

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM'S PAST AND PRESENT
EXPLORED THROUGH CUTTING-EDGE ART INSTALLATION
AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

On January 28, 2015, Israeli artist **Liat Segal** will make her US debut at the **National Museum of American Jewish History** with [Liat Segal: Scattered Light](#), an innovative work of new media art. Drawing from her multidisciplinary background, including her past work as a researcher at Microsoft Innovation Labs and as a teacher at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Segal, whose interactive technology was recently featured in the Israeli Pavilion's 2014 exhibit at the Venice Biennale, is developing an installation that offers a new interpretation of George Washington's 1790 letter to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island.



Photo by: Arnon Fisher

Segal's work of art draws from Washington's courageous affirmation of the new nation's commitment to religious liberty and weaves the first president's words together with reflections from NMAJH's visitors, collected from the Museum's *It's Your Story* recording

booths. Both speak to the centrality of religious freedom to our national identity and to the continuing role we all play in its preservation.

According to Segal, the “old still echoes while the new is written, just as Jewish immigrants in the new world had to reinvent their Jewish practices and ‘rewrite’ their old ways.”

Scattered Light pairs the old with the new through the use of a wand embedded with LED lights that move over a photosensitive surface, “printing” Washington’s words along with those of Museum visitors. The texts fade away over time, allowing new content to appear, a representation both of freedom’s fragility and the ever-evolving dialogue between the past and the present.

“What makes this installation so exciting is its weaving together of cutting-edge technology, an iconic historical document, and the thoughts and reflections of our visitors in a way that creates a whole new kind of museum experience,” says **Dr. Josh Perelman**, the Museum’s chief curator and director of exhibitions and collections. “That NMAJH is collaborating with an artist to create a dialogue about the significance of religious freedom in the lives of American minority communities makes it all the more poignant.”

Scattered Light will be on view through Fall 2015.

Related Programs

Opening Event

Wednesday, January 28

5 - 8 pm: Free, registration required

Investigate this unique piece of art and gain firsthand insights from the artist herself about the intersections of Jewish history, art, and technology.

Young Friends of NMAJH Curated Cocktails

Thursday, January 29

6 - 8 pm: Free for Young Friends members/\$12 for non-members

Scattered Light artist Liat Segal will speak to the Museum's Young Friends. Afterwards the group can mingle with her and enjoy the installation. Refreshments will be served.

Generous support for this installation has been provided by:

Shirley and Albert H. Small, Consulate General of Israel to the Mid-Atlantic Region, and Jane and Stuart Weitzman.

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The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Museum hours are Tuesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm. NMAJH is closed most Mondays, including federal holidays and some Jewish holidays. Museum admission is \$12.00 for adults, \$11.00 for senior citizens and youth, free for children 12 and under, Museum Members, and active military with ID. For more information, visit NMAJH.org or call 215.923.3811.