

Request for Submissions

Upcoming Exhibit: *A Fence Around the Torah: Safety and Unsafety in Jewish Life*

The Jewish Museum of Maryland (JMM) invites submissions of artwork for its upcoming exhibit, *A Fence Around the Torah: Safety and Unsafety in Jewish Life*, an artist-curated exhibit exploring safety and exclusion in Jewish communities on display in JMM's Samson, Rossetta and Sadie B. Feldman Gallery from November 21, 2021 to February 13, 2022.

Deadline for Submission: Sunday, September 5, 2021

Exhibit Overview

Curated by Liora Ostroff, JMM's Curator-in-Residence, ***A Fence Around the Torah: Safety and Unsafety in Jewish Life*** will explore manifold discussions on safety and exclusion in Jewish communities.

Judaism's commitment to enduring collective identity is enshrined in the *Mishnah*, the first comprehensive written collection of Jewish oral tradition and law. *Pirkei Avot* instructs us to "make a fence around the Torah." With the Torah at its center, Jewish law and practices—the fence—define the bounds of Jewish life and preserve the core values and ethics of Judaism. But safety practices, an integral part of this fence, which Jewish communities build today to protect communal life can also perpetuate unsafety and create barriers to participation for diverse Jewish populations and challenge relationships with our neighbors.

A Fence Around the Torah: Safety and Unsafety in Jewish Life explores manifold discussions on safety and exclusion in Jewish communities. American Jewish communities and institutions must, on one hand, respond to rising antisemitism and white supremacist violence; and on the other, acknowledge the ways that Jewish institutions have created physical and emotional danger for marginalized community members and neighbors marginalized by white supremacy and systemic oppression. **The "fence" will be re-imagined as a conscientious fortification for Jewish life and complex Jewish identities.**

Submissions

As a part of this exhibit, JMM seeks submissions from artists, musical performers, cultural innovators and poets that highlight the internal conflict over safety and exclusion within Jewish communities and institutions, including personal reflections on queer life and Judaism, racial justice in Jewish spaces, and dreams for inclusion and solidarity coming from within Jewish institutions and the organized Jewish community.

Submissions should address one or more of the following questions:

- When do you feel safe?
- Who feels unsafe in Jewish communities and institutions and why?
- When does what makes some feel safe make others feel unsafe?
- How do diverse Jewish communities handle the question of safety?
- How does unsafety and exclusion affect personal relationships with Judaism and Jewish community?
- How do we imagine Jewish futures, safety, and solidarity?
- How do excluded voices make space for themselves?
- How does the issue of safety in Jewish spaces connect to broader conversations about safety, justice, and policing in the greater community?

The Jewish Museum of Maryland connects people to Jewish experiences and Maryland's Jewish community to its roots. We inspire everyone to explore history, take action, and imagine a better future.

Guidelines

- Artists are invited to submit up to 5 pieces of their original work.
- Submissions can include existing work or plans for new work that will be completed in advance of the exhibit.
- Any medium or format will be considered.
- Any work exceeding 7' by 6' by 6' must be able to be disassembled and assembled onsite by JMM staff.
- While JMM has some ability to provide minor mounts and hardware, artwork must be delivered ready to be installed.

Please include in your submission

- A brief artist's statement or biography
- A description of the work that outlines a creative response to one or more of the questions listed above and exemplifies how these themes can be personal, political, and central to Jewish life.
- JPEG or PDF images of work, if applicable.
- Medium or format of the work.
- Dimensions and weight of artwork, or approximate if the work has not yet been created.
- A/V technology requirements for your piece, if applicable.
- Your location (within the United States).

Preference will be given to artists who indicate in their submission that they are interested and willing to participate in an artist talk, interview, or lead a community workshop. Participating artists will be asked to reflect on and discuss how their work relates to the central themes of the exhibit, their personal relationships to these questions, and engage in conversation with other participating artists to illuminate the connections between works.

Please send questions and submissions to Liora Ostroff, Curator-in-Residence, at jmmresidency@jewishmuseummd.org by Sunday, September 5, 2021