

End Times

Conference explores fears and hopes of the future / 2

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Diverse selection of artwork

Third annual international show takes place May 25-28.

CYNTHIA RAMSAY

"I am very much looking forward to seeing all the new artwork coming from around the world," Lisa Wolfin told the *Independent*. "We have some giant heads coming from Miami, some art made out of spider webs, metal sculptures and some really crazy stuff – can't wait to see it all together under one roof."

Wolfin is the founder and director of Art! Vancouver, which this year takes place May 25-28 at Vancouver Convention Centre-East. She is also an artist herself and will be bringing recent work to the fair.

"Over the past year," she said, "I have contemplated what to make for the show that is new and unique and have come up with my new series called I Feel. It is a portrait series made from different materials: oil on canvas, mixed media on wood panel, and photography."

Her current work is contemporary, she said. "What I have found in the many art fairs that I have attended is that artists are using recycled materials and making them into creative art forms. My newest series is made out of my kids' things they used when they were young. Sometimes, it feels like I am back in kindergarten being free to just play with materials, not thinking what you are trying to make out of it, just doing. Who doesn't want to be a kid again?"

As more people have become aware of the art fair – this is its third year – inquiries have come from around the world, said Wolfin. And CBC Arts' Amanda Parris "is flying out from Toronto to host the show and speak in a panel talk on Saturday at 3 p.m. Joining Amanda on the panel is Barrie Mowatt, who presently runs the Vancouver Biennale."

Art! Vancouver opens on May 25, 7 p.m., said Wolfin, with "The Face of Art, where the artists walk down the runway carrying their artwork, so the attendees can put a face to the art to know who the artist is. People are curious as to who are the makers of the art – at this show, the artists are mostly in attendance, where people can come to meet them."

Among those artists are several from the Jewish community, including Wolfin. Also presenting their work will be Johanan Herson, who is coming to the fair from Israel, and local artists Michael



Johanan Herson is coming from Israel to Art! Vancouver.

Abelman, Lauren Morris, Taisha Teal Wayrynen and Skyla Wayrynen.

"I will be showing mostly the soft art, textile art, but will have some of the sculpture works and acrylic paintings as well," Herson told the *Independent* about what he's bringing with him. "Le Soleil Gallery [on Howe Street] is showing the full range of my work and will continue after the fair to handle my artwork."

Herson said he's been to Vancouver a couple of times before, when he was a student at Banff School of Fine arts. He is originally from Montreal.

"I grew up in Montreal and visited Israel on various occasions before making aliyah," he said. "In fact, I had come to study at the Bezalel Academy just after the Six Day War and hated it. I traveled the world before coming back to Montreal and the Canadian sense of pluralism and diversity. I came back later [to Israel] to understand the meaning of my Jewishness and fell in love with an Israeli woman, of a 10-generation family, and find myself part of this dynamic society."

In terms of his artwork, Herson said, "I know that my soft art is a product of being at the right time and the right place, where this technique evolved, and I did look into the possibility of doing it in Quebec, but ... the soft art is definitely an Israel discovery and development."

"My Canadian identity is one of respect for everyone, the celebration of diversity and acceptance of the other, and I cherish my Cana-

dian roots and heritage and am proud of my citizenship. My work in Israel and my Jewish identity has always been part of who I am wherever I am and was part of who I am as a Canadian and an Israeli. I hope that my commitment to making the world a better place for everyone would have guided me if I had never left Canada, although perhaps the intensity of living and creating in the Middle East has challenges that are unique to Israel.

"I believe in the good in humanity," he continued, "and have always sought to defend the less-privileged and suffering ... whether they are in Montreal, Tel Aviv, Ramallah or Africa, and seek global communication as a platform to making the world a healthier and safer place of love, respect and opportunity for a better life for everyone. I do so as a Canadian Jewish Israeli artist."

He gave the example of an exhibit of his work that just closed at the University in Minnesota. The exhibit, he said, was "part of encouraging dialogue between the Jewish student and Islamic student bodies. The message is that we must pray and work for a better world, that tikkun olam is to wake up every day and say that the world has been created for me alone, and that I must make it a better place for everyone."

Teal Wayrynen is working toward a similar goal – making the world a better place – in a different way.

"I received my associates degree

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Halifax "owns" bagel

East Coast Bakery's first year is a success.

ALEX ROSE



Gerry Lonergan (inset) opened East Coast Bakery in Halifax on May 14 last year.

Gerry Lonergan wants to put Halifax on the bagel map. "Why do Montreal and New York own bagels?" he asked. "Two cities shouldn't own bagels. Why can't Halifax own them?"

Lonergan's East Coast Bakery celebrates its one-year anniversary May 14. Since he opened last year, he's been churning out quality bagels. The bakery came in third in a local newspaper's poll for best new business after being open for only 45 days – and the voting had started two weeks before the store's first day.

Although Lonergan is from Montreal, he is adamant that his bagels are their own style, which he calls East Coast. There are a few things that set them apart.

The first is sourdough: Lonergan is the only baker he knows who uses it for his bagels. The second is that his bagels are kosher, even though Lonergan himself isn't Jewish.

With a laugh, he noted that Chabad Rabbi Mendel Feldman "said if I do become Jewish I wouldn't be able



to open on Saturday, so it works for everybody in the community."

About his decision to go kosher, Lonergan explained, "If I went kosher, it was another level of auditing, of standards, of quality that I felt a lot of people would have trouble following my example, so it would give me a leg up in it from a business standpoint. But, also, I thought it was the right thing to do, it would just add that extra bit of authenticity to these bagels."

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Religion

End-time visions

MATTHEW GINDIN

Are we living in the "end times"? Many would agree that, some days, it feels like it. Vancouver School of Theology's Inter-Religious Studies program will host an apocalyptically themed conference this month called Visions of the End Times. Presenters will invite attendees to explore their fears and hopes for the future.

As part of the conference, which runs May 23-25, the keynote speaker, psychologist Dr. Lionel Corbett, will give a free public lecture. In the May 23 talk, Corbett will discuss the psychology of apocalyptic thinking and religious violence.

On the mornings of May 24 and 25, more than a dozen regional scholars will speak about concepts of the "end times" found in sacred texts, film, popular music and contemporary culture. Afternoon activities will include a multifaceted panel of local religious leaders and a creative writing workshop.

The conference had its genesis about three months before the U.S. election in a conversation between Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan, the director of Inter-Religious Studies at VST, and Hany Maier, professor of New Testament and early Christianity studies. The two professors contemplated why zombies are such a popular motif in contemporary culture. Are they a metaphor for soul-less humanity, for consumer culture consuming itself or a political world that has no awareness or conscience? This led to a discussion of the possibility of an academic conference on zombies in popular culture.

"Then," Duhan Kaplan explained to the *Jewish Independent*, "we remembered we're faculty at a theology school, and that zombies sort of appear in the Bible, in Ezekiel's prophecy about the resurrection of the dead. So, we broadened the topic to Visions of the End Times and made the conference a VST project."

Duhan Kaplan said she expects the conference will yield lively discussion. "My prediction for the thread that runs through the conference [is that] we will debate whether the world is getting worse or better, or heading in any direction at all."

She said speakers will address topics such as extremism and religious violence, visions of the end times articulated by religious traditions, the meaning of end-times themes in music and film, the nature of utopian thinking, and a deeper look at end-times teachings in Jewish, Christian and Muslim scriptures. There will also be an open mic Tuesday evening featuring music and poetry of the end times, which Kaplan hopes will be "whimsical and fun."

"I do believe that eschatological concepts [ideas resulting from the study of the end times] are helpful metaphors," she said. "They place even terrible events into a hopeful vision. When something bad happens, they say, 'Don't worry, it's just a blip on the way to a good end.' For example, when something bad happens, many Jews say, 'These are the footsteps of Mashiach.' Personally, I take great comfort in Isaiah's vision that 'the lion will lie down with the lamb.'"

"I don't think human beings will ever make a [peace] treaty that holds indefinitely," she continued. "But, while peace holds, people do experience a bit of 'the World to Come,' as we sometimes call the end times in Jewish thought."

Corbett's public talk is at 7 p.m. on May 23 at Chapel of the Epiphany on the University of British Columbia campus. For more information, visit vst.edu/event/visions-of-the-end-times-an-inter-religious-conference. ■

Matthew Gindin is a freelance journalist, writer and lecturer. He writes regularly for the *Forward* and *All That Is Interesting*, and has been published in *Religion Dispatches*, *Situate Magazine*, *Tikkun* and elsewhere. He can be found on *Medium* and *Twitter*.

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS

DR. SAMUEL DALES
APRIL 29

BARRY RITTER
MAY 1

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in psychology from Capilano University and am graduating this year with my bachelor's degree from Simon Fraser University," she told the *Independent*. "I will then combine my art with my counseling and do a master's program for art therapy after I travel for half a year."

At last year's Art! Vancouver, Teal Wayrynen featured her Pop Icon collection. This year, she said she is "experimenting with charcoal and acrylic paint and drawing female bodies."

Right now, her favourite medium is acrylic paint mixed with spray paint, she said. "I just started to mix mediums and use molding paste, acrylic paint and charcoal on top," she added.

Morris has also been delving into new methods and media.

"I have continued predominantly working on flowers, however, I have introduced a new colour palette, as well as more abstraction within my floral pieces," she told the *Independent*. "I've also continued with my free, fluid style and introduced some abstract landscapes using the new colours. My inspiration comes from the beautiful flowers that seem to surround me every day. Every season brings on something new and I am inspired by their shapes and colours."

She has been working on a new series for Art! Vancouver, Morris said, "experimenting with a couple of new techniques and colours. They will be mainly florals and will all coordinate in style so



"Golden Hour," acrylic on canvas, by Michael Abelman, one of several Jewish artists whose work is part of Art! Vancouver, which runs May 25-28.

that there is consistency within my pieces. I work predominantly in acrylic."

She added, "I am hoping that my growth as an artist is shown in my new pieces and that my work continues to evoke my viewers' emotions through visual imagery."

Art! Vancouver opens May 25 at the convention centre with a VIP preview at 6 p.m. and the gala at 7 p.m. The show runs May 26-27, noon to 8 p.m., and May 28, noon to 5 p.m. A one-day pass is \$15 (online) or \$25 (at the door); \$8 for children under the age of 14. A multi-day pass is \$40 and a VIP pass is \$100. Tickets to the opening gala are \$30. Visit artvancouver.net. ■

BAGELRY from page 1

Halifax Jewish community member Josh Bates helped Lonergan get started. The two met when a mutual friend told Bates he had to try Lonergan's bagels, when Lonergan was still making them from home.

"In terms of becoming kosher, I also introduced him to the Chabad rabbi who kosher-izes his bagels, if that's the word," said Bates.

Bates works in the mayor's office and, although he didn't help Lonergan in any official capacity, he was able to use his knowledge to help in other ways.

"He had a few questions around building code, getting approvals, finding a location. I introduced him to the executive directors of a couple different business improvement districts in Halifax," explained Bates.

With a background in the electronics industry, where he streamlined production processes, Lonergan knew how he wanted his bakery to function and what he would need to make it happen. The entire back of the bakery is open concept, so the customer can see as the bagels and challot are made every step of the way.

It was important for Lonergan to find the perfect place to set up shop, in part because his machines need three-phase power, which wasn't available in every potential location. One of those machines turns tubes of dough into rings, which are then each individually hand-stretched before being boiled in a pot of honey-water. The machine churns out the rings at a rate of 3,600 an hour, or one a second.

While living in Montreal, Lonergan vis-

ited Halifax a few years ago and knew it was the place he wanted to be.

"I came for a five-day trip and I just fell in love. I just said, 'Wow the people are so nice, the ocean is amazing.' I just saw lots of opportunity here, and I saw there was a need for what I wanted to do here. There was a need for artisanal bread, artisanal bagels," he said. "Within 48 hours of that trip, I said, 'That's it, I'm moving.' I came home and put my house up for sale within about five days."

In less than a year, East Coast Bakery has become something of a Halifax institution. Aside from his bagels and challot, which are based on old family recipes, Lonergan hopes to add hamantashen by next Purim. But even if he keeps the menu the same, Bates said the quality of Lonergan's baked goods should ensure the bakery's success.

"No matter how good a bagel is, it's always better when it's fresh out of oven.... I like a thin sweet bagel right out of the oven and, until East Coast Bakery opened, you couldn't get that in Halifax," he said.

And the challah? "Best challah I've ever had," Bates said. "When I go in there and buy a bag, I have hard time not finishing an entire loaf on my walk home." ■

Alex Rose is a master's student in journalism at the University of King's College in Halifax. He graduated from the same school in 2016 with a double major in creative writing and religious studies, and loves all things basketball. He wrote this article as part of an internship with the *Jewish Independent*.

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