



News from JWT

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You are cordially invited to join us for opening night of our new group art show at The Gallery@The Braid, located at the home of Jewish Women's Theatre in Santa Monica. Why not view the art show, hear the artists discuss their work and stay for the opening of *Crossing Our Red Sea*, JWT's new salon? Opening night is March 10, with the Art Talk at 7pm and the performance at 8. We would love you and a guest to be our guests. Just let Maureen know!

New Art Exhibit to Enhance Passover Performance and Holiday Celebrations

Santa Monica, CA (February 27, 2018) What does the story of Passover mean to eleven California women artists? A new group show at The Gallery@The Braid, home of Jewish Women's Theatre (JWT) in Santa Monica, answers that question through painting, sculpture, photography, textile design and ceramics, beginning on March 10.

The wide scope of interpretation includes materials that originated in family haggadahs, inspirational biblical texts, searches for the role of women in the story of Exodus, and the desire to create personal matzah covers to adorn the seder table. Many of the artists will be on hand at the opening reception and art talk that precedes the premiere of JWT's new salon show, *Crossing Our Red Sea* - contemporary stories of letting go and liberation.

Participating artists are Eve Brandstein, Jan Burns, Laurie Gross, Nancy Kaye, Ellen Kimmel, Susan Landesmann, Sonia Levitin, Peachy Levy, Laraine Mestman, Sandy Savett and Sara True. The opening reception begins at 6:30pm with an art talk by many of the artists at 7 and the performance at 8pm on Saturday, March 10. The Gallery show and art talk are free. The opening night performance of *Crossing Our Red Sea* is \$40 pre-sale or \$45 at the door.

Many of the artists began their creations after spending a day studying the story of Exodus with Rabbi Ed Feinstein of Valley Beth Shalom synagogue in Encino. After the study session, they were asked to reflect on the rabbi's teachings, then go home and create art that gave a personal and contemporary interpretation of the part of the story that spoke to them.

"The theme of this show is one I have been trying to express through my ceramic hand project, which focuses on the invisible women in the haggadah," says Marina Del Ray ceramicist Ellen Kimmel. "While

writing my own haggadah a few years ago, I discovered midrashim on the Exodus story that not only included women, but elevated the role our foremothers played in Jewish history. My intention is for the ceramic hands I created to make visible and bring to life the women who are marginalized in the traditional Passover story, but who played a crucial role in freeing the Israelites from slavery, individual and collectively.”

Photographer Jan Berlfein Burns was also inspired by the Passover story. “I used my photo in a haggadah that I made in honor of my parents’ 60th wedding anniversary, where I told their story through the symbolism of the Passover seder. The photo was captioned “Why is our father different than all other fathers?”

Participating artists:

Eve Brandstein (painter) One of Hollywood’s most prodigious workers, Brandstein has made contributions to nearly every facet of the entertainment industry in New York and Hollywood. Her art work is on exhibit at Bergamont Station and was on exhibit in the 40×40 show. She also participated in many group shows including The Art Studio and Susan Shomburg Gallery.

Jan Berlfein Burns (photographer) After her daughter visited Auschwitz on a high school trip, Burns created a keepsake book, *March of the Living ~ Our Stories*, to honor Holocaust survivors. Two editions sold out. Burns’ contribution to the Gallery show is a photo, taken by her mother Jean Reiss Berlfein and used in a family haggadah.

Laurie Gross (textile artist and fiber sculptor) Gross is a nationally recognized artist known for her inspirational and spiritual work. She uses biblical texts and Jewish heritage to create pieces that embody universal themes, many of which originate in liturgical texts and midrashic material. Her compositions are on display in Jewish museums and synagogues throughout the country.

Nancy Kaye (photographer) Based in Los Angeles, Kaye has photographed for many news companies including the *New York Times* and *Associated Press*. Her photos are included in many books, including Bob Woodward’s *Wired* and her portrait of Ralph Ellison is part of the Smithsonian’s exhibit on African American History and Culture.

Ellen Kimmel (ceramic artist) Ceramicist Kimmel contributes several works to the Gallery show, including a ceramic sculpture of fish entitled “Fertility.” Fish are a symbol of fertility, and when Pharaoh forbid sexual relations between male and female Jewish slaves, the Israelite women used fish to nourish their weary husbands. In this way, the women brought life into the world when Pharaoh decreed death.

Sonia Levitin (painter) An accomplished and prolific novelist and painter, Levitin escaped Nazi Germany as a child. Her first novel, *Journey to America* became an instant classic. A talented painter, her inaugural art show featured ten of Levitin's expressionist paintings which were never before seen in the public arena.

Peachy Levy (textile artist) Levy displays a cotton and hand embroidered matzah cover that is bordered by images of bricks the Hebrew slaves were forced to make for their Egyptian Pharaoh. Her design symbolizes freedom as it depicts matzah and parsley. Levy's generous gifts to many Jewish institutions, particularly camps, have helped fund arts programming for countless children.

Laraine Mestman (painter) Mestman's watercolor "Hatkhala Khadasha" means new beginning, and illustrates one of several places considered to be where Moses crossed the Red Sea. A prolific artist and author, Mestman has exhibited at the Pasadena Museum of History, the LA Municipal Art Gallery and The Latino Art Museum among many others.

Sandy Savett (mixed media artist) Savett, a member of the Advisory Board of Jewish Women's Theatre is a retired family and child therapist. For over 20 years she worked with at-risk families dealing with abuse, neglect and cultural difference in child rearing. The Gallery show will feature her work "Facing Our Enemies," which she created using markers on paper.

Sara True (painter) Sara True is a traveler, poet, and painter whose work has been exhibited internationally. She translates philosophy and theory into a unique language of color and texture. Her acrylic painting "Miriam's Dance" shows the Red Sea parting as Miriam stands in front, joyous in magenta, arms outstretched towards the sky, a woman leading the masses towards the future

"Crossing Our Red Sea" will be on display at The Gallery@The Braid, home of Jewish Women's Theatre, 2912 Colorado Ave., Suite #102, Santa Monica, CA 90404, from March 10 through April 30. The opening reception, preceding the premiere performance of *Crossing Our Red Sea*, will take place on Saturday, March 10 at 6:30pm with an art talk with many of the artists at 7pm. Additional art talks are Monday, March 19 and Tuesday, March 20 at 6:30pm. Art talks, featuring the artists and curator are free. Tickets must be purchased for performances.

For tickets: www.jewishwomenstheatre.org

JWT, voted "Best Live Theatre on the Westside" by *The Argonaut*, stages and displays traditional and contemporary works and educational programming that provide a forum for the development, performance and showcasing of Jewish artistic talent. Now celebrating its 10th Anniversary, JWT's salon theatre of original dramatic shows, each written to a specific theme, displays the diverse and eclectic community of writers, artists and creators who comprise L.A.'s Jewish women's community. Learn more about JWT at: www.jewishwomenstheatre.org.

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