

2024 IMPACT REPORT



**THE MAGNES COLLECTION
OF JEWISH ART AND LIFE**



Thank you on behalf of the entire Magnes team for your generosity in supporting our work and brightening the museum with your presence throughout the year. Your dedication to and care for the Magnes is reflected in the museum's many accomplishments, which are only possible thanks to your support.

From fall 2023 into winter 2024, the staff of the Magnes undertook a strategic planning process in partnership with colleagues on campus and members of our public community. We affirmed our deep commitment to our mission to generate new knowledge and understanding of Jewish cultures. Additionally, we articulated our vision to advance a society that seeks common ground while honoring cultural differences and embracing the diversity of Jewish life around the world. We identified strategic priorities to guide our work over the next three years, including Community Engagement, Collections Care and Access, and Financial Sustainability.

Community Engagement. You—the communities we serve and collaborate with—are the soul of our work. We seek to deepen our existing relationships and broaden our outreach so the Magnes can thrive as a vibrant space for gathering, learning, and teaching, where members of the university and Bay Area Jewish communities feel a sense of belonging and visitors of all backgrounds feel welcome, engaged, and valued.

Collections Care and Access. If you are the soul of the Magnes, the unparalleled collection of objects, art, texts, music, and more that represent Jewish life around the world forms its heart. We take seriously our obligation to provide access to the collections for our academic and public audiences now while preserving them for future generations.

Financial Sustainability. We can only fulfill our mission and realize our vision with strong financial health. As a community-supported museum, the Magnes relies on philanthropy to make our work possible. We are grateful for your generosity, which allows us to create new exhibitions, programs, and teaching and learning opportunities. We commit to expanding our donor community and developing new sources of revenue so the Magnes can continue to grow.

I am proud that the accomplishments recorded in this report represent collaborative efforts between the Magnes and our communities. Please join me in celebrating the achievements that you have made possible and in reaching new milestones in the years to come.



Hannah E. Weisman
Executive Director



On right: Ketubah [detail], March 23, 1887, Kerala, Kochi, India. 75.31. On view in *In Plain Sight: Jewish Arts and Lives in the Muslim World* through May 15, 2025.



Defenders of Warsaw by Arthur Szyk, London, 1939. 2017.5.1.45

Exhibitions

offer museum visitors opportunities to encounter and reflect on the stories of communities represented in the Magnes's permanent collections.

Cities and Wars: Roman Vishniac in Berlin and Jerusalem, 1947/1967

curated by Magnes Curator Francesco Spagnolo, headlined the Magnes's exhibition program this year with 110 of the photographer's rarely or never-before seen images of Berlin and Jerusalem.



"We are preparing the Roman Vishniac Archive for digitization and online publication so that anyone can view these historically important and fragile photographs that would otherwise remain in storage. I am excited to have these digital surrogates on a public forum where others can help generate new understanding of the archive and the cultures and ideas represented in it."

— Tina Kremzner-Hsing, Database & Digital Assets Manager

Fairfield University Art Museum hosted **In Real Times. Arthur Szyk: Art & Human Rights (1926-1951)**, from September to December 2023, reaching more than 4,500 people through museum visits and programs.

"[We] expanded the Museum's reach to new audiences who had not engaged with us previously, and who were expressive in their appreciation for the power and timeliness of Arthur Szyk's work."

— Carey Weber, Frank and Clara Meditz Executive Director, Fairfield University Art Museum



Mikveh (ritual bath) shoes, Egypt, ca. 1900. 96.22.5
Photo by Sibila Savage

Magnes Curator Francesco Spagnolo and guest co-curator Qamar Adamjee, scholar of Islamic art, worked with the collections team to develop

In Plain Sight: Jewish Arts and Lives in the Muslim World, the culmination of five years of curatorial collaboration. The exhibition opened in August 2024 and will run through May 15, 2025.



"In Plain Sight opens a needed conversation about diaspora, hospitality, and coexistence. It reflects the best of the Magnes, a combination of scholarly collaboration, curatorial innovation, and object-driven inquiry in order to reveal a narrative that too often has been overlooked."

— Sara Guyer, Irving and Jean Stone Dean of the Division of Arts & Humanities at UC Berkeley



Photo by Brandon Sanchez Mejia

3 New Colleagues work behind the scenes to preserve the collection, make it available for teaching and learning, and create powerful exhibitions and programs:

Andrea Calderon Assistant Registrar

Tina Kremzner-Hsing
Database & Digital Assets Manager

David Sullivan Head Preparator

New Acquisitions ensure the museum's collections



continue to reflect the work and lives of Jewish artists and communities. Photographer Richard Nagler donated *Homage to Raphael Soyer N.Y.C. Sept '87*, a color photograph printed in 1998, and artist Sonia Melnikova-Raich donated a portfolio of 22 prints (left) titled *Aleph-Bet (or The Birth of the Alphabet)*, which she created around 1993.



4,000 VISITORS

experienced **public programs**, **group tours**, **class visits**, and self-guided exploration of museum **exhibitions** on site.



Dan Alter joined the Magnes as Learning & Engagement Coordinator in February and began creating new programming to welcome visitors from campus and beyond.

“Recent exhibitions share the richness of the [Magnes’s] collections with creative connections to contemporary issues on our campus and our nation. Programming touches both my head and my heart, reminding me of the ties between our community now and the heritage the museum helps illustrate.”

— **Avi Rosenzweig**, UC Berkeley Staff and Magnes Community Member

165 More Hours

open to the public than in 2023.

A new initiative, **Teens Take the Magnes**, brought teens to the museum and spurred the creation of a volunteer program.



“As a volunteer, I’ve discovered the expansiveness of Jewish art and artifacts

—Shabbat candles and Jewish holiday cards in

the collection have invited broad conversations about social media, time, and more. I have been so inspired by this experience that I am looking to pursue a career in museum spaces.”

— **Sadie Straus**, Volunteer, Teens Take the Magnes Founder

27 Public Programs

brought live theater, new scholarship, and learners of all ages to the Magnes.



on ancient Jerusalem. The visit allowed them to encounter ancient objects from Jerusalem in person—not just on the page or screen—and to put them in the bigger context of Jewish history and culture since antiquity. Francesco Spagnolo and [other] staff gave expert training to the faculty and graduate student instructors, which equipped us as teachers to inform and excite the students about the collection.”

— **Duncan MacRae**, Associate Professor of Ancient Greek & Roman Studies and Co-Director, Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion

Teaching and Learning are core to our mission. The Magnes supports UC Berkeley students’ education through class visits, the Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program, Work-Study positions, and courses taught at the Magnes.

“As a student working with the Magnes for the past couple of years, I learned a variety of skills necessary for my field of study through hands-on experience. My time at the Magnes is definitely one of the highlights of my college career here at Cal.” — **Aleeza Raveh**, Class of ‘25, History of Art



700 STUDENTS

“Two hundred students from my large lecture course visited the Magnes in small groups as part of a module



THANK YOU



“The Magnes is a community treasure. As a lifelong member of our Bay Area Jewish community, I recognized the value it creates for our community many years ago and have been an active supporter ever since. It is a museum, housing and caring for more than 60,000 artifacts from Jewish communities no longer in existence to the work of contemporary artists. It is a place of teaching, research, and learning. It fosters community by bringing people together through its robust schedule of public programming. For all that it adds and does for our community, so must we support its legacy by providing the funding it needs to sustain and grow its collections, museum exhibitions, and programs.”

— Helen Bulwik,
Magnes Advisory Board
Member and Donor

The Magnes greatly appreciates the generosity of supporters whose gifts from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, make everything we do possible and enrich the lives of those in our community.

Institutional Funders

Alameda County Arts Commission	Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust	Koret Foundation	Sunrise Foundation for Education and the Arts
Berkeley Public Schools Fund	Hellman Foundation	Magnes Museum Foundation	Taube Philanthropies
David Berg Foundation	Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund	Magnes Museum Foundation’s Esther and Jacques Reutlinger Fund	Temple Sinai of Oakland
East Bay Community Foundation	KlezCalifornia	San Francisco Foundation	Walter & Elise Haas Fund
			Anonymous (2)

Leadership Circle

Ruth Arnhold	Susan Coliver & Robert Herman <i>In memory of Mr. Norman Coliver</i>	Susan Goldstein & Andrew Kivel	Kenneth Kofman
Sue & Ronald Peter Bachman	Donald & Carole Chaiken Foundation	Richard & Lorrie Levin Greene	Carole & Ted Krumland
Joan Bieder	Holly Doyne & George Rehm	Joan Grossman	Susan Morris
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Jennifer Chaiken & Sam Hamilton <i>In memory of Mr. Donald Chaiken & Ms. Carole Chaiken</i>	Herbert & Marianne Friedman	Fred J. Isaac Philanthropic Fund	Frances Quittell
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		Andrea King	Valerie Sopher
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			Hannah Weisman & Mike Peluse

In Kind Gifts

Sonia Melnikova-Raich	Richard Nagler
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Programming Partners

Campus Partners:

Austrian Center at the Institute of European Studies	Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive	Department of German	German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
	Center for Jewish Studies	Department of History	Helen Diller Institute for Israel Studies and Jewish Law
	Department of English	Dutch Studies	

Community Partners:

Berkeley Unified School District	Goethe-Institut San Francisco	Open Austria/Austrian Consulate San Francisco	theatre dybbuk
	Jewish Film Institute	Taube Philanthropies	Yiddish Theatre Ensemble

To view a full list of all Magnes supporters, please visit: magnes.berkeley.edu/supporters



IN MEMORIAM: Florence B. Helzel

Florence B. Helzel, a former Curator of Prints and Drawings and dedicated supporter of the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, passed away on November 4, 2024, at age 103. During her tenure at the Magnes, she established and stewarded an important collection of works on paper, curated more than a dozen exhibitions, and authored several catalogs. Her legacy continues to inform exhibitions at the Magnes to this day.

Thank You to all who have made gifts to the Magnes in Florence’s memory.



THE MAGNES COLLECTION OF JEWISH ART AND LIFE

Mission

As a museum and research center at UC Berkeley, the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life preserves, studies, and interprets its holdings to generate new knowledge and understanding of Jewish cultures with and for its academic and public communities.

Vision

The Magnes envisions a society that seeks common ground while honoring cultural differences and embraces the diversity of Jewish life around the world.

Values

COMMUNITY

The Magnes fosters a sense of belonging through collaboration and appreciation of diverse perspectives.

STEWARDSHIP

The Magnes manages its collections and other resources to ensure the museum's ongoing cultural relevance and financial sustainability.

DISCOVERY

The Magnes creates and facilitates collections-based opportunities for research, teaching, learning, and creative expression.

On cover: A mother and her young child viewing *Cities and Wars: Roman Vishniac in Berlin and Jerusalem 1947/1967*. Photo by Brandon Sanchez Mejia.

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