

For Immediate Release

Across Divides: Borders and Boundaries in Contemporary Art

On view March 26–July 30, 2017

Reception and Curator's Talk: Sunday, March 26, 1:30–3:00 p.m.

R.S.V.P. art@hebrewhome.org or 718.581.1596



Angela Strassheim, *Saugy Praying*, 2008, digital print, 24 x 30 in.
Courtesy of the artist.

Derfner Judaica Museum + The Art Collection at Hebrew Home at Riverdale is pleased to announce the exhibition *Across Divides: Borders and Boundaries in Contemporary Art*, which will be on view from March 26–July 30, 2017. This exhibition of 28 works by 17 artists was organized by guest curator Reba Wulkan. A reception and curator's talk will take place on Sunday, March 26, from 1:30–3:00 p.m., in the Derfner Judaica Museum, located in the Jacob Reingold Pavilion at 5901 Palisade Avenue in the Riverdale neighborhood of the Bronx. Several of the artists also will be present to speak about their work. This event is free and open to the public. Please R.S.V.P. to 718.581.1596 or art@hebrewhome.org. Photo I.D. is required for entry.

Grounded in the description in the biblical Book of Genesis that the world came into being through a series of divisions—light and darkness, day and night, sea and land, animals and human beings—this exhibition explores how individuals and communities maintain their distinctiveness, yet also reach across divides. The artists address boundaries that may be physical or spiritual, exist in law or in tradition, and traverse secular and religious life as they confront issues of gender, geographies and Jewish, cultural and national identities.

The Artists

- In *Exile*, 2015, **Andi LaVine Arnovitz** (born Kansas City, MO, 1959; lives and works in Jerusalem) addresses loss of home, border crossings and potential bridges to a new life in an installation of fragile porcelain houses encased in silk organza bags. Her other work, *Garments of Reconciliation*, 2009, creates a dialogue between Palestinians and Jews in Israel, suggesting a bridge to unanimity by combining fabrics from Palestinian embroideries with Jewish prayer vests.
- Two videos by **Tova Beck-Friedman** (born Tel Aviv, Israel; lives and works in New York City) are about women who confront life's boundaries: one is about aging and the other is the story of Lot's wife. In *On the Other Side*, 2015, Beck-Friedman identifies with a woman's vanishing youth, while *Lot's Wife* reveals the social divide between genders. The nameless wife of Lot, Abraham's nephew, is turned into a pillar of salt, as Beck-Friedman probes and redefines the myths on which she was raised.

- Raised in predominantly Hindu and Muslim India, the work of **Siona Benjamin** (born Bombay, India, 1969; lives and works in New Jersey) is inspired by traditional miniature painting, Sephardi icons and the Bible. In two paintings from the *Finding Home* series, *Lilith in Pardes*, 2008, and *Curry-oke*, 2000, Benjamin depicts the defiant Lilith, said to be Adam's first wife, and Kali, associated both with death and motherhood, combining Indian, Jewish and American iconography in a pop art style.
- In *L'lo Reshut (Without Domain)*, 2016, **Ken Goldman** (born Memphis, TN, 1960; lives and works in Bet Shean, Israel) documents a performance walking a section of the *eruv*—a symbolic boundary uniting separate domains—of his kibbutz on a tightrope. By walking the line with one foot in the collective domain and one foot out, Goldman attempts to find balance within the “new kibbutz” after its members voted to discontinue the collective lifestyle they had maintained for nearly 70 years.
- From a series of paintings on recycled vinyl depicting maps, *Strife #4*, 2015, by **Tamar Hirschl** (born Zagreb, Croatia, 1939; lives and works in Tel Aviv, New York and Jersey City, NJ) is in the tradition of Jasper Johns; here the map of Israel becomes a painting readymade through which the artist expresses the histories of various cultures vying for territory.
- In *Je Suis Juive, I Am You (Talmud Dreds and Tefillin Bindings)*, 2015, **Sara Klar** (born Far Rockaway, NY, 1959; lives and works in Brooklyn) reimagines traditionally male prayer phylacteries (*tefillin*) in a space that allows for both femininity and masculinity, personal choice, individual expression and inclusiveness. Klar reclaims her connection to religion, her identity as a woman and her relationship to her Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, neighborhood through her work.
- In the video *Lunar Eclipse*, 2015, **Lea Laukstein** (born Valka, Latvia, 1986; lives and works in Lod, Israel) offers a conceptual bridge between male and female roles, challenging the stereotype of women as mothers and housekeepers eclipsed by their husbands, especially within the religious community. Her work is a carefully composed investigation of narratives of identity, religion and gender. In *Embryo*, 2015, Laukstein pictures the world within the womb and reflects on the societal limitations imposed on pregnant women.
- A master calligrapher and illuminator, **David Moss** (born Youngstown, Ohio, 1946; lives and works in Jerusalem) depicts a map of the Jewish community, *Roaming Rome*, 2016, in a succinct, illustrative style arranged like a page of the Talmud. It shows key places and symbols of Jewish contributions to Roman culture, evidence of the Jewish presence in the city dating back 2,150 years.
- *Tracing Path*, 2016, is an abstract painting by **Laura Murlender** (born Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1957; lives and works in Buenos Aires). Murlender was a “disappeared,” a term that describes persons kidnapped under the former dictatorship in Argentina. Her work reflects a lifelong process of building emotional walls for self-protection, bridging connections with the past and passage across borders between countries, in particular, Argentina, Israel, Mexico and France. *Sequence*, 2016, uses abstract geometric patterns and a grid format that reinforces a sense of movement and fragmented time.
- **K. Flo Razowsky** (born Chicago, 1974; lives and works in Los Angeles) combines art with activism. Her digital photographs printed on microfiber, *Melilla (Spanish border at Morocco)*, 2007, *Jerusalem*, 2008, and *Playas de Tijuana (southern U.S. border)*, 2014, are part of the project *Up Against the Wall* that Razowsky began when she was living in the Palestinian territories. Razowsky has observed that such walls are ubiquitous and in many places people regularly risk imprisonment or death to try and cross them.



Andi LaVine Arnovitz, *Exile*, 2015, porcelain, linen cord and silk, dimensions variable, each house, 4 x 4 ¾ in. Courtesy of the artist.

- *Following the Ten Commandments: Lyon County Courthouse, Yerington, NV, 2012–2014*, is a mesh print photograph from a series by **Andrea Robbins and Max Becher** (born in Boston, MA, 1963, and Dusseldorf, Germany, 1964; live and work in New York) that presents the irony of religious monuments located on public land and around public buildings. At courthouses, public schools, parks and county seats, despite some legal disputes, many such monuments have remained in place for decades, including ones gifted by the Fraternal Order of the Eagles in conjunction with the release of the 1956 film *The Ten Commandments*.
- *Architectural Follies of the Talmud*, 2014, by **Ben Schachter** (born New York City, 1974; lives and works in Pittsburgh, PA) are playful renderings of Talmudic commentary on the *eruv*. In order to carry things in public spaces on the Sabbath, the Rabbis created the concept of an *eruv*. Popular in Europe in the 18th and 19th century, these small, architectural curiosities that punctuated rolling gardens often resembled ruined Greek temples.
- **Ruth Schreiber** (born London, 1947; lives and works in Jerusalem) is represented with three works. *Enter the Eruv*, 2011, is an interactive glass map of the northwest London *eruv* that engages the viewer with motion sensors and lights. Until recently, there were none in the United Kingdom; however, a new awareness in society and religious feminism in the Jewish community have demanded change. *An Oscar for my Daughter, the Surrogate*, 2015, is Schreiber's way of recognizing her daughter who had been a surrogate for another family. A watercolor, *Abraham's Aliya*, 2016, maps Abraham's journey into Canaan along with a list of the countries from which Jews have immigrated to Israel.
- **Angela Strassheim** (born Bloomfield, IA, 1969; lives and works in Stamford, CT) is fascinated with rituals of praying. In her photograph *Saugy Praying*, 2008, a young woman carves out a personal space among the impersonal, prefabricated dwellings in a community housing settlement in central Israel, known as Yad Binyamin.
- In the painting *Creation: Separation*, 2017, **Ahuva Winslow** (born New York, 1978; lives and works in Bergenfield, NJ) reflects on the divine process of division and separation, using bands of color along with organic forms that flow within its center to suggest continuous flux—from the creation of the physical world to the boundaries that Jewish law mandates throughout one's life. She reflects on the borders of identity and the particular challenges faced by an Orthodox Jewish woman artist.
- *Tel Aviv, Purim*, 2015, by **Pavel Wolberg** (born Leningrad, USSR, now Saint Petersburg, Russia, 1966; lives and works in Tel Aviv) captures a Tel Aviv club at Purim, a Jewish holiday where dressing up as the opposite sex is permissible. It has been said about Wolberg that he views his adopted country both intimately and from a distance; he captures private moments amidst the complex reality of conflicts and political instability in the region.

High resolution images available upon request.

As a member of the American Alliance of Museums, Hebrew Home at Riverdale by RiverSpring Health is committed to publicly exhibiting its art collection throughout its 32-acre campus, including Derfner Judaica Museum and a sculpture garden overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades. Derfner Judaica Museum + The Art Collection provide educational and cultural programming for all visitors, including residents of the Hebrew Home, their families and the general public who come from throughout New York City, its surrounding suburbs and elsewhere. RiverSpring Health is a nonprofit, non-sectarian geriatric organization serving more than 12,000 older adults through its resources and community service programs. Museum hours: Sunday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Art Collection and exhibitions open daily, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Call 718 581.1596 for holiday hours or to schedule group tours, or for further information visit our website at <http://riverspringhealth.org/art>



This exhibition is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.