



DWELLING



IN A TIME OF PLAGUES

SUKKOT — *2020*

PASSOVER — *2021*

WHAT *Plagues* YOU?

WHAT *Liberates* YOU?

WELCOME, AND THANK YOU FOR **DWELLING** WITH US.

Dwelling comes to you at a time when we know of **plagues** all too well. It comes as the Jewish people prepare their homes for an annual ritual during which we actively recount the bitterness of enslavement... of **plagues** brought upon our oppressors... of the sweetness of **liberation**, and of Spring.

In this booklet, you will find images and words that capture the crises of our times, as well as visions for hope that can free us from those things that enslave us. It is designed with two goals in mind:

1. To share with you a Jewish creative response to contemporary **plagues**.
2. To encourage you to craft your own response and share it with us.

What **plagues** you?
What **liberates** you?

We have dedicated the opposite page for your answers. Keep them to yourself, or share them with us and others here: share@plaguedwelling.com or online using #PlagueDwelling.

We invite you to **dwelling** upon these pages on your own, at your seder table, or at any table where you may find yourself reclining with others.

For now, *zayt mir ale shtark un gezunt* — stay strong and healthy!

Lou

Lou Cove
Founder
CANVAS

DWELLING IN A TIME OF PLAGUES...

...is a Jewish creative response to real-world plagues of our time.

Coinciding with the holiday of Passover, during which we remember the 10 Plagues visited upon the Egyptians, the works for *Dwelling in a Time of Plagues* reinterpret the themes of Passover in response to our times and our unique partners. New works generated by Jewish artists and creatives include outdoor sculptures, murals, essays, audio pieces, videos and digital art experiences online, with literary contributions presented in partnership with Jewish Book Council. Each piece responds to its medium and host community specifically, and to our collective plight as Jews and as human beings.

We invite you to dwell with us in these physical and virtual pieces for our times.



Nº 1
COVID



in the absence of a proper mourning

TAL BEERY

JEWISH MUSEUM OF MARYLAND (BALTIMORE)

IT HAS BEEN A TERRIBLE YEAR FOR GOODBYES: final FaceTime calls with loved ones in the hospital; no hugs at the graveside funeral; memorial services over Zoom. The mourning rituals we rely on for comfort and support as we grieve are not possible right now. The loss and isolation so many of us are feeling is immense.

a proper mourning is an outdoor installation and online space to gather testimonials from Maryland residents who have had to say goodbye or memorialize their loved ones under conditions of social distancing. Beery asks us to confront numerous difficult questions related to

our connections to one another and transforms the Jewish Museum of Maryland's public-facing facade into a site for collective mourning and communal care.

PRODUCED BY LABA: A LABORATORY FOR JEWISH CULTURE

“Freedom From Sharing Our Covid-19 Grief Stories”

REBECCA SOFFER

WE HAVE BEEN IN RELATIVE ISOLATION FOR A FULL CALENDAR YEAR. An entire year of pain, readjustment, fear, confusion, stress, trauma. A year of collective sorrow and loss: loss of employment, identity, childcare, education, dating opportunities, perceived control over our present day and also over our futures.

And, of course, a year of enormous loss of life. More than half a million souls have died in the United States alone, sparking a grief pandemic suffered by *at least five million grievors* from Covid-19 deaths alone (a theory called the bereavement multiplier suggests that for every death from this virus, an average of nine people are directly affected by long-lasting emotional, health and financial consequences). Many of whom had to say their goodbyes through screens—if any were able to be said at all.

The isolation foisted upon grievors during the Covid-19 pandemic has held them prisoner in many ways. Go-to in-person mourning rites and rituals have nearly ground to a halt. Sitting in a room full of human comfort as mourners begin to navigate the deep well of personal grief has been stolen away. As devastating, also vanished are the ongoing invitations to share narratives during these formal and impromptu gatherings. Stories of life, memory, and, of course, final farewells.

Grief is best processed when it is acknowledged. Everyone has a story, and everyone deserves not only the chance—but also an earnest invitation—to share it. When we feel we have witnesses to our narratives, we often feel our emotional burdens are ever-so-slightly-lighter. Because they are divided up and carried by a community that cares and sees us.

By inviting survivors of Covid-19 victims to share their stories from this unforgiving plague, Tal Beery has stepped in as an integral, intimate witness during one-on-one interviews. By sharing those interviews through a larger installation, he is creating a community that sees and is impacted by these grievors. In that sense, this project has liberated them from the inability to lean on older support structures and created new ways for us to hold each other close.

Nº 2

BINARY THINKING



Both&

BAREKET KEZWER

MILES NADAL JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE (TORONTO)

BAREKET KEZWER'S *Both&* INSPIRES US TO CONSIDER THE PLAGUE OF BINARY THINKING. Passover is a holiday celebrating the duality of freedom and slavery, a time when we intentionally hold the paradox of life—the inseparability and interdependence of seemingly contradictory phenomena. Holding this paradox is not only part of fulfilling the mitzvah of retelling the story of our exodus from Egypt into the land of Israel, but also a lesson that can support us embracing the wholeness of life—especially as we navigate the uncertainty of this global pandemic. Slavery and freedom. Connection and alienation. Division and sol-

idity. Struggle and growth. Beauty and ugliness. Pleasure and pain. Simcha and sorrow. Recognizing that we cannot have one without the other, Bareket's mural invites viewers to explore how we can create space and acceptance by shifting our perspective.

PRODUCED BY ASYLUM ARTS AND HILLEL SMITH,
IN COLLABORATION WITH LABA.

“Makah/Plague of the Binary”

RABBI ABBY STEIN

The Makah of binary gender,
The Plague of forced identities.
The Makah of binary gender roles,
The Plague of sexism and marital status—at home, in leadership, and in unequal pay.
The Makah of binary professional opportunities,
The Plague of class structure, and lack of social mobility.
The Makah of binary sexuality,
The Plague of labeling—even when not needed.
The Makah of binary race,
The Plague of misplaced divisions.
The Makah of non-binary color blindness,
The Plague of the melting pot, instead of diverse inclusion.
The Makah of binary accessibility,
The Plague of erasing nuance in the needs of the body, soul, and spirit.
The Makah of binary immigration status,
The Plague of nationalist walls—of brick and mind—driven by phobia.
The Makah of binary health-care systems,
The Plague of being under- and uninsured, and of insurance tied to work.
The Makah of binary politics,
The Plague of unequal representation for the people.

All these mentioned, and more binaries that were not, are sources of pain to so many of us. Tonight, as we transcend those binaries, we hope for a world of freedom.

Tonight, as we work toward our generational exodus, *b'chol dor v'dor* (in every generation), we know that no one is free till we are all free.

Tonight, we bring in all of humanity, with our differences.

Tonight, we break free, together, towards a nonbinary, inclusive world, where we see all!

Nº 3

HOUSING INSECURITY



“Havtacha” The Promise

MIKE WIRTH

THE STAN GREENSPON CENTER FOR PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
AT QUEENS UNIVERSITY (CHARLOTTE)

SINCE THE PANDEMIC HIT, MANY SHELTERS IN CHARLOTTE, N.C., HAVE HAD TO CLOSE. This has forced hundreds of individuals and families to the streets and into a makeshift tent city that runs adjacent to a central highway. Many of these people have endured months of freezing temperatures and winter weather. A concerted effort is underway to assist these people, but still many in the community are unaware or choose to ignore the growing problem, and Mike’s mural is intended to raise awareness of this crisis. The piece is built around the concept of “a promise,” which is at the heart of virtually every system of faith.

Spiritual, financial, societal, and interpersonal. The project highlights the struggle that these individuals face on a daily basis brought on the pandemic and other systematic plagues that befall the Queen City.

PRODUCED BY ASYLUM ARTS AND HILLEL SMITH,
IN COLLABORATION WITH LABA.

“Plague of Housing Insecurity”

RABBI DR. SHMULY YANKLOWITZ

A PLAGUE IS A FORCE SO ROBUST THAT ONE CANNOT HIDE FROM OR ESCAPE IT. This is the brutally harsh reality of housing insecurity and homelessness in America today. Having served as a Rabbi in homeless camps on many occasions, I have seen firsthand what deep despair can look like: indeed, a modern plague. A plague that crushes the spirits of anywhere between half a million to one and a half million people in America each year.

Jews are morally mandated to feed and tend to the most vulnerable in our midst. In the *Shulchan Aruch*, Joseph Karo writes: “If someone comes and says, ‘feed me,’ you don’t check him to see if he is an imposter, but you feed him right away” (*Laws of Tzedakah* YD 251:10).

In the Torah, a society that punishes those who feed the homeless is analogous to Sodom, a city that was riddled with moral perversion. Not only are we encouraged to engage in hospitality and acts of kindness; we are warned that there will be collective consequences for those who mistreat the downtrodden (*Sanhedrin* 109b). The citizens of Sodom not only avoided welcoming guests, and abused them, but also punished those who helped others. “They issued a proclamation in Sodom saying: ‘Everyone who strengthens the hand of the poor and the needy with a loaf of bread shall be burnt by fire!’” (*Pirke DeRabbi Eliezer* 25). How can we ensure that America does not resemble Sodom?

This is a life-and-death issue. To ignore it is to absolve ourselves of our sacred responsibility; to wait around for action is to betray the very essence of justice itself. From Henry David Thoreau to Martin Luther King Jr., America has a strong tradition of objecting to and even defying laws that violate core spiritual values. It is not enough to provide meager soup kitchens to which one must travel. Many people without shelter need more, and find themselves so desperate that they are begging in the streets. We must respond compassionately. The Jewish people need to be at the forefront of this call to action.

Nº 4

GRIEF & LOSS



This Place Has a Body

MAYA CIARROCHI

—
14TH STREET Y / ZAZIOTS (NEW YORK CITY)

NEW YORK CITY IS A CITY IN CONSTANT FLUX AND A PLACE OF GHOSTS. We live in apartments that housed countless generations of individuals and families, new buildings rise on top of the foundations of what came before, and long-familiar businesses open and close overnight. Now during the Covid-19 pandemic, this flux is more rapid and the scale of loss so immense we barely have time to comprehend its breadth. Combining decorative details that adorned the walls and ceilings of now-vanished wooden synagogues with her dancing body and the Unicorn, an ancient symbol of

death and rebirth, Maya's mural project and video installation, *This Place Has a Body*, creates new fantastical spaces out of the residue of loss.

PRODUCED BY ASYLUM ARTS AND HILLEL SMITH,
IN COLLABORATION WITH LABA.

“Beyond the Plague of Grief and Loss”

DARIN STRAUSS

IN THE UNBOUND ANTHOLOGY OF THINGS HAPPENING UNDER THE AMERICAN SUN, we live in a chapter that might well be titled *Grief and Loss*.

For many, such gloom would have been—say, five years ago—a surprise. To American Jews, in particular, the approach of danger has for a long time seemed unlikely. Would some transatlantic military (as a wise person put it) “step the Ocean and crush us at a blow?” No. Dangers to this country, said Abe Lincoln (that wise person), do not come from abroad.

And yet, here we are, in *the* trial of at least many decades. Of course, Covid-19 did arrive from elsewhere. But, read today's chapter of loss and you'll see something further. We ourselves—Americans—are its author. Of all the developed world, we failed the most. Cruelty, incompetence, and selfishness. Lies and extremism. These are everywhere. And, of course, it's not *just* the virus that brings us grief and loss. I should say that someone in my extended family died attached to a ventilator; even personally, I still feel the effects (headaches, joint pain) of my luckily mild clash with that spiked microbe. But a further loss I feel is the QAnon cousins with whom I no longer speak; another is the loss of faith in so many of my countrymen. “If danger ever reach us,” said Lincoln, “it must spring up amongst us.”

How do we fortify against it? I don't know if we can. But if there is an answer, and I say this as someone who hasn't stepped foot in a synagogue in a long time, it is faith. Faith in reason. Faith in one another. And faith in the morality—the commitment to kindness and generosity—we find in thinking about G-d. If (as Lincoln would have it) the pillars of the temple of liberty have begun to crumble away, we must supply their places with other pillars, hewn from the quarry of benevolence.

I can only speak for myself, and my own failings. Which remain many. But I have tried more than ever to hear this call.

Nº 5

XENOPHOBIA



Clamor in the Desert

MIRTA KUPFERMINEC

JEWISH HISTORY MUSEUM AND HOLOCAUST HISTORY CENTER (TUCSON)

THE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD DOES NOT STOP STIRRING. Whether emigrants, exiles, expatriates, immigrants, or refugees – all are displaced from their homes and are referenced in this sukkah. The sukkah is an unstable and temporary construction, representing the fragility of human life and at the same time a shelter for anyone who feels forlorn.

Kol Kore Bamidbar are the Hebrew words to say, “That voice that cries out for protection.” The work transforms fence materials into a shelter that welcomes everyone. The same material that is used to build limitation and separation

are used in this habitable installation to build a celebration, a shelter that receives humanity as a whole. Humanity is represented on the walls of the sukkah, as they are filled with printed images of eyes through participatory collective action. Mirrors hanging from the structure will reflect the eyes of visitors, as witnesses.

In the time of our current plague, although our mouths are covered with protective masks; our voices in our eyes continue to claim justice together.

PRODUCED BY LABA: A LABORATORY FOR JEWISH CULTURE

“A Writer’s Report on the Beersheba Bus Station Shooting”

AYELET GUNDAR-GOSHEN (TRANSLATED BY SONDR SILVERSTON)

Haftom Zarhum was twenty-nine years old on the morning he arrived at the central bus station in Beersheba. Four years earlier, he had still been in Eritrea, doing the compulsory, indefinite military service imposed on its citizens. Zarhum fled Eritrea to Israel, crossed the border from Sinai illegally, and found work in a plant nursery. He sent the money he earned to his family, who had remained in Africa. On Sunday, October 18, 2015, he arrived at the central bus station in Beersheba on his way to renew his conditional release visa.

Zarhum didn’t know that Muhannad al-Aqabi had come to the bus station on the same day, armed with a pistol. Al-Aqabi followed a nineteen-year-old soldier, Omri Levy, into the restroom and shot him to death. Then he grabbed the soldier’s automatic rifle and opened fire on the passersby in the station, who ran for their lives. Haftom Zahum was one of them.

But Zarhum wasn’t only an innocent passerby. He was also a Black man. And a foreigner. The security services, seeing him running away, didn’t think twice before shooting him. The innocent young man collapsed onto the bus station floor.

The bullets that entered Haftom Zarhum’s body were only the beginning. A crowd gathered around the fallen man, calling for death to the terrorist, and the lynch began: they kicked him in the head and threw chairs and benches at his body. An Arab who worked in the central bus station testified later that he’d suspected the man being attacked wasn’t a terrorist, but he was afraid to say anything that might cause the angry mob to leave Zarhum and turn on him instead.

Haftom Zarhum was declared dead in the hospital. The bullets had killed him. Two members of the lynch mob were acquitted in court. The immigrant’s foreign appearance had misled them, the lawyers said, had made them think he was a terrorist. But Haftom Zarhum wasn’t a terrorist. He was merely a foreigner. A refugee.

N° 6

FOOD INSECURITY



What Sustains Us

HILLEL SMITH

REPAIR THE WORLD WORKSHOP (BROOKLYN) / JCC (HARLEM)

CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE EXACERBATED THE EXISTING CRISIS OF FOOD INSECURITY IN THIS COUNTRY. Meanwhile, an unexpected consequence of the pandemic has been reconnecting us to how and what we eat as we spend more time at home. In Hillel Smith's paired murals, *What Sustains Us*, he was inspired by the two quotes bracketing the beginning and end of Birkat Hamazon (the traditional prayer said after eating): "*Hazan et hakol*" (thanking God for sustaining everything and everyone) and "*Na'ar Hayiti v'gam zakanti v'lo raiti tzadik ne'ezav*" (I have been old and I

have been young yet I have never watched a righteous person forsaken...) He has designed a language of faces and body parts built out of utensils and food items—spoons, forks, knives, fruits, and veggies—that offer fun and whimsical encouragement to think about all that connects our bodies to what we eat.

PRODUCED BY ASYLUM ARTS AND HILLEL SMITH,
IN COLLABORATION WITH LABA.

"When I Was Ruth"

MICHAEL TWITTY

BEFORE I HAD A NAME ANYONE RECOGNIZED, before I had a book or two James Beard awards, I was penniless and food insecure, and Pesach was coming. The recession hit hard, and I wondered, in shame, how did I get here? How could a big guy, like me, a chef searching for a kitchen, run out of money for food? How did I get here?

I tucked my tail, I went to Jewish Social Services, and in an instant, I was saved from the consequences of not eating and being left without a home. I realized then I was Ruth. Ruth, the marginalized; Ruth, the convert; Ruth at the intersection of so many identities and vulnerabilities and fears. Ruth the gleaner, the forager, the searcher for a life beyond her heartbreaking station.

Food insecurity is a heritage as well as a condition. Over 40 million Americans are currently food insecure. It's living paycheck to paycheck, living in food deserts with little consistent access to adequate food and nutrition; food insecurity haunts the richest nation on earth. Food insecurity isn't just a side effect of the pandemic; it is the consequence of Native removal, the enslavement of Africans, the ghettoization of immigrants, systemic racism and little inflected cruelties on the working poor that make eating, and eating healthy, choices rather than givens. I was not alone; we are a whole nation of Ruths, waiting to glean, waiting for our neighbor to end our dance with this most humiliating of plagues.

*One day we will have parks full of gardens in which to forage fruits and vegetables and herbs...
We will reduce food waste and donate food as a general practice.
We will pay meals forward and send plates to our neighbors again...
We will give until no one needs to glean.*

Nº 7

DARKNESS



Golem v. Golem

JULIE WEITZ

—
VILNA SHUL (BOSTON)

IN 2017, IN RESPONSE TO THE CHARLOTTEVILLE PROTESTS, artist Julie Weitz created her performative project *My Golem*, which centers on her embodiment of the mythical creature drawn from Jewish folklore. A futuristic, highly-stylized figure covered with white mud, she was brought to life to respond to contemporary challenges including climate catastrophe, white supremacy, anti-Semitism and xenophobia. Over the past four years, *My Golem* has evolved from Instagram videos to performances at protests to creative collaborations, taking on a life of her own. *Golem v. Golem* is a new eight-part episodic video series inspired by the Passover story's struggle between tyranny and freedom.

Golem v. Golem is produced in partnership with the Jewish Arts Collaborative. Additional digital partners include the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco, Jewish Museum Milwaukee and the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU. Created, co-directed and co-edited by Julie Weitz, directed and co-edited by D.S. Chun of Rug and Vase alongside director of photography Mustafa Zeno, sound recordist Cameron Gibson, costume designer Jill Spector and musician Nyxe.

PRODUCED BY ASYLUM ARTS

“How Is This Farewell Different from All Other Cisterns”

MORIEL ROTHMAN-ZECHER

And so, we are off into our various little futures. Good morning, Jew, is a terrible way to start any day, still. We are scared to die, to be humiliated, death and shame are yet again our coconspirators: does this make us more or less human in their eyes? We danced when Golem arrived, we danced and sang and plastered our neighbor's baby calf with golden soda, poor thing, all wet and befuddled, its udders not yet formed as we all uttered to one another: may our tomorrow be better than yesterday, omeyn, and yet, believe it or not, it was not. What is a Jew left to do in this country of the future, except keen, lie, wander.

Oh god, oh well.

(Excerpt from *What We Talk About When We Talk About the Golem*)

N° 8
AGEISM



*The Ushpizin of the Silver Screen:
Honoring the Visions & Voices of the Past*

TIFFANY WOOLF

HOLOCAUST MUSEUM (LOS ANGELES)

THIS YEAR, WE ARE ALL LIVING APART...forced to quarantine...many alone, sheltering in place, often with no outlet for deep connection and community. For our elders, there is a loss of voice and in these times, a disappearance. This outdoor installation focused on the Sukkot tradition of the ushpizin: symbolic guests invited into the sukkah...ancestors...friends. The tradition manifests by calling them into the temporary space of the sukkah to honor stories of the past. Traditionally, the ushpizin are called in through photos and drawings displayed in the sukkah—remembered together by its nightly visitors.

In keeping with Los Angeles culture, this sukkah was designed as an old-time Hollywood movie house, with the voices and stories of the ushpizin watched and heard from the outside. While the sukkah remained Covid-empty, it was filled by the once voiceless, with their diverse and cherished Jewish stories and remembrances of the past.

PRODUCED BY REBOOT

“Plague of Ageism”

LETTY COTTIN POGREBIN

I USED TO THINK OLD PEOPLE WERE EITHER CUTE OR SAD.

The cute ones were Kirk Douglas or Ruth Bader Ginsburg doing push-ups, and gray-haired couples animatedly talking to each other or walking hand in hand in the park. The sad ones were stooped, infirm, disheveled, occasionally incoherent, and mostly invisible. I used to laugh when comedians mocked elderly men who still flirt when a pretty girl passes by, and 80-something women who still dress with panache as if they had a prayer of attracting the male gaze. In other words, having absorbed from the world around me its negative stereotypes of “seniors,” and its cultish adoration of youth, I’d succumbed to the plague of ageism.

Since turning 60, then 70, then, incredibly, 80, I’ve cringed at age-related stereotypes and raged not just at the ‘dying of the light’—Dylan Thomas’ immortal phrase for mortality tremors—but at the societal attitudes that dismiss my cohort as over the hill has-beens.

In 2017, America’s seniors totaled more than 46 million, a number expected to nearly double over the next 30 years. Yet children and young people are still being indoctrinated with disparaging images and demeaning mindsets about age and aging.

Jewish tradition, though more balanced, sends mixed messages. On the one hand, our liturgy and sacred texts constantly refer to elders as repositories of wisdom, compassion, experience, and insight. On the other hand, we also encounter descriptions in granular detail of the depredations and burdens of age—dimmed vision, physical weakness, mental confusion—and perplexing paradoxes.

Just as our inherited tradition tries to reconcile these contradictions, so should we tackle the scourge of age-bias. We must assume the best (imputing to older people personal value, continuing capacities, and aspirations), while accommodating to the worst (the inevitable depletions of age) by providing care and kindness until the end of life. Anything less will be a plague on humanity and a *shanda* for our people.

To read the unabridged version of this essay, please visit plaguedwelling.com

Nº 9

RACISM



Shelter In Place

ADAM W. MCKINNEY

OREGON JEWISH MUSEUM AND CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION (PORTLAND)

A BLACK JEWISH RESPONSE TO HISTORIES OF OPPRESSION, *Shelter in Place* is an inquiry into social isolation and the physical and emotional effects of anti-Black racial violence across time and space.

Shelter in Place is made up of several elements, including: contemporary tintypes of McKinney dressed as 1921 Fort Worth, Texas, lynching victim Mr. Fred Rouse at sites associated with the lynching; a mélange of hanging tree branches to reference the deconstruction of a sukkah; and two projected dance films—one of

McKinney performing the story of Mr. Rouse in sites of trauma, and the other a hologram about the intersections of racism and antisemitism in the time of Covid-19.

PRODUCED BY ASYLUM ARTS

“Your Life Too”

MARRA B. GAD

The life that you are living is my life, too
God whispered into my heart when I burst forth
Brown

Beautiful

A Child of Israel

Into a world that screamed and mistook me for a plague
While the real plague
The thick choking fog of hate blankets us
Poisoning

Blinding

Killing our humanity slowly and our bodies quickly

If the life that I am living is your life, too
Then from where does liberation come? I ask
I created each of you as both the question and answer, God replies
When we were slaves in Egypt you controlled the plagues
You started and stopped them
Can you not stop this for us?
I controlled nothing, God weeps
Don't you see?
I cry out to God again and again

From where will liberation come?

Liberation must come from you, God whispers back
I put the answer into each human heart
As eternal as is the question itself
The life that you are living is their life, too

It is my life

And when every one of my creations cries out when you cry
And sings with one human heart
Then the life that you are living will be their life, too
Then will the fog be lifted
Then all will be free

Nº 10

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC



At Our Table

OLIVIA GUTERSON | REBOOT

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART DETROIT

At Our Table is a REIMAGINING OF A PASSOVER TABLE CONSTRUCTED FROM LOCALLY SOURCED, DISCARDED SINGLE-USE PLASTICS, illuminating the concept of convenience, throwaway culture, and environmental responsibility during a holiday centered on the joy and the sacrifices necessary in finding our own personal liberation.

At Our Table is a visual exploration of the Passover table, situated outside during a pandemic, as a platform centering the urgency to generate new meaning in a time of isolation

and reflection. Set on a 20-foot Passover table set for four “social-distancing” observing guests, the installation reimagines the Passover table in this time of limited gathering and innovative observance. We question why we value what we value and what sacrifices can we make to secure a collective future free of plastic pollution.

PRODUCED BY REBOOT

AN EXCERPT FROM “*Over Time*”

SARAH BLAKE

I LEARNED ABOUT THE GREAT PACIFIC GARBAGE PATCH WHEN I WAS 25, when one of my students wrote a research paper about it.

I was a year away from having my son. We were already discussing it, the pregnancy. We spat into plastic tubes to have our DNA tested, to make sure we were not carriers of any genetic disease. As Ashkenazi Jews, we were mostly concerned about Tay-Sachs.

We were sensible people, thoughtful, deciding to bring a child into the world.

*

My son will never know the giant family dinners. He won’t hear the Yiddish in all the conversation around the table.

But he will also never see swastikas all over his house—as I often came across them, my grandfather always reading a nonfiction book about the Holocaust, as if he could figure it out.

*

For over 3,000 years the Jewish people have celebrated Passover.

I think of the time as only 6 plastic bottles, one coming into existence right as the one before it has broken down completely.

I think of it as 3,000 years from now, 30 more passings of 100 years of plastic consumption and waste. The Earth we will inhabit then.

I think of it as an exceptional feat, too—maintaining the seder, the festival, maintaining anything.

I think of it as 150 passings of 20 years. The nuclear family transformed. The extended family transformed. My son, possibly a father himself, 20 years from now.

SUPPORT OUR ARTISTS

The **PLAGUE** that is Covid-19 has hit our economy hard. Everyone has felt this pain. But of all sectors in the nonprofit world, the arts have paid with the highest losses: [36% of all arts jobs... gone.](#)

This isn't an "arts crisis".

This is a humanitarian crisis.

This is a community crisis.

If you've looked to a film or a song or a book or a painting or a performance in the past 12 months to help you process this **PLAGUE** or pretend that it doesn't exist for a few minutes, then you've depended on an artist to help you.

They are depending on you now.

If you have longed for the **LIBERATION** to attend a concert, a play, or a museum opening, then you know how much we have lost to the **PLAGUE** of social distancing. But imagine how much these artists have lost, because you are not the only one who isn't attending. No one is. The coffers are empty. There is no applause.

This is not the time to wonder whether arts and culture matter.

This is the time to act.

Make a donation [now](#) to the **CANVAS FUND FOR CREATION**

Every dollar you contribute to the will go directly to artists economically impacted by Covid-19.

Visit [BYCANVAS.ORG/DONATE](https://bycanvas.org/donate)

With thanks in advance,
CANVAS

READ THE BIOS FOR ALL ARTISTS AND AUTHORS ON [PLAGUEDWELLING.COM](https://plaguedwelling.com)

PARTNERS



NETWORKS



SUPPORT

