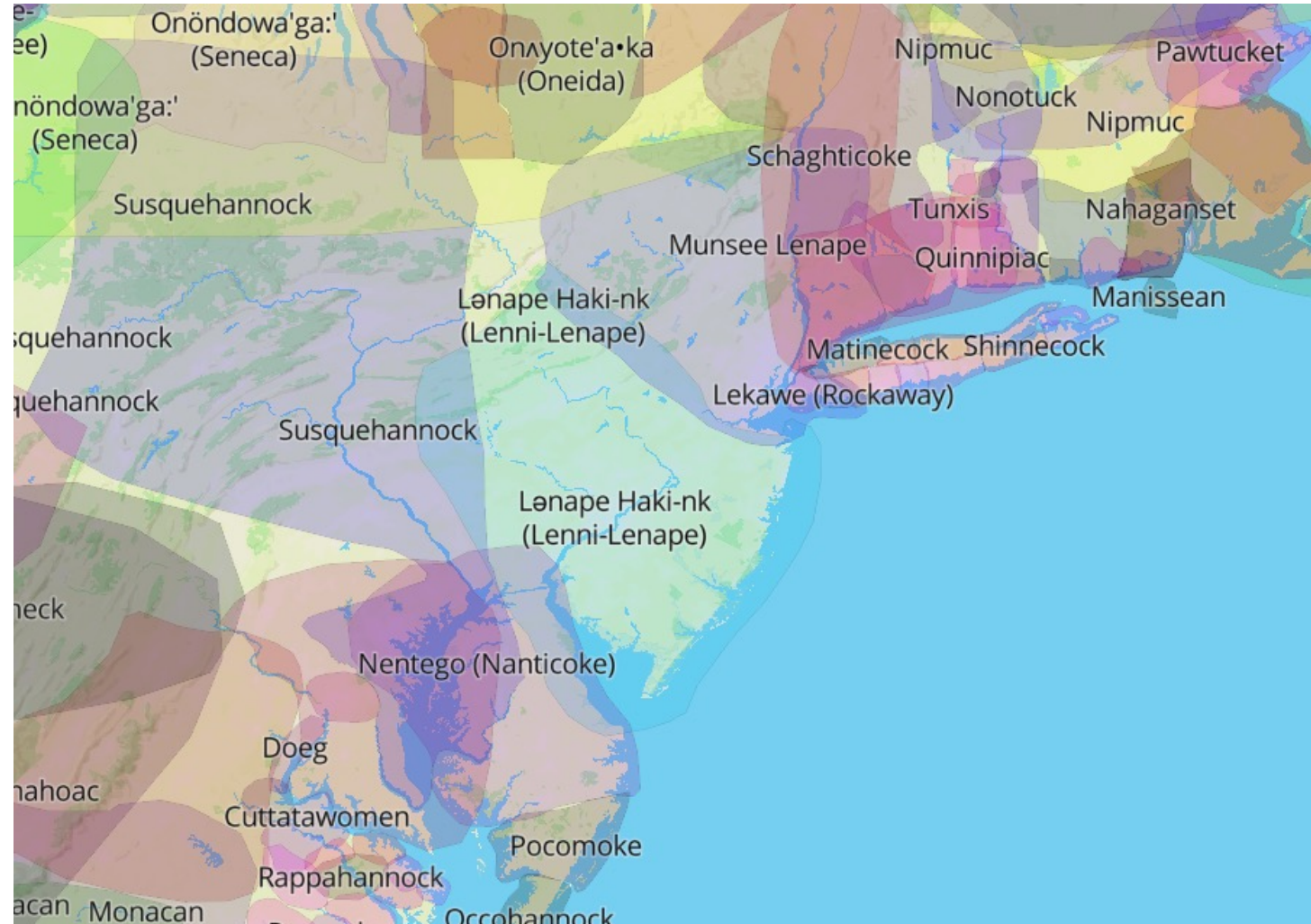




• Preserving Judaica:
FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

Margalit Schindler (*they/them*)
Preventive Conservation Graduate Fellow
Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation
margalit@udel.edu

Land Acknowledgement

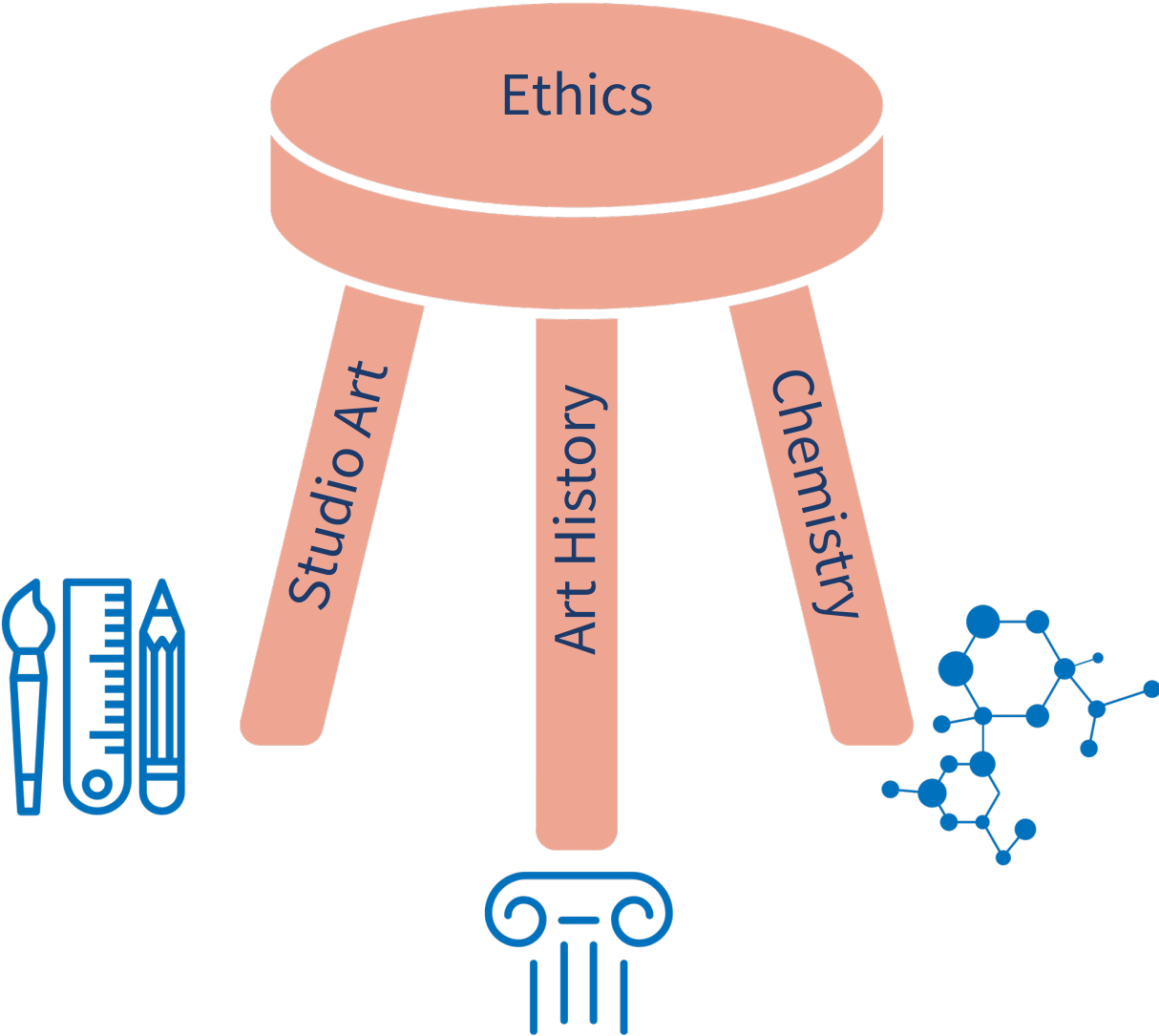


Map showing traditional indigenous territories on what is now called Delaware.
<https://www.native-land.ca/>



Ruth and David Levine, September, 1958

What is Conservation?



What is Conservation?



Man dressed as old woman throws cake at *Mona Lisa* as climate change protest. www.bbc.com



Kim Kardashian wears historic Marilyn Monroe dress to 2022 Met Gala. www.nypost.com

Plate 8 of Samarkand, c. 1914. E.A. Seguy (French), Stencil (pochoir) on wove paper



Before Treatment



After Treatment

Plate 8 of Samarkand, c. 1914. E.A. Seguy (French), Stencil (*pochoir*) on wove paper



Before

During

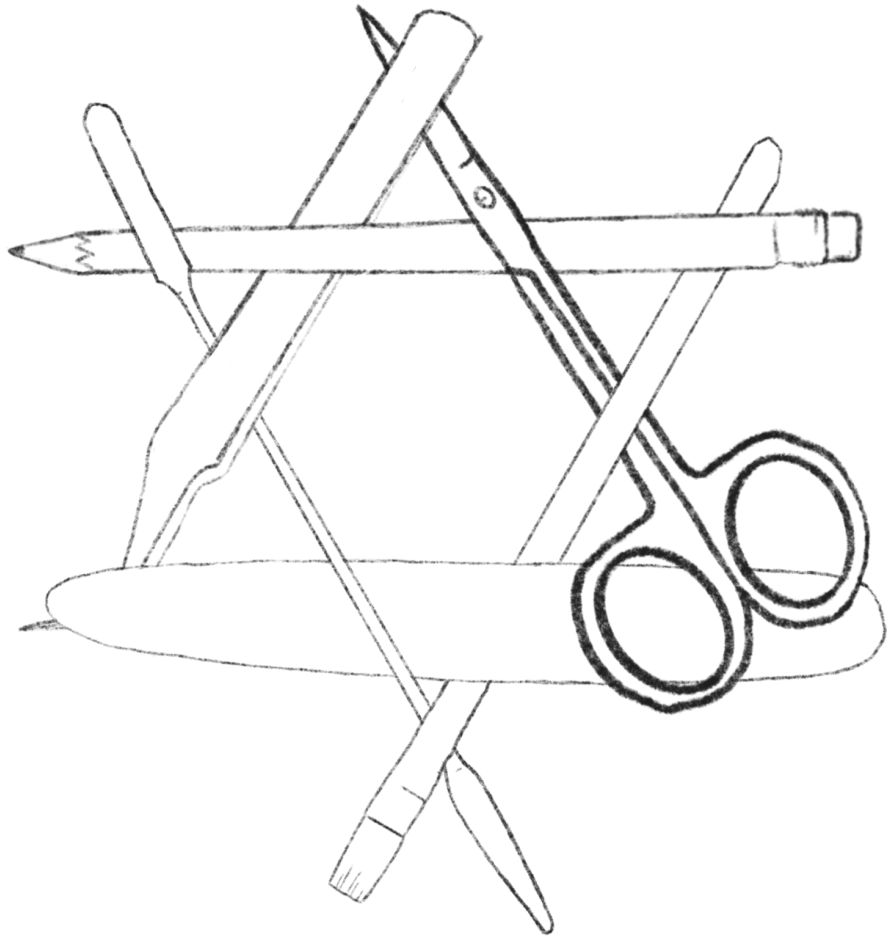
After



Mezzuzah



From Generation to Generation



לדור ודור

L'dor v'dor

Jewish Life and Ritual



Photo and art from Margalit's first day of first grade, September 1999



Margalit and family at Ilan's Bar Mitzvah, October 2012

Art and Materials



Margalit making art, 1996

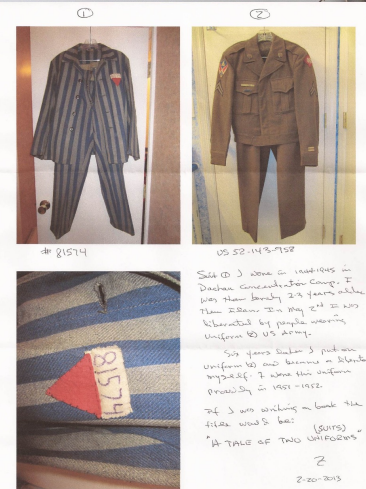


Margalit making art, 2008

Jewish Life and Ritual – The College Years



Reading Torah for a B'nai Mitzvah at the Western Wall, 2013



Metalsmithing artwork made using family artifacts, 2012

Pre-Program Apprenticeships



Annual maintenance of Rodin's *Thinker*



Maintenance for Yayoi Kusama: *Infinity Mirrors*



Reattaching lost ear of Japanese paper mache tiger

Jewish Material Culture



Mezzuzah, Plastic, paint, parchment, ink



Source: www.MyJewishLearning.com

Seder Plate, Stamped metal with surface patina



Source: www.MyJewishLearning.com

Shofar, Horn
Siddur, Bound volume of printed paper



Mahzor, Illuminated manuscript on parchment

Survey Results

Who is responsible for collections care?

Curator
Archivist
Director of Collections and Exhibitions
Director of Congregational Operations
Collections Manager
Executive Director
Director, Libraries and Media Center
Director/Curator



8

Different Titles

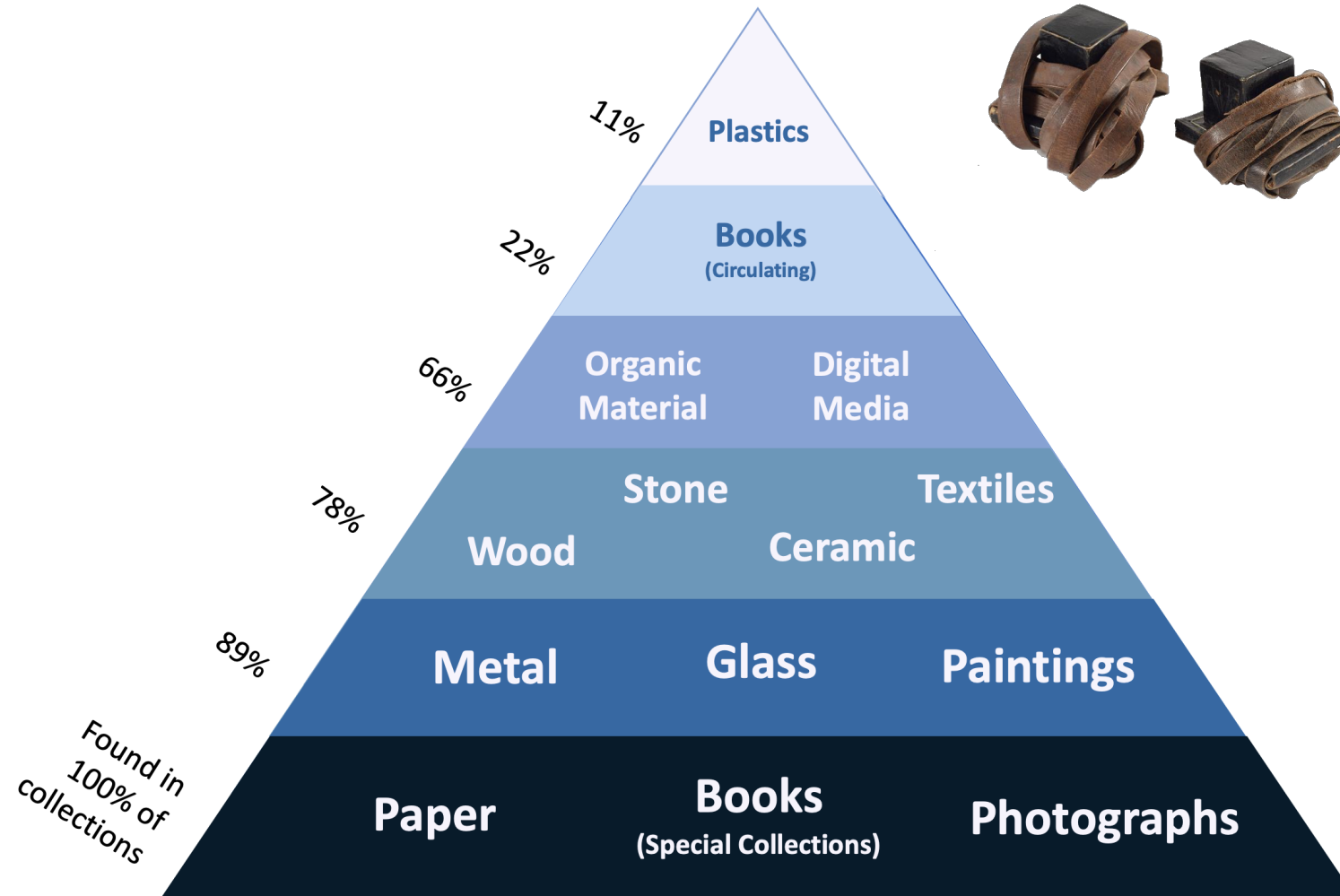


2

Conservators

Survey Results

What types of materials are represented?



89%
of collections contain
Sifrei Torah
Tefillin
Mezuzot

Preventive Conservation



Analyzing environmental data



Taking readings of light levels

Networks



Jewish Life and Ritual



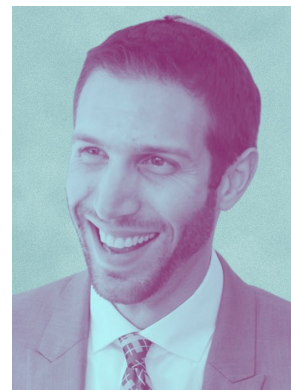
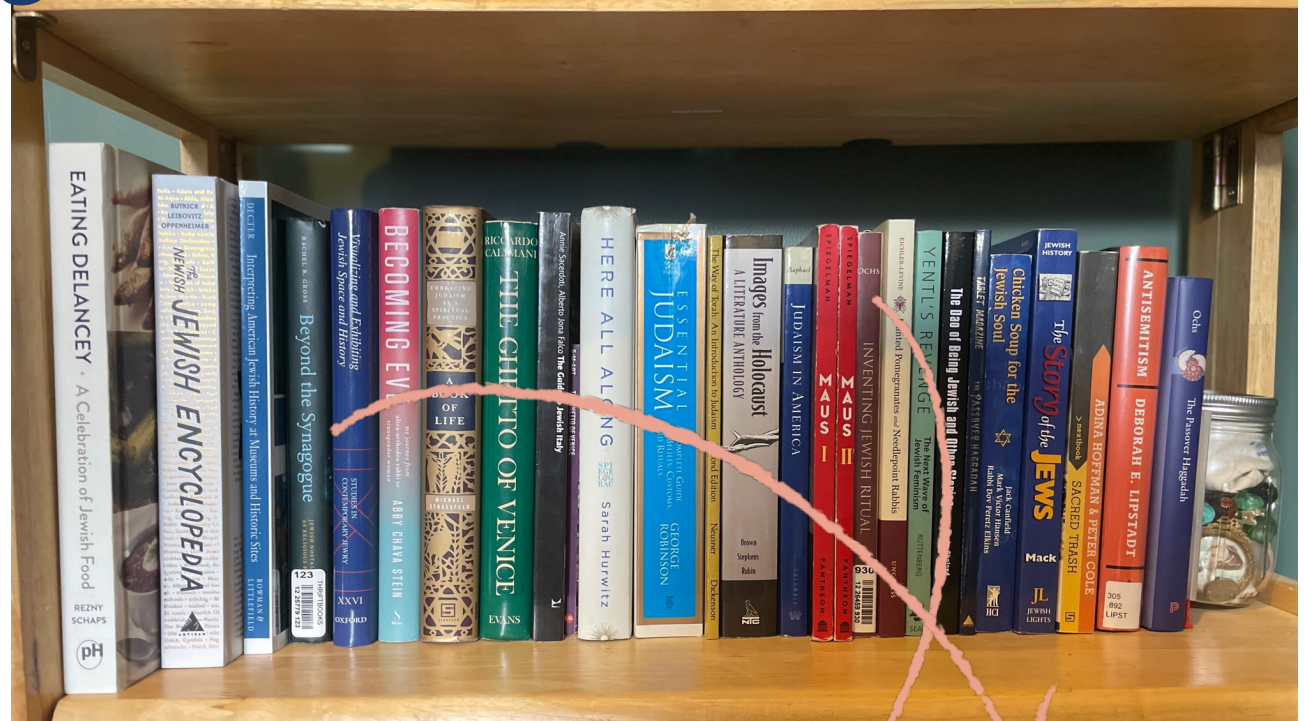
SEP • 58 •



Reading and Connecting



Reading about Jewish material culture, Jewish museums, Holocaust education, and the history of American Judaism



Rabbi Lex Rofeberg (he/him) serves as Senior Jewish Educator for Judaism Unbound



Rabbi Vanessa Ochs, Ph.D., Professor in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Virginia



Rachel B. Gross, Assistant Professor, John and Marcia Goldman Chair in American Jewish Studies, San Francisco State University

Council of American Jewish Museums



Lighting Hannukah Candles with CAJM Talking Circles, 2021

Speaking and Writing



Art Conservation *and a sense of obligation*

Growing up with grandparents who were Holocaust survivors and in an engaged and practicing Jewish family, Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC) Fellow Margalit Schindler has developed a passion for Judaica and considers its preservation a sacred obligation. They have used that passion to guide their graduate education in art conservation.

Margalit took an important step at the end of their first year in deciding to specialize in preventive conservation, which focuses on the many complex issues, including the environment, pest management and emergency preparedness, involved in the protection and preservation of art and cultural heritage. To understand more fully what that might mean in relation to Judaica, this year Margalit prepared and distributed a survey to members of the Council of American Jewish Museums. The survey included questions on staffing, the types of items in the collection, materials, how the pieces in the collection were acquired and used, and the holiness status of those pieces.

From the organizations that responded to their survey, Margalit found that many Judaica collections are relatively small and lean heavily towards paper, photographs, and books, though they include all types of material. Judaica can be found not only in museums of all sizes but also in synagogues, Jewish Day Schools and with families not associated with any institution at all. Most respondents possessed one or more holy objects, which may have special handling considerations. Margalit was surprised to find that no respondents had a formal conservator on staff or anyone with traditional conservation training caring for these items, and almost half of the respondents had no preservation policies in place to guide them. Margalit also found that the highest priority for respondents was digitizing their collections, and that the most frequent concerns were how to find space to house them.

In response to these findings, Margalit has proposed several next steps. High on the list is involving rabbinical insight to focus on ethical issues, while other initiatives include supporting respondents while writing preservation policies, seeking resources to help with digital preservation and researching space-saving storage. Margalit has been buoyed by the survey results, which have given them much to consider as they look ahead to a third-year internship and completion of the program. Meanwhile, their passion for Judaica and commitment to its preservation promise to play an important role in their career as an art conservator.



ARTC Spotlight—May 2021

The University of Delaware's Art Conservation Department educates and trains professional conservators who are well versed in the treatment, analysis, documentation, and preventive conservation of individual artifact and archive collections. For more news about our students and other department activities visit our web site at www.artcons.udel.edu.

Top: A shelf in WUDPAC Fellow Margalit Schindler's childhood home, displaying heirloom prayer books and personal effects. Above: David Levine's (Margalit's Grandfather) Dachau prison uniform. Right: Most survey respondents confirm that their collections have at least one object with elevated holy status, and their collections are diverse in terms of material. Photos: M. Schindler; A. Reznay.

- ✂️ ⚡️ **Preservation as Jewish Religious Practice**
Essay in *The Ethics of Conservation*, upcoming
- ✂️ ⚡️ **Jewish Value Considerations for Judaica in Collections**
Poster presentation, American Institute for Conservation 50th Annual Conference, *upcoming*
- ⚡️ **Preserving Jewish Collections: From Generation to Generation**
Guest lecturer for *Objects as Cultural Artifacts Course*, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, April 2022
- ✂️ **Preservation 101**
Instructor for Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services of New York's 3-week online course, April 2022
- ⚡️ **Memorial Books As Objects**
Part of Memorial Books: Comparative and Global Perspective, one-day international workshop, University of Delaware Jewish Studies Program, Feb 2022
- Pronouns at WUDPAC: Stakeholder Roles in the Process of Effecting Change**
Webinar as part of CCAHA's *Let's Talk About That* series, Jan 2022
- ✂️ **Staff Reflects on 20 Years of the Philadelphia Stewardship Program**
Blog post in support of the CCAHA Stewardship Program Relaunch, Jan 2022
- ✂️ **Housing and the Museum Environment**
Webinar as part of CCAHA's *Select, Save and Stack Workshop*, Nov 2021
- ⚡️ **The Objects That Remain: The Ethics of Tending to Sacred Objects**
Panel Discussion Hosted by University of Delaware Jewish Studies Program, Oct 2021
- ✂️ **What's the Point, Dude? A Conversation about Dew Point**
Guest lecture for Preventive Block WUDPAC 2024, Sept 2021
- ✂️ **Residential Environments: Examining a Microclimate to Inform Household Exhibitions**
Conservation During Covid: Student Talks, Philadelphia Area Conservation Association (PACA), June 2021
- ⚡️ **Judaica Preservation Survey: A Portrait of Jewish Collections**
Lightening Round presentation, ANAGPIC, April 2021
- Answering the Questions We Wish You Would Ask: A Panel Presentation on Conservation and Disability**
Panelist for CCAHA's Diversity in Collections Care Colloquium, March 2021
- Seeds of Change Speaker Series: From Ask to Action**
Panelist for University of Delaware Student Activist Speaker Series, March 2021
- ✂️ **Building Diagnostics at the Wharton Esherick Museum: A Case Study**
Guest lecture for Wood Block WUDPAC 2023, Dec 2020
- ✂️ **Tabletop Exercise: Understanding Context**
Workshop for ARTC301, an undergraduate art conservation course, Dec 2020
- ✂️ ⚡️ **Systems Thinking, Scatterplots, Social Justice and Shabbat: A Summer of Growing Soft Skills**
WUDPAC Summer Work Project Talk, Sept 2020

Poster at American Institute for Conservation Conference

Jewish Value Considerations When Working with Judaica

Overview

The purpose of this poster is to introduce traditional classifications for Jewish holy objects and suggest ways that their cultural significance may be recognized and respected in tandem with modern preservation practices. By looking at these traditions and techniques, we can examine the values they are trying to communicate and apply those larger values to collection care work. This poster is designed for anyone who may steward Judaica in an institution, community or home.

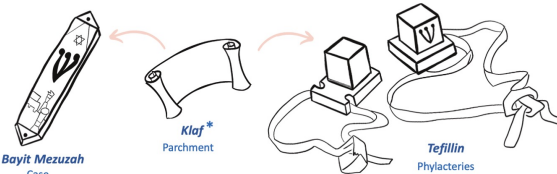
Traditional Classifications

According to the traditional classification of sacred Jewish objects, there are four categories, each with different rules about the creation, use, and end of the object. Some categories have strict rules, others are more relaxed. These traditional classifications only consider traditional ritual objects and are based in *halakha* – Jewish rabbinic law – which are laid out in the *Talmud*, a compendium of Jewish law and rabbinic interpretation.

In this system, there is a hierarchy of sacred objects and rules that dictate how they are to be made, handled, repaired, and disposed of through burial. *Klei kodesh* are holy objects (literally translate to “vessels of holiness”) because they have the name of G-d written on them one or more times. They are considered sacred whether they are in use or not. Examples of *klei kodesh* are a *sefer Torah* (Torah scroll), *tefillin* or *mezuzah* parchment scroll, all of which are carefully crafted by a *sofer*, or scribe, who must handwrite every letter flawlessly. The very creation of these items involves spiritual *kavana* – intent – to infuse them with *kedusha* – holiness. Objects that are traditionally “more holy” have special handling guidelines, aimed at preserving the structural integrity of the ink on the parchment and legibility of the text, which, if damaged, deems the objects no longer *kosher*, or fit for ritual use.

Other objects fall into one of three categories, each different in nuanced ways, but for the sake of collection care practices can all be considered “not sacred.”

Margalit Schindler (they/them)
Preventive Conservation Graduate Fellow
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www.margalitschindler.com

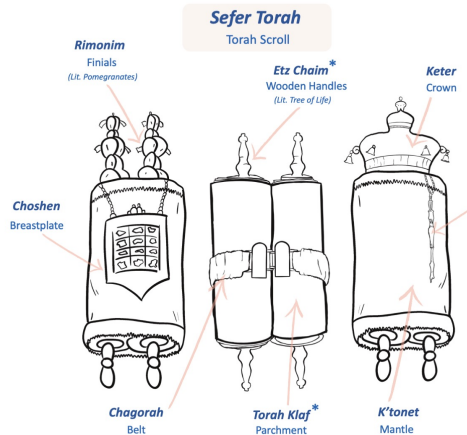


English	Transliteration	Hebrew
Holy objects (literally “vessels of holiness”)	<i>Klei Kodesh</i>	כלי קודש
Accoutrements of holy objects (literally “holy utensil”)	<i>Tashmishi Kedushah</i>	תשמישי קדושה
Ritual implements (literally “commanded utensil”)	<i>Tashmishi Mitzvah</i>	תשמישי מצווה
Optional ritual object (has several definitions, but we’ll use “optional”)	<i>Reshut</i>	רשות

“חַיֵּב אָדָם לִנְהַג כְּבוֹד גָּדוֹל בְּסֵפֶר תּוֹרָה.” “A person must have great respect for a *Sefer Torah*. It is their duty to assign a special place for it and to treat this place with honor, and to hold it in utmost reverence.”

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 28:3

Outlined below are some practical collection care notes for the most spiritually sensitive, the *Sefer Torah*, or Torah scroll, which is *klei kodesh*, the most holy object in the Jewish tradition. The following recommendations are based on a *Sefer Torah* still in ritual use, which must stay free from imperfections to remain *kosher* and be used in ritual. These are the strictest limitations, and do not apply to all Judaica. However, by examining these traditions and techniques, we can examine the values they are trying to communicate and apply those to collection care work.



Storage

A *sefer Torah* is usually stored upright, at an angle – its *atzet chain*, or wooden rollers (lit. “trees of life”), resting on a backboard, its front feet up against a footrest. The scroll is stored inside its protective and decorative wrappings and adornments. One or several Torah scrolls can be stored together. An *aron kodesh* is a special nook, box, or cabinet that is designated to store the scrolls, and should not be used to store other objects. The *aron kodesh* is kept closed, and it is customary for folks to stand to show respect when it is opened. In addition to respect, this arrangement also has practical benefits of thoughtful storage practice – protection from light, water, pests, and fluctuations in relative humidity.

→ Safe spaces have tangible and intangible value.

Handling

When handling or using, users are careful to not touch the written surface of the Torah parchment. Partly, this is to make sure the *sofer* is respected (not touching something is a powerful way to signify importance); partly, it is because touching can cause damage to the text, which may ritually invalidate the entire object. If you need to touch the parchment for some reason, do it in private. It is both customary and practical to place a lining or covering on the surface before placing the Torah down. All people, including non-Jews and women, may hold a *sefer Torah* and read from it. While some communities may have their own traditions that prohibit this, there is no *halakha* (law) against it. Traditionally, a scroll is carried by resting it against one’s body and supporting it from the bottom. Dropping a *sefer Torah* is considered a tragedy, a communal traumatic event, and should be avoided with careful handling. If it happens, a Rabbi should be consulted immediately for next steps, which will likely include some sort of communal fasting to symbolize grief.

→ Work with intention.

Emergency Preparedness

The Torah is considered is the soul of the community, their “portable homeland” and embodies the holiness of its message. After prioritizing human life and safety, Torah scrolls should be salvage priority before, during, and after disasters.

→ Value life, center people.

Fixing Problems

If there is a structural or aesthetic issue in any part of the Torah scroll (parchment, ink, seams, wooden rollers), a *sofer* (scribe) should be consulted. It is recommended to inspect Torah scrolls regularly (every five years) to make sure the Torah is in stable condition. This way, any minor issues can be resolved before they expand into the text, rendering the scroll “not kosher.” It is encouraged that Jewish people actively engage with ritual by challenging tradition, asking questions, and engaging with texts.

→ Know when to ask for help.

→ Be curious and ask questions.

End-of-Life

Religious manuscripts, including *sefer Torah*, that time or human error have rendered unfit for use cannot be “thrown out” but rather “require *genizot*” – removal, for example, to a jar, closet, or burial plot that they may “decay of their own accord.” While this may not be applicable to objects that have shifted in meaning upon entering a museum collection, stewards should consider the tradition and implied values.

→ Sometimes you must say goodbye.

About the Author

Margalit Schindler (they/them) is a Preventive Conservation Graduate Fellow in the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation. Margalit is the president of *Shema*, a non-profit organization that provides Jewish religious objects to the community. A passion for Jewish culture has led Margalit to explore the preservation of Jewish religious objects and their role in the community. Margalit is also a member of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) and the American Institute for Jewish Studies (AIJS). Margalit is also a member of the American Institute for Jewish Studies (AIJS) and the American Institute for Jewish Studies (AIJS).

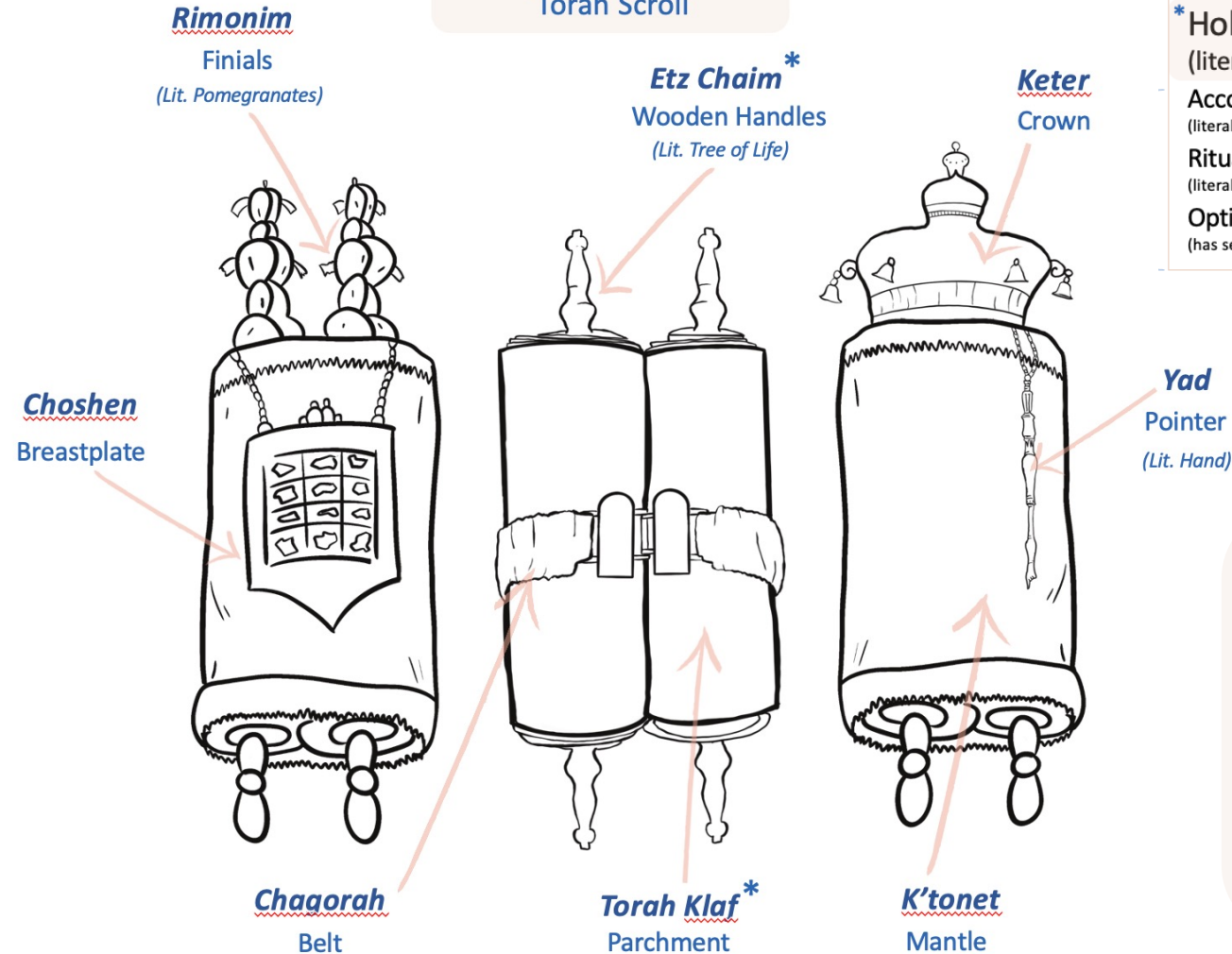
References: Graessle, Virginia. 2005. “Preservation of Holy Objects: Defining Sacred Texts.” *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 44 (3): 30-39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00141801.2005.10861926>
Hatch, Jeffrey. 2018. “The Torah and Its Care.” *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 57 (2): 1-10.
Hatch, Jeffrey. 2019. “The Torah and Its Care.” *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 58 (2): 1-10.
Hatch, Jeffrey. 2020. “The Torah and Its Care.” *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 59 (2): 1-10.
Hatch, Jeffrey. 2021. “The Torah and Its Care.” *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 60 (2): 1-10.
Hatch, Jeffrey. 2022. “The Torah and Its Care.” *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 61 (2): 1-10.
Hatch, Jeffrey. 2023. “The Torah and Its Care.” *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 62 (2): 1-10.
The American Institute for Jewish Studies (AIJS). “The Torah.” <http://www.aijs.edu/>
The American Institute for Conservation (AIC). “The Torah.” <https://www.aic-con.org/>



Poster at American Institute for Conservation Conference

Sefer Torah

Torah Scroll



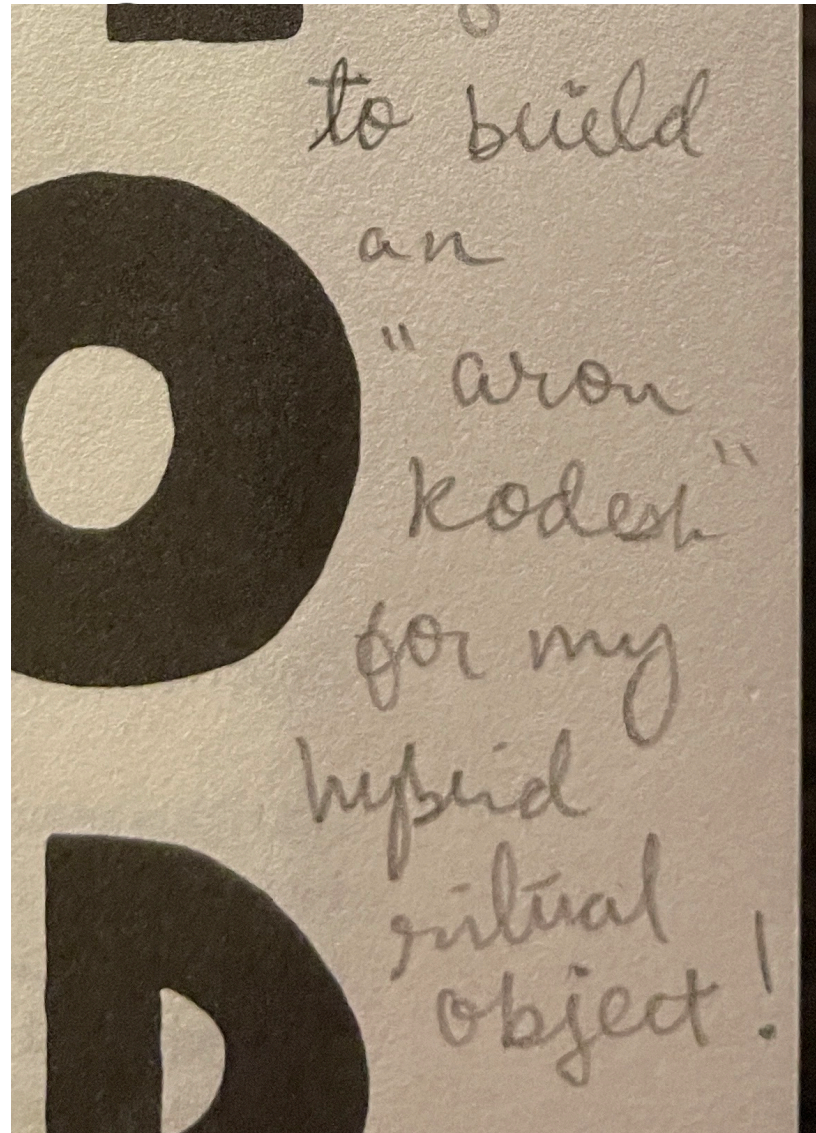
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Optional ritual object (has several definitions, but we'll use "optional")	<i>Reshut</i>	רשות

חייב אדם לנהג כבוד גדול בספר תורה. ומצוה ליחד לו מקום, ולכבד את המקום ההוא ולהדרו ביותר.

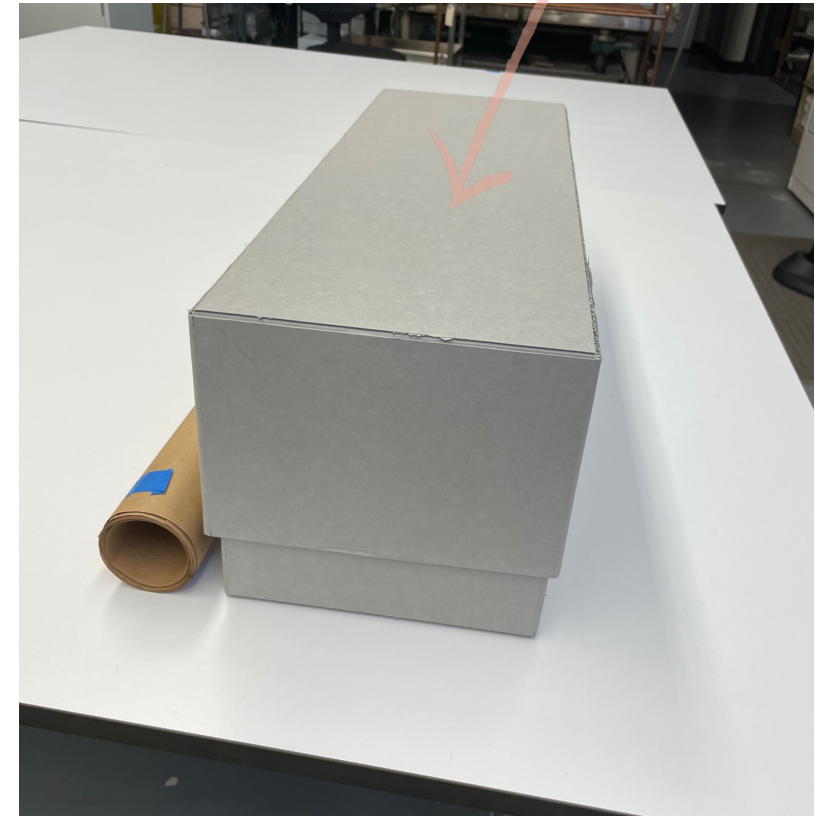
"A person must have great respect for a *Sefer Torah*. It is their duty to assign a special place for it and to treat this place with honor, and to hold it in utmost reverence."

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 28:3

Arielle Tonkin's *Hybrid Ritual Object*



Aron Kodesh
Holy Ark






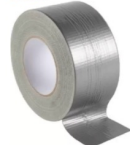








Working with The Jewish Museum of Maryland to build custom housing and transport for extra-long artwork by contemporary artist Arielle Tonkin, which was exhibited in *A Fence Around the Torah*

Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts

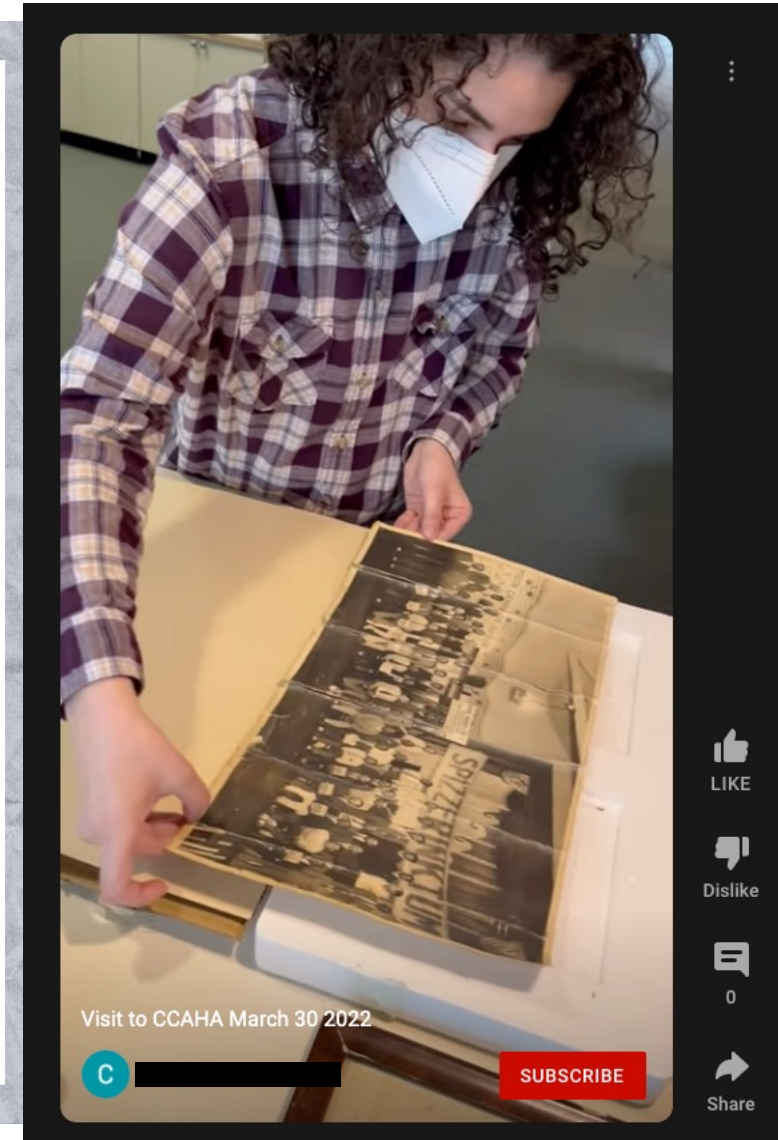


Margalit at CCAHA

Tape
 Paper, fabric, or plastic carrier with an adhesive layer applied. The adhesive layer is generally activated by pressure, or by the application of heat or water. Pressure sensitive or 'sticky' tapes should not be used for materials intended for long term preservation, since the adhesive degrades and yellows and the adhesive residues can become impossible to remove.

<p>Double Sided</p>  <p><small>www.uline.com</small></p>	<p>Gaffer's</p>  <p><small>www.uline.com</small></p>	<p>Packing</p>  <p><small>https://www.walshart.com/premium-grade-brown-soft-adhesive-bopp-packing-tape.html</small></p>
<p>Duct</p>  <p><small>https://www.fishart.com/gummi-duct-tape-manual-manual-10x2-10x10-10x20</small></p>	<p>Gummed Linen Tape</p>  <p><small>https://www.uline.com</small></p>	<p>Packing (Reinforced)</p>  <p><small>www.walshart.com</small></p>
<p>Electrical</p>  <p><small>https://www.3m.com/3M/cda/cpg/9800034620/</small></p>	<p>J-LAR®</p>  <p><small>www.uline.com</small></p>	<p>Painter's</p>  <p><small>www.uline.com</small></p>
<p>Frame Sealing/Aluminum</p>  <p><small>White/6011/CACTEV</small></p>	<p>Masking</p>  <p><small>www.uline.com</small></p>	<p>Transparent/Scotch</p>  <p><small>www.3m.com</small></p>

Tape, from Damage and Materials Glossary



Margalit rehousing silver gelatin photograph for Community Stewardship Program

Website as Business Card

www.margalitschindler.com

Margalit (they/them) Schindler



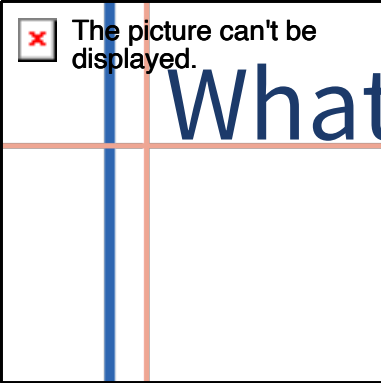
- Links to recorded talks and available writing
- Annotated Bibliography of Judaica Preservation
- Preservation Bibliography Library
- Portfolio of Conservation Projects and Studio Artwork


 Annotated Bibliography
[Judaica Preservation and Jewish Museums and Collections](#)

Living Preservation Bibliography

The following table is searchable, sortable, groupable, and changeable. If you'd like to add or change a resource, please contact me at margalit@udel.edu.

Name	Topic	SubTopic	Materials	Link
294 Sustainable Housing for Oversized Works of Art on Paper	Collections Care	Housing Sustainability	Oversized Paper	http://cerpart.creves.org/...
295 Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings: Problems and Recommended A...	Environment	HVAC	Historic House	http://www.nps.gov/teah...
296 Achieving Conservation Environments: HVAC	Environment	HVAC Facility		http://files.eric.ed.gov/full...
297 Ideal Climate, Risk Management, the ASHRAE Chapter, Proofed Fluctuations, and To...	Environment	HVAC Temperature Relative Hum		http://www.gstty.edu/con...
298 A Short Guide to Film Base Photographic Materials: Identification, Care, and Duplica...	Collections Care	Identification	Photographs	https://www.nedcc.org/ab...
299 Audio guidance: Identifying audio formats	Collections Care	Identification	AV	https://www.archives.gov/...
300 Care and Identification of Objects Made from Plastic	Collections Care	Identification	Plastic	https://www.nps.gov/mus...
301 Identification and Care of Amber	Collections Care	Identification	Natural History	
302 Identifying and Preserving Motion Picture Film	Collections Care	Identification	Motion picture	https://www.connectio...
303 Types of Photographs, part 1: 19th and Early 20th Century	Collections Care	Identification	Photographs	https://www.nedcc.org/ab...
304 Identifying Mouse and Rat Damage in Museum Collections	Pests	Identification		https://www.nps.gov/mus...
305 Identifying Museum Insect Pest Damage	Pests	Identification		https://www.nps.gov/mus...



What's Next?

Pearl Preservation

Museum-Quality Preservation Services and Consulting



Mission:

Our mission is to support the care of art, historic artifacts, heirlooms, and treasures of all kinds by offering preventive conservation services, resources, and consultation.

Vision:

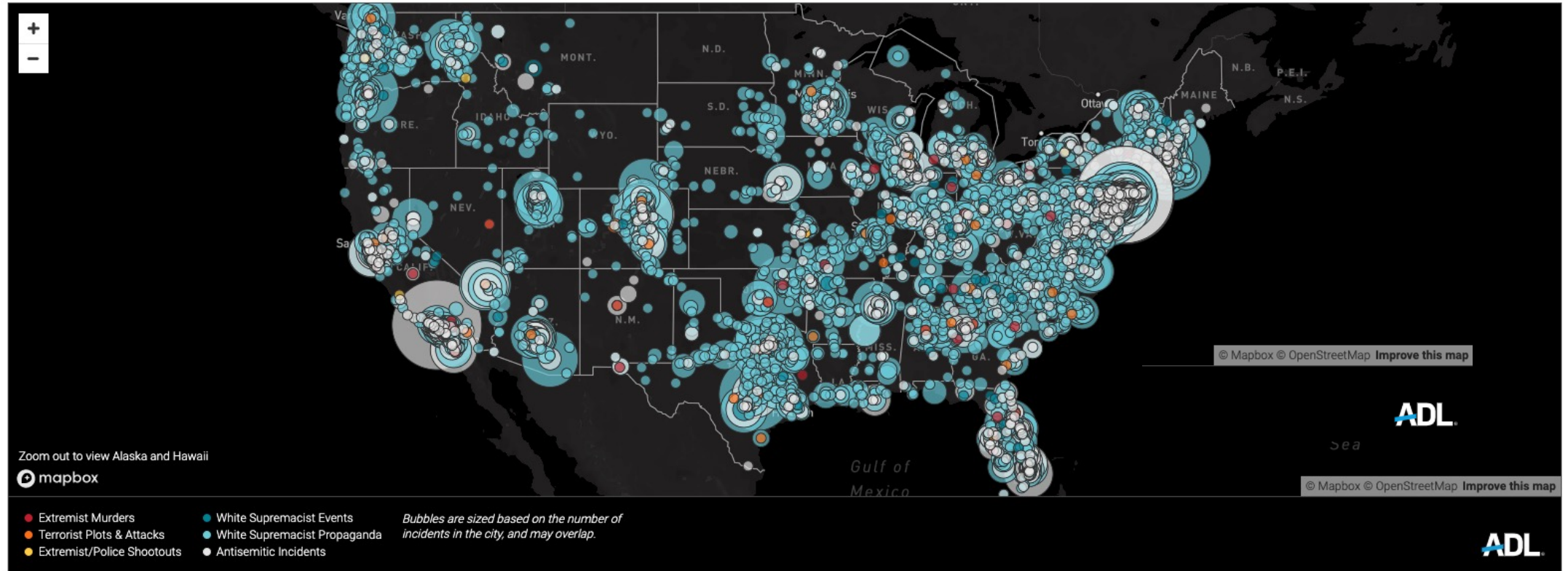
We dream of a world where all people feel empowered to preserve their own heritage and pass it on to future generations in a way meaningful to them.

Menu:

We offer a menu of preservation services for institutions and families of all shapes and sizes.

Relevance

In 2020 and 2021, there were **12,336** incidents of extremism or antisemitism in the United States.



HEAT Map showing incidents of antisemitism in the United States during 2020 and 2021
Anti-Defamation League, 2022.

THANK YOU



Margalit Schindler (*they/them*)
Preventive Conservation Graduate Fellow
Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation
margalit@udel.edu