

Al Farrow



Contemporary Jewish Museum Opens Sabbath-Oriented Exhibit

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Al Farrow's *Sabbath Candleabra*. | Photo: David-Elijah Nahmod/Hoodline

San Francisco's Contemporary Jewish Museum has opened a new exhibit dedicated to the Sabbath, the Jewish day of rest, at its historic SOMA building.

Sabbath: The 2017 Dorothy Saxe Invitational can be seen at CJM (736 Mission St. between 3rd and 4th) through February 25th, 2018.

The museum's Invitational series invites contemporary artists to create new works inspired by a Jewish concept or a piece of Judaica. Pieces are presented so that each creation can be enjoyed by the museum's audience, and in the hope that the works will find permanent homes in private collections.

More than fifty artists and their pieces are on display in *Sabbath*, including several that present traditional images in a radical manner. Al Farrow's *Sabbath Candelabra*—fashioned from guns and bullets—is a meditation on the relationship between religion and violence.

Other pieces, such as Cary Leibowitz's *TGIF*, might amuse. In *TGIF*, the artist offers a water pitcher which Jews of ancient times might have used to wash their hands prior to the Sabbath meal.

During the press opening for *Sabbath*, CJM announced some of its upcoming shows for 2018.

From February 22nd–July 29th, the museum will present *Contraption: Rediscovering California Jewish Artists*.

Jews constitute a considerable number of the artists who have built California's artistic reputation, according to CJM, and a significant percentage were inspired by the notion of the machine, especially the improvised machine.

The exhibition includes the work of sixteen artists, including contemporary artists Bernie Lubell and Bella Feldman, the twentieth century's Boris Deutsch, painter Irving Norman, and sculptor Annabeth Rosen.

From March 15th–July 8th, CJM will present *The Art of Rube Goldberg*, which explores the career of one of the most celebrated and influential cartoonists of all time. Goldberg was a San Francisco native.

Highlights include one of Goldberg's earliest existing drawings, "The Old Violinist," from 1895, an original concept drawing of Boob McNutt and Bertha from the 1920s, as well as original artwork for comic strip series from the era.

Goldberg, who was born in San Francisco in 1883 and died in New York in 1970, was part of an established Jewish family—his father, Max, was the sheriff of San Francisco County in the 1890s.

Goldberg graduated from Lowell High School in 1900 and UC Berkeley in 1904. After working as an engineer for the city briefly, he left to do sports cartoons for the San Francisco Chronicle and relocated to New York in 1907.

Another exhibition steeped in local history will be *Lew the Jew*, on display from July 25th to November 18th, 2018.

This is a CJM original exhibition based on material from the collection of San Francisco artist and tattoo legend Don Ed Hardy. In it, CJM examines the work of "Lew the Jew" Alberts (born Albert Morton Kurzman, 1880-1954), one of America's most influential tattoo artists.

Alberts, son of two Jewish immigrants living in New York, learned tattooing as a member of the armed forces overseas during the Spanish-American War and was the original creator of what is now known as tattoo flash, ready-to-go design sheets that could be purchased by other tattoo artists.

This exhibition centers on artistic correspondence from the late 1940s and early 50s between Alberts and two Bay Area Jewish tattoo artists, Brooklyn Joe Leiber (1888–1953) who was working in Alameda, and C.J. "Pop" Eddy in San Francisco.