

**DERFNER** Hebrew Home at Riverdale  
**JUDAICA** 5901 Palisade Avenue  
**MUSEUM** Riverdale, NY 10471  
+ The Art T. 718-581-1596 F. 718-581-1980  
Collection <http://riverspringhealth.org/art>

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## Brenda Zlamany: 100/100

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On view September 10, 2017–January 7, 2018, at the Derfner Judaica Museum  
Opening Reception and Artist's Talk: Sunday, October 15, 2017, 1:30–3 p.m.  
R.S.V.P. 718.581.1596 or [art@hebrewhome.org](mailto:art@hebrewhome.org)

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Derfner Judaica Museum + The Art Collection at Hebrew Home at Riverdale is pleased to announce its latest exhibition *Brenda Zlamany: 100/100* on view at the Derfner Judaica Museum from September 10, 2017–January 7, 2018. A reception and artist's talk will be held from 1:30–3 p.m. on Sunday, October 15, 2017, at the Museum, located at 5901 Palisade Avenue in the Riverdale section of The Bronx. This exhibition, celebrating the Centennial of the Hebrew Home, is free and open to the public. R.S.V.P. 718.581.1596 or [art@hebrewhome.org](mailto:art@hebrewhome.org). Photo I.D. required for entry.



Brenda Zlamany, *100/100* (detail), 2017, watercolor and pencil on paper, 12 x 9 in. each. Courtesy of the artist. [www.BrendaZlamany.com](http://www.BrendaZlamany.com)

*Brenda Zlamany: 100/100* features 100 watercolor portraits of residents of the Hebrew Home at Riverdale, and is part of the artist's "Itinerant Portraitist" project. In this project, Zlamany explores the constructive effects of portraiture in communities around the globe. Previous efforts include *888: Creating a Portrait of Taiwanese Aboriginals*, which was funded by a Fulbright Grant, and a project involving the diverse population of the UAE. *100/100* is the second US location of the "Itinerant Portraitist" and was created over several weeks during which the artist was in residence at the Home. As Zlamany explains: "In each project I choose a specific demographic and discover something new. With the Tibetan nomads and monks, I was interested in the interior gaze. With *366: A Watercolor Portrait a Day*, I was interested in becoming more deeply involved with my community of artists. In the UAE I was interested in cultural differences, especially the women. With *100/100*, I am interested in aging: What is important at the end of life? In the face of loss: loss of loved ones, mobility, senses, taste, hearing, sight. . . . Is there still the possibility of joy? The role of memory. What experiences from the past fuel happiness?"

Working with the Home's residents, most of whom are in their 80s and 90s, with several over the age of 100, Zlamany embraces the collaborative nature of the portrait process, borrowing strategies from traditional art-making (portraiture, watercolor), conceptual art (production according to a predetermined schedule and quota of 100 paintings) and performance art (emphasizing process and the nature of the engagement between artist and sitter). She paints six or more sitters each day using a camera lucida, a device for drawing that dates back to the Renaissance and promotes a two-way exchange between artist and subject. Working in close proximity, with her paper flat, her subjects watch as their image emerges on the page and guide it, consciously and unconsciously.



Brenda Zlamany, *100/100* (detail), 2017, watercolor and pencil on paper, 12 x 9 in. each. Courtesy of the artist. [www.BrendaZlamany.com](http://www.BrendaZlamany.com)

Given the unique setting for this project, the collaborations led to intimate, surprising and often inspiring revelations from the sitters. The interactions have been both “poignant and confusing,” as Zlamany has gotten to know older adults, unique in their backgrounds and experiences, yet part of a large, singular community, whom she might not otherwise have met and had the opportunity to paint. *100/100* has required more focus and empathy than her other projects, she says. “Portraiture from observation is a specific form of communication. We show ourselves to each other and an image appears documenting this,” she explains. Even when a sitter cannot communicate verbally, “when I paint them I can see their thoughts about the portrait on their face,” she adds. “For instance, I’ll load a brush with red and as it hits the paper, a subject’s eyes will go to the red on her shirt and suddenly there will be the slightest smile of recognition. These silent conversations are really special to me.”

As Zlamany points out: “The project is as much about the experience as it is about the watercolor. I attempt to see someone. Who are they? They reveal themselves, but they also see me seeing them. Thus, I reveal myself to the subject. This takes place over an hour of extreme focus. The subject guides me. Sometimes we sit in silence; other times great secrets are divulged. I may coax them, but they decide. Sometimes I’m the one telling the secrets. The image, built up slowly, stroke by stroke, is evidence of a two-way exchange. Often I’ll make big changes, perhaps add a slight smile in the end, after a good laugh is shared. I ask myself about empathy. What is that? Is it required? Am I creating fiction or am I discovering something real. Does it matter? It’s a talking project, a performance; stories are at the heart of it.”

Following in the tradition of the early modern era, sitters arrived all dressed up for the occasion much as patrons would have more than a century ago at the studio of portrait painters like John Singer Sargent. To be painted was not only flattering, but provided time set aside to share their stories. Those private moments are hinted at in the portraits, which convey to visitors to the exhibition a glimpse of the beauty and wisdom that comes with age.

#### About the artist



Brenda Zlamany, right, paints Hebrew Home resident Esther Kaplan

Brenda Zlamany is a painter who lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Since 1982 her work has appeared in over a dozen solo exhibitions and many group shows in the US, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Museums that have exhibited her work include the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei; the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; the National Museum, Gdansk, Poland, and Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent, Belgium. Her work has been reviewed in *ARTFORUM*, *Art in America*, *Flash Art*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, and elsewhere, and is held in the collections of the Cincinnati Art Museum; Deutsche Bank; the Museum of Modern Art, Houston; the Neuberger Museum of Art; the Virginia Museum of Fine Art; the World Bank, and Yale

University Art Gallery. Zlamany has collaborated with authors and editors of the *New York Times Magazine* on several commissions, including an image of Marian Anderson for an article by Jessye Norman and one of Osama bin Laden for the September 11, 2005, cover. Grants she has received include a Fulbright Fellowship (2011), a Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant (2006–07) and a NYFA Grant in Painting (1994). [www.BrendaZlamany.com](http://www.BrendaZlamany.com)

## About Hebrew Home at Riverdale

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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 the Derfner Judaica Museum and a sculpture garden overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades. The 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 12,000 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 <http://www.riverspringhealth.org/art>



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