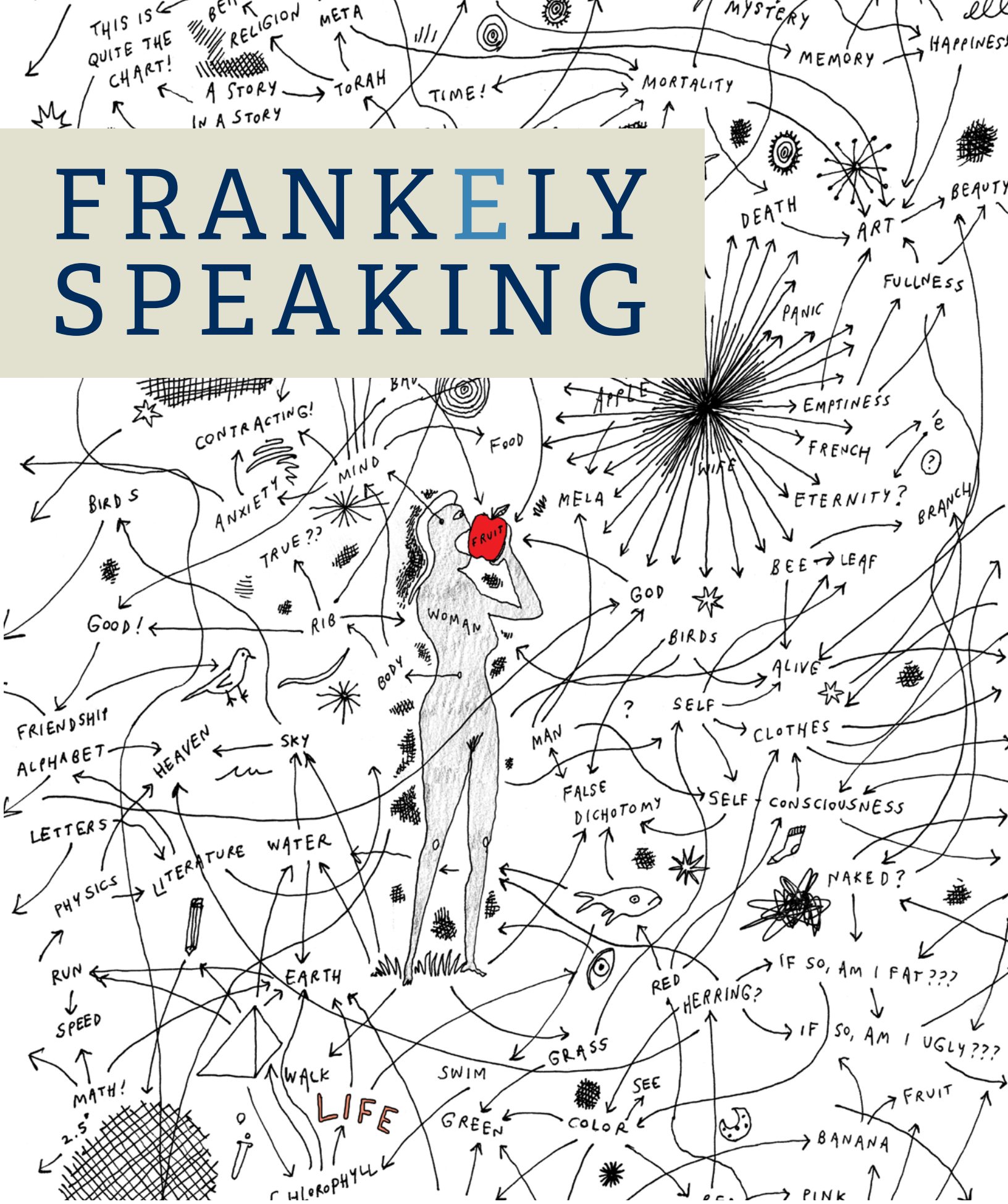


# FRANKELY SPEAKING



# From the Director



**Maya Barzilai**  
*Director of the Frankel Center  
for Judaic Studies*

This past summer, I had the opportunity to visit the Mikvé-Israel Emanuel Synagogue on the island of Curaçao where a Sephardic Dutch community settled in 1651. This magnificent synagogue was consecrated in 1731 and boasts the title of the oldest continuously operating synagogue in the Americas. Inside, original chandeliers still hang above the mahogany benches and platforms built to withstand the tropical weather. Strikingly, the floor is entirely covered in sand, following 18th-century Dutch Jewish custom. Stepping into this synagogue space, with its azure-blue glass windows, I reflected on the convergence of local and European architectural styles as an expression of Jewish heterogeneity.

At the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, our students can delve into the complex histories, cultures, and languages of Jews who lived and worshiped across the globe, including on the island of Curaçao. Our colleague Devi Mays teaches courses on Sephardic Jewry and the history of Jews in the Americas and the Caribbean. Yanay Israeli, spotlighted in this newsletter, offers courses on Jewish and Muslim minorities in medieval and early modern Spain. New this fall, students at U-M can enroll in a 4-credit Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) language and culture course sequence, offered by the Judaica curator, Gabriel Mordoch. Alongside this growing emphasis on Sephardic studies, our faculty continue to enrich Jewish studies through comparative perspectives from other religions and cultures.

I am also thrilled to share that this year the Frankel Center inaugurates a yearlong public forum for exploring different facets of “Life” as a timely, interdisciplinary theme. Our discussions around “Life” include the topics of climate change in modern Jewish thought; abortion in Jewish, Muslim, and American law; disability in biblical narrative and contemporary culture; and reproductive technologies in American Jewish religion. In winter 2024,

*On the Cover:* Liana Finck, illustration from *Let There Be Light: The Real Story of Her Creation*





Mikvé-Israel Emanuel Synagogue

“Stepping into this synagogue space, with its azure-blue glass windows, I reflected on the convergence of local and European architectural styles as an expression of Jewish heterogeneity.”

comics artist Liana Finck will visit the Frankel Center to discuss her recent work *Let There Be Light: The Real Story of Her Creation*, featured on the cover of this newsletter. I warmly invite all of you to attend these events and discussions, whether in person or through our livestreaming. Join us to learn how Jewish history and thought enriches contemporary discussions of sex and gender identities, reproductive rights, and environmental justice.

The Frankel Institute has embarked on a yearlong exploration of “Jewish Visual Cultures.” Our co-head fellows, professors Deborah Dash Moore (U-M) and Richard Cohen (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), have

convened an international group of scholars, curators, and artists working on projects in the fields of architecture, fashion, photography, film, illustration, and puppetry. This fellowship group explores how Jewish experiences with and attitudes toward the visual intersect with those of other majority and minority ethnoreligious groups. Dash Moore and Cohen foster an environment of open and supportive dialogue concerning the methodological challenges entailed in the study of Jewish visuality. We hope that the fellows find in Ann Arbor a rich intellectual environment in which the most crucial questions of their fields can be articulated and addressed.

My gratitude goes out to the wonderful faculty, students, and staff at the Frankel Center who make all of these activities possible. Julian Levinson has stepped into the role of Associate Director and our undergraduate and graduate students will benefit from his leadership and experience in the years to come. Cheri Thompson, chief administrator, and Michele Fleming, executive assistant, have devoted much attention and effort to planning the 2023–2024 year at the Institute and Center. I am also thankful to Marina Mayorski, graduate student in Comparative Literature and Judaic Studies, for her contributions to this issue, including a new spotlight on our Judaica collection.

I'll end by wishing you all a lively year ahead! I hope you stay in touch with the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies and I always welcome your inquiries and feedback.

**Maya Barzilai**

*Director of the Frankel Center  
for Judaic Studies*

*Professor of Hebrew Literature  
and Jewish Culture*

# Julian Levinson Named New Associate Director of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies



Julian Levinson  
*Associate Director of the  
Frankel Center for Judaic Studies*

Julian Levinson is the Samuel Shetzer Professor of American Jewish Studies. This past summer, Levinson began a two-year term as the associate director of the Frankel Center. “I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve as associate director of the Frankel Center. Our course offerings have expanded in so many exciting ways in recent years—from the inclusion of Ladino to an emphasis on new comparative contexts for viewing Jewish history and culture.”

Levinson is working on all aspects of the undergraduate and graduate programs and aims to maintain their quality and relevance for students. He also teaches the Judaic Studies Capstone graduate certificate course, which brings together doctoral students at the dissertation writing stage. As part of this course, Levinson facilitates student dissertation writing workshops and guides them through significant steps such as article publication and job market preparation.

In his new role, Levinson is building on the work of the outgoing associate director, Shachar Pinsker, in addition to collaborating with the director and the curriculum committee. His primary goal is to “continue encouraging our wonderful faculty to see the classroom as a place to expose students to their latest research—and indeed as a place where faculty can develop and test out their ideas.” He strongly believes that the students, both undergraduate and graduate, are up to the challenge.

Levinson is excited about his role as associate director and increase collaboration and exchange among students and faculty both within the Frankel Center and across the University of Michigan.

# Faculty Spotlights

## Yanay Israeli

**Y**anay Israeli joined the University of Michigan in fall 2022 as assistant professor of history and Judaic Studies. He holds a PhD in history from U-M, and previously worked at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This fall, he is teaching courses on conversion and inquisition in early modern Spain and on Latin America in colonial times. Israeli's research focuses on the social and legal history of the Iberian world from the 13th to the 16th centuries. He is currently working on a book about petitioning and petitioners in the Castilian monarchy. This project analyzes how ordinary people—Christians, Jews, and Muslims—utilized petitions to the supreme institutions of royal justice to navigate social conflicts and power relations. It also explores the broader implications of popular participation in the justice system for pre-modern processes of state formation.

Israeli's research suggests that Castilian Jews were remarkably active as petitioners and litigants until their expulsion from Spain in 1492. According to Israeli, "petitions offer an invaluable source for studying Jewish social life in late medieval and early modern Europe, shedding light on Christian-Jewish relations as well as tensions and conflicts within Jewish communities." In addition to the book project, Israeli has been studying the history of the "conversos"—or converts from Judaism and their descendants. His articles—published in journals such as *Speculum* and *Viator*—explore the avenues through which members of this group sought to negotiate their social position in face of exclusion and violence, before and after the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition.



Yanay Israeli  
Assistant Professor of History and Judaic Studies

“Petitions offer an invaluable source for studying Jewish social life in late medieval and early modern Europe, shedding light on Christian-Jewish relations as well as tensions and conflicts within Jewish communities.”

Israeli's research and teaching interests are fueled by a fascination with the life stories of people who lived centuries ago and the desire to recover and bring these stories to light. He recalls stumbling upon such petitions in archives in Spain at the beginning of his dissertation research. He had initially arrived with the intent of pursuing a different project, but the sheer volume of these grievances amazed him. One striking example was that of a young Jewish woman of a seemingly humble background who petitioned the supreme royal court to complain about the sexual assault she had suffered at the hands of a wealthy Jew from her own town. Israeli realized that “there is a much larger story waiting to be told here—a story about the practice of petitioning and popular participation in the justice system.”

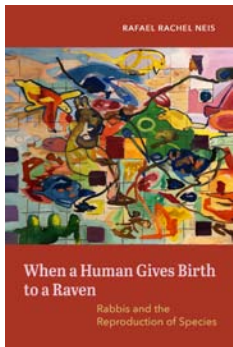
Israeli has been pursuing several new research projects. When recently visiting the archives, he discovered fascinating materials on property disputes of Jewish converts in the aftermath of the 1492 expulsion, which he is currently studying. Another project is a micro-historical study of a single family of Christians of Jewish descent who faced repeated inquisitorial repression. Finally, within the next couple of years, Israeli hopes to complete a compilation of translated primary sources, especially of legal records pertaining to Jews and converts in late medieval Iberia.



## Rafael Neis

Professor **Rafael Neis** is the director of the Interdepartmental Program in Ancient History and the Jean and Samuel Frankel Chair in Rabbinics. Neis studies the rabbinic movement in the first several centuries CE, alongside the ways that ancient Jewish culture is deployed in the present. In their book, *The Sense of Sight in Rabbinic Culture: Jewish Ways of Seeing in Late Antiquity*, Neis explored how rabbis, and members of other communities in the ancient Middle East, endowed vision with meaning in their ritual, political, erotic, and interpersonal lives.

While conducting research for their first book, Neis came across an intriguing passage in early rabbinic literature describing people expelling (or miscarrying) various entities, including bird- or animal-like creatures. In one of these scenarios, a woman from Sidon expels a raven-like being. Delving deeply into this and related texts eventually germinated their book *When a Human Gives Birth to a Raven: Rabbis and the Reproduction of Species* (University of California Press, 2023). The book investigates how ancient sources written in the Mediterranean, Southwest Asia, and North Africa grapple with reproduction, likeness, difference, species (nonhuman and human), and gender.



In *When a Human Gives Birth to a Raven*, Neis takes ancient worldmaking seriously. In other words, when the rabbis and other ancient authors describe events like humans birthing ravens, or cows birthing camels, or beings like centaurs and unicorns, Neis avoids evaluating such events and beings through the lenses of modern, scientific rationalism.

They seek instead to meet the past

on its own terms. Neis recruits critical studies of science, disability, gender, and sexuality in order to push against the uncritical use of Western categories such as animal, human, nature, and reproduction. These methods, applied to ancient sources, expose a rather “queer” world in which reproduction as likeness is far from assured, and in which the possibilities of creaturely life exceed our earthly knowledge. Neis thereby exposes the constructed, historically contingent character of species categories including that of the human, which many tend to view as ahistorical and unchanging.

While Neis has been writing for some years now, they shared that this almost decade-long project was the first in which they truly took pleasure in the writing process. One of the



Rafael Neis  
Professor of History and Judaic Studies

many gratifying aspects of working on the book, they recounted, was the opportunity to integrate their art—paintings, drawings, mini-comics, and zines—and go beyond the conventional academic constraints of textual communication. Neis finds writing and image-making to be complementary ways of “glimpsing other worlds and different ways of living and being.”

Neis is currently working on several exciting projects. One of them focuses on ancient art, which they analyze through expansive gender lenses. This approach is exemplified in the final chapter of their current book, which argues that Lilith and other demonic images in ancient incantation bowls cannot be understood as either quite male or quite female. What happens, Neis asks, when we do not assume that all

**Neis finds writing and image-making to be complementary ways of “glimpsing other worlds and different ways of living and being.”**

depictions of humans, non-humans, and those in between, are either male or female? In other words, what happens if we adopt a certain posture of ignorance and openness about “sexing” images? In another project, Neis takes on the history of the category of “law” as it is used to describe and analyze Jewish sources. They also plan to continue investigating reproduction, sex, and gender and have been pursuing independent and collaborative projects that blend art and scholarship, including a project on the Talmud’s Tractate Sotah with Berlin-based artist Ella Poni.

# Jewish Salonica Postcard Collection

Over the past two years, Judaica curator Dr. Gabriel Mordoch has been working on a collection of early-20th-century postcards that commemorate Jewish life in Salonica (Thessaloniki nowadays). The postcards were purchased through the generous support of the Thal Judaica Trust Fund; the collection currently contains 26 postcards, 15 of which are available to the public through the library's *Beyond the Reading Room Blog*.

Salonica was home to a large Jewish population since the late 15th century, when Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula resettled in the expanding Ottoman Empire, which, at the time, included much of the Balkans and the Middle East. Often referred to as "Jerusalem of the Balkans," "Madre de Israel" (Mother of Israel), and "Jewish Republic," Salonica was a flourishing center of Jewish life as a strategic port city, and drew a diverse, multicultural

population. From the beginning of the 16th century until the 1920s, Jews were the largest ethnic group in Salonica, an unprecedented occurrence until the establishment of the State of Israel. In the early 20th century, almost 100,000 Jews resided in the city, alongside Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Albanians, and Western-Europeans. Under Nazi occupation, this thriving Jewish community was obliterated.

The developing collection of postcards offers a glimpse of Salonica's rich history and lively culture. One postcard, titled "Costume of a Jewish Woman" (Costume de femme juive), from 1917, shows the traditional garb of Jewish women in early 20-century Salonica. In its details, we can learn about the city's history: the image is credited to Albert Barzilai, a Jewish editor whose shop was located, according to the inscription, in Salonica's "Quartier Franc" — a historic neighborhood where many Western

European merchants resided. However, the inscription on the back states that it was printed in Faubourg Saint-Martin, a Parisian neighborhood. Postcard production, like other businesses, must have been moved to the French capital, perhaps after the great fire in Salonica of 1917.

In addition to the *Jewish Salonica Postcard Collection*, the University of Michigan offers access to the robust *Jewish Heritage Collection*, established in 2003 with a donation of more than 2,000 items from Constance and Theodore Harris. The *Jewish Heritage Collection* includes artwork, books, pamphlets, postcards, and objects of everyday and religious significance. Some 600 items of this collection are available online (visit at <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/s/schlarris>).



1917 photograph of bakery and Jewish restaurant in Salonica, attributed to Henri Manuel (1874-1947).



## 2023–2024 Lecture Series at the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies

The Frankel Center offers a year-long series of public events centered on the theme of “Life.” In recent decades, scholars have developed new constellations of themes pertaining to life, giving rise to fields such as animal studies, disability studies, and posthumanism. Increasingly, this research is informed by a push against human exceptionalism and a critical reexamination of the category of the human, especially its exclusions on the basis of animality, race, gender, and disability. The significance of these discussions is evident in the increasing social discord surrounding life in the current moment, when questions about when life begins and how it might persist in an age of climate change appear more urgent than ever. Throughout the “Life” Lecture Series, we will learn from a variety of speakers and artists about the potential contribution of Jewish perspectives to this discourse and the vitality of Jewish Studies as a point of departure for critical new explorations of life.



## FALL THEME EVENTS

### The Human Question: Jewish Thought in the Anthropocene

**Robert Erlewine**, Professor of Religious Studies in the Department of History & Philosophy at Eastern Michigan University  
Director of EMU Center for Jewish Studies.

To kick off our Life Theme Year programming, students and faculty gathered to hear EMU's Professor Robert Erlewine's presentation on modern Jewish thought and its hesitancy to address climate change due to the belief that humans are distinct from the non-human world. Erlewine discussed the origins of this influential strategy in nineteenth-century German Jewish philosophy and reflected on its potential impact on future generations.

### Ancient Religion, Embodied Lives, and Disability

**Julia Watts Belser**, Professor of Jewish Studies in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Georgetown University

Streaming live from her home in Washington DC, Professor Julia Watts Belser passionately described her experience as a lifelong wheelchair user and how it impacts her research, worldview, and relationship with God. During this hybrid lecture with Frankel Center faculty and students, Watts Belser presented from her recent book, *Loving Our Own Bones*, a spiritual companion and political manifesto that cuts through objectification and inspiration alike to offer a powerful new account of disability in biblical narrative and contemporary culture.

## WINTER THEME EVENTS

### Abortion in Jewish and Islamic Law

**Rabea Benhalim**, Associate Professor at the University of Colorado Law School

**Tuesday, January 30, 2024**

4–5:30 pm, Hybrid format,  
2022 Thayer Building

The Jewish and Islamic legal traditions provide diverse, nuanced opinions on the legality of abortion. These diverse opinions inform a variety of topics salient to the current legal debate in the United States. Scholars in both traditions have debated the issue over extended periods of time (millennia in both instances), creating sophisticated bodies of jurisprudence on abortion. Benhalim will discuss how this abortion jurisprudence might be adopted in the American context.

### Let There Be Light: The Story of Her Creation

**Liana Finck**, Cartoonist

**Tuesday, February 6, 2024**

4:30–6:30 pm, Hybrid Format,  
North Quad 2435

Liana Finck is an American comics artist and contributor to the *New Yorker*. Her two recent books, *Passing as Human* (2018), and *Let there Be Light: The Real Story of Her Creation* (2022), whimsically approach the timeless questions: What does it mean to be human? What is the purpose of our lives? And how should we treat one another? Finck will discuss the ideas and creation of these books and engage in dialogue with faculty and students.

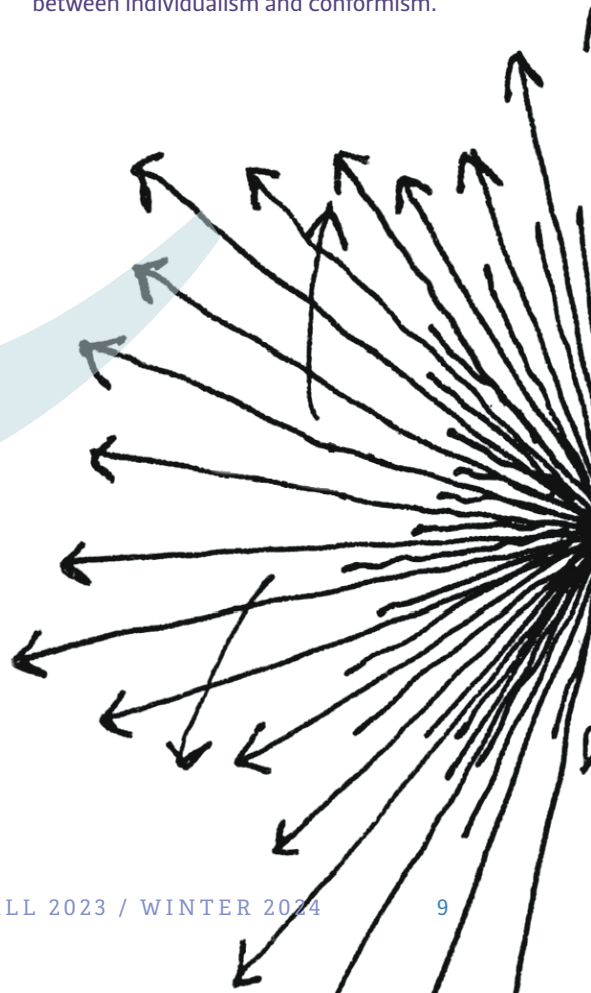
### Stockholm: Old Friends Die Hard

**Noa Yedlin**, Israeli author

**Tuesday, March 5, 2024**

4:00–5:30 screening, 5:30–7:00 talk  
and book signing, North Quad 2435

Noa Yedlin is a bestselling Israeli author, the recipient of the Sapir Prize (the Israeli Man Booker) and the Prime Minister's Literature Award and author of *House Arrest*, *Stockholm*, *People Like Us* and *The Wrong Book*. Yedlin is also the creator of a two-season TV series based on her bestselling novel *Stockholm* (the Israeli Best Mini-Series TV Award). Yedlin's novels deal with global phenomena that infiltrate the personal realm and shape our everyday lives—the rise and fall of social elites, shifts in the balance of power and the never-ending battle between individualism and conformism.



# Fall Events

at the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies

## Horror Films Across Boundaries: American, Israeli, Jewish, and Muslim Perspectives

Jeremy Dauber, Olga Gershenson, Adam Lowenstein, and Karla Mallette

Wednesday, October 4, 2023



What does horror add to our understanding of Muslim and Jewish cultures? Film scholars from across the United States and Israel gathered in this hybrid event at U–M to discuss horror films that draw on Muslim and Jewish motifs and narratives. They explored the global idiom of horror cinema and the points of convergence and divergence among these different films produced in Turkey, Israel, and the US. The intrigue of a new outlook on horror drew a large crowd of students eager to ask questions and share their own perceptions and reactions to the films and the scholars' research.

## Padnos Public Lecture on Jewish Learning

*Abrahamic Vernaculars: Rivals Thinking Together*

Rebecca Scharbach Wollenberg

October 17, 2023

Contemporary media often emphasizes the competitive nature of the Abrahamic monotheisms. This is not entirely unjustified. Relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims have certainly included their share of religious wars, theological polemics, and oppression. This year's Padnos Public Engagement Lecture on Jewish Learning, generously supported by a gift from the Padnos family, presented another side to the Abrahamic coin.

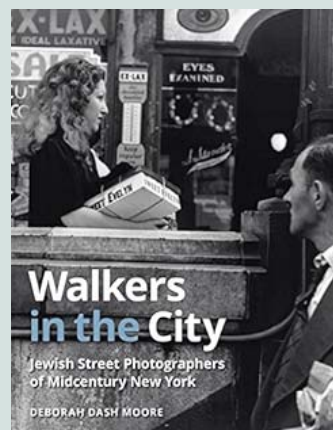
Even amid communal rivalry, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim practitioners have often turned to each other to think through religious concepts, elucidate a shared sense of sacred history, and enrich their ritual practices. From the development of shared ritual practices surrounding childbirth to ecumenical medieval study groups, Professor Wollenberg explored historical moments when Jews, Christians, and Muslims, have done their religious thinking together. Her presentation at the Kaufmann Interfaith Institute at the Grand Valley State University campus drew a large audience of faculty, students, and community members. It supported the mission of the Padnos family to promote Jewish and interfaith studies and connect faculty and fellows at the Frankel Center at U–M with audiences in West Michigan.

## Eyes on the Street: A Conversation on Photography

Deborah Dash Moore, Rebecca Zurier, and Sara Blair

November 14, 2023

Author Deborah Dash Moore discussed her new book, *Walkers in the City: Jewish Street Photographers of Midcentury New York* with U–M scholars Rebecca Zurier and Sara Blair. Drawing on the experiences of and photographs by a generation of young Jewish photographers, many of whom belonged to the New York Photo League, *Walkers in the City* offers a new perspective on New York as seen through their eyes—a cityscape of working-class people



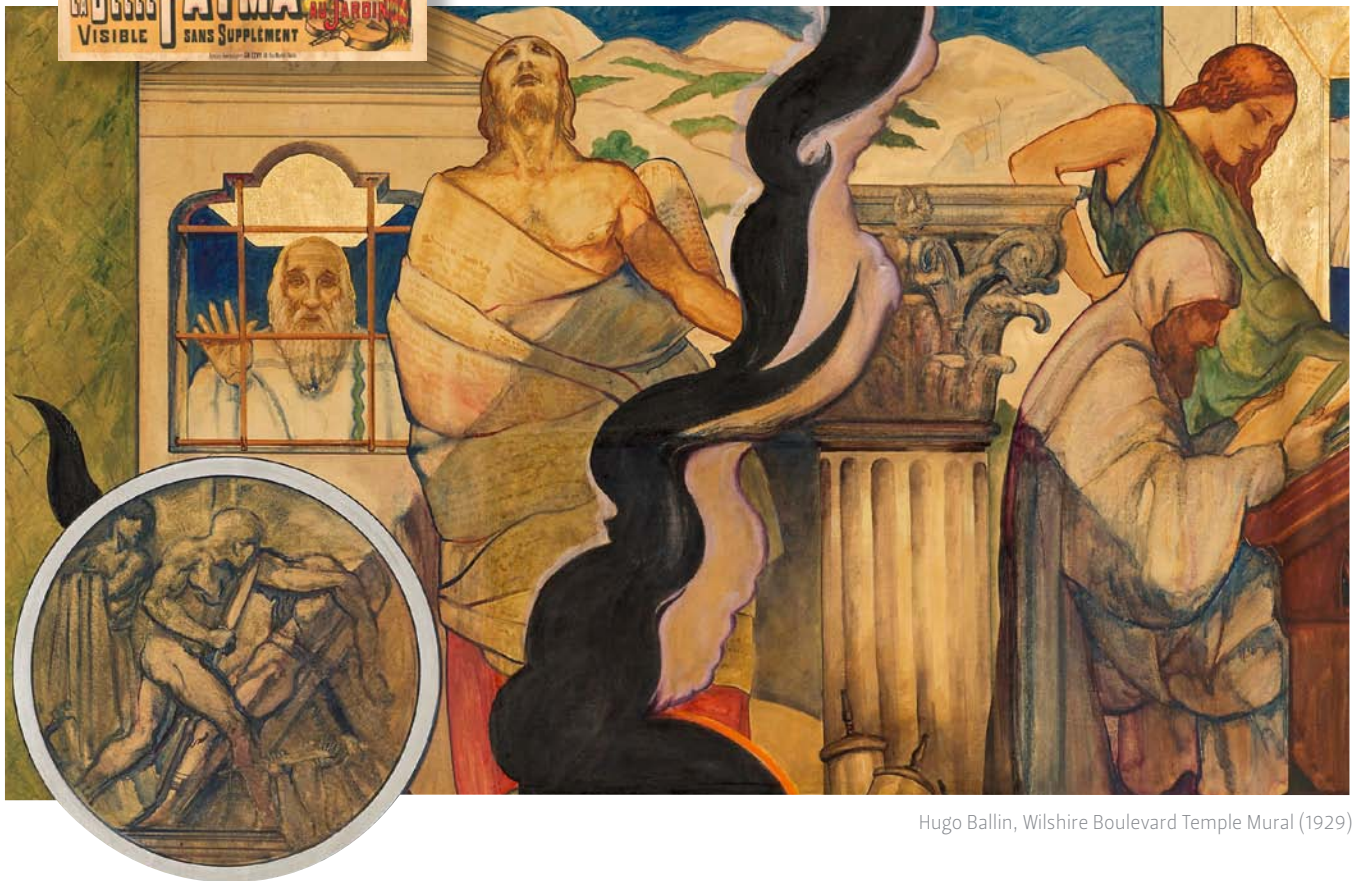
and democratizing public transit. With their cameras, they pictured Gotham's abrasive social milieu and its evanescent textures and light, creating an archive of vernacular images of city life and a distinctive tradition of street photography that is still widely imitated today.



# Announcing the 2023–2024 Jean & Samuel Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies Fellows



During the 2023–2024 academic year, the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies focuses on the theme of **“Jewish Visual Cultures.”** Under the leadership of co-head fellows Deborah Dash Moore, University of Michigan, and Richard I. Cohen, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 14 scholars from five countries, including Argentina, Canada, Germany, Israel and the US, are exploring various aspects of Jewish visual imagination.



Hugo Ballin, Wilshire Boulevard Temple Mural (1929)

## 2023–2024 Frankel Institute Fellows

Work on Jewish visual cultures has flourished in recent years. From the growth of Jewish museums throughout the U.S. and Europe to the founding of new journals devoted to Jewish art, the Jewish visual imagination has engaged broad audiences. Scholarly and popular studies, exhibitions, and films have enlightened us on a range of themes in various periods, from antiquity to the present day. They depict, in diverse formats, the way Jews and Jewish culture and religion see and were seen, extending our understanding of the intricate relations between Jews and others. These portrayals have added important dimensions to the imagination of Jewish life as a minority throughout history and recently as a majority in the State of Israel.

The Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies is devoting the 2023–2024 year to an exploration of many facets of Jewish visual imagination. How have Jewish experiences with and attitudes toward the visual intersected with those of other majority and minority groups? How has Jewish visibility challenged or coexisted with that hallmark of Jewish culture, the literary text? How does visual culture broaden the Jewish narrative? The Frankel Institute theme year addresses these and other questions. It fosters scholarship on the significant place that visual culture has occupied in Jewish historical development, considering monuments, manuscripts, synagogue architecture, ephemera, ceremonial art (Judaica), printed books, drawings, and fashion items. The Institute brings these historical questions into dialogue with research on 20th- and 21st-century contemporary art, photography, architecture, and exhibition practices.



### Jeffrey Abt

Wayne State University

**“The Indigeneity of Heterogeneity: An Exploration of Visual Languages in the History of Judaica”**

Jeffrey Abt is a professor emeritus at Wayne State University. He trained as a painter, earning his BFA and MFA degrees at Drake University, working primarily with Jules Kirschenbaum. He studied at the Jerusalem campus of the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion. Prior to Wayne State, he worked at the Wichita Art Museum; the Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago; and Chicago’s Smart Museum of Art. An artist and writer, Abt has exhibited widely in the United States and abroad, and his artwork is held in several museum and corporate collections. His books include *American Egyptologist: The Life of James Henry Breasted and the Creation of His Oriental Institute* (University of Chicago Press), *Valuing Detroit’s Art Museum: A History of Fiscal Abandonment and Rescue* (Palgrave Macmillan), and *Too Jewish or Not Jewish Enough: Ritual Objects and Avant-Garde Art at the Jewish Museum of New York* (Berghahn, forthcoming).



### Inka Bertz

Jewish Museum Berlin

**“The Entrance of Jews into the Artistic Professions”**

Inka Bertz has been a curator at the Jewish Museum Berlin since 1996 and headed the collection of the Jewish Museum Berlin from 1996–2021. She studied German language and literature, art history, media studies, and history in Göttingen and Berlin, worked for various exhibition projects, and completed a museum traineeship. Bertz has curated exhibitions on 19th-century family paintings, drawings from the Theresienstadt ghetto, art looting and restitution, and the “Art and Artists” section of the permanent exhibition, among others. Since 1988, she has published on various topics of Jewish history, especially on the history of art and museums and, most recently, on a Rome scholarship for Jewish artists, and on the history of Jewish museums in the Federal Republic of Germany.





### Zoya Brumberg-Kraus

University of Texas – Austin

#### “From Gold Mountain to Tinseltown: Ethnic Identity in California’s Architectural Vernacular”

Zoya Brumberg-Kraus holds a PhD in American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin and an MA in Visual and Critical Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her forthcoming book, *From Gold Mountain to Tinseltown: Constructions of Ethnic Identity in California’s Architectural Vernacular*, explores the ways that Jewish, Chinese, Japanese, and other immigrant communities represented their identities through public visual culture.



### Irit Carmon Popper

Technion Israel Institute of Technology and Haifa University

#### “Past Imperfect: Contemporary Art Versus Heritage in Historic Sites in Israel — A New Comparative Framework”

Irit Carmon Popper is an art curator, researcher, and lecturer emphasizing contemporary art and heritage preservation. She graduated with a BA in philosophy and art history and an MA in art history from The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Curatorship and Museology Studies from Tel Aviv University, and a PhD from the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning, Technion IIT. Her research was awarded the 2020 *magna cum laude* Ben Halpern Award of ISA, the 2019 Bruno Zevi Foundation Award, the 2019 Study and Research Award by Jabotinsky Institute, the 2017 Elhanani Prize on Architecture & Identity, and the 2020 Balaban-Glass Fund Scholarship. Her latest articles were published in *Arts* journal, in a 2022 special issue titled “Renegotiating Identity, Reenacting History—21st Century Art in Israel.”



### Richard I. Cohen

Hebrew University of Jerusalem

#### “Revisiting Jewish Icons in Modern Culture and History”

Richard I. Cohen is an emeritus professor of Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the former academic director of Da’at Hamakom, the Israel Center of Research Excellence (I-Core) for the Study of Cultures of Place in the Modern Jewish World. His publications include: *The Burden of Conscience: French-Jewish Leadership during the Holocaust*; *Jewish Icons: Art and Society in Modern Europe*; and, with Mirjam Rajner, *Samuel Hirszenberg (1865–1908): A Polish Jewish Artist in Turmoil*. He has edited and introduced Raymond-Raoul Lambert’s *Carnet d’un témoin, 1940–1943*, also in English and Hebrew; served as co-editor and co-curator of *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage, and Power, 1600–1800* and *Le Juif Errant: Un témoin de temps*; co-edited *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization: Reassessing an Idea* and *Spiritual Homelands: The Cultural Experience of Exile, Place and Displacement among Jews and Others*, and edited a variety of books on Jewish history and culture.

## 2023–2024 Frankel Institute Fellows



### Deborah Dash Moore

University of Michigan – Ann Arbor

#### “Camera as Passport”

Deborah Dash Moore is Frederick G. L. Huetwell Professor of History and Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. A historian of American Jews, she specializes in 20th-century urban history. Her new book, *Walkers in the City: Jewish Street Photographers of Mid-Century New York* (2023), extends her interest in urban Jewish history to photography. Currently, she serves as editor-in-chief of *The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization*, a 10-volume anthology of original sources translated into English from the biblical period to 2005, selected by leading scholars.

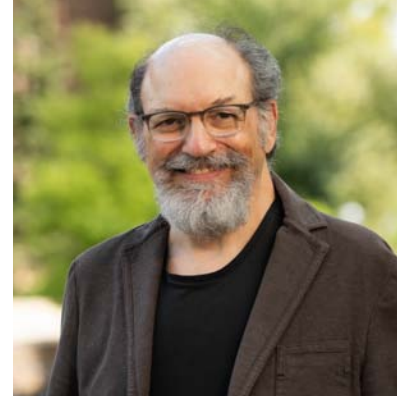


### Débora Kantor

University of Buenos Aires

#### “Israel in Jewish Diaspora Nonfiction Film”

Débora Kantor has an MA in cultural sociology from the National University of San Martín in Buenos Aires. She is a PhD candidate in social sciences at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA). Her doctoral project, titled *A Judaism of Our Own: Jewish Subjects, Affect, and Cartographies in Contemporary Argentine Cinema*, explores the representation of Jewish characters and Jewishness in modern and contemporary Argentine film. Her work is funded by the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) of Argentina.



### Louis Kaplan

University of Toronto

#### “Jewish Photographic Humor in Dark Times: Reflections on Visual First Responders to the Third Reich”

Louis Kaplan is Professor of History and Theory of Photography and New Media at the University of Toronto and affiliated faculty member at the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies. He is the author of numerous books in photography studies including *Laszlo Moholy-Nagy: Biographical Writings* (Duke, 1995) and *Photography and Humour* (Reaktion Books, 2017). His award-winning *At Wit's End: The Deadly Discourse on the Jewish Joke* (Fordham) was named as Choice 2020 Outstanding Academic Title in Humanities–Performing Arts. His new book (with Scott Michaelsen) on *The Revelations of Xxenogenesis* (Metanoia) explores the life and work of an elusive American mystic.



Hugo Ballin, Wilshire Boulevard Temple Mural (1929)





### Tamar Kay

Negev Architecture School

**“3938 Chene St.— Research for the basis of writing a TV series Bible”**

Tamar Kay is a four-time Israeli Academy Award nominated filmmaker whose film, *The Mute’s House*, was both shortlisted for the 2017 Best Short Documentary Academy Award (Oscars) and won numerous awards in prestigious festivals. *Unchained*, an Israeli TV drama Kay co-created, premiered in 2019 on the Israeli KAN 11 channel and was purchased by SBS in Australia. Kay has edited a variety of documentary films and TV series, a number of which won Israeli Emmy awards. Currently, she’s working on a feature-length film with the support of the Rabinovich Foundation for the Arts, which supports cinema in Israel. Kay is a graduate of the Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film School and is currently a faculty member at the Negev Architecture School in Beersheba, Israel. Prior to her film studies, she completed a dual degree in psychology and philosophy at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.



### Vladimir Levin

Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**“Muskelijudentum and Lachrymose Prayer: How Jewish Historians Constructed Fortress Synagogues”**

Vladimir Levin is director of the Center for Jewish Art at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Born in St. Petersburg, he holds a PhD from Hebrew University. He authored *From Revolution to War: Jewish Politics in Russia, 1907– 1914* (in Hebrew, 2016) and co-edited *Synagogues in Lithuania: A Catalogue* (2010–2012). In 2017 he co-authored, with Sergey Kravtsov, *Synagogue in Ukraine: Volhynia*, and is currently working on a book about Jewish material culture in Siberia with Anna Berezin. He also co-edited, with Victoria Gerasimova, a special issue of *Judaic-Slavic Journal* devoted to the Jewish history in Siberia (2021). Levin has published more than 120 articles and essays about social and political aspects of modern Jewish history in Eastern Europe, synagogue architecture and ritual objects, Jewish religious orthodoxy, Jewish-Muslim relations, Jews and Jewish politics in Lithuania, and Russian architecture in the Holy Land.



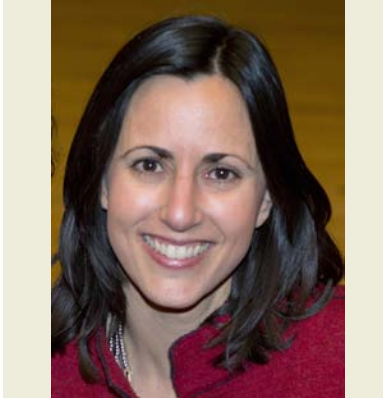
### Adam Lowenstein

University of Pittsburgh

**“The Jewish Horror Film: Taboo and Redemption”**

Adam Lowenstein is Professor of English and Film/Media Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. He is the author of *Horror Film and Otherness* (2022); *Dreaming of Cinema: Spectatorship, Surrealism, and the Age of Digital Media* (2015); and *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film* (2005), all published by Columbia University Press. Lowenstein is especially invested in horror studies, and is the director of Pitt’s Horror Studies Working Group as well as a board member of the George A. Romero Foundation. He played a central role in the acquisition of the George A. Romero Collection for Pitt’s Horror Studies Archive. Lowenstein has held visiting professorships at Columbia University, New York University, and Tel Aviv University, and received a MacGeorge Fellowship from the University of Melbourne as well as a Guggenheim Fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

## 2023–2024 Frankel Institute Fellows



### Julia Phillips Cohen

Vanderbilt University

**“Tastemakers: How a Forgotten Group of Jews from the Middle East and North Africa Shaped Modern European Culture”**

Julia Phillips Cohen is an Associate Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University. Her publications include the books *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014) and *Sephardi Lives: A Documentary History, 1700–1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), co-authored and edited with Sarah Abrevaya Stein. She also authored articles in the *American Historical Review*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, *Jewish Social Studies*, and *AJS Perspectives*. She is currently working with Devi Mays, University of Michigan, on a book exploring a forgotten network of North African and Middle Eastern Jews in 19th- and early 20th-century Europe. Their first article from this project, “Global Threads: An Alternative History of Fin-de-Siècle Parisian Fashion, by Way of Constantinople, Algiers and Kyoto,” is forthcoming in the *Journal of Modern History*.



### Catherine M. Soussloff

University of British Columbia and  
University of California, Santa Cruz

**“Shadows of Diaspora: Material Culture at the Crossroads of Islamic Art and Jewish History”**

Catherine M. Soussloff’s research and publications explore the historiography, theory, and philosophy of art and visual culture in the European tradition from the early modern period (ca. 1400) to the present. She is the author of: *Foucault on Painting* (2017), *The Subject in Art: Portraiture and the Birth of the Modern* (2006), and *The Absolute Artist: The Historiography of a Concept* (1997) and over 80 essays, articles, and edited volumes in art history, performance studies, aesthetics, Jewish studies, and the history of photography. Her focus on Jewish studies began with Vienna School art history and expanded with the publication of *Jewish Identity in Modern Art History* (1999), the first book to explore the significance of Jewish identity in the discipline of art history and art criticism. Soussloff holds emerita appointments in art history and visual studies at the University of British Columbia and the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her current research concerns the cultural and symbolic form of the Ottoman-Turkish shadow puppet theater, together with interpretations and collections of its puppet artifacts by 20th-century Jewish scholars.



### Roni Tzoreff

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

**“Israeli Art in the Age of ‘Multiculturalism’: The Exhibitions for Israel’s 50th Independence Day”**

Roni Tzoreff received her PhD in 2022 from the Department of Art at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, where she is currently a teaching associate. In her dissertation, she explored the ambivalent relationship between Zionist/Israeli art and modern Jewish traditional objects. In her next project, Tzoreff intends to explore the self-image of the Israeli art field as it was reflected in the various exhibitions that were mounted in museums in Israel, nationwide, in honor of Israel’s Jubilee year. Her main interest is to conceptualize the broad cultural meaning of modern and contemporary Jewish visual culture, and to frame its political, theological, aesthetic, and gendered significance.



## Graduate Certificate Student Accomplishments



**Pavel Brunssen** defended his dissertation, “The Making of ‘Jew Clubs’: Performing Jewishness and Antisemitism in European Soccer and Fan Cultures.” He also published two new book chapters: “FC Bayern Munich: A Football Club’s Remembering of and Working Through its Past”; and “Antisemitism ohne Juden.” Dr. Brunssen has accepted a position at Alfred Landecker Lecturer at the Research Center on Antigypsyism, Heidelberg University.



**Hannah Roussel** defended her dissertation, “Mad Rabbis: The Intersection of Bodyminds with Personal, Communal, and Non-Human Relationships in the Babylonian Talmud.” Dr. Roussel will be joining the faculty of the Hebrew Seminary: A Rabbinical School for Deaf & Hearing.



**Maggie Carlton** has been awarded the Association for Jewish Studies Dissertation Completion Fellowship for her project: “Mothering the Race: Racial Uplift and Motherhood in Interwar Detroit.”



**Omri Senderowicz** defended his dissertation, “From Society to Community: Privatizing the Israeli Kibbutz (1975–2020).” This fall, Dr. Senderowicz will begin his position as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Israel Studies at the University of Kansas.



**Brittany Joyce** received an IRWG / Rackham Community of Scholars Fellowship to support her project, “Slave Virgins and Freed Wives: The Control of Enslaved Sexuality through Virginity and Marriage.”



**Cassandra Euphrat Weston** received a 2023 Boyd/Williams Dissertation Grant from the Institute for Research on Women and Gender to support her project, “Sexual Dissidence, Jewishness, and American Radicalism, 1900–1930.”



**Shai Zamir** defended his dissertation, “Friendship brings Cities Together: Voluntary Kinship and Intimacy in the Early Modern Iberian World.” This fall, Dr. Zamir will begin a postdoc at Northwestern University.

# Student Funding



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## The Wolens Experience Fund

**Hanna Lupovitch**, a Judaic Studies Major undergraduate student, undertook a study abroad program at Tel Aviv University from during the winter and spring semesters.

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## The Frankel Summer Fellowship

**Sari Rosenberg**, a Judaic Studies minor undergraduate student, undertook an internship program with Hillel in Tel Aviv, Israel.

**Marina Mayorski**, a Comparative Literature graduate student and Judaic Studies certificate program student, traveled to the University of Southampton, UK, to attend the International Parkes Institute Conference. Mayorski's presentation concerned the translation and circulation of historical fiction in Yiddish, Hebrew, and Ladino depicting the Jewish past in Spain.

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## The Goldstein Israel Travel Fund

**Zhanyang Liu**, a International and Regional Studies Master's student, conducted research on the cultural and social dynamics of Israeli society, focusing on Jewish-Arab interactions. She visited Haifa and worked with scholars at the Jewish-Arab Center at Haifa University.

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## The Solovy Fund

**Shai Zamir**, a History graduate student and Judaic Studies certificate program student, participated in the Aljamiado Manuscripts Mediterranean Studies Summer Skills Seminar.

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## The Weingast Family Fund

**Caroline Parker**, a School of Public Health student, traveled to Jerusalem to participate in an internship program run by the Department of Nutrition at the Ministry of Health of Israel. Her internship project focused on the recent revocation of the sugar-sweetened beverage tax in Israel.

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## The Brandt Challenge

**Ben Shovers**, a graduate student in the Jewish Communal Leadership Program, participated in a summer internship with Jewish United Fund of Metro Chicago.





## Atara Kresch *at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

Last winter, Atara Kresch, an Art and Design undergraduate student, received funding from the Kantor Family Israel Study Fund to participate in the Nachshon Project. She had the opportunity to study at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and meet students from across the world with whom she engaged in meaningful discussion and collaboration. Kresch describes her time in Israel as a “transformative experience” that shaped her into “a more diverse and well-rounded individual who can embrace the richness of difference.”

Kresch is particularly interested in Israel’s vibrant art scene, and she visited many museums and met with artists. She found the cultural and historical complexity of Israel a source of inspiration and insight into the global art world. This invaluable experience reaffirmed Kresch’s desire to become a full-time artist, in the area of Jewish art.

“The memories and lessons from my time abroad will forever stay with me,” Kresch told us, adding that she hopes to have “the opportunity to give back to someone else in the same impactful way.”

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