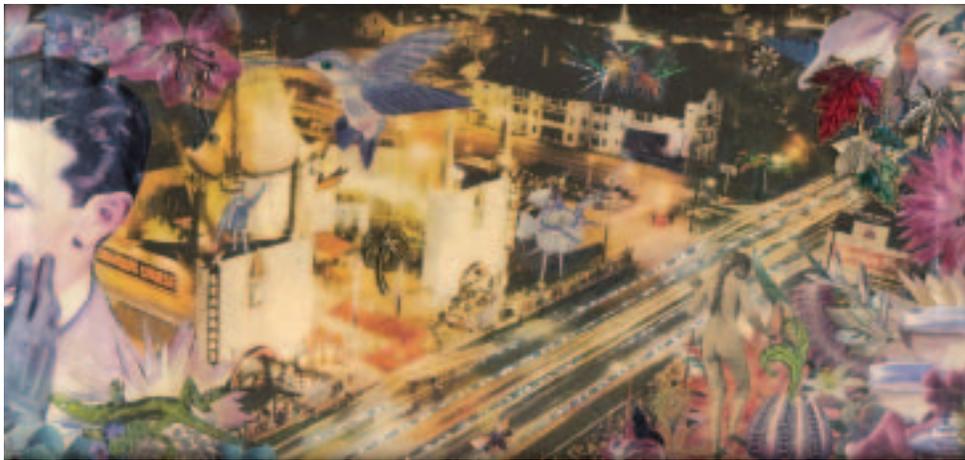
“Everything can be used, but of course one doesn’t know it at the time. How does one know what a certain object will tell another?” (Joseph Cornell)

That unpredictable dialogue is the basis of my method and my faith.

Born: 1945, New York, NY

Education: M.F.A., B.F.A, University of California, Los Angeles

Exhibitions include: Santa Barbara Museum of Art; Ventura College, CA; University of California, Santa Barbara; Temple Judea Museum, Elkins Park, PA; Hillwood Art Museum, C.W. Post College, Long Island University, NY; Wexford Art Museum, Ireland; Laguna Art Museum, CA; The Center for Book Arts, San Francisco; Hebrew Union College Skirball Museum, Los Angeles



World Premiere, 2006
Mixed media; 9" x 11"

A Wild Night at the Pier, 2007
Mixed media; 5 ½" x 11"

ruth weisberg

I make art out of all aspects of my identity, finding in the process that art integrates my experiences, beliefs, and heritage. I am particularly nourished by the history of art, by the history of the Jewish people, and by the unwritten history of women. I believe that art creates meaning and can be transformative for both the artist and their audience. I seek to create realms of the imagination in which the viewer can also project their struggles, stories, and desires.

The visual qualities of my work are often affected by the lens of memory: by the sense of the passage of time and the act of remembering. Various media appeal to me for their distinctive strategies and associations but especially for their visual qualities, for example, lithography for its liquidity, monotypes for their luminosity, and mixed media painting for the tactility of its surface. I find drawing to be the underpinning of everything I do. As a medium, I have treated drawing as both an intimate and monumental form. Since 1974, I have created installations that invite the viewer to enter into an architecturally defined space. My interest in the spatial organization of narrative with its potential for interactivity culminated in the large scale works, *The Scroll* (1987-88) and *New Beginnings: 100 Years of Jewish Immigration* (2006).

Born: 1942, Chicago, IL

Education: M.F.A., B.F.A., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Laurea in Painting and Printmaking, Accademia di Belle Arti, Perugia, Italy

Permanent collections include: Art Institute of Chicago; Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; Detroit Institute of Arts; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Huntington Library and Art Collection, San Marino, CA; Smithsonian Institution, National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC; Harvard University; Jewish Museum, NY; Biblioteca Nazionale d'Italia, Rome; Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, CA.

Harbor, 2003

Mixed media on canvas; 47 ½" x 61"

Courtesy of Jack Rutberg Fine Arts



eugene yelchin

“Section Five” refers to the fifth section of the former Soviet Union passport, which stated a citizen’s ethnicity. In the passport I carried until I emigrated from Russia to the United States, the fifth paragraph listed me as “*Yevrei*, Jew.” In the Cold War Soviet Union it was not safe to be a Jew. Jews were presumed traitors and security risks. Their activities elicited police surveillance and informers. As a result, Jews were in a constant state of anxiety. The word “*Yevrei*” was embarrassing. Being a Jew was an embarrassment. It was also a liability. Consequently, “Section Five” burned like a suddenly revealed deficiency, producing in the holder of the passport feelings of shame and guilt. It branded one for life.

My *Section Five* paintings are diminutive in size and recall passport photos. The faces, modeled after my own, almost become in the process of painting the faces of all Jews whose self-identities have been formed by fear of exposure, shame, and anger. Why am I painting these faces? Why today? Perhaps my newfound country’s present politics

of division bring out something deeply buried within me. Such words as “patriot act” and “homeland security” hark back to a time and place I thought I had left when I handed in my Soviet passport.

I discarded my brushes in the painting of *Section Five*. Instead I painted with my hands, fingers feeling intuitively through the thickened oil. Emotion pent up for twenty years within me found its way into a charged hand gesture, a slip of a thumb across a viscous surface of paint, each portrait completed urgently in one sitting.

Born: 1956, Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), Russia

Education: M.A., Leningrad Institute of Theater, Russia; M.F.A. University of Southern California, Los Angeles

Exhibitions include: Hillel at University of Southern California, Los Angeles and University of California, Los Angeles; Mizel Art Center, Denver, CO; Jan Baum Gallery, Los Angeles; Boston University; MA; Bell Family Gallery, Jewish Federation, Los Angeles; Center for Jewish Culture, San Diego, CA; American Jewish Museum, Pittsburgh, PA; Riverside Art Museum, Riverside, CA

Jewish Luck VI, 1995
Oil on canvas; 48” x 60”
Collection of Victor Yelchin



EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Bill Aron

Holocaust Survivors: The Indestructible Spirit, 2007

Rosetta and Ralph Fisher
Vera and Sigi Hart
Selma Konitz
Curt Lowens
Paul Mandel and Nandor Markovic
Jack Pariser
Sonia and Israel Rosenwald
Natalie and Leon Weinstein

From a series of 100 images of Holocaust Survivors in Southern California; A project with Chapman University and The 1939 Club

Digital photographs; each 20" x 14" (photographs are in horizontal and vertical formats)

Pat Berger

Deborah Giving Judgment, 1991

Acrylic on canvas; 60" x 48"

Song of Songs: I Am Black but Comely, 1991

Acrylic on canvas; 60" x 48"

Tony Berlant

The Jew in the Desert (The Journey #81), 1981-85

Printed metal collage; 84" x 141"

Collection of Peter Gould

The Light That Never Fails, 2003

Tzedakah Box

Found and fabricated printed tin collage on plywood; 8" x 8 3/8" x 6 3/4"

Collection of Sydney J. Levine

Mirror Image, 2003

Tzedakah box

Found and fabricated printed tin collage on plywood; 8" x 8 1/4" x 6 3/4"

Haven, 2003

Tzedakah box

Found and fabricated printed tin collage on plywood; 8" x 8 3/4" x 6 3/4"

Joyce Dallal

Embryo: UN Resolutions 181, 194, 242 and Various Other Peace Initiatives, 2007

Inkjet print, charcoal, chalk; 42" x 36"

Parallel: UN Resolutions 181, 194, 242 and Various Other Peace Initiatives, 2007

Inkjet print, charcoal, chalk; 36" x 48"

Sam Erenberg

Modernism: Paris, Mexico City, Los Angeles, Amsterdam, 1997-2007

Paris: Ilya Ehrenburg [at left, Russian historian and journalist, with Albert Einstein]

Mexico City: Félipé Ehrenberg [at left, artist and Mexican Cultural Attaché to Brazil, with unidentified Chilean artist]

Los Angeles: Louise and Walter Arensberg [at left, American art collectors, with artist Marcel Duchamp]

Amsterdam: Sergey Erenburg [at right, Israeli grandmaster chess player]

Acrylic on screen prints; each 12" x 10 1/2"

On loan from the artist and Craig Krull Gallery, Santa Monica, CA

The Complete Works of Roland Barthes, 1997

Anna / Michelet

Barry / S/Z

Cathy / A Lover's Discourse

Lucas / The Empire of Signs

Marsea / The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies

Pamela / The Grain of the Voice

Simone / Critical Essays

Victor / The Semiotic Challenge

8 chromogenic prints (of 22); 16 1/2" x 16 1/2"

The Complete Works of Roland Barthes, 1997

8 hand-made books; 8" x 5 1/2"

Bonita Helmer

Prelude, 2006

Acrylic on canvas; 4' x 5'

Victor Raphael

Cone Nebula, 2003

Chromogenic print (edition of 3); 43 3/8" x 51 1/2"

Genesis, 2006

From the collaborative project *From Zero to Infinity* with Clayton Spada

Pigmented Ink on Moab Entrada paper; 31 1/2" x 25 1/2"

Spiral Nebula III, 1988

Metal leaf on Spectra Polaroid; 4 1/2" x 4"

Collection of Jane Raphael

Planet Tribeca, 1999

Metal leaf on Spectra Polaroid; 4 1/2" x 4"

Planet in Metal Field, 2001

Metal leaf on Spectra Polaroid; 4 1/2" x 4"

Cone Nebula I, 2001

Metal leaf on Spectra Polaroid; 4 1/2" x 4"

Nachamu Series: Ring Nebula I, 2006

Metal leaf on Spectra Polaroid; 4 1/2" x 4"

Collection Nancy Berman and Alan Bloch

Nachamu Series: EOG Nebula III, 2006

Metal leaf on Spectra Polaroid; 4 1/2" x 4"

Elena Mary Siff

City, 1986-2007

Based on the Arthur Rimbaud poem
Plexiglass boxed installation; 7 1/2" x 35" x 8"

Material World, 2007

Mixed media; 9 1/2" x 11 1/2"

A Wild Night at the Pier, 2007

Mixed media; 5 1/2" x 11"

Alamogordo: Ashes and Diamonds, 2007

Mixed media; 6 1/2" x 9"

World Premiere, 2006

Mixed media; 9" x 11"

Ruth Weisberg

Fire and Water, 2005

Mixed Media on canvas; 41" x 47 1/4"

Collection of Carol and Arthur Spinner

Harbor, 2003

Mixed media on canvas; 47 1/2" x 61"

Courtesy of Jack Rutberg Fine Arts

Psalm 114: "...Hills, why did you jump like lambs..."

from *The Open Door: A Passover Haggadah*

Mixed media on paper; 22" X 29 1/2"

Collection of Carol and Arthur Spinner

Wellspring, 1992

Mixed media drawing; 39 1/4" x 27 1/2"

Courtesy of Jack Rutberg Fine Arts

Eugene Yelchin

Section Five: USSR Jewish Passport Portraits, 2002-2004

1, 2, 5-11, 13-19, 21, 23-25, 27, 29-34, 36, 37

from a series

28 paintings; Oil on canvas; each 12" x 9"

1, 2, 7 Collection of David Cohen

#5 Collection of Brenda Wehle

Jewish Luck VI, 1995

Oil on canvas; 48" x 60"

Collection of Victor Yelchin

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