



HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
היברו יוניון קולג' - מכון למדעי היהדות
3077 University Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90007

NEWS

ADAM M. GREENWALD
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF
DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC
AFFAIRS, WESTERN REGION
(213) 765-2105
agreenwald@huc.edu

New Art Exhibit Opening on LA Campus *Memory and Transformation* **Sponsored by the Enhancement Committee of HUC-JIR/Los Angeles** **in collaboration with the Jewish Artists Initiative**

On view from September 30 – December 31, 2010

Memory as defined by guest curator, Donna Stein is, “a person’s ability to store, retain and recall information. The genius of memory is that it is choosy, chancy and temperamental. Memories are not carved in stone. They become erased, altered or, as time goes by, transformed by the incorporation of new experiences and perceptions. Yet, memory is what makes our lives. It is our coherence, our reason, our feeling, even our action. ‘Without it,’ Luis Buñuel observed, ‘we are nothing.’”

This exhibit, in collaboration with the Jewish Artists Initiative, is a juried show of thirty-three artists who were selected to participate in this exhibition on the theme of “Memory and Transformation.” Artists approached the theme from their own perspective. Their works reflect the dynamic process of cultural change, their individual connections with religious or political ideas, and link phenomena previously thought unconnected.

The public is invited to view the exhibit and meet the artists.

Artists’ Reception

Wednesday, November 17, 2010, 6:30- 8pm
at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
3077 University Avenue, LA, 90007
(Parking lot entrance on Hoover Street between 30th and 32nd Streets)
No charge for admission
Kindly RSVP to 213.765.2106 or at dsauerwald@huc.edu



Madeleine Avirov, Old Jew With Bird, 2009 oil on canvas 48” x 24”

Memory and Transformation includes work by Melinda Smith Altshuler, Bill Aron, Madeleine Avirov, Pat Berger, Elizabeth Bloom, Terry Braunstein, Jean Edelstein, Sam

Erenberg, Benny Ferdman, Bruria Finkel, Max Finkelstein, Simone Gad, Shelley Gazin, Carol Goldmark, Baila Goldenthal, Bonita Helmer, Gilah Yelin Hirsch, Kathryn Jacobi, Marcie Kaufman, Karen Koblitz, Nancy Goodman Lawrence, Eileen Levinson, Laurel Paley, Victor Raphael, Yoella Razili, Elena Mary Siff, Doni Silver Simons, Ruth Snyder, Debra Sokolow, Erella Teitler, Ruth Weisberg, Eugene Yelchin and Harriet Zeitlin.

Highlights of a few of the featured artists:

Ruth Weisberg's *Alight* (2006) is from a series of images that narrate clandestine journeys to Palestine in the immediate aftermath of World War II. Weisberg conceives of life as a journey and in this color monotype investigates the 20th century history of the Jews in relation to issues of survival and new beginnings.

The work of **Madeleine Avirov** is driven by a desire to participate in what the Greek call *kairos*, “the appointed time,” when the eternal breaks in upon *chronos*, chronological time. *Old Jew with Bird* (2009) is a portrait of Avirov’s father who died in 2004 at 89. As she describes it, “I was driven by the hope that by inserting my father into an invented interior, whose every wall, window, garment, outsized crow would be self-evidently numinous by virtue of how I had described them, that I could force open a door into the details of the past, and that the details would yield a new story. I wanted to change the past by wrenching meaning from its unconscious crowded darkness.”

Nancy Goodman Lawrence's *The Goodman Kids #2* (2007) is a double portrait of the artist and her younger brother when they were children. She completed the collage a year after he died.



Red Creek Valley," 2009,
ceramic and graphite on paper,
36" x 33.5" x 10"

Simone Gad immigrated to Boyle Heights with her Holocaust survivor Polish-born parents in 1951 from Brussels, Belgium, where she was born. Her work focuses on the built environment in homage to old Los Angeles and is a clarion call for preservation of the city’s rich architectural heritage beginning with the Victorian, Craftsmen and Art Deco structures. Her painting of *Front Gate at Night—Chinatown Plaza* (2009-10) evokes memories of her early childhood when she often visited Chinatown and its exotic architecture.

The simple vessels of **Karen Koblitz's** Tattoo Series emulate ancient burial objects found in Azerbaijan, the exotic crossroads of the Caucasus Mountains and the Caspian Sea. Koblitz was inspired by archaeologist’s drawings that map the surface symbols found on a container’s exterior. Dotted *sgraffito* patterns on the surface of her pots are repeated on paper and hang on the wall behind each vessel in the group. The images included on *Red Creek Valley* (2009) reproduce her niece’s tattoos. All the symbols recall significant memories and at the same time serve as body ornamentation.

Sam Erenberg's enigmatic watercolor *Mementos (Idaho 1892)* (2008) commemorates the first miners' strike in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. In response, the mine owners infiltrated the union in an effort to break it up because of the miners' demands for a living wage.

The minimalist work of **Yoella Razili** is based on the recognition and transformation of physical material. She examines the characteristic qualities and inconsistencies of different substances. While working and reworking the surface of *A Square With Holes* (2005), her efforts call to mind memory as well as fresh beginnings.



No matter the historical or material reference, each artist included in *Memory and Transformation* has taken an optimistic stance, suggesting hope and redemption.

Arrangements to view the exhibits may be made by contacting the College-Institute at (213) 765-2106. Artists are available for interviews and appointments may be made in advance by contacting Adam M. Greenwald at HUC-JIR/LA at (213) 765-2105 or at agreenwald@huc.edu.

About the Jewish Artists Initiative (JAI)

The goal of the Jewish Artist Initiative has been to establish a forum for artists whose work is informed by their identity and to create avenues of support for their work in relation to the Jewish cultural sphere. The group believes in the transformational power of art and its ability to transcend barriers of language and culture. They have benefited from the emergence of Los Angeles as a world-class center for the arts and from the unique confluence of cultures that enrich the fabric of life in our region. Currently, the JAI operates under the 501(c) 3 umbrella of the USC Roski School of Fine Arts. For more information, please visit <http://www.jaisocal.org>.

About HUC-JIR

Founded in 1875, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion is the nation's oldest institution of higher Jewish education and the academic, spiritual, and professional development center of Reform Judaism. HUC-JIR educates men and women for service to American and world Jewry as rabbis, cantors, educators, and communal service professionals, and offers graduate and post-graduate degree programs for scholars of all faiths. With campuses in Cincinnati, Los Angeles, New York, and Jerusalem, HUC-JIR's scholarly resources comprise renowned library and museum collections, the American Jewish Archives, biblical archaeology excavations, research centers and institutes, and academic publications. Visit us at <http://www.huc.edu>

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