

## IN TOUCH

MAY 2015

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

TIMOTHY L. HANFORD

Dear Friends and Supporters of AFJMH:

Now that the winter chill in much of the country is just a memory, it is my pleasure to invite you to enjoy this Spring newsletter. It provides a glimpse of some of the recent activities of the Jewish Museum Hohenems.

Museum Director Hanno Loewy introduces the newest exhibition, "A Streetcar Named Desire: A Journey through Yerushalayim/Jerusalem/Al-Quds." This streetcar has little to do with the one Tennessee Williams immortalized – instead it is a relatively new streetcar that connects western Jerusalem with the Jewish settlements in the city's Palestinian eastern part. Through photographs and exhibits, visitors will experience a journey through Jerusalem and the divergent cultures thrown together in the city.

Dr. Loewy also provides an update on the Museum's successful exhibition, "Jukebox. Jewkbox! A Jewish Century on Shellac and Vinyl" that closed in Hohenems in March. The exhibition is now in Munich and next year will be in Poland. We should all be proud that the Jewish Museum Hohenems is producing scholarly (but nonetheless entertaining) exhibitions that are of interest to international audiences.

The Museum had its best attendance year ever in 2014. Much of what the Museum has accomplished is made possible by your generous contributions passed on by the AFJMH. As you read about what the Museum is up to, I hope you will consider making additional (tax-deductible) gifts to the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems. This is especially important as the Museum continues its preparations for the 2017 Descendants Reunion.

*Sincerely,*  
*Tim Hanford*  
*President, American Friends of the Jewish*  
*Museum Hohenems ♦*

Save the Date:  
**Hohenems Descendants Reunion**  
at the Jewish Museum Hohenems  
**July 27-30, 2017**

## NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

DR. HANNO LOEWY

Working for the Jewish Museum Hohenems is a challenge every day. We are part of a lively community that reaches around the globe. It is a great gift to be able to communicate with descendants and friends all over the world, and to welcome guests from all continents almost every week. The American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems are at the heart of this thrilling experience.

Welcoming 17,800 visitors (more than ever) to the museum in 2014 was another challenge for us. We work hard to engage a diversity of people from all backgrounds in the discourse of our exhibitions, to encourage young pupils and students from Austria, Switzerland and Germany to discover the richness of the Hohenems heritage and its Diaspora, and to take part in the evolving multicultural civil society of the region. All of this demands our attention, and our traveling shows now reach out to other places and

communities, more than ever.

The team knows that only a developing museum, with creativity and innovation, can confront this ever growing and intensifying mission. We have started a process to evaluate our work and to discuss our future, within our team, with our board of directors, and with our sponsors, both public and private. New forms of financial resources have to be shaped that will make us less dependent on public money, and enable us to call for public support with self-confidence.

It's you, the American Friends, who help us to make Hohenems an inspiring place – for those who want to preserve heritage and for those who want to build the future.

### **Successful exhibition on Jewish pop-culture and the history of shellac and vinyl**

*Jukebox. Jewkbox! A Jewish Century on Shellac and Vinyl*, our exhi-



*Jukebox. Jewkbox! A Jewish Century on Shellac and Vinyl* © Dietmar Walser

bition in Hohenems from October 10, 2014 to March 8, 2015, was extremely successful. The show can now be seen in the Jewish Museum Munich, right in the center of the city, from March 24 to November 22, 2015. More venues are to come. In Fall 2016, the exhibition will travel to Poland, to the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, the largest Jewish Museum in Europe.

Around 1900, a Jewish immigrant, Emil Berliner, changed the world. With the invention of the gramophone and the record, the first medium of a global culture was born. And the Jewish century found its expression on shellac and vinyl—from the introduction of synagogal music into the Jewish middle-class home, to the reinvention of Jewish folk music, from the

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## NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM (CONT)

(Continued from page 2)

career of Yiddish theatre songs on Broadway, to the rebels of punk. The history of shellac and vinyl was also a history of Jewish inventors, musicians, composers, music producers, and songwriters. Their music – the sound of the 20th century – was not always “Jewish” music, but still a product of Jewish experience. *Jukebox. Jewkbox!* takes you on a journey of discovery through unfamiliar worlds of popular culture, accompanied by personal stories about records that have changed many a life. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalog in an English edition too.

### **Jukebox. Jewkbox! A Jewish Century on Shellac and Vinyl**

English edition | Edited by Hanno Loewy | Bucher Verlag, Hohenems 2014 | 312 pages | € 29,90 | 23,5 x 22 cm | ISBN 978-3-99018-297-0 | 45rpm record included

With essays by Caspar Battegay, Alan Dein, Helene Maimann, Ray-

mond Wolff – and personal contributions by Timna Brauer, Harley Swedler, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Michael Asch, Cilly Kugelmann, Vladimir Vertlib, Lizzie Doron, Marian Fuks, Ari Rath and many others. 45rpm record included.

The catalog is available for purchase from the museum for 29,90 € (plus shipping and handling).

### **The Grüninger Dossier**

Alain Gsponer's movie about Paul Grüninger, the Swiss police officer in St. Gall until 1939, who helped more than 3,000 Jews in 1938 to escape into Switzerland, is now available in the museum with English subtitles. The producer of the film is *c-films* in Zurich, headed by Peter Reichenbach, a descendant of both the Hohenems' Reichenbach and Brettauer families, and a member of our academic board.

You may order the DVD from the museum for 19,00 € (plus shipping and handling).

### **European Summer University for Jewish Studies, Hohenems / June 28 – July 3, 2015** ***Poor Jews! About Poverty***

Jewish life in Europe was informed by the experience of poverty for centuries. Behind both the success stories and the dramatic catastrophes, and apart from the nostalgia of the *Shtetl* and the discourse about

cultural traditions, the reality of poverty and hardships in everyday life are forgotten all too often. The majority of European Jews historically have lived on the verge of misery. Subordinated to particular laws and regulation they were cut off by large parts of the economy, limited in their social and cultural life, or (particularly in Eastern Europe) confined in a partial autonomy that



Museum visitors in the Jukebox. Jewkbox! exhibit © Walser



## NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM (CONT)

(Continued from page 3)

was informed by repression and poverty.

Mass emigration from east to west and out of the traditional communities in little towns and villages to the urban centers was the result, offering new experiences, but also new forms of misery that became the subject of political debates, ideas and utopias. The discussion about poverty has been

an integral part of Jewish tradition and its challenge, from the biblical scripture, to modernity and socialism.

The Summer University 2015 will study the social reality, but also the reflection and representation of poverty in literature and religious tradition, in the arts and media, from various perspectives and disciplines. Attempts to confront Jewish poverty

in traditional or modern forms of self-aid and solidarity will be the subject, as much as the reflection, of poverty in the rabbinical tradition.

The Summer University Hohenems, now in its seventh year, is a joint project of the universities of Munich, Basel, Vienna, Zurich and Bamberg, together with the Jewish Museum Hohenems. It offers a

specialized program for students of Jewish studies, in the fields of history and culture, literature and linguistics, religious studies and anthropology. Applications for the program are accepted and reviewed by the University of Munich. The one-week interdisciplinary program provides the students the possibility to deepen their knowledge and to discuss ideas related to a certain topic of Jewish studies with an international group of scholars, and in communication with fellow students from various German-speaking countries.

By joining the resources of the five participating universities, students are offered possibilities that go far beyond the scope of the single institutes and faculties. Collaboration between scholars and the museum is also encouraged on various levels. The former Jewish Quarter of Hohenems and the Jewish Museum offers an inspiring setting for this collaboration.



Jewish Poorhouse Hohenems, about 1900

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## NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM (CONT)

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### Emsiana Festival 2015

The Museum has partnered with several local cultural initiatives and institutions to organize the regional “Emsiana” Festival for the past six years. Between May 28 and May 31, 2015, exhibitions, music, theater, readings, guided tours through the historical quarters and special programs for children will explore the heritage and the contemporary life of the smallest European Metropolis: Hohenems. Exhibitions by artists from Hohenems and the international region will explore the challenges of migration, multicultural coexistence, historical experiences along the border, and the limitations of life. A theatre project from Zurich will investigate contradicting Jewish claims of identity, and Daniel Kahn and the Painted Bird from Berlin will present Klezmer Punk Cabaret.

A highlight this year will be a painted house in the Jewish quarter, turned into a colorful

world of fantasies about migration, by Tone Fink, one of the best know artists from Vorarlberg today. Where members of the Rosenthal family and a famous Jewish Cantor once lived, families of migrants started their way into the local economy and society. The Collinis, Italian immigrants from the Trentino region, started their business here more than one hundred years ago, evolving

from a knife sharpener to one of Europe’s leading companies in the field of applied surface intelligence. Later this same house became the home of the company’s Turkish workers, and today it’s a part of the diverse urban improvements taking part both in the Jewish quarter and the former “Christengasse” in Hohenems. Markus Schadenbauer-Lacha, who is our major partner in the Emsiana Fes-

tival, has been active for many years as a developer in the historical quarters of Hohenems.



*Tone Fink's plan for Emsiana*



# A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE. A JOURNEY THROUGH YERUSHALAYIM-JERUSALEM-AL QUDS

An exhibition curated by Hannes Sulzenbacher (Vienna), with photographs by Galia Gur Zeev (Tel Aviv)

Israelis, Palestinians and pilgrims, townspeople and tourists meet. It is a reflection of today's volatile situation of Jerusalem's urban society.

and Muslims consider holy, a city that people from all parts of the world claim for themselves, and in which all conflicts of the past and present have their place.

In Jerusalem, the most varying groups live very close to one another, oftentimes in quarters that are closed off to each other, surrounded

by walls or barbed wire fences. In-between are the religious tourists accommodated in special pilgrim hostels and hotels. Still, they all meet—in markets and in shopping malls, in hospitals and parks, and, not least, on the street. Everyone casts their own interpretation over the city while blocking out the others or denying

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1  
For the past three years, a controversial streetcar has been connecting Jerusalem's west with Jewish settlements in the city's Palestinian eastern part. In it, Orthodox Jews and secular

The exhibition "A Streetcar Named Desire. A Journey through Yerushalayim-Jerusalem-Al Quds" takes its visitors on a journey through the city that Jews, Christians,



Refugee camp Shuafat: inside of the city territory but outside of the wall ©Galia Gur Zeev

## A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE (CONT)

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them their right to exist. Pilgrim groups walk through the city as if through a projection area of their own holy accounts.

With the streetcar, we move through the various “Jeruselems” that exist next to each other and against each other, often in the same place, mutually obscuring each other. We drive through ruins of past utopias and along numerous monuments to the symbolic and political interpretation of this city.

For this exhibition, the Israeli artist Galia Gur Zeev has explored and traversed the city: station after station along the route of our exhibition streetcar. She has photographed places where diverging historical or contemporary religious and national interpretations rub against each other. Her images are a documentary gaze at the city combined with a sensitive and critical subjectivity: pictures of splendid sights and dilapidated houses, of walls and fences, pictures of bleak and controversial areas.

And we will enrich this journey through Jerusa-

lem with precious objects from various collections, and with everyday life commodities that mark the symbolic competition, the clash of political claims and the power of the market that run the dynamics of the city.

2

As a place, Jerusalem has multiple epithets, be it “holy,” “eternal,” “God’s property,” “foundling,” or “prostitute.” As the center of the three great monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the city was and is marked not only by immediate religious practices, whether through temples, sanctification of sites, and flocks of pilgrims, but also by the position the religions have adopted toward it through time. Here, both vituperation as well as deification already exist in the Hebrew Bible, which is the first reason for the city’s time-transcending and transregional significance: the Tanakh mentions Jerusalem more than six hundred times. Henrik Budde and Andreas Nachama, curators of the exhibition “Eine Reise nach Jerusalem” (A Journey to Jerusalem) (Berlin 1995/96)



*Relief Map of Jerusalem, American Colony Hotel, The Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London*

noted in their preface to the exhibition catalog: “Without the historical impact of the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Koran, Jerusalem would at best be a pilgrimage site for archaeologists, comparable to Troy.”

In this context, the Jerusalem biographer Simon Sebag Montefiore opines in an interview with the German daily “Die Welt”: “Every empire has made attempts at conquering Jerusalem, the Egyptians and Assyrians, the Persians and Greeks, the Ro-

mans, the Arabs, the Crusaders, the Ottomans, the French and British. Writing about Jerusalem means writing about Solomon, Saladin, and Suleiman the Magnificent, about Cleopatra, Caligula, and Winston Churchill, about Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, Nero, about Emperor Wilhelm II, Rasputin, and Lawrence of Arabia. It’s like the earlier wide-screen movies, which featured all the known stars of their time.”

The images of this city’s history are as much

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# CEREMONY MEMORIALIZING THE HOHENEMS VICTIMS OF THE NAZIS

SUSAN ROSENTHAL SHIMER

A small stone, with a brass plate on a block of stone, barely 10 cm by 10 cm, but very meaningful. Nine such stones were placed in Hohenems on June 30, 2014 to mark the last residences of the nine persons, considered Jewish under Hitler's laws, who were deported from Hohenems between 1938 and 1940. None survived.

A German artist, Gunter Demnig, has placed more than 46,000 of these stones in a number of countries in Europe, memorializing the victims of Nazism. Stones had been placed in Vorarlberg once before, in Lingenau, but not in Hohenems. Demnig was invited to place these "Stolpersteine" (tumbling blocks) in Hohenems by the Mayor of the City, Richard Amann, together with the Cultural office of the City of Hohenems. School children from the local middle school, together with Judith Niederklöpfer-Würtinger from the Jewish Museum, worked on the biographies of each of the

victims and read the summary of their research as to each of the victims. A brief synopsis appears below. Numerous townspeople, including music students and their teacher, appeared along with the school children at each site, as did the Mayor, the Vice Mayor, Günther Linder, and officials from the province of Vorarlberg, Mag. Harald Sonderegger and Vahide Aydın and Dr. Hanno Loewy, the Director of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, and I, Susan Rosenthal Shimer, a Trustee of the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, a descendant, and also a cousin of one of the victims, delivered brief comments at the site in front of the Museum, where a stone commemorating Clara Heimann was planted. (Susan's comments were included in the December 2014 Special Edition of the AFJMH Newsletter.)



*Gunter Demnig installing blocks in front of the Elkan House*

The nine "Stolpersteine" (tumbling blocks) placed in Hohenems were for:

Frieda Nagelberg (1889, Stryi (then Austro-Hungary)-1942, Izbi-ca). She moved to Hohenems as a child in 1898. When her father died in 1924, he left his family almost penniless. Frieda worked in the environs of Hohenems as a domestic servant. After many years of effort, she achieved Austrian citizenship in 1930, citizenship she had lost when Stryi became part of Poland after World War I. In that same year she converted to Christianity, spe-

cifically becoming an Adventist.

In 1936, she became ill, lost much of her ability to work and from then until the time of her deportation, Frieda Nagelberg lived in the city supported house for those in need. Despite her poor health, she did work at the poor house, and the people there wanted her to remain and not be deported. For Hitler's purposes she was Jewish, even though she had converted in 1930 to become an Adventist. She was deported in 1942 to Vienna and then less than two months later sent to Izbica in South Poland.

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## HOHENEMS CEREMONY (CONT)

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Nothing more is known of her.

Gisela Figdor (1882, Vienna-1942, Vienna), also a resident of the house for needy people. Gisela was a descendant on her mother's side of Abraham Schwarz, a resident of Hohenems, whose family engaged in numerous local endeavors, including the building of many local trains in South Tyrol. She moved to Hohenems with her mother and in 1924, she was registered in the Jewish poor house.

She was ill by early 1939 and by then, like all the other Jews, was given a card designating her as Jewish. After her deportation to Vienna, she lived in an overcrowded so called Jewish apartment, became very ill and died on January 18, 1942.

Markus Silberstein (1904 Lemberg (now Ukraine)-1942 Gross Rosen, Poland). His family moved to Vienna in 1910 and then in 1935 moved to Hohenems where he rented a room. Although he was able to move family assets to Switzerland in

1939, he remained in Hohenems and was arrested on November 23, 1939. In December he was deported to Sachsenhausen, the concentration camp near Berlin, and then on September 20, 1940 he was brought to Gross Rosen in Poland where he was murdered on January 20, 1942.

Clara Heimann (geb. Rosenthal) (1866 Hohenems-1942 Theresienstadt). Clara was born in Hohenems in 1866 to Charlotte and Anton Rosenthal. She lived in the house that is now the Jewish Museum, until 1891. Then she married Josef Heimann and moved to Antwerp where she lived until 1906 when Josef died.

She loved Hohenems and so she moved back and lived in her former home until 1940. Then on May 31, 1940 she was deported to Vienna, and later in July 1942, she was forced to leave Vienna and was deported to Theresienstadt. There on November 20, 1942, she died.

Alois (Louis) Weil (1878 Hohenems-1938 Dachau), a merchant and librarian and also a Communist, whose political affiliation resulted in an even earlier death than the others. He was a businessman and a librarian in the Hohenems Library Club. He was active politically. In June 1938, he was de-

mund Steingraber, she and her husband moved back to Vorarlberg. After her husband's death in 1912, Sophie returned to Vienna where she remained until 1914.

Then she married Ignaz Hauser who came from Pressburg, but had, since 1914, served as



*"Stolpersteine" (tumbling blocks) in Hohenems*

ported to the concentration camp Dachau near Munich and was murdered on August 19 that year.

Sophie Steingraber-Hauser (geb. Rosenthal) (1863, Hohenems-1942 Treblinka). She was a daughter of Ludwig and Amalia Rosenthal, and a cousin of Clara Heimann. After her marriage to Sieg-

mund Steingraber, she and her husband moved back to Vorarlberg. After her husband's death in 1912, Sophie returned to Vienna where she remained until 1914. Then she married Ignaz Hauser who came from Pressburg, but had, since 1914, served as secretary to Rabbi Link in Hohenems; Hauser remained in Hohenems when Rabbi Link moved to Innsbruck and the community wanted to appoint him as their new Rabbi. The marriage with Sophie was meant to secure his Austrian citizenship, an attempt in vain. Ignatz Hauser left Hohenems and in 1919, Sophie,

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## HOHENEMS CEREMONY (CONT)

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who had lost her registration as a Hohenemser, had to reapply for it and finally received it in 1922.

Sophie lived with the Elkan family in Hohenems until May 31 1940 when she was forced to move to Vienna. On July 28, 1942 she was deported first to Theresienstadt and on September 23 to Treblinka, where she was murdered in the gas chamber.

Theodor Elkan (1864 Wien -1942 Theresienstadt) a Municipal

leader, bank officer and insurance agent and a leader of the Synagogue who financially contributed significantly to the First World War effort. He was transported with the rest of his family to Vienna in May 1940. On August 20, 1942 he was deported to Theresienstadt. Twelve days later he was dead.

Helene Elkan (geb. Neuburger) (1879 Bad Buchau, Wurttemberg-1944 Theresienstadt). A descendant of the Bernheimer family of Hohenems and a cousin of Elkan's first wife Betty Menz (who also came

from Hohenems), she like her husband and son received the order in May 1940 to pack up and leave Hohenems for Vienna. On August 20, 1942, she was deported to Theresienstadt. Somehow she survived there until February 28, 1944.

Hans David Elkan (1900 Hohenems-1944, Theresienstadt), a student at the University of Freiburg of Martin Heidegger, earned his PhD in 1927 and was a highly praised school teacher, who in the late years before the Anschluss had diffi-

culty finding positions because of the strong anti-Semitism of Vorarlberg where he wanted to remain. At the end of May 1940, he, together with his parents were forced to move to Vienna. He secured some work in Vienna, among other things as a gardener. Attempts by the Elkan family to leave in 1941 failed. He and his parents were transported to Theresienstadt, where he died at the age of 43.

*On a very different note, at the end of the ceremony in front of the Jewish Museum, Sue Shimer presented Dr. Loewy with a gift from the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems. That gift, a beautifully crafted pen and pencil desk set, was presented in honor of Dr. Loewy's 10 years of amazing work as Director of the Museum.*



Susan Shimer speaking in Hohenems, June 30, 2014



# WEINGARTEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT HOUSING WILL OPEN SOON

DR. HANNO LOEWY

“Denkstättenkuratorium Oberschwaben” (Board of trustees of Memorials in Upper Swabia) and the “Foundation Weiße Rose,” named after the famous German Anti-Nazi resistance group “The White Rose,” have been active for many years and are associated with Weingarten University in Southern Germany, 50 kilometers north of Lake Constance. The Jewish Museum Hohenems and the City of Hohenems are both partners of

this network of memorials, museums and associations in Southern Germany, commemorating Jewish communities, resistance to Nazi crimes, and acts of civil courage in Upper Swabia, the region between Ulm and the Lake Constance.

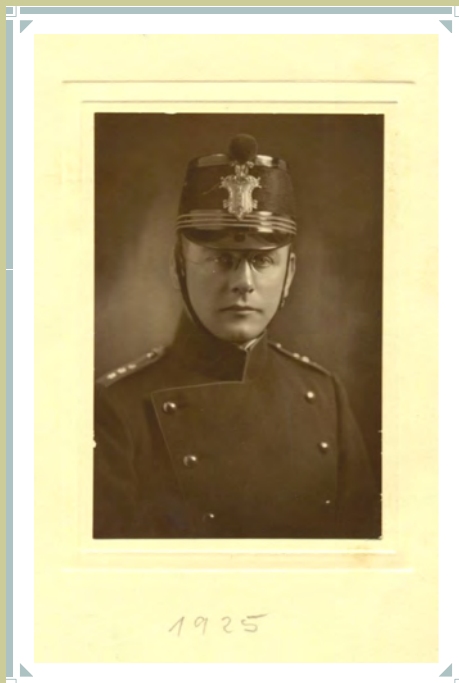
At the southern end of this route of memory, which is propagated by the network using various media, lies Hohenems, including its Jewish quarter and the Museum, as well as the Paul Grüninger Bridge between Hohenems and Switzerland. Recently, “Stolpersteine” (tumbling blocks) were installed in Hohenems, commemorating the last nine Jews living in Hohenems in 1939, and this installation was organized in cooperation with Professor Wolfgang Marcus, the head of the “Foundation Weiße Rose.” (For more information about the tumbling blocks, please see page 8.)

On July 20, 2015, four new student homes will

be opened on the premises of the Weingarten University. One of the homes will be named after Hans David Elkan from Hohenems, who studied philosophy with Edmund Husserl in Freiburg, and one after Paul Grüninger, the courageous Swiss police officer, who saved Jewish refugees from Nazi-

Germany and Austria. Among the other personalities honored in Weingarten are courageous Christians like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Alfred Delp, or Georg Elser, who spend most of his life at Lake Constance and tried to kill Adolf Hitler in 1939.

We are happy to be able to support this initiative and to continue to foster our collaboration with the foundation in Weingarten. We hope these dedications will remind coming genera-



Paul Grüninger, 1925

tions of students of past acts of civil courage and the significance of Jewish history and culture in our region. ❖



Hans Elkan, from his study book in Innsbruck, where he studied to become a teacher, 1929

## A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE (CONT)

*(Continued from page 7)*

splendid film material as are the visions about its end. The ideal, rebuilt Jerusalem of Jeremiah is a city full of life: "Then through the gates of this palace shall enter kings of David's line who sit upon his throne, riding horse-drawn chariots, with their courtiers and their subjects." Should, however, law and justice not prevail as commanded, the prophet Jeremiah vows in the sixth century B.C.E.: "...declares the Lord—that this palace shall become a ruin." (Jer 22:4, 5).

All along, the history of Yerushalayim/Jerusalem/Al Quds has been linked—for better or for worse—to the question of to whom this city belongs. Yet, this ownership question must not be conceived as just one of geography, particularly sovereignty, but also as a spiritual one, never mind from which place around the world it is contemplated. Moreover, it cannot be conceived as a purely historical one either; in fact, it directly relates to the present: After all, ever since the onset of the Mideast conflict, Jerusalem has been a

central point of contention. Representatives of both sides claim the city or at least part of it as capital either of Israel or of Palestine. The religious grip on the city has partly made way for the political, and the political has been charged with the religious, the sacred symbolism and the uncompromising gesture of "eternal essence" and vice versa – making any attempt to find pragmatic solutions even harder.

None of the local participants in this struggle for hegemony of the place seem to act as neighbors to each other, struggling for a position that makes life together possible. Rather they are all the spearhead of a wider, regional or global community that has turned Jerusalem into a symbol of its uncompromising claims. For many Jews in the world Jerusalem thus is the "eternal capitol of a sovereign Jewish state," while for Christians of various, competing denominations, Jerusalem is the center of the world and of the apocalyptic prophecies of the return of the messiah. For Arab nationalists the city is the heart of the



*View from the old city over the excavations of the "city of David" into the Arab quarter of Silwan ©Galia Gur Zeev*

Arab nation, while for Muslims it's a sacred symbol of Muslim unity throughout the world.

The exhibition "A Streetcar Named Desire: A Journey through Yerushalayim-Jerusalem-Al-Quds," moves along the rubble of past utopias and the monuments of present symbolic and political

appropriations of this city following a vehicle that has altered the perception of this city in recent years: the streetcar, called Jerusalem Light Rail. However, before we shall deal with it in greater detail, we wish to provide a concise survey of the historical and geographical space of this city.

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## A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE (CONT)

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3

Key to the exhibition concept are the nets of meaning that have been and still are cast over Jerusalem by the various protagonists; nets, in which only one's own reading is accepted and other interpretations often fail even to be acknowledged. Jerusalem will be shown as a city, in which everybody sees the same, yet means something different by it and thinks something different about it, a city whose objects are embedded in different narratives.

The Citadel becomes for Christians the Tower of

David and for Muslims David's prayer niche. The footprint in the rock of the Temple Mount, which had been presented to Christian pilgrims as Jesus' imprint, later on became Muhammad's footprint. Many more examples are available: There is a tomb on the Mount of Olives that in Christian tradition is ascribed to Saint Pelagia, in Jewish tradition to the prophetess Huldah, and according to Muslim reading to the saint Rabi'ah al-Adawiyah. Even the new bridge by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava is to some a departure toward architectural modernity while to others,

because of its shape ("King David's Harp"), it is another appropriation of Jerusalem by way of Jewish interpretational sovereignty. Today, the most conspicuous contrast of political nature is undoubtedly evident in the interpretation of the "security fence," which Israel has erected "as protection against terror attacks," and which to those excluded by it is nothing but an expression of the oppression and iso-

lation brought about by the Israeli government. The image of the city evoked by Menachem Klein shall simultaneously emerge in this exhibition: "a city united in theory and divided in practice." Jerusalem is subject to a great number of different interpretational sovereignties, both by its inhabitants as well as by its visitors. In his "Jerusalem biography," Simon Sebag Montefiore, too, holds that visitors to the city were "generally pilgrims with blinders who hardly perceived anything beyond their own religion."

All along, the religions have ensured a flourishing economic life as well as a vibrant urban everyday life. Ever since biblical times, the need has existed to accommodate and feed flocks of the faithful and pilgrims; merchants and changers of sacrifice money made a living in front and in the Temple; investments into the city have been and still are coming from all around the world; magnificent sacred and mundane edifices have frequently showcased competing political, religious, or economic interests in Jerusalem. Yet, as is the case everywhere else,

participation in the profits has not been equal. Rather, it has created a social fabric of clerical and economic upper and lower classes whose particular vantage points are even more disconnected from each other than those among religious zealots. Jerusalem's sites are not only subject to numerous religious interpretations, they were and still are also carriers of meaning for men, women, children, locals and foreigners, rich and poor, well-established or outcasts, for clerics as well as for prostitutes, for tycoons as well as for the brigand bands who used to lie in waiting outside the city for the flocks of pilgrims.

All these groups live in Jerusalem side by side, often in tight, separate quarters, often confined by walls or barbed wire fences. A heterogeneous urban population emerges that has little in common and little to do with each other. Nevertheless people meet, in the markets and shopping centers, in hospitals and parks, and not least, in the streets. For several years now, a new meeting place exists in the city, the Jerusalem Light



Mizrach of Moses Montefiore, Jewish Museum London

## A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE (CONT)

*(Continued from page 13)*

Rail: this streetcar connects Mount Herzl to Pisgat Ze'ev in East Jerusalem.

All along this ride we run into competing narratives, connected to the same stones and hills, tombs and streets. On Mount Herzl we see the grave of the legendary founder of Zionism, who for himself, envisioning a secular, multicultural and civil society dreamed of a grave in Haifa, not in Jerusalem. Walking down the slope of the hill we encounter Yad Vashem, Israel's national memorial of the Holocaust. And from its balcony, the visitors overlook one of the new

quarters of the town, built on the rubble of Deir Yasin, an Arab village, whose inhabitants had been massacred by the Irgun in 1948. From this disturbing conflation of memories of catastrophes and hopes, the journey takes us down to the old city, to the Church of Sepulchre, where different Christian denominations violently fight for their share of time and space, to the Kotel where Orthodox Jewish men attack Jewish women who want to read from the Torah, to the Haram Al-Sharif, where the Muslims presence competes with a political archeology undermining the Temple Mount – and to the Aus-

trian Hospice, that marks the old Austrian claim to represent the heritage of the crusaders, the Kings of Jerusalem. Continuing through the heart of Palestinian Jerusalem between the Damascus gate and the American Colony Hotel and to the Arab quarters and refugee camps of Shuafat and Beith Hanina, our tour with the Light Rail ends in the new Jewish settlement of Pisgat Zeev.

The streetcar is now the city's most conspicuous public means of transport; in it, Orthodox Jews and secular Israelis, Palestinians and pilgrims, townspeople and tourists meet. The

ceptions of the city. In the exhibition, it defines the central path through the city, lined by stations where the city's conflicts were and are ignited. At each station a conflict will be recounted, be it a current argument or be it a historical dispute, many of which are the basis of present conflicts.

The streetcar's route is lined with places that have ignited and keep igniting the city's conflicts. Each site has its own stories and represents a different area of tension. This streetcar through Jerusalem has been controversial from the start, the route itself a political issue. Politicians maintained that it connects the city's eastern and western part and its various groups of inhabitants. However, its actual planning was designed to deal with the Jewish settlements in the east of the city and not with the Arab parts of the city it passes through. Yet, for many of the city's inhabitants, independent of their origin or religion, it has also become a carrier of hope; after all, it

streetcar forms the main strand of the city's traffic system. Along its stations, in walking distance, are all those sites where the various historical or current interpretations are reflected. It travels on a fixed track through the net of competing narratives and per-



*The Light Rail on Jaffa Street, next to the Central Bus Station ©Galia Gur Zeev*

*(Continued on page 15)*



## A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE (CONT)

*(Continued from page 14)*

represents an ardent desire that many Jerusalemites harbor for their city: the desire for the everyday life of an international metropolis.

The streetcar might drive toward this “normalcy,” toward a station where, to be sure, the various interpretations will not coalesce, but where they are able to tolerate each other: However, this “Streetcar Named Desire” has not yet reached its final stop. Indeed, it is still far from there.

### 4 Postscript

“You now have come,” Selma Lagerlöf writes in 1902 in her novel Jerusalem, “to the holy side of the city. Here you think only of ancient High Priests and servants of the Temple. Just inside the wall is the Wailing Place of the Jews where Rabbis in their long red or blue

caftans are leaning against the cold stone-wall and weeping over the palace, which is destroyed. ...

On the other side are the expansive Jewish and German agricultural colonies, the large convents and the many benevolent institutions. ... Here are the splendid mission schools, where the pupils are given free instruction, board, lodging, and raiment for the sake of winning their souls. ... It is here, the Catholic speaks evil of the Protestant, the Methodist of the Quaker, the Lutheran of the Reformist, the Russian of the Armenian; here lurks the demon of envy; here the zealot mistrusts the worker of miracles; here orthodox contends with heretic; here one finds neither pity nor tolerance; here one hates in the name of God everyone else. And it is here that you find what you have been seeking. This is the Jeru-



Jaffa Street ©Galia Gur Zeev

salem of soul hunting; this is the Jerusalem of cruel tongues—of falsehood, of slander, of revilement. Here one persecutes untiringly; here

one murders without weapons. It is this Jerusalem that kills.” ❖

### Hohenems Mayor Re-Elected

The American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems would like to congratulate Hohenems Mayor Richard Amann on his re-election at the end of March. Mayor Amann has been a longtime friend to the Jewish Museum Hohenems. We are also happy to report that following the election, Amann's run-off opponent personally expressed his regret for the derogatory remarks he had made about the Museum's Director, Dr. Hanno Loewy, a few years ago.

The Newsletter of the  
American Friends of the  
Jewish Museum  
Hohenems, Inc.

## IN TOUCH

ISSN: 1559-4866



**The Jewish Museum of Hohenems**, as a regional museum, remembers the rural Jewish community of Hohenems and its various contributions to the development of Vorarlberg and the surrounding regions. It confronts contemporary questions of Jewish life and culture in Eu-

rope, the diaspora and Israel - questions of the future of Europe between migration and tradition. The museum also deals with the end of the community of Hohenems, the regional Nazi history, the expulsion or deportation of the last members of the community, anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. Along with these fragmented lines of regional and global history, it is also devoted to the people and their histories and maintains a relationship to the descendants of Jewish families in Hohenems around the world.

The permanent exhibition in the Heimann-Rosenthal Villa, which was built in 1864, documents the history of the Jewish community in Hohenems which existed for over three centuries until its destruction during the era of the Nazi regime. The museum offers annually changing exhibitions and an extensive program of events. ❖



Please visit us on the web -

**Jewish Museum  
of Hohenems**

<http://www.jm-hohenems.at>

**American Friends of the  
Jewish Museum Hohenems**

<http://www.afjmh.org>

## JOIN US . . .

BECOME A MEMBER AND LET'S KEEP *IN TOUCH*!



During the first meeting of the descendants of Jewish families from Hohenems in 1998, the idea to found the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, Inc. emerged. The association unites the numerous descendants living in America and supports the Jewish Museum of Hohenems in various ways.

Annual dues are \$25. We hope to count on you to join today.

Dues can be sent to:  
**PO Box 237  
Moorestown, NJ 08057-0237**

Any additional contribution you could make would be very much appreciated and

thus enable the American Friends to continue to make important contributions to the Museum at Hohenems as well as to other endeavors designed to contribute to knowledge of the Hohenems Jewish Community as it was when our ancestors lived there.

❖