

Letter from the Editors

In this volume of *Musings* we bring our readers a range of fascinating articles on various aspects of Jewish studies and reviews of three recent books by Australian authors. Returning to the journal's original purview to explore questions relevant to the focus of the Sydney Jewish Museum (Holocaust history, Jewish culture and Human Rights), the articles included in this volume consider issues pertinent to both the Sydney Jewish Museum as an institution and the wider Sydney Jewish community.

We open with an article by Alexandra A. Morehead, a PhD candidate at Brown University (Rhode Island) who served as the SJM's Severyn and Frieda Pejsachowicz Memorial Research Fellow in 2024. In her article, Morehead explores an ecological approach to Holocaust museology, using the SJM's existing Holocaust exhibition and archival collection as a case study.

In 2024, the SJM and broader Sydney community lost one of its founders and longtime volunteers, Olga Horak OAM. While Olga is remembered by the thousands who passed through the museum's doors as a Holocaust survivor who dedicated her life to sharing her experiences in hopes of contributing to a better world, she is less well known as a prolific artist. Jana Vyrhlik offers a tribute to Olga's oeuvre through an in-depth exploration of her work, its visual and cultural significance, as well as its varied influences.

For many members of our community who came to Australia – whether survivors of the Holocaust, refugees from North Africa and the Middle East, or migrants from the former USSR – the acceptance as they experienced as Jews in this multicultural society affirmed the title of “Lucky Country”. However, in the two and a half years since 7 October 2023, Australian Jewry, like its counterparts across the world, has experienced an exponential rise in antisemitism. Ron Spielman, Lynette Chazan, Paul Foulkes, George Halasz, Ilana Nayman and Garry Walter address this concerning trend and its manifestations from a psychiatric perspective. While the authors do not offer answers or solutions, their perspective “has the capacity to usefully inform debate and discussion about the issue.”

This issue also includes reviews of recent books in Jewish and Holocaust studies by Australian authors. Kip Green reviews Jana Vyrhlik's *Treasures of Old Sydney: The Story of a Visual Heritage* (2024, winner of the 2025 Leslie and Sophie Caplan Prize for Jewish Non-Fiction). Lynne Swarts reviews *Ruptured: Jewish Women in Australia Reflect on Life Post-October 7* (2025), an anthology edited by Lee Koffman and Tamar Paluch. Concluding this issue is Erin O'Brien's review of Graham Blewitt and Mark Aarons anthology *Nazis in Australia: The Special Investigations Unit, 1897–1994* (2025).

Finally, as we publish a new volume of *Musings* we bid farewell to the journal's founder and co-editor, Professor Avril Alba. We thank Professor Alba for her tireless efforts and dedication to *Musings* over the years and introduce Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod (Chair of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, University of Sydney) in her stead. We look forward to a fruitful co-editorship and the journal continuing to go from strength to strength.

Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod
The University of Sydney

Dr Jonathan C. Kaplan
Sydney Jewish Museum