

Modern and Contemporary Torah Pointers on Loan from the Barr Foundation September 22–December 18, 2025, at Derfner Judaica Museum



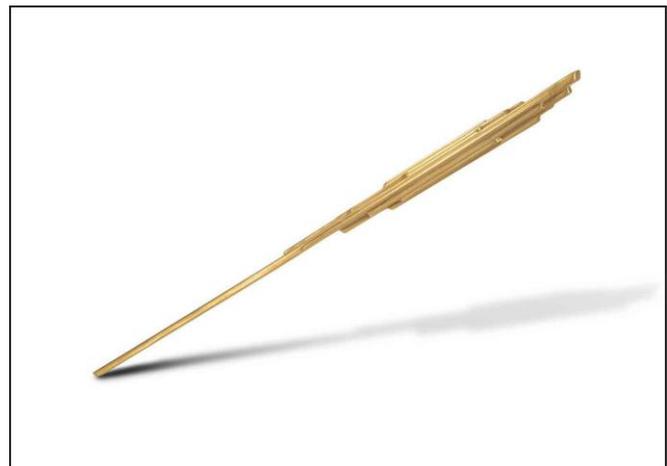
Jennifer Banks (b. Colorado, 1966), Torah Pointer, 2007. Pointer: ebony, copper, silver; stand: copper, silver, red-pigmented resin, 8 3/4 x 4 x 4 in. (22.2 x 10.2 x 10.2 cm). The Barr Foundation.

Derfner Judaica Museum + Art Collection is pleased to announce our upcoming exhibition, *Modern and Contemporary Torah Pointers on Loan from the Barr Foundation*, which will be on view from September 22 through December 18, 2025. Admission to the Museum is always free. Open Sunday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. More information at www.derfner.org/visit.

The exhibition includes fifteen Torah pointers by contemporary and modern artisans from the Barr Foundation, and complements older pointers from the museum's collection that are on view concurrently in the ongoing exhibition, *Tradition Remembrance: Treasures of the Derfner Judaica Museum*. The Barr collection was formed by Virginia resident Clay H. Barr, who began collecting Torah pointers nearly three decades ago in memory of her late husband, Jay D.A. Barr. In addition to acquiring items that represent the historic forms of the object, she purchased and commissioned new Torah pointers from contemporary artists.

The Torah pointer, in Hebrew, yad, is a ritual object commonly in the shape of a tapered rod that is used during religious services to guide the reader through the Torah—the sacred scroll containing the first five books of the Hebrew Bible—without physically touching the delicate parchment surface. The Hebrew word yad means hand

and traditional Torah pointers often include a closed hand with an extended finger. Torah pointers are crafted in a wide variety of materials, most often silver or wood, and can be ornamented with precious stones and inscriptions. Contemporary yads can be particularly inventive. The ones on view range from the art deco-inspired gold-plated *Metropolis* Torah pointer by French designer Richard Lauret to a unique multi-layered and boldly-colored red resin, copper, and silver pointer and stand by Jennifer Banks, who studied jewelry and metal arts at California College of Arts and Crafts, as well as examples by twentieth-century masters Ludwig Wolpert and Bernard Bernstein.



Richard Lauret, (b. Paris, France, 1949), Torah Pointer, 2017. Gold plated bronze, 9 1/2 x 1/2 x 1/2 in. (24.1 x 1.3 x 1.3 cm). The Barr Foundation.

The exhibition at Derfner Judaica Museum coincides with the presentation, *Guiding Hands for Sacred Scripts: Torah Pointers, Art, and Contexts*, organized by Fordham University Center for

Jewish Studies at the Walsh Library, Fordham University, on view through December 18. Also drawn from the Barr Foundation collection, the Fordham exhibition engages with ideas of what Jewish art is and explores different materials and interpretations of the Torah yad, placing them in conversation with other historical artifacts: medieval manuscripts and printed books, and material objects from Fordham's Special Collections and Archives.



Ludwig Wolpert (b. Hildesheim, Germany, 1900 – d. New York, New York, 1981), Torah Pointer, 1950–1960. Silver, 9 x 1 x 1 in. (22.9 x 2.5 x 2.5 cm). The Barr Foundation.

Museum Hours

Museum hours: Sunday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Photo ID is required for all visitors to the RiverSpring Living campus. Call 718.581.1596 or email art@riverspring.org to schedule in-person or virtual group tours or for holiday hours. For further information, visit our website at www.derfner.org.

About RiverSpring Living

As a member of the American Alliance of Museums, RiverSpring Living is committed to publicly exhibiting its art collection throughout its 32-acre campus—which includes the Hebrew Home at Riverdale—featuring Derfner Judaica Museum and a sculpture garden overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades. Derfner Judaica Museum + Art Collection provides educational and cultural programming for residents and clients of RiverSpring Living, their families, and the general public from throughout New York City, its surrounding suburbs, and visitors from elsewhere. RiverSpring Living, based in Riverdale, New York, is a leading non-profit organization serving older adults through a range of healthcare services, housing options, and community programs.