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Art Gallery Exhibit at Jewish Women's Theatre (JWT) Explores Special Relationship between Food and Jewish Life

Art Gallery Exhibit “Nourishing Tradition” Inspires New Show Featuring Eight Jewish California Artists

Santa Monica, CA (January 5, 2017) Food preparation is not only an art in itself, it is also the inspiration for a new show at the Art Gallery@The Braid, the home of the Jewish Women's Theatre (JWT). The show, entitled “Nourishing Tradition,” will run from January 21 to March 5, 2017 and will feature paintings and sculptural assemblies by eight well-known California artists.

“Nourishing Tradition” will open at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 21, the same night as the first performance of “The Matzo Ball Diaries.” At 7 p.m. featured artists will discuss their work. The artists will participate in an informative Art Talk on January 30 and 31 at 6:30, preceding an 7:30 p.m. performance of The Matzo Ball Diaries. Visit www.jewishwomenstheatre.org for tickets and more information.

“We put out a call to the West Coast art community to locate both serious and whimsical pieces that reflect Jewish connections to food and how they nourish the body, the mind and the soul,” explains gallery director Marilee Tolwin. “Our show will give viewers an inside look at how each artist uses food to convey emotion and to connect it to Jewish tradition and community.”

Ask any Jewish man, woman or child to describe a favorite memory and the answer is likely to be a story about family, friends, holidays or special occasions. They will recall the sights, sounds, smells and, most importantly, the tastes that still bring smiles to their faces. Food and Jewish life have been inseparable throughout history. And now, the Jewish Women's Theatre (JWT) will celebrate this connection with a gallery exhibit and a series of special events throughout the months of January and February.

The Old Testament explains that as soon as the Israelites reached safety from the Pharaoh, they celebrated their newfound freedom with a communal meal of roast lamb and herbs. History has been repeating itself throughout the ages in every Jewish home through the diaspora. Whether religious or cultural, Jewish people and food share both symbolic and societal meaning. This meaning is the inspiration for the “Nourishing Tradition” gallery show.

Participating artists include: Harriette Estel Berman, Judy Dekel, Betty Green, Harriet Glaser, Benny Ferdman, Marleene Rubenstein, Penny Wolin and JWT's Gallery Director Marilee Tolwin.

Harriette Estel Berman—For nearly three decades, Harriette Estel Berman has made it her sacred mission to create work that addresses cultural issues and political hot buttons. Her 1982 mixed media sculpture “Toast to the Bride” was fabricated from sheet and wire to look like a manufactured domestic appliance as a social commentary on the roles of women in society and about the value and influence of our consumer goods. The piece is highlighted through a time travel video.

Judy Dekel—Tarzana printmaker Judy Dekel studied at the University of Judaism, UCLA and Haifa University where she explored Fine Art Printmaking, Etching, Lithography and Silk Screen. With the advent of digital photography, she now incorporates visual ideas into her work. Her 2015 watercolor

“Abundance” will display how she was influenced by the forms, shapes and colors in nature. She has participated in numerous juried shows in Israel, Asia, and throughout the greater Los Angeles area.

Benny Ferdman—A visual artist and educator, Benny Ferdman reclaims and reworks cultural and historical iconography inspired by ancient Jewish manuscripts and rare photographs of now-destroyed wooden synagogues. He is the recipient of a Milken Jewish Educators Award for his work as founding faculty and Arts Director at deToledo High School (formerly New Community Jewish High School. He has studied many diverse cultures and is creating a new work for “Nourishing Tradition” inspired by his mother and yiddishkeit.

Harriet Berman Glaser – Although she became a serious artist in her 50’s, Jewish tradition has always been a focal point of Glaser's life, so it was natural for her themes to center on Judaica. She initially working in watercolors, then studied oil painting under Regina Lyubovnaya where she learned chiaroscuro, using light as it flows through the painting. She found the early Dutch master's style to be a perfect medium to match the glow of her rich Jewish heritage.

Betty Green – Mixed media painter and Emmy Award-winning designer Betty Green is a familiar face to museum and gallery visitors throughout California. She attended Cornell and UCLA, where she studied under the tutelage of Richard Diebenkorn and Tony Berlant. She is the recipient of an International CLIO and received the “City of Los Angeles Certificate of Tribute” for exemplary contributions in the arts. Her “Pear Fantasy” mixed media painting on canvas will be on display during “Nourishing Tradition.”

Marleene Rubenstein-- “Milk and Honey,” Rubenstein’s mixed media sculpture tells the story of the importance of continuing the cycle of Torah reading each year. Even during the darkest days of the Warsaw ghetto, the Jewish people honored the Torah by dancing with their children. She uses pre-WWII photographs of European children in her sculpture to send messages of survival, mourning and memorial to those she never knew. For her, the Torah is an eternal source of nourishment

Penny Wolin—Since her teen-aged days photographing rodeos in her native Wyoming, Wolin has been creating wry and insightful documentary portraits. Her work has been featured in a solo exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution and she has received grants from such prestigious establishments as the National Endowment for the Arts. Her latest work, “American Photographers of Jewish Ancestry: A Visual and Verbal Dialogue with Jewish America” was featured at the Jewish Women’s Theatre this year and one of her most recent photographs “Pastrami and Cheese on Kosher Rye,” is featured in “Nourishing Tradition.”

Marilee Tolwin – Director of Gallery@The Braid, Tolwin finds that painting allows her to connect more deeply to Judaism. Her work displays Jewish ideas and rituals through a contemporary lens. Many times, Hebrew text obscures images in her paintings, thus helping her to connect to her ancestors through her art. She is a frequent participant in group exhibits and the resident artist at the Jewish Women’s Theatre.

JWT provides a home for the diverse and eclectic community of artists and creators who comprise L.A.’s Jewish community. Both at its home in The Braid theatre and art gallery in Santa Monica’s Bergamot Arts District, in intimate salons throughout the city, and on tour throughout the country, JWT stages and displays traditional and contemporary works that provide a forum for the development, performance and showcasing of Jewish talent. Visit www.jewishwomenstheatre.org for gallery hours, salon locations, tickets and more information.

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