



Jews of Color to be Featured in New Art Gallery Show at Jewish Women's Theatre Through Deeply Personal and Introspective Artwork

The Gallery at The Braid to Display Unique Artistic Perspectives of Diverse, Multicultural Jews in New *True Colors* Show



left to right: *Burning Bush* By Davi Yael Cheng, *Kushtaka Doll* By Corey Stein, *A Member of Two Tribes* by Emily Bowen Cohen

Santa Monica (April 24, 2019) Judaism is multiculturalism. The enchanting artwork of three diverse artists of mixed Jewish and Chinese, Muscogee (Creek) Nation or Tlingit descent will be on display at a new show at The Gallery at the Braid, opening May 4 in Santa Monica.

Gallery director Marilee Tolwin said, "We are excited to exhibit artists who share with us their views of their multicultural backgrounds through deeply personal and introspective art works. The art in our new Gallery show beautifully reflects their diverse cultural backgrounds."

Davi Yael Cheng, Emily Bowen Cohen and Corey Stein all grew up in culturally diverse families. Their upbringing as Jews of Color allowed them to develop unique perspectives which each of them later translated into enchanting visual images that reflect their culturally diverse lives and ancestries.

Cheng, the daughter of a Chinese father and Jewish mother, was often questioned about her heritage. She found she was "too Chinese to fit in with her American friends and too American to fit in with her Chinese friends." In an article for *My Jewish Learning*, she

explains, “One way to look at this is that she either doesn’t fit in anywhere, or that she belongs to multiple communities and can serve as a connector to the differences.” She chose the latter.

Her Jewish education led her to sketch and doodle scenes from the Torah. These early expressions led to the creation of stained glass windows for sanctuaries, acceptance into the *Women of the Book* project – a visual midrashic Torah scroll created by 54 Jewish women artists from around the world, and inclusion in the Facebook Art Challenge, where she posted five original pieces of art in five days.

Cheng, now an esteemed graphic designer, will be displaying some of her original paintings including *The Parting of the Red Sea* and *Cloud by Day, Fire by Night* in the Braid’s Gallery show.

Emily Bowen Cohen has a Jewish mother and Native American, Muscogee (Creek) Nation father. She grew up in rural Oklahoma until her father died when she was nine. Cohen and her mother then moved to the East Coast, but she never forgot her childhood in a town that was one-third Native American. As an adult, she began to draw comics based on her childhood memories.

Cohen is now a member of the Asylum Arts network. Her comics recently appeared in *Paper Brigade*, a publication of the Jewish Book Council. In 2017, she received a WORD artist grant, the Bruce Gellar Memorial Prize to create a mini-comic, *An American Indian Guide to the Day of Atonement*.

A graduate of Harvard University with a degree in Visual and Environmental studies, she will be showing one of her comic book covers and her *Day of Atonement* Comic Book at the Braid Gallery *True Colors* show.

Mixed media artist Corey Stein uses a variety of techniques to surprise her audience and add humor to the world. The daughter of a Jewish father from New York and a Tlingit mother from Alaska, she earned an MBA from Cal Arts and now uses environmental observations and connections, unanticipated juxtapositions, contrasts and wordplays to define her art.

Using traditional Native American art forms, Stein expresses new ideas about our changing society. She feels a responsibility to draw audiences together into new discussions, promote inquiry, educate and entertain. She has participated in scores of solo and group exhibitions and earned many awards from organizations including The Autry Museum, the Eiterjord Indian Art Market, and the Sealaske Juried Art Show.

Some of her Kustaka Dolls, shown for the first time at the American Indian Arts

Marketplace in 2018, will be displayed at the Braid Gallery. The Kushtaka Dolls are inspired by the legend about the mythical shape-shifting creatures found in Tlingit folklore.

The *True Colors* gallery show, opening May 4, will complement a new salon show of the same name that celebrates today's multicultural Jews.

JWT artistic director Ronda Spinak said, "Jewish Women's Theatre's new *True Colors* gallery show and salon performances will spotlight the experiences of Jews of Color. Using different media to tell poignant and personal stories, our audiences will engage with emotionally moving displays of questioning and feeling like outsiders. The creators of the artworks and stories share their personal insights in some of the most creative ways Jewish Women's Theatre audiences have ever seen or heard."

There will be a reception and art talk featuring some of the artists at 6:30pm opening night, prior to the 8pm performance of *True Colors*. Additional art talks will be held on Monday, May 13 and Tuesday, May 14 at 6:30pm prior to the 7:30pm salon performances. There is no charge for the gallery shows, but tickets are required for the salon shows. Presale performance tickets are \$45, \$50 at the door and are available at: www.jewishwomenstheatre.org.

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