

**2024 Conference 11-12 February**  
***Creation – Re-Creation***



Deirdre Hart, *Fourth Day of Creation*, NSTE, Sydney

# Contents

- *Introduction* **1**
- *Schedule* **2**
- *Abstracts and Speaker Bios* **8**

*This conference is supported by the Sydney Jewish Museum and the following benefactors:*

*Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton*

*Dr Anna Hirsh*

*Ted Labow*

*Professor Emerita Suzanne D Rutland OAM*

*Chuck Volpe*



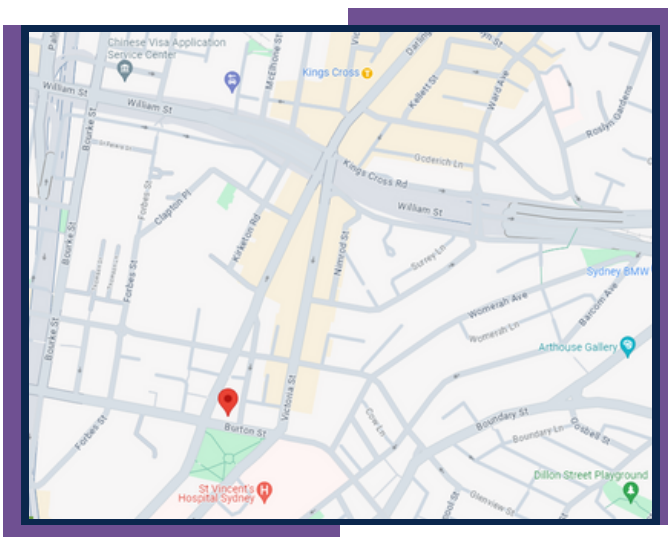
# Conference Program

*Creation – Re-Creation* is the theme for the 2024 Australian Association for Jewish Studies Conference. The conference will be held at the Sydney Jewish Museum, 148 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst NSW 2010 (see map below) on 11-12 February 2024. The conference addresses all elements of the themes of Creation and Re-Creation – broadly defined – with reference to Judaism, Jewish History and Culture, and Jews.

The conference committee has accepted a range of papers that extend or challenge Jewish ideas of the Origin. Creation as an ongoing category of meaning, both divine and secular, has been fundamental to Jewish belief, thought and politics. Creation may hence be investigated through the various forms of human expression that seek to mirror Divine perfection, but also through protagonists of new ideas: material construction, or innovative contributions through scientific, political, artistic, philosophical, legal, and other fields.

Re-Creation indicates a resumption of Creation after a period of stasis or change or may denote reinvention. This includes themes of Jewish Diaspora and phases of migration; or changes both individualised and of the Jewish people, such as during eras post-destruction, including the return of antisemitic tropes and the Holocaust.

A diverse cohort of academic scholars and professional practitioners, both Australian-based and visiting from abroad, will explore the experiences of Jews from diverse backgrounds, and from all areas of Jewish Studies and related fields including (but not limited to):



## WHERE:

**Sydney Jewish Museum**  
**148 Darlinghurst Rd,**  
**Darlinghurst NSW 2010**

- **Tanakh and Biblical Studies**
- **Antisemitism, Holocaust and Genocide Studies**
- **Memory Studies**
- **Jewish Cultural Studies, including the Visual Arts and Literature**
- **Jewish Life and Jewish identity**
- **Jewish Education**
- **Gender Studies**
- **Literary and Film Studies**
- **Israel and Diaspora Studies**
- **Museums, Architecture, and Arts Professionals**

## DAY 1: Sunday 11 February

8:30AM-  
9:00AM

### Registration

9:00AM-  
10:10AM

### Keynote Lecture 1

**Professor Michael Cohen (Tulane University)**  
'American Jews and the (Re) Creation of Ethnic Economies'

10:10AM-  
10:30AM

### Morning Tea

#### **PANEL 1 (ERC123) Holocaust Museums & Education**

#### **PANEL 2 (ERC4) Genesis Perspectives 1**

#### **PANEL 3 (AUD) The Re-Creation of Sephardic Identities**

**PARALLEL  
SESSION  
1  
10:30AM-  
12:00PM**

- **Dr Donna-Lee Frieze & Associate Professor Steven Cooke**

'Learning From the Past? Educational Efficacy in Holocaust Memorial Museums in Australia'

- **Dr Simon Holloway**  
'The Secondary Uses of Primary Sources: Holocaust Artefacts in Their Curatorial and Pedagogical Evolution'

- **Dr Anna Hirsh**  
'A Reimagining of Perec Willenberg's Częstochowa Synagogue Ceiling'

**Chair: Lee-Anne Whitten**

- **Dr Stephen Cook**  
'Humour and Sarcasm in the Biblical Creation Stories'

- **Dr Deborah Hurn**  
'The Role of Water in Israel's (Re-)Creation in the Biblical Transjordan'

- **Dr Timothy Rafferty**  
'Destruction and (pro)Creation: Sex as an Act of Re-Creation in the Book of Genesis'

**Chair: Dr Natalie Mylonas**

- **Professor Mechtild Gilzmer**  
'The Memory of North African Jews in the Diaspora'

- **Professor Seth Kunin**  
'Crypto Judaism as a Process of Cultural Creation and Recreation'

- **Rabbi Dr Yehonatan Elazar-DeMota**  
'Liminal Banilejos in the Diaspora in Search of Meaning and Understanding'

**Chair: Associate Professor François Soyer**

**DAY 1: Sunday 11 February**

**PARALLEL  
SESSION  
2  
12:00PM-  
1:30PM**

**PANEL 4  
(ERC123)  
The (Re)Creation  
of Jewish Roots  
in Polish  
Lands**

- **Dr Artur Markowski**  
'Who (Re)Created Jewish Pogroms in Russia? Examining the Paradigms in Research on Anti-Jewish Violence and Their Impact on Our Understanding of Antisemitism'
- **Dr Anna Michałowska-Mycielska**  
'Creation and Re-Creation of the Image of Jewish Self-Government in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth'
- **Rita Nash, M. Lib.**  
'Could the Jews Rebuild Life in Poland After World War II?'

**Chair: Associate Professor Jan Láníček**

**PANEL 5  
(ERC4)  
Cultural  
Creations:  
Film &  
Literature**

- **Associate Professor François Soyer**  
'Collective Memory and Historical Amnesia: The "Ritual Murder" Libel in Modern Spain'
- **Dr Basia Vucic**  
'A (R)evolutionary Reading of Janusz Korczak'
- **Dr Adrian Michael Schober**  
'Spielberg, Romanticism and The Fabelmans: A Super-Director's Origin Story'

**Chair: Dr Kate Green**

**PANEL 6  
(AUD)  
Mediaeval  
and Early Modern  
Jewish History**

- **Assistant Professor Nuray Ocakli**  
'A New Life for the Romaniote Jews of Kastoria in Istanbul: Physical Characteristics of Householder and Unmarried Men, Their Crafts, and Residential Quarters'
- **Mark Ellison**  
'Jews of the Silk Route: The Bukhari Experience of Re-Creation'

**Chair: Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton**

**1:30PM-  
2:10PM**

**Lunch**

## DAY 1: Sunday 11 February

<b>PARALLEL SESSION 3</b> <b>2:10PM-3:40PM</b>	<p><b>PANEL 7</b> (ERC123) <b>Australia &amp; the Holocaust: Re-Creation of Memory</b></p>	<p><b>PANEL 8</b> (ERC4) <b>Re-Creation Narratives</b></p>	<p><b>PANEL 9</b> (AUD) <b>Creating Australian Jewish Stories</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Professor Emerita Suzanne Rutland</b> 'Recreating New Lives at the Edge of the Diaspora'</li> <li>• <b>Associate Professor Avril Alba</b> 'Australian Holocaust Memory: Material Histories of Trauma: Evolving Objects of Memory'</li> <li>• <b>Dr Anna Rosenbaum</b> 'Egon Erwin Kisch and Hanuš Burger, Creation and Recreation in Literature and Film'</li> </ul> <p><b>Chair: Sarah Grandke (PhD candidate)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Viva Hammer (PhD candidate)</b> 'Jewish Women's Fertility as Source of Creative Expression'</li> <li>• <b>Benjamin Wyatt (MPhil candidate)</b> 'Jewishness in Motion: Creating Meaning in Melbourne's Jewish Workplaces'</li> <li>• <b>Dr Henry Lew</b> 'Patterson of Israel'</li> </ul> <p><b>Chair: Dr Anna Hirsh</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr Anne Sarzin</b> 'Connecting and Transforming: Eva's Lifelong Outreach Mission'</li> <li>• <b>Cohava Rubenstein Sturgess (BA Hons)</b> 'The Re-Creation of Ruby Rich as a Transnational Jewish Australian Feminist'</li> <li>• <b>Professor Kim Rubenstein</b> 'Sir Isaac Isaacs and Citizenship in Australia'</li> </ul> <p><b>Chair: Dr Jonathan Kaplan</b></p>
	<p><b>3:40PM-4:00PM</b></p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b></p>	
<p><b>4:00PM-4:35PM</b></p>	<p><b>Film Screening: <i>Dreyfus Drei</i></b></p>		
<p><b>SESSION 4</b> <b>4:40PM-5:40PM</b></p>	<p><b>Panel 10: The Re-Creation of Trauma and Memory</b></p>		
	<p><b>Dr Ella Dreyfus &amp; Dr Sylvia Griffin</b> <b>Chair: Dr Lynne Swarts</b></p>		

## DAY 1: Sunday 11 February

**5:40PM-  
6:00PM**

**Break**

**6:00PM-  
7:00PM**

**Keynote Lecture 2**

**Professor Susannah Heschel (Dartmouth College)**

'From a Topic to a Field: How Jewish Studies Challenged the  
Academy and Recreated Itself'

**7:00PM-  
8:00PM**

**Cocktail Reception**

**DAY 2: Monday 12 February**

<p><b>PARALLEL SESSION 5</b> 9:00AM- 10:30AM</p>	<p><b>PANEL 11 (ERC123) Holocaust Reverberations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Professor Zohar Segev</b> 'Diaspora Nationalism, Migration and Cultural Revival: American Jewry and the Challenge of European Jewish Diaspora in the Shadow of the Holocaust and the Cold War'</li> <li>• <b>Emily Ashdown (PhD candidate)</b> 'Complicating the Victims: Representations of Holocaust and Nazi Genocide Victims at Sites of Atrocity in Poland and Germany'</li> <li>• <b>Dr Darren O'Brien</b> 'The Nazi Nurses of the Bełżec Extermination Camp'</li> </ul> <p><b>Chair: Professor Emeritus Konrad Kwiet</b></p>	<p><b>PANEL 12 (ERC4) Synagogues: Re- Creating Sacred Space</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton</b> 'Creating and Re-Creating the Interior of The Great Synagogue'</li> <li>• <b>Dr Jana Vytrhlik</b> 'Sydney's Macquarie Street Synagogue: Re-Creation of Its Ideological Setting'</li> <li>• <b>Ruby Abrams (PhD candidate)</b> 'The Creation of the Synagogue'</li> </ul> <p><b>Chair: Dr Anna Hirsh</b></p>	<p><b>PANEL 13 (AUD) Jewish History &amp; Diverse Narratives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rabbi Dr Iris Yaniv</b> 'The Status of Women according to the Two Stories of Creation in Genesis and the Koran' (<i>via Zoom</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Dr Mateusz Majman</b> 'The Troubled Memory: The Tat Myth and Its Impact on the Ethnic Self-identification of the Mountain Jews' (<i>via Zoom</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Dr Jonnie Schnytzer</b> 'What World(s) Did God Create? On a fierce polemic among medieval kabbalists regarding creation, extinction &amp; Human-Animal Relations' (<i>via Zoom</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Chair: Dr Jonathan Kaplan</b></p>
<p>10:30AM- 11:00AM</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b></p>		
<p><b>SESSION 6</b> 11:00AM- 12:30PM</p>	<p><b>Panel 14: 'Old Wine in New Bottles': The Re-Creation of Antisemitism in 21st Century Australia</b></p> <p><b>Professor Emeritus Konrad Kwiet &amp; Jasmine Beinart (PhD candidate)</b> <b>Chair: Associate Professor Avril Alba</b></p>		



<p>12:30PM-1:30PM</p>	<p>Lunch</p>		
<p>PARALLEL SESSION 7 1:30PM-3:00PM</p>	<p><b>PANEL 15</b> (ERC123) Post-War Re-Creations</p>	<p><b>PANEL 16</b> (ERC4) Genesis Perspectives 2</p>	<p><b>PANEL 17</b> (AUD) The Re-Creation of Homeland</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr Elana Broch &amp; Julia Panter</b> ‘Can a Stolpersteine Help the Next Generation Stumble into the Past?’</li> <li>• <b>Dr Kate Green</b> ‘Cultural Re-creation: The Role of Theatre in Post-WWII DP Camps’</li> <li>• <b>Sarah Grandke (PhD candidate)</b> ‘(Re)Creation of Memory: Jewish and Christian Displaced Persons as memory activists after World War II’</li> </ul> <p><b>Chair: Associate Professor Jan Láníček</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr Natalie F Mylonas</b> ‘Creation and Emotion in Judaism: From Genesis to the Midrash and Beyond’</li> <li>• <b>Dovi Seldowitz (PhD candidate)</b> ‘Eternal Grudge of the Moon: Rabbinic Dramatisation of Genesis and Artistic Consecration’</li> <li>• <b>Odile Ellison</b> ‘BERESHIT: An artistic interpretation of the Creation Story’</li> </ul> <p><b>Chair: Rabbi Dr Yehonatan Elazar-DeMota</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr Carol Langley</b> ‘The Zohar, the Zionist Travelogue, Their Creation and Re-Creation’</li> <li>• <b>Professor Avner Holtzman</b> ‘O, My Land, My Homeland: The Traumatic Encounter of Hebrew Poetry with the Land of Israel’</li> <li>• <b>Chuck Volpe</b> ‘A Return to Jewishness’</li> </ul> <p><b>Chair: Dr Lynne Swarts</b></p>
	<p><b>Panel 18: Re-Creating Landscapes in Diverse Geographical Settings – A Panel Discussion</b></p>		
<p>SESSION 8 3:00PM-4:30PM</p>	<p><b>Professor Shaul Sapir (via Zoom), Dr Racheline Barda, Dr Shahar Burla</b> <b>Chair: Professor Emerita Suzanne Rutland</b></p>		
<p>4:30PM-4:40PM</p>	<p><b>Closing Remarks:</b> <b>Conference Convenors Dr Lynne Swarts &amp; Dr Jonathan Kaplan</b></p>		

## 'American Jews and the (Re) Creation of Ethnic Economies'

**Dr Michael R Cohen**

Stuart and Suzanne Grant Professor in the American Jewish Experience, Tulane University

11 February 2024

This talk aims to frame the theme of this conference, creation/re-creation, within the context of migration and economics. If re-creation indicates a resumption of creation after a period of change, or denotes reinvention, what does it mean to come to a new land and create or re-create a new economic life? What determines whether creation or re-creation, or both, will occur, and what do those answers tell us about the Jewish experience writ large? Though a deep dive into American Jewish economic history and historiography, this talk aims to provide us with food for thought for the next two days about our conference theme.



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**Michael Cohen** is The Sizeler Professor of Jewish Studies at Tulane University, and the author of *Cotton Capitalists: American Jewish Entrepreneurship in the Reconstruction Era* (2017), *The Birth of Conservative Judaism: Solomon Schechter's Disciples and the Creation of an American Religious Movement* (2012).

# 'From a Topic to a Field: How Jewish Studies Challenged the Academy and Recreated Itself'

**Dr Susannah Heschel**

**Eli M. Black Distinguished Professor, Dartmouth College**

**11 February 2024**

The *Wissenschaft des Judentums* has been depicted as participating in an 'objective' historicism cultivated by German historians of the 19th century. My own examination of the work of Abraham Geiger (1810-1874), one of the most important Jewish historians of that era, revealed to me a quite different situation: historians whose political and theological views were imbued in their research. I have described Geiger's scholarship on Second Temple Judaism as a reversal of the gaze and a revolt against the colonized. I arrived at those conceptualizations thanks to insights gained from my studies of feminist theory and postcolonial theory

Theory has always operated within Jewish Studies, but implicitly and unstated. What happened when the field moved from the margins into the academy, from seminaries to universities, where interpretive modalities were encouraged? Jewish Studies began to take shape at universities in Israel, the United States, Europe, and elsewhere (from North Africa to China) in the decades after World War II, during the same era as the rise of interdisciplinary programs and identity studies, including Women's Studies, Black Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, and, more recently, Sexuality Studies and Asian American Studies. Those new programs often address topics with implications for Jewish Studies, such as migration, diaspora, race, gender, performance, and more.

Today Jewish Studies has the opportunity to collaborate with each of those topics and also with theoretical modalities, including affect theory, history of emotions, queer theory, and thinkers such as Lacan. Doing so enhances our ability to recognize elements of Jewish experience that may make us adjust some of the conclusions we have drawn in the past, expand our ability to explain more fully elements of Jewish history that have eluded us, and place Jewish historical experience in a broader contextual framework.

My talk will begin with the contours of 19th century German historicism, especially its Christian and gender commitments. I will then turn to contemporary Jewish Studies and discuss aspects of the interactions with other interdisciplinary programs and interpretive theories, including comparisons of Jewish and Arab modernities, discoveries of Jewish women's experiences, and studies of the sadism of antisemitism.

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**Susannah Heschel** is The Eli M. Black Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College. Her scholarship includes a focus on Jewish feminism, Jewish and Protestant thought during the 19th and 20th centuries, and the history of antisemitism. Her 1995 book *On Being a Jewish Feminist* became an iconic masterpiece on Jewish feminist thought.



## 'The Re-Creation of Trauma and Memory'

**Dr Ella Dreyfus**

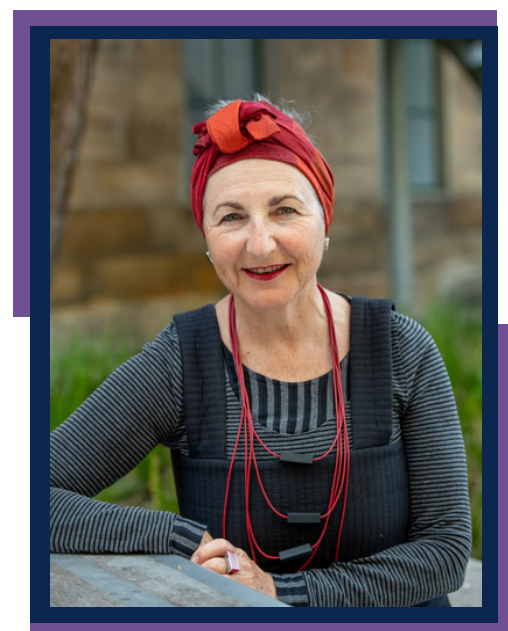
National Art School, Sydney

11 February 2024

This paper reports on a short documentary film titled *Dreyfus Drei*, which investigates themes of German-Jewish identity in the Diaspora, phases of migration, and the return to contested sites of trauma relating to experiences of children who escaped Germany before the Holocaust. The memories of trauma linger in the atmosphere, embodying and inhabiting specific locations, leaving their mark upon the psychological and physical environment in which they occurred, and the lives of subsequent generations. The film *Dreyfus Drei* focuses on three members of the artist/researcher/presenter's family, and the differences in the Creation, Re-creation of their German-Jewish identities. The protagonists, from three generations, are George Dreyfus, 95, Ella Dreyfus, 63 and Jonathan Dreyfus, 36. They each give personal testimonies and are interviewed individually and collectively. The film exposes their attitudes towards the reclamation of German citizenship, antisemitism, family history, politics, and collective memory. Further, they are active participants in the creative production of the film, in their roles as visual artists, writers, composers and musicians. The film mediates between the gaps of knowledge, feelings of displacement, painful silences and unspeakable losses of previous generations, by engaging with Dreyfus family members in Sydney, Melbourne and visiting their former homes in Wiesbaden, Wuppertal and Berlin. The practice-led research aimed to explore the psychic impact of 'transmitted trans-generational memories' (Hirsch, 2008) on descendants of survivors of traumas. In contemporary art and film this emotionally difficult terrain can be the subject of representation, forging a new visual language to register the experience of highly charged memories of the Holocaust and the way 'trauma is mediated to us in terms of embodied perception' (Bennett, 2002).

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**Dr Ella Dreyfus** is the writer, co-director, co-producer, and main protagonist of the film *Dreyfus Drei*. She is an award-winning, multi-disciplinary visual artist and senior academic at the National Art School, Sydney. Dreyfus' PhD in Fine Arts was titled *Shame and the Aesthetics of Intimacy in Contemporary Art*. Further information at [www.dreyfus3.com](http://www.dreyfus3.com) and [www.elladreyfus.com](http://www.elladreyfus.com)



## Dr Sylvia Griffin

National Art School, Sydney

11 February 2024

My contribution to Transgenerational memory and Jewish identity is in using a contemporary art practice to explore issues around being parented by Holocaust survivors. For those of us who grew up with our parent's unresolved trauma, their grief and burden of loss left many of us with feelings such as hopelessness or guilt. I believe that art can be a powerful means of expressing feelings common to those who have suffered various forms of mass trauma either first- or second-hand where words have failed. On discovering the discourse on postmemory (or trans-generational) trauma during postgraduate studies, I gained a deeper understanding of cultural trauma and family dynamics. Incorporating this into my practice led me to seek various artistic means to express complex sorrow. The notion of absence, for example, can be expressed by deploying ephemeral and alternative materiality; while remembrance can be expressed by referencing rituals that signal connection and continuity, such as the lighting of candles or the placing of stones on a loved one's grave. I will refer to some of the work I have produced that demonstrate this including textile works, sculptural work and videos. Many of these works were conceived as alternatives to the role that monuments and memorials have traditionally played in assisting the mourning process. My PhD dissertation, 'Inscribing memory: Art and the Place of Personal Expressions of Grief in Memorial Culture,' argued for the role that contemporary art can play in imparting meaningful remembrance and solace – engaging both artist and viewer

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**Sylvia Griffin** is an artist of Hungarian-Jewish descent, graduating with a PhD (Sydney College of the Arts) in 2017. Her materially diverse practice incorporates sculpture, installation, textiles, video, and photography. She has exhibited nationally and internationally and developed site-specific works. She has been shortlisted for several national awards and received various grants, scholarships, and prizes.



## 'Old wine in new bottles: the recreation of Antisemitism in 21st century Australia' – Panel Discussion

**Professor Emeritus Konrad Kwiet & Jasmin Beinart**

**12 February 2024**

This panel will explore the contemporary manifestations and of antisemitism in Australia at schools, universities, the workplace and the online sphere. The discussion will also focus on the surge in, and re-creation of, anti-Jewish bigotry in light of the Israel-Hamas war and the impact such hatred has on local communities. Gaining an understanding of this phenomenon and its modern causes can provide a means to address this escalating of a problem which has implications for the whole of society.




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**Emeritus Professor Konrad Kwiet** is a German-born historian and child survivor of the Holocaust. Formerly the Pratt Foundation Professor in Modern Jewish History and Holocaust Studies at The University of Sydney and the Chief Historian of the Australian War Crimes Commission. He is Emeritus Professor in German and European Studies at Macquarie University, was Pratt Foundation Professor in Modern Jewish History and Holocaust Studies at the University of Sydney, and has been Resident Historian at the Sydney Jewish Museum since its foundation. Konrad is the author of 10 books and over 80 articles, chapters and historical dictionary entries. His research interests include: Modern Jewish history, with specific focus on the History of the Holocaust, Antisemitism, German-Jewish relations, Nazi war crimes, German and exile studies.

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**Jasmine Beinart** is a PhD candidate in the School of Humanities at the University of Adelaide and Analyst at the Online Hate Prevention Institute. Her PhD research topic is antisemitism in contemporary Australia, and in her role at the Online Hate Prevention Institute she focuses on antisemitism on social media. Previously Jasmine worked at the Adelaide and Melbourne Holocaust museums, and undertook internships at Yad Vashem and the Wiener Holocaust Library. She holds a MA in Holocaust Studies from the University of Haifa and an Honours degree in History from the University of Adelaide.

## 'Re-creating Landscapes in Diverse Geographical Settings' – Panel Discussion

12 February 2024

Three distinguished scholars will explore and debate re-creating landscapes in diverse geographical settings – architecture, Jewish identity, and politics of the Israeli Diaspora. The panel will be chaired by renowned scholar Professor Emerita Suzanne D Rutland, OAM, PhD.

### 'A second wind for Jerusalem's magnificent windmill'

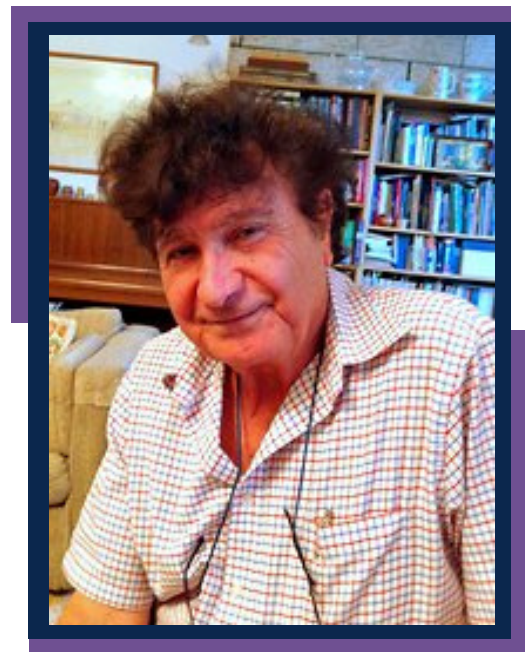
#### **Professor Shaul Sapir**

**The Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

Professor Sapir, a Professor of Historical Geography at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was instrumental in renovating and reviving Sir Moses Montefiore's Windmill, a quintessential Jerusalem landmark, to its full glory after 137 years of neglect. Originally built in 1857, the cupola-capped English-styled mill located in Mishkenot Sha'ananim is the first Jewish neighbourhood to be built outside the walls of the Old City so 19th-century Jerusalem residents could be self-supporting.

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**Professor Shaul Sapir** has been a Professor of Historical Geography at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem since 1975, and at the Department of Geography at the David Yellin Teachers College, Jerusalem. He is a renowned scholar of history, geography, archaeology and education. Born in Bombay, (now Mumbai), India, Professor Sapir researched his roots and the history of this amazing city, its regal causeways and public spaces, which culminated in several books including, *Bombay: Exploring the Jewish Urban Heritage*, and *Bombay/Mumbai: (14) City Heritage Walks*. Professor Sapir has published numerous articles on a wide range of subjects, including 'Jerusalem through the Ages,' the 'Land of Israel in the Modern Era,' and 'Historical Geography of the Bene Israel in Bombay and the Konkan – Their Synagogues and Prayer Houses,' which is due to be released soon.



## 'A Minority within a Minority: Identity of Egyptian Jews in Australia'

### **Dr Racheline Barda**

**Independent scholar**

Dr Barda will examine the migration and integration experiences of the 2,000 Egyptian Jews who settled in Australia. Like most refugees, the Jews of Egypt suffered the trauma of dispossession, expulsion, and dislocation. However, their experience only attracted the attention of Australian sociologists and historians after Dr Barda gave them a voice to tell the stories of their rich cultural heritage through the oral testimonies of first-hand witnesses of a vanished world.

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**Dr Racheline Barda, OAM** has a Ph.D. from the University of Sydney for her comparative study of the migration experience of the Jews of Egypt in Australia and France. Dr Barda was born in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1939 and migrated to Australia with her husband in 1958 in the wake of the 1956 Suez War. She is the author of *Egyptian-Jewish-Emigrés in Australia*. Dr Barda lectured at the University of Sydney for twenty years on Egyptian Jewry from antiquity to the modern period, focussing on the Cairo Genizah. She also specialises in Holocaust studies and has been a volunteer guide at the Sydney Jewish Museum since 1996.



## 'Fighting for democracy back home: "Ausraelis" new diasporic identity'

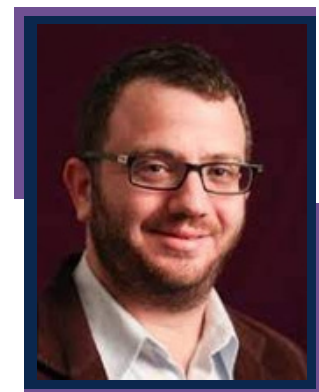
### **Dr Shahar Burla**

**Independent scholar**

The last three years, and more intensively since the formation of the new Israeli government, have witnessed a new political activism and a powerful sense of purpose by the Israeli Diaspora. In Australia, a network of pro-democracy protests has emerged in Australia's capital cities under the name 'UnXeptable Australia – Saving Israeli Democracy'. This new political activism pursued by the 'Ausraelis' is a recent development, adding another layer of complexity and network to their diasporic identity.

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**Dr Shahar Burla** is an academic researcher, lecturer, philanthropy expert, and contributing editor to Plus61J Media. Dr Burla holds an MA in Political Science from the Hebrew University and a PhD in Political Science from Bar-Ilan University. He researched and analysed complex social and cultural issues such as the 'political imagination', Diaspora Studies and the Modern History of Political Thought. Dr Burla is the author of 'Political Imagination in the Diaspora: The Construction of a Pro-Israeli Narrative' and co-editor of *Australia and Israel: A Diasporic, Cultural and Political Relationship*.





## Abstracts (alphabetical by author surname)

### 'The Creation of the Synagogue'

**Ruby Abrams**

**AA School of Architecture in London**

Synagogues offer a rare insight into a continually changing institution, by a community who never chose to be nomadic and whose rituals were grounded the distinct geographic location of the Jerusalem Temple. The synagogue is often perceived as a replacement for the Temple; however, each synagogue has been designed to facilitate the rituals of different communities resulting in often radically distinctive forms as a response to both the loss of sanctity and the desire to build another. As a successor to the Jerusalem Temple, the synagogue has become the vehicle that enabled Judaism to become movable, and hence survive. Purposely designed to house holy, its liturgical function gained dominance over its reproduction generating a sequence of sacred Jewish Architecture. Synagogues are not replicas of the Temple, rather a dynamic dialectic reaction to the constraints of both Rabbinic Sages and the respective local culture. This paper will trace the development of the synagogue in the Diaspora and its unique forms as a reaction to the loss of the Holy of Holies and the recreation of a religion outside of the Holy Land.

*Ruby Abrams is an architect, educator and researcher in London. Since 2021 she has been doing her PhD entitled 'Sacred Jewish Architecture after the Destruction of the Second Temple' under the supervision of Pier Vittorio Aureli and Maria Sheherazade Guidici at the AA School of Architecture in London. As an Architect, she has worked for various architecture firms in London specialising in restoration in conservation areas. As an educator, she has been teaching architectural history and theory at several institutions in London and Cambridge since 2020, after graduating from the University of Sydney and the Architectural Association.*

### 'Australian Holocaust Memory: Material Histories of Trauma: Evolving Objects of Memory'

**Associate Professor Avril Alba**

**University of Sydney**

As the Australian community witnesses the ageing and ultimate passing of the survivor generation, more and more such objects will pass into the care of collecting institutions. The challenges involved in sensitively curating and displaying these memory objects are immense. For example, the survivor's understanding of the meaning and value of the object is central to its importance yet may be at odds with how and where the object is ultimately displayed. Or the meaning that a survivor may have originally attributed to a particular object may change over time. Finally, if the object was donated by a descendent, an extra layer of interpretation might be taken into consideration, as the object becomes indicative of the intergenerational transmission of memory. In all these instances, the propensity for the object to 'tell a different story' is clear. If, however, we remain mired in a conception of trauma that resists transformation, the alternate meanings contained in these objects may remain latent. In this presentation, I explore how a more fluid interpretation of the role of objects in negotiating Holocaust memory could afford a more fulsome understanding of the complex relationship between objects and the traumatic memories they signify for survivors, their descendants, and for the museum professionals who seek to communicate their meanings to diverse audiences.

*Avril Alba is Associate Professor in Holocaust studies and Jewish civilization in Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney, Australia. She publishes in the areas of Holocaust memory and representation and has also curated several major exhibitions on these topics. She is currently working on an ARC Discovery project, 'The Memory of the Holocaust in Australia' and Linkage Project 'Evaluating the Impact of Holocaust Museum Education'.*

## 'Complicating the Victims: Representations of Holocaust and Nazi Genocide Victims at Sites of Atrocity in Poland and Germany'

**Emily Ashdown**  
Deakin University

Almost 80 years since the liberation of Nazi sites of atrocity such as extermination and concentration camps in Europe many of which have become heritage sites, how they have been managed and how their histories have been communicated to visitors through different interpretive strategies has changed significantly since the end of the Second World War. This includes how victims of the Nazi regime have been understood and represented in museum, exhibitions and interpretative signage at these sites. However, there are risks that these sites perpetuate a one-dimensional image of Jewish identity, as well as a binary between Jewish and non-Jewish identities at Nazi sites of atrocity. Through applying intersectional theory and drawing from scholarship this paper this paper will examine how the categorisation of groups imposed artificially by genocidaires does not illuminate the nuanced facets of these victims. Thus, museology representations of the Holocaust rarely represent where these identities intersect. Further, by examining how Jewish victims are represented in museums, these individuals will be complicated in a way that gives them back the totality of their humanity while also acknowledging the ways in which Jews in contemporary society are more than just their Jewish identity.

*Emily Ashdown is a PhD Candidate in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Deakin University. Her research focuses on the representation of those deemed Jewish and non-Jewish victim at Nazi sites of atrocity in Poland and Germany focusing on Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Dachau and Hadamar. She completed her BA (Honours) in History (2022) looking at the representation of women in Armenian Genocide and Holocaust memorials in the United States. She also completed her MA in Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies (2023) where she researched how we deal with objects of historical significance that have shameful histories attached to them.*

## 'Can a Stolpersteine Help the Next Generation Stumble into the Past?'

**Dr Elana Broch & Julia Panter**

Stolpersteine were laid in Bochum, Germany for Elana's paternal grandfather's family, although not for him ('whereabouts unknown'). However, the accompanying writeup led to a connection with a second cousin (who never knew about us and vice versa). To a genealogist the accuracy of the accompanying information seems crucial, but to the wider community, which is most important: the placement of the stone, the accuracy of the information, or the involvement of the next generation. We believe they are all important beyond measure. Our family has wanted to place Stolpersteine in Cologne to pay tribute to Rosa Lichtmann Broch née Holler's two husbands, four siblings, three in-laws and one nephew killed by the Nazis. An unexpected request from Tilberg, Netherlands to place a stone for the great-aunt prompted a detailed exploration into her and the niece and nephews she was sheltering. Many people ask where the stones are – 'In front of their last address of choice'. Of course, even that is not simple to define. Rosa's son (our father and grandfather) remembered his family through weekly family gatherings destroyed by the war, but it appears that none of them were actually in Germany by 1940. To put the stones in Cologne would be misleading—or would it? You notice this submission has two authors—mother and daughter, a genealogist and a researcher in Memory Studies. By collaborating across generations, we hope to demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between memory studies and genealogy.

*Elana Broch (PhD, MLIS) recently retired from her position as a research librarian at Princeton University. A psychometrician by training, she is interested in how genealogists 'keep found things found' and in increasing the utility of archives within both the amateur and professional genealogy communities. Her interest in genealogy began when she discovered that her grandfather (who she'd had never known about) was a 1941 'euthanasia' victim. More recently, her research has expanded to other Holocaust-era family members.*

*Julia Panter holds a master's degree in linguistics from the City University of New York Graduate Center. Her undergraduate thesis focused on the impact of language on national memory within the context of post-Soviet Russia. As an undergraduate, she earned a certificate in Museum Studies. She relocated to Melbourne, Australia in January 2023.*

## 'Humour and Sarcasm in the Biblical Creation Stories'

**Dr Stephen Cook**  
University of Sydney

Puns, wordplays, and sarcasm occur frequently in the Hebrew Bible, often with a humorous effect, and their purpose, according to Hershey Friedman, is that God 'is more understandable and less aloof when he is sarcastic.' Although not generally regarded as a comedic text, the second account of creation in Genesis contains several humorous elements. This paper examines some of these comedic features and analyses the function of humour in the theological and historic contexts of the Genesis narratives.

*Dr Stephen Cook* was awarded a PhD in Biblical Studies by The University of Sydney for his thesis on reading the book of Jonah as satire. His research interests include the use of irony, parody, satire and humour in the Hebrew Bible. He currently teaches Hebrew and Biblical Studies at The University of Sydney and is the NSW coordinator for the Fellowship for Biblical Studies. Recent publications include "Foiled by the Hand of a Woman": Irony in the Book of Judith,' in *Irony in the Bible: Between Subversion and Innovation* (Leiden: Brill, 2023).

## 'Liminal Banilejos in the Diaspora in Search of Meaning and Understanding'

**Rabbi Dr Yehonatan Elazar-DeMota**  
University of Antwerpen

In recent years island scholarship has reflected broader shifts in critical thought and demonstrated a growing interest in tropes of suspension (Berlant, 2016), the wake (Sharpe, 2016), opacity (Glissant, 1997) and other, less coherently graspable, ways of framing relationality when exploring the ongoing legacies of colonialism. This paper discusses an anthropological and sociological study of 23 female subjects which was conducted in the Dominican Republic city of Bani, during June of 2015, utilizing questions found in the Spanish and Portuguese inquisitorial manuals. On the surface, the banilejo people appear to be devout Catholics. However, having had access to their personal lives, it was evident that their peculiar family traditions and folklore hinted at their Jewish-converso identities. The study also included the organization of a genetic database of the mitochondrial DNA sequences of the subjects. As a result of the entire study, many descendants of the banilejos in the diaspora find themselves betwixt and between while seeking to understand the meaning of the taboos and superstitions transmitted to them by their ancestors. Utilizing Victor Turner's *communitas* and *liminitas* theory, this paper seeks to understand how the concepts of time, memory, and spirituality converge on the island of Hispaniola. Incidentally, banilejos in the diaspora are suspended in time as they attempt to make sense of their past and recreate themselves in the present.

*Dr Yehonatan Elazar-DeMota* holds an MA in Anthropology and Religious Studies from Florida International University and a PhD in International Law from the University of Amsterdam. He is a terminal post-doctorate research fellow in the political history and urban history departments at the University of Antwerp.

## 'Jews of the Silk Route: The Bukhari Experience of Re-Creation'

**Mark Ellison**

Jews first came to Central Asia in the Second Temple period as merchants began to follow the Silk Road. By the 12th century, there were as many Jews in Samarkand as in Sydney today, with others in Bukhara and Tashkent. We will see how the community re-created itself every hundred years, while oscillating between isolation and integration with the global Jewish world. How did this re-creation come about, and what lessons can today's far flung Jewish communities draw from this amazing story?

*Mark Ellison*, MA (Cantab), MBA, FCA, CPA, GAICD. Mark Ellison has lived and worked in the UK, USA, France, Monaco, Kazakhstan, Hong Kong and now Melbourne. Beyond his career in finance, he has researched a number of Jewish topics, served as a member of the Board of the Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong, and occasionally lectures on Jewish history.

## 'BERESHIT: An artistic interpretation of the Creation Story'

### **Odile Ellison (Elido)**

Although the Bible creation story is well known, it remains mysterious and ambiguous. Through my paintings of the story, I have tried to visually describe my interpretation of the events – from chaos to a thriving planet. Each painting describes a stage of creation, each one raises questions about the story and brings a response on a creative level. We will use these 12 paintings as a base to develop a deeper understanding of the creation story, albeit a very personal one.

*Parisian by birth, **Odile Ellison (Elido)**, after living for 4 years in Hong-Kong, now lives in Melbourne. She started painting in Paris in 1999 and her works include oil paintings, cartoons and greeting cards. Elido has exhibited in Paris, London and Melbourne. She has a particular fascination for karsts, limestone hills strangely shaped by rain and wind. Other muses are her many travels, as well as her Jewish culture.*

## 'Creating and Re-Creating the Interior of The Great Synagogue'

### **Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton**

#### **The Great Synagogue Sydney**

When The Great Synagogue of Sydney was designed in the early 1870s it was modelled on English synagogues that had been built over the previous two centuries. In particular, it was a recreation of the latest synagogues to be built in London and Liverpool and so connected the Jewish colonists with their mother communities. This included a central Bimah (reading platform), which reflected the continued conservatism of Anglo-Jewry, which kept a central Bimah as part of its standard synagogue plan until the 1890s, at least twenty years longer than European communities. In 1907 the Synagogue interior was recreated, when the religious and lay leaders of the congregation decided to import the fashionable ethos and aesthetic and moved the Bimah to the front of the interior, in imitation of synagogues such as the Dohany in Budapest and the New Synagogue in Berlin. It now reflected the early twentieth century acculturated vision of a synagogue. Finally, as the first quarter of the twenty first century comes to an end, The Great Synagogue is being recreated again, as the Bimah is restored to its central position. This is not only a recreation of the 1878 design, but also a contemporary recreation, reflecting current needs for an inclusive and connected service. This presentation will track these creations and recreations and their religious, cultural and social significance.

***Benjamin Elton** read History at Queens' College Cambridge and then received his PhD from the University of London (Birkbeck). His book Britain's Chief Rabbis and the Religious Character of Anglo-Jewry 1880-1970 was published in 2009. Since then he has written in academic journals on British and Australian Jewish religious history.*

## 'Learning From the Past? Educational Efficacy in Holocaust Memorial Museums in Australia'

### **Dr Donna-Lee Frieze & Associate Professor Steven Cooke**

#### **Deakin University & Melbourne Holocaust Museum**

Holocaust education has been a deliberate component of Australian forms of Holocaust remembrance since the inception of the country's first Holocaust museum in Melbourne in 1984. Created soon after, Sydney's Jewish Museum has incorporated similar initiatives. On the eve of the creation of Holocaust museums or resource centres in every state and territory in Australia, our Australian Research Council-funded research project investigates the long term effects and affects of Holocaust education through museums on Year 10 students and asks not only what students learn at these museums but how does that learning play a role in our civil, civic and multicultural diasporian nation-state? This paper will provide an overview of the research on the long-term effects of these Holocaust education programs in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney and then focus on preliminary results from our pilot study. Developed in partnership with the Holocaust museums in those cities, the study raises questions about how we know these programs are working and whether learning about difficult pasts contributes to the development of ethical behaviour in individuals and broader contemporary society Through a unique methodology, Visual Research Methodologies, the research aims to capture affective learning and rigorously interrogate the potential for ethical and behavioural transformation.

**Donna-Lee Frieze** is a genocide studies scholar and a Senior Research Fellow with the Centre for Contemporary Histories at Deakin University in Melbourne. Donna was the 2013 and 2014 Senior Research Scholar at the Centre for Jewish History in NYC. She has been an academic advisor for several films and exhibitions on genocide. She has published widely on twentieth century genocides in relation to philosophy and cultural studies and is the editor and transcriber of Raphael Lemkin's autobiography, *Totally Unofficial*. She is past Chair of the Committee on the Holocaust Genocide and Crimes against Humanity in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and past First Vice President of the International Association of Genocide Scholars.

**Steven Cooke** is an associate professor of cultural heritage and museum studies at the School of Humanities and Social Science, Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University. He is a cultural and historical geographer, and an expert on issues related to heritage, memory and identity, particularly the spatialities of difficult histories. He has published widely on the cultural heritage of war and genocide, including three highly commended monographs. He was appointed to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 2015, where he sits on the Memorials and Museums Working Group.

## 'The Memory of North African Jews in the Diaspora'

**Professor Mechtild Gilzmer**

Saarland University

My contribution tries to explore the construction of memory by North-African Jews in the Diaspora. I will first trace the history and historiography of Jews in Arab countries and point out their characteristics. This will lead me to look more precisely at the concept of 'Sephardic Jews', its meaning and application as a key-notion in the memory building for Jews from Arab countries in the Diaspora nowadays. In the context of postcolonial diaspora, the term Sephardic turned into a central concept of identity among Maghrebi Jews. I will focus my analysis on three selected works of Sephardic Jews who live and write in the diaspora. These are the grandchildren of Jews who migrated in the second half of the 20th century from North Africa to Israel, France or Quebec. Eliette Abécassis' (France) novel *Sépharade* and Kobi Oz (Israel) lyrics highlight the Sephardic history, culture and tradition. Both artists try a re-orientalization; they accentuate typical Sephardic cultural elements and introduce them into a nationalist discourse. In comparison, Isabelle Azoulay (Germany) shows in *De Gaulle and me. A story from Casablanca* the importance of the Arab-Jewish cultural contact in Franco-Maghrebi history and elaborates the openness of identity construction processes.

*Professor Mechtild Gilzmer is Professor of Contemporary French Studies at Saarland University. Her research concerns French History in the 20th century in a gender perspective. Mechtild Gilzmer has been a Visiting Professor at the University of Sydney/Australia, School of Languages in 2017, where she gave lectures on 'Contemporary Jewish Identity' in the Major for Hebrew and Biblical Studies and Jewish Studies.*

## '(Re)Creation of Memory: Jewish and Christian Displaced Persons as Memory Activists after World War II'

**Sarah Grandke**

University of Regensburg

After liberation survivors of Concentration Camps tried to overcome their traumatic past and find a way back to civilian life. Those who decided not to go back to their country of origin were mostly in Displaced Person Camps in Germany and Austria. While waiting for years in the lands of their former persecutors and before leaving the DP Camps for emigration, some of them became energetic memory activists (Gutman/Wüstenberg 2023). They were amongst the first to build hundreds, if not thousands of memorials in commemoration of the victims of Nazi persecution. Their aim was to remember those who were murdered and to (re)create a group identity. Whereas more research on Jewish DPs and Jewish commemoration has been done this is not the case for non-Jewish/Christian DPs. While there was cooperation on some projects often both groups chose to work independently. At the same time, Jewish DPs did not want to participate in predominantly Christian commemorative projects that obscured the antisemitism of the non-Jews. This paper will examine the case of the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial which was built in 1946/47 and continued to develop until the early 1950s. It was one of the first Concentration Camp Memorial Sites in Germany ever built.

***Sarah Grandke**, curator and historian, currently Visiting Research Fellow at the Sydney Jewish Museum; PhD candidate at the Institute for Eastern and Southeast European Studies at the University of Regensburg about Displaced Persons as memory activists and the case of Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial (advisor: Prof. Dr. Guido Hausmann). Activist at Aid Network for Survivors of Nazi Persecution in Ukraine. Until June 2023 she was curator at the Hamburg Documentation Center ‘denk.mal Hannoverscher Bahnhof’ on deportations during World War II. From 2016 to 2018, Sarah was staff of Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial and worked previously at the Munich Documentation Center for the History of National Socialism and Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial. She studied Eastern European Studies at the LudwigMaximilians-University in Munich and attended several long-term research trips to Poland, Ukraine and Belarus.*

## ‘Cultural Re-Creation: The Role of Theatre in Post-WWII DP Camps’

**Dr Kate Green**  
Sydney Jewish Museum

This paper will investigate the interplay between notions of recovery and culture. Jews in DP camps found ways to ‘recover’ cultural traditions which had nearly been lost under the Nazi regime. In turn, the enactment of culture through theatre productions was an important element in the personal recovery of survivors after the traumas of the Holocaust. Theatre performances worked on multiple levels to help survivors rebuild concepts of themselves as individuals and as a community. Firstly, the presentation of old works enabled survivors to feel connection to the past, when so many other elements of the past had been lost. The recreation of works in Yiddish, or works from the traditionally Jewish canon, represented a victory: the survival of Jewish culture in spite of the Nazis’ attempt to obliterate all traces of Jewish life. Attending the theatre, as they may have done prior to the Holocaust, gave survivors a sense of normality in a world which remained precarious and complex, and allowed a brief respite from the difficulty of life in DP camps. Finally, the creation of new works gave writers, performers and audiences the opportunity to explore their recent past, and process their experiences in a form that is now recognised as therapeutic.

***Dr Kate Green** has been an educator for over twenty years. They began their career working in secondary and tertiary education, and now works as a historian and educator at the Sydney Jewish Museum. Kate’s current research focuses on theatre in post-WWII DP camps, as well as the ways in which gender affected experiences of the Holocaust.*

## ‘Jewish Women's Fertility as a Source of Creative Expression’

**Viva Hammer**  
Hadassah-Brandeis Institute and Australian National University

Religious Jewish women's childbearing patterns are radically different from their Jewish and non-Jewish peers. Immediately after World War II as the developed world experienced a baby boom, religious Jewish women had smaller than average families. As the baby boom ended and birth-rates declined in the developed world, birth rates for religious Jewish women began to rise and continue to be high. I have studied religious mothers of large families for twenty years, and have found that religious mothers want large families. Their mothers and grandmothers did not have large families and they created a new mode of family building. They see child bearing and rearing as creative acts and acts of service to the Jewish people. Contrary to the dominant trope of child rearing being in conflict with women's roles outside the home, religious women believe that the public and private creativity are both necessary and possible and ideally, seamless. Making it possible for women to raise large families is of paramount importance to the religious community which has created institutional infrastructures centred around marriage and family building. The creation of the large family model is a joint exercise of women, men and leadership. The drive for religious women's family creation is the question this paper intends to address.

***Viva Hammer** holds appointments at the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, Brandeis University, and the Crawford School of Public Policy at the Australian National University. She was Legislation Counsel at the Joint Committee on Taxation in the US Congress and at the Office of Tax Policy in the US Treasury. She has conducted research on Jewish family size for over twenty years.*

## 'A Reimagining of Perec Willenberg's Częstochowa Synagogue Ceiling'

**Dr Anna Hirsh**

**Melbourne Holocaust Museum**

In the 1920s, Polish-Jewish artist Perec Willenberg (1874-1947) revived the interior of the Old Częstochowa Synagogue. Willenberg implemented new modernist and avant-garde styles, including the organic aesthetics of Art Nouveau, to create stunning murals prolific with Jewish liturgical and mystical symbolism, and interwoven with Hebrew calligraphy. The synagogue was destroyed by the Nazis during the Holocaust; only a few photographs and a post-war drawing exist that capture Willenberg's stunning artwork. In the 2020s, the Melbourne Holocaust Museum embarked on a major redevelopment, including a new Permanent Exhibition that features a 'Częstochowa Room' to represent pre-war life in a Jewish-majority city in Poland. The ceiling feature is a reimagining of Willenberg's Częstochowa synagogue ceiling by Anna Hirsh, reconstructed via the photographs and drawing, and referencing Willenberg's other works, along with iconography from other synagogues in the vicinity. This presentation will explore Willenberg's artwork and its symbolism, the artistic processes and considerations, and the meaning connected to the ceiling mural's recreation.

*Dr Anna Hirsh is the co-President of the Australian Association for Jewish Studies. She is the Manager of Collections and Research at the Melbourne Holocaust Museum, and an Honorary Fellow at Deakin University.*

## 'The Secondary Uses of Primary Sources: Holocaust Artefacts in Their Curatorial and Pedagogical Evolution'

**Dr Simon Holloway**

**Melbourne Holocaust Museum**

In 1944, two young men in the Lodz Ghetto hid various items underground in the hopes that they would recover them. Their names were Abram and Bono, and their intention with these objects was to show the world what had transpired during the years of their incarceration. They were successful in retrieving some of those items after the war, and when the Melbourne Holocaust Museum (formerly, the Jewish Holocaust Centre) was established in 1984 those objects were put on display. This paper will consider the evolving role that those objects have played: in terms of their original function within the ghetto, in terms of their intended use when being salvaged, in terms of their role in Melbourne as artefacts, and in terms of the use to which replicas of these items are being put in school programs today. By considering the historical and pedagogical evolution of these items, this paper will remark upon the continuing evolution of Holocaust engagement within museums.

*Dr Simon Holloway has a PhD in Classical Hebrew and an MA in Ancient History. He served for six years as an Education Officer at the Sydney Jewish Museum, where he had the great privilege of working very closely with a number of Holocaust survivors, whom he interviewed for students, for public and for film. While there, Simon delivered seminars for students and for teachers on Nazi racial science, Jewish resistance and the history of the Holocaust, and was a sessional academic at the University of Sydney, where he lectured on Classical Hebrew and Biblical Studies. At present, he serves as the Manager of Adult Education and Academic Engagement at the Melbourne Holocaust Museum.*

## 'O, My Land, My Homeland: The Traumatic Encounter of Hebrew Poetry with the Land of Israel'

**Professor Avner Holtzman**  
Tel Aviv University

The subject of this paper is the changing attitude of Hebrew poetry to the Land of Israel in recent generations, as part of the creation of modern Hebrew culture. The paper reviews expressions of longing for Zion scattered throughout ancient Hebrew literature (in the Bible, prayer, and poetry of the Middle Ages), but these are presented as a contrasting background to illustrate the transformation that took place in the image of the Land of Israel when it turned from an elevated symbolic entity into a concrete, real landscape. The paper discusses various manifestations of the traumatic meeting with the land in the successive periods of Zionist immigration, through the eyes of prominent poets who related to the subject in a wide range of positions, from messianic ecstasy or ideological enthusiasm to tormented realistic sobriety. The conclusion that emerges is that every period in the history of immigration to Israel, before the establishment of the Jewish State and after, produced its own poets, who gave expression to their elaborate encounter with the land. As the poet Noah Stern put it in his poem 'Smells' (1935), it combines hallucinations and disappointments, tortures and pleasures, closeness and rejection, intimacy and alienation. Each new poem about the meeting with the land is another chapter in a never-ending story.

*Avner Holtzman is a Professor of Hebrew Literature in Tel-Aviv University and a member of the Israel National Academy of Sciences and Humanities, as well as the Academy of the Hebrew Language. His English publications include editing the Hebrew Literature section of The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe (YIVO and Yale University Press, 2008) and Hayim Nahman Bialik: Poet of Hebrew (Yale University Press, 2017). He has published 16 books and edited about 40 more books on various aspects of modern Hebrew Literature.*

## 'The Role of Water in Israel's (Re-)Creation in the Biblical Transjordan'

**Dr Deborah Hurn**  
Avondale and Australian Institute of Archaeology

The nation of Israel was both created and re-created in escaping Egypt through the Red Sea and entering Canaan through the Jordan River. Canaan lay on the west side of the Jordan, but having defeated the Amorite kings in the Transjordan, the Israelite tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh returned to settle the east side also. According to the Torah, Israel was the fourth wave of ethnic immigration in the Transjordan. The first nations of Horim, Emim, and Zamzummim had been dispossessed (in Abraham's lifetime) by Edom, Moab, and Ammon in the south, and the Rephaim had been displaced (in Moses' lifetime) by Amorites in the north. The borders of these successive settlements are obscure in the biblical narrative, and atlases differ in depicting the ancient regions. A new hydrological model reveals that the four great river catchments of the Transjordan — Zered, Arnon, Jabbok, and Yarmuk — consistently correspond to the four national territories in each of the four early settlement periods. With this original insight it is possible to locate unknown biblical lands like Ar, Jazer, and the Argob, and to delineate Ammon's enclave after the Amorite and Israelite conquests. Thus it turns out that water plays an essential role in Israel's deliverance and inheritance, as evident in the Transjordanian regions. This presentation uses custom-made maps to clarify the stages of ethnic immigration in the Transjordan throughout the early biblical period.

*Deborah Hurn has a BTh(Hons) from Vose Seminary in Perth WA and a PhD in Biblical Geography from Avondale University in Cooranbong NSW. Her special interest is the wilderness itinerary of the Israelite migration from Egypt to Canaan.*



## 'Crypto Judaism as a Process of Cultural Creation and Recreation'

**Professor Seth Kunin**  
Curtin University

This paper examines the role of cultural creativity framed as creation and recreation within crypto-Judaism in New Mexico. It argues that all cultural activity is essentially an act of creation or at the very least improvisation in line with Bourdieu's analysis. The paper focuses on a song book written by a modern crypto-Jew and explores how the author used a sophisticated rhetorical structure to provide the basis for validating her own cultural creativity through original songs and poetry. The paper concludes that despite or perhaps through creativity and improvisation the creative material remains highly structured and reflective of wider crypto-Jewish cultural underlying structure.

*Professor Seth Kunin is Deputy Vice-Chancellor Global at Curtin University, having previously worked in senior roles at Aberdeen and Durham universities in the UK. He holds a PhD from Cambridge University in Social Anthropology. His research has focused off the development and application of neo-structuralist theory to religious material – initially in respect to biblical and rabbinic texts and for the last 20 years recently to crypto-Judaism. He has published widely, with books including The Logic of Incest: A Structuralist analysis of Hebrew Mythology (1995), We Think What We Eat (2004), Juggling Identities: Identity and Authenticity among the Crypto-Jews of the American South West (2009), and Reflections on a New Mexican Crypto-Jewish Songbook (2023).*

## 'The Zohar, the Zionist Travelogue, Their Creation and Re-Creation'

**Dr Carol Langley**  
Sydney Jewish Museum

The Zohar and Zionist travel literature both involve the journeying of Jews through the Land of Israel. In the former, it's that of Rabbi Shim'on bar Yochai and his companions as they strive to unpack the Torah and gain insight into its hidden meanings; and in the latter, it's that of Diaspora Jews touring the Jewish communities, extolling the progress they are making, and thus reinforcing the Zionist narrative. Both the Zohar and Zionist travel literature also seek to inspire. Beyond that, the two have seemingly little connection. This paper however conducts a reading of a classic Zionist travelogue, *Nous Venons de Palestine* (We Come from Palestine) through the lens of The Zohar, exploring their distinct commonalities across a range of parameters, including purpose, narrative, language, biblical engagement, kabbalistic symbolism, mystical journey, eroticism and the desired, 'historical moment', and status of the feminine. It then invokes theories of intertextuality to explore how the Zohar and this Zionist travelogue each drive the other's creation, re-creation and/or transformation.

*Carol Langley is an author and writer with a PhD in Theatre from UNSW. In recent years, she has been researching the pasts of Middle Eastern and North African Jews, and she is now employed at the Sydney Jewish Museum as Sephardi and Mizrahi Community Liaison.*

## 'Patterson of Israel'

### Dr Henry Lew OAM

Lieutenant-Colonel John Henry Patterson (1867-1947), the godfather of Israel's Defence Forces, helped create and then led the first 20th century Jewish Army; at the same time recreating the concept of a Jewish Army, something which had not existed since 135CE. It was because of this that Vladimir Jabotinsky described him as one of the most significant Christian figures our people have encountered since 135 CE. Patterson, who had never met a Jew until 1915, led Jewish troops at Gallipoli, and accompanying the Anzac Light Horsemen on their Palestine campaign. His story was deliberately swept under the carpet of history by General Allenby, an opponent of the Balfour Declaration, who wanted an Arabic Islamic state in Palestine; by the Australians Bean and Gullett, Bean being a notorious antisemitic opponent of Sir John Monash; and by David Ben Gurion because of his irrational hatred for Vladimir Jabotinsky. As a result of this obscuration most Jews and non-Jews today have never heard of Patterson.

*Dr Henry R Lew OAM is a retired medico of 47 years experience, 42 years of which were spent practicing ophthalmic surgery. In his spare time he has written 9 historical books specialising in biographies of people who he feels have been unfairly written out of history.*

## 'The Troubled Memory: The Tat Myth and Its Impact on the Ethnic Self-Identification of the Mountain Jews'

### Dr Mateusz Majman

Ludwig Maximilian University

In the 1920s, Soviet linguist Boris Miller postulated that a single Tat ethnos existed in the North Caucasus, and it was shared by three religions: Muslim, Christian, and Jewish. Drawing on some earlier ethnographic works, his thesis posited that the local Mountain Jews did not belong to the Jewish people but formed a sui generis ethnic entity. From this point on, under the pressure of Soviet propaganda, the ethnonym "Tat" was imposed on the Mountain Jews. The subsequent gradual process of 'Tatization' of the Mountain Jews was carried out with the aim of isolating them from other ethnic groups with Judaic traditions and creating a single socialist Tat nation within the Soviet family of nationalities. This narrative also aimed to displace earlier legends and myths about the ancient settlement of this Jewish community in the Caucasus and its biblical roots. This paper examines how the Soviet authorities' campaign to de-Jewify the Mountain Jewish community affected its identity during the Soviet era and after the collapse of the USSR. Drawing on archival sources and oral interviews, it shows the gap between the attitudes of the Mountain Jewish elites and the ordinary population toward this policy.

*Mateusz Majman received a PhD in Jewish History at the LMU for his dissertation on the collective memory and oral history of the Holocaust among the Mountain Jews. His research interests include Holocaust Studies, Caucasology, and Israel Studies. Research conducted by Dr Majman received support from numerous institutions, including Yad Vashem.*

## 'Who (Re)Created Jewish Pogroms in Russia? Examining the Paradigms in Research on Anti-Jewish Violence and Their Impact on Our Understanding of Antisemitism'

**Professor Artur Markowski**  
University of Warsaw

The late 19th-century escalation of pogroms in the Russian Empire has spurred extensive historical accounts, attempts at definition, and perpetrator identification. The historical narratives of anti-Jewish violence have become intricately linked with national policies; they impacted diplomacy and profoundly shaped Jewish identity, having an impact also on the evolution of Jewish history. In my paper, I will present my latest research findings regarding the development of both established and emerging narratives regarding pogroms of Jewish communities. I will examine motivations responsible for (re)constructing the historical representation of anti-Jewish violence and scrutinize how, why, and by whom research paradigms were established. These paradigms currently serve to restrict contemporary studies on anti-Jewish violence while stimulating essential societal discussions in Central and Eastern Europe. Relying on a diverse range of sources from Russian, Israeli, and American archives, including publications, biographical materials, and documents subjected to czarist censorship, I will present the history of the creation of historical politics of pogroms in Russia and the successor states of the Russian Empire. I will elaborate on its assumptions, evolution, and impact on contemporary discussions of Jewish relations with others.

*Artur Markowski is a professor at the Department of History at the University of Warsaw, He specializes in the history of Jews in the former Russian Empire in the 19th century. Major publication: Anti-Jewish Violence and Social Imagery: Bialystok Pogrom of 1906, Warsaw (2018, Polish) (English translation 2024 Brill).*

## 'Creation and Re-Creation of the Image of Jewish Self-Government in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth'

**Dr Anna Michałowska-Mycielska**  
University of Warsaw

The interwar period saw the first comprehensive studies on the Jewish self-government in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (16th-18th centuries). Prominent scholars such as Bałaban, Schiper and Schorr created an image of a Jewish society seemingly existing in relative isolation from their non-Jewish neighbours, boasting self-governing institutions that operated autonomously. This perspective was primarily influenced by ideological considerations, with these self-governing structures being perceived as a substitute for statehood and a reflection of Jewish agency. This paper aims to demonstrate how recent research has re-evaluated this narrative. It has become evident that the Jewish self-governing institutions were intricately interconnected with non-Jewish counterparts and actively engaged in political life at both local and central levels. Jewish representatives were sent to the assemblies of the nobility and maintained a constant presence at the courts of kings and magnates. Within private estates, Jewish communities played pivotal roles in administration. Furthermore, economic ties between Jewish institutions and the broader non-Jewish society, including church institutions, played a significant role. Consequently, my research presents markedly different image, one that does not diminish Jewish agency but instead underscores their genuine influence on legal regulations and the living conditions of the Jewish population in the Commonwealth.

*Anna Michałowska-Mycielska is Associate Professor of Jewish history at University of Warsaw and head of Mordechai Anielewicz Center there. Her research focuses on history of Jews in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (16-18th c.), with a particular emphasis on forms of organization of Jewish society and Jewish-Christian relations. She is the author of The Jewish Community. Authority and Social Control in Poznań and Swarzędz, 1650-1793 (2008) and The Council of Lithuanian Jews, 1623-1764 (2016). She also edits Hebrew primary sources and has published two communal pinkassim (Pinkas kahału swarzędzkiego (1734-1830), 2005 and Pinkas kahału boćkowskiego (1714-1817), 2015) and several source collections.*

## ‘Creation and Emotion in Judaism: From Genesis to the Midrash and Beyond’

**Dr Natalie F Mylonas**  
**Australian Catholic University**

The creation of the world and of humankind is a foundational event in Judaism that has an important bearing on Jewish theology and notions of what it means to be human. Far from being a homogenous event, there are multiple Jewish accounts of creation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these accounts vary widely. This paper examines different ideas about creation in a range of Jewish texts spanning from ancient times through to late antiquity and traces how the emotions associated with creation have changed over time. Emotions, just as mythologies of creation, are central to human experience and self-understanding. Emotions help communities adapt to historical challenges and play an important role in shaping societal values, identities, and hierarchies. Despite their importance, emotions have been neglected in Jewish studies until recently and the topic of creation and emotion has received little attention. By examining emotions relating to creation in Jewish texts including Genesis 1-3, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and *Bereshit Rabbah*, this paper reveals the ways that Jewish ideas about creation intersect with identity and power to respond to historical challenges. It suggests that emotions associated with creation vary widely across time and place and are bound up with notions of self and community.

*Dr Natalie F. Mylonas is the founder of Learn Ancient Hebrew Online Education and a sessional academic at Australian Catholic University in the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy. Natalie’s latest book, Jerusalem as Contested Space in Ezekiel, reveals the critical relationship between space, emotion, and identity politics in the Hebrew Bible, using Ezekiel as a case study.*

## ‘Could the Jews Rebuild Life in Poland after World War II?’

**Rita Nash**

Fewer than 10% of Polish Jews survived the Holocaust the majority of whom spent the war years in the Soviet Union either voluntarily or through deportation. Post-war, the eastern borderlands of Germany were ceded to Poland and became known as the Recovered Territories. In a major repatriation program orchestrated by Stalin, between 200,000 to 250,000 Polish Jews returned to Poland to populate these new territories. The Zionists among these repatriates wanted to leave for Palestine/Israel as soon as possible but the majority chose to stay in Poland in a desire to re-create Jewish life in Poland despite the devastation of the Holocaust. They quickly established social and medical services, training and employment opportunities and a vibrant cultural life and, for a few short years, this surviving remnant of Polish Jewry created a viable new life for themselves. However, by 1950, having been thwarted by continuing antisemitism and Stalinisation, most had left Poland for good. My presentation reveals this seldom told story by examining the historical and geopolitical forces driving it and describes the astonishing achievements of these plucky people.

*Rita Nash’s scholarly interest is the Polish Jews who survived WW2 in the Soviet Union and their post-war return to Poland. She has developed two illustrated lectures on both these subjects which have been presented at the Sydney Jewish Museum, Limmud Oz, many private groups and most recently in Poland at the Lubliner Reunion, July 2023.*

## 'The Nazi Nurses of the Belžec Extermination Camp'

**Dr Darren O'Brien**  
University of Queensland

Between 1963 and 1965, four nurses were tried in the First District Court in Munich for their participation in the March to December 1942 murder of 360,000 Jews in the Belžec extermination camp. The sole purpose of the Belžec camp was systematic murder by gassing of Jewish victims with carbon monoxide. Despite free acknowledgement of participation in the Belžec operation by each of the nurses during pre-trial interrogation, the defence argument of 'putative duress' (*Putativnötigungsstand*) diminished the nurse's responsibility to the point of exoneration. All four nurse perpetrators were 'excused'. My paper explores the pre and post Belžec history of these nurses. I argue that their collective participation in the systematic murder of patients at one or more of five German psychiatric institutions between 1940 and 1941, along with the benefits participation entailed, informed their willingness to continue to participate in the same 'line of work' in Belžec. The expectation of the utilisation of their newly mastered nursing/killing skill/expertise in facilitating mass murder, was the value they now brought to killing on a far greater 'industrial' scale at Belžec. Pre-existing knowledge of, and relationships with, senior staff was collaborative, respectful, at times collegial, given the nature of the 'secret work' they were undertaking together, to the point that renders the defence argument of putative duress specious. The nurses committed to killing at Belžec and continued in the same 'line of work' after Belžec, often under the same managers. Sources include archival documents from the provincial institutions where these nurses were working in the late 1920s/early 1930s, their NSDAP records, correspondence regarding recruitment into T4, their Munich trial statements, photographs and drawings predominantly drawn from the Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin, Bundesarchiv Berlin, NARA Washington, Staatsarchiv München and family member correspondence.

*Dr Darren O'Brien is Honorary Senior Research Fellow, School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry, University of Queensland; Adjunct Lecturer, The University of Sydney Susan Wakil School of Nursing and Midwifery; President of the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (aihgs.org) and Director of the Australian Stumbling Stones project. He has been teaching, researching and writing in the field of Holocaust and comparative genocide studies for 30 years.*

## 'A New Life for the Romaniote Jews of Kastoria in Istanbul: Physical Characteristics of Householder and Unmarried Men, Their Crafts, and Residential Quarters'

**Assistant Professor Nuray Ocakli**  
Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University

The Romaniote Jews of Kastoria were recorded in the first Ottoman cadastral survey of their hometown dated to the first reign of Sultan Murad II (1421-1444). An updated record in the fief register of Macedonia indicates that they set on a journey to a new life in Istanbul in the spring of 1455. The earliest detailed source of information on the new life of the Kastorian Jews is the late 16th century poll-tax register of the Jewish communities in Istanbul whose tax revenues were allocated to the endowment of Sultan Mehmed II. Many details about the physical characteristics of the Kastorian Jews and their new life were meticulously recorded in the survey book such as color of skin and eyes, shape of eyes and eyebrows, scars and wounds on their faces and hands, crafts of some householder and unmarried men, guild apprentices, workers and residential quarters of the community members. This study aims to shed light on the physical characteristics of the tax-payer male members of the Kastorian community and interesting details of their life in Istanbul that are not expected to be found recorded in a tax register book.

*Nuray Ocakli is an assistant professor at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. She teaches Ottoman paleography and archival research courses. Her studies focus on the Ottoman cadastral survey books, military registers and demographic censuses. She has been conducting research projects on the socio-economic history and the Romaniote Jews of Kastoria since 2021.*

## 'Destruction and (pro)Creation: Sex as an Act of Re-Creation in the Book of Genesis'

**Dr Timothy Rafferty**  
 University of Sydney

In the book of Genesis, acts of punishment and destruction are often followed by sexual acts. Think Adam and Eve after the expulsion from Eden, Ham's uncovering of his father's nakedness after the flood, and Lot and his daughters after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. This paper will make the argument that these sexual acts are acts of re-creation. However, this is not just in the sense that they are intended to 'preserve offspring' as Lot's daughters would have us believe (Genesis 19:32). Instead, these sexual acts also re-create the post destruction world in their image by acting as a metaphor or foreshadowing of the nature of and problems within the creation that they re-establish.

*Tim Rafferty is a lecturer in Biblical Studies and Classical Hebrew at the University of Sydney and the current treasurer of the Fellowship for Biblical Studies in Australia. He completed his PhD at the University of Sydney in 2022, for which he wrote a thesis examining the idea of human dominion over animals in Genesis, Psalm 8, and the book of Job. His current research interest focuses on stories of questionable sexual conduct and sexual prohibitions in the books of Genesis and Leviticus.*

## 'Egon Erwin Kisch and Hanuš Burger, Creation and Recreation in Literature and Film'

**Dr Anna Rosenbaum**

My paper delves into literary and film studies, relating to the hurricane of historical events that shook the world to its foundations prior, during and following the Second World War. There are two protagonists, one of them known in Australia, the second one, not known at all. They were both politically experienced Czech Jews and they predicted what was to happen. Egon Erwin Kisch came to warn Australians of the dangers that Hitler posed to the world. They listened to him in their thousands at a rally in Sydney in 1935. The second protagonist was Heinz Burger, a film director, whose fate led him in a different direction but whose work, not known to many today, became a predicament, as well as a testament of humanities' fall into abyss, as well as what many people after 1945 wished for – a peaceful future. Kisch and Burger lived through tumultuous times. Their work left their postscripts for generations to learn from. Time moved on and new crisis emerged and we are now facing new dangers, searching for the same answers that both Kisch and Burger were pursuing. My paper focuses on challenges that both Kisch and Burger faced.

*Dr Anna Rosenbaum studied modern European languages for her first degree. She then studied Holocaust studies with Professor Emeritus Konrad Kwiet for her Master's Degree and the history of the Jewish community in Australia with Professor Emerita Suzanne Rutland. For her doctoral degree she concentrated on the history of exile studies of Czechoslovak Jewish Refugees in Australia 1938-1944. She graduated in 2015 and her doctoral dissertation was published by Peter Lang International Academic Publishers under the title The Safe House Down Under in October 2017.*

## ‘Recreating New Lives at the Edge of the Diaspora’

**Professor Emerita Suzanne D Rutland OAM**  
**University of Sydney**

In 1945, the Jewish demographer, Dr Joseph Gentilli, predicted that by the twenty-first century, almost no Jews would be living in Australia. This prediction has proved to be totally false because of the influx of immigrants, particularly after the end of the Second World War, in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Despite their traumatic experiences, many of the survivors who found refuge in Australia wanted to create a new life in their adopted country – at both the personal and the communal levels. In the immediate post-war years, Australian Jewry experienced a transformation in every aspect of Jewish community life and identity. This included founding and invigorating religious, cultural, educational, and sporting institutions. The survivors reinforced the Zionist movement and contributed to communal leadership in many ways. While the pre-war refugees provided the foundations for these radical changes, it was the larger number of survivors, who enabled this transformation to happen. Through their activities, the survivors succeeded in recreating their lives at the Edge of the Diaspora. This paper will briefly outline the changes which occurred with the establishment of many new institutions, and then will analyse the factors which enabled survivors to make such a positive contribution. How were most survivors able to put their traumatic past behind them – at least within their families and the community – and show such positivity in terms of rebuilding their lives? What was the role of the local welfare institutions in this rehabilitation and transformation?

*Suzanne D Rutland (OAM, PhD), Professor Emerita, Hebrew, Biblical & Jewish Studies, University of Sydney, is a past president of the AAJS, patron of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, and member of the Australian IHRA Delegation. She has published widely on Australian Jewry focusing on the Holocaust, immigration, Jewish education, Soviet Jewry, antisemitism, and Jewish leadership.*

## ‘Sir Isaac Isaacs and Citizenship in Australia’

**Professor Kim Rubenstein**  
**University of Canberra**

In the 1890s in colonial Australia several Jewish men were elected to the Constitutional Conventions to draft the Australian constitution. One of these men was Sir Isaac Isaacs, who later not only became a High Court judge but was the first Australian born Governor General. Isaacs’ interventions around Australian citizenship in the drafting of the Australian Constitution have an inglorious history which will be examined in this paper, to assess both the creation and evolution of membership in Australia and its impact on the broader Australian public and the Australian Jewish community.

*Kim Rubenstein is a Professor in the Faculty of Business, Government at the University of Canberra. A graduate of the University of Melbourne and Harvard University, she is Australia’s leading expert on citizenship, both around its formal legal status and in law’s intersection with broader normative notions of citizenship as membership and participation. This has led to her scholarship around gender and public law, which includes her legal work and her oral history work around women lawyers’ contributions in the public sphere. She was the Director of the Centre for International and Public law at the ANU from 2006-2015 and the Inaugural Convener of the ANU Gender Institute from 2011-2012. She is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law and the Australia Academy of Social Sciences.*

## 'The Re-Creation of Ruby Rich as a Transnational Jewish Australian Feminist'

**Cohava Rubenstein Sturgess**  
University of Melbourne

Ruby Rich (1888-1988) was a prominent Australian Jewish feminist whose name is strongly associated with feminist campaigns and organisations of the twentieth century. Rich's life spanned a century of significant change, for feminism, for Jews and for Australia. She devoted her life to feminist and Jewish causes while also travelling, playing music and writing poetry and plays. Despite Rich's prominence, she receives little attention in Australian feminist historiography. In Australian Jewish history, her life is unexamined in relation to broader historical processes. This paper will simultaneously 'create' Rich by bringing to life previously unknown aspects of her, while also 're-creating' our current understanding of her life and activism. Bringing Australian history, feminist history and Jewish diaspora history into conversation, this paper enables a 're-creation' of our understanding of Rich's life. Through a focussed study of key flashpoints in the life of Ruby Rich, this paper analyses her feminism and mobility in tandem with her Jewishness to provide a nuanced cultural understanding of how Australian and international feminism intersected with a Jewish diasporic self. This 're-creation' of Rich provides an important avenue to appreciating the way Jewishness and feminism interacted in Australia in the twentieth century.

*Cohava Rubenstein Sturgess graduated from the University of Melbourne in 2023 with a BA (Hons) in History. Her Honours thesis 'Ruby Rich: A Transnational Jewish Australian Feminist' explored the themes of feminism, Jewishness and mobility in Rich's life.*

## 'Connecting and Transforming: Eva's Lifelong Outreach Mission'

**Dr Anne Sarzin**  
University of Technology Sydney

Creation and re-creation are concepts at the core of Eva Engel's lifelong outreach programs she initiated and conducted successfully among Sydney's Jewish youth. A child survivor of the Holocaust, Eva connected with Jewish 'unaffiliated youth', creating organisational programs to counter disaffection, alienation, loneliness and emotional trauma. Eva's work with child survivors led her to create the Association for Child Survivors, an innovative and consciousness-raising concept in Holocaust awareness at that time. Additionally, she created programs for second-generation Holocaust survivors, initially friends of her children and their contacts, who gathered in her home to discuss topics, monitored by facilitators and leaders she appointed from their own generation. Motivated by awareness of trauma and its transmission to the second-generation, she pioneered modalities to mitigate its disabling effects she noted among these young people. The paper also reflects the further re-creation of her values by program participants, whose self-confidence, personal agency and self-esteem they attributed in large measure to immersion in her programs over several years. Additionally, Eva started the B'nai Brith choir, which enabled survivors, newcomers and Australians to meet and interact in a positive and therapeutic environment. The paper views these creative and re-creative endeavours through the prism of Eva's life.

*Dr Anne Sarzin is a writer, former editor and journalist. Her latest book (2023), The Angel of Kings Cross, is the first published biography of Dr Fanny Reading. In 2010, Anne and her daughter, Dr Lisa Sarzin, co-authored Hand in Hand: Jewish and Indigenous people working together. Anne has two doctorates. Her first PhD thesis focused on the dramatist Athol Fugard. For her second PhD, Anne researched the life and times of Dr Fanny Reading. Anne is a qualified qigong practitioner, teaching qigong in Sydney.*



## 'Spielberg, Romanticism and *The Fabelmans*: A Super-Director's Origin Story'

**Dr Adrian Michael Schober**  
University of Melbourne

Steven Spielberg's semi-autobiographical, coming-of-age film *The Fabelmans* (2022) has been described as a 'super-director's origin story.' Indeed, this is where Spielberg takes us back to 'where it all began' to reveal some uncomfortable truths about his parents and himself, but also an underlying Romantic truth. For Romanticism is the largely unspoken influence in Spielberg's rich body of work. This can be found in a nostalgia for a lost Eden, or lost childhood, or some 'pure' state of origin. Indeed, many of Spielberg's films are about the return to origins. In *The Fabelmans*, budding filmmaker Sammy Fabelman is a surrogate for Spielberg, through whom he relives the often-painful memories of growing up Jewish in the sunbelt suburbs of America during the 1950s and 1960s, while recapturing his early sense of wonder for the magic of movies and moviemaking. But the film is as much about the return to family as it is to childhood, where Sammy's parents, who are such a study in contrasts (undisguised portraits of Spielberg's parents, now deceased), represent the quintessential dilemma or dynamic between Romanticism and modernity. Not only does this dilemma recur in Spielberg films, but it is also played out in Sammy's own personality, which he must struggle with if he is to ever get on with life and fulfil his destiny.

*Adrian Schober*, who has a PhD in English from Monash University, Australia, is the author of *Possessed Child Narratives in Literature and Film: Contrary States* (Palgrave, 2004), a *Devil's Advocates* monograph on *The Omen* (Auteur/Liverpool University Press, 2022), and co-editor (with Debbie Olson) of *Children in the Films of Steven Spielberg* (Lexington, 2016), *Children, Youth, and American Television* (Routledge, 2018) and *Children, Youth, and International Television* (Routledge, 2022). He is currently researching the relationship between Steven Spielberg and Romanticism through the Enlightenment, Romanticism, and Contemporary Culture (ERCC) unit at the University of Melbourne.

## 'What World(s) Did God Create? On a Fierce Polemic among Medieval Kabbalists Regarding Creation, Extinction & Human-Animal Relations'

**Dr Jonnie Schnytzer**  
Ben Gurion University

Towards the end of the thirteenth century, in Christian Spain's Guadalajara, prominent kabbalists debated whether God created just one world, or whether the divine intention was to create a series of seven worlds, each one with its own *scala naturae* to exist and then become extinct towards the next one etc. This debate was not only rooted in enquiries into the essence of creation, re-creation and the meaning of extinction and destruction. It was also deeply connected with, and the outcome of, the different ways in which kabbalists articulated what it meant to being human as well as their perceptions regarding humanity in relation to the divine and natural worlds. An overwhelming majority of kabbalists advocated the creation of one world, which coincided with viewing the human form as superior and disconnected from other beings. However, a select few, who advocated a series of worlds created and re-created, offered alternative conceptions of human beings, which sought to stress the interconnectedness with other beings. An exegetical biblical commentary which sheds light on a secret tradition regarding a previous world in which humans were aquatic creatures is just one of several examples this paper wishes to discuss and analyse.

*Jonnie Schnytzer's* recent PhD from Bar Ilan University's Department of Jewish Philosophy focused on the oeuvre of thirteenth-century kabbalist Rabbi Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi. Currently, he is a postdoctoral fellow at Ben Gurion University, focused on kabbalistic concepts of being within the context of Animal-Human Studies and New Materialism

## 'Diaspora Nationalism, Migration and Cultural Revival: American Jewry and the Challenge of European Jewish Diaspora in the Shadow of the Holocaust and the Cold War'

**Professor Zohar Segev**  
University of Haifa

The dramatic triangle formed by the Holocaust, its survivors, and the state of Israel, formed a framework not only for the processes of establishing the state. It was also the arena in which the strengthening of Diaspora Jews' ethnic identity took place as they integrated into the world as it changed after the Second World War and the emerging Cold War. American Jewish leadership worked with intense determination to rehabilitate the Jewish Diaspora in Europe and to help survivors interested in so doing to reintegrate into Europe. The challenge was especially great given the emerging Cold War and the widening gap between east and west and in view of the will to do this not only in western Europe but also in central and eastern Europe. Special attention should be given to the role of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) after the Holocaust. WJC leaders were not fazed by the plight of the survivors and the terrible destruction of European Jewish communities. Quite the opposite – they saw it as proof positive of the need for an international Jewish organization with two objectives. The first was to preserve the rights of world Jewry, representing them in the new post-war international organizations. The second was to foster an ethnic identity with national characteristics. Such a step would assure continued Diaspora existence in which individuals and communities would contribute to a better world with global characteristics, and international cooperation. World that would foster the interests of Jews and of minorities in general in the post-war era.

*Zohar Segev is a professor of Jewish History at the University of Haifa. Professor Segev has published books and many articles on American Jewish History including, The World Jewish Congress During the Holocaust: Between Activism and Restraint (De Gruyter, 2014).*

## 'Collective Memory and Historical Amnesia: The 'Ritual Murder' Libel in Modern Spain'

**Associate Professor François Soyer**  
University of New England

The claim that Jews abduct and murder Christian children to parody the Crucifixion of Christ, to consume their blood or even to practice dark magic is one of the most extreme manifestations of Antisemitic hatred. Incredibly, the cults of two popular 'saints' linked to the 'ritual murder' libels – the Holy Child of La Guardia and Dominguito de Val – continue to exist in Spain. Both 'child saints' are still venerated in La Guardia and Zaragoza, with yearly festivals and celebrations. Sections of the Spanish church see no issue with continuing to use the figure of Dominguito de Val as a role model for young Catholic children in the literature that it produces as well as in catechism lessons. A recent 2012 drama on the life of Queen Isabel of Castile produced by Spain's national state-owned public television broadcaster TVE seemed to claim that the Holy Child of La Guardia had really existed despite the absence of evidence. This paper examines how these Antisemitic legends have become part of the collective memory in Spain since 1900, passed down through generations via oral traditions, written records and education, and why they do not appear to cause any controversy or uproar in contemporary Spain.

*François Soyer is Associate Professor at the University of New England, Australia. He is the author of several books, including Antisemitic Conspiracy Theories in the Early Modern Iberian World (2019) and Ambiguous Gender in Early Modern Spain and Portugal (2012). He is also the co-editor of Emotions in Europe 1517-1914: Revolutions, 1715-1789 (2021) and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.*

## 'Eternal Grudge of the Moon: Rabbinic Dramatisation of Genesis and Artistic Consecration'

**Dovi Seldowitz**

**University of New South Wales**

The Talmud's interpretation of Genesis includes an enigmatic exchange between God and the moon, resulting in seemingly excessive overtures to a grudging moon who remains forever upset with God. While it's unsurprising for folklore to incorporate non-human characters in legends, the reception of the tale by subsequent generations of rabbis complicates the tale's definition and position in rabbinic literature. This paper offers a careful reading of the tale's variations and reception history as indicative of a scene of artistic activity involving the rabbis of late antiquity and their project of the dramatisation of the Genesis narratives, arguing that a process of consecration led to this tale's eventual reception as essentially canonical. Of great interest here is evidence of rabbinic equivocation over God's culpability, the legitimacy of the moon's complaint, and God's inability to pacify the moon. Were the ancient rabbis violating any taboos with their implied criticism of God? And are later efforts to interpret this tale also attempting to sanitise the tale from any perceived heretical undertones? This paper considers a sociological framework to account for this process and to explain why this tale continues to resonate in contemporary Jewish discourse.

*Dovi Seldowitz is a PhD candidate (sociology) at UNSW Sydney, previously earning his BA(Hons) in Sociology and Anthropology at UNSW and awarded the University Medal for his thesis on Hasidic women's leadership. Dovi previously received his rabbinical ordination and his interests in Jewish studies include Midrash, Hasidism, and contemporary Jewry.*

## 'A Return to Jewishness'

**Chuck Volpe**

'Zionism is a return to Jewishness even before it is a return to the land,' declared Herzl at the First Zionist Conference. He recognised the need to rebalance the three main components of the Jewish cultural ecosystem: people, faith, and land. While the faith had preserved Jewish life during the long exile, it had not preserved Jewish lives. Jewish lives could only be preserved by returning to the land. Herzl's pillars parallel the two concepts of freedom in the Exodus. The 'freedom from' journey from slavery ends on the eastern bank of the Red Sea. It parallels the return to the land from diasporic slavery. The 'freedom to' journey is the longer spiritual journey of nation-formation culminating in the Promised Land and parallels Herzl's return to Jewishness, a journey the people have yet to complete, as evidenced by the political upheaval in Israel this year. Just as the 'freedom to' journey of the Exodus created the Jewish nation, the return to Jewishness will recreate it.

*Chuck Volpe is a Six-Day War volunteer, BA Philosophy and Psychology, CEO of Volpes, past president Theodor Herzl Schools, South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Israel advocate, contributor to Jewish Affairs magazine, co-founder EG Managed Property Funds ethics workshop, working on creating an alliance between the Jewish people and indigenous peoples.*

## 'A (R)evolutionary Reading of Janusz Korczak'

**Dr Basia Vucic**

**UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Social Pedagogy, Warsaw & The Children's Rights Centre, Adelaide**

This politicised reading of Janusz Korczak, the Jewish doctor and educator, delves into his intellectual influences to reveal the impact of revolutionary movements and the critique of Social Darwinism. While academia has rigidly upheld evolutionary theory and marginalised anarchism, this study explores the historical debate beyond natural selection and creationist stances. Central to this historical analysis is the absence of racial discourse and concerns for pure blood in Eastern Europe – a stark contrast to the West's fixation on human evolution. A history of ideas deepens Korczak's perspective within the context of alternatives, a facet overlooked in existing scholarship. His intellectual journey was shaped by influential scientists such as Petr Kropotkin, whose Mutual Aid theory spearheaded opposition to Social Darwinism. The emphasis on cooperation over competition and intra-species collaboration resonated deeply with Korczak's educational principles. This research investigates Korczak's references to these thinkers, revealing their profound connection to his worldview. It uncovers how these influences shaped his pedagogical approach, his rejection of rigidity, and his embrace of mutualism. Challenging the conventional view of Korczak emphasises his work's enduring relevance in an interconnected world, unveiling a transformative perspective on this iconic educator and advocate for children's rights.

*Basia Vucic is an expert in the fields of human rights and education. Her research at UCL (London) delves into children's rights movements and political theory. Her applied history approach proves invaluable in contemporary social struggles, aiding in the quest for innovative forms of radical organisation and engagement with diverse audiences. Basia serves as a visiting academic at the UNESCO Chair in Social Pedagogy (Warsaw) and is involved in projects related to the philosophy of Janusz Korczak and democratic education. She has returned to Australia to establish The Children's Rights Centre and work for change in children's everyday lives.*

## 'Sydney's Macquarie Street Synagogue: Re-Creation of its Ideological Setting'

**Dr Jana Vytrhlik**

**The Great Synagogue Sydney**

In 1859, about twenty Sydney Jews decided to leave the York Street Synagogue and set up a new congregation, soon to be known as the Macquarie Street Synagogue. It has been commonly accepted that the break-up was brought on by a dispute concerning a religious ritual, but we rarely explore the causes any deeper. Thanks to the digitization of the Australian Jewish Historical Society archives, however, new records came to light which call for further research. Among them, the architectural plans by the prominent colonial architect George Allen Mansfield (1834-1908) are particularly intriguing. In 1870, Mansfield was engaged by the leaders of the Macquarie Street Synagogue to present ideas for refurbishment of the premises. Through the analysis of prime visual and oral history sources, this paper attempts to understand and re-create the context in which the initial congregational divide took place.

*Dr Jana Vytrhlik is the Judaica Collection Curator of the Rosenblum Jewish Museum at the Great Synagogue Sydney. She is an art historian specialising in synagogue art and architecture.*

## 'Jewishness in Motion: Creating Meaning in Melbourne's Jewish Workplaces'

**Benjamin Wyatt**

**Australian National University**

The relationship between identity and texts is a prominent theme in Jewish studies. However, distinctions are commonly drawn between the literary theories which constitute Jewish textuality, and the practice of Jewish daily life more broadly. Jewish textual interpretation often ties together multiple texts across different historic contexts in creative ways. In short, Jewish space is created through engagement with texts in ways that articulate personal belonging to a global and ancient community of fellow readers. These literary theories are rarely considered alongside Jewish activity more broadly. Although an individuals' Jewish practice may be explained by reference to a text, much of the literature does not consider this through theories of Jewish textuality directly. Drawing a sharp distinction between the study of Jewish thought and action. Utilising Melbourne's Jewish community as an ethnographic case study, this paper will examine the labour practices involved in communal organisations. For many involved in this space, their activities are an attempt to create local Jewish meaning by more closely considering their thought and action in dialogue. This paper will explore the vernacular creativity that is involved in this process and propose that understanding this is critical to the study of contemporary Jewish life in Australia.

*Benjamin Wyatt is an MPhil candidate at the Australian National University in the School of Archaeology and Anthropology. His current research is an anthropological examination of labour participation in Melbourne's Jewish community institutions. Here, he hopes to understand volunteer and professional participation in the community as an embodied heuristic practice, and the values which inform these activities.*

## 'The Status of Women according to the Two Stories of Creation in Genesis and the Koran'

**Rabbi Dr Iris Yaniv**

**Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism, Israel**

According to biblical research, the Torah has two stories of creation. The status of women in each story is different. In the story of Genesis 1, man and woman are equal. In this story the male and the female are both called 'אדם' – human being. Both were created in the image of God and both are responsible for the animals. In this chapter, having children is seen as a blessing. On the other hand, in the story of chapter 2, first the man was created, then the animals, and only finally – the woman. The question arises: what does this say about her status in relation to the man? Also, in the second story bearing children is part of the woman's punishment – a punishment for which she is called Eve, whereas before she was called 'woman'. Another part of the woman's punishment in this story is being dominated by the man. In the lecture I would like to examine the differences between the two stories and their significance regarding the status of women today. Also, I would like to show that also in the Koran we can see different concepts regarding the status of women in relation to men.

*Rabbi Dr Iris Yaniv has a master's degree in biblical studies from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a master's degree and a doctorate in education from the University of Haifa. Her dissertation is 'From Alienation to Dialogue: Teaching Bible in Non-Religious Schools'. She has been teaching the Bible and Jewish culture for more than 30 years, including mentoring and training teachers and leading two thinking teams she initiated: a team about Bible teaching in non-religious schools in Israel at the Van Leer Institute, and a team that dealt with Jewish identity in non-religious schools in Israel at the Mofet Institute. She teaches at Oranim College of Education and in many private settings in Israel and around the world. In addition, Rabbi Dr. Iris Yaniv conducts ceremonies, she is a group facilitator, couples' counselor and personal trainer. She was ordained as secular humanist rabbi at the Tmura Institute in 2010, and in 2018 she founded the Yahal community – liberal humanist Judaism – in Haifa, and has since been leading the community voluntarily.*