

Holocaust Reading Room and Study Center

Dedicated in 2007, the Schwab Family Holocaust Reading Room in the Penn State Harrisburg library is a visible centerpiece for the first research and outreach center devoted to Holocaust and Jewish studies in the region. The center sponsors public programming, develops special collections, and promotes educational opportunities in Holocaust and Jewish studies.

The Reading Room, community and University focal point for Holocaust education, is the result of

a generous donation from Harrisburg resident Linda Schwab and the late Morris Schwab. It is located on the library's first floor, and also serves as a resource for preservation of local connections to the Holocaust.

The Reading Room includes materials from Penn State Harrisburg's extensive Holocaust and Genocide Collection of books and other media, now totaling more than 1,000 titles, and provides space for gallery presentations of art and documents of the Holocaust and Jewish experience. The collection is the largest specifically devoted to Holocaust studies in Central Pennsylvania.

The Room's video and audio recordings of survivors, liberators, and witnesses in Central Pennsylvania allow visitors to learn about local connections to the Holocaust, while special collections, exhibits, documents, and oral histories provide additional perspectives. The room's collection continues to grow as interviews and documents of Central Pennsylvania survivors, their children, and liberators are added with ongoing special projects and coursework.

For more information: harrisburg.psu.edu/chjs



SUSAN LEVITON

The joy of crafting words into art is the result of the confluence of two areas of beauty: the meaning of the words, and shape of the letters themselves and the spaces they create in becoming forms on paper. In this exhibit of 18 calligraphic paintings, those two aspects of creating visual art from words come together in what I see as a unified arc of experience and perception.

Some of the works shown in this exhibit spoke to me first as poetry and some as song. These are texts culled from Yiddish writers, from sacred texts, and from believers and those who question. Many of the pieces are hand cut from single sheets of paper in the tradition of Jewish papercut art, and one is an extrapolation of traditional design used to fill in the spaces in medieval manuscript illumination, making those design elements themselves the sole focus of the art.



As both a singer and a visual artist, I often bring those two aspects of my life's work together by crafting a visual home for song text before or while I delve into the voice of the lyric, thus building a bond with the original poet while finding myself in the words. These two gifts in my life-visual art and song-are never separated for long, and my hope is that while viewing this exhibit, you may also hear the whisper of the voices of those who sang the words in the past and who continue to sing them out today.

Please find your own way through the material using the descriptives to set the pieces in time and space. I hope you will begin to see, too, the beauty of the space within and surrounding the words.

-Susan Leviton
January, 2014

Catalogue of the Exhibition

1. Peace and Blessing Papercut
2. No Matter How Far Away
3. Seven Species Watercolor
4. Oh, Winter Night
5. Every Blade of Grass
6. O, Sacred Torah
7. Nation Shall Not Lift up Sword
8. The Golden Peacock
9. Far Vos?
10. Medieval Star
11. We, the People
12. Aliles Dam (Blood Libel)
13. This is the Day
14. Blessed is the Match
15. House Blessing Papercut
16. Peace Papercut
17. Deep in the Night
18. Letters in Love with Letters

Most of the calligraphic works on display are for sale. If you are interested in a particular piece, please contact the artist at susan@susanlevitonarts.com.

Feel free to visit Susan's website, www.susanlevitonarts.com for a wider look at her art, music, and programming offerings.

About the Artist:



Susan Leviton

A self-described “Jewish Culture Worker,” Susan Leviton expresses her love for, and skill in, the lettering arts by translating Yiddish and Hebrew text into works of art. The ancient craft of papercutting, universally egalitarian in that it requires only paper and a tool to cut it, in Susan's hands connects to Jewish roots of expression. Her calligraphic works incorporate delicate images from nature, bold expressions of poetry from another century, and exuberant 21st Century statements that connect to historic letter forms.

The exhibition is part of programming organized by the Penn State Harrisburg Center for Holocaust and Jewish Studies under the direction of Dr. Simon J. Bronner. The Center acknowledges the support of Dr. Mukund Kulkarni, chancellor, Penn State Harrisburg; Dr. Kathryn Robinson, director of the School of Humanities, Penn State Harrisburg; Dr. Gregory Crawford, library director, Penn State Harrisburg; Irwin and Nancy Aronson, Dr. Madlyn Hanes, Neil Leifert, Kurt and Doris Moses, Linda Schwab, Harry Yaverbaum, and Eileen Zagon.

Lead Scholar: Simon J. Bronner

Curator: Spero Lappas

Administrative Support: Ella Dowell

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Website: harrisburg.psu.edu/chjs