

Newsletter for friends of the  
**AZRIELI INSTITUTE  
OF ISRAEL STUDIES**

FALL 2019

CONCORDIA

# KAFKA'S LAST TRIAL

### Dear friends of the Azrieli Institute,

Greetings and welcome to the 2019-20 academic year!

The previous year was full of exciting accomplishments. I hope that you enjoy learning about them in the pages that follow.

This past summer, we conducted the third Azrieli Institute Summer in Jerusalem program in collaboration with Hebrew University's Rothberg International School. Thanks to generous support provided by the Azrieli Foundation, this year's program included a number of new special site visits and a more enhanced learning opportunity for our students in Israel.

For the first time, our group was able to spend a whole day at the Yad Vashem campus in Jerusalem to learn about the significance of the memory of the Holocaust for the national identity of Israel, visit Mount Herzl and travel to the Galilee to learn about the history of the relationship between the Jewish and Druze populations there. During the current academic year, we will be working towards establishing this summer course as a regular and integral part of our undergraduate Israel Studies Minor program.

Starting this academic year, our best-performing undergraduate students will benefit from generous financial assistance made available by two new awards, the Sarah Morris Scholarship and the Sarna-Weigensberg Award. We are extremely grateful to our donors for their support and encouragement.

Last spring we ran a very successful series of public lectures in cooperation with the Adath Yisrael synagogue of Montreal. Thanks to the generous support of Brenda and Sam Gewurtz, we were able to offer four talks on the Israeli electoral and party systems, with particular focus on the general elections held in April 2019. Building on the success of this program, we started a new series in the fall of 2019 about the history of the Israeli presidency. All our events are free of charge and we encourage everyone to join us.

Our faculty members and graduate students regularly participate in international conferences where they showcase the results of their research and help enhance our global exposure. This year's annual meeting of the Association for Israel Studies took place at Kinneret College and we were able to support the participation of three of our members. The conference was especially important from a personal sense because the Association's Annual General Meeting elected me to serve on its Board of Directors.

Two years ago, we started a special project of research collaboration with our colleagues at the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism located in Sde Boker. Our joint efforts have culminated in the publication of a special issue of articles in the fall 2019 edition of *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*. The broad range of topics covered includes art history, sociology, religion, history and political science. As such, they capture the exciting diversity of the scholarly field of Israel Studies.

As ever, I remain grateful to Dr. Norma Joseph, the Institute's associate director, as well as to our colleagues Drs. Loren Lerner, Meir Amor, Lorenzo Di Tommaso and Ira Robinson who volunteer their time to serve and offer advice on the Institute's Advisory Board.

I look forward to welcoming you to our events during the new academic year!

With sincere good wishes,



Csaba Nikolenyi  
Director, Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies  
Professor, Department of Political Science





# SUMMER STUDIES IN ISRAEL PROVIDE FASCINATING WINDOW ON CULTURE, RELIGION AND DIVERSITY

By Lisa Komlos



PHOTO BY LISA KOMLOS

Students from the Azrieli Institute and Western Galilee College explored the deeper meanings of multiculturalism and intersectionality

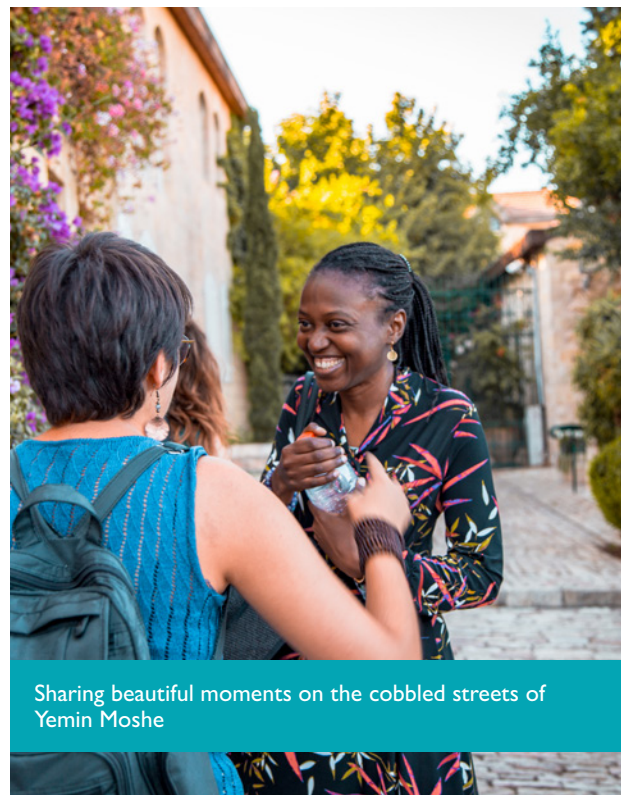
The students of the Azrieli Institute's summer program in Israel participated in a unique opportunity this year to explore the multiculturalism and diversity of Israeli and Canadian societies.

Our students visited Professor Osnat Akirov's class at Western Galilee College in Acre (Akko), where Peter Harris, the head of the college's Theatre Studies Department, asked us to reflect on the intersectionality of our identities as an ice-breaking exercise.

In just our small group alone, we observed so much diversity, with backgrounds from multiple countries, such as Canada, Cameroon, Hungary, Dominican Republic, the United States, Venezuela, Germany, Russia and Israel.

Moreover, we were able to dive deeper into other intersections centred on religious beliefs. Here, we saw again how diverse the group was with Druze, Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Messianic Jewish, atheist and Gnostic members.

Following the exercise, students and faculty engaged in conversation and asked questions about the intersections of their identities. As a result, we were able to travel the globe in one short afternoon. It was a remarkable experience.



Sharing beautiful moments on the cobble streets of Yemin Moshe

PHOTO BY LISA KOMLOS



# SUMMER STUDIES IN ISRAEL PROVIDE FASCINATING WINDOW ON CULTURE, RELIGION AND DIVERSITY



PHOTO BY LISA KOMLOS

Tea time in Salima's tent on the outskirts of Yerucham in the Negev desert

The Summer in Israel program, made possible through the generous support of the Azrieli Foundation, is truly an experience of a lifetime. It provides students with the ability to learn on-site about history, different cultures and religions, and to visit historical sites in Israel referenced in the classroom.

The program transforms the traditional classroom setting into field-study research, where students can immerse themselves in the surrounding culture.

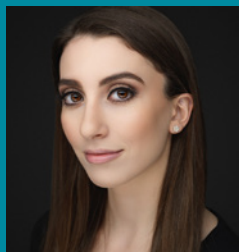
This provides an exceptional understanding of the diversity and multiculturalism of Israel that may not otherwise be fully realized. Some of the places we visited include the National Library of Israel, the Israel Museum, Yad Vashem,

the Knesset, Mount Hertzl, Qumran, Masada, the Dead Sea, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Ba'hai Gardens and Sde Boker kibbutz — and we even drank tea with Salima, a Bedouin woman, in her community tent.

Although the course focused on religion, culture and politics in contemporary Israel, our students left with much more knowledge and insight than they expected.

It's always fascinating to see how each student reflects on what they've read, seen and experienced while living in Jerusalem for a month and how they relate it to their own lives. Students come back from the program feeling enlightened, educated and with new perspectives.

## MEET THE INSTITUTE'S NEW MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA DIRECTOR



Lisa Komlos has joined Concordia's Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies as its new director of marketing and social media.

Lisa received her DEC in the Psychology Profile of the Social Sciences from Dawson College. While at Dawson, she was nominated and

chosen for her high academic performance and leadership qualities to become a member of the Blue Ring Society. Alongside her studies at Dawson, Lisa actively tutored Dawson students in Calculus 1, Calculus 2 and Linear Algebra.

Now an undergraduate student at Concordia, Lisa majors in Women's Studies at the Simone de Beauvoir Institute and was named a Faculty of Arts and Science Scholar for

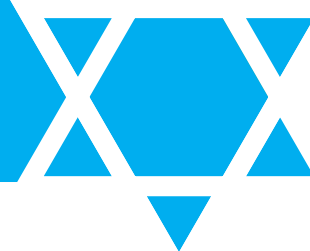
the 2018-19 academic year. In recognition of this superior achievement, Lisa's name will appear on the Faculty's Dean's List and a Scholars mention will be placed on her transcript.

Lisa is also pursuing a Minor in Israel Studies (and took part in our month-long summer program in Israel). She is also a member of the Concordia Emergency Response Team.

Lisa studied American Sign Language and received three certificates from the MAB-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre alongside her studies at Concordia.

When Lisa is not studying or writing papers for school, she spends her time writing songs, lyrics, poems, op-eds, personal pieces, short stories and even writing contracts for the music she creates. She has recorded some of her original songs in studios in Montreal and Los Angeles.

You can reach her at [lisa.komlos@mail.concordia.ca](mailto:lisa.komlos@mail.concordia.ca)



## A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE

*The opportunity to travel to Israel and partake in this course has changed my life. As an undergraduate student of anthropology and sociology, I have had few chances to conduct field work, especially abroad. I now have lived in Israel and experienced its beauty. I was given a chance not only to learn theoretically, but to immerse myself in Israeli culture through food, music, theatre, personal narratives, museums, scenic views, participation and observation.*

*I would recommend this life-changing course to everyone. What an amazing opportunity it was to implement participation observation and live among Israelis. The course not only taught me about Israel's cultural richness but the diversity of its*

*people's religions and ethnicities, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Baha'i, the Jewish diaspora, Bedouins, Armenians and Druze. I also learned that many Israelis speak at least three languages or more.*

*My highlight was drinking tea in a Bedouin tent and, from a personal narrative, learning the reality of Bedouin concerns and changes in lifestyle. I also appreciated the opportunity to spin wool for the first time.*

*I was welcomed and embraced by the locals, I made friends and fell in love with Israel. I did not want to leave and will certainly return.*

– Alicia Maxwell, BA, Specialization in Anthropology and Sociology

## TO BE THERE IS BOTH SURREAL AND EXCITING

*Living for a whole month in Israel, a land that is so important for me but that felt so foreign at the same time, was a life-changing experience.*

*As a student in Communication Studies, the trip gave me the opportunity to meet people from all kinds of religious and ethnic backgrounds and to really explore the country. We went to the desert and visited a kibbutz. We saw the fortress of Masada and the Dead Sea. We visited all kinds of religious temples and landmarks. It was simply amazing.*

*To be where the events we were studying actually took place was both surreal and exciting. All that, and the fact that Professor Csaba Nikolenyi is one of the best professors I've had, made this class very special.*

*If you are interested in history, religion, politics or cultural studies, then this class is a must! Regardless of your religious or political views, it is absolutely worth it to go and soak in as much knowledge as you can.*

– Clarisa Mendoza, BA, Specialization in Communication Studies

## AN INFORMATIVE AND STIMULATING TRIP

*Visiting Israel for the first time, I was surprised at how open and diverse the society is and really more complicated and tangled than what I expected.*

*Despite all that, the country still manages to function and have a good economy. I am very grateful for the ways Professor Nikolenyi invested a lot of his energy and care into our group.*

*I really enjoyed visiting the Bedouin village and the kibbutz; they were my two favourites because they seemed to be completely new universes with their own social structures.*

*I would describe the summer course in Jerusalem as truly enriching. I've learned so much and I am now more familiar with a part of the world that was completely unknown to me. I appreciated being in Jerusalem because you can feel the politics everywhere. Also, the field-school format worked perfectly; it is easier for me to assimilate information when I am out of the classroom.*

*I am a student in the Languages Department and I found the trip informative and stimulating intellectually because Professor Nikolenyi encouraged us to question and look for answers, in relation to our classes.*

*Israel is a very interesting piece of land that has a lot to offer and that is overly concentrated on politics — which I loved. I would recommend this trip; it is totally worth it, but be prepared to work. This was a complete overview of Israel, with its different issues, communities and societies, thanks to Professor Nikolenyi. We really had diverse points of view on what is Israel and the professor was very encouraging in answering all our questions.*

– Élisabeth B. Lavoie, BA, Spanish (Minor, Modern Chinese)

# KAFKA'S LAST TRIAL



**T**he Azrieli Institute hosted writer and translator Benjamin Balint for a guest lecture last spring in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut Montreal and the Jewish Public Library. Balint's book, *Kafka's Last Trial: The Case of a Literary Legacy*, begins with writer Franz Kafka's last instruction to his closest friend, Max Brod: to destroy all his remaining papers upon his death. But when the moment arrived in 1924, Brod could not bring himself to burn the unpublished works of the man he considered a literary genius. Instead, Brod devoted his life to championing Kafka's writing, rescuing his legacy from obscurity and physical destruction.

The story of Kafka's posthumous life is itself Kafkaesque. By the time of Brod's own death in Tel Aviv in 1968, he had edited and published Kafka's major works. Yet Brod left a wealth of Kafka's papers to his secretary, Esther Hoffe, who sold some, and wished to bequeath the rest to her daughters. An international legal battle — brimming with dilemmas legal, ethical and political — would determine which country could claim ownership of Kafka's work: Israel, where Kafka dreamed of living but never entered, or Germany, where Kafka's three sisters perished in the Holocaust? *Kafka's Last Trial* tells the story of two countries whose national obsessions with overcoming the traumas of the past came to a head over the rights to claim the literary legacy of one of our modern masters.

**Kafka was a German-speaking Prague Jew, subject of the Habsburg monarchy and later citizen of Czechoslovakia. Unlike his friend Max Brod, he never moved to Israel. On what grounds should his manuscripts be kept in Israel?**

**Benjamin Balint:** Dora Diamant said she and Kafka 'constantly played with the idea of leaving Berlin and immigrating to Palestine to begin a new life.' The couple fancifully imagined opening a Jewish restaurant in Tel Aviv; Dora would cook and Kafka would serve as the waiter. (In leafing through Kafka's handwritten Hebrew vocabulary notebook from 1923, I noticed that he lists the Hebrew word for waiter — 'meltzar.') But of course Kafka allowed himself to imagine moving to Palestine only when his illness was so far advanced as to make the move impossible.

Still, I think a good claim could be made that by providing him refuge from what Brod called 'the bestialization of politics' that was engulfing Europe, Zionism saved his life — and by extension the Kafka manuscripts he rescued from Prague to Palestine in March 1939.

On a deeper level, the trial also made clear that Jerusalem sees itself as the rightful heir and home to the cultural products of the Jewish Diaspora; in the eyes of its courts and its National Library, at least, Israel has begun to see itself as the ending or culmination of a story that began elsewhere.

**Why did Max Brod leave Kafka's manuscripts to Ester Hoffe?**

**BB:** In 1942, Max Brod met Ilse Esther and Otto Hoffe, fellow refugees who, like him, came to Palestine from Prague. It was at Brod's suggestion that Ilse Hoffe took the Hebrew name Esther, and it was at his urging that Esther agreed to help him transcribe and organize the papers he had rescued from their hometown in his suitcase. He sensed that she could understand how the manuscripts served as the slackened cord that threaded together his present to the bygone world of his own former life.

In his memoir, Brod calls Esther 'my creative partner, my most stringent critic, my help-mate and ally,' to whom he felt 'infinitely indebted.' To his friend Shin Shalom, Brod remarked that Esther had burst into his life 'like a rescuing angel.'

Kafka's manuscripts, which so vitally linked Brod to his former heyday in Prague, now began to link Brod with Esther — the currency of their relationship. Esther received no regular salary for her years of work with Brod. Instead, Brod gave his literary estate — including the Kafka manuscripts — to Esther.

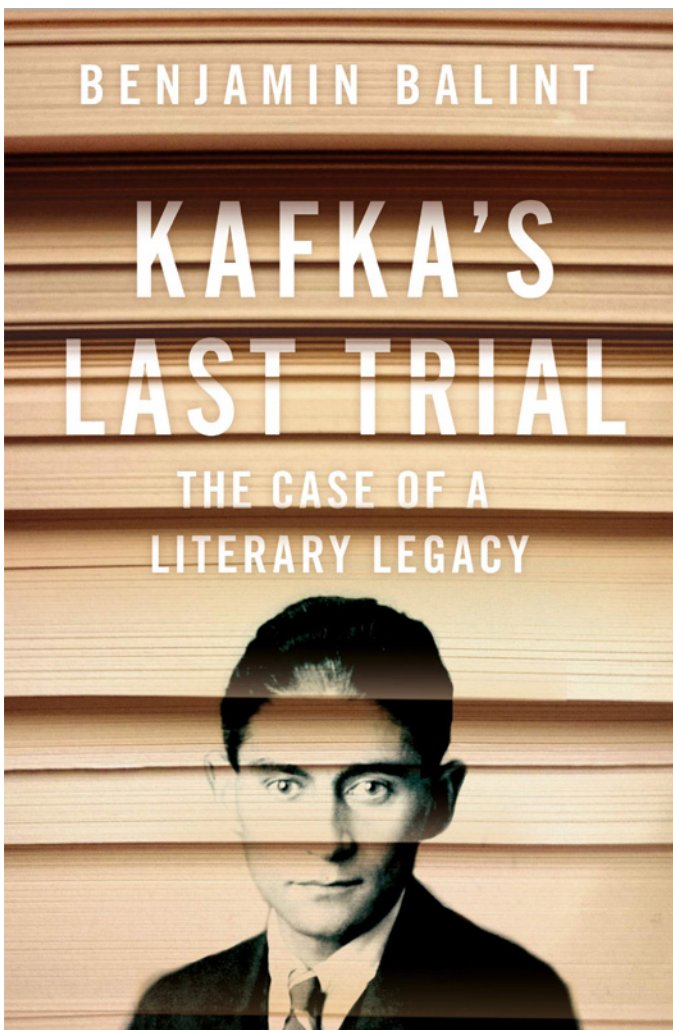


**Do Israelis appreciate Max Brod today? How much do they know about him and his oeuvre?**

During his lifetime, Brod expressed a deep need to be understood in Israel. In a 1964 interview for the Israeli newspaper *Maariv* on the occasion of his 80th birthday, Brod was asked about his plans.

‘Plans? What plans can a man of 80 entertain? I dream that my autobiography, which has already appeared throughout the world, will be translated into Hebrew as well. That is my great dream. I so wish that Israeli youth would get to know me a bit more!’

Now that Brod’s estate has been transferred to the National Library in Jerusalem, which has pledged to digitize its most important parts, I hope that 50 years after his death Brod’s dream will at last be fulfilled, and that his writings and his valuable contributions to Israel’s national theatre during his work at Habima will become more widely known in this country.



**What is your own opinion? Where does Kafka’s legacy belong?**

Judges have to make a decision of ownership, one way or another. I tried to look at the question of belonging through a cultural lens rather than a legal/national lens; in other words, to use the trial to open up the larger questions of who owns art or has a right to claim guardianship of it.

In the book, I quote Joseph Brodsky’s 1987 Nobel lecture to that effect: ‘The revulsion, irony, or indifference often expressed by literature towards the state is essentially a reaction of the permanent — better yet, the infinite — against the temporary, against the finite.’

If the trial in Israel represents the apprehensive counter-reaction of the finite (national/state interests) against the infinite (literature), it seems apt that the German word for trial, *Prozess*, suggests something in open-ended progress. In my view, the judges in Jerusalem may have reached their verdict, but the symbolic trial over Kafka’s legacy and Kafka’s belonging has yet to adjourn.

**What would Kafka have thought of all this?**

I think Kafka would have been amused and entertained by the ironies in this case, for example by the fact that this trial laid bare a possessiveness over the artistic legacy of the least possessive of men. As Reiner Stach writes of Kafka: ‘There is not a single known episode in his life in which he displayed possessiveness.’ So I imagine Kafka would have been entertained, at least, by the spectacle of those who today take a proprietary attitude toward a writer so bound up in the refusal to belong.

Kafka himself, in a letter to his fiancée Felice Bauer, seems to have had a premonition of the contradictory ways he would be claimed. He contrasts two recent articles about his work, one of them by Max Brod:

‘Won’t you tell me what I really am? In the last *Neue Rundschau* the writer says: “There is something fundamentally German about K’s narrative art.”’

In Max’s article on the other hand: ‘K’s stories are among the most typically Jewish documents of our time.’

‘A difficult case,’ Kafka concludes. ‘Am I a circus rider on two horses? Alas, I am no rider, but lie prostrate on the ground.’

# AZRIELI INSTITUTE HAS STRONG PRESENCE AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES



The 35th Annual Conference of the Association for Israel Studies was well represented by the Azrieli Institute

Faculty members from the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies continued the tradition of presenting their latest research results at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Israel Studies.

This year's conference took place at Kinneret College in Israel on June 24-26, 2019, and was attended by more than 400 delegates.

Meir Amor (Department of Sociology and Anthropology) presented a paper — “*Ashkenaziyut* and *Mizrahiyut* as Sabras: Emergent Israeli Ethnic Identities” — as part of a panel entitled “Mizrahi Identity Reconsidered: Allocation, Representation, and New Voices.” In addition, Amor chaired a panel on “Identities in Hebrew and Israeli Theatre.”

Ira Robinson (Department of Religions and Cultures) participated in a panel on the “Jewish, Arab and British Presence in Northern Mandate Palestine” with his paper “Zionists, Scholars, and the Kinneret: The 1935 Maimonides Celebration in Tiberias.”

Csaba Nikolenyi (Department of Political Science and Director of the Azrieli Institute) convened and chaired a panel on “Israeli Political Institutions: Political parties, the Knesset and the Presidency,” where he presented his paper on “Partisan Dynamics and the Election of the Israeli President.” He also chaired “Roundtable: Israel at the Polls, 2019: Perspectives on the 21st Knesset Election.”

The Annual General Meeting of the Association elected Nikolenyi to its Board of Directors. Prior to the meeting, Nikolenyi was also invited to join the Editorial Advisory Board of Israel Studies.

The European Association for Israel Studies held its annual meeting at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. The Institute was represented by Nikolenyi, who presented a paper, “Party Switching and Limits of Political Entrepreneurship in the Israeli Party System: The New Right in the 2019 Knesset Election.” The paper was part of a multi-year study supported by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies supported Marc des Jardins's (Department of Religions and Cultures) participation in a conference entitled “History Through Rituals,” held at the University of Haifa on July 1-2, 2019.

Des Jardins presented his paper, “Indigenous Gods and Demons and the Nativist Institutionalization of Pantheons Through Rituals.”



## BOOK LAUNCH DRAWS SELL-OUT CROWD

The Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies welcomed Yossi Klein Halevi to the Montreal launch of his recently published book *Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor*. Co-sponsored with Federation CJA, the sold-out event took place on May 28 at the Gelber Conference Centre.

The evening opened with a warm welcome from Federation President David Amiel, who was followed by Rabbi Reuben Poupko. A long-time friend of Halevi, Rabbi Poupko offered a special personal greeting and treated the audience to some humorous details from the many adventures he and the author shared.

The main event was a conversation-style exchange between Halevi and Csaba Nikolenyi, Director of the Azrieli Institute. The two discussed a wide range of topics centred on the timely significance of the key messages Halevi wanted to communicate to readers.



Among other important details, the audience learned that Halevi's book was translated into Arabic and made electronically available free of charge in the Arabic-speaking world in order to encourage conversation between Israel and her neighbours.

Copies of the book were made available for purchase and signing by local bookstore Bibliophile.

## SPECIAL ISSUE OF INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL CULMINATION OF TWO-YEAR RESEARCH COLLABORATION

The publication of a special issue in the international journal *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* marks the culmination of a two-year program of research collaboration between the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies and the Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism located at the Sde Boker campus of Ben-Gurion University.

The collaboration started with the exchange of visiting lecturers and sabbaticant visiting researchers, followed by two research workshops, in Sde Boker and Montreal, respectively.

The special issue is co-edited by the directors of the two centres, Paula Kabalo (Ben-Gurion University) and Csaba Nikolenyi (Concordia University) and includes 13 original research articles by participating scholars.

The contributions include works by the following current and former graduate students, post-doctoral fellows as well as faculty members of the Institute:

- Sigal Barkai, "Neurotic Fantasy: The Third Temple as Metaphor in the Contemporary Israeli Art of Nira Pereg and Yael Bartana"
- Tal-Or Ben-Choreen, "The Emergence of Fine Art Photography in Israel in the 1970s to the 1990s through Pedagogical and Social Links with the United States"
- Andrea Gondos, "Isaiah Tishby, Új Kelet (New East), and the Cultural Mediation of Zionism in Transylvania (1920-1930)"
- Csaba Nikolenyi, "Party Switching in Israel: Understanding the Split of the Labor Party in 2011"
- Ira Robinson, "A Life to Remember: Yehuda Even Shmuel's Memorialization of His Son, Shmuel Asher Kaufman and the Crisis of his Zionist Vision" <sup>1</sup>
- Judith Weisz Woodsworth, "A Language for Israel: the Role of Translation in Building the Resources of Hebrew"

<sup>1</sup> My thanks to Professor Aviva Halamish who read and commented on an earlier version of this article

## AZRIELI INSTITUTE OF ISRAEL STUDIES POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

When it was time to choose her PhD topic, Angy Cohen was inspired by her background in psychology and her own family's experiences with immigration.

"One of the things that used to interest me as a psychologist was identity processes and life stories," Cohen says. "How people tell the story of how they ended up being the way they are, identifying with the things they identify with and the impact of those things on their own experiences."

Cohen, a researcher on the immigration experiences of Spanish-Moroccan Jews to Israel and Argentina, is the 2019-20 Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies postdoctoral fellow.

Born and raised in Madrid, Cohen moved to Israel in 2014. She has a BA in Psychology and a master's in Philosophy. She received her PhD in 2017 in a joint PhD program with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Universidad Autónoma of Madrid.



Her doctoral dissertation was a comparative ethnographic study of the relationship between memory and identity among Spanish-Moroccan Jews who emigrated to Israel and Argentina.

"I decided to compare the two different experiences of immigrants and the impact these varying experiences have on these peoples' sense of self and autobiographical memories," she says. "I was interested in the story of my own family and I was trying to understand my own identity process as a Spaniard, but also as a descendant of Moroccan Jews."

After completing her PhD, Cohen received a postdoctoral fellowship at Tel Aviv University, where she began to examine second-generation Mizrahi activism. She did an ethnography of the beit midrash, a hall for women in Jerusalem where the study of Sephardi and Mizrahi texts takes place, and plans to build on this work at the Azrieli Institute.

"I thought the Institute would be a very appropriate match for my project — a project about Israeli society and the struggles within the Jewish society of Israel," she explains.

Cohen has other projects lined up which will keep her busy during her stay at the Institute. The main project is the publication of her PhD dissertation into a book. Cohen also plans to publish the theoretical framework she developed while working on her dissertation in order to help her study the identity processes of those she interviewed.

"I'm having a great time. I really like what I'm doing," she says of her experience at the Institute so far. "I've met very interesting researchers and I feel very, very blessed to have so much autonomy and time to do my research."

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENT LEARNS ABOUT ISRAELI ELECTORAL PROCESS

The Azrieli Institute teamed up with the Adath Yisrael congregation to have Institute Director Csaba Nikolenyi deliver a four-part public lecture series about the Israeli electoral process in the winter of 2019.

Supported by a generous donation from Brenda and Sam Gewurtz, the four lectures examined the historical development of the Israeli electoral and party systems and ended with an in-depth analysis of the 2019 Israeli election campaign.

Building on this successful collaboration, Nikolenyi was invited to deliver a new series of lectures about the history of the office of the Israeli presidency in the fall of 2019.



# MEET YOUR MONTEFIORE AWARD WINNERS

By Molly Hamilton



## Tal-Or K. Ben-Choreen

is pursuing a PhD with a specialization in photography at Concordia's Department of Art History. After graduating with a photography-focused BFA (2012) and MFA (2014) from Ryerson, "it was a natural progression," she says.

Ben-Choreen is investigating patterns in photography education in Canadian, American, and Israeli higher-

education institutions, in order to trace the effects of pedagogical models on the production of art photography and the field at large.

While writing a paper for the symposium, "Faces of Israel at Expo 67," held by the Azrieli Institute in 2017, Ben-Choreen realized that there was little scholarship available on Israeli photography in English.

"I started to build that into my research as I saw a connection between the kind of education system that was developing in the United States and the programs that were developing in Israel," she says. "It was a happy fluke."

After spending last year conducting research in the United States, Ben-Choreen is working on her dissertation. Being awarded the Montefiore Fellowship has been very encouraging for her, especially at this stage of her PhD.

"It's nice to feel that my research is being supported," she says. "It's great to know that someone's actually hearing about it and paying attention."



## Natasha Doyon

is now a PhD candidate in Art Education at Concordia after receiving her BFA from Concordia in 2001 and her MFA and BEd from the University of Ottawa. "The Art Education program is situated within a university that values cross-disciplinary research," she says.

"Concordia has a forward-thinking social sciences approach that bridges the humanities with other disciplines to provide a

fertile and dynamic learning environment."

Interested in the role that art can play in bridging divides between people in areas of conflict, such as Palestine and Israel, Doyon examines the intersection of arts education and social justice to counter the radicalization of youth.

"My research is at the Israel Museum's Youth Wing to work with the project directed by Eldad Shaaltiel with Israeli and Palestinian youth," she explains. "They make art together over a year and use that context for creative collaborative projects."

This past summer, Doyon spent some time in Poland as a recipient of the Auschwitz Jewish Center Fellowship, a program supported by the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York.

"With the rise of nationalism and the whitewashing of history, the fellowship provided an intense opportunity to reflect on the roles of the victim, bystander and perpetrator and how important memorialization is today and for future generations," she says of her experience.

Doyon is an Israeli-Canadian professional artist who has exhibited nationally and internationally. The art educator has won many awards, including most recently the Montefiore Fellowship.

"It's a huge honour to be recognized by my peers," she says. "The fellowship will allow me to add to the canon of exciting new research in the field of international art education and fill a gap in the literature on the innovative peace education programs taking place in Israel."

## ABOUT US

The **Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies** unites students and scholars across disciplines in drawing a bigger picture of Israel, its languages, religions, rich history and evolving culture.

Its researchers aim to advance how society understands the multifaceted Middle Eastern state by sharing knowledge that benefits Montreal, Quebec, Canada and the world.

Founded in 2011, the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies was born thanks to a visionary gift from the Azrieli Foundation to Concordia University. Today, the Institute serves as fertile and neutral ground for stimulating discovery and discussion. For more information, please visit **[concordia.ca/azrieli](http://concordia.ca/azrieli)**.

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## SECURING A BRIGHT FUTURE

A contribution to the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies is a gift toward education and research.  
Help us advance knowledge on the State of Israel by giving to Concordia.

To support the Azrieli Institute of Israel Studies, please contact our development staff:

Faculty of Arts and Science  
Advancement and Alumni Relations  
Phone: 514-848-2424, ext. 4379



Azrieli Institute  
of Israel Studies



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- Concordia's 9 Strategic Directions are bold, daring, innovative and transformative: **[concordia.ca/directions](http://concordia.ca/directions)**.
- Learn how Concordia's most ambitious campaign to date will empower tomorrow's leaders: **[concordia.ca/campaign](http://concordia.ca/campaign)**.
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Designer: Stephen Pan. Proofreader: Ian Harrison.