

News Release

Press Office

T 212.423.3271

F 212.423.3232

Exhibition Featuring Designs and Paintings by Pioneering Graphic Designer and Artist Elaine Lustig Cohen Opens in August at the Jewish Museum

Masterpieces & Curiosities: Elaine Lustig Cohen
August 17, 2018–August 11, 2019

New York, NY, July 18, 2018 – The Jewish Museum will present ***Masterpieces and Curiosities: Elaine Lustig Cohen*** from August 17, 2018 through August 11, 2019, featuring over 30 works by the pioneering graphic designer and artist. One of seven sections that make up the Jewish Museum’s third floor collection exhibition, [Scenes from the Collection](#), “Masterpieces and Curiosities” offers an in-depth examination of a single object or group of objects within a larger cultural, historical, or aesthetic context. This iteration of “Masterpieces and Curiosities” will focus on six Jewish Museum catalogues whose covers and interiors were playfully and ingeniously designed by Elaine Lustig Cohen (1927–2016). Over six decades of practice, Lustig Cohen moved between diverse activities including art-making and rare book dealing, as well as design. This exhibition will bring together the public sphere of her graphic design work and the private vision of her paintings, highlighting a pivotal moment and a singular voice in American visual culture of the twentieth century.

Lustig Cohen began her career in the mid-1950s, extending the vocabulary of European modernism into an American context as a designer for a clientele of significant publishers, architects, and cultural institutions. From 1962 to 1967, she helped shape the Jewish Museum’s institutional identity by directing the design of printed ephemera and catalogues for a program of art exhibitions that was among the most progressive in the nation, including the historic *Primary Structures: Younger American and British Sculptors* (1966) organized by Kynaston McShine. During the same period, Lustig Cohen developed a hard-edged style as a painter. Employing a bold formal language of geometric shapes and vibrant solid colors, Lustig Cohen’s paintings relate to her design work as well as the contemporaneous practices of other artists who strove to dissolve the barriers between painting and objecthood. Seen in this light, her work suggests that the lineage of post-painterly abstraction – the term often used to describe the 1960s work of artists such as Frank Stella, Ellsworth Kelly, and Morris Louis – should be expanded to include not only post-war artistic movements such as Abstract Expressionism but also post-war graphic design. At the same time, Lustig Cohen’s ephemera and exhibition catalogues offer a window into a moment in the Jewish Museum’s history that was as lively and colorful as her designs.

The exhibition includes six Jewish Museum exhibition catalogues: *Toward a New Abstraction* (1963); *Recent American Sculpture* (1964); *Kenneth Noland* (1965); *Primary Structures* (1966); *Ad Reinhardt* (1966); and *Masada* (1967). Also included are a selection of paintings from the 1960s and 1970s; approximately ten of Lustig Cohen’s typographic, abstract, and photographic book jacket designs that show her unique style and attention to content; and graphic pieces such as posters, bags, and invitations for the Jewish Museum.

The Jewish Museum
1109 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10128
TheJewishMuseum.org

Under the auspices of
The Jewish Theological Seminary

Jewish Museum

The exhibition is organized by Prem Krishnamurthy, Curator, K., Berlin, and Partner & Director, Wkshps, New York; Cole Akers, Curator and Special Projects Manager, The Glass House, a National Trust Historic Site; and Shira Backer, Leon Levy Assistant Curator, The Jewish Museum.

An exhibition featuring Lustig Cohen's work will also be on view at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University at the James B. Duke House, 1 East 78th Street, from October 19, 2018 through February 24, 2019. Visiting hours are free and open to the public from 1-4pm daily. For more information on the Institute please visit ifa.nyu.edu.

About Scenes from the Collection

The Jewish Museum's ongoing collection exhibition, *Scenes from the Collection*, features nearly 600 works from antiquities to contemporary art. Art and Jewish objects are shown together, affirming universal values that are shared among people of all faiths and backgrounds. The exhibition is a powerful expression of artistic and cultural creativity as well as a reflection of the continual evolution that is the essence of Jewish identity. The unique mix of art and ceremonial objects speaks of the many strands of Jewish tradition, culture, spirituality, and history. *Scenes from the Collection* is divided into seven different sections, or scenes, highlighting the diversity and depth of the collection. Several scenes change annually, and one changes every six months, so that different subjects can be examined while audiences are offered opportunities to see as much of the collection as possible, including new acquisitions.

About the Jewish Museum

Located on New York City's famed Museum Mile, the Jewish Museum is a distinctive hub for art and Jewish culture for people of all backgrounds. Founded in 1904, the Museum was the first institution of its kind in the United States and is one of the oldest Jewish museums in the world. Devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary, the Museum offers diverse exhibitions and programs, and maintains a unique collection of nearly 30,000 works of art, ceremonial objects, and media reflecting the global Jewish experience over more than 4,000 years.

Location: 1109 Fifth Avenue at 92nd Street, New York City

Hours: Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, 11am to 5:45pm;
Thursday, 11am to 8pm; and Friday, 11am to 4pm.

Admission: \$18.00 for adults, \$12.00 for senior citizens, \$8.00 for students, free for visitors 18 and under and Jewish Museum members. Pay What You Wish on Thursdays from 5pm to 8pm. Free on Saturdays and select Jewish holidays.

Information: The public may call 212.423.3200 or visit TheJewishMuseum.org.

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Press contact:

Daniela Stigh, 212.423.3330 or dstigh@thejm.org

General inquiries: pressoffice@thejm.org

