

Year in Review 2023



Our Message



↑ Noè Harsel
Museum Director & CEO

This past year at the Jewish Museum of Australia: Gandel Centre of Judaica (JMA) has been one full of inspiration, curiosity, conversation, play, growth and discovery. Amidst significant staff changes, including the departure of Museum Director & CEO Jessica Bram, who stood down suddenly for health reasons in early 2023, our Museum remained steadfast in its commitment to excellence and community engagement.

Under Jessica's leadership, the JMA achieved milestones and cultivated a vibrant culture of creativity and collaboration. Her vision helped lay the foundation for the many of the successes we celebrated throughout the year.

With a new Leadership team, and formally appointed as the new Museum Director & CEO, in mid-2023, myself and the whole JMA team continued to produce world-class exhibitions and immersive museum experiences that captivated and enlightened audiences. Our dedication to education programs for both the young and the young at heart, driven by our belief in the concept of *tikkun olam* (our desire to improve the world), underscored our broader mission of fostering dialogue and understanding.

Throughout 2023, the JMA presented unique offerings to explore love, colour and joy, including our flagship show CHAGALL, curated by the extraordinary international art historian Jade Niklai, and the inaugural Contemporary Artist Commission supported by Daniel Besen, featuring an original body of work titled *Carnelian* by Yvette Coppersmith. These achievements were made possible through the sustained support of our valued partners, including the Gandel Foundation, Creative Victoria, and the City of Port Phillip, as well as the dedicated donors listed in this document, to whom we are ever grateful. Additionally, this year, we appreciatively received the State Government Multicultural Infrastructure grant, enabling the JMA much needed support in upgrading and updating our facilities.

We were marked by the tragedy of October 7 with the resulting rise in tensions and antisemitism affecting our Museum and our community profoundly. In the face of these challenges, the JMA remained resolute in its commitment to serving as a safe and inclusive space for all. Our team's dedication to sharing stories and experiences within our diverse community, coupled with the unwavering support of our volunteers, members and partners, has been the cornerstone of our success.

As we look to the future, we are filled with pride and gratitude for the passion, talent and collaboration that define the JMA. Together, we will continue to dream big, reach new heights and inspire greatness at the intersection of art and Jewish culture.

Noè Harsel
Museum Director & CEO



Marie-Luise Skibbe, Contemporary Artist Commission, Yvette Coppersmith,
Carnelian supported by Daniel Besen, 2023

Our Vision

At the Jewish Museum of Australia, we illuminate Jewish life. At the intersection of art and Jewish culture, our Museum is a place for all people to share in the Australian Jewish experience. For almost 45 years, the Jewish Museum has celebrated a truly global people through an Australian prism with curiosity and connection at our heart. We create world-class exhibitions, programs and events, and design experiences, that explore the many voices of our diverse community and showcase Jewish excellence and everydayness. Devising entry points that are compelling for Jewish and non Jewish audiences of all ages and backgrounds, we animate and activate storytelling across our three key platforms—onsite, offsite and via outreach—ensuring always that our offer is interactive, inclusive and audience-centred. In a time of growing intolerance and rising antisemitism, our Museum provides a reason to come together, share ideas and exchange perspectives. A place of learning, creativity and multi-generational experiences, we're proud to create opportunities that strengthen social cohesion, combat prejudice and share the wonders of our collective similarities and differences.

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Our Team

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Lisa Klepfisz
Head of Experience & Facilities (until late '23)

Eli Dunlevie
Head of Experience & Facilities (until early '23)

Shelley Krape
Head of Brand & Partnerships

Esther Gyorki
Head of Collection & Interpretation

Mark Themann
Head of Collection & Interpretation (until mid '23)

Naomi Ryan
Spotlight Head of Learning & Engagement

Theresa Powles
Spotlight Head of Learning & Engagement
(until late '23)

Our Team (cont.)

Jade Niklai
Project Curator

Sarah Giles
Marketing & Communications Coordinator

Piera Dennerstein
Development & Partnerships Coordinator

Liat Azoulay
Grants & Partnerships Coordinator (until mid '23)

Annette Bagle
Brand & Partnerships Assistant

Charlotte Eizenberg
Learning & Engagement Officer

Naomi Dascal
Learning & Engagement Officer

James Parini
Experience & Facilities Coordinator

Alice Freeman
Assistant Producer & Project Officer (until mid '23)

Krystalla Pearce
Education & Programs Producer
(until mid '23)

Elisa Ronzoni
Curator, Collection

The Museum said farewell to some wonderful staff members in 2023, Eli Dunlevie, *Head of Experience & Facilities*, Lisa Klepfisz, *Head of Experience & Facilities*, Liat Azoulay, *Grants & Partnerships Coordinator*, Alice Freeman, *Assistant Producer and Project Officer* and Krystalla Pearce, *Education & Programs Producer*. We thank them for their enduring contribution to the Museum and wish them well in their future endeavours.

In 2023, the Museum farewelled our *Director & CEO* of more than three years, Jessica Bram. We recognise Jessica's leadership of the Museum and celebrate her vision in creating our Flagship exhibition series: MIRKA (2021), HELMUT NEWTON: In Focus (2022) and CHAGALL (2023). We thank Jessica for her service and leadership.



Our Focus Areas: Collection & Interpretation

With over 25,000 items of historical and contemporary significance—including ritual Judaica, fine art, photography, textiles, letters, diaries, documents, books, everyday objects and more—the Jewish Museum is home to the world’s largest repository of the Australian Jewish experience. Our Collection is a storehouse of memories, preserved in perpetuity and regularly presented for the enjoyment of audiences, both physical and virtual. Through our permanent galleries, special exhibitions and collection showcases, we share the myriad of experiences of being Jewish and Australian. Exploring concepts such as identity, belonging and belief, we spotlight iconic and mainstream stories—inspiring delight, curiosity and introspection through our rigorous but generous and dynamic lens. Each year, our multidisciplinary team conceives, curates and crafts exhibitions—an immersive journey that illuminates Jewish life and captivates the young and young-at-heart.

In 2023, we:

- acquired 19 separate lots for a total of 138 items including the book *Diary of a Horse* written by Claire Goll and illustrated by Marc Chagall, 1946 produced as part of Edition Hemispheres’;
- had 147 new enquiries and image requests;
- digitised 253 objects;
- enhanced 987 Catalogue records;
- increased the number of records in EMu to 18109, including 12663 Multimedia items;
- reduced recent acquisition backlog by 45%;
- archived 200+ items; and
- installed the *New Evolving Identities* display.

As an active part of the program delivery for CHAGALL, Collection & Interpretation directly participated in:

- curator-led tours of CHAGALL;
- Curator interviewed by *Il Globo* Italian newspaper; and
- Curator interviewed on SBS Italian radio.

Throughout the year, the team worked with a variety of partners and public including:

- hosting an Open House Behind the Scenes, an object handling workshop with Education volunteers;
- key partnerships with the State Library of Victoria, the Melbourne Holocaust Museum, Monash University, FIN Gallery and AGNSW + National Gallery of Victoria;
- lending large loans out to the State Library of Victoria for the *Luminous* Exhibition and to the Melbourne Holocaust Museum for their eagerly anticipated re-opening;
- welcoming an international loan for our flagship CHAGALL from ArtCo in Italy;

Our Focus Areas: Collection & Interpretation (cont.)



- participating in collection management workshops and development opportunities, i.e. YIVO sessions at Monash Uni in September/October, EMu Registry Module training in August, EMu Day in Canberra in November; and
- welcoming international researcher Noit Banai from Hong Kong who researched the Collection for a week.

Whilst the JMA was closed for major infrastructure works, the team:

- returned our Haggadot collection previously on display in the ground floor cabinets to meet conservation needs;
- undertook collection management and care, and improved preventive conservation and upskilled;
- successfully deinstalled and stored the relevant permanent gallery objects safely in preparation for re-opening;
- enhancing the team with one new skilled volunteer, bringing the number of volunteers to 4; and
- set up volunteers to work in the cloud and in EMu.

↑ ↗ Jade Niklai and Mark Themann installing CHAGALL

Our Focus Areas: Learning & Engagement

At the Jewish Museum, we believe in the arc of lifelong learning—recognising every engagement with our visitors as a chance to open minds and hearts and imprint our hope for a community of compassion and tolerance.

From launches, lectures and panel discussions to creative workshops, film screenings, historic walks and musical performances, our programs bring people together and our Collection and Exhibitions to life—within and beyond our walls.

Each year, tens of thousands of students from Jewish and non-Jewish schools, both public and private, come to the JMA to discover more about Jewish culture and the contribution Jews have made to shaping modern, multicultural Australia. For many, it is their first encounter with Judaism. Our professional development programs support the teaching of Jewish life and beliefs, particularly as part of comparative religious studies, and our seasonal short courses enable adult learners to discover more about themselves, their culture and the world.

Taking our onsite work offsite and out into the wider community, our annual curated series of experiences and events also enables vibrant and dynamic partnerships with our community friends and arts/cultural counterparts.

In 2023, we:

- developed and created 43 events and programs;
- had over 115 participants across 8 short course sessions;
- welcomed over 115 participants in public Learn programming; and
- had 55 schools at the Museum with over 3760 students across 122 sessions.

The Learning & Engagement team developed teachers' professional development in 2023 that saw 156 teachers attending sessions at the JMA.

Other highlights include:

- CHAGALL After Hours with 141 visitors attending over four events;
- JMA walking tours guided 125 walkers through 6 tours;
- welcoming 6 Jewish Day Schools into the JMA for new programs (Roots Project, JMA Minis and bespoke offerings); and
- building relationships with tertiary institutions including RMIT and University of Melbourne that has welcomed 66 students to our exhibitions and spaces.

ours are the friends of their
and the lovers of their opposites.
Marc Chagall



Our Focus Areas: Brand & Partnerships

The Jewish Museum of Australia has a strong brand belief which shines through all its exhibitions, programming, presentations, collateral and social media.

Starting with our brand manifesto, 'we illuminate Jewish life', throughout our story of being a place for all people to share in the Australian Jewish experience, Brand & Partnerships strives to uphold the JMA's values: that of **chesed** (compassion and kindness) and **tikkun olam** (a desire to improve the world) to underscore all we do.

Across all of our platforms, we're focused on boldly representing the Museum for a new era, guided by our values of:

- **Authenticity:** A commitment to excellence, heritage and quality;
- **Inclusivity:** Building a sense of belonging and trust with people of all backgrounds;
- **Innovation:** A museum experience re-imagined beyond our community and country; and
- **Openness:** Sparking curiosity, conversation and social cohesion through connection and play.

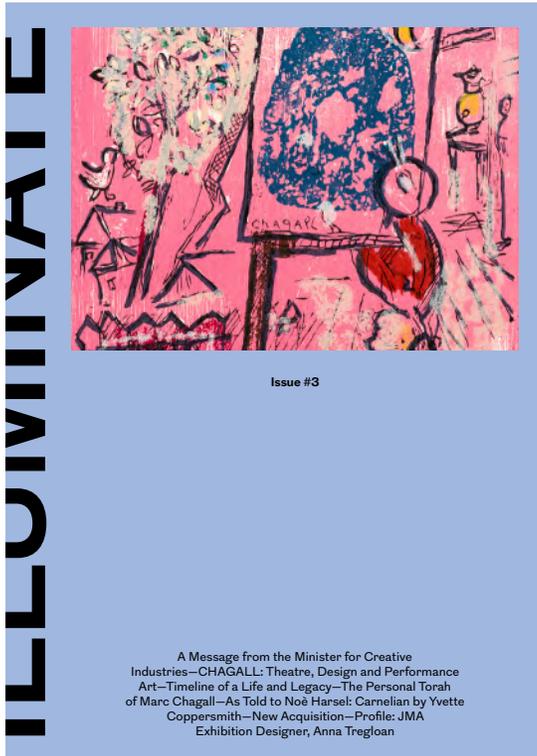
In 2023 we:

- had 75,450 visitors to our website;
- had 1917 new social media followers and 33,484 people engaging with us across socials generally;
- 451 new and renewed JMA Members; and
- raised \$41,650 profit from the JMA Design Store.

Additionally, the Brand & Partnerships team were thrilled to continue great media coverage with **CHAGALL** throughout the year, including:

- radio feature on the ABC's *Friday Revue* with an interview with Jade Niklai, CHAGALL Curator, on 09 June;
- radio feature on Triple R with an interview with Yvette Coppersmith, the JMA's inaugural Contemporary Artist Commission recipient, on 08 June;
- radio feature on SBS Italiano with an interview with Elisa Ronzoni, the JMA's Curator: Collection, on 10 June;
- radio feature on the ABC's *Radio National* with an interview with Jade Niklai, CHAGALL Curator, on 21 June;
- featured in Yvette Coppersmith's campaign with Maserati;
- feature on Broadsheet *Things to Do*, written by Gideon Cohen
- feature in Broadsheet's *Domain Review* inside CHAGALL with Curator Jade Niklai, published 02 October; and
- a new partnership with the Australian Jewish News, supported by the Erdi Foundation, that invited artistically talented school students to produce a creative response to CHAGALL with 4 student pieces published in the AJN throughout the year.

Our Focus Areas: Brand & Partnerships (cont.)



While the year kept the team busy across events, Design Store, partnerships, PR, marketing and communications, we were also proud to deliver:

- the publication of our third issue of *ILLUMINATE*, supported by the Gordon Darling Foundation, the JMA's arts and cultural magazine;
- *Spotlight on Marc Chagall* on the JMA website, supported by the Gordon Darling Foundation;
- the development of exclusive CHAGALL postcards that sold out by the close of the exhibition (767 sold);
- the Museum's own gifting line, Collect JMA, saw great success and was restocked throughout the year to meet demand;
- Collect JMA's new Challah Cover arrived in store at the end of the year;
- the development of exclusive *Carnelian* by Yvette Coppersmith postcards (138 sold);
- two successful fundraisers: Chai (mid-year) and Illuminate (end of year).
- *Luminous: A Thousand Years of Hebrew Manuscripts* with the State Library of Victoria which hosted 68k visitors and included several items from our Collection and offered JMA Members an exclusive tour and cocktail party with a reciprocated event hosted for SLV Members at the JMA including a tour of CHAGALL, and
- partnership with Jewish International Film Festival and Greek Film Festival where our Curator spoke.

Our Focus Areas: Experience & Facilities

Delivering on our ambitious organisational objectives by assuring an exceptional quality of workplace and visitor experiences is part of our everyday focus at the Jewish Museum.

Through all of our spaces and services, we're committed to establishing clear systems and frameworks that support creativity and innovation, while also contributing to an insights-driven culture of collaboration, productivity and continual improvements.



↑ King David students doing work experience at the JMA

In 2023, we:

- welcomed volunteers to our CHAGALL exhibition with 3 insightful training sessions, providing volunteers with the opportunity to walk through the exhibition before anyone else and soak up the magic of CHAGALL in a special guided preview;
- held a volunteer community coffee catch-up in September which was a chance to celebrate the pivotal role our VEO volunteers played in the success of CHAGALL. Here they were able to watch a special video tour from esteemed curator Jade Niklai to deepen their understanding of the CHAGALL exhibition;
- welcomed 95 people through the JMA as part of Open House Melbourne for a special behind-the-scenes curatorial tour and volunteer lead guide through the permanent galleries; and
- celebrated JMA volunteer Roslyn Shlagman who won the Health and Spiritual Engagement Caulfield Volunteer Award.

In addition to this, the team:

- had 112 active volunteers across 2023;
- welcomed 33 new volunteers, of which 26 were Visitor Experience Officers, 6 were Education Officers and 1 began helping the Collection team;
- thanked our volunteers who have dedicated 3495.75 hours of their time to the JMA;
- hosted 21 adult groups for private tours through the JMA's Permanent Exhibitions;
- ran 16 Chagall guided tours led by the Experience & Facilities team; and
- hosted a range of groups who hired JMA venue spaces including Hadassah Australia, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jewish Chaplaincy and Courage to Care.

Volunteer testimonials

“Meeting so many fantastic people and getting to work with the amazing museum staff!”

“Learning new stories from history.”

“A chance to engage with others and enjoy contributing to the successful running of the Museum.”

“Being able to share my Jewish experience.”

“I have enjoyed many years here and it has given me the opportunity to learn so much.”

Visitor testimonials about their appreciation for the JMA's volunteers

“Volunteers at the Museum were friendly and helpful”

“Lovely volunteers who give their time to answer questions”

“Fantastic, helpful reception volunteers and exhibition guides”

“Volunteers extremely helpful in sharing knowledge about Chagall's history”

“The front of house volunteers were very helpful”

“The Museum volunteers are fabulous”

“Thank you to the volunteers at reception who provided a great overview of the exhibition”

“Thoroughly enjoyed my experience at both exhibition and also Jewish Museum, the volunteer staff were very engaging and appeared to truly enjoy talking to visitors”

Visitor testimonials about CHAGALL

“What a remarkable exhibition. Thank you so much for both the regular exhibits and the breadth and scope of the Chagall works.” Stephanie, Sydney

“What a genius Chagall was. Thank you Jewish Museum for curating this to see in person.” Helen

“The Chagall works are very moving and evoke many emotions—from joy, to sadness, to exhilaration, especially at a time like today, what is happening after the October 7 tragedies.” Anon

“Beautiful exhibition—very uplifting.” Jhe, Brisbane

“Four hours here and still haven't seen or read enough! Will be back to continue the journey. Thanks so much for an amazing Chagall exhibition and the JMA is a wonder itself too.” Anon

“Thank you so much. CHAGALL exhibition is astounding. What a wonderful exhibition.”
Ann, Wollongong, NSW

“Beautiful Museum!” Lynn, Los Angeles California

CHAGALL

CHAGALL opened in June–December 2023. The exhibition celebrated the remarkable story of the international master, considered to be among the greatest artists of the twentieth century, Marc Chagall (1887–1985.) Jade Niklai’s extraordinary curation of Chagall’s Poetry, Print making, and Public Art explored the oeuvre of the artist in a new way not before seen.

Chagall’s public art practice, most notably the windows at Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem were greatly received seeing as it was the first time they had been reproduced. The Museum received extensive exposure throughout the exhibition, notably with pieces in Broadsheet, and multiple radio interviews.

The new initiative between the Australian Jewish News and the Museum featuring young Jewish artists was successful and is set to continue in 2024. RMIT’s fine art students held an exhibition of artistic responses.

Survey data indicated that many visitors travelled from interstate to see the exhibition and that 80% of the visitors identified as not Jewish.

Special programs and activities, included:

- Welcome to Yvette Coppersmith’s Salon;
- What is a Jewish artist panel with Dr. Victor Majzner, Anita Lester, Avraham Vofsi; and
- The Joint × JMA with Jade Niklai and Brett Kaye explored the Many Journeys of CHAGALL .

Coverage highlights, included:

- Broadsheet Things to Do *Chagall at the Jewish Museum of Australia*
- radio feature on the ABC’s *Friday Revue* with an interview with Jade Niklai, CHAGALL Curator, on 09 June;
- radio feature on the ABC’s *Radio National* with an interview with Jade Niklai, CHAGALL Curator, on 21 June;
- feature in Broadsheet’s *Domain Review* inside CHAGALL with Curator Jade Niklai, published 02 October; and
- a new partnership with the Australian Jewish News, supported by the Erdi Foundation, that invited artistically talented school students to produce a creative response to CHAGALL with 4 student pieces published in the AJN throughout the year.

MELBOURNE ART & DESIGN

A Celebration of Marc Chagall, a Master of Early Modernism, is Coming to Melbourne

Woven through the Jewish Museum of Australia's galleries, the exclusive collection will show the artist's large-scale public art and poems, alongside an exhibition by Archibald Prize winner Yvette Coppersmith.




1/4 I Am a Jew (I My Jew) 1948, © Marc Chagall. ADAGP/Courtesy of the Jewish Museum of Australia

Published on 27 May 2023
by STEVEN COPPIN

SHARE

Viewing a painting by 20th-century modernist Marc Chagall makes you want to cry through the frame: not the colourful dreamscapes of his imagination. And now you can, if it was, when the Jewish Museum of Australia transforms its gallery rooms into a whimsical woodland inspired by his paintings.

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New exhibition brings massive Chagall works to life in Melbourne

STEVE MEACHAM



Published: 30 May 2023
Last updated: 15 March 2024

STEVE MEACHAM previews a flagship Jewish Museum exhibition, which includes a contemporary companion exhibition by Yvette Coppersmith.

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★★★★★ Exhibition review: CHAGALL, Jewish Museum of Australia

A dreamlike exhibition that includes illustrated poetry and lithographs.

18 Jun 2023
Mimi Cass



Let the show begin! Make your way up a flight of stairs to the first floor and join in the wonder of flying horses and embracing couples while a weightless Eiffel Tower floats happily by. And, like magic, as you move from intimate space to intimate space, flowers will bloom on the walls around you. Delineated by variously coloured stage-like curtains, each room takes on its own fantasy-like performance. Presently showing at the Jewish Museum of Australia in Melbourne, the exhibition CHAGALL tells the story of the artist's creative journey through text, printmaking and his larger-scale epic-scale works and stained-glass window installations.

Celebrating the artist's distinctive visual language, Curator Jade Nihal draws from his folkloric Russian roots to his Russian influences spanning futurism, cubism and expressionism to explore themes around language, literature and the Bible, as well as the theatre and the natural world.

Born in 1887 in Vitebsk, Belarus, then part of the Russian Empire, Marc Chagall grew up in a Hasidic Jewish household. After moving to Paris, he became a pioneer of modernist art.

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art guide AUSTRALIA

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Illustration view of CHAGALL, Jewish Museum of Australia, 2023. Image credit: Steve Lisle/ArtHub

Marc Chagall, I Am a Jew, an oil on paper, 1948, 1.6m high in total on wood panel, 415 x 333 cm. Courtesy: Art & Co / Jewish Museum of Australia.



JEWISH MUSEUM of AUSTRALIA
Gandhi Centre of Judaism

CHAGALL

Printmaking, Poetry, Public Art.
09 Jun-10 Dec 2023

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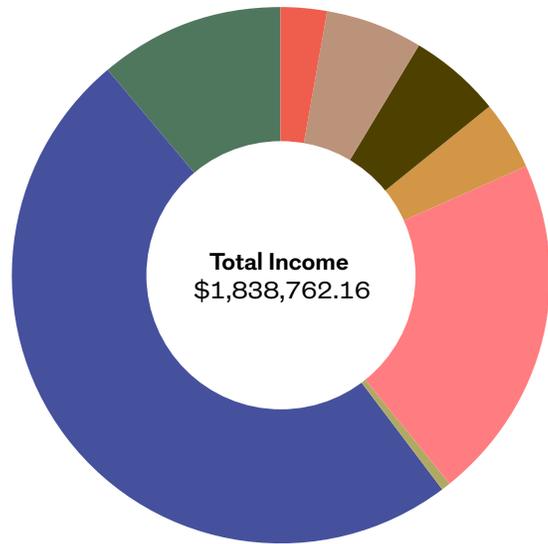
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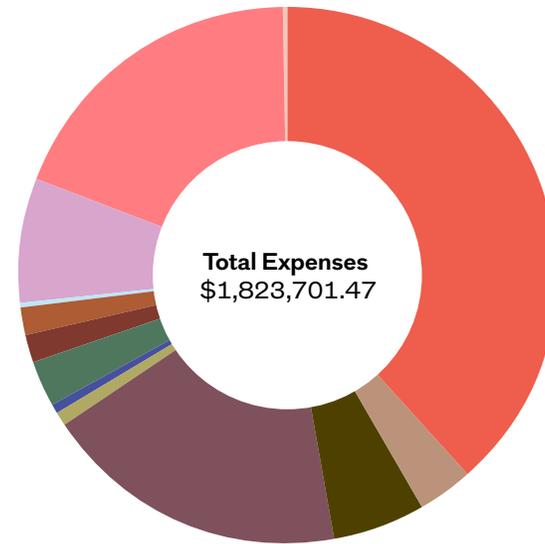
Partners: Jewish Museum of Australia, and others.

Our Performance: Income & Expenditure



Income

- **Sale of Goods** \$51,154.34
- **Provision of Services** \$110,628.82
- **Creative Victoria Grant** \$100,000
- **Safe & Together Grant** \$79,300
- **CHAGALL Exhibition** \$384,122.36
- **Interest from Financial Institutions** \$8,600.39
- **Contributions** \$901,215.89
- **Other Income** \$203,740.36



Expenses

- **Employee benefits** \$723,393.50
- **Superannuation** \$64,081.54
- **Depreciation** \$102,268.84
- **Experience & Facilities** \$348,901.48
- **Education & Programs** \$14,243.43
- **Curatorial** \$7,515.29
- **Marketing & Communications** \$55,805.45
- **Development** \$31,212.55
- **HELMUT NEWTON Exhibition** \$26,827.55
- **Melbourne Museum** \$2,367.55
- **Multicultural Grant** \$91,438.28
- **CHAGALL Exhibition** \$355,079.01
- **New Exhibition** \$567.00

Net Profit 15,060.69

Our Supporters

The Jewish Museum of Australia: Gandel Centre of Judaica is grateful to the individual donors, philanthropic trusts and foundations, corporate and government partners who share our passion for illuminating Jewish life, and whose financial and in-kind support assists and enables our pillars of research and interpretation, learning and engagement, and experiences and events.

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Kevin Smaller
Ricci Swart AM
Nechama Werdiger & Family

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**Jewish Museum of Australia:
Gandel Centre of Judaica**

26 Alma Road

St Kilda VIC 3182

jewishmuseum.com.au

ABN 21 005 574 210

At the Jewish Museum of Australia: Gandel Centre of Judaica, we illuminate Jewish life. We do this knowingly and respectfully acknowledging the first storytellers and their diverse Indigenous cultures across what is now called Australia. At the Jewish Museum we tell our stories on the lands of the Bunurong peoples and pay our respect to the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their Elders, past and present.



Gandel Centre of Judaica

Donations of \$2 or more to the Jewish Museum of Australia are tax deductible. The Jewish Museum of Australia is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient.