

Leonard Freed: Israel Magazine 1967–1968

September 15, 2019–January 5, 2020

Opening Reception and Curator's Talk: Sunday, September 15, 2019, 1:30–3 p.m.

At the Derfner Judaica Museum

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



Leonard Freed, *Jerusalem, Israel*, 1967, gelatin silver print. Courtesy of the Estate of Leonard Freed.

Freed was the staff photographer. This is the first exhibition to examine this period of Freed's work and the context in which these images were published.

Freed had been living in Amsterdam for a decade when war broke out between Israel and the neighboring states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria in June 1967. In response to this news, he made his way to Israel and over the next two years spent 15 months living in the country, covering the aftermath of what came to be known as the Six-Day War. In 1968, his wife, Brigitte, and young daughter, Elke Susannah, joined Freed and they settled in Tel Aviv where Brigitte at first borrowed Micha Bar-Am's darkroom to print Freed's negatives as she often did throughout her husband's career.

The first issue of *Israel Magazine* appeared in late 1967. Dozens of Freed's images from 1967 and 1968, and a few from an earlier trip, his first, in 1962—mostly in black and white, but occasionally in color—appeared in all but three of the issues in the first volume. Freed's photographs continued to be reproduced in later issues, which came out irregularly in the magazine's early years, including the first issue of volume two in 1969. The latter was a special picture issue featuring 150 photographs, mostly by Freed and Bar-Am. The magazine ceased publication in 1976.

Israel Magazine was conceived of in Amsterdam as a joint Israeli-American venture between the Philadelphia-based Israel Publishing Company and Spotlight Publications in Tel Aviv. The editor was Maurice Carr, a nephew of the Yiddish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer, also a contributor. In addition to covering economic, political and military matters, the magazine featured short stories, poetry, theatre, visual art and book reviews, and cartoons by Dosh.

Derfner Judaica Museum + The Art Collection at Hebrew Home at Riverdale is pleased to announce its latest exhibition, *Leonard Freed: Israel Magazine 1967–1968*, on view at the Derfner Judaica Museum from September 15, 2019–January 5, 2020. A reception and curator's talk will take place on Sunday, September 15, from 1:30–3 p.m. in the Museum, located at 5901 Palisade Avenue in the Riverdale section of The Bronx. This event is free and open to the public. R.S.V.P. 718.581.1596 or art@hebrewhome.org. Photo I.D. required for admission.

The exhibition includes 50 black and white photographs from Freed's estate, many of which were reproduced in *Israel Magazine*, where



Leonard Freed, *Tel Aviv, Israel*, 1968, gelatin silver print. Courtesy of the Estate of Leonard Freed.

Responding to an increased interest in Israel in the wake of the war, the magazine sought “to serve as an enduring bridge between Israel and [the] Diaspora” while being independent, eschewing propaganda and bringing to Jews and non-Jews “as vivid, as truthful an image of Israel as possible.” At the same time, the magazine supported the State of Israel and celebrated its diverse Jewish population, its strides in scientific research and contributions to developing countries, including its neighbors in Africa and Asia, and efforts on behalf of its own economy. It also encouraged secular and religious tourism.



Leonard Freed, *Jerusalem, Israel*, 1967, gelatin silver print. Courtesy of the Estate of Leonard Freed.

Freed’s images of everyday life on the kibbutz, in Arab homes, among religious Jews, Christian communities and clergy, in refugee camps, in factories and on the streets of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv accompanied stories tied to a particular theme in each issue. Freed’s photographs of Israel were part of a larger humanistic project. They reflect his particular connection to Israel and to Jewish suffering, as well as his empathy for others whose experiences were different from his own. Some of Freed’s images from *Israel Magazine* were also exhibited in *The Concerned Photographer*, organized by Cornell Capa at the Riverside Museum in New York in 1967, which included Freed and five other photographers—Werner Bischof; Capa’s late brother, Robert; Andre Kértész; David Seymour; and Dan Weiner. They were also in another exhibition Capa organized at The Jewish Museum, New York, *Israel: The Reality*, in 1969, and later included by Freed in his book, *Danse des fidèles (Dance of the Faithful)*, published in France in 1984.

About the photographer



Leonard Freed, *Jerusalem, Israel*, 1967, gelatin silver print. Courtesy of the Estate of Leonard Freed.

Leonard Freed was born in 1929 in Brooklyn, New York, to Jewish immigrant parents from Minsk, now in Belarus. From 1948–52, he studied and worked as a graphic designer, before traveling through Europe and North Africa from 1952–1954. While in Paris in 1953 he began taking photographs and discovered the work of Henri Cartier-Bresson. He acquired his first Leica, the camera he would use for the rest of his life, second-hand in Cologne. After his return to New York in 1954, he documented Hasidic Jews in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. In 1956 and 1957 he traveled and photographed in Italy, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, including the Jewish community in post-War Amsterdam, where he had recently settled.

In 1958, Freed married Brigitte Klück, whom he had met in Rome in 1956. Their daughter, Elke Susannah Freed, was born in 1959. Around this time Freed began to exhibit his photographs, including in a group exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. In 1961 he photographed Jewish communities in Germany and made his first trip to Israel the following year. In 1963 he photographed the historic March on Washington, beginning a long term project that focused on African Americans during the civil rights era. While based in the Netherlands, he continued to travel in Europe, the US, and Israel and then settled with his family in New York in 1970.

Freed became a member of the international photographers’ cooperative agency Magnum Photos in 1972. During the next several decades, until his death in 2006, his assignments brought him to countries in Europe and Africa, as well as to Israel, India, Iraq and Brazil. His work appeared in such publications as *Fortune*, *Life*, *Look*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Der Spiegel*, *Die Zeit*, and *Paris Match*, among others. He also published 10 books of his photographs. Freed has exhibited widely and his photographs are in the permanent collections of the Jewish Museum, New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Museum of the City of New York, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, the Joods Historisch Museum, Amsterdam, the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

About Hebrew Home at Riverdale

As a member of the American Alliance of Museums, the Hebrew Home at Riverdale by RiverSpring Health is committed to publicly exhibiting its art collection throughout its 32-acre campus, including the Derfner Judaica Museum and a sculpture garden overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades. Now in its 10th year, the Derfner Judaica Museum first opened its doors in the recently completed Jacob Reingold Pavilion at the Hebrew Home campus in 2009. Originally founded as The Judaica Museum in 1982, it was renamed that year in honor of benefactors Helen and Harold Derfner and formally merged with The Art Collection. Derfner Judaica Museum + The Art Collection provides educational and cultural programming for residents of the Hebrew Home, their families and the general public from throughout New York City, its surrounding suburbs and visitors from elsewhere. RiverSpring Health is a nonprofit, non-sectarian geriatric organization serving more than 18,000 older adults in greater New York through its resources and community service programs. Museum hours: Sunday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Art Collection and grounds open daily, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Call 718.581.1596 for holiday hours and to schedule group tours, or for further information, visit our website at RiverSpringHealth.org/art



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