

Cathy Gelbin
Nadia Valman
Sara Lipton
Daniel Magilow
Sarah Lightman

Leo Baeck Institute
London
Lecture Series 2023

The Good, the Bad
and the Ugly:
Myths, Images and
Imaginings about Jews

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This season's lecture series *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly: Myths, Images and Imaginings about Jews* seeks to explore the connection of visual narratives in the context of beauty, ugliness and morality with representations of Jews and Jewishness in the Western world from the Middle Ages to the present day. We aim to examine the subject from different historical, social and artistic perspectives ranging from medieval mythology to Orientalism, Zionism, Feminism or modern aesthetics, and through the lens of a selection of diverse media including painting, photography and comics.

Lectures will be held at: German Historical Institute, 17 Bloomsbury Square London WC1 and will also be available on Zoom. Places at the GHI are strictly limited and must be reserved in advance by contacting the Leo Baeck Institute, London e: info@leobaeck.co.uk t: +44 (0) 20 7882 5690. Admission is free. Lectures will begin promptly at 6.30pm. Latecomers may not be admitted.

Zoom links will be advertised closer to the dates of individual events in our lecture announcements via email, social media and on our website: www.leobaeck.co.uk. To participate online and to register your booking please follow instructions provided in those communications.



Cathy Gelbin
University of Manchester, UK
Gender, Sex and Jewishness in Weimar Cinema's Monsters
6.30pm, Thursday 9th March, 2023

The monstrous Jew of popular imagination found perhaps his most salient expression in Weimar cinema's love of the uncanny. These films derive their lasting fascination from the often-ironic interplay of their separate and yet related gendered, sexualised and racialised portrayals. The talk explores how spectatorial pleasure can arise from the emerging gaps where the incoherence of these categories, presumed to be absolute in the biologized discourses of modernity, is playfully made visible and ridiculed.

Cathy Gelbin is Professor of Film and German Studies at the University of Manchester. Her work on feature film, video testimony, literary texts and live art has focused on Holocaust representations and the dynamics of German-speaking Jewish culture.

Nadia Valman
Queen Mary University of London, UK
The Virtuous Jewess
6.30pm, Thursday 4th May, 2023

British culture has always been fascinated by the figure of the Jewess. This lecture will explore its roots in nineteenth-century theology, and its popularisation through literature. In contrast to the more well-known stereotypes of Fagin and Shylock, the virtuous Jewess was an emblem of the privileged status accorded to both women and Jews in Victorian Protestant culture and demonstrates that Jews could function not simply as an 'other' within modern cultures, but also, simultaneously, an ideal self.

Nadia Valman is Professor of Urban Literature at Queen Mary, University of London. She is the author of *The Jewess in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (2007) and has co-edited several books on Jews and literary culture including *Between the East End and East Africa: the 'Jew' in Edwardian Culture* (2009), *Nineteenth-Century Jewish Literature* (2013) and *British Jewish Women Writers* (2014). She is currently Principal Investigator of an AHRC-funded research project, *Making and Remaking the Jewish East End*.



Sara Lipton
Stony Brook University, NY, USA
Marked Off in the Eyes of the Public: Anti-Jewish Imagery and the Politics of Prejudice
6.30pm, Thursday 8th June, 2023

Art can be a powerful force in shaping the way we see and think about the world: pictures craft our ideas of beauty and ugliness, good and bad, power and weakness. This lecture traces how medieval Christian images of Jews, originally designed to aid religious devotions, made Christians look at Jews with new curiosity and interest, and drew their attention to previously unnoticed aspects of Jewish life and looks. As images of Jews evolved from benign but outdated Hebrews to caricatured usurers and demonic sorcerers, Christian society developed new – and increasingly hostile – ideas about and policies toward Jews, whose effects have endured to this day.

Sara Lipton is Professor of History at the State University of New York, Stony Brook and a Fellow of the Medieval Academy of America the Royal Historical Society (UK). She is currently a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford. Her most recent book is *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Jewish Iconography* (2014).



Daniel Magilow
University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA
What a shayna punim!: Cute Jews, Photography, and Jewish Regeneration
6.30pm, Thursday 12th October, 2023

Jüdische Kinder in Erez Israel, a collection of twenty-one photographs of adorable Jewish children in Mandatory Palestine, was the last overtly Jewish-themed photobook published in Germany before the Holocaust. Yet its propaganda mission transcended its diminutive size and surface superficiality. This talk examines how this photobook creates an allegory of Jewish vulnerability by eliciting responses associated with the minor aesthetic category of 'cuteness.' In so doing, it broadens our understanding of how photobooks helped expand the visual lexicon and aesthetic strategies central to Jewish cultural and political regeneration.

Daniel H. Magilow is Professor of German at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. His research centers on photography and its intersections with Holocaust Studies, Weimar Germany, and postwar memory. He has authored and edited six books, including *The Photography of Crisis: The Photo Essays of Weimar Germany* and *Holocaust Representations in History: An Introduction*.



Sarah Lightman
Artist and writer, Royal Drawing School, London, UK
Dressing Eve: Re-drawing Biblical Women through Comics
6.30pm, Thursday 30th November, 2023

Jewish women have been at the forefront of feminist autobiographical comics since the 1970's as they challenged sexism in popular culture. But how have they revised misogynistic images and stories closer to home? Sarah Lightman will illustrate how Sharon Rudahl in her bildungsroman 'The Star Sapphire', Miriam Katin in her Holocaust memoir, *We Are on Our Own*, and her own graphic novel, *The Book of Sarah*, transform biblical narratives and images to reflect their own, lived, experiences.

Sarah Lightman is an artist, writer and Faculty member at The Royal Drawing School, London. She attended the Slade School of Art for her BA and MFA, University of Glasgow for her PhD and was an Honorary Research Fellow at Birkbeck, University of London (2018-21). She edited the multi-award-winning *Graphic Details: Jewish Women's Confessional Comics in Essays and Interviews* (McFarland, 2014), published her autobiographical graphic novel, *The Book of Sarah* (Myriad Editions and Penn State UP, 2019) and co-edited *Jewish Women in Comics: Bodies and Borders* (Syracuse UP, 2023).



The Leo Baeck Institute
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Leo Baeck Institute
2nd Floor
Arts Two Building
Queen Mary
University of London
Mile End Road
London E1 4NS
t: +44 (0) 20 7882 5690
www.leobaeck.co.uk



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