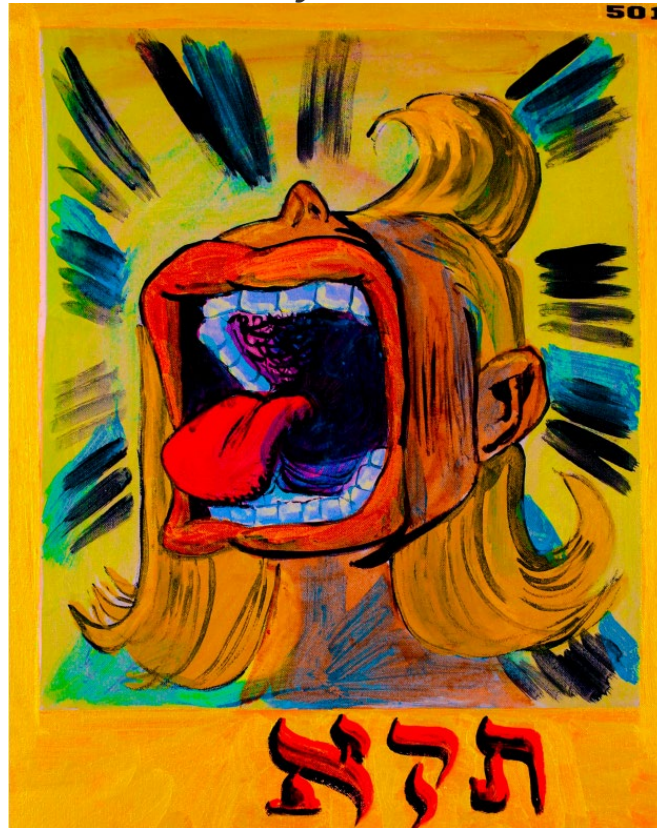


Memorial Art Gallery to Present *The 613 by Archie Rand*



Archie Rand, *Not To Insult Or Harm Anybody With Words*. (Leviticus 25:17), part of *The 613*, 2001–06, serial painting composed of 614 panels, acrylic on canvas, 20 x 16 in. each. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Mary Faith O'Neill. *The 613 by Archie Rand*.

ROCHESTER, NY, March 16, 2021—The Memorial Art Gallery (MAG) is pleased to announce an exhibition of [The 613 by Archie Rand](#), the celebrated painter and muralist. For over five decades Archie Rand has been regarded as a maverick and rule breaker, and *The 613* is his most ambitious work. An enormous multi-panel painting, it depicts surprising responses to the 613 commandments of the Torah, which is the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (or Old Testament). Yes, there are more than 10 commandments—the rules that govern ethical and religious behavior in Judaism. Rand’s monumental installation, which will fill MAG’s Docent Gallery from April 24 through July 18, 2021, explores traditions of both biblical interpretation and artistic expression. It exemplifies Rand’s groundbreaking achievements in the construction of a contemporary Jewish iconography, affirming his position as a relentlessly innovative artist.

Interrogation is a common strategy among the individual panels, as the images may underscore, contradict, and very often obscure the teachings of the referenced commandments. Quoting masterworks by artists such as Paul Cézanne and Edouard Manet and enlisting imagery from mainstream media as well as Jewish comic artists, Rand interweaves visual culture and Jewish Scripture, which, ironically, has been interpreted historically to forbid the creation of idols, images, and, even more broadly, art.

On another level, *The 613* also challenges commonly held beliefs about expression and representation. By linking the Torah’s commandments with oftentimes seemingly unrelated pictures, Rand undermines how people usually expect words and images to function when juxtaposed. His loose, pulp fiction-inspired, cartoon-like painterly style



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is as irreverent to the history of painting as it is to the religious tradition it purports to explicate. The complexity of the project encourages an investigation of both systems of knowledge, that of art history and of Judaism, and demands an engaged viewing. *The 613* is fundamentally a study of the mechanics of tradition and how meaning is made.

Jonathan P. Binstock, MAG's Mary W. and Donald R. Clark Director, stated that "Archie Rand's fluid, illustrational style belies a sophisticated philosophy that challenges viewers to rethink preconceptions of how words and images interrelate, and what we mean when we say a picture is worth a thousand words." Binstock continued, "MAG is thrilled to bring *The 613*, a powerful, immersive aesthetic experience and an extraordinary artistic accomplishment by any measure, to Rochester."

MAG's exhibition is sponsored by the Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation, which is honoring the artist as the 2020 Farash Fellow for the Advancement of Jewish Humanities and Culture. "We are honored to have this wonderfully inventive artist join us in Rochester as the recipient of the 2020 Farash Fellowship," said Holli Budd, executive director of the Farash Foundation, "and we are pleased to collaborate with the Memorial Art Gallery in the presentation of his magnum opus, *The 613*."

The exhibition will include the animated short film, *Kol Nidre #3* (2017), with direction and animation by Tatiana McCabe, paintings by Archie Rand from *The 613*, and music by Jeremiah Lockwood, produced by Bill McGarvey and Executive Producer Dan Ain, for Because Jewish.

The 613 (Blue Rider Press; Penguin Random House), a 640-page hardcover book reproducing the work in full color, with an essay by Rand and endorsements by Art Spiegelman, among others, will be available through MAG's shop on-site and online.

The exhibition The 613 by Archie Rand is organized by the Memorial Art Gallery (MAG) of the University of Rochester and Joan Brookbank Projects in collaboration with the artist, Archie Rand. The MAG presentation is made possible through underwriting by the Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation. Mr. Rand is the recipient of the 2020 Farash Fellowship for the Advancement of Jewish Humanities and Culture.

About the Artist

Rand's work as a painter, muralist, and graphic artist is held in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Art Institute Of Chicago, Brooklyn Museum, Baltimore Museum of Art, Smithsonian Institution, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Victoria and Albert Museum, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Carnegie Museum of Art, Dallas Museum of Art, and New York Public Library. His works are included in the university and library collections of Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Brown, and Johns Hopkins, among many others. There have been over 100 solo exhibitions of his work. He has created collaborative projects with many poets, among whom are Robert Creeley, John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, Clark Coolidge, David Plante, John Yau, Bill Berkson, Maryline Desbiolles, David Lehman, Bob Holman, Lewis Warsh, and David Shapiro.

Rand was awarded, among numerous honors, the Achievement Medal for Contributions to the Visual Arts by the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, and is a recipient of a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship. Formerly chair of the Department of Visual Arts at Columbia University, he is currently the Presidential Professor of Art at Brooklyn College, in the City University of New York. His home and studio are located in Brooklyn, New York.

About The Farash Fellowship

The Farash Fellowship is an opportunity to honor an extraordinary Jewish luminary who exemplifies excellence and is celebrated for their accomplishments in the field of Jewish humanities and culture. With a monetary award



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as well as living and travel expenses, the Fellow will reside in the Rochester area for a period of time to pursue their work in a comfortable and supportive environment. By design, the Fellowship will ensure that the holder has ample time for their own intellectual pursuits, a Shabbat for the Soul.

About Joan Brookbank Projects

Joan Brookbank Projects is a literary agency and a producer of special projects including the exhibition tour of *The 613*.

About Memorial Art Gallery

The Memorial Art Gallery showcases visual art from antiquity to the present day, including the outdoor public Centennial Sculpture Park. In addition to its permanent collection, MAG offers a year-round schedule of special exhibitions, lectures, concerts, tours, after-hours social events, and family activities.

Hours: Wednesday–Sunday 11 am to 5 pm, and until 9 pm on Thursdays and select Fridays. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Admission: \$20; senior citizens, \$17; college students with ID and children 6–18, \$11. Always free to members, University of Rochester faculty/staff and students, and children 5 and under. Half-price general admission Thursdays from 5–9 pm is made possible by Monroe County, with additional support from Dave & Margaret Burns.

For more information, call 585.276.8900 or visit mag.rochester.edu.

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