

WINTER 2025

Kunst קונסט



Ora

NORTHWEST  
JEWISH ARTISTS

ORA NW Jewish Artists: Newsletter



**Kunst is the Yiddish Word for ART**  
**ORA is the Hebrew word for light**  
**Everything else in this newsletter is probably in English!**



## **Our Co-Presidents Discuss A New Idea for ORA Member Involvement**

**Linda:** I would like to see more ORA members get involved in a new event. What brings us together is we are Jewish and we like being creative. I would like to see our members get together and work on a simple art project. I'm thinking that we could make prayer flags together.

**Glenn:** Linda, I think you are right. We need to involve our members in creative or educational events. In fact, besides more and different types of sales events, our greatest innovation this year has been an increase in the number and types of educational offerings. How do you see prayer flags being used? Would this be accessible to all our members with their different approaches to art?

**Linda:** I think we should start out simple and stick with fabric or canvas flags. We'll use fabric or regular paints to decorate the flags. There are many possibilities, like creating flags with Jewish holiday themes. I can imagine flags that have S,H,A,L,O,M that could be done simply or could be highly decorated like illuminated lettering. Our imaginative artists could create some very visually interesting flag sets.

**Glenn:** We have writers or storytellers in ORA, who could inspire us with a holiday or other Jewish theme. Do you have an idea what we'll do with the finished product?

**Linda:** Membership input will be important. I can envision the possibility of selling these prayer flags at one of our sales or events and donating the proceeds to a local charity. One of our new members suggested that since we have partnered with Rachel's Well Mikvah, we might contribute to their building painting fund. We might elect to retain some of the funds to cover our project costs. Again, I think membership input will be important.

**Glenn:** It's a good idea. One worth exploring with our membership. It also has the advantage of being a project that is easy to find a work space to "art" in: the J, at Neveh or at someone's home.

**Linda & Glenn:** What do you think of this idea? Do you have improvements for this or another idea? We'd like to know what you think. Contact us at (Glenn) gdecherd@comcast.net or (Linda) lindaibourne@gmail.com

**Editor: Eddy Shuldman**  
**Copy Editor: Linda Bourne**

# WELCOME

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ORA is pleased to welcome several new members to our guild of Jewish artists!

**We'll celebrate our new members at a party on February 2, 2025.**

The party will be held in room 102 @ Neveh Shalom 2900 SW Peaceful Lane from 2-4pm. We'll have refreshments, a brief meeting, and an opportunity to schmooze with each other. More information will come your way shortly! In the meantime....**save the date!**

**An upcoming new feature of this newsletter is a focus on new artists. Each issue will focus on a few of our newest members. Listed below are the names and media of artists who have joined ORA in the last year.**

**Amy Solomonson**, mixed media, watercolor, colored pencil, archival

**Barbara Bava**, mixed media, watercolor, ikebana

**Ben O'Glasser**, wood

**Brian Rohr**, poet, author, storyteller

**David Friedman**, papercutting/printmaking/digital art/painting

**Donna Erbs**, storyteller

**Eliat Avivi**, acrylics

**Gail Pasternack**, storyteller

**Jan Baross**, acrylic, photography, films

**Judith Brown**, glass, fiber art, candles

**Kathy Jaffe**, glass, fiber art, candles

**Lynn Latta**, jewelry

**Neil Wagner**, fused glass

**Nissa Rost-Rothman**, mixed: water color, clay dough, random odds and ends

**Polina Olson**, embroidery

**Rabbi Sarah Rensin**, Acrylic, oil, pen and ink

**Rachel Harris**, drawing, mixed media and painting

**Richard Hurwitz**, wood

ברוכים  
הבאים  
Welcome  
BRUCHIM HABAIM

# Meet 2 ORA Artists!

## Gail Pasternack and Diane Fredgant

**This is the first installment of our new series featuring ORA members!**

*Gail Pasternack is one of ORA's newer members. She enthusiastically participates on our marketing committee, and as a storyteller, was involved in the OUR STORIES show at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education and our recent Hanukkah Marketplace. The following article has been "lifted" from her website. She writes a fabulous newsletter and you are welcome to subscribe to it! It makes for some great reading! Just go to : <https://gailpasternack.com> to sign up!*



"I'm passionate about living the creative life and dedicated to writing and storytelling. In my newsletter, Gail's Art Encounters, I chronicle my creative adventures and share the inspirational stories of other artists and writers.

I'm devoted to helping other writers and creative people. That is why I love being a reading coach for authors and helping them use their voice to bring their stories to life. I also enjoy being the president of Willamette Writers, the largest writing organization in the Pacific Northwest, with more than 1300 members.

My short story "Asmodai in Portland," was published in the anthology New Mitzvah Stories for the Whole Family by Reclaiming Judaism Press, and my short story "Here I Am" was published in the 2021 fall edition of JewishFiction.net. In March of 2021, my travel essay about cocktail bars in London and Paris was published in Wanderlust Journal.

I was ordained as a Maggidah, a Jewish storyteller, in August of 2021 and contributed two stories to the anthology The Fruit of Yitzhak's Tree in 2023.

After twenty years as an educator, I'm at work on a novel, a redemptive story about the relationship between a pansexual female artist and a Hollywood film star.

As an active member of the Jewish Women's Storytelling Collective, I collaborate with fellow Maggidah to tell stories about women and celebrate the female voice. We are currently compiling a collection of stories with female protagonists, which will be published in 2025.

My husband and I live in Portland, where our date nights are filled with trying new restaurants and cocktail bars or listening to live jazz or just hanging out with our dog, Leeta.

# Diane Fredgant, Silk Artist

by Gail Pasternack

*Diane Fredgant is a founding member of ORA and has served on the board of directors in a variety of capacities, including serving a term as ORA president.*

*Gail Pasternack recently featured Diane in two of her newsletters, so we thought we would share her article here. What a great way to launch our ARTIST FOCUS series.*

Recently, I talked with silk artist Diane Fredgant about art and creativity. In our conversation, I learned that Diane didn't start as a fabric artist, nor did she seek to become a silk artist. It was as if the medium found her.

Diane began her creative endeavors as a sculptor, working in stone and wood. She also earned a living in the healing arts. Over twenty years ago, she ran a massage studio in Albuquerque, NM.

She joined a drum circle that was run by a woman who, in addition to being a musician, made hand painted silk. Diane was so taken by the pieces hanging in the woman's studio that she decided to commission her to make a wall hanging for her business.

When the silk artist came to Diane's massage studio, she said, "Usually I get what I'm supposed to make for someone, but what I'm getting from you is that you're going to make this yourself."

At first Diane just laughed. But then she took workshops and learned how to paint silk herself. "It was magic," Diane said.

She still has the wall hanging she made all those years ago, and she still has a passion for working with silk.

I call Diane a silk artist, though she admitted to me that she didn't always see herself as an artist.



"I went between thinking that I'm a craft person and an artist," she said. "But I got to that point where I can say I'm an artist."

"Is that because some of the things you make can be used?" I asked.

"Right. And because it's fabric."

"Is there a prejudice against fabric?"

"I think so," she said. "And I don't understand it."

Diane is not alone in perceiving a bias against fabric in the art world. Welsh-Canadian artist Alana Tyson wrote in her blog, *Dangerous Women*, "There remains a hierarchy in the art world; craft processes rank lower [...] This extends even further; amongst crafts, textiles are one of the least well regarded."

In the February 2024 article for "The Great Women's Art Bulletin" in *The Guardian*, Katy Hessel wrote, "textiles [are] art forms historically deemed as 'decorative' by the establishment because of [their] association with women's work."

According to Katy Hessel, textiles have been considered a lower art form since the Renaissance, but was cemented as such by the Royal Academy in 1769, when they banned textile arts from its exhibitions.

**ORA's own Cassandra Sagan is the instructor!!!!**

**ORA members pay reduced rate of \$25 !**

Please register by aiming your phone camera at the QR code,  
or send an email to [lrichmond@nevehshalom.org](mailto:lrichmond@nevehshalom.org)



Thursday, January 16 | 6:30–8:30pm

CNS-ORA

Art  and Soul

Wine | Snacks | Date Night | Friends' Night Out



Sip and Sketch

# Zentangles

Come drink wine with friends old and new, and play with simple, incremental drawing techniques. For complete newbies, lifetime artsy types, and everyone in between.

\$25 CNS-Member | \$30 Non CNS-Member



[nevehshalom.org/art25](https://nevehshalom.org/art25)

Questions? [lrichmond@nevehshalom.org](mailto:lrichmond@nevehshalom.org)

# Hanukkah Marketplace

## 2024

Our Hanukkah/Winter Marketplace took place December 8-12th, Although it ran a full day shorter than previous shows, we experienced record sales!

The show featured the artistic works of new members: Ben O'Glasser (wood), David Friedman (paper cuts), Lynn Latta (jewelry), Barbara Weissman (jewelry), , and Brian Rohr (author).



We were pleased to welcome longer term members Lori Randel (mixed media), Laura Fendel (fabric), and Avi O'Glasser (fabrics) to their first Hanukkah Fair.



Returning members included Aaron Pearlman (photography), Andrea Meyer (jewelry), Annelie Thurin (paper art), David Kolasky (ceramics & wood), Deborah Schneider (ceramics), Diane Fredgant (silk painting), Diane Russell (painting), Eddy Shuldman (glass), Glenn Decherd (pottery), Jack Liskear (wood), Linda Bourne (ceramics), and Martha Decherd (weaving).



We are grateful to all these artists for their efforts to make this a successful event.

Evening events (pictured on the previous page) were organized by Aaron Pearlman. Our graittude is also extended to Martha Decherd, our stalwart treasurer who handled the complexities of our finances for this event! Coordination of the artists was led by Eddy Shuldman.



We look forward to holding another Marketplace event prior to Hanukkah 2025! Stay tuned!



# Scenes from our Hanukkah Marketplace Evening Programs!



Brian Rohr



Gail Pasternack



Cassandra Sagan



Klezmer!



Aaron Pearlman & Haverim



# From the Belly of the Mishkan: Art and Performative Poetry

## An Art Launch and Sukkot Ritual Celebration

It was the second night of Sukkot, October 17th, 2024 when a crowd gathered together at the Eastside Jewish Commons to experience Diane Fredgant's art installation: *The Modern Mishkan* and to hear poetry from Brian Rohr's exquisite newly released collection, *Shaken to My Bones: A Poetic Midrash on the Torah*.

A local sing-along band known as the DownStairs Band led the crowd in singing in place of the traditional maariv Sukkot service.

Sadly, performative poet, storyteller, and ORA artist Brian Rohr had to miss this event due to a rugged bout with COVID. Thanks to modern technology, he was able to zoom in to hear a selection of his work read by Sharon Fendrich, Daniel Fredgant, and Eddy Shuldman.

A lively talk-back session with Diane followed the music and poetry. The crowd was asked for their initial reactions to experience in the mishkan.

*"This was a spiritual high for me,"* remarked one of the attendees. *"I stepped inside the mishkan and immediately felt transported. The imagery was powerful and the lettering seemed to infuse the space in holiness!"*

You can catch a glimpse of the evening's program by going to youtube using this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-thVU17iDVA>

This is a private link at the moment because the brief film is being edited. A public version will be released soon! We'll be sure to announce the new link when it goes public!

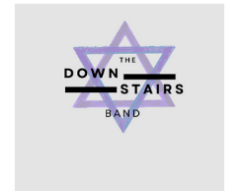
Diane is currently working on some grants through ORA to gain funding for curriculum development and new programming with the hopes of taking the Modern Mishkan on the road...after all, the original Mishkan was built for traveling!





# Art Can Mean Community!

Waters of Life and Peace **מים חיים ושלום**



**Mayim Chayim V'Shalom** is an innovative program that was inspired by a request for art by Caron Blau Rothstein who manages Rachel's Well Community Mikvah. ORA responded by visiting the mikvah to discuss the various options for developing a project that could bring contemporary art into the mikvah building and its surrounding garden.

A mikvah is a "living waters" ritual bath which is accessible to all Jews who seek a spiritual cleansing experience in a sacred space.

Zac Banik and Eddy Shuldman coordinated Mayim Chayim (V'shalom (Waters of Life and Peace). With the assistance of Ahavah Oblak (z"l) a grant was written to the **Helen and Jerry Stern Grandchildren's Fund**. They provided ORA with the seed money to launch this project!

The project was launched with an open call for Jewish artists to become involved in creating art for the mikvah through a short program of spiritual experiences and study. Eighteen artists attended an erev Shavuot experience at the Mikvah and the MJCC. After a brief tour of the mikvah led by Caron, the artists gathered in the mikvah courtyard to sing prayers and meditate before

gathering at the MJCC for some cheesecake and a study session with Rabbi Josh Rose (CoLab) and Zac Banik. A second study session was led by Rabbi Eve Posen of Congregation Neveh Shalom.

Artists had 5 months to apply their creativity to crafting an artistic response to their mikvah studies. On November 7th, the MJCC generously hosted an artist reception. Twelve artists were on hand to receive a crowd of 80+ attendees.

Participating artists were (ORA members in bold) **Brian Rohr** (poetry), **Diane Fredgant** (silk), **Eddy Shuldman** (glass), **Glenn Decherd** (ceramics), **Judith Brown** (mosaic), **Laurie Fendel** (fabric), Leila Wice (ceramics), Leora Troper (poetry), Merridawn Duckler (conceptual landscape design), **Nissa Rost Rothman** (mixed media), and **Sharon Segal** (painting).

A jury was assembled to review the art. Selected artists will be asked to loan artwork for display at the mikvah. Several artists have indicated their willingness to donate their art! **(continued on the next page.....)**

Mayim Chayim....continued

Eddy Shuldman stated that “Community involvement was remarkable. If you take a look at the number of organizations ...8!....supporting this effort, it’s just amazing!”



She went on to share ORA’s future plans for engaging the community in broader art experiences. “We’ll be writing several more grants this year. Our project provided us with enough art to fulfill our initial goal of providing art for the mikvah. The ‘takeaway’ from this experience is that artists are very interested in spiritual experiences and Jewish study. We learned a lot about how to organize these types of experiences and we will now focus on creating new opportunities for artistic and spiritual growth for our artists. Grant deadlines are coming up at the end of January. Once we find out what our financial support looks like, we will announce our plans!”





## **ORA's Mission, Vision, Value**

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With the help of many members at large, ORA crafted new statements regarding our mission, vision, and value proposition during 2021-2022.

**MISSION:** ORA is a community of Jewish artists who share a love of art and creativity. We support each other through camaraderie, networking, and continued learning. We foster confidence and courage through our collective body of wisdom and grow ourselves as artists. Our exhibitions, art sales, and educational opportunities build networking and professionalism within the larger arts community.

**VISION:** ORA is a recognized regional presence in the Jewish and secular community. a vibrant tapestry of partnerships, collaborations and opportunities across diverse art forms. ORA foster artistic growth and professionalism, We encourage each artistic voice and nurture the creative soul.

**VALUE PROPOSITION:** We are the home where Jewish artists find support, community, and inspiration.