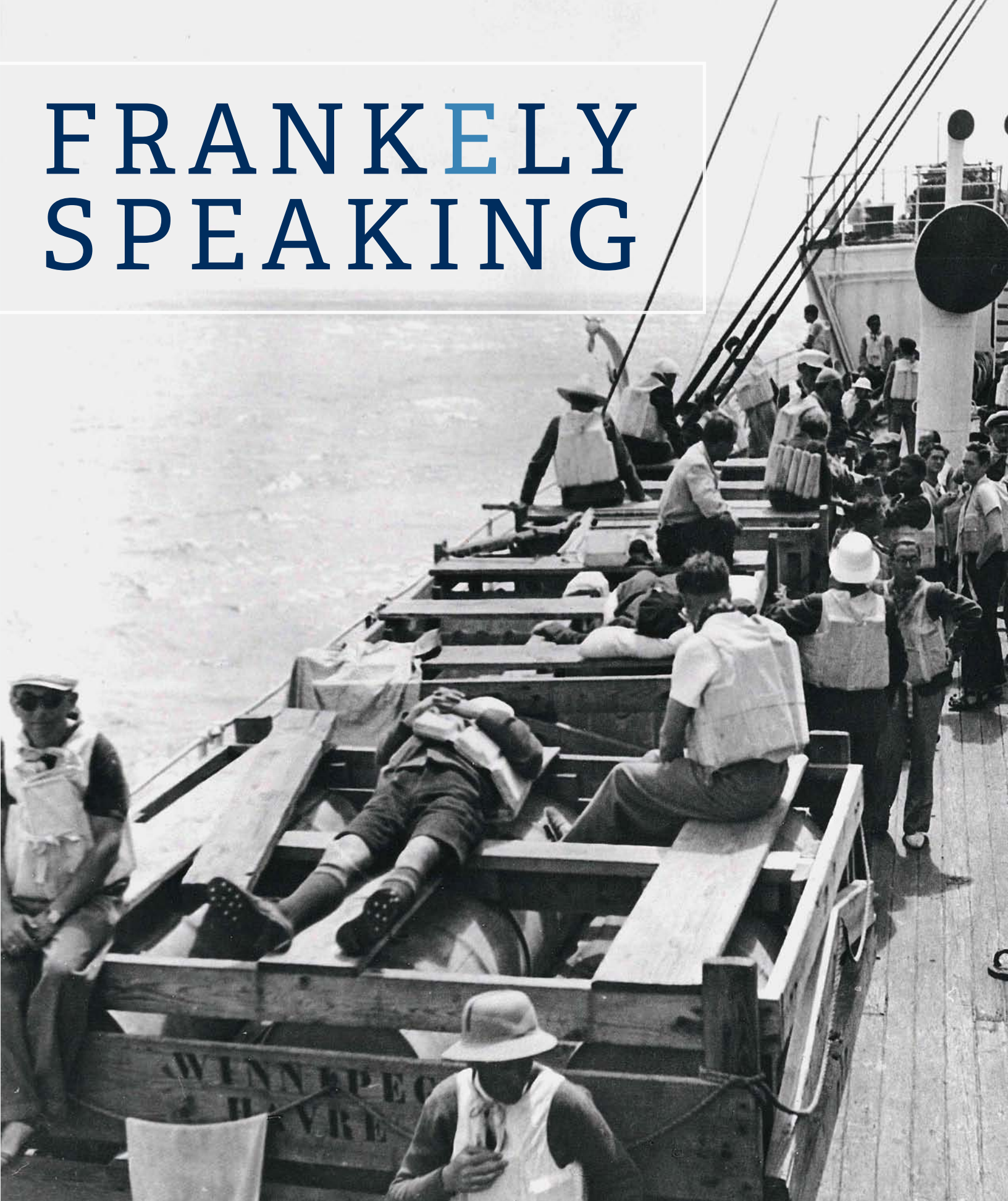


FRANKELY SPEAKING



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JEAN & SAMUEL FRANKEL
CENTER FOR JUDAIC STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SUMMER 2024

From the Director

On the Cover: Yolla Niclas (1900–1977)

Rescue Drills for Passengers on the Ship 'Winnipeg', 1941

Leo Baeck Institute Archives, LBI Memoir Collection.

Courtesy of the Leo Baeck Institute.

In May of this year, faculty, family, friends, and partners gathered to recognize the achievements of the Class of 2024. This graduation felt different from previous years and somehow more stirring. The 2024 cohort started its educational journey during the COVID closures and ended it during a challenging year on campus and worldwide. These students have contended with personal and communal isolation but their excitement and optimism have remained constant. When coming onto the stage to receive their degrees, they smiled and spoke about their positive experiences at the University of Michigan and in the Judaic Studies program. Their mantra was that the Frankel Center makes a big school feel smaller, more like home.



Maya Barzilai

*Director of the Frankel Center
for Judaic Studies*

One student spoke about her studies of Ladino, a language she had never expected to become passionate about. Another student talked about her connection to Judaism through her art practice and the exhibition she mounted as a senior. We also heard about a student-driven project to translate the entire Haggadah into Yiddish, and an Honors Thesis concerning two productions of *Parade*, a Jewish-themed Broadway musical. The richness of these students' learning experiences

is also evidence of their instructors' commitment and mentorship, and the willingness of these faculty to devote time and thought to students both inside and outside of the classroom. Such activities could not take place without the support of the Frankel Center's generous donors. I thank them for their vision that enables us to carry out the important mission of educating U–M students about the histories, societies, and cultures of Jews across the globe.

This year, the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies hosted 13 researchers from Europe, Israel, South and North America, and Canada. They worked on a wide range of projects around the theme of "Jewish Visual Cultures."

I am grateful to Deborah Dash Moore (U–M) and Richard Cohen (Hebrew University) for leading this fellowship year and making it a productive and rewarding one. It was wonderful to witness unexpected synergies develop around shared interests leading, for instance, to a photography exhibit ("Camera as Passport: Ship of Photographers") that will travel from the University of Michigan to other institutions. The Institute fellows generously shared their time and knowledge with the broader community through film screenings and lectures. They also took advantage of the visual and cultural resources available in Ann Arbor and Detroit and met with artists such as Lynne Avadenka and Ken Aptekar.

Our Center wrapped up a year of programming around the theme of "Life" that included multiple events, readings, and artist talks around issues of abortion law, environmental ethics, narratives of creation, and Jewish meditations on disability and mortality. We were fortunate to host several engaging scholars and creators, including comics artist Liana Finck and Israeli writer Noa Yedlin. One of the highlights of our programming this year was the Belin Lecture featuring Professor Samantha Baskind from Cleveland State University, who gave a talk on the lesser-known history of American Jewish Art.

Julian Levinson completed a successful first year as Associate Director of the Frankel Center, and under his leadership, we have seen the growth of our undergraduate minor and the continued vibrancy of our graduate certificate program. Levinson worked closely with our new student services coordinator, Kristina Riemer, to organize co-curricular programming for both undergraduate and graduate students. All of our events, course offerings, and Institute activities have been made possible through the hard work and dedication of the remarkable Frankel Center staff, including Kristina, Michele Fleming, Caitlyn Gordon, and Cheri Thompson. I am grateful for their wisdom and compassion as we navigated a particularly challenging year.

I wish you all a productive end of the summer and an excellent start of the new academic year, with all the exciting opportunities that it brings.

Maya Barzilai

*Director of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies
Professor of Hebrew Literature and Jewish Culture*

Meet Kristina Riemer and Caitlyn Gordon



Kristina Riemer

In September, **Kristina Riemer** joined the Frankel Center Staff as the new Student Services Coordinator. In this role, she supports student needs and curriculum matters for both undergraduate and graduate programs. Prior to her start at the University of Michigan, Reimer worked as both a high school science teacher and a technical recruiter in Kansas City. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Nebraska and a Master of Education from the University of Missouri.

Given her background in secondary education, Reimer has always enjoyed mentoring young adults and aiding in student development across various capacities. She perceives working in higher education as the fulfillment of a long-held career ideal, motivated by her positive experiences with college advisors and their significant influence on her life perspective and

self-assurance when facing the unknown. Her aim is to become a steadfast advisor for students at U-M and to enhance the Judaic Studies major and minor programs in ways that resonate with a diverse student population.

In addition to learning the nuances of student support within the Judaic Studies Department, Reimer has become active in several campus groups. She contributes to the Inclusive Cultural Liaisons, LUGS, LGRAD, and a number of LSA affinity groups, including both the LGBTQIA+ and Community Service groups. Away from campus, she delights in the natural beauty that Ann Arbor offers, exploring local hiking trails and kayaking spots. Reimer also nurtures her love for coffee, cozy reading sessions, farmer's markets, animals, and the joy of travel. She looks forward to her journey at U-M, including all the challenges and opportunities it has to offer.



Caitlyn Gordon

Last Fall, **Caitlyn Gordon** also joined the Frankel Center team as the new Events and Communications Coordinator. In this role, she organizes all the guest speakers, workshops, and major conferences hosted by the Frankel Center. She also produces the Frankel Institute Annual, Belin Book, and Frankely Speaking Newsletters. Before starting at the University of Michigan, Caitlyn worked as a Marketing Coordinator at an art gallery in Southfield, MI. She earned a Bachelor of Business Administration from Western Michigan University specializing in Advertising and Event Management.

In addition to her work at the Frankel Center, Caitlyn also contributes to the DEI Inclusive Cultural Liaisons and the Communications, Web, Event, and Social Media (CWES) Staff Group. Off the clock, Caitlyn can be found tending to her vegetable garden, volunteering as an MSU Extension Master Gardener, or planning her next road trip. Born and raised in Metro Detroit, she loves kayaking, hiking, biking, exploring the city, and enjoying all that Southeast Michigan offers.

Caitlyn can't wait to infuse her passion into her work at the Frankel Center and is excited to be part of the Judaic Studies community!

Rebecca Wollenberg



Rebecca Scharbach Wollenberg published her first book, *The Closed Book: How the Rabbis Taught the Jews (Not) to Read the Bible* in 2023 with Princeton University Press. In *The Closed Book*, Wollenberg argues that Jews didn't truly embrace the biblical text until nearly a thousand years after the Bible was first canonized. She tells the story of the intervening centuries during which even rabbis seldom opened a Bible and many rabbinic authorities remained deeply ambivalent about the biblical text as a source of sacred knowledge. Wollenberg shows that, in place of the biblical text, early Jewish thinkers embraced a form of biblical revelation based on memorized spoken formulas.

We asked Wollenberg to share with us the process of writing the book and how it came about:

The Closed Book was a bit of a happy accident. Many years ago, I set out to write a dissertation about how and why the rabbis of the high middle ages began to read the Hebrew Bible as what you might call God's monograph—that is, I was curious about this odd phenomenon where around the turn of the first millennium, medieval rabbis across the globe suddenly began to treat the Bible

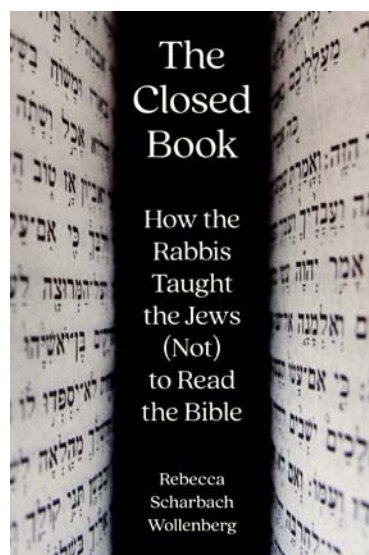
as a carefully curated informational text, with a single author, and one consistent message.

But every time I submitted an application for a fellowship, at least one reader would object. 'What do you mean medieval rabbis began to read the Bible as a monograph?' they would say. 'The rabbis have always approached the Hebrew Bible as a perfect book. What does this research question even mean?' So I first added a preliminary chapter showing that late-antique rabbis did not, in fact, read the

Hebrew Bible as a book—at least not in any sense that we would understand that term. Then I added a chapter showing that the rabbis weren't particularly convinced that the Bible was a perfect book—or, really, that any written revelation could be a perfect blueprint for religious life. And so on. By the time I was done addressing all the objections to the research question, I was 400 pages into my dissertation. So in the end, I never got to write about the middle ages at all.

Why do you think it is important to research this specific area of Jewish studies?

The Bible has become a huge part of contemporary cultural debates. But I don't think we really understand how this book 'works.' That is, I don't think we really understand how the Bible



document to be mined for new information. Instead the parchment text was engaged as a sort of icon of revelation—a vessel that tied a fuller, living, spoken version of the biblical

We tend to project contemporary ways of reading the Bible onto other historical periods. But there are many other diverse ways that people have related to this text.

has acted as a cultural force in important periods of history. We tend to project contemporary ways of reading the Bible onto other historical periods. But there are many other diverse ways that people have related to this text. *The Closed Book* offers an account of one important historical approach that we lost sight of. In this period, the written text of the Hebrew Bible was not read closely as a

revelation to the material world. In this biblical culture, divine meaning hovered around the written text and was anchored by it but this sacred knowledge could not be derived by reading the text for information.

What is going to be your next project?

This past April, I published a shorter book for a Cambridge University Press Elements series called *The Abrahamic*

Vernacular. It's written for students in an accessible style. The book expands on the idea of a spoken scripture to explore how that text beyond the text could sometimes be co-constructed between different religious communities. On paper, the Abraham of the Quran is very different from the Abraham of the Hebrew Bible or Paul's Abraham in the New Testament. And the same is true of a character like Moses or Joseph. But when it came to the vernacular spoken scripture of everyday life, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim neighbors often created little pockets of local religious common sense—in which they came to share basic preconceptions about these scriptural figures, concepts, or rituals. That doesn't mean that these practitioners agreed about everything. They would often fight tooth and nail about hot-button issues—sometimes even violently. But behind those debates, there was a backdrop of shared assumptions and mythologies that never really got examined. And these shared religious vernaculars often got folded back into the broader religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam over the years. So that the so-called Abrahamic traditions are subtly knit together by a thousand tiny threads of spoken scripture that popped up here and there over the centuries. In a time of increasing polarization and religiously based conflict, I thought it would be good for students to see the other side of the Abrahamic coin, as well.

Camera as Passport

The Ship of Photographers



Deborah Dash Moore and Louis Kaplan

On May 6, 1941, the SS *Winnipeg*, a converted freighter, pulled out of the harbor of Marseille, France, heading for the French Caribbean Island of Martinique. It was a fraught moment. Nazi Germany had conquered Poland in 1939, and then invaded Western Europe in the spring of 1940, marching triumphantly into Paris in June of that year. Germany was poised to invade the Soviet Union in June 1941. The United States was not yet in the war.

Much of what we know about this trip across the Atlantic Ocean comes from an article published in *Modern Photography* in July 1951 to mark the 10th anniversary of the *Winnipeg*'s perilous journey. In "The Saga of the SS *Winnipeg*," Fritz Neugass, a German-Jewish refugee photographer, dubbed the voyage "The Ship of Photographers" because there were eight

photographers aboard the freighter. They came from Belgium, France, Germany, and Hungary: Ilse Bing, Josef Breitenbach, Boris Lipnitsky, Charles Leirens, Yolla Niclas, Fred Stein, Monie Tannen, and Ylla (Camilla Henriette Koffler). During lifeboat drills, they discovered each other.

Among the 750 passengers aboard the *Winnipeg* were approximately 75 French military and 120 French nationals, many of whom were suspected of being Nazi collaborators on a mission to infiltrate Martinique. Just two hours away from its destination, armed soldiers from a free Dutch ship boarded the *Winnipeg*, arrested the Vichy soldiers, and rerouted the ship to Port of Spain in Trinidad. Six of the photographers managed to continue their journeys to the United States, finding a safe harbor in New York by mid-June 1941; two of them only arrived later.



The American journalist Varian Fry and the New York-based Emergency Rescue Committee that helped so many Jewish and anti-fascist artists get out of Europe in the nick of time also assisted many of these photographers.

“Camera as Passport: The Ship of Photographers,” presents the work of seven of the eight photographers (Monie Tannen is missing). It introduces this intrepid group as exemplary case studies of the wide range of European photographers who used their cameras as passports to other worlds. Taking photographs presented a sufficiently malleable opportunity in the 1930s that not only allowed these women and men to leave Europe but also to have the means to sustain themselves in foreign countries where they did not necessarily speak the language. They did, however, mobilize the visual language of photography.



This exhibition of 36 photographs allows one to grasp the power of the camera as passport and shows the diversity of these photographers’ work prior to World War II, ranging from portraiture to street photography to commercial photojournalism. The exhibit focuses first on their European experiences pre-emigration before turning to their escape from Europe on the *SS Winnipeg*. Only three of the eight photographers—Bing, Breitenbach, and Niclas—brought their cameras on board and documented the trip. The exhibit includes examples of their photographs of the ship and sea, conveying the sense both of possibilities yet to come and the immediate experience of overcrowding. The exhibit concludes with examples of some of their initial photographic reactions to the new world, seeing it through European eyes.

34th Annual Belin Lecture

Toward a Jewish American Art History



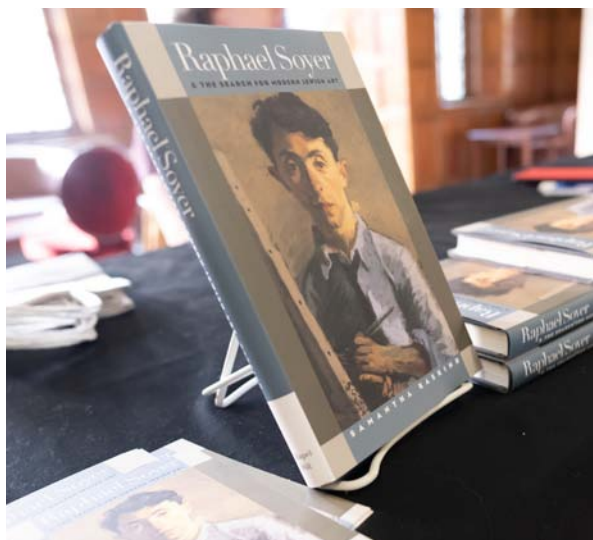
Dr. Samantha Baskind, Distinguished Professor of Art History at Cleveland State University, delivered the 34th David W. Belin Lecture in American Jewish Affairs on March 14, 2024. Baskind has authored five books and numerous articles on Jewish American art, including the 2004 *Raphael Soyer and the Search for Modern Jewish Art*; the



Dr. Samantha Baskind

2007 *Encyclopedia of Jewish American Artists*, a 2011 co-written volume; *Jewish Art: A Modern History*, and two independently authored studies: *Jewish Artists and the Bible in Twentieth-Century America* (2014) and *The Warsaw Ghetto in American Art and Culture* (2018). Her co-edited volume *The Jewish Graphic Novel: Critical Approaches* (2008) has transformed the field of research and teaching on comics. In addition to her

scholarship as an art historian, Baskind is also a curator and public intellectual who publishes her writings in *TIME*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, and the *Washington Post*.



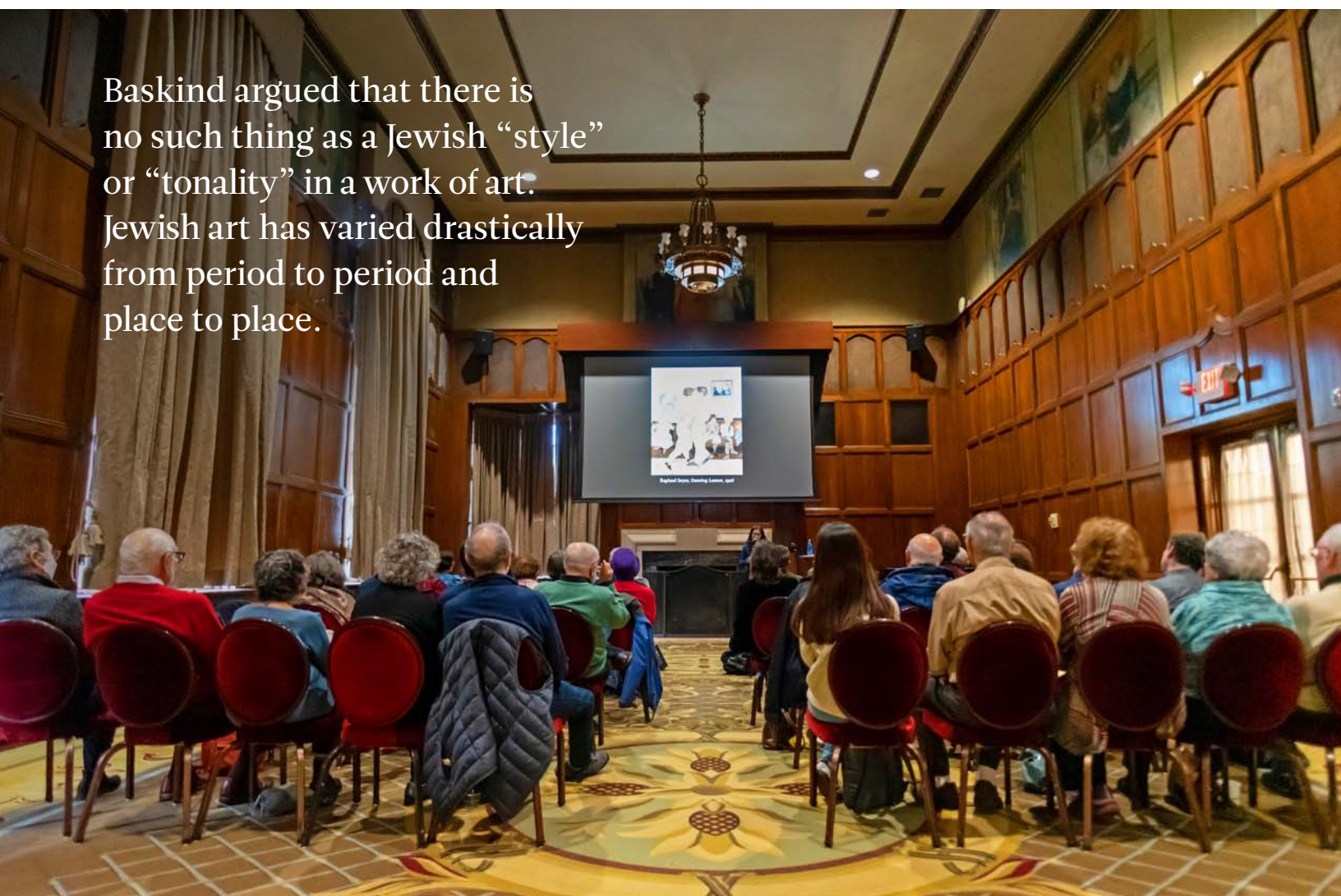
Baskind's lecture surveyed two decades of her academic work devoted to the question of what makes American art Jewish. She argued that there is no such thing as a Jewish "style" or "tonality" in a work of art. Jewish art has varied drastically from period to period and place to place. In addition, just because a work of art was created by a Jewish hand does not make it necessarily Jewish, in Baskind's view. She understands Jewish art as a work that expresses an aspect of Judaism or Jewishness through its contents. Furthermore, the influence of Jewish ideas and values in art can be covert, implicit, rather than overt. Values such as social justice or *tikkun 'olam* (repairing the world) might inform artworks that do not feature Jewish subjects, for instance.

Baskind's lecture explored the overlooked or marginalized images of well-known American artists such as Hyman Bloom, whose Jewish-themed artworks have been poorly received. She claimed that Jewish art did not fit neatly within the historical narrative of national American art. It has been viewed as less American and less authentic, but precisely for this reason these

artists have been able to reflect upon and critique the general American society. Baskind's lecture focused on the neglected Jewish works of Jack Levine and Audrey Flack, two 20th-century Jewish artists, as well as on contemporary artists who embrace their Jewishness more directly. She concluded with her current project on the Jewish sculptor Moses Jacob Ezekiel, a Virginia-born confederate who created confederate monuments, alongside Jewish-themed sculpture. In Baskind's words, "Ezekiel opens up a conversation about the place of Jewish American artists and the place of Jewish art in a religiocultural heritage without a long history of artistic production."

The Belin Lecture Series was established in 1991 through a generous gift from the late David W. Belin of Des Moines and New York to provide an academic forum for the discussion of contemporary Jewish life in the United States. Previous scholars to hold this honor include Gary Shteyngart, Deborah Lipstadt, Samuel Freedman, Ruth Messinger, Jim Loeffler, Beth Wenger, and Lila Corwin Berman, among others. Each year, the lecture is also published in written form in collaboration with Michigan Publishing.

Baskind argued that there is no such thing as a Jewish "style" or "tonality" in a work of art. Jewish art has varied drastically from period to period and place to place.





Symposium on Ottoman Jewish Culture

at the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies

On February 12 and 13, the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies held a symposium at the University of Michigan dedicated to Ottoman Jewish Culture. Bringing together a diverse group of scholars, the event featured presentations and discussions about different facets of Ottoman Jewish history and culture. The symposium was accompanied by an exhibit of historical Jewish postcards and a shadow puppet theater workshop.

The Ottoman Jewish Culture Symposium was part of the Frankel Institute 2023–2024 theme year “Jewish Visual Culture,” led by U–M Professor of History and Judaic Studies Deborah Dash Moore, and Richard I. Cohen, Professor Emeritus of Jewish History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Professors Dash Moore and Cohen convened a group of 12 scholars, curators, and filmmakers to investigate different facets of Jewish visual imagination and cultural production. The scholars at the Institute researched a wide array of topics such as architecture, photography, iconography, religious iconology, museology, theater, fashion, and film.

The Symposium on Ottoman Jewish Culture explored the visual, musical, and literary dimensions of the Jewish experience in the Ottoman Empire, reconceptualized within a transnational and interdisciplinary framework. Scholars from Canada, Turkey, Israel, and the United States came together to rethink historiographic narratives of the late Ottoman period in the Jewish realm and consider how Ottoman Jewish creativity stemmed from and contributed to broader processes in global Jewish culture and among non-Jewish communities across the Mediterranean. The papers delivered at the symposium offered a counterpoint to mainstream Eurocentric and orientalist perceptions of the Ottoman Empire, which often consider its modern culture through the lens of stagnation and decline. These Eurocentric notions still pervade popular and scholarly discourses about the histories of the Ottoman Empire and its Jews. By contrast, throughout the symposium, speakers illuminated the study of Jews in Muslim lands as crucial to the diversity and inclusivity of Jewish studies and, in a broader sense, the production of knowledge about non-Western cultures.

This symposium also marked the culmination of the Frankel Center's collaboration with the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, which focused in 2023–2024 on "The Sound and Music of Jewish Life." Two fellows at the Katz Center presented their work on Ottoman Jewish music: Edwin Seroussi discussed cross-cultural intersections in Jewish music produced in the city of Izmir; and Hadar Feldman-Samet discussed her study of interconnected musical expressions of Jews, Muslims, and Sabbatians (Dönme) in late Ottoman Salonica.

These two presenters on Ottoman Jewish music were joined by scholars working in the fields of literature and visual arts. In a panel dedicated to literary production, Esra Almas, Professor of Turkish literature at Bilkent University in Ankara, discussed representations of Jews and Jewish languages in literature written in and about Ottoman Istanbul. Moreover, U-M PhD student Marina Mayorski explored translations and adaptations in Ladino literature published in the late Ottoman Empire.

Yossi Chajes, Professor of Jewish Thought at Haifa University, provided an overview of the visualization of knowledge in Kabbalistic practices in the early-modern Ottoman Empire. Current Frankel



Institute fellow Julia Cohen Phillips and U-M professor of Judaic Studies Devi Mays presented their exciting project about the Ottoman Jewish roots of modern fashion.

Shalom Sabar offered another perspective on material popular culture focusing on images of Jews in illustrated postcards from early 20th-century Salonica (today's Thessaloniki). Symposium attendees could view examples of Jewish postcards from Salonica in a special exhibit organized by Marina Mayorski and Judaica curator Dr. Gabriel Mordoch. The postcards, which circulated globally in the 20th century, feature images of Jews and Jewish neighborhoods and spaces in Salonica.

Finally, Frankel Institute fellow Catherine M. Sousloff presented her research on Turkish shadow puppet theater, focusing on representations of Jews throughout Ottoman history. Following this intellectually stimulating lecture, symposium participants took part in a workshop about Karagoz Anatoliam shadow puppet theater led by Ayhan Hulagu. Hulagu is a US-based actor who runs the theater group "Hayal Pardesi" and has launched the annual PAU Theater Festival. As part of the workshop, participants learned how a single actor creates and performs all the characters of the shadow theater from behind an illuminated screen. Hulagu demonstrated his improvisation technique and then allowed the participants to try using the puppets themselves. This hands-on interaction with the puppet-master concluded two days of stimulating interaction and learning.

This event was co-sponsored by the departments of History of Art, History, Middle East Studies, the International Institute, the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies. It also received support from the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.



Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies Celebrates Class of 2024

The Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies applauds the Class of 2024, consisting of 12 minors, three majors, and two graduate certificate students. Our graduates are moving on to new educational degrees, travel, and employment in finance, social work, law, music, and art.

Dana Beth Steiner was selected as the inaugural recipient of the “Outstanding Undergraduate Essay Award.” For this award, all undergraduate students enrolled in our courses were eligible to submit an essay they wrote on any aspect of Jewish history, society, politics, and culture. Steiner’s essay is an undergraduate honors thesis written under the supervision of Professor Julian Levinson, entitled “Can Parade Call Broadway Home? An Analysis of Parade’s Success on Broadway in 1998 and 2023.” Her analysis effectively connects Broadway theater with larger political and cultural currents, highlighting the changing status of Jews in multiethnic America.

The Marshall Weinberg Prize is bestowed annually to an outstanding graduate student who is engaged in writing a

dissertation. This year’s recipient was Marina Mayorski, who spent the year completing her dissertation project, “Guilty Pleasures: Popular Literature and the Formation of Jewish Cultural Modernity in Hebrew, Ladino, and Yiddish.” This comparative work on modern Jewish culture uses the framework of translation and adaptation to provide a nuanced understanding of Jewish cultural modernity beyond the writings and debates of intellectual elites. The project offers an innovative approach to Ladino texts as products of late Ottoman Jewish culture and as part of a broader transnational Jewish cultural moment.

Oona Woodbury and Jenna Frieberg were selected as the two inaugural recipients of the “Deborah Dash Moore Award for Academic Excellence.” This award is based on academic merit and faculty recommendations. These students took a variety of Judaic Studies classes and received nominations from multiple faculty. They were active participants in their course discussions and completed high-quality coursework.





"I'm so thankful that through the Judaic Studies program, I was able to achieve the goals I had when applying to college: exploring the beauty, artistry, and musicality of Judaism, tying this art to contemporary social and political issues, and inspiring people to connect with and learn from one another"

Dana Beth Steiner, Judaic Studies Major, Graduated 2024

"This department has done such a great job at making a big school feel small. This year we faced a few challenges as a Jewish community on campus, but having the space and comfort of our professors and staff has really made all the difference. I am and have always been proud of being Jewish, and this education has made me even more proud."

Jenna Frieberg, Judaic Studies Minor, Graduated 2024

In recognition of his exceptional contribution to his Yiddish classes, Raffi Kaluser is this year's recipient of the Outstanding Yiddish Student Award. Each year, the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies presents the Outstanding Yiddish Student Award to a student enrolled in first- or second-year Yiddish whose classwork and commitment to Yiddish stands out.

Sophie Reed was selected as the inaugural recipient of the "Jeffrey Veidlinger Award for Dedication to the Frankel Center." The award was created to honor students who demonstrate deep investment in the Judaic Studies department. It aims to annually reward a student who has devoted their time and energy to the advancement and success of the department. Ideal candidates for this award are not solely participants in undergraduate events; they go beyond by bringing their friends and promoting our events within their larger networks. These students introduce fresh ideas and assist in conveying the needs of the student body to the department.

The 2024 graduates join a distinguished group of Frankel Center alumni. We wish them the best of luck!

Class of 2024

Graduate Certificate

Morgan Carlton
Marina Mayorski

Major

Josh Chynoweth
Hanna Lupovitch
Dana Steiner
Oona Woodbury

Minor

Jenna Frieberg
Adelaide Gordon
Jacqueline Klein
Atara Kresch
Jesse Krugel
Grace Kruse
Eva Nadler
Elisabeth Palmer
Maytal Meisler
Lillian Arbetter
Hazel Rosenberg
Alisa Rubinstein

Jenna Pearsall

This newsletter's Frankel Center Alumni Spotlight features recent U-M grad Jenna Pearsall, who is a Cantor at New York's prestigious Central Synagogue.

What are your job responsibilities?

As a cantor, every day of my job is different, which I love! A large part of my role is crafting worship for Shabbat and holidays with our incredible senior cantor and musical team. I get to have music in my life every day, singing, playing guitar,



and collaborating with professional musicians as we craft meaningful worship for our community in person as well as our community of thousands of livestreamers. Pastoral care is a huge part of what it means to be a cantor as well, making sure our congregants have a listening ear in their hardest moments and also their most joyous. I officiate all lifecycles for our members, including baby namings, b'nai

mitzvah, weddings, and funerals, and work as a team with our fabulous other clergy to make sure we are living our Jewish values and being there for our members.

What is the most rewarding part of your work?

I feel blessed every day to get to blend my two passions of music and Judaism, and it is incredible to use these passions to do *tikkun 'olam* (healing and repair) and to do it as my job! I love being there for our members through the twists and turns of life and making a difference in our community.

Tell us about your experiences at the Frankel Center.

I loved my time at the Frankel Center and learned so much through its many offerings. Some of my favorites included the "Jewish Film" course ("Screening Jewish Cultures") and the "Jewish Graphic Novel" course taught by Professor Maya

I was able to feel confident in cantorial school because of the knowledge I gained from the classes I took during my undergraduate degree.

Barzilai. I learned so much about so many different facets of Judaism in these courses and I was actually excited to attend class. I also loved having Hebrew three days a week and used those skills frequently throughout my cantorial school experience and my year of living in Israel.

How did your education at the Frankel Center prepare you for your current job?

The diverse education that the Frankel Center provided was invaluable as I continued my studies in higher education. It provided a solid foundation for my knowledge of Judaism, Talmud, Hebrew, literature, film, art, and everything to do with Jewish culture. I was able to feel confident in cantorial school because of the knowledge I gained from the classes I took during my undergraduate degree.

What advice would you give to students who are considering studying Judaic Studies?

Studying Judaic Studies at the Frankel Center changed my life and put me on a path to accomplishing my dreams of the cantorate. If you are considering a career as a rabbi or cantor, a degree in Judaic Studies can be the solid foundation that gets you to your dream. The professors are kind, warm, and extremely knowledgeable; you will learn about diverse topics and deepen your understanding of Judaism.

Faculty



Deborah Dash Moore received the National Jewish Book Award from the Jewish Book Council for her book *Walkers in the Street: Walkers in the City: Jewish Street Photographers of Midcentury New York*.



Jeffrey Veidlinger received the Vine Award for Canadian Jewish Literature from the Koffler Center of the Arts.



Rebecca Wollenberg was promoted to Associate Professor of Judaic Studies, with tenure.

Students



Maggie Carlton received a 2023–2025 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), in Scholarly Editions and Translations category, for “In the Shadow of the Holocaust: Short Fiction by Jewish Writers from the Soviet Union” together with Harriet Murav, also a Frankel Institute past fellow. In August, Maggie will start as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Princeton University’s Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies.



Marina Mayorski was awarded by the Frankel Center the 2024 Marshall Weinberg Prize for her dissertation project, *Guilty Pleasures: Popular Literature and the Formation of Jewish Cultural Modernity in Hebrew, Ladino, and Yiddish*. In June 2024, Marina successfully defended her dissertation project and this upcoming fall she will start her position as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania.



Ben Shovers graduated from the JCLP program and published “Pittsburgh Strong: A city of collaboration and resilience” in *ejewishphilanthropy*

Alumni



Pavel Brunssen published “Hitler’s American Counter-model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Ideology” in *German Politics and Society*.



Zachary Goldsmith published an article titled “The Demons We’ve Made” in *Law & Liberty*.



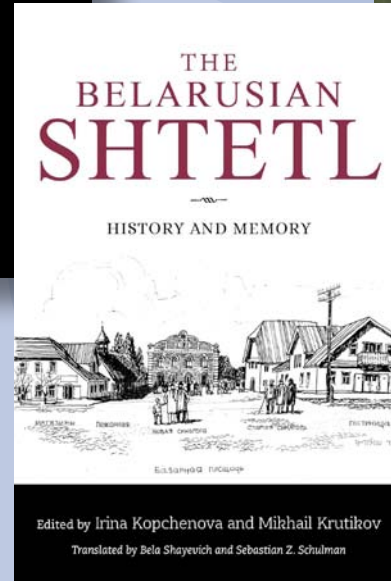
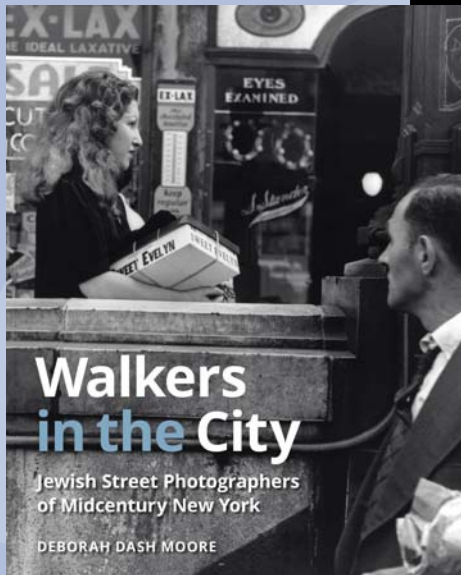
Anne Kreps is a newly tenured Associate Professor of History at the University of California Santa Cruz. Last year, she published *The Crucified Book* (University of Pennsylvania Press) and an article titled “Ancient Anatomy, Embryology, and the Gestation of Early Christian Heresy” in *Early Christianity*.



Nadav Linial received the Frankel Center’s Michael S. Bernstein Dissertation Award for his outstanding dissertation, *Second Time as Tragedy: The Tragic Mode in Second Aliyah Hebrew Literature*. He is a full-time Hebrew lecturer at Case Western Reserve University.



Omri Senderowitz was awarded the Halpern Award for Best Dissertation in Israel Studies from the Association of Israel Studies for his outstanding dissertation *From Society to Community Privatizing the Israeli Kibbutz (1975–2020)*



Jeffrey Abt, Past Institute Fellow, ***Too Jewish or Not Jewish Enough: Ritual Objects and Avant-Garde Art at the Jewish Museum of New York*** (Berghahn Books 2024)

Richard I. Cohen, Past Institute Fellow, ***Samuel Hirszenberg 1865–1908. A Polish Jewish Artist in Turmoil*** (The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization 2022)

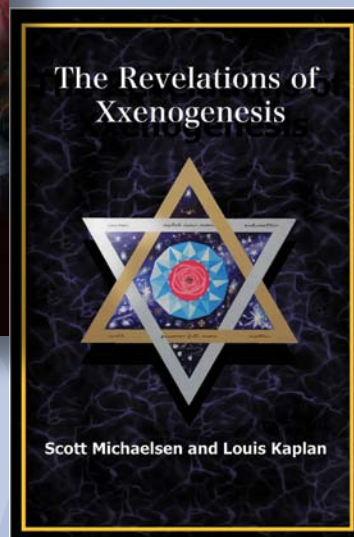
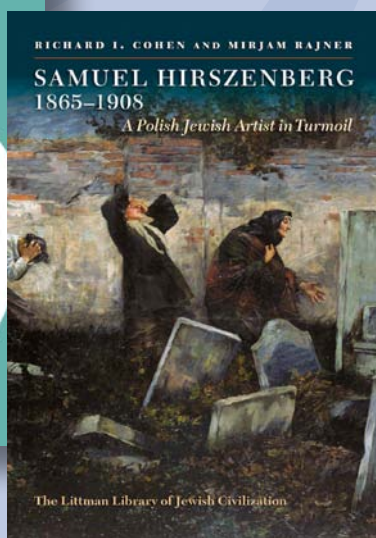
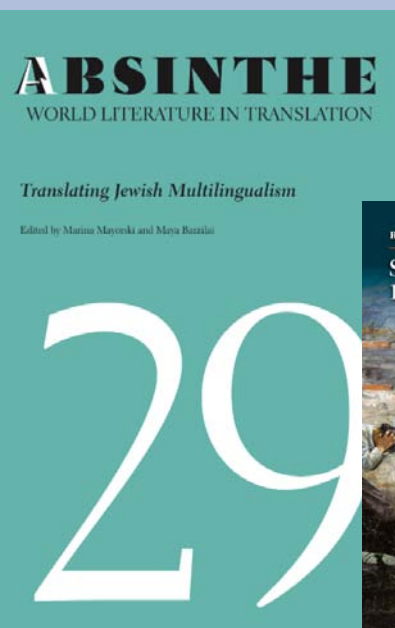
Karla Goldman, Faculty, ***“A memorial in Yiddish, Italian and English tells the stories of Triangle Shirtwaist fire victims — testament not only to tragedy but to immigrant women’s fight to remake labor laws.”*** *The Conversation*

Louis Kaplan, Past Institute Fellow, ***The Revelations of Xenogenesis***, (Metanoia Press, 2023)

Mikhail Krutikov, Faculty, ***The Belarusian Shtetl: History and Memory***, (Indiana University Press 2023)

Adam Lowenstein, Past Institute Fellow, ***Horror Film and Otherness*** (Columbia University Press 2022)

Marina Mayorski, Past Graduate Student, ***Absinthe 29: Translating Jewish Multilingualism*** (Michigan Publishing 2024)



Deborah Dash Moore, Faculty, ***Walkers in the City: Jewish Street Photographers of Midcentury New York*** (Three Hills 2023)

Anita Norich, Emerita, “**The Factory**,” by Tsilye Dropkin (English Translation), *JewishFiction.net* “**A Modern Bride and Groom**,” by Sara Familiant (English Translation), ***Absinthe: World Literature in Translation. DESIRES***, by Celia Dropkin (English Translation)

Shachar Pinsker, Faculty, “**Don’t Forget**,” by Avrom Karpinovitsh (English Translation), ***In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies***.

Adi Saleem, Faculty, ***Queer Jews, Queer Muslims: Race, Religion, and Representation*** (edited) (Wayne State University Press 2022)

Catherine M. Soussloff, ***Mina Totino: Colour Figurations in Mina Totino’s Monochromes***, (Monica Reyes Gallery, Vancouver Canada 2023)

Jindrich Toman, ***Bohemia’s Jews and Their Nineteenth Century: Text, Contexts, Reassessments*** (Karolinum Press, Charles University Prague 2023)

Conference

Midwest Jewish Studies Association

On September 16 and 17, 2024, the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies will be hosting the 36th annual Midwest Jewish Studies Association Conference in Ann Arbor, in person only and in English. This year's keynote will be delivered by Iris Rachamimov, Professor of History at Tel Aviv University and Frankel Institute fellow during the 2024–2025 academic year.

The Midwest Jewish Studies Association (MJSA) is a broad and interdisciplinary nonprofit organization. It brings together scholars of Jewish and non-Jewish backgrounds to generate new ideas, share resources, and forge networks. The MJSA is designed to facilitate scholarship and pedagogy and offer other valuable resources and services for individuals involved in Jewish studies at the college and university levels.

The annual conference is the MJSA's central yearly event, held, on a rotating basis, at various Midwest institutions of higher education. The Frankel Center for Judaic Studies is hosting the MJSA conference for the first time and helping promote an accessible, collegial, and informative midwestern exchange in the field of Jewish studies.

Featured Artist

2Fik

2Fik is a multidisciplinary artist known for embodying multiple, unique characters. Through his social and political works, 2Fik creates lives for characters who almost seem real, whose stories, personalities, and interests are rooted in our world. Each of his creations are conceived in a voyeuristic way that pushes the spectator to wonder what exists beyond the scope of the work. Each character in this humorous and interpretative world becomes a reflection of our society.

Between October 28 and November 11, 2024, 2Fik will visit Ann Arbor as the Frankel Institute's featured artist for Fall 2024. While in town, there will be a public exhibition of 2Fik's artwork at Now Studios (715 N University Ave bsmt, Ann Arbor, MI 48104), a Bring Your Own Heels (BYOH) Workshop on 10/31, a drag performance titled My Name is Ludmillia Mary in the Diag on 11/4, a public lecture on the topic of 2Fik's work followed by a discussion on 11/7, and multiple private student office hours sessions with the artist.



2025–2026 Fellowship Opportunities

Jews and Media

In today's media-saturated world, understanding the impact of media on Jewish life and culture is more important than ever before. In recent years, scholars of Jewish Studies have broadened their scope beyond traditional textual analysis to encompass the study of various media, from the historical artifacts of manuscripts and scrolls to books, newspapers, magazines, recordings, film, television, and digital technologies. This fellowship year at the Frankel Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies will explore the intersection of Jewish Studies and Media Studies and the relationships between Jews, Jewishness, Judaism, and media.

We seek to understand the roles Jews have played in the production, distribution, and consumption of media throughout history, and to study the representation of Jews in various media, both old and new. By including a broad range of media, we aim to examine the dynamic relationship between Jews and media; the role of media in Jewish/non-Jewish relations, as well as in shaping concepts of Jewishness globally. We invite projects that explore the subject through a variety of perspectives: the evolving boundaries of religious traditions, ideas of belonging, migration, nationalism, capitalism, race, gender, and the transformations of Israel and the diaspora.

The “Jews and Media” fellowship year will explore these questions:

- What can Jewish Studies learn from Media Studies and vice versa?
- How have different media shaped the Jewish public sphere and fostered connections or divisions among Jews and non-Jews, as well as among Jews of diverse backgrounds?
- How have Jews adapted certain media and how have these media contributed to the construction of Jewishness? Likewise, how have Jews been represented in different media, and how have these representations influenced public perceptions?
- What is the role of the media in discussions of the real or perceived influential position of Jews in media production?

We invite scholars, experts, and practitioners from an array of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences to join us in this multidisciplinary exploration. We encourage applicants to consider questions of diversity, inclusion, and the voices that are amplified or marginalized in different media contexts.

Applications due **November 4, 2024.**

For more information, and complete application materials go to

www.lsa.umich.edu/judaic/institute

js-frankel-institute-applications@umich.edu | 734.763.9047

University of Michigan (734) 763-9047
Frankel Center for Judaic Studies JudaicStudies@umich.edu
202 S. Thayer St., Ste. 2111
Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1608

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research in the field of
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by fellows at the Frankel
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*Listen on
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