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**American Jewish University's Institute for Jewish Creativity Announces
Word 2021: Bruce Geller Memorial Prize Recipients**

Los Angeles, CA (May 21, 2021) – Today, the Institute for Jewish Creativity (IJC) of American Jewish University (AJU) announced the grantees of the *Word 2021: Bruce Geller Memorial Prize*, an annual award designed to support projects that explore the meeting points of Jewish ideas, ideals, contemporary practice, and texts.

In an effort to broaden support of Jewish artists and creatives during the pandemic era, this is the first year the IJC, which supports projects that approach Jewish culture from a variety of perspectives and disciplines, accepted submissions from across the U.S.

“This past year reminded the world artists are essential workers in our communities. Now, more than ever, they need our support,” said Dr. Rotem Rozental, Chief Curator and Senior Director of Arts and Culture at AJU. “We are honored to welcome these artists to our growing network and support fascinating projects and artists who stretch our understanding of Jewish life and help us review the world. The IJC is a resource and a hub for artists, organizations, and audiences in Los Angeles and beyond, and we look forward to sharing their insightful work with local, national and international communities.”

Twelve digital projects have been awarded artists grants for this year's theme, FORGIVENESS. Grants range from \$1,000 - \$2,000 and will be used in the creation and/or presentation of new work.

The winners will share their projects with the community during a virtual event, to be held Sunday, August 8, 2021. The event is free and open to the public with advanced registration. For more information and to register, visit: aju.edu/ijc/digital-word-2021.

Awarded Artists:

Katya Apekina, *Out of This Spark*, Book

Hadar Cohen, Selichot: Songs of Forgiveness, Website, poetry, music recording

Sharon Kagan, The Undoing: Forgiveness, Painting, Sculpture, Installation, Video/Performance

Julia Knobloch, Heshbon HaNefesh_Poetic Accountings of the Soul: Forgiveness Edition, First Heshbon HaNefesh Modern Liturgy Retreat

Avital Meshi, AI-Apologetic-T-Shirt, Wearable Technology

Dr. Erin Mizrahi and Jason Lipeles, The Book of Forgiveness, Digital Book

Jonathan Skurnik, Death and Love, Virtual Table Read

Cassio Tolpolar, *Moldova Impressions (and everything after)*, Book to be shared via social media

Jericho Vincent, Tikkun for the Moon, Instagram essay

Julia Vogl and Gabriella Willenz, Rolling Gender, Radio Play

Josh Warshawsky, Hineni (Here I Stand), A live musical and video recording of a new original composition

Ariel Wolpe, Ruach Neshama, Music Album

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***The Institute for Jewish Creativity (IJC)** is a proud project of American Jewish University (AJU). The IJC cultivates a network of local Jewish artists, and supports a contemporary, vibrant, Jewish cultural landscape in Los Angeles and beyond, in the spirit of AJU's mission to elevate individuals and communities through Jewish wisdom and creativity.*

Word: Bruce Geller Memorial Prize is made possible through the legacy of Bruce and Jeannette Geller. Bruce and Jeannette Geller were influential Los Angeles residents whose passion for creativity and the pursuit of art defined their lives. Bruce Geller was an award-winning Hollywood screenwriter most famous for creating, directing and producing the highly successful TV show, Mission Impossible.