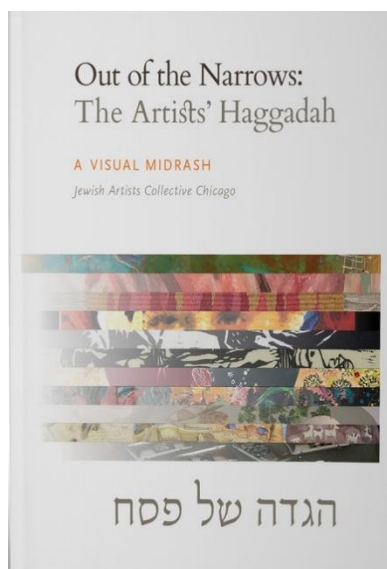


Out of the Narrows: Art from a new Haggadah by the Jewish Artists' Collective Chicago

March 25 - July 10, 2022



Featuring works by

Susan Dickman ■ Dorit Jordan Dotan

Berit Engen ■ Alan Hobscheid

Ellen Holtzblatt ■ Judith Joseph

Carol Neiger ■ Amy Reichert

Beth Shadur ■ Jane Weintraub

Jewish Artist Collective Chicago is a community of visual artists connected through common heritage and committed to sharing ideas, enriching practices, and creating dialogue with community. JACC artists in this exhibit are: Susan Dickman, Dorit Jordan Dotan, Berit Engen, Alan Hobscheid, Ellen Holtzblatt, Judith Joseph, Carol Neiger, Amy Reichert, Beth Shadur and Jane Weintraub.

The exhibit includes art from our new Haggadah, *Out of the Narrows*. We present art as an aggadic response, a way to tell the story using metaphor and ritual to address the themes of oppression and liberation, wandering and dispersion, slavery and Exodus, of topics as ancient and contemporary as racism and anti-Semitism, civil disobedience, freedom, and identity. For this exhibit, we have added some additional works that complement the themes of the Haggadah. The art includes handmade silver ritual objects, paintings, woven tapestries, encaustic, collage, printmaking, drawing, and digital photography.

Out of the Narrows is 144 pages and contains the full Haggadah with art as commentary. JACC artists Susan Dickman (editor, writer), Berit Engen (content curator, editor), and Carol Neiger (project director, designer), created a Haggadah that is rich in meaning and beauty, to evoke in-depth discussions at the Seder.

Susan Dickman

The Wandering ▪ Legacy

Encaustic, cold wax, oils



The persistence of narrative, holes in the story, and the natural world inspire me to explore the intersecting spaces between image and text. Using encaustic and cold wax medium, oils, photographs, cloth, thread, paper, salt, rust, and other found objects, I work to cover and reveal as a way of amplifying narrative tension to locate the story within. By adding layers and gouging, scraping, and incising, I store and explore memory: loss, grief, joy, the effects of time on culture, and lost spaces surrounding language.



Susan Dickman (www.susanjoydickman.com) has exhibited work at the Memphis Jewish Community Center, Woman Made Gallery, Spertus Institute of Jewish Learning, The Amstelkerk in Amsterdam, The Evanston Art Center, Rissman Kol Ami Collection at North Suburban Beth El, The Art Center of Highland Park, The Bridgeport Arts Center, and Morpho Gallery. Her writing has appeared in *HyperText*, *Another Chicago Magazine*, *Intellectual Refuge*, *Best of the Best American Poetry 2013*, *Lilith*, *Zocalo Public Square*, *Brain, Child*, *Jewish Fiction*, and she is a three-time Illinois Arts Council writing award recipient.

Dorit Jordan Dotan

HomeBound

Mixed media



These images are of my family's history, with the temporary home as central to the dialogue between past and present. Refugees, stateless, surviving in a long journey from Vienna to Dachau to Shanghai to Haifa. Carrying with them the brown suitcase, holding their temporary documents and photos as evidence of the past. The suitcase symbolizes their memories, dreams and hopes to find a new home.

Our brown suitcase is not only my family's treasure, but also the glue that keeps us together, generation after generation. It is our family's Pandora's Box that holds our memories and story. Once open, it unites us and keeps us together.



Dorit Jordan Dotan (www.doritjordan.com) is an internationally-based visual artist and curator. Her work often expresses her social/political views and calls attention to cultural issues. Dorit has exhibited in the US, Canada, Europe, and Israel. She participated in the Jerusalem Biennale in 2015 and in 2017. Her curated exhibition about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was on view in 2017 at the Evanston Art Center. She was a juror and guest curator of the Refreshing Feminism exhibition created for Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, 2019. In 2020 she curated the exhibition *i am. an immigrant.* in Berlin. She is a fellow with the Jewish Art Salon New York and co-curates the JAS virtual Open Studio Program. In recent years she exhibited at The Dr. Bernard Heller Museum NYC (Hebrew Union College) in a continuing process of creating contemporary Jewish art.

Berit Engen

Song of the Sea – And a Man with a Plan (Series)

Linen yarn

The Song of the Sea, a poem and prayer of praise (Exod. 15:1-18), concludes the story of safely fleeing Egypt and underscores God as the Redeemer.



Pursuing and Fleeing in Black and White

White, the redemptive color in Judaism, used in the series to depict the descendants of Jacob – and, thus, God’s plan. Although the Hebrews are ahead of Pharaoh’s fast approaching and overwhelmingly large and well-equipped army, the distance between the two is fast diminishing.



Standing Still in White by the Sea of Reeds

The giant, paralyzing pause. The fleeing attempt halts abruptly and completely as the Hebrews are stranded by the inconvenience of a body of deep waters.



Fearful in White: Crossing the Sea on Dry Land

A miracle! God splits the sea, and His children hurry, on dry land, between the two walls of water.



Dancing in Red on the Other Shore

A happy outburst. When safely on the other shore, Miriam and the women pick up their tambourines and begin to sing and dance.

(The whole series of six tapestries can be seen in *Out of the Narrows* on pages 74 and 75.)

Berit Engen (www.beritengen.com) began weaving as a child in Norway and now practices this ancient craft in the centuries-old tradition of expounding on Jewish texts. Her ongoing project, "WEFT and DRASH – *A Thousand Jewish Tapestries*," begun in 2007, consists of to date about 620 pieces. She compares her small-scale, linen-yarn tapestries to Japanese Haiku: formally constrained by a miniature size, imagistic and focused, yet allusive.

Berit gives frequent talks about her work which has been shown in solo and group shows, including exhibitions at the Spertus Institute, Chicago (2012–2013), the Janice Charach Gallery, Detroit (2018), and Oak Park Public Library, Oak Park, IL (2020). It is part of the permanent collection of the Chicago History Museum, and it has been featured in *Lilith* magazine. She was a selected participant to the Covenant Foundation sponsored Midwest Jewish Art Lab (2015). A ten-piece commission on the Sinai story is permanently installed in Temple Har Zion in River Forest, IL (2020). She is co-editor of *Out of the Narrows: The Artists' Haggadah* (2021). She is a co-founder of the Jewish Artists Collective Chicago (JACC). Berit lives and works in Oak Park, IL.

Alan Hobscheid

Fourth Cup of Wine

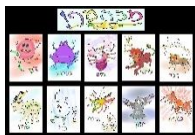
Woodblock print



The Gaon of Vilna understood the fourth cup relating to the *olam haba* – the world to come. The ushering of this epoch requires the resolution of *livyatan* and *b'hemot*, ur-creatures of the sea and land respectively. As a cup is typically constructed of two circles, one above and one below, these animals are each represented as an ouroboros – a serpent and a bull consuming their tails, together symbolizing that all of creation and our existence will come to full circle and utter completion – *shalem*.

Makamif

Digital Image



In 2002, a product branded Makamif was created by the Jewish-Japanese design firm, אריגות/ありがとう, to enhance the Passover Hagaddah. To assure child participants of the seder are avidly engaged, these characters were developed to leverage the rabid popularity at the time for anime-focused, action-oriented merchandising. The tradename combines the Hebrew words for “plague” and “monster” as part of a marketing campaign that enlivened the ten plagues (*Eser Makot*) portion that is recited towards the conclusion of the Maggid. Unfortunately, after some initial success, especially within progressive Jewish circles, interest waned quickly, and the venture was abandoned.

Alan Hobscheid

Bedikat Chametz (Search for Leaven)

Oil on paper on board



The tradition of canvassing the house for the remaining crumbs of *chametz* the evening before Erev Pesach has always fascinated me. It's conducted in the dark – to make the last stretch all the more difficult? Or is this about the real challenge – to rid oneself of their personal *chametz*?

Alan Hobscheid (www.alanhobscheid.com) creates paintings, digital images, and comics. His subject matter ranges from landscapes and still lifes to images inspired by Jewish themes and texts. He developed a series of images based on the story of Yona, investigating the nature of faith and fate, and another on his conversion to Judaism. Hobscheid has shown in numerous local, national, and international exhibits. He is a professional cartographer and teaches geography at Chicago's Roosevelt University.

Ellen Holtzblatt

Song of Songs: Portraits of the Artist's Mother

My Beloved

Oil on linen

Like a Lily Among Thorns

Oil on linen

I Sought the One I Love

Oil on linen mounted on panel



My 98-year-old mother, Mary, lived with me periodically during the pandemic. Through her, I witnessed the effects of emotional and physical loneliness. The needs of the body - both the basics of bodily functions, and spiritual and emotional yearnings - are satisfied largely through physical proximity to others, touch, and intimacy.



The titles for the portraits of my mother come from the biblical text, Song of Songs. This poetry is both explicitly sensual and metaphorically spiritual, describing the intensity of the relationship between lovers. Although there is a societal disconnect between the language of sexual longing and the physicality of a 98 year old woman,

I choose to title works of my mother from this text to convey the truth that love and desire, the need for human contact and touch are universal and not limited by age. Living through the pandemic and social isolation, this reality has become painfully clear.



Ellen Holtzblatt (www.ellenholtzblatt.com), a Chicago-based artist, explores the profound connections between the physical and spiritual world - the memories of the body that reside in the soul.

Holtzblatt exhibits her work internationally and nationally at venues including the Jerusalem Biennale, the Museum of Biblical Art, Spertus Institute, the Rockford Art Museum, Chicago Artist's Coalition, the Wausau Museum of Contemporary Art, Inselgalerie in Berlin, Yeshiva University Museum, and the Center for Book Arts. Recent one person exhibits include Josef Glimer Gallery, Fermilab Gallery, and the Robert F. DeCaprio Art Gallery. Holtzblatt has been awarded artist residencies in the U.S. and Iceland, and was a 2019/2020 artist resident with the Chicago Artists Coalition, where she exhibited in two-person and group exhibitions. Holtzblatt's work is held in public and private collections, and she has received grants from the Illinois Arts Council and City of Chicago. Holtzblatt earned degrees in visual art and art therapy from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Judith Joseph

Spring Tree / Kadeish Statement

Acrylic on canvas



For me, the Tree of Life is the default image. It is the symbol of hope, life, truth. The tree reaches deep into the earth for nourishment and stability, as human beings yearn for God and God needs humanity. We have a covenant; a symbiotic partnership. The tree is bursting into leaf with the promise of spring.

The priestly blessing hovers in its branches as a promise of redemption: *May God bless and guard you, may God's countenance shine upon you and be gracious to you; May God lift up Their face towards you and grant you Peace.*

Joseph's Dream

Egg tempera on ragboard



As a child, my mother shared her love of art history with me. So, as I listened to the Haggadah at the seder, I was picturing ancient Egyptian wall paintings. I

remembered beautiful images of Egyptians on their slender, elegant boats, sliding through the reeds, fishing. I saw graceful birds rising over the pyramids; gods with animal heads, smoking censers, diaphanous gowns on beautiful bodies.

This painting is about the guilty pleasure of imagining the hedonistic pleasures enjoyed by the Egyptian royalty, while the Hebrew slaves toiled. It seemed to me like the moment in *The Wizard of Oz*, when the black-and-white austerity of Dorothy's home yields to the Technicolor of the Land of Oz. Thus, I depicted the family seder as a colorless scene in an airless tomb, while the Egyptians are on the outside, partying their hearts out.

Joseph's Dream, while anachronistic to the Passover story, is the beginning of the story of the Hebrews in Egypt. I included him, with his cows and wheat.

I realize this is not the way the story is meant to be received, but, like comic books, it arose from adolescent rebellion.

Judith Joseph (www.judithjosephstudio.com) is a Chicago based artist whose work is exhibited internationally. Her work is idea-driven, and she works across media, chiefly woodblock prints, painting, calligraphy and installation. Her work is in numerous public and private collections. In addition to her fine-art practice, she creates Judaica, chiefly the ketubah.

Carol Neiger
Ageusia Anosmia
Oil on Canvas



Like those affected with the early symptoms of COVID-19, the weeping willow has neither taste nor fragrance. And while for too many, this pandemic has created

suffering and loss, for those who are relatively safe the willow can also represent gentle fulfillment of the commandments through simple faith. This willow that I painted in the Chicago Botanic Garden made me think about The Simple Child in our Seder. There is beauty in simplicity. COVID-19 forced simplicity upon all of us. Staying home forced us to spend more time doing simple things. A willow tree also symbolizes balance, learning, growth, and harmony. We have learned to embrace simplicity while in the wilderness, drawing on the Israelites' years of wanderings in the desert, and likening that to our own experiences in the coronavirus wilderness. When every place feels like the desert, it is important to keep our eyes and hearts open to what centers us, calms us, and reminds us that life still contains goodness, even in a place of uncertainty and concern for what may lie ahead.

Carol Neiger

Wilderness

Monotype



Wilderness was inspired by a Midrash teaching (Numbers Rabbah 1:7). Why does the Torah emphasize God's speech to Moshe in the wilderness of Sinai? It was to teach that "a person does not attain the Torah until they

have made themselves empty and ownerless like the wilderness." To learn to love the Torah purely, a person must first make themselves into a *midbar*, an inner empty wilderness that is cleared of all the weeds and brush that obstruct true perception and feeling. A wilderness that returns to the first purity of nature. The story of enslavement and liberation is one we tell each year. Although we cannot control the timing, God does not make us endure trials forever. Sometimes a forced pause helps us see who we are and realize the nature of our obligations to those who are oppressed.

Carol Neiger

Libera me

Oil on canvas



I created *Libera me* after learning about Rafael Schachter, a Czechoslovak composer, pianist, conductor, and organizer of cultural life in the Terezin concentration camp. Schachter died in the death march during the evacuation of Auschwitz in 1945. He was one of the tens of thousands imprisoned in Terezin. Rafael Schachter asked the inmates: “Do you like to sing?” What started as a way to lift the inmates’ spirits turned into more than a performance. It gave the prisoners a voice with a hidden message in those words they sang in Latin... “How great will be the terror when the judge comes” ... “We will be avenged.” I wanted to create the image of the spiritual reassurance they still managed to find in their collective voices. The power of music and the human spirit can overcome the worst and illuminate the best in humanity.

I am interested in how our past experiences influence how we see. Memories are fuzzy and jumbled together in our minds, but they leave an impression that marks us forever and impacts how we see. As we move through spaces we sense familiarity even in places we have never been before. Our memories reinforce our visual impressions and carry meaning with them. My artwork strives to trigger the viewer’s memories of lived experience excavating personal meaning in the process.

Carol Neiger (www.carolneiger.com) graduated with a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1980. She is a painter and printmaker primarily focused on exploring the connection of memory and place. Individuals bring their own experiences — both known and buried memories as they experience place. Each work is created with the hope of connecting to individuals through her art, and evoking meaning in the viewer's own memories.

Carol's style is characterized by the use of layers, split plane composition, patterns, a vibrant color palette, and a painterly style. She paints in oils and watercolor and has worked with various methods of printmaking. Most of Carol's prints are monotypes; painting, rolling and/or removing ink directly on printing plates which are transferred to paper to achieve layers of translucency that create a quality of light very different from a painting on paper.

Amy Reichert

Seder Plate I

Sterling silver and mahogany

How can a rich tradition of interpretation be translated into material form? Since 1995, I have been mining our texts – Torah, Midrash, contemporary commentaries – to create new ritual objects that reflect a modern sensibility while revealing surprising elements that can help to awaken our spiritual lives.



The Passover Haggadah is an anthology of elements from Torah, Talmud, Midrash, and folksong. The abstract design of this seder plate, juxtaposing the elements rather than placing them in the round, echoes that collage-like quality. Since it can be completely disassembled, and has two recessed slots for carrying, the plate resembles a package or suitcase, recalling the hurried flight from Egypt.

The seder plate is not supposed to be a plate at all, but a symbolic landscape. Ordinary plates, when wiped clean, leave no hint of their previous use. In contrast, the seder plate must bear a trace of what has been there, and point toward what will be there again. It is a repository of memory, whose mysterious, fossil-like impressions provoke interpretation and elaboration.

The original of this seder plate won second prize in the 1996 Philip and Sylvia Spertus Judaica Prize. The first of an edition of 10 is in the permanent collection of The Jewish Museum, NY.

Amy Reichert
Miriam's Cup I
Sterling silver



This cup is a restless vessel, like Miriam's ancient well dancing with the people Israel at the Red Sea. It is heard as well as seen, the cymbals ornamenting the bowl's perimeter respond to the slightest vibration of the table. On the seder table, it echoes the sounds of freedom—the wind rustling through grasses, the murmuring of exiles, a joyous song with a tambourine.

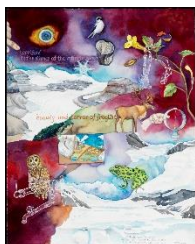
It was originally created for the first Miriam's Cup exhibition, "Drawing from the Source," at the Hebrew Union College Petrie Gallery, NYC. This cup is in the permanent collection of The Jewish Museum, NY, and Anu: The Museum of the Jewish People, Tel Aviv.

Amy Reichert (www.amyreichertjudaica.com) is an award winning architect, exhibition designer, and designer of Judaica. Since 1996, when she won second place in the Philip and Sylvia Spertus Judaica Prize for her Seder plate, she has participated in invited juried exhibitions in museums around the world. Her work can be seen on display at The Jewish Museum, NY, Jewish Museum Vienna, Yale University Art Gallery, and Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco. She has also created installations and furnishings for synagogues around the country, including North Suburban Synagogue Beth El. She received her B.A. and M.Arch from Yale University, and combines her studio work with teaching at the School of the Art Institute, Chicago.

Beth Shadur

Violado

Watercolor and mixed media on paper



From my *Fragility of the Sacred* series, *Violado* addresses the issue of climate change and its effect on the pristine ecosystem of Banff Provincial Park in the Canadian Rockies. While an artist in residence at the Banff Art Center's Layton Artists Colony, I worked on various paintings and a handmade book all using Banff as a type of "case study" in how a beautiful and untouched place has been effected by human actions. In all my work, I research my subject matter and discovered what was unique to the Banff environment. The area, although considered "wilderness" is fragile, and the area is considered sacred to First Nation people. I felt that sacredness while there, being surrounded by exquisite nature and beings. Not only does global warming destroy the glaciers there, but many species, plant and animal, are endangered by rising temperatures and acid rain. Threats to the environment are depicted symbolically as is common in my work. Endangered species are depicted as well. The title is Spanish for "violated." Our responsibility as humans is to take care of the sacred earth as our way of addressing our own modern versions of the plagues.

Beth Shadur

Release

Watercolor on paper



This handmade book was created after losing both my sister and my brother-in-law to rare forms of cancer. The idea of the small book was to reflect the concept of a “journey” in their passing. The imagery went from images of beach and water (they both loved the water, my sister being an avid swimmer, and my brother-in-law, a sailor) to closer images of water, which eventually transitioned to cancer cells, which are surprisingly beautiful. These images eventually transitioned to images of sky, suggesting release into the realm beyond earth. The theme of journey is implicit in the Passover story, with water being the catalyst to freedom.

Rapture

Watercolor on paper

My most recent series aspires to explore the National Parks as pristine environments that need to be considered as sacred to protect the land and environment which serves as our nation’s natural legacy. The exhibition and research were funded, in part, from an Artist Grant through the Illinois Arts Council Agency; the support allowed me to visit and photograph the five national parks that are in Utah and do continuous research for my artwork. Most importantly, I am reflecting on the impact of climate change, tourism, and man’s use of natural resources on each park; the paintings will reflect these



concerns by representing the natural beauty, plants and animals impacted and threatened, and using text to address the fragility of the natural environment there.

Our stewardship of the earth proves increasingly important. For many years, my work has addressed the fragility of nature, and reflected my vast love for nature. I want my current work on the National Parks to address this alarming circumstance by expressing the wondrous beauty of the natural environment, while reminding us of its fragility. It is only with strong attention to our human impact that we can reverse what are dangerous trends; we must take action now before it is too late.

Beth Shadur (www.bethshadur.com) Beth Shadur is an artist whose work has been exhibited in solo and group shows nationally and internationally in museums, galleries, art centers and universities. Her work, comprised primarily of works on paper, is included in Christopher Finch's Twentieth Century Watercolors, Abbeville Press, and in many catalogues and publications. Shadur's work is represented in private and public collections in the US and abroad, and exhibitions have included shows at the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago Cultural Center, Butler Museum of American Art, Davenport Museum of Art, The Drawing Center, NYC; and at the Hudson River Museum. She has completed over 150 murals as both private commissions and as public and community art projects. She is currently represented by Springboard Arts Gallery, Chicago; is the Gallery Director at Prairie State College, Chicago Heights, IL; and serves on the Board of the Illinois State Museum.

Jane Weintraub

Elijah's Cup

Sterling silver, 14K gold

"Jacob's Pillow" Mizrach

Sterling silver, beach stones, wood

"Shalom" Candle Holders

Sterling silver

As a trained metalsmith/jeweler, I make objects that look at ceremony and spirituality and reinterpret these notions with contemporary and sometimes non-traditional materials. I fabricate both functional and nonfunctional work. I have used global architecture, mythology, and tribal objects from around the world as the departure points for her own stories. The common thread running through all of my work is an abiding interest in narrative.



This Elijah's cup symbolizes our yearning for the coming of the Messianic age. We hope for a mystical reunification of the *sefirot* and the Oneness of the Divine.

The focus of this *Mizrach* – a plaque placed on the eastern wall of one's home indicating the direction of Jerusalem that Jews face during prayer – is the *middah* of *Shalom Bayit*, peace in the home. Home becomes a sacred space and it is more about how and where we make our "home" and less about physical location. Whether we are in



Jerusalem, Jakarta or Joliet, we are connected and become one in peace.

Jacob's pillow is referenced in Genesis 28:10-11. Jacob, fleeing from Esau's murderous rage, lays down to sleep – his head resting on a group of stones. Jacob took not one stone, but twelve which merged into one, foreshadowing a time when the twelve tribes would become one. I have used 13 stones – the last stone representing Jacob's daughter Dinah.

Shalom Bayit – may we form home wherever we find ourselves and with whomever we define as family.



The “Shalom” Shabbat Candle Holders have at their heart a hope for peace. The back of each candlestick represents an Israeli watch tower complete with barbed wire on the top; the front shows doves being released, the barbed wire broken and peace breaking through.

Jane Weintraub (www.janeweintraub.com) received a Master of Fine Arts Degree from the University of Wisconsin/Madison and since then, has been teaching in higher education and exhibiting her art work both nationally and locally. Recently she retired from Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago where she is a professor emerita and was in charge of the metalsmithing and jewelry area of the Art Department. She is now happily creating work in her studio full time. She lives and works in Highland Park, Illinois.

The Rissman Kol Ami Collection is a unique collection of Jewish art, artifacts and ritual objects. In addition to preserving significant objects for posterity, the museum seeks to develop programs and exhibitions that are designed to educate the congregation and promote an appreciation for works of Judaica.

North Suburban Synagogue

Beth El

בית כנסת בית אל

1175 Sheridan Road, Highland Park 60035