

MUSEUMS ESSENTIAL
2020

CONVERSATIONS

COUNCIL OF AMERICAN JEWISH MUSEUMS



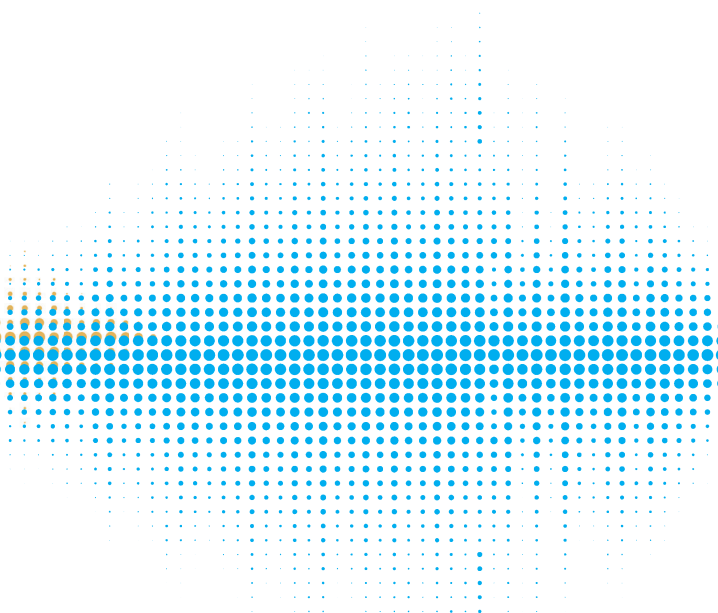
ANNUAL CONFERENCE | DALLAS | FEBRUARY 22-25 | #CAJM20

MUSEUMS 2020

ESSENTIAL CONVERSATIONS

This year's CAJM conference recognizes that 2020 will be an important year for Americans and for museums—a year in which the lessons of history and identity will have a key role to play in public life. Jewish museums—keepers and narrators of critical storylines for today's world—are focusing on what is essential for the year ahead and the next generation: the stories they will share, the voices they will prioritize, the role they will play in Jewish culture and the ongoing exercise of America. This year's conference program explores some of the most vital and essential conversations for our museums to have in the year ahead, and opens up new possibilities for our work together.





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Gabriel Sanders
Tablet Magazine
Lynne Krasker Schultz
The Vilna Shul, Boston's
Center for Jewish Culture
Marsha Semmel
National Endowment
for the Humanities

MAIN CONFERENCE LOCATIONS

Hall Arts Hotel

1717 Leonard Street
Dallas, TX

Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum

300 North Houston Street
Dallas, TX

National Center for Jewish Art

at the Museum of Biblical Art
7500 Park Lane
Dallas, TX

Temple Emanu-El

8500 Hillcrest Avenue, Dallas

Crow Museum of Asian Art

2010 Flora Street
Dallas, TX

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PROGRAM

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22

6:30–8 pm **WELCOME RECEPTION AT HALL ARTS HOTEL**
Tours of art collection available



Paul Go Images

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23

- 10 am Optional Morning Activities:
Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza
Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum
- 11 am Registration opens, galleries open at Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum
- 12 Noon Opening Lunch
- 12:15 pm Mentor/Mentee Orientation (over lunch)
- 12:50 pm Welcome from CAJM and the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum
- 1 pm **OPENING PLENARY**
CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS FOR JEWISH MUSEUMS IN 2020
In seeking to better understand our core constituencies and potential audiences, our museums often ask: what is the landscape of American Jewry today? Are we holding onto false assumptions about Jewish political leanings, and what can data tell us about the priorities of our communities? This session will use interactive polling to look at our assumptions, and will feature historians and journalists to place these conversations in context.
Featuring: **TONY MICHELS** (University of Wisconsin-Madison), **ANNIE POLLAND** (American Jewish Historical Society), and **WARREN BASS** (Wall Street Journal) moderating
- 2 pm **WORKSHOPS, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE**
- Dialogue Workshop
 - Working with Refugee Communities
 - Partnering in Justice Work
- 3:45 pm Afternoon Snack Break & CAJM Town Hall Meeting





4:15 pm CONCURRENT SESSIONS:

FACING DIFFICULT HISTORIES

For Jewish museums, difficult subjects—including persecution, injustice, and antisemitism—have long been part of our work. Yet as we look at issues pressing on us in the 21st century, how can we better contend with today's difficult histories, and the parts of our own pasts we have not yet faced? What can be our role as museums and public centers—in collecting, interpreting, and discussing painful issues with our publics? And how can we help Americans in healing and in building a better future?

Featuring: **SEAN KELLEY** (Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site), **CINNAMON CATLIN-LEGUTKO** (Illinois State Museum), **DEBORAH MACK** (National Museum of African-American History & Culture), **JUDY MARGLES** (Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education), with **MELISSA MARTENS YAVERBAUM** (Council of American Jewish Museums) moderating

INTERVIEWING CONTROVERSIAL FIGURES

Jewish museums and Holocaust centers have long utilized oral histories and testimonies: as evidence, as research, as narrative, and as artifact. But what difficulties and dilemmas do we face in selecting, conducting, and interviewing our subjects? In today's fraught world, who are we willing to interview, who are we not, and what do we do when faced with an interviewee we consider highly problematic?

Featuring: **TONY MICHELS** (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

5:20–7 pm RECEPTION AT THE DALLAS HOLOCAUST AND HUMAN RIGHTS MUSEUM, with special remarks by **DEBORAH MACK** of the National Museum of African-American History and Culture

7:30 pm EMERGING PROFESSIONALS GATHERING at Ellie's Lounge in the Hall Arts Hotel co-hosted by Temple Emanu-El's ATiD with **ERIKA PURDY-PATRICK**

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24

10 am Coffee and Bagels, tours of The National Center for Jewish Art
Artists Fair opens in main hall from 10 am–2:30 pm

10:30 am Welcome from The National Center for Jewish Art

10:40 am PLENARY

CHANGING MISSIONS/CHANGING INSTITUTIONS

As museums consider what they should be today and in the future, the societal needs of our times have begged new questions. What do our audiences (and potential audiences) care about now, and how might this shape our fundamental work, values, and missions? Are today's concerns already in natural alignment with our historic resources and original institutional intentions, or how might we pivot to find new purposes and applications for our work? This session will explore these questions and show case studies of museums that have experienced meaningful transformation.

Featuring: **SHERYL HACK** (Independent Consultant), **LINDA HARRISON** (Newark Museum), **MARY PAT HIGGINS** (Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum), **KELLY MCKINLEY** (Bay Area Discovery Museum), with **MARSHA SEMMEL** (National Endowment for the Humanities) and **SEAN KELLEY** (Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site) moderating

11:45 am

CONCURRENT SESSIONS:

CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND TRUTHS

Conspiracy theories are part of America's lore and culture—attached to an array of issues and events. For those tasked with interpreting the Jewish story, the idea that there are those who believe in shadowy networks pulling strings can have genuine explanatory power. But in today's climate, where conflicting narratives are routinely dismissed as no more than conspiratorial thinking, how can museums help navigate the line between truth and fiction?

Featuring: **STEPHEN FAGIN** (Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza), **AMY FISHER-SMITH** (University of Dallas), **MARK ZAID** (Compass Rose Legal Group), and **GABRIEL SANDERS** (Tablet Magazine) moderating

NAVIGATING THE LESSONS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Many of our museums are responsible for collecting, presenting, and interpreting the history of the Holocaust. And while this history has great inherent value for our times, we as professionals must carefully evaluate how and when to use it to shed light on contemporary events. How can we best navigate and apply these historical lessons to our own times without stretching too far, and how can we make meaningful and responsible connections for visitors—even when the stakes are high?

Featuring: **MICHAEL BERENBAUM** (Independent Consultant), **EDNA FRIEDBERG** (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum), **TALI GINSBURG** (Never Again Action), and **NILS ROEMER** (University of Texas at Dallas), with **ARI GOLDSTEIN** (Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust) and **BRYAN DAVIS** (Jewish History Museum) moderating

1 pm Lunch with Director's Forum or Talking Circles

2:30 pm CONCURRENT SESSIONS:

JUDAISM IN JEWISH MUSEUMS

Jewish museums sometimes have academic and distanced relationships to Judaism—approached carefully through scholarship, history, and art. Are we at risk of presenting Judaism as a thing of the past, ensconced behind glass? How might Jewish museums reconsider the role of Judaism as something more active, engaging, and as lived experience? How can our exhibitions, collections, programs, and buildings invite authentic spiritual engagement, and what might that look like?

Featuring: **AMY REICHERT** (Amy Reichert Design), **GABRIEL GOLDSTEIN** (Independent Consultant), **DAVID LESLIE** (Rothko Chapel), with **EMILY AUGUST** (National Museums of American Jewish History) moderating

AFTER TREE OF LIFE, REBUILDING COMMUNITIES

The murders at Tree of Life Synagogue in 2018 greatly affected the way we think about our communities and our work. Now more than a year since the tragedy in Pittsburgh, what has changed in our museums, their priorities, and their approaches? This session will explore the work of museums dealing with recent trauma and healing.

Featuring: **ANNE FULLENKAMP** (Children's Museum of Pittsburgh), **ERIC LIDJI** (Rauh Jewish History Program & Archives), **JAN RAMIREZ** (9/11 Memorial Museum), with **AVI DECTER** (History Now) moderating



INTERFAITH PARTNERSHIPS: NEW APPROACHES & PRACTICAL TOOLS

As organizations about Jewish life and culture—how can our work help build new bridges across faith communities—especially those struggling with political divides and local antisemitism? How might our programs and exhibitions provide unique opportunities for academics, clergy, educators, and diverse visitors to connect and converse? This session will discuss projects with new approaches to interfaith programming.

Featuring: **RICHARD GOLDIN** (University of North Texas Denton), **ANNE HROMADKA GREENWALD** (AMH Art Advisory), **SCOTT PECK** (National Center for Jewish Art)

4 pm Bus to Temple Emanu-El

4:20 pm An Evening at Temple Emanu-El, with tours, art, remarks, and a special cocktail reception

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

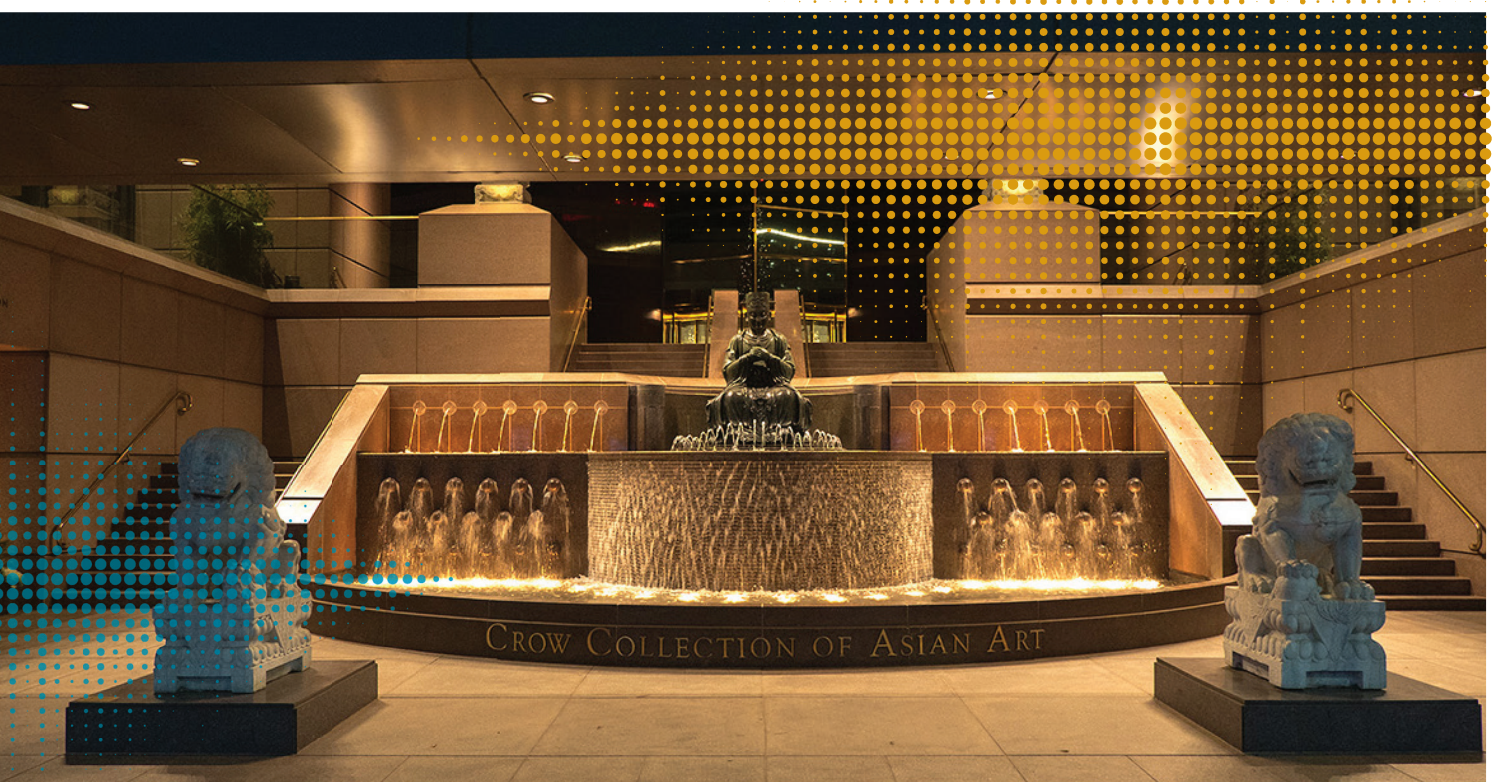
9 am Welcome from the Crow Museum of Asian Art

9:10 am PLENARY

FUNDING PRIORITIES: INVESTING IN KEY CONVERSATIONS

As we engage in critical issues and conversations for the immediate years ahead, how are foundations also grappling with new priorities for the 21st century and investing in the future? How will we work together in the shifting climate to address shared priorities? In this session we will hear from foundation representatives that share insights on how they contemplate and evaluate new initiatives, and what they are prioritizing as they look ahead.

Featuring: **BARRY FINESTONE** (Jim Joseph Foundation), **YEHUDA SARNA** (The Maimonides Fund), **DAVID WEINSTEIN** (National Endowment for the Humanities), with **ANNIE POLLAND** (American Jewish Historical Society) moderating



10 am CONCURRENT SESSIONS:

AMERICA'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE IMMIGRATION NARRATIVE

Immigration has long been an explicit or implied narrative underlying our institutions. Yet as we move further away from the 20th century, how will our museums contend with the shifting storyline of immigration and its meaning for Americans and Jews? To what extent has the immigration narrative accounted for race? This session explores our shifting relationship to immigration—as Americans and as practitioners.

Featuring: **HASIA DINER** (New York University), **ANNIE POLLAND** (American Jewish Historical Society)

EXPLORING ISRAEL: A PECHA KUCHA

Jewish museums often struggle to find meaningful ways to explore Israel—though the culture is rich with innovative arts, heritage sites, historical memory, cuisine, and diverse discourse. How can we rise above political narratives that dominate the mainstream media to allow for other stories about “Israeli” life today? How can arts and culture deepen our understanding, and take us beyond the surface of things? This session will feature six colleagues presenting for six minutes each on innovative approaches.

Featuring: **DAHLIA FISHER** (Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage), **ZACHARY P. LEVINE** (National Building Museum), **LAURA MANDEL** (Jews Arts Collaborative), **CARON TABB** (Independent Artist)

11 am CONCURRENT SESSIONS:

RESPONDING TO IMMIGRATION

This session will explore approaches for responding to the multifaceted realities of contemporary immigration, through exhibitions, programs, and advocacy. It will include the voices of recent immigrants—offering guidance on how to better tell their stories in a museum setting.

Featuring: **YOLANDA CHAVEZ LEYVA** (Borderlands Public History Lab), Josie Shapiro (Jewish History Museum), and **BRYAN DAVIS** (Jewish History Museum) and **ANNE HROMADKA GREENWALD** (AMH Art Advisory) moderating

JEWS OF COLOR: WHAT CAN MUSEUM INVOLVEMENT LOOK LIKE?

As public forums and public symbols, what should Jewish museums be doing to advance the work of racial justice within our own institutions and communities? In a nation strained by race-based violence, what will be our role, and what is the work we need to do internally and externally to incorporate new voices and Jews of color specifically?

Featuring: **BRYANT HEINZELMAN** (Independent Consultant), **KYLIE UNELL** (New York University)

12 Noon Closing Lunch and Conference Conclusion

1 pm Optional Post-Conference Museum Visits to:

- Dallas Museum of Art
- Crow Museum of Asian Art
- Nasher Sculpture Center



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