

First Comprehensive Exhibition of Costumes from The Israel Museum's Unparalleled Collection Opens at the Jewish Museum on November 3, 2017

New York, NY, July 6, 2017 – The first comprehensive U.S. exhibition drawn from The Israel Museum's world-renowned collection of Jewish costumes opens at the Jewish Museum on November 3, 2017, and remains on view through March 18, 2018. *Veiled Meanings: Fashioning Jewish Dress, from the Collection of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem* showcases over 100 articles of clothing from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, arranged as complete ensembles or shown as stand-alone items. A sumptuous array of apparel from over 20 countries on four continents offers an exceptional opportunity for American audiences to view many facets of Jewish identity and culture through rarely seen garments. The exhibition is organized by The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

The extraordinary range of textile designs and clothing in the exhibition illuminates the story of how diverse global cultures have thrived, interacted, and inspired each other for centuries. Jewish communities from Afghanistan, Algeria, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Georgia, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan, Israel, Italy, Libya, Morocco, Poland, Romania, Tunisia, Turkey, the United States, Uzbekistan, and Yemen are represented. Showcasing color, texture, function, artistry, and craftsmanship, the exhibition also offers an incisive and compelling examination of diversity and migration through the lens of fashion.

The Jewish Museum's presentation will focus on how clothes balance the personal with the social, how dress traditions distinguish different Jewish communities, and how they portray Jewish and secular affiliations within a larger societal context. Historical, geographic, social, and symbolic interpretation will be included within the context of four thematic sections: "Through the Veil," "Interweaving Cultures," "Exposing the Unseen," and "Clothing that Remembers."

The first section, "Through the Veil," focuses on veils and wraps worn by Jewish women in Central Asia, revealing the influence of local Islamic culture on Jewish dress. Conversely, wraps worn by Jewish women inspired the adoption of new traditions; for example, the *chader* worn in Mashhad, Iran, was brought by Jews to Afghanistan.

"Interweaving Cultures" broadly examines the migration of Jewish communities and the effects of acculturation. The section uncovers multicultural influences on motifs, styles, and dress-making techniques, as well as changes brought about by modernization. The ensembles displayed trace the melding of global dress customs and illustrate how clothing from distant locations and cultures influenced Jewish fashion, frequently resulting in innovative and often eclectic creations. The exhibition features a brocaded silk sari worn by a bride in India's mid-twentieth century Bene Israel community. Under European influence, white saris were preferred to the red ones traditionally worn by non-Jewish brides. Also highlighted is a deep purple silk, velvet, and cotton outfit from the early twentieth century that incorporates elements from the Parisian ballet into the attire of a Jewish woman from Mashhad: the skirt is short and flared like a ballet skirt, but matching pants ensure modesty.

“Exposing the Unseen,” the largest section in the exhibition, magnifies the fine and often hidden details of clothing, the many layers and extraordinary craftsmanship that comprise an ensemble, and the symbolic embellishments that define a garment’s purpose. Visitors will be able to view the lavish ikat lining of a Bukharan coat; the metallic embroidery on a jacket from Persia; the undergarments of a trousseau from Rome; and men’s sashes from Morocco and Iraqi Kurdistan. Also examined is the tension between the desire to reveal and the dictum to conceal – evident in aprons and bodices worn by women to cover specific areas of the body. Paradoxically, these often elaborately crafted modesty garments drew attention to the physical attributes they were intended to obscure.

Articles of clothing used in tribute are included in the final section, “Clothing that Remembers.” Garments often serve to perpetuate the memory of the dead – at times after being repurposed or redesigned to fulfill this new role – as in the transformation of lavishly embroidered Ottoman Empire bridal dresses into commemorative Torah ark curtains.

Veiled Meanings: Fashioning Jewish Dress, from the Collection of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem is organized by The Israel Museum, Jerusalem. The Israel Museum’s curatorial team includes Curator in Charge, Daisy Raccach-Djivre; Exhibition Curator, Efrat Assaf-Shapira; and Scientific Advisors, No’am Bar’am Ben-Yossef and Esther Juhasz. Claudia Nahson, Morris & Eva Feld Curator at the Jewish Museum, is Supervising Curator for the New York presentation. The exhibition has been designed by Leslie Gill Architect. The exhibition graphics were designed by Topos Graphics.

Support

Veiled Meanings: Fashioning Jewish Dress, from the Collection of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem is made possible by The Coby Foundation, Ltd., Barbara and Richard Lane, the Peter Jay Sharp Exhibition Fund, the Joan Rosenbaum Exhibition Fund, and the Alfred J. Grunebaum & Ruth Grunebaum Sondheimer Memorial Fund.

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: \$15.00 for adults, \$12.00 for senior citizens, \$7.50 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.
Information: The public may call 212.423.3200 or visit thejewishmuseum.org



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Press contacts:

The Jewish Museum:

Anne Scher, 212.423.3271 or ascher@thejm.org

Daniela Stigh, 212.423.3330 or dstigh@thejm.org

General inquiries: pressoffice@thejm.org

