HOLY SPARKS

Celebrating Fifty Years of Women in the Rabbinate

Holy Sparks: Celebrating 50 Years of Women in the Rabbinate

Dr. Bernard Heller Museum, New York
Skirball Museum, Cincinnati

The Braid

the-braid.org

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Lynne Himelstein, *Board Co-Chair; Co-Director, Story Archive of Women Rabbis*
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Dr. Bernard Heller Museum, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York

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HOLY SPARKS:
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF WOMEN IN THE RABBINATE

Jean Bloch Rosensaft, *Director, Dr. Bernard Heller Museum, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York*
Abby Schwartz, *Director, Skirball Museum, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati*

On June 3, 1972, Jewish and American history were made when Rabbi Sally Priesand was ordained by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) as the first woman rabbi in North America. A pioneer who opened the way for generations across all denominations and around the globe, Rabbi Priesand set in motion the first steps toward inclusion, diversity, equity, and empowerment of new cohorts of leaders for the Jewish people over the past 50 years.

This exhibition illuminates the creativity, commitment, and vision of 24 women who were "firsts" in their time. Their challenges and contributions, struggles and successes, represent the achievements of all the 839 women rabbinical graduates of HUC-JIR in North America and Israel to date – and the nearly 1,500 women rabbis of all movements who have transformed the fabric of Jewish tradition, worship, spirituality, scholarship, education, and pastoral care.

Evoking their stories are the works of 24 leading contemporary Jewish women artists, who immersed themselves in their respective rabbi's recorded interviews, produced by The Braid and preserved at the Jewish Women's Archive. The artists' insights, empathy, and broad array of aesthetic approaches convey the wide-ranging scope of these trailblazers' experiences and accomplishments and capture the essence of their identities and consecrated paths.

From the pulpit to the college campus, from philanthropic foundations to Jewish communal organizations and agencies, from military to healthcare chaplaincy, women rabbis have indelibly redefined Jewish leadership. It is particularly meaningful to honor their journeys, as we confront painful moments of intolerance, exclusion, and abuse and begin to build a better future where all those who seek spiritual fulfillment within Judaism feel respected and valued equally.

Our mission at the Dr. Bernard Heller Museum in New York and Skirball Museum in Cincinnati is to advance the visual expression of Jewish history, values, and heritage. By supporting contemporary artistic creativity that depicts a historic milestone and pays tribute to individuals who continue to shape the Jewish world, this exhibition exemplifies that mission.

As "holy sparks," women in the rabbinate are kindling the Jewish engagement, education, and identity of communities far and wide, today and for the generations to come. May these builders of a vital Jewish future go from strength to strength!

THE BRAID'S STORY ARCHIVE OF WOMEN RABBIS

Ronda Spinak, *Founder & Artistic Director, The Braid; Co-Director, Story Archive of Women Rabbis*
Lynne Himelstein, *Board Co-Chair, The Braid; Co-Director, Story Archive of Women Rabbis*

One could say the *Holy Sparks* art exhibition was a work of divine inspiration. The truth is, inspiration came from a handful of women leading The Braid (formerly Jewish Women's Theatre), a groundbreaking theatre company based in Los Angeles. Our company's mission, for the first many years, had been to bring the untold stories of contemporary Jewish women to the stage. One day we asked ourselves: why not do the same for women in the rabbinate?

While women had been in the rabbinate since 1972, their challenges and very personal decisions to become rabbis were little known to the public. In the fall of 2009, we interviewed eighteen prominent Los Angeles women rabbis. Each was asked a series of thought-provoking questions around their rabbinical school experience, when they got their "calling," their understanding of God, holy moments, greatest obstacles, and so on. Their inspiring stories were adapted into a play, *Stories from the Fringe*, which was so well received it moved us to create the Story Archive of Women Rabbis, a more expansive, filmed collection of interviews.

Over the next decade, our team traveled across North America, Europe, and Israel, conducting nearly 200 interviews. Male rabbis, scholars, and heads of seminaries were also interviewed. These stories confirmed what many Judaic academics were already saying: women in the rabbinate were affecting a radical shift in Judaism that included a transformation of theology, liturgy, ritual, God language, and even synagogue design.

In 2014, in order to make these remarkable stories publicly accessible, The Braid's Story Archive of Women Rabbis provided edited stories from nearly 100 rabbis to the Jewish Women's Archive (jwa.org), an online archive that documents Jewish women's lives.

That same year, The Braid opened an innovative performance/art space where contemporary Jewish topics explored through stories on stage were also being examined through fine arts, inviting audiences to engage more deeply with myriad themes. The mission was broadened to include not only women's stories but all inspiring Jewish stories. With the success of connecting fine arts with Jewish stories, we looked to do the same with our collection of rabbi interviews.

The Dr. Bernard Heller Museum at HUC-JIR in New York joined the project, lending its curatorial expertise, recommending artists, creating the exhibition catalogue, providing the exhibition venue, and extending the exhibition's presentation to HUC-JIR's Skirball Museum in Cincinnati. Artists were given rabbi interview transcripts and edited stories and were charged with creating a unique work of art, inspired by the words and life of their assigned rabbi.

Holy Sparks, a milestone exhibition that celebrates 50 years of women in the rabbinate, honors and explores the contributions and legacy of 24 trailblazing women rabbis across movements and continents through the works of leading contemporary Jewish women artists. It is our hope that the *Holy Sparks* exhibition will bring more scholars, educators, the public, and future generations to discover the lives of these pioneering women who have transformed not only the face of Judaism but also its heart and soul. May we all be divinely inspired by this collection.

THE PIONEERING SPIRIT AND POWER CONTINUE

Judith Rosenbaum, Ph.D., *Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Women's Archive*

In 2022, 50 years after the ordination of Rabbi Sally Priesand as the first female rabbi in America, it is hard to imagine a rabbinate without women. From positions of leadership on the *bima*, in educational settings, as chaplains, ritual-creators, and scholars, women as rabbis have transformed and renewed Judaism, forging new models of authority and infusing fresh perspectives, insights, and creativity into religious and communal life. Their presence and innovations have benefited people of all genders, expanding Jewish rituals and role models, Torah and traditions, and expectations of families and leaders. In just 50 years, what was once unthinkable has become foundational.

As we celebrate this monumental anniversary and the sea change it represents, we must also recognize that the many advances and accomplishments of women in the rabbinate have only just begun. The 24 rabbis featured in this exhibit represent "firsts" of many kinds: not only the first female rabbis of the denominational movements – Rabbis Sally Priesand, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, Amy Eilberg, and Rabba Sara Hurwitz – but also firsts across the world, firsts of their community or identity, firsts to hold particular leadership roles. And the pioneering continues: more "firsts" will be achieved as the next generation of rabbis break new ground. The rabbinical leaders featured in this exhibition represent the larger network of women rabbis who are building and changing communities around the world, extending the inclusion that their presence as women in the rabbinate represents to other categories, such as race, sexuality, and disability.

Given the vibrancy of women in the rabbinate, it can be difficult to acknowledge that challenges to women's rabbinical leadership persist. To be sure, some of an earlier era's arguments against ordaining women – that women are too weak to carry the Torah, that they will cry at board meetings – have been proven irrelevant, but others – that women do not command enough authority, or that the aesthetic of a woman on the pulpit will be alienating or just "feel wrong" – still seep into hiring and renewal considerations. After all, despite the fact that women now make up more than 50% of non-Orthodox rabbinical students, the prevailing image of "The Rabbi" remains, for many, a bearded man. Perhaps, then, it should not be surprising that men continue to hold the majority of senior rabbi positions and to receive higher salaries than their female peers. Sexual harassment remains an all-too-common experience for many female rabbis, and the challenges of dating, parenting, and even inhabiting and dressing a woman's body in a rabbinical context continue to demand significant time and attention from women in the rabbinate.

The form of this exhibition – artwork created by leading female artists in response to the stories of trailblazing female rabbis – provides a lens on the creative and spiritual vision sparked by women's rabbinical leadership. The innovative guidance of women rabbis does not live in just one community or movement; it reverberates throughout the Jewish world. Their impact, depicted so vividly and evocatively in these works of art, continues to shape Jewish life and culture and deserves greater attention, visibility, and recognition. This exhibition – like the Women Rabbis collection of the Jewish Women's Archive (JWA) and the Story Archive of Women Rabbis, and JWA's archive in its entirety – reminds the viewer of the diversity and strength of Jewish women's lives and leadership and the insights and harmonies that emerge when we look at their collective stories.

May the pioneering spirit and power of the women rabbis featured in this exhibition resound throughout the next 50 years and beyond.

REMEMBERING REGINA JONAS, THE FIRST WOMAN RABBI

Gail Twersky Reimer, Ph.D., *Founding Director, Jewish Women's Archive*

Decades before Rabbis Sally Priesand, Sandy Sasso, Amy Eilberg, and Rabba Sara Hurwitz blazed a trail for future women rabbis, a young woman in 1935 Germany made history as the first woman to be ordained a rabbi in modern times.

But neither these pioneering American rabbis nor the generations of women who followed in their footsteps knew much, if anything, of their European foremother.

Regina Jonas' journey to becoming a rabbi was not easy and her rabbinate was short-lived. For half a century, the story of her revolutionary ordination was lost to Jewish history and memory. Young women from observant communities might have been empowered to pursue unspoken dreams by Rabbi Jonas' clarity that "other than prejudice and unfamiliarity almost nothing opposes a woman holding office halakhically." Women in rabbinical schools, demoralized by the prejudice they periodically face, might have felt empowered by Regina Jonas' determination to become a rabbi and her refusal to give up her dream even after Berlin's liberal Hochshule denied her the opportunity to sit for her final oral rabbinical exam. And women rabbis at every stage of their career might have drawn strength from Jonas' devotion to Berlin's Jews as they faced the agonies of Hitler's murderous regime and her continued commitment, after her deportation to Terezin, to give meaning and hope to the remnants of various Jewish communities who arrived at Terezin.

Murdered in Auschwitz in 1944, Regina Jonas was all but forgotten until the fall of the Berlin wall. The discovery of her papers in previously inaccessible archives led to the recovery of her courageous, pathbreaking story and the growing recognition that the women rabbis in this exhibition as well as the hundreds of others ordained over the last 50 years are living Regina Jonas' legacy.

JOAN ROTH

At 25, Rabbi Sally Priesand's undeterred youthful vision and the support of her parents gave her the courage to dare and to dream. She smashed the glass ceiling of Judaism's long-held patriarchy, holding the door open for others to follow. Committed to the study of Torah and the task of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), she changed the course of Jewish history, divinely inspired by the miraculous rainbows that have accompanied her on her life's journey. On this, her jubilee year, I am grateful for the opportunity to use my camera to reflect the radiance of her accomplishments.

Opening Doors: The World Moves Forward Every Day Because Someone Is Willing to Take the Risk, 2020-2021
Digital photo
24" x 30"

1972

Joan Roth

RABBI SALLY J. PRIESAND

Rabbi Sally J. Priesand, America's first female rabbi, was ordained in June 1972 by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute in Cincinnati, OH. From 1981 to 2006, she served as rabbi of Monmouth Reform Temple in Tinton Falls, NJ, becoming rabbi emerita upon her retirement. Nationally she has served on the executive board of both the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) and the Union for Reform Judaism. She also served as a member of the Board of Governors of HUC-JIR, as President of the Rabbinical Alumni Association, and for three years as editor of the CCAR Newsletter. Locally, she is President of Interfaith Neighbors, an organization whose primary purpose is to provide rental assistance and support services for the working poor. A native of Cleveland, Rabbi Priesand lives in Ocean Township, NJ, with her Boston terrier, Zeke. She is a contributor to many books, and her hobbies include photography and abstract watercolor.

DEBRA BAND

In midrash (commentary) on Song of Songs, and Qohelet, Byzantine-era rabbis offer a metaphor to explain the value of these texts in understanding Torah, the bearer of divine wisdom into the world. The Torah, they write, is like a plain clay jar; when that jar is upright and stoppered it could be filled with flour, oil, wine, or any staple of the day. Tip this *particular* jar, however, and not flour but *jewels* spill out. The Torah, they explain, is the plain, opaque clay jar, while the act of tipping it is likened to the act of reading each of these surprising books – suddenly the full richness and beauty of the Torah becomes visible. I adapt this midrash here to reveal the depth and value of Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso's approach to revealing the spiritual imagination, facilitating the conversation between the individual and the divine.

Discovering the Spiritual Imagination, 2021
Paper, ink, gouache, gold, silk, and semi-precious stones (palladium, lapis lazuli, aquamarine, amethyst, moonstone)
18" x 24" x 2"

1974

RABBI SANDY EISENBERG SASSO

Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso was the first woman ordained from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 1974 and the first to serve a Conservative congregation together with her husband, Rabbi Dennis C. Sasso, as the first practicing rabbinical couple in world Jewish history. Following 36 years of service to Congregation Beth-El Zedeck, Indianapolis, IN, she is now its senior rabbi emerita. She currently is the Director of the Religion, Spirituality, and Arts Initiative at Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis Arts and Humanities. Active in the arts, civic, and interfaith communities, she has written on midrash, women, and spirituality. Rabbi Sasso has, through many nationally acclaimed children's books, pioneered creative literature that engages the religious imagination of children. She earned a Doctor of Ministry from Christian Theological Seminary and is the recipient of awards and honorary doctorates from universities, theological seminaries, and civic institutions. In 2016 she co-founded Women4Change Indiana, a statewide organization of 5,000 focused on creating positive change for women.

RUTH WEISBERG

I first met Rabbi Laura Geller, who was to become one of my most precious and steadfast friends, when she became the Director of the University of Southern California (USC) Hillel in 1976. I was a very junior USC faculty member in Fine Arts at the time and just at the beginning of my journey from a more secular Jewish identity to an observant life. Rabbi Geller's activism and invitation to engage at USC Hillel had a life-changing effect on me, as it did for so many others.

Just as Rabbi Laura Geller was a pioneer as the third woman rabbi in history, in 1994 she became the first woman rabbi to head a major congregation in the United States or really anywhere. I immediately joined Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills, where her vision and leadership created an activist and deeply spiritual community that has been at the center of my life and the lives of so many others for the past 27 years.

Portrait of Laura Geller, 2021
Mixed media on canvas
11.5" x 10.25"

1975

RABBI LAURA GELLER

Rabbi Laura Geller, rabbi emerita of Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills, was the third woman in the Reform Movement to become a rabbi, and in 1994 the first woman selected through a national search to lead a major metropolitan synagogue as senior rabbi. Prior to that, she was the Hillel Director at the University of Southern California and then Director of the Southwest Region of American Jewish Congress, where she co-created the Jewish Feminist Center. Named one of *Newsweek*'s 50 Most Influential Rabbis in America, and by PBS's *Next Avenue* as a 2017 Influencer in Aging, she was a cofounder of ChaiVillageLA and is the chair of the Synagogue Village Network. She serves on the corporation of Brown University and on the boards of the Jewish Women's Archive, Encore.org, and B3: The Jewish Boomer Platform. Her book, co-authored with husband Richard Siegel, *z"l*, *Getting Good at Getting Older*, was named a National Jewish Book Award finalist in the category of Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice.

SANDY BLEIFER

My research took me to Rabbi Jackie Tabick's TED Talk, where she interjects a parable about a man's inadvertent good deeds that are interpreted by the rabbi as functioning as the hands of G-d. I bring together that theme with her interfaith work in the refugee community, experimenting with combining some techniques: a new photo transfer method where I selected a compelling newspaper photograph and printed it onto an art paper with a preexisting image (clouds on a sky). In order to push the work into the viewer's space, I created a three-dimensional element by employing a casting technique I had used many years ago.

Serving as the Hands of G-d, 2020
Cave Cloud art paper, cast Hosho paper, photo transfer of a newspaper photo, oils, oil pastels
30" x 22"

1975

RABBI JACKIE TABICK

Rabbi Jackie Tabick helped pave the way for others as Britain's first female rabbi and first female head of the Reform Beit Din. She studied medieval history at University College London before entering Leo Baeck College, Great Britain's Reform seminary, where she was ordained in 1975. She served as Vice President of Britain's Reform movement. Rabbi Tabick is currently a convenor for the European Union of Progressive Judaism's Beit Din and is a former patron of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE). She has played a leading role in interfaith initiatives and served on the Executive Board of the Interfaith Network and is Co-President of the World Congress of Faiths. She is the rabbi of West Central Liberal Synagogue in Bloomsbury, central London.

HEDDY BREUER ABRAMOWITZ

Finding Her Home, 2021
Vintage book covers and elements, end papers, book spines, ink, hand-marbled paper, natural olive tree leaves, paper, color pencil, pen inks, silver and red markers, adhesive, water-based gouaches
24.5" x 30.5"

"I wanted to be different," said Rabbi Kinneret Shiryon, when describing her choice to portray Zeresh, the wife and advisor of Haman, in the Purim *spiel* (play) of her youth. Thus, the Purim story is included as an element in my collage combining book parts, liturgical references, and known cultural touchpoints, as I try to make the components jostle together visually, creating dissonant associations in my contemporary take on "the People of the Book." As a veteran Israeli by choice, I am aware of the significant fault lines that Rabbi Shiryon traversed to make her mark as the first woman to serve as a rabbi in Israel.

1981

RABBI KINNERET SHIRYON

Rabbi Kinneret Shiryon was the first woman to serve as a community rabbi in Israel. She founded Kehillat YOZMA in Modi'in in 1997 and helped introduce Israelis to the possibilities of liberal Judaism. She significantly advanced religious equality in Israel when her synagogue became the first non-Orthodox congregation to receive funding from the state. After a decade-long court case, the Israeli Supreme Court finally ruled that Kehillat YOZMA should receive the same funding as the local Orthodox communities for constructing a permanent synagogue. YOZMA's case became a precedent for the funding of dozens of additional liberal congregations across the country. Rabbi Shiryon, as rabbi for Kehillat YOZMA, focused on education, social justice partnerships, and outreach efforts to economically struggling families. She was the first woman to chair the Council of Progressive Rabbis in Israel (MARAM) and continues to be an outspoken advocate for Reform Judaism in Israel. She retired in 2017 and is now rabbi emeritus of Kehillat YOZMA. Her rabbinical work today focuses on spiritual counseling for families struggling with health crises and bereavement.

DEBORAH UGORETZ

"Open My Heart to Your Torah...Let my soul pursue your *Mitzvot* (precepts)" epitomizes Rabbi Amy Perlin's core values – her love of Torah, love of her community, and love for youth – especially as it pertains to their education and, by her example, their life-long dedication to Judaism. I chose to depict the centrality of Temple B'nai Shalom in Rabbi Perlin's life by depicting a silhouette of its *Aron Kodesh* (Torah Ark). Plants, growing from stalks, blossoming into bright flowers, translate her process of building the congregation from a seedling to a fully flourishing community over the course of her 32-year tenure. Holding the Torah aloft shows the power and strength of Rabbi Perlin's convictions.

Open My Heart to Your Torah, 2021
Cut paper on canvas
24" x 24" x 1.5"

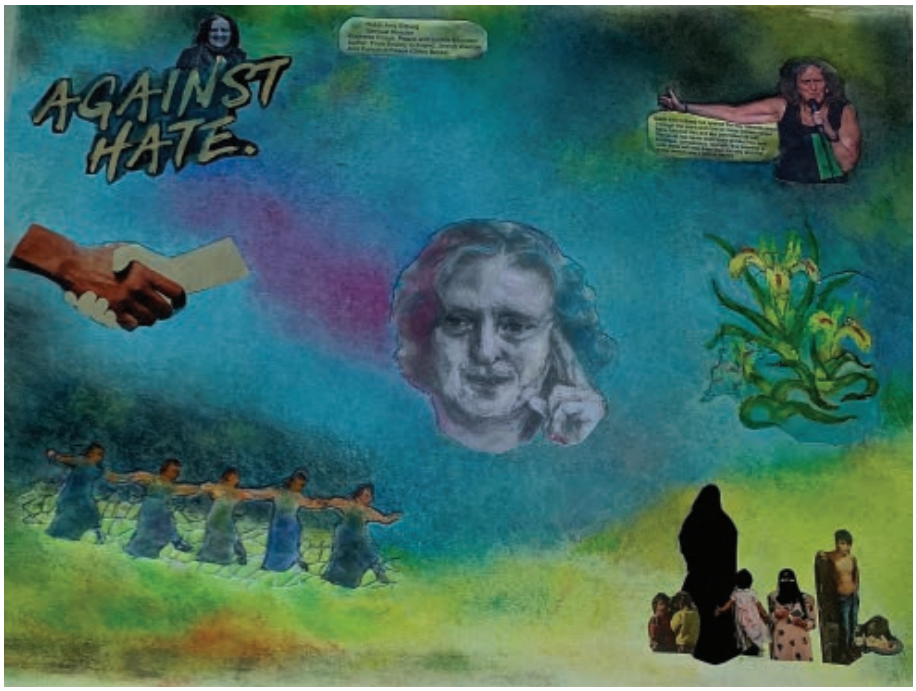
1982

RABBI AMY R. PERLIN

Rabbi Amy R. Perlin is the first female rabbi to start a congregation, founding Temple B'nai Shalom (TBS) in Fairfax Station, VA in 1986. She was also one of the first women to become a senior rabbi. She served TBS for 32 years, until retiring in 2018 as the Founding Rabbi Emerita. Her rabbinate focused on teaching, counseling, and innovative preaching and worship, all with a goal of establishing a caring community guided by and living its Jewish values. She is proud of sending nine rabbis to HUC-JIR. As another first, Rabbi Perlin was also made Rabbi Emerita of the congregation's sister Lutheran congregation. She graduated Princeton University in 1978, was ordained by HUC-JIR in 1982, and received her Doctor of Divinity from HUC-JIR in 2007. In 2012, she was honored by Jewish Women International as one of its "Women to Watch." In 2013, she was included in *The Forward's* list of America's 36 Most Inspiring Rabbis. A committed philanthropist and lifelong Zionist, Rabbi Perlin is president of the Perlin Family Foundation, serves on the Board of Governors of HUC-JIR where she co-chairs the Israel Committee, and continues to mentor rabbis in the US and Israel.

PAT BERGER

Rabbi Amy Eilberg has accomplished so much in her life and never stops. She was born to be a rabbi. Specializing in interfaith dialogue and peace and reconciliation work, she relates to the sisterhood and believes that women can lead the way to peace – they are natural bridge builders and play all kinds of roles in places around the world, and not just for Jews. During the pandemic, Amy's workshops have helped people to let go of fear and listen to both sides.



Spiritual Director, 2019-2020
Collage, watercolor, pencil, pastel, paper, cardboard
21" x 26"

1985

RABBI AMY EILBERG

Rabbi Amy Eilberg was the first woman ordained as a Conservative rabbi by the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1985. She serves as a peace and justice educator, spiritual director, and kindness coach. She recently served as Coordinator of Jewish Engagement for Faith in Action Bay Area, a multi-faith, multi-racial, social justice organization in the San Francisco Bay Area. Rabbi Eilberg helped found the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, where she directed the Center's Jewish Hospice Care Program. Nationally known for her work in Jewish healing, spiritual direction, and peace building, she lectures and writes on issues of spiritual direction, spiritual practice, and the pursuit of peace and justice. She teaches on dialogue and conflict engagement, anti-racism through a Jewish lens, and Mussar in venues throughout the country. She has been honored with awards from the Rabbinical Assembly, the New Israel Fund, and Tru'ah: the Rabbinic Call for Human Rights.

EMILY BOWEN COHEN

As a story-teller through my artwork, drawing upon my Jewish-Native American intersectional identity, I usually work in multi-panel sequential art (also known as comics!). However, with this piece, I wanted to challenge myself to present the multiplicity of my subject, Rabbi Julie Schwartz, in just one image. I represented her leadership role by showing her face extending beyond a panel's border. She is "breaking out" from the framework. The background of the piece showcases the many areas where Rabbi Schwartz excels. Rabbi Schwartz mentioned that she was inspired to join the clergy by attending her family's seders. I included some imagery of a seder meal in the artwork, and the Hebrew phrasing that surrounds her image is from the Haggadah. I wanted to literally frame Rabbi Schwartz with the liturgy she finds meaningful.

Rabbi Julie, 2021
Color pencil and ink
17" x 11"

1986

RABBI JULIE S. SCHWARTZ

Rabbi Julie S. Schwartz is Associate Dean, a Certified Supervisor of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), and Jay Stein Director of Human Relations at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. Following her ordination from HUC-JIR in 1986, she became the first woman rabbi to serve on active duty as a chaplain in the United States military, serving at the Naval Hospital in Oakland, California, where she provided leadership for the Jewish military community of Northern California. At the conclusion of her three-year tour, she earned the Naval Commendation award. She was certified as a Jewish chaplain by the National Association of Jewish Chaplains and in the early 1990s she established the first CPE program ever affiliated with a rabbinical school at HUC-JIR. She was the founding rabbi for the Weinstein Hospice in Atlanta, where she led Temple B'nai Israel in building their first synagogue home, later serving as Senior Rabbi of Temple Emanu-El. She has served on the boards of the trans-denominational National Association for Jewish Chaplains (NAJC), chairing its Certification Commission, The Weber School, the Faith Trust Institute, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta, and was the Treasurer and Vice President of the Atlanta Rabbinical Association.

DORIT JORDAN DOTAN

Rabbi Denise Eger has spoken about her volunteer visits to Jewish HIV/AIDS patients in the early 1980s, when patients were isolated and shunned and society condemned them in fear and ignorance. I imagined her as an angel who came to comfort them and fill their loneliness. She trained members of Jewish burial groups so that they could give the dead purity and a Jewish burial at a time when Jewish mortuaries were unsure about how to prepare the body traditionally, with *Taharah* (washing) and purification rituals. I used digital techniques, adding layers to highlight her goodness.

Angel's Embrace, 2021
Acrylic, pencil, spray on canvas
21.5" x 29"

1988

RABBI DENISE L. EGER

Rabbi Denise L. Eger is the founding Senior Rabbi of Congregation Kol Ami, West Hollywood's Reform synagogue. She is the editor of *Mishkan Ga'avah: Where Pride Dwells, A Celebration of LGBTQ Jewish Life and Ritual* as well as the author of the *Study Guide* (2021). A co-editor of *Gender and Religious Leadership: Women Rabbis, Pastors, and Ministers*, Rabbi Eger is a Past President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the largest organization of rabbis in the world. She is the first gay person to hold this position and the first woman to be president of the Southern California Board of Rabbis. Her academic credentials include a B.A. in religion from the University of Southern California, an M.A. from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and rabbinical ordination and a Doctor of Divinity from HUC-JIR. A senior Rabbinical Fellow of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem, she is also an executive coach and consultant for nonprofits and nonprofit executives.

JUDY SIROTA ROSENTHAL

living through tragedy, knowing intimately
many dark places in a life
lovingly, Naomi
walks beside her communities and friends
through hard, confusing, despairing &
joyous moments
blessing them

young "Nomi" played with the fringes of her
beloved father's tallis
her DNA "knowing"
calling her "become a rabbi"

spiritual leader of Nashuva
she gathers souls
singing
with deep faith
she guides

responding where she is called,
asking herself what she asks of others:

"what is your soul called to do?"

DNA of a Rabbi, 2020-2021
Brass screen, tree root, copper wires, mirror, terra cotta, crystals (natural and Swarovski), silk, threads; wooden music box, electrical connectors; with appreciation to Jacob Weinberg, Edwina Stevenson, Fran Paulman, Eli Whitney Museum, Hamden, CT; recording of *Elohai N'shaman* (music by Cory Prusher) by the Nashuva Band, Rabbi Naomi Levy, and Nashuva congregation.
24" x 36" x 3"

Edwina Stevenson

1989

RABBI NAOMI LEVY

Rabbi Naomi Levy is the bestselling author of *To Begin Again, Talking to God*, and *Hope Will Find You*, as well as her latest award-winning work, *Einstein and the Rabbi*. Rabbi Levy was a member of the first class of women to attend the Jewish Theological Seminary's Rabbinical School in New York and became the first female Conservative rabbi to head a pulpit on the West Coast. Rabbi Levy is the founder of Nashuva, a groundbreaking Jewish outreach community based in Los Angeles that has drawn thousands of unaffiliated Jews back to Judaism, spirituality, and social justice. Rabbi Levy has appeared on NBC's *Today* and *Oprah* shows and has been featured in *Parade, Redbook, Self, Los Angeles Times, The Boston Globe,* and *Los Angeles Magazine*. *The Forward* identified Rabbi Levy as one of the nation's 50 most influential Jewish leaders, and *Newsweek* included her in its list of Top 50 Rabbis in America.

TAMAR HIRSCHL

My work uses symbolic but open-ended motifs. The egg and outstretched finger both suggest creation. The hands are a reflection in terms of likeness, but they never fully touch. I find this relationship, of reaching but not touching, to be very potent in art.

In my portrait of Rabbi Pauline Bebe, I wanted to capture the ideas behind her congregation rather than her likeness. Specifically, her French identity and how it connects to her identity as a female rabbi. The Louvre was founded under the idea of culture for all, and likewise Reform Judaism is about opening faith for all, regardless of gender. Rabbi Bebe describes how she offers *tefillin* to all.

The concept of *liberté* is very important to the French, symbolized by the color blue. In Judaism, blue is a symbol for divinity. How these ideas intersect is significant for the Reform movement.

Diptych Portrait of Rabbi Bebe, 2020-2021
Acrylic, pencil on paper
32" x 20" x 1.125"

1990

RABBI PAULINE BEBE

Rabbi Pauline Bebe is the rabbi of the Communauté Juive Libérale-Ile de France, in the 11th arrondissement of Paris. Ordained in 1990 by the Leo Baeck College, she became the first woman to serve as a rabbi in France and continental Europe since World War II. Rabbi Bebe holds a DEA in Hebrew and Judaic studies from the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales and is a member of the governing board of the Rabbinical Assembly of European Liberal Rabbis (ERA), as well as part of the college of founders of the Emouna-l'Amphi des Religions program at Sciences-Po Paris. She teaches at the Collège des Bernardins and is also a founder and Director of the Rabbinical School for the formation of French-speaking liberal rabbis, l'École Rabbinique de Paris. Rabbi Bebe is the author of numerous books, including *Le Judaisme Libéral* and *Isha: Un Dictionnaire des Femmes et du Judaisme*.

Path Breaking and Bridge Building, 2021
Ink, spraypaint, gems, Calanit flower on illustration board
19.75" x 28.75"

ELLEN ALT

In 1980, when Naamah and I were on staff at Camp Ramah, she turned to her husband and said, "You see that woman over there? She is going to be my best friend." And that was that; 41years and counting.

This work is about another kind of counting – the achievements and challenges that Rabbi Naamah Kelman has confronted and continues to work for: religious pluralism and women's empowerment in Israel. It includes quotes from her favorite female inspirations: Zelophchad's daughters, Naomi Shemer, Joni Mitchell, and lyrics from *The Sound of Music*. The composition is grounded in tradition and inspired by Judaic texts. The calligraphy weaves and dances, as any change requires a fresh approach. A tallit soars through the air; the *tzitzit* lift up in hope. This work is dedicated to strong and lasting female friendships.

1992

RABBI NAAMAH KELMAN

Rabbi Naamah Kelman is Dean of the Taube Family Campus of HUC-JIR in Jerusalem and an advocate for interfaith dialogue and peace and justice work. As the first woman rabbi ordained in the State of Israel, she has devoted her career to strengthening the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism's outreach, community organizing, and Jewish education. She served as IMPJ Director of Education and was among the founders of the first Progressive Day School. She has strengthened HUC-JIR's Year-In-Israel Program for North American first-year rabbinical, cantorial, and education students, advanced professional development for its Israeli Rabbinical Program, co-founded the Blaustein Center for Pastoral Counseling, and been a catalyst for the joint M.A. in Pluralistic Jewish Education with the Hebrew University and the Teachers' Lounge for Jewish, Muslim, and Christian educators advancing tolerance education in Jerusalem. She is a founder of Panim: Jewish Renewal in Israel, and serves on the boards of Rabbis for Human Rights, Melitz-Centers for Israeli-Jewish Education, and the Tali Education Fund of the Seminary of Judaic Studies (Machon Schechter), and is a past Board member of Israel's Women's Network.

Karin Mendelson

DEBBIE TEICHOLZ GUEDALIA

Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss' life's journey is an assemblage of metaphors that, like my photo collages, are layered with significance. In this portrait, she wears the *tallit* (prayer shawl) that she wore for the first time on the first occasion when she ordained HUC-JIR rabbinical and cantorial graduates in 2019. The *tallit* is covered with appliqued photos of artifacts that connect her to HUC-JIR, such as Yaakov Agam's Torah Ark from the Petrie Synagogue at HUC-JIR/NYC, and green flowers from Andrea's Russian stacking dolls, which to her represent her stages of personal growth, including her becoming the first woman rabbi Provost of HUC-JIR. Superimposed is a text that is meaningful to her, "May my teaching drip as the rain, my words flow as the dew" (Deuteronomy 32:2-3). Dew dries to be invisible, like God's omnipresence, and synthesizes like the montage elements in this portrait. Rabbi Andrea Weiss stands center stage on her grass covered by dew, surrounded by her flowers and her fig tree, which bears a plaque from Micah 4:4, "They shall sit under their own fig tree and no one shall make them afraid."

Standing Firmly in Her Garden, 2021
Archival photo-collage
32" x 21.5" x 2"

1993

RABBI ANDREA L. WEISS

Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss is the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost and Associate Professor of Bible at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Rabbi Weiss was ordained at HUC-JIR and received her doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, with a focus on the Bible in the context of the ancient Near East. In the wake of the 2016 presidential election, she created a multi-faith campaign called *American Values, Religious Voices: 100 Days, 100 Letters,* which led to a co-authored book by that title and the launch of Values & Voices 2021. She served as associate editor of *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* and authored *Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel*. Her research interests focus on metaphor, biblical poetry, and Psalms, including work in progress on an in-depth study of biblical metaphors for God, entitled *God in the Biblical Imagination: The Mechanics and Theology of Metaphor*.

SIONA BENJAMIN

From exile to rebirth
Courage is fraught awry
I am the other…she said
But then…so am I

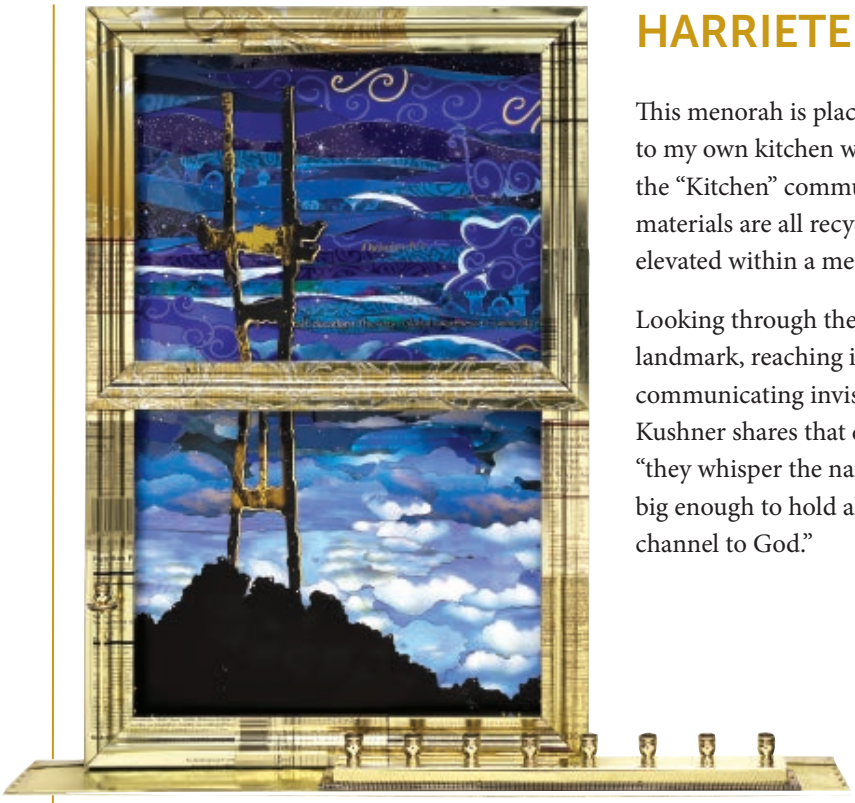
Coming from a non-Ashkenazi community, Rabbi Dianne Cohler-Esses' decision to become a rabbi was radical. I depict her in her prayer shawl as the golden light, breaking through the glass ceiling, flying over a geological terrain, soaring between oceans and transcultural terrains symbolizing her two identities – American and Syrian – as she reaches upward. She is a Jewish woman of color, as am I – a Bene Israel Jew from India – and her blue skin reflects the sky and ocean, borderless and beyond boundaries.

Holy Flying Sparks, 2021
Mixed media on canvas
14" x 26" x 2"

1995

RABBI DIANNE COHLER-ESSES

Rabbi Dianne Cohler-Esses was the first woman from the Syrian Jewish community to be ordained as a rabbi. She currently serves the Romemu community in Manhattan as Associate Rabbi and Director of Lifelong Learning. She graduated from the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1995. Since that time, she has served as an educator, scholar-in-residence, and administrator for multiple organizations in the Jewish world, including CLAL, the Bronfman Youth Fellowship, the Curriculum Initiative and UJA Federation. In 2007 she was named one of 50 top rabbis by the *Washington Post*. In addition to serving the Romemu community, she co-teaches the Arts Beit Midrash at the Skirball Institute with artist Tobi Kahn, teaches courses at UJA Federation, and writes and speaks regularly on Torah, Jewish values and family life, Jewish ethnicity, and Judaism and disabilities.



HARRIETE ESTEL BERMAN

This menorah is placed in a kitchen window, a specific reference to my own kitchen window looking toward San Francisco, and the "Kitchen" community organized by Rabbi Noa Kushner. The materials are all recycled tin cans, mundane food containers elevated within a message about transformation.

Looking through the window we see Sutro Tower, a San Francisco landmark, reaching into the sky, towering above the city, communicating invisibly with the world. In her interview, Rabbi Kushner shares that during the Yizkor service at her congregation, "they whisper the names to me" and her perception that "I'm not big enough to hold all those names, but I feel here I am a direct channel to God."

They Whisper the Names to Me, I Am a Channel, 2021
Post-consumer recycled tin cans, printed steel, brass, sterling silver rivets, 10k gold rivets, brass, and stainless steel screws
21.75" x 23" x 3.5"

1998

RABBI NOA KUSHNER

Rabbi Noa Kushner founded The Kitchen in 2011 in response to friends who were seeking an informal, transformative Shabbat experience they couldn't find. Along the way, she crashed head-first into what has now been well documented as a generational trend away from many established religious institutions. The Kitchen quickly grew from a local Shabbat experiment into an active doorway for San Francisco's Gen X and millennials looking for serious Jewish life. After graduating with a degree in Religious Studies from Brown University, Kushner was ordained by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1998. She then served as a Hillel rabbi for both Sarah Lawrence College and Stanford University. The Kitchen has been featured internationally in *Ha'aretz, Tablet, The Forward,* and *Medium.* Kushner has been profiled in *SF Magazine*'s Power Issue and the final *Newsweek / Daily Beast:* Rabbis to Watch list.

ELIZABETH LANGER

Rabbi Hara Person's journey was built on words and ground-breaking publications. She was also an outlier – as a young girl determined to enter a male-dominated field, as a mother raising young children while attending rabbinical school, and as a champion of gender equality, diversity, and LGBTQ rights.

When asked for Hebrew words embodying Judaic concepts most personally meaningful, Rabbi Person offered the following: בראשית *(Breishit)* In the Beginning, ברא *(Bara)* Creation, אמת *(Emet)* Truth, צדק *(Tzedek)* Justice, שלמות *(Shleimut)* Wholeness, and חסד *(Chesed)* Kindness.

This collage – דברים (Devarim) *Words* – incorporates these words. Its colors are those of the *Mishkan* (tabernacle). Its structure was influenced by other women outliers – Southern Black women quiltmakers largely from Alabama whose joyful improvisational works, pieced together with scraps of fabric drawn from their daily lives, often incorporate words of scripture. Rabbi Person's Hebrew words have been merged into a uniquely female and diverse patchwork collage.

Devarim, 2021
Collage
40" x 18" x 2"

1998

RABBI HARA PERSON

Rabbi Hara Person is the first woman rabbi to serve as Chief Executive of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR). Previously, she was the CCAR's Chief Strategy Officer, overseeing the Communications Department and serving as publisher of CCAR Press. Her academic credentials include graduating *summa cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa from Amherst College, an M.A. in Fine Arts from New York University and the International Center of Photography, and ordination from Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion. Before coming to the CCAR, Rabbi Person was Editor-in-Chief of URJ Books and Music, where she was responsible for the revision of *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* and the publication of many significant projects. Rabbi Person was co-editor of *Mishkan HaSeder, A Passover Haggadah.* Her essays and poems have been published in various anthologies and journals, including *Bridges: A Jewish Feminist Journal* and *The Women's Haftarah Commentary.*

LAURIE GROSS

Rabbi Angela Warnick Buchdahl offers an interpretation of a verse from Psalm 96: "We are each compelled to sing a new song, one that speaks to us and renews us." This work is a reflection of that concept, weaving together symbols and texts from both her Jewish and Korean heritages. The background photo, the Torah Ark tapestry at Central Synagogue, references Angela's place on the *bimah* (pulpit). In the center, the seven Hebrew letters *shin* evoke Divine presence. When one chants words beginning with this sound, they resonate as meditative vibrations.

As roots of a tree create a strong foundation, the Hebrew words *hazak, hazak, v'nithazek* (Be strong, be strong and let us be strengthened) anchor the piece, highlighting Angela's strength. The Korean words mountain 산, water, 산, and song, 노래, on each side, along with *Shiru Ladonai Shir Hadash* ("Sing to God a New Song") (Psalm 96), frame the work, demonstrating the rich ways Angela interprets the traditions from which she draws inspiration.

Shira Hadasha, 2021
Archival photo print, bronze, handwoven and dyed linen and gold hand embroidery, metallic fabric with machine embroidery
30" x 24" x 1"

2001

RABBI ANGELA WARNICK BUCHDAHL

Rabbi Angela Warnick Buchdahl serves as the Senior Rabbi of Central Synagogue in New York City, the first woman to lead the large Reform congregation in its 180-year history. She previously served as their Senior Cantor. Born in Korea to a Jewish American father and a Korean Buddhist mother, Rabbi Buchdahl is the first Asian American to be ordained as rabbi or cantor in North America. Rabbi Buchdahl has been nationally recognized for her innovations in leading worship, which draw large crowds both in the congregation's historic main sanctuary and via livestream and cable broadcast to viewers in more than 100 countries. Under Rabbi Buchdahl's leadership, Central Synagogue has become a leading voice in the interfaith movement for criminal justice reform and racial equity. Rabbi Buchdahl has been featured in dozens of news outlets, including *The Today Show,* NPR, and PBS, and was listed as one of *Newsweek*'s "America's 50 Most Influential Rabbis."

Rabbi Sharon Brous, 2021
Multi-image photograph on canvas
30" x 30"

PENNY WOLIN

Without the placing of an orange on the seder plate, symbolizing the inclusion of those marginalized in the Jewish community, could so many embark upon personal journeys to discover their own true callings?

The flexible religious observance that prompts modern Jews to embrace placing a non-rhyming, boldly-colored fruit among the symbols of our suffering and redemption is the same hallmark that has nurtured Jewish civilization to this day. As an artist, I am grateful for the sanctioned creative thinking.

Rabbi Sharon Brous is the embodiment of the orange: difficult to define, beautiful, joyous, deeply impassioned, and, as a bonus, determined to heal the world. She is our generation.

2001

RABBI SHARON BROUS

Rabbi Sharon Brous is the Founding and Senior Rabbi of IKAR, which has become a model for Jewish revitalization in the U.S. and beyond. Her 2016 TED Talk, "Reclaiming Religion," has been viewed by more than 1.4 million people and translated into 23 languages. In 2013, she blessed President Obama and Vice President Biden at the Inaugural National Prayer Service and returned in 2021 to bless President Biden and Vice President Harris, and then to lead the White House Passover seder that spring. Brous was named #1 on the *Newsweek*/*The Daily Beast* list of the most influential rabbis in America and has been recognized by *The Forward* and *Jerusalem Post* as one of the 50 most influential Jews. She graduated from Columbia University, was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary, and is an Auburn Senior Fellow. She sits on the faculty of the Shalom Hartman Institute-North America and REBOOT and serves on the International Council of the New Israel Fund and national steering committee for the Poor People's Campaign.

MARISA TAKAL

My work illustrates our mental landscapes, how we connect and disconnect from ourselves and each other. I use repeating text and motifs to depict the many environments our minds can travel and to convey the depths of our psyches. Rabbi Claudia Kreiman opened up my awareness to the depths of humanity, suffering, and how faith connects us all. Rabbi Kreiman discusses her childhood memory of the bombing of the AMIA (Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, that killed her mother. She describes this destructive, harrowing experience as the catalyst for her life path and spiritual journey. Rabbi Kreiman says, "I did not have a crisis of faith towards G-d – the divine. I had a crisis of faith towards humanity."

Crisis of Faith, 2021
Oil on canvas
30" x 24" x 2"

2002

RABBI CLAUDIA KREIMAN

Rabbi Claudia Kreiman is the Senior Rabbi at Temple Beth Zion in Brookline, MA, and the first Chilean-born woman to be ordained to the rabbinate. Rabbi Kreiman's love for Judaism, combined with her experience growing up under the repressive Chilean dictatorship, forged her passion for social justice. Ordained at the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, she became the first rabbi of NOAM, the Masorti youth movement in Israel. Rabbi Kreiman is deeply committed to inspiring impactful work toward social justice and experiencing meaningful and joyful prayer. She is widely involved in the local and national Jewish community, serving on numerous boards, including JCRC of Greater Boston and T'ruah. She also serves and supports such interfaith organizations as the Brookline Clergy Association and Greater Boston Interfaith Organization.

Mem, 2021
Acrylic paint and metal leaf on canvas
20" x 16" x 1.5"

YONA VERWER

In this painting, the Neue Synagoge's dome, representing German Jewry's past splendor, morphs into a manuscript featuring the letter *mem* for Masorti. The scroll seems to be lit from within, illustrating how Rabbi Gesa Ederberg, as the first female pulpit rabbi in Berlin, has brought new life and spirituality into the German community. She is bringing the Berlin Jewish community, which previously pioneered the liberal Judaism movement, into Berlin public life and into religious dialogue. I was inspired by her statement that in Germany one is reminded of how much was there, and how much has been lost. The overall patterns are inspired by her synagogue's Moroccan-style stenciled walls.

2003

RABBI GESA S. EDERBERG

Rabbi Gesa S. Ederberg is the first female rabbi to serve in Berlin since the Holocaust. She is the rabbi of Oranienburger Strasse Synagogue, an egalitarian synagogue of Juedische Gemeinde zu Berlin, the official Jewish umbrella organization in Berlin. Working to create local networks for liberal rabbis, she was a founding member of the General Rabbinic Conference of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and helped found the European Region of the Rabbinical Assembly of Masorti/Conservative Rabbis. She is currently an officer of the International Rabbinical Assembly. Ordained at the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary in Jerusalem, Rabbi Ederberg is the founder of Masorti Germany, with a nursery school and primary school attended by 140 children, and co-founder of IsraAID Germany. She has published several prayer books and a book on German language for Jewish immigrants.

LINDA SOBERMAN

Amid a resurgence of worldwide anti-semitism and despite a nationalist government that has sought to silence criticism of Polish complicity in the Holocaust, Poland's Jewish community is being reborn. Rabbi Tanya Segal, the first woman rabbi of Poland, is leading the charge. Her words, "Out of the dark, I came to the light," not only describe her journey to Kraków but have served as the impetus to create this print, one that honors the past and reaches forward to embrace the future.

Atop this print, I include an image from my installation, "The Empty Chairs," where several hundred chairs hung from the ceiling, many with faces of those who perished in the Holocaust. Below is a map of Kraków and the old Jewish quarter, where Beit Kraków now has its home. The focus of the print is the rabbi, with her flowing red hair symbolizing her determination and creativity.

It is through art that we can comprehend and engage in conversation about our Jewish history and its rebirth. We honor those who are willing to take the risks for all of us.

From Darkness into the Light, 2021
Monoprint with collaged photographs
30" x 24" x 1"

2007

RABBI TANYA SEGAL

Rabbi Tanya Segal is a founder of the Jewish artistic Reform community Beit Kraków (2009). She is the first female rabbi of Poland and the Czech Republic and Senior Rabbi of the Jewish community of Ostrava, a community that dates back to the beginning of the 19th century. Having begun her career as an actress in the Moscow Chamber Jewish Musical Theatre, she moved to Israel in 1990 to study Jewish mysticism and theatre arts at Tel Aviv University and later entered rabbinical school at Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem. Combining Jewish learning with performance art, Rabbi Segal has transformed and revitalized Jewish life in the historic city of Krakow, where she established the Midrash Lab, teaching Jewish text through arts, and founded the Midrash Theatre (2008). Following her rabbinical vision of the common heritage of the Galicia-Silesia-Spis region, Rabbi Segal is involved with the Reform community Beit Silesia in the Czech Republic and supports Jewish activities in the Spis community in Slovakia, both of which are historically connected to Kraków.

KATHRYN JACOBI

Rabba Sara Hurwitz stated, "I think women as spiritual leaders was inevitable. It's a natural evolution towards women finding their place and space in helping build community."

I loved the idea of Rabba Hurwitz being so embedded in the life of the community – a deeply committed member of a family, a teacher and spiritual guide. With courage and a willingness to face the reality of non-acceptance, she is able to retain an open and loving spirit, tolerance, compassion, and a sense of humor.

In my painting, Rabba Hurwitz looms large in front of the Torah Ark curtain at Hebrew Institute of Riverdale. It is a framework for smaller portraits of her family – her parents with her at her bat mitzvah in a community day school in South Africa, where she was born; her maternal grandparents at her wedding; her husband and her children. In the right foreground corner, she embraces a group of newly ordained women at Maharat.

Yehuda Amichai, in *Open Closed Open*, summed up the changing nature of Jewish life, where women are empowered to share their gifts equally with men. "Thou shalt change. You will change."

Tribute to Rabba Sara Hurwitz, 2021
Oil on panel
24" x 20"

2009

RABBA SARA HURWITZ

Rabba Sara Hurwitz, Co-Founder and President of Maharat, the first institution to ordain Orthodox women as clergy, also serves on the rabbinical staff at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale.

She completed Drisha's three-year Scholars Circle Program, an advanced intensive program of study for Jewish women training to become scholars, educators, and community leaders. After another five years of study under the auspices of Rabbi Avi Weiss, she was ordained by Rabbi Weiss and Rabbi Daniel Sperber in 2009.

In 2013 she was awarded the Hadassah Foundation Bernice S. Tannenbaum Prize, followed the next year by the Myrtle Wreath Award from the Southern New Jersey Region of Hadassah. In 2016 she was the Trailblazer Award recipient at UJA Federation of New York and named one of *Jewish Week*'s 36 Under 36, as well as included in *The Forward* 50's most influential Jewish leaders and *Newsweek*'s 50 most influential rabbis.

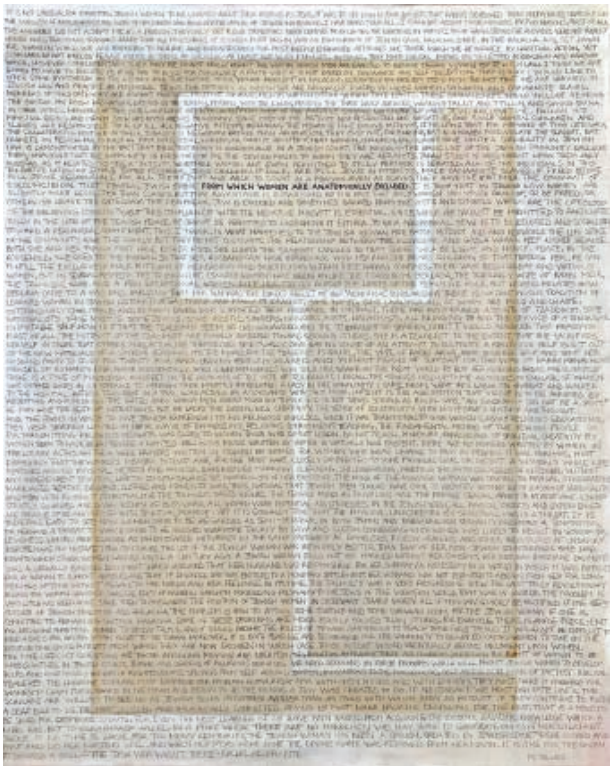
MARILEE TOLWIN

Rabbi Rachel Adler is a rabbi, professor, academic scholar, published author, feminist theologian, and much more. In 1971, Adler wrote a landmark feminist essay for an issue of *Davka*, entitled "The Jew That Wasn't There."

"There were things I wanted to do that were not in women's roles in Orthodox Judaism," Rabbi Adler said. "Gender should not be a consideration in how the goods and benefits of the Jewish culture are distributed." Rabbi Adler passionately wanted everyone to be treated equally in Judaism. This has been her life's work.

Inspired by Rabbi Adler's continued courage to speak out against women's inequality in Judaism, I created a painting of her words and voice. I wrote Rabbi Adler's entire article from 1971 in pencil on canvas. I overlayed a Talmud structure on top of her article. The highlighted sentence illuminates the subject of the page.

Placing Rabbi Adler's essay on a Talmud page acknowledges the sacredness of rabbinical tradition, keeping her work open for further study and conversation.



The Jew Who Was There, 2021
Pencil and oil on canvas
30" x 24"

2012

RABBI RACHEL ADLER

Rabbi Rachel Adler is the Rabbi David Ellenson Professor Emerita of Modern Jewish Thought at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles. She was one of the first theologian/ethicists to integrate feminist perspectives into interpreting Jewish texts and law. Her 1971 essay, "The Jew Who Wasn't There," is generally considered the first piece of Jewish feminist theology/ethics. She is the author of *Engendering Judaism* (1998) the first book by a female theologian to win a National Jewish Book Award for Jewish Thought and the award-winning *Tales of the Holy Mysticat*. Rabbi Adler also wrote one of the first articles on sexual ethics in the rabbinate, "A Stumbling Block Before the Blind: Sexual Exploitation in Pastoral Counseling." She has published more than 65 articles on Jewish thought, law and gender, and suffering and lament in Jewish tradition. Her academic credentials include a Ph.D. in religion and social ethics from the University of Southern California, ordination from Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, an M.A. in English literature from Northwestern University, and an M.S.W. from the University of Minnesota.

CAROL HAMOY

Rabbi Dr. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi has told of the despair her father experienced upon learning of his parents' death at Auschwitz. He felt God had failed him and, in his disappointment, discarded both his *tefillin* and prayer books. And yet, despite the split she felt between her beloved father's pain and God, she pursued a faith-based career. I believe questioning God was her motivation, seeking answers regarding the unrelenting antipathy focused on Jews and Judaism by others. Reinterpreting biblical literature and history to a 21st-century world became her passion. *Inheritance* illustrates the spark Rabbi Eskenazi generates regarding Judaism and the value of changing traditions.

Inheritance, 2020
Mixed media
8" x 16" x 1"

2013

RABBI TAMARA COHN ESKENAZI

Rabbi Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, Ph.D., serves as the Effie Wise Ochs Professor of Biblical Literature and History at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion's Los Angeles campus. She was the first woman appointed as professor to the rabbinical faculty of HUC-JIR. Rabbi Eskenazi is the editor of the award-winning book *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* (with Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D.), a unique commentary with contributions from hundreds of women scholars, clergy, and poets, bringing the voices and visions of women to the interpretation of the Torah in the 21st century. Rabbi Eskenazi has served on the executive committee of the Society of Biblical Literature and as President of its Pacific Coast region. She has authored numerous articles and several books, including the award-winning *The JPS Bible Commentary: Ruth*, and has lectured at conferences in Jerusalem, Berlin, Paris, Vienna, and Rome, among other cities, and in synagogues and churches in the United States.

"HOLY SPARKS" CELEBRATION CONSORTIUM

Celebrating 50 Years of Women in the Rabbinate with **Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion** and **The Braid**

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Women's League for Conservative Judaism
Women's Rabbinic Network – Central Conference of American Rabbis, New York, NY
World Union for Progressive Judaism
Yeshivat Maharat, Riverdale, NY
Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, American Jewish University, Los Angeles, California

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