



American
Jewish
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New Exhibition Space and Curatorial Project at AJU

Bel Air, CA – January 11, 2018 - American Jewish University is delighted to announce the upcoming opening of a new exhibition space, the **Project Room**, in which **curators and artists will be invited to respond to AJU's arts collection.**

The Project Room will launch with **"RE:Formation of the Jewish Body,"** curated by Los Angeles-based, Israeli art historian Sagi Refael. The exhibition explores the cultural perception and transformation of the Jewish male body via its emergence in pop culture and media, modernist and contemporary art, and ephemera and sports, from the early twentieth century to the present.

This visual path of representations begins with biblical figures; traverses the character of the "Wandering Jew" and the "Shtetl Jew" in European culture, which was perceived as weak, feminine and defeated; explores the active, confident "Muscle Jews," conceived by early Zionist thinking; and addresses the contemporary subversive representations of sensual and even taboo-breaking contemporary Jewish masculinities in both American and Israeli cultures.

Artists being showcased include Zachary Balber, Salvador Dali, Mati Elmaliach, Ted Gilien, Austin Grodinger, Lea Golda Holterman, Alon Kedem, Saul Raskin, Melver Unter, Ron Winter, Sara Wallach, Gil Yefman, and more.

The Project Room invites the public, for the first time, to interact with AJU's extensive collection, through projects that suggest crucial conversations relating to Jewish culture, questions of identity, and community formation. These creative opening points will serve as platform for educational activities and public events.

"This new initiative reflects AJU's longstanding commitment to the exploration of our shared past," said Rotem Rozental, AJU's Chief Curator, Assistant Dean of the Whizin Center for Continuing Education and Director of the Institute for Jewish Creativity, "We are honored to support local practice and cultivate current intellectual and creative pursuits that reflect our future by acknowledging the complexities, tensions and nuances that have shaped our histories."

The community is invited to join a free opening event on on February 18, 2018 at 3pm. The annual students' exhibition of the Sarah Soraya Nazarian Fine Arts Program, *Imagine*, will open simultaneously, the public is invited to attend both events.

Further making our collection and cultural treasures accessible to the wider public, AJU now offers guided tours for individuals, families, schools and academic institutions at the Sondra & Marvin Smalley Sculpture Garden, the University's extensive collection, and the Galleries. Tours are led by art historians, artists, and educators. For details and pricing, contact arts@aju.edu.

American Jewish University, founded in 1947, is a recognized leader in providing world class, Jewish educational and cultural opportunities. By creating a unique and distinctive learning environment in which innovation is nurtured, new ideas are born, and Jewish values are integrated into community life, AJU has grown into a thriving center of Jewish resources and talent. For more information about AJU, visit us online at www.aju.edu. For more information about the Arts at AJU program, visit arts.aju.edu.

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