Activities Report
Spring 2017 – Spring 2018

New website of the Center for Jewish Art

Center for Jewish Art
Hebrew University of Jerusalem
This year in the life of the Center for Jewish Art was a year of great success. We finished several important projects, presented them to the public and received extensive media coverage. During this year, the Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art was inaugurated on the 17th World Congress of Jewish Studies (see below, p. 5); the project “Historic Synagogues of Europe” was completed and presented in the British Parliament (see below, p. 3). Moreover, a new book, Synagogue in Ukraine: Volhynia by Sergey Kravtsov and Vladimir Levin, was published and presented in the Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History (see below, p. 13-14).

The publication of this Update coincided with the inauguration of a new design for the Center for Jewish Art’s website, prepared by Gilad Hemed (press here). This design is very modern and convenient for use in computers as well as smartphones.

**During this year we also have started several new projects:**

1) We have established a new section of the Index of Jewish Art – a section for Hebrew Printed Books (see below, p. 12). This section has begun a cooperative project with the Russian State Library in Moscow, with a documentation of visual elements in Hebrew books (see below, p. 12);

2) We started to prepare a book on synagogues in Latvia (grant from The Israeli Science Foundation);

3) We continue to work on a book on Jewish material culture in Siberia (grant from Dr. Betsy Gidwitz);

4) We are preparing an expedition to Hungary in order to document synagogues built before the Revolution of 1848 (grant from the Keller Foundation);

5) We started an iconographical indexing of the Ursula and Kurt Schubert Archives (see below, p. 16);

6) We began a cooperation project with the Izmir Project of Kiriaty Foundation, which includes an international Conference “Jewish Izmir: History, Cultural Legacy and its Preservation,” to be held in January 2019 (see below, p. 21);

7) We are one of co-organizers of the international conference “Urban Jewish Heritage: Presence and Absence”, to be held in Cracow on September 3-7, 2018.
Historic Synagogues of Europe

In February 2018, a lasting project “Historic Synagogues of Europe” by the Center for Jewish Art was launched on the Internet. The project was commissioned by the Foundation for Jewish Heritage and was one of the CJA’s central projects since 2015. The researchers of the Center have adjusted their documentation methodology and the Index of Jewish Art software for the needs of this work and succeeded to introduce 3,335 extant synagogue buildings across Europe in this specialized section of the Index. On completion, the project was presented at the British Parliament and discussed in the British and Israeli media.

A search page of the Historic Synagogue of Europe website.
For instance, The Guardian reported on February 3, 2018: “Now, however, there is hope that it will be preserved and restored as a Jewish museum, part of the scheme being rolled out this week. The project, commissioned by the Foundation for Jewish Heritage, has identified synagogues built before the second world war, from Cork in Ireland in the west to Vladivostok in Russia in the east. Each has been catalogued with construction dates and materials, the Jewish community it served, its present use and condition, and a “significance rating”. [Prof. Simon] Schama will launch the project in parliament on Wednesday with the backing of more than 40 high-profile supporters including Downton Abbey creator Julian Fellowes, architect Daniel Libeskind, television newsreader Natasha Kaplinsky, artist Anish Kapoor, authors Linda Grant and Howard Jacobson, and former government ministers Malcolm Rifkind and Tristram Hunt.”

Haaretz wrote on February 26, 2018: “The Historic Synagogues of Europe, a database that was launched last week, tells a sad story. Of the 17,000 or so synagogues in Europe prior to World War II, only 3,318 still stand. Less than a quarter are still in use; the remainder are abandoned, in ruins, or have been repurposed. About 20 were turned into garages or parking lots, eight are now banks, six became police stations and many others now house churches, restaurants, concert halls and theaters. Two are now mosques. A team from Hebrew University’s Center for Jewish Art did the crucial work in creating the database – of mapping, documenting and researching all the historic synagogues that remained in Europe at the end of World War II.”

The project can be approached here.

Map with historic synagogues of Europe
Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art

After five years of hard work, the Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art was finally inaugurated at the ceremony held during the 17th World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, on 9 August 2017. Dr. Vladimir Levin presented the Index to the crowded auditorium, which was also addressed by the Academic Director of the National Library of Israel Prof. Elchanan Reiner, by Prof. Rina Talgam of the Art History Department at the Hebrew University and by Dr. Ilia Rodov, the chair of the Department of Jewish Art at Bar Ilan University.

The development of the Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art has been undertaken in cooperation with the National Library of Israel and Harvard University Library and was made possible by the generous support of the Rothschild Foundation (Europe), Landmarks Project in the Prime-Minister Office, the Claims Conference, as well as Mrs. Josephine Urban (London), Dr. Betsy Gidwitz (Chicago), Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation (Canada), Mrs. Leona Z. Rosenberg (Chicago), Mr. William L. Gross (Tel Aviv), and Prof. Paul Wachtel (New York). We are immensely grateful for the continuing support on which all this valuable work depends.

The Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art with 280,000 images became now not only a tool for research of Jewish iconography throughout the ages, but a digital depository of Jewish visual heritage and material culture. The Index is constantly growing as a result of activities of the CJA staff, as well as thanks to collectors and researchers from all over the world who submit their collections to the Index. During the last year, we had the honor to include in the Index the collections and research materials of the following:

Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Science in St. Petersburg, known as the Kunstkamera, provided the Index with 195 photographs representing various aspects of Jewish culture in Belarus, Georgia, Uzbekistan and India (could be viewed here). The collection includes rare photographs of Cochin Jews of the early 20th century, the extensive documentation of the life of Georgian Jews in 1929 and of Jewish artisans in two Belorussian small towns in 1930, as well as numerous photos of Jewish monuments that have not survived to our days.
Today Tskhinval is the capital of the unrecognized independent Republic of Southern Osetia. In the early 20th century Georgian Jews comprised about 40% of the town’s population, but almost all of them left when a conflict between Ossetians and Georgians began in the early 1990s. Nowadays nothing remains of the Jewish quarter after 70 years of Soviet rule and the Russian-Georgian war of 2008.

The Liady branch of Schneersohn Hasidic dynasty emerged in 1869 and died out in 1910. The Jewish cemetery in Liady was completely demolished during Soviet times, and the only three surviving tombstones were accidentally found several years ago (see here, here and here).
The Lithuanian Art Foundation in Vilnius provided the Index with images of one hundred works by Lithuanian Jewish artists from the Foundation’s collection. Among them are the works by Mark Antokolsky, Jacques Lipchitz, Samuel Tepler, Augustinas Savickas, Janusz Trefler, Pinchus Krémègne, Lasar Segall, Jehusa Meier Epstein, Max Band, Bezion Zukerman, Mojżesz Lejbowski, Samuel Bak, Joseph Budko, Adomas Jacovskis, Jeshua Kovarsky, Rafael Chwoles, and many others. The collection could be viewed here.

**Collection of photographs of synagogues in the Netherlands by Willy Lindwer**, a renowned Dutch and Israeli documentary film producer, director and publisher. Willy Lindwer is highly appreciated by architectural historians for his meticulous photographs, which illustrate books on synagogue architecture in the Netherlands. These photographs are not only an accurate photographic record of architectural monuments. The atmosphere of a Dutch city inhabited by pedestrians and bike riders, the close milieu surrounding a Jewish place of prayer, and the solemn and vibrant ambience of a synagogue interior, expose the uniqueness of Lindwer’s photographic works. The number of photographs taken as preparatory work for publication projects, is by far more extensive than that used in the printed books. Nowadays, thanks to Lindwer’s willingness and the diligent work by the Center’s staff, this indispensable record of synagogue architecture in the Netherlands, numbering more than 300 works, became digitized and made publicly accessible via the the Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art (see [here](#)).

*The synagogue in Dieren, the Netherlands. Photo by Willy Lindwer, 2002. © Willy Lindwer.*
Mrs. Barbara Weiser provided the Index with her documentation of art works in the synagogues of Canada. Over the past fifteen years, Barbara Weiser has been researching Holocaust memorials, the Jewish art in synagogues and Jewish public buildings across Canada. Her primary interest is ritual objects and synagogue decoration as well as stained glass windows. From the 13,000 images that Mrs. Weiser has accumulated during her research, she chose about 4,000 for the Index of Jewish Art. The images are provided with information on the objects' location, date of creation, artist's name, measurements, media and subjects. The first uploaded items could be seen here.

Mrs. Myriam Rosenblit Szwarcbart provides the Index with her images and descriptions of synagogues and ritual objects in São Paulo, Brazil. Myriam Szwarcbart is a Brazilian researcher and architect. She photographs the synagogues and their ritual objects, compiles architectural and historic descriptions as well as interviews with community members. Myriam Szwarcbart’s documentation in Portuguese is available on-line [here](#), and English texts with photographs in the Index of Jewish Art could be seen [here](#).

![Torah cases from the Synagogue Israelita Brasileira in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Photo by Myriam Rosenblit Szwarcbart, 2018. © Myriam Szwarcbart’s documentation project.](#)

**Mr. Richard Schofield**, the founder and creative director of the International Centre for Litvak Photography in Kaunas, Lithuania, undertook a survey of the present situation of the synagogues in Lithuania. The preliminary result of the survey is 59 up-to-date photographs of Lithuanian synagogues, which are being uploaded to the Index of Jewish Art.
Sculptor Josef Tabachnyk provided the Index with photographs of his art works. Tabachnyk was born and worked in Zhytomyr, Ukraine, but lives in the last two decades in Nuremberg, Germany. Tabachnyk made several Holocaust monuments in Ukraine, as well as numerous works on Jewish subjects. One of the most prominent pieces he created is the Willy Brandt Memorial in Nuremberg. The selection of Tabachnyk’s work in the Index could be viewed here.
Printed Books in the Index of Jewish Art

We are happy to announce the creation of a new section in the Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art – the section for Printed Books in Hebrew Typeset. Hebrew books are one of the most important sources of study of Jewish art and culture, which have passed through thousands of hands throughout the Jewish diaspora. Images in printed books have influenced many Jewish artists, and served as models for the decoration of ritual objects, tombstones, synagogue walls and even manuscripts.

The first project of the new section is a cooperative project with the Russian State Library in Moscow. In the framework of the project, the books of the Schneersohn Collection – the library of the fifth and sixth Rebbes of Lubavitch – will be examined for decorations and illustrations. The pages with such elements will be included in the Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art and provided with the appropriate metadata and, most importantly, with the proper iconographical and textual references, linking them to the thesaurus of iconographical subjects developed by the researchers of the Center for Jewish Art.

This is a pilot project, from which we hope to develop a larger one, aiming to include all decorations and illustrations from Jewish books in the Index of Jewish Art. The first dozen books are already included in the Index and can be viewed here.

Moses with the Decalogue in the tailpiece from Sefer ir miklat by David ben Aryeh Leib of Lida, published by the printing house of Shabbetai Bass in Dyhernfurth in 1690 (fol. 54).
Presentation of Synagogues in Ukraine: Volhynia

The two-volume book by Sergey Kravtsov and Vladimir Levin, Synagogues in Ukraine: Volhynia (Center for Jewish Art and Zalman Shazar Center, Jerusalem 2017), was presented at a special event at the Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History in Jerusalem on February 27, 2018. Prof. Ziva Amishai-Maisels was the chairperson of the event, while Vladimir Levin, Sergey Kravtsov, Prof. Shaul Stampfer and the Israeli writer Haim Be’er talked about various aspects of synagogue architecture and communal life in Eastern Europe.

The research and publication of the book has been made possible with the support of the Machover Foundation at the British Friends of the Hebrew University

Michal Nakar, the director of the Shazar Center, opens the presentation of the book, Prof. Ziva Amishai-Maisels, Dr. Vladimir Levin and Dr. Sergey Kravtsov are on the podium.
The book *Synagogues in Ukraine: Volhynia* was also presented at the International conference “The Past and present of Volyn and Polissia” in Manevichi, Ukraine, in November 2017. The conference was attended by 40 directors of Ukrainian museums, mostly from the Volhynia region, and Dr. Anna Berezin presented the new book and specified the activities of the Center for Jewish Art, its research and its digital possibilities.

*The conference was sponsored by the Ukrainian-Jewish Encounter.*

*Dr. Anna Berezin presenting the Index of Jewish Art and the book Synagogues in Ukraine: Volhynia during the conference in Manevichi, Volhynia.*
Ursula and Kurt Schubert Archives

In the past year, the Center for Jewish Art continued its work on the collection of illuminations from Hebrew manuscripts of Ursula and Kurt Schubert, which was donated to the CJA by its creators in 1999 and recently digitized as a separate section of the Index of Jewish Art.

On March 20, 2017, the head of the Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts Section in the CJA, Michal Sternthal, traveled to Vienna to represent the CJA at the launching of the “Ursula Schubert Archive” at the University of Vienna. This digitized archive includes transcripts of lectures given by Dr. Ursula Schubert and it is linked to the Schubert Archives kept in the CJA. Thus, it is possible to read Ursula Schubert’s lectures accompanied by the relevant visual material, which she formerly discussed in her classes.

Michal Sternthal speaking at the inauguration of the Ursula and Kurt Schubert Archives in the University of Vienna. Photo by Joseph Krpelan. © Universität Wien.
The Iconographical Indexing of the “Ursula and Kurt Schubert Archives” is due to start this year. The project aims to record each illumination in the collection and its iconography with the relevant text, according to a thesaurus of Iconographical Subjects developed by the Center for Jewish Art during its 40 years of existence. The project is a cooperation between the Center for Jewish Art, the Center for Austrian Studies at the Hebrew University, and the Institute for Jewish Studies at the University of Vienna. Mrs. Eva Schubert, the daughter of Ursula and Kurt, played a significant role in bringing together the involved institutions.

The Ursula and Kurt Schubert Archives is available [here](http://cja.huji.ac.il).
Lithuania

The researchers of the Center for Jewish Art were intensively involved this year in the commemoration and preservation projects of Jewish monuments in Lithuania.

In April 2017, Vladimir Levin took part in the presentation of the map “Hundred Synagogues of Vilnius” published by the Litvak World NCO and based on the research of synagogues in Lithuania carried out by the Center for Jewish Art. The presentation took place in the residence of the Israeli Ambassador to Lithuania, Mr. Amir Maimon. On this occasion, Dr. Levin gave several interviews to the Lithuanian media.

Anna Avidan, the CEO of the Litvak World, met on June 13, 2017 in the Center for Jewish Art with CJA researchers and Israeli experts, to discuss the possibility to commemorate the Great Synagogue of Vilnius.

Anna Avidan, Dr. Sergey Kravtsov, Dr. Jon Seligman, Dr. Vladimir Levin and Dr. Boris Khaimovich at the meeting in the office of the CJA, concerning the Great Synagogue of Vilnius.
Vladimir Levin, in his capacity of an academic adviser to ‘The Lost Shtetl’ project of creating a Jewish museum in Šeduva, visited in August 2017 this former shtetl with Milda Jakulytė, the curator of the future museum. They surveyed the site where the museum will be built and the Jewish cemetery, which was restored in the framework of ‘The Lost Shtetl’ project.

A creative workshop “How to present the site of The Great Synagogue of Vilna” was held on September 4, 2017 at the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, with the participation of Vladimir Levin, Sergey Kravtsov and Boris Khaimovich. The problems addressed by the workshop and the Center’s researchers in particular were complex and challenging, since only the underground remains of the once magnificent Great Synagogue and its shulhoyf exist, and a kindergarten was built upon its site. To quote Anna Avidan, the organizer of the workshop on behalf of the Litvak World, “the Lithuanian, Israeli, USA, German, Ukrainian Jewish organizations, scholars, politicians – all together were discussing the significance and possible ways of commemorating the Great Synagogue of Vilnius. This is an unforgettable, exciting and historic event where the congenial atmosphere and productive results went far beyond our expectations.”

The keynote lecture given by Dr. Levin, “The Great Synagogue in Vilnius: Between the City and its Jewish Community,” is available [here](#); and the paper by Dr. Kravtsov, “The Great Synagogue of Vilnius: Architecture, Meaning and Memory,” is available [here](#).

On the occasion of the Day of Remembrance of Lithuanian Jewish victims of genocide and the European Day of Jewish Culture, a conference took place on September 25–28, 2017. Sergey Kravtsov gave a lecture entitled “Wooden Synagogues of Lithuania: From Magnificent to Modest;” and in the framework of the Advisory Group for Heritage Issues at the Lithuanian Jewish Community, took part there in a debate on the future of Jewish historical sites. The discussion was continued during a tour to the wooden synagogues in Alanta, Kurkliai, Pakruojis, Rozalimas and Žiežmariai, organized by the Jewish Community, the Cultural Heritage Department of the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture, as well as by local mayors and conservators. The visit to the Pakruojis synagogue was especially interesting, because of the conservation and renovation works undertaken there according to the theoretical reconstruction of the synagogue created by Dr. Kravtsov in 2006, following the CJA expedition.

Computer reconstruction of the wooden synagogue in Pakruojis by Sergey Kravtsov, 2006.
Expeditions

The expedition of the Center for Jewish Art to Romania took place in November 2017. The expedition documented synagogues, Jewish cemeteries and cemetery chapels in Covasna and Brașov counties of Transylvania (Sfântu Gheorghe, Boroșneu Mare, Vâlcele, Brașov, Hoghiz, Racoș, Făgăraș), and in Prahova county in Wallachia (Ploiești, Câmpina), as well as surveyed the synagogues in Bucharest. All the expedition documentation has been uploaded to the Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art. A detailed report on the expedition can be viewed here.

_The expedition was made possible thanks to the generous support of the Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation_


Our next expedition, this time to Hungary, is generously supported by the Keller Foundation, Jerusalem. The report on the expedition will follow soon.
Synagogues in Izmir, Turkey

The Mordechai Kriaty Foundation (Tel Aviv) conducts extensive work on preservation of the material heritage of the Izmir Jews, and aims to establish a museum in the former Jewish quarter of the city. In 2017, the Foundation invited the Center for Jewish Art to participate in its Izmir project. The researchers of the CJA documented synagogues and ritual objects in Izmir already in 1993. Now, the CJA, together with the Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of the Jewish Communities of the East and the Kriaty Foundation, organize a conference “Jewish Izmir: History, Cultural Legacy and its Preservation,” which will take place in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in 2019.

Beit Israel Synagogue in Izmir, Turkey (built 1907), Torah ark (heichal, erected 1910).

Preservation and Commemoration

A project for the revitalization of the Great Synagogue in Raşcov (Rashkov), Moldova, has been initiated by the Raşcov Rebirth NCO of the local descendants in Israel. Drs. Kravtsov and Levin have been invited as advisors and informed about the initiative and its challenges in the Jewish Heritage Europe online resource. They suggested that “The establishment of a secure lookout point at the edge of the western wall of the synagogue — with spectacular views of the building, the shulhoyf and the Dniester valley — may attract tourists, and cause the local authorities to pay more attention to the upkeep of this outstanding monument.” They emphasized, however, that the Raşcov Rebirth (or any other restoration/preservation project in the site), in addition to funding, “needs the support of conservation professionals, to ensure that the preservation would not cause any damage.” Indeed, the conservation project of the damaged, roofless synagogue, was prepared by professionals in Lviv (Ukraine) and Chişinău (Moldova) under the supervision of the Center for Jewish Art, and is now awaiting its implementation.

Great Synagogue and Catholic church in Raşcov (Rashkov), Moldova.

Photo by Vladimir Levin, 2014.
During the last year, Dr. Sergey Kravtsov was also involved in advising the reconstruction projects of the Great Synagogue in Ostroh and the Great Synagogue in Sharhorod, both in Ukraine. His participation in the Advisory Group for Heritage Issues at the Lithuanian Jewish Community has been described above.

Bet Tfila – Research Unit for Jewish Architecture in Europe

The Center for Jewish Art, in its capacity as the Bet Tfila Research Unit – Jerusalem, together with Bet Tfila Braunschweig, Germany, and the History of Architecture and Preservation of Monuments Unit in Innsbruck University, Austria (Prof. Klaus Tragbar), co-organized a Study Day “100 Years of Planning and Building in Palestine and Israel,” held in Innsbruck on April 10-12, 2018.

Volunteering and Internship

We are very glad that Mrs. Tova Szeintuch, formerly of the National Library of Israel, continues to volunteer at the Section for Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts at the Center. She makes very important improvements of the descriptions of Hebrew illuminated manuscripts, documented by the CJA researchers in the past decades.

This year, we also had two young interns from the United States, Gabriel Rosenthal and Penina Seigel. Both helped us with several projects, such as the uploading of Willy Lindwer and Barbara Weiser’s collections to the Index of Jewish Art and advancing our research on Jewish material culture in Siberia.

Exhibitions

Ido Noy of the Center for Jewish Art and Dr. Shirat-Miriam Shamir organized an exhibition Keep It Light: Vessels for Memorial and Remembrance Candles in the Contemporary Jewish Art of the Bezalel School. The exhibition was part of The Jerusalem Biennale 2017. The beautifully designed catalogue of the exhibition opens with a foreword by the Director of the Center for Jewish Art Dr. Vladimir Levin.
The Center for Jewish Art provided photographs from its collection to the exhibition of **Solomon Yudovin in the Vitebsk Art Museum**, organized by Anna Klimovich and her volunteer group from St. Petersburg. Yudovin was born in 1892 in Beshenkovichi, a town not far from Vitebsk, and studied in Vitebsk at the art school of Yehuda Pen. Thus, it is probably the first time that Yudovin’s works are shown in the region where he grew up.

### 17th World Congress of Jewish Studies

Besides the inauguration of the Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art, The Center for Jewish Art organized a session “Synagogues: Architecture and Topography”. Vladimir Levin chaired this session as well as gave a paper “Sacred and Profane: The Synagogue Compound (Shulhoyf) in Eastern Europe.” Other participants of the session were Agnes D. Oszko, Ulrich Knufinke and Naomi Simhoni. Sergey Kravtsov lectured at the Congress on “Iconographic Study of Synagogue Architecture” and Ido Noy – on “Love Conquers All: The Erfurt Girdle as a Source for Understanding Medieval Jewish Love and Romance.”

### Events at CJA

This year the Center for Jewish Art had the honor to host several events with participation of foreign researchers.

On November 9, 2017, Dr. Lynne Swarts of the University of Sydney gave a lecture “The Cosmopolitan Nationalist: E.M. Lilien, Jewish National Identity and the Pursuit of German Culture, 1900-1914.”

On October 25, 2017, a presentation of the book by Prof. Rudolf Klein, *Synagogues in Hungary, 1782–1918* (Budapest, 2017) was held at the Center for Jewish Art. The presentation included the lectures by Prof. Rudolf Klein of Szent Istvan University, Prof. Shaul Stampfer of the Hebrew University, and Dr. Sergey Kravtsov of the Center for Jewish Art.

On September 13, 2017, Taras Nazaruk, the manager of the Lviv Interactive (LIA) project at the Center for Urban History of East-Central Europe in Lviv delivered a lecture on LIA, which is a web-accessible interactive historical map of Lviv and “an Internet encyclopedia of Lviv and its past.”
Student Excursions to Israel

In September 2017, the Center for Jewish Art welcomed a student group from the University of Innsbruck, Austria, headed by Prof. Klaus Tragbar and Dr. Ulrich Knufinke. Dr. Anna Berezin of the CJA guided the group through the Mount Scopus campus of the Hebrew University and explained its history and architecture.

In October 2017, Dr. Berezin guided a group of students of architecture from the Technical University of Braunschweig, Germany, through the Old City of Jerusalem and through the ancient synagogues of North Israel.
Narkiss Prize

On December 14, 2017, Mrs. Daisy Raccah-Djivre, the Chief Curator of the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Wing for Jewish Art and Life in the Israel Museum received the Bezalel, Mordechai and Nessia Narkiss Prize for Excellence in the Field of Jewish Art. The award ceremony took place in the Umberto Nachon Museum of Italian Jewish Art in Jerusalem, on the 91st anniversary of the late Prof. Bezalel Narkiss, the founder of the Center for Jewish Art. Mrs. Raccah-Djivre gave the lecture “The Israel Museum’s Jewish Art and Life Permanent Display: Past, Present and Future.”

Educational Activities

The CJA researchers participated in seminars and workshops around the world and introduced students into the field of Jewish art and architecture:

In May 2017, Vladimir Levin spoke on East European synagogues at a seminar in the Parkes Institute for the Study of Jewish/non-Jewish Relations, University of Southampton, United Kingdom.

In July 2017, Sergey Kravtsov gave three lectures at the Summer School “Connecting (to) Histories: Engaging with the Urban Pasts and Displaying Jewish Heritage” at the Center for Urban History in Lviv, Ukraine.

In August 2017, Vladimir Levin participated in the Summer School “Difficult Heritage and Memory in the Making” organized by the Bremen University, Germany, and lectured on “The Great Synagogue in Ashmiany – Why Does It Matter?”

In September 2017, Vladimir Levin lectured about the Center for Jewish Art at the Jewish Library in Vilnius, Lithuania.

In January 2018, Vladimir Levin presented the Index of Jewish Art at a workshop for archivists from the Balkans in the National Library of Israel.

In February 2018, Vladimir Levin gave a talk about East European synagogues at the seminar of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in the University of Tokyo, Japan.

In March 2018, Michal Sternthal spoke on Illuminated Medieval Haggadot in Nofei Yerushalayim Home for Aged, Jerusalem.
In March 2018, Vladimir Levin gave a public lecture and a seminar on synagogue architecture in the Centre of Jewish Studies in Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic.
Lectures by the CJA researchers

In addition to the lectures and papers mentioned above, the Center’s researchers participated in scholarly conferences and workshops and lectured on different occasions:

In January 2017, Aliza Cohen-Mushlin gave a lecture at the University of Mumbai, India on “The Synagogues of the Jews in Kerala”. She also conducted a survey of the synagogues which should be documented by the Center for Jewish Art in Mumbai.

In March 2017, Vladimir Levin participated in the Annual Conference of the Israeli Historical Society, “One Hundred Years to the Russian Revolution” held at Tel Aviv University and presented a paper “Jewish Religion during the Russian Revolution.”


In May 2017, Vladimir Levin gave a public lecture “Synagogue and the City: Architectural Dialogue between the St. Petersburg Jewish Community and the Capital of the Russian Empire” in the Parkes Institute for the Study of Jewish/non-Jewish Relations, University of Southampton, United Kingdom.


In June 2017, Vladimir Levin served as a respondent in the workshop “Jews and Jewishness in Eastern Europe in Modern Times: New Readings,” organized by the Leonid Nevzlin Research Center for Russian and East European Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

In September 2017, Sergey Kravtsov delivered a talk “Lviv Collections before 1939: Art Patrons, Communities, Institutions” at the Jewish Days in the City Hall of Lviv, titled “(Un)Displayed Past in East European Museums.”

In October 2017, Vladimir Levin participated in the GIF Young Scientists’ Meeting "Exodus of the Mind: East-West Knowledge Transfer Since 1989“ in Potsdam, Germany, and

In February 2018, Irina Chernetsky and Anna Berezin participated in the annual conference of the SEFER Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization, Moscow. Dr. Chernetsky lectured on “Hebrew Script in Vittore Carpaccio's (1465?-1525/1526) Paintings,” and Dr. Berezin delivered a paper “Jewish politics of Catherine II: Searching for Origins.”

In February 2018, Vladimir Levin participated in the workshop “Protecting the Empire: Imperial Government and Russian Nationalist Alliance in the Western Borderlands during the Late Imperial Period” in the University of Tokyo and spoke there on “Russian Jews and Russian Nationalism: Why there was no Jewish Right-Wing Politics in the Late Russian Empire?”

In February 2018, Sergey Kravtsov and Vladimir Levin spoke at the presentation of their book *Synagogues in Ukraine: Volhynia* in the Zalman Shazar Center in Jerusalem. Levin delivered a talk “The Synagogue as historical Source” and Kravtsov on “Synagogues of Volhynia: Style and Identity.”

In April 2018, Vladimir Levin participated in the Study Day “100 Years of Planning and Building in Palestine and Israel,” held in the University of Innsbruck with a paper “Our Holy Land. The Politics of Russian Architecture in Palestine in the Late Imperial Period.”

In April 2018 Vladimir Levin delivered a talk “Synagogues in Eastern Europe at the time of War and Revolution,” at the conference “World War I, Nationalism, and Jewish Culture” in The Yeshiva University in New York.

In April 2018, Anna Berezin and Vladimir Levin spoke on “Jewish Colonization of Asiatic Russia (Siberia) and its Architectural Expression” at the international conference “Jewish Communities in Modern Asia: Cultural Contacts in Historical and Comparative Perspective” at Haifa University.

Recent publications by the CJA researchers:


Vladimir Levin, Opening Address, in *Keep it Light: Vessels for Memorial and Remembrance Candles in the Contemporary Jewish Art of the Bezalel School*, curators Dr. Shirat-Miriam Shamir and Ido Noy (Jerusalem, 2017), 4e-5e (in English), 4-5 (in Hebrew).