

WORKING TITLES

Journal for Practice-Based Research

Issue No. 03/2025:

SPELL CHECK: Spiritualism, Shamanism,
Sorcery & the Reincarnation of the
Occult in Dark Times

Working Titles is an online journal run by doctoral candidates in the Ph.D. programme Art and Design at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar. By “working titles” we hint at the journal’s main objectives: To serve as a platform for the presentation of research carried out through any practice – from oil painting to anarchist urban plumbing – and to facilitate the self-publishing of practice-based working papers. Contributors submit their works to a non-blind peer review by those they deem suitable, regardless of their academic affiliation, and based on friendship and trust.

Editorial team for issue No. 3: Yvon Chabrowski, Leopold Haas, Be Körner, Eleftherios Krysalis, Pablo Santacana López, Hans-Martin Robert Rehnig and Felix Björn Sattler; directed by Ann-Kathrin Müller and Gabriel S Moses.

Supported by Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Professorship Arts and Research. Published by Working Titles, c/o Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Ph.D.-Studiengang Kunst und Design, Geschwister-Scholl-Straße 7, 99423 Weimar. Libre Fonts by Sun Young Oh: Anthony, velvetyne.fr/fonts/anthony, and Lucas Le Bihan: Happy Times at the IKOB, velvetyne.fr/fonts/happy-times, under the SIL Open Font License, Version 1.1. This publication is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 (CC-BY-NC 4.0): <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>.

Ritual and Mysticism as Subversion: Rethinking the Sacrifice- Redeemer Mechanism

Rotem Ritov

Abstract

My interactive art installation *Ha-Sair* is a platform for exploring the intersection of contemporary artistic practice, mysticism, faith, and magical thinking. I created *Ha-Sair* as a critical response to hegemonic structures of order and control, particularly those predicated on the sacrifice-redeemer hierarchy.

Ha-Sair constitutes a fictional ritual, yet one that is experienced as real, designed to challenge, resist, and subvert binary frameworks that glorify sacrifice as a fundamental mechanism of relational structures, whether between individuals, humanity and the divine, or citizens and the state.

By employing ritualistic gestures, sacred iconography, and participatory engagement, the installation functions as an active mystical inquiry within a spiritual framework. It incorporates and reinterprets religious and ritualistic practices, drawing from pre-monotheistic traditions and also monotheistic, such as the Jewish *Sair La'Azazel* ritual of the *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) from the Temple period, and the Islamic *ramy al-jamarāt* ceremony of *Eid al-Adha* (the Feast of Sacrifice), performed in the city of Mina located east of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The reconfigurations undertaken within the framework of the art installation foreground a feminist critique of sacrificial relational paradigms and challenge the passive anticipation of divine salvation.

Ha-Sair refers to this mystical framework as a tool for stimulating an alternative model of salvation based on proactive agency.

The work inhabits a space between faith and critique, neither affirming nor rejecting mysticism outright, but rather using it as a lens for critical exploration. This article further explores the emotional and semiotic potency of ritual aesthetics within *Ha-Sair*, contextualizing its embedded historical and faith-based references.

Origins – The Meaning of *Ha-Sair* (השעיר)

Framed through an artistic and a feminist perspective, I seek to rethink traditional and religious hierarchies, particularly those predicated on the sacrifice-redeemer mechanism within hegemonic structures of order and control. I situate *Ha-Sair* within a faith-based timeline that spans over thousands of years, where meanings and narratives have been shaped by each era's dominant culture or religion. It draws from belief systems and ceremonial practices originating in ancient Mesopotamian and Middle Eastern¹ polytheistic cultures – later assimilated and reinterpreted within Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and vernacular local folkloristic spiritual traditions. Within this ongoing evolution, the installation emerges as a site of ritual. Choosing the title *Ha-Sair* reflects my intention to subvert tradition and challenge entrenched hierarchies. The name *Ha-Sair* (השעיר) refers to a specific Jewish sacrificial ritual and a Hebrew idiom, “scapegoat”:² *Sair La-Azazel* (השעיר לעזאזל).

SAIR השעיר → A young goat

LA ל → To

AZAZEL עזאזל → A demon from Jewish mythology, associated with the northeastern Negev desert

Adding the Hebrew definite article “*Ha*” (ה, “the”) and omitting “*La-Azazel*” (“to Azazel”), transforms the goat from an object of sacrifice offered to a demon into an autonomous subject, one that possesses the agency to resist. The goat is no longer used to satisfy the desires of angry demons or to purify human sins. Its liberation, and the reversal of its role and position during the ritual, transforms it into a symbol of resistance against the traditional hierarchy founded on the sacrifice-redeemer mechanism. This act of rebellion subverts the structure of power and control, revealing a feminist perspective.



Figure 1: *Azazel and the Goat*, 2019, mixed technique. Photo: courtesy of the artist.

¹ The Middle East is defined in this essay by the cultural heritage of Akkad, Babylonia, Assyria, and Ancient Egypt, as well as the development of monotheistic religions, particularly Islam in the Arab world. These ancient civilisations were located in territories that are now part of Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, and Turkey.

² “The word ‘scapegoat’ is a modern interpretation of the perplexing phrase ‘a goat for Azazel’. It was not until the *Tyndale English Bible* was published in 1530 that the translation ‘escape-goat,’ later shortened to the familiar ‘scapegoat’ in the 17th century King James Version, was introduced” (Rashkow 89).

The idiom “*Sair La-Azazel*” entered the Hebrew language through the biblical *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) sacrificial ritual, performed by high priests at the Temple in Jerusalem from the beginning of the Iron Age II (1000-700 BCE) (Mazar) until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

With the intention “to remove the accumulated contamination, caused by the impurities and sins of the Israelites, from the tabernacle” (Rashkow 86), two young male goats (Leviticus 16:7-11) were offered for divine forgiveness. One goat was offered to God at the Temple’s main altar. The second was taken to the wilderness, to Azazel, the head of the sinful angels, associated with forbidden fornication, curse, darkness, and death (Elior 37–56): “And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for Azazel” (Leviticus 16:8). There, with a red thread tied to its horns, the goat was cast off the cliff to its death. If the red thread turned white following the goat’s descent, it was interpreted as a sign that God had absolved the sins of Israel and that Azazel had accepted the offering.³

I come from a Middle Eastern region where self-sacrifice is not only a present and prominent part of diverse local communities, but also reflects the unwritten contract between the state and its citizens. The glorification of sacrifice as a supreme value (Martyr in Christianity, *Shahid* in Islam, *Kiddush Ha-Shem*⁴ in Judaism) involves violence, and in turn, produces violence. Proudly accepting either being, or giving, a personal sacrifice is part of both the Israeli and the Palestinian ethos. Secular national ethos, both Zionist and Palestinian, are not detached from religious sources: they draw heavily on concepts such as salvation, self-sacrifice, and heroism in the service of a chosen collective. These ideas form a central axis for legitimizing and advancing nationalist narratives. Thus emerges a profound dissonance: modern ideologies that claim to uphold democracy and human rights often continue to promote faith-based narratives that sanctify suffering, martyrdom, and death in the name of a higher vision. This dissonance undermines the establishment of a truly egalitarian society, in particular obstructing the realization of feminist values.

Rituals and cults are intrinsic elements of spiritual traditions. *Ha-Sair* constitutes a fictional one, yet it is intended to be experienced as real. It is designed to challenge, resist, and subvert power structures that glorify sacrifice as a fundamental relational mechanism between individuals and communities, humanity and the divine, or citizens and the state. *Ha-Sair* proposes mysticism as a tool to stimulate the participant’s proactive agency.

³ “There was a strip of crimson tied to the entrance to the Sanctuary, and when the goat reached the wilderness and the mitzvah was fulfilled the strip would turn white” (Mishnah: Yoma 6).

⁴ “*Kiddush Ha-Shem*” means “Sanctification of the Name” (of God).



Figure 2: *Ha-Sair*, 2022, installation view, NordArt, Germany. Photo: Conrad Pfüller.

Ha-Sair, Ritual Sequence – A Detailed Account of the References Embedded in Its VI Stages

Ha-Sair's ceremonial framework draws on Middle Eastern mythologies and rituals, from ancient polytheism and monotheism to contemporary sociocultural and philosophical discourse. I weave between cultural and religious archetypal themes of sacrifice, redemption, and resistance, inviting participants to engage beyond fixed systems of belief.

Taking on the role of creator, I became the author of a ritual with the power to break the mystical cycle that ties individuals to systems that perpetuate suffering through the hierarchical logic of sacrifice and redemption. This act challenges the social and political tendency to demand self-sacrifice and scapegoating in the name of order, hierarchy, or power.

To enact *Ha-Sair's* ritual and break the sacrifice-redeemer circle, six physical and mental ceremonial actions must be performed. Each is embodied in a symbolic object that holds its essence.

- I. Attunement: A Golden Bench and Protective Fabric Garment for Shoes
- II. Social Commitment, One for All and All for One: Ornate Pedestal and Horn
- III. At the Mount of Golden Stones
- IV. Redemption at the Golden Wall
- V. Revelation: A Personal Message, Amulets, Red Threads, and Scrolls
- VI. Salvation: At the Foot of the Offering Bowl and the Mask

The resonance of cultures, traditions, and mythologies extends beyond mere citation. Their invocation allows for a process of response, rewriting, reclaiming, adaptation, and updating, through which a feminist perspective and critical lens are brought to bear on contemporary ideological currents. This process unfolds while venturing into realms of the supernatural and the depths of the subconscious.

I will elaborate on these elements through a discussion of specific references and their significance, each situated within the unfolding sequence of the *Ha-Sair* ritual.



Figure 3: *Ha-Sair*, 2022, installation view, NordArt, Germany. Photo: Conrad Pfüller.

Ceremonial Action I

Attunement: A Golden Bench and Protective Fabric Garment for Shoes

Traditionally, participation in a ritual is neither immediate nor direct. To attune with mystical sanctity, one must first undergo a process of purification gestures. Upon crossing the threshold into the ritual installation, participants are invited to settle on a golden-colored bench and cover their shoes with protective fabric garments. Settling on the bench unconsciously heightens spiritual intention as the symbolic spatial gap created between the external world and the ritual environment serves as a threshold separating the mundane from the sacred. Donning protective covering on the shoes prepares and gives the participants (each in turn) the opportunity to attune to a heightened state of ritual consciousness, opening them to a mystical experience within an artistic space perceived as holy at this liminal moment.

“Thus the reality and the enduringness of a construction are assured not only by the transformation of profane space into a transcendent space (the center) but also by the transformation of concrete time into mythical time” (Eliade 20-21).

This gesture echoes the biblical text “put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Exod. 3.5), marking the installation as a site of potential revelation. It signals to participants the need for emotional and spiritual intention before entering a sacred zone. The origin of this phrase is found in the Book of Exodus, where Moses encounters the burning bush. It is the first moment in Jewish scripture where a physical-ritual-symbolic gesture of removing one’s shoes is commanded in response to a mystical event, thereby designating the place as sacred and demanding reverence and awe.

Rituals of purification and cleansing prior to entering spiritual or sacred spaces are practiced across a wide range of cultures and religious traditions, such as removing shoes before entering Buddhist temples and Islamic mosques. In the architectural traditions of these building types the threshold between the profane and the sacred is often made visible, emphasizing the transition from the everyday into a space of heightened spiritual significance. The act of transition reinforces one’s surrender to the mystical experience. As part of the Sunni Islam’s⁵ *Wudu* (الوضوء, ablution) purification ritual, performed before prayer, it is customary to wear special socks known as *Khuffayn* (الخُفَّيْن).

Foundational principles of sacred architectural design in Christianity of churches and basilicas were formalized following the Edict of Milan (Cataliotti) in 313 CE,

⁵ Sunni Islam represents approx. 90% of the global Muslim population. In contrast to Shiites and Khawarij, the Sunnis deny Ali, Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law, as Muhammad’s only legitimate successor. Sunni Islam avoids fundamental divisions, allowing, instead, for “pluralism within a unitary system” (Immenkamp).



Figure 4: *Ha-Sair*, 2022, NordArt, Germany, Ceremonial action I: covering the shoes with protective fabric garments. Photo: courtesy of the artist.

when two Roman emperors, Constantine and Licinius, declared religious tolerance for Christianity, lifting it from the shadows of persecution. In the earliest known basilica, the Basilica of Bishop Theodore of Aquileia (Angelini et al. 2386) in Italy, the sequence of spatial divisions from the entrance to the sanctum reflects this ritual progression: Portico (a roofed colonnade supported by columns), Atrium (an open, central courtyard), Narthex (a covered porch or vestibule at the entrance of a church, separating the outside from the nave) – only then does one reach the nave (the main worship area) and the Altar, the most sacred part of the structure.



Figure 5: *Ha-Sair*, 2022, NordArt, Germany, Ceremonial action I objects: protective fabric garments basket and gold colored bench. Photo: courtesy of the artist.

Ceremonial Action II

Social Commitment, One for All and All for One: Ornate Pedestal and Horn



Figure 6 + 7: *Ha-Sair*, 2022, NordArt, Germany, Ceremonial action II: Commitment, objects: the donation pedestal and horn, mixed technique. Photo: courtesy of the artist.

The second stage of the ritual is a metaphorical gateway to a society based on reciprocal relationships and interconnected circles of support. One for all and all for one. This circular connection is not hierarchical. It maintains interrelationships between its four generators:

- A) exhibition visitors
- B) the creator and the work of art
- C) a chosen social impact associations that empower communities
- D) the community members supported by these associations.

Ha-Sair uses artistic frameworks as a critical response to hegemonic structures of order and control, particularly those based on the sacrifice-redeemer hierarchy. In a circular system of mutual interactions devoid of hierarchy, each generator feeds the others and each action supports the whole. The production of thousands of gold stones (generator B, expanded in more detail in Ceremonial Action III) was made possible through collaboration with the women's community (generator D) supported by IsA-K Berlin (generator C).

For participating in the ceremony and receiving an amulet and a linoleum ink print (expanded upon in Ceremonial Action V), visitors to the exhibition (generator A) were asked to give a donation designated to support the association's work. Thus, the circular system of mutual interactions is now complete.

In the NordArt exhibition in 2022, it was mandatory to give a fixed donation designated to IsA-K, a non-profit clothing workshop and women's association affiliated with AWO Kreisverband Berlin-Mitte e.V. in Berlin. They support women engaged in community service and offer guidance for transitioning out of cycles of socio-economic hardship, empowering them through skill-building and social advocacy. Thanks to the donations collected, IsA-K was able to purchase new sewing machines for their workshop.

In the solo exhibition at Alfred gallery in 2019, it was voluntary to give donations. They were directed to the independent Israeli news magazine *The Hottest Place in Hell* – committed to investigative journalism and the exposure of social injustices in Israel. The platform champions the values of democracy, equality, and social justice.

The horn and pedestal are constructed from hundreds of dismantled and reassembled pieces of women's jewellery. They echo the biblical story of the Golden Calf, crafted from the jewellery of Hebrew women following their exodus from Egypt. Yet, the meaning is subverted. Rather than being objects of worship or idolatry, they serve as a metaphorical gateway to a larger circle of social commitment and support, and to one's inner powers (which will be revealed through the *Ha-Sair* ceremony).

Ceremonial Action III At the Mountain of Golden Stones

In the third stage of the ritual, the participant draws one of the stones from the Mountain of Golden Stones. Each stone possesses the mystical power of liberation from the sacrifice–redeemer mechanism. Hidden within each golden colored clay stone is an amulet and a blessing, which will be revealed in the fifth phase of the ritual. The laborious process of moulding thousands of stones, concealing amulets within them and dyeing them gold was made possible by working together with the women from IsA-K, AWO Kreisverband Berlin-Mitte.



Figure 8: *Ha-Sair*, 2022, NordArt, Germany, Ceremonial action III: At the Mount of Golden Stones. Photo: courtesy of the artist.

Ceremonial Action IV Redemption at the Golden Wall

In the fourth stage of the ritual, the participant throws their chosen stone at the Golden Wall. As it shatters, the cultic potential of the object is realized – the artwork fulfills its function: touching the boundary between the secular and the sacred, between destruction and elevation. The Golden Wall appears to ripple and respond to the impact of shattering stones. This illusion is achieved through the application of a collaged sheet of masking tape, painted with gold pigment, affixed directly to the gallery wall.

In the context of an exhibition, it is uncommon to throw and break an artwork. Touching is usually prohibited, let alone destruction. The gesture of hurling an art object constitutes an act of rebellion: it desecrates the artwork's sanctified status, directly challenging the reverence afforded to artworks as sacred artefacts. Granting permission to transgress, to act violently and destroy the artist's creation, generates a sense of release and opens the possibility for an alternative mode of spectatorship. The emotional resonance that follows the sense of release echoes the experience of redemption.

At its core lies a fundamental question: What is the value and meaning of an artwork? Does the value lie in the object itself, or in the spiritual experience it provides?



Figure 9: *Ha-Sair*, 2022, NordArt, Germany, Ceremonial action IV: Redemption At the Golden Wall.

The act of throwing stones against the Golden Wall draws inspiration from both Islamic and Jewish stories and rituals:

Stoning: *Ramy al-jamarāt* (رمي الجمرات, the Stoning of the Devil), is an Islamic ritual performed in the city of Mina, as part of the *Hajj* (حج) pilgrimage to Mecca during *Eid al-Adha* (عيد الأضحى, the Feast of Sacrifice). Pilgrimage to Mecca is one of the five pillars of Islam. It represents the profound spiritual and physical journey that every Muslim is called upon to undertake at least once in their lifetime, if they are able. Among its symbolically charged moments is the stone-throwing ritual, where pilgrims cast stones at three towering pillars (*jamarāt*, جمرات) in a symbolic reenactment of Ibrahim's (Abraham's) defiance in the face of satanic temptation. This gesture signifies the rejection not only of external evil but also of internal doubt.

Shattering: The story of Abraham, the forefather of monotheism and patriarch of both the Jewish and Muslim peoples (Judaism: through Sarah and Isaac; Islam: through Hagar and Ishmael). According to Jewish texts (Bereshit Rabbah),⁶ in order to establish a new faith, Abraham shattered the idols in his father Terah's shop, revoked polytheistic worship, and defied the divinity of Nimrod, the god-king of the city Ur of the Chaldees. Metaphorically, this gesture resonates in the symbolic act of throwing the stone at the golden wall within the installation, echoing iconoclasm as a spiritual and ideological rupture.

Casting: *Tashlich* (תשל"ך) is a Jewish prayer ritual traditionally performed on the first afternoon of *Rosh Hashanah* (ראש השנה, the Jewish New Year), near a water source, preferably one containing fish, such as a sea, river, well, or spring. The ceremony includes the symbolic gesture of shaking one's pockets, intended to cast away one's sins into the water, while chanting the verse:

“He will again have compassion upon us;
He will subdue our iniquities;
and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” (Micah 7:19)

A popular interpretation connects the ritual to Abraham's journey to the Binding (*Akedah*, עקדה) of Isaac. According to traditional Jewish and Islamic texts, during this journey, Satan attempted to prevent Abraham from fulfilling the divine command (Machzor Rosh Hashanah Sefard, Tashlich; “Stoning of the Jamarat”).

⁶ Bereshit Rabbah is a talmudic-era *midrash* on the book of Genesis. It interprets most of Genesis with commentary in Hebrew, mixed with Aramaic, and occasional Greek words.

This narrative closely parallels the Islamic tradition of *Ramy al-Jamarāt*, highlighting a shared symbolic language of resistance and the rejection of evil across the Abrahamic religions.

The connection between Abraham, the Binding, the Islamic rituals of *Eid al-Adha*, scapegoat, and *Tashlich* is fascinating. These practices continue a lineage of ritual traditions from pre-monotheistic cultures such as those of Assyria (c. 2600-610 BCE), Babylon (c. 1900-540 BC) and Akkad (c. 2330-2150 BC). Rituals involving the transfer of abstract evils (Rashkow 87-88), whereby human sin is symbolically displaced onto an external vessel (animal or object) in the hope of receiving atonement through divine or magical means, were widespread across this region. In contrast, and despite the outward similarity of casting something away, the *Ha-Sair* ritual turns inward. It calls for personal reckoning and self-redemption independent of an external savior or divine intercessor.



Figure 10: Golden stones, amulets, linoleum ink print with *Ha-Sair* emblem.
Photos: courtesy of the artist.

Ceremonial Action V

Revelation: A Personal Message, Amulets, Red Threads, and Scrolls

In the fifth stage of the ritual, the participant unveils a personal message.

From the shattered stone, a concealed amulet (a pendant tied to a red thread) imbued with *Ha-Sair's* special powers and wrapped around a paper scroll, is revealed. On one side of the scroll is a description of the amulet's unique power and how it may support the participant's spiritual journey. On the back is a hand-signed linoleum ink print of the *Ha-Sair* emblem: the figure of the rebellious goat.

In folk traditions, the amulet must be tied around the wrist for its powers to be activated. The red thread is believed to bring good fortune and guard against "evil eye" (the belief in the presence of demons or curses that are intent on causing harm).

While amulets have no formal basis in canonical monotheistic texts, they are deeply rooted in popular practice and appear in various forms. Sometimes it is simply a red string, but at other times it is adorned with pendants in the form of a palm known as the "*Hamsa*", the Arabic word for five, representing the five fingers (Sayed); Fatima's Hand (Islam: Fatima Zahra, Muhammad's daughter); Mary's Hand (Levantine Christianity: Mother Mary); or Miriam's Hand (Judaism: Miriam, sister of Moses). The origins of the open-hand symbol can be traced back to ancient Mesopotamian artefacts dedicated to the goddess Inanna or Ishtar, and to Tinnit and Baal Hammon in Carthage (modern-day Tunisia).

Ceremonial Action VI

Salvation: At the Foot of the Offering Bowl and the Mask

The sixth stage of the ritual marks its closure as the participant places a shard of the shattered stone in the offering bowl at the foot of the mask. The terms “salvation” and “redemption” are given new significance in the *Ha-Sair* ritual. This places them beyond religious dogma while preserving their core mystical and psychological resonance: release, transformation, and the possibility of inner freedom.



Figure 11: The offering bowl, 2019. Photo: Tal Nissim

In Christianity, salvation refers to God’s complete work in delivering humanity from sin and restoring their relationship with Him, and granting them eternal redemption (Colijn).

In the *Ha-Sair* ritual, the term refers to the ritual’s completion and closure, thus achieving eternal self-redemption.



Figure 12: The offering bowl and *Ha-Sair* mask, 2019. Photo: Tal Nissim

Ha-Sair offers a fictional ceremony grounded in real traditions. It operates within a liminal space – one that both honors and interrogates, invokes and questions historical systems of belief. This dialogue allows it to challenge the status quo and question dominant religious narratives. *Ha-Sair* inhabits a space between faith and critique, neither affirming nor rejecting mysticism outright, rather using it as a lens for critical exploration, aiming to enable mystical frameworks to be used as tools for subversion and inquiry.

Eliade shows how humans imbue objects with mystical power, making them sacred and valuable—a dynamic also applicable to artworks often regarded as “sacred.”

If we observe the general behavior of archaic man, we are struck by the following fact: neither the objects of the external world nor human acts, properly speaking, have any autonomous intrinsic value. Objects or acts acquire a value, and in so doing become real, because they participate, after one fashion or another, in a reality that transcends them. Among countless stones, one stone becomes sacred and hence instantly becomes saturated with being because it constitutes a hierophany, or possesses mana, or again because it commemorates a mythical act, and so on. The object appears as the receptacle of an exterior force that differentiates it from its milieu and gives it meaning and value. (Eliade 12)

Aftermath

During *Ha-Sair* exhibitions I met visitors and engaged in conversation, both at Alfred Gallery in Tel Aviv in 2019 and at the NORDART in Germany in 2022.

Something unusual happened during these two exhibitions.

People of different ages, from varied backgrounds and countries, asked whether the amulet's mystical power was real, and whether participating in the ritual would truly impact their lives.

While tying the amulet around their wrists, I looked them in the eyes, and answered: Yes!

Later, messages began to arrive.

People wanted to thank me because the amulet had worked and the challenges they had feared, whether related to work, personal matters or health, had shifted.

My role is to provoke emotional and intellectual movement through artistic means. Acts such as shattering an art object, participating in a ritual, discovering an amulet, or receiving a blessing serve as tools of resistance and rebellion. These gestures question not only the value and meaning of art, but also the legitimacy and potency of mystical experience, both as a real phenomenon and as a form of social critique. Rooted in a feminist perspective, my work challenges established traditions and inherited customs, inviting reflection on the power structures embedded within them.

Works Cited

- Angelini, Andrea, Marilena Cozzolino, Roberto Gabrielli, Vincenzo Gentile, and Paolo Mauriello. "Three-Dimensional Modeling and Non-Invasive Diagnosis of a Huge and Complex Heritage Building: The Patriarchal Basilica of Santa Maria Assunta in Aquileia (Udine, Italy)." *Remote Sensing*, vol. 15, no. 9, 2 May 2023, www.mdpi.com/2072-4292/15/9/2386.
- Bereshit Rabbah. Chapter 38. Sefaria, https://www.sefaria.org/Bereshit_Rabbah.38?lang=bi.
- Cataliotti, Joseph. "Edict of Milan: History & Proclamation." *Study.com*, <https://study.com/academy/lesson/edict-milan-history-facts.html>. Accessed 18 May 2025.
- Colijn, Brenda. "Salvation in the Bible." *St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology*, edited by Brendan N. Wolfe et al., University of St Andrews, 29 Aug. 2024, <https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/SalvationintheBible>.
- Eliade, Mircea. "Repetition of the Cosmogony." *The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History*. Harper Torchbooks, 1954, pp. 20–21. <http://users.uoa.gr/~cdokou/MythLitMA/Eliade-EternalReturn.pdf>.
- Eliade, Mircea. "The Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History." *Harper Torchbooks*, 1954, pp. 3–4. <http://users.uoa.gr/~cdokou/MythLitMA/Eliade-EternalReturn.pdf>.
- Elior, Rachel. "Kippurim, Expiation, Purity, and Impurity: The Well of the Past and the Abyss of Oblivion." *The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, 2012, pp. 37–56. orion-bibliography.huji.ac.il/node/59214.
- Immenkamp, Beatrix. "Understanding the Branches of Islam: Sunni Islam". Briefing, *European Parliamentary Research Service*, February 2016. European Parliament, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)577963](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2016)577963).
- Machzor Rosh Hashanah Sefard, Tashlich. Sefaria, www.sefaria.org/Machzor_Rosh_Hashanah_Sefard%2C_Tashlich?lang=bi
- Mazar, Amihai. "The Iron Age." *Israeli Institute of Archaeology*, 1 Aug. 2022, www.israeliarchaeology.org/תקופות/the-iron-age/?lang=en
- Rashkow, Ilona. "Azazel: The Scapegoat in the Bible and Ancient Near East." *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, vol. 51, no. 2, Apr.–June 2023, pp. 85–94. jbnqnew.jewishbible.org/assets/Uploads/512/jbq_512_rashkowitzone.pdf
- Sayed, Nafisa Ali. "The Hand of Hamsa: Interpretation across the Globe." *International Journal of Culture and History*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2016, CORE, IISTE, core.ac.uk/reader/234675429.

“Stoning of the Jamarat.” The Pilgrim, 21 May 2024, <https://thepilgrim.co/jamarat>

The Holy Scriptures: Leviticus 16:7-11. Parashat Acharei Mot. Mechon-Mamre, based on the 1917 JPS translation, <https://mechon-mamre.org/about.htm>.

The Holy Scriptures: Exodus 3:5. Mechon-Mamre, based on the 1917 JPS translation, <https://www.mechon-mamre.org>.

The Holy Scriptures: Micah 7:19. Mechon-Mamre, based on the 1917 JPS translation, <https://mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt2307.htm>

The Mishnah: Seder Moed, Yoma 6. Compiled by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, ca. 200 CE. Sefaria, https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Yoma.6?lang=bi.

Rotem Ritov is a multidisciplinary artist based in Berlin since 2019. Member of the curatorial and management team at Zuzu Gallery in Israel (2017-2025), and past member of the artist-run Alfred Gallery in Tel Aviv (2011–2023). She holds a B.Arch.Ed from the Neri Bloomfield Academy of Design, where she developed and taught a studio course (2013–2019) exploring the intersections of installation, architecture, and dance. Ritov also founded Apart.Art Gallery (2009-2011), an experimental exhibition space within her home in Tel Aviv, examining the relationship between public and private space. Before transitioning to visual arts, she was a professional contemporary dancer (1998–2008).

www.rotemritov.com

Rotem would like to thank her reviewers: artist **Assi Meshulam**, associate professor at the University of Haifa, and philosopher **Menahem Goldenberg**, for their generous support as peer reviewers. Their in-depth insight, inspirational remarks, and willingness to share their knowledge greatly enriched my work. I want to offer a special note of deep appreciation for their dedication under extraordinary circumstances: supporting thoughtfully and attentively, even as they sought shelter with their children amid the missile strikes from Iran. Their commitment is both humbling and profoundly moving.