Interchanging influences on the road: reflection on Jewish textiles

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Interchanging Influences on the Road: Reflection on Jewish Textiles

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

Masters of Creative Arts - Research.

From

University of Wollongong

By

Noa Price, Bachelor of Applied Arts

University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N.B., Canada

2008
CERTIFICATION

I, Noa Price, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Masters of Creative Arts - Research, in the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

______________

Noa Price

11 July 2008.
Interchanging Influences on the Road: Reflection on Jewish Textiles

Abstract

As a textile designer, my research examines designs and embellishments on the everyday and sacred objects of Jewish migration. My research considers the influences, changes and interactions of migration on the decoration and the embellishments of artefacts.

In my study I examine matzah bags, whimples, pages of the Bible and ktubot (Jewish marriage certificates) across cultures, from Yemen to Israel and through Europe. I look at these various artefacts with attention to the message they carry and their relevance to Jewish origins, observing the differences and similarities between various Jewish cultures.

I chose this topic on the artefacts of Jewish people as it reflects my heritage and responds to my own experience of travel. The exhibition “Traveling Patterns: Fabrics on the Road” held in the Faculty of Creative Arts Gallery at the University of Wollongong, June to July 2008, incorporated my experience as a traveller through a series of scrolls and jackets. It included the use of microtext that symbolized a personal connection to the past and to the Jewish people who travelled before me.
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CONTENTS

CERTIFICATION .................................................................................................................. 1
ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................................ II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..................................................................................................... III
INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................... 4
TRAVELLING CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS ................................................................. 43
"TRAVELLING PATTERNS: FABRICS ON THE ROAD" .................................................. 51
CONCLUSION ..................................................................................................................... 63
APPENDIX 1 .......................................................................................................................... 64
Glossary of terms .................................................................................................................. 64
APPENDIX 2 .......................................................................................................................... 67
List of Images with full references ................................................................................... 67
BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................................................................................. 79

List of images

IMAGE 1. SEDER PLATE ...................................................................................................... 12
IMAGE 2. SEDER PLATE ..................................................................................................... 13
IMAGE 3. MATZAH BAG ................................................................................................... 14
IMAGE 4. MATZAH BAG ................................................................................................... 15
IMAGE 5. MATZAH BAG ................................................................................................... 15
IMAGE 6. MATZAH BAG ................................................................................................... 15
IMAGE 7. MATZAH BAG ................................................................................................... 16
IMAGE 8. MATZAH BAG ................................................................................................... 16
IMAGE 9. MATZAH BAG ................................................................................................... 16
IMAGE 10. POUCH FOR APICOMAN (MATZAH PIECE) ..................................................... 17
IMAGE 11. MATZAH BAG ................................................................................................... 17
IMAGE 12. PENTATEUCH .................................................................................................. 22
IMAGE 13. PENTATEUCH .................................................................................................. 23
IMAGE 14. BIBLE .............................................................................................................. 24
IMAGE 15. PENTATEUCH .................................................................................................. 25
IMAGE 16. A CARPET PAGE ............................................................................................. 26
IMAGE 17. ANNE BRENNAN ............................................................................................. 27
IMAGE 18. TEXTILE FRAGMENT PATTERNED IN RED, YELLOW AND BLUE .............. 28
IMAGE 19. WHITSTABLE, GERMANY, 1674 .................................................................. 30
IMAGE 20. Binder for the Torah Scroll ............................................................................. 30
IMAGE 21. Binder for the Torah Scroll ............................................................................. 30
IMAGE 22. Binder for the Torah Scroll (detail) ................................................................ 31
IMAGE 23. Binder for the Torah Scroll (detail) ................................................................ 31
IMAGE 24. Binder for the Torah Scroll (detail) ................................................................ 32
IMAGE 25. Torah Binder ................................................................................................... 32
IMAGE 26. Torah Binder ................................................................................................... 33
IMAGE 27. KUBA, MAHON, MINORCA, 1751 ................................................................. 35
IMAGE 28. KUBA CORFU, GREECE, 1804 .................................................................... 36
IMAGE 29. KTUBA HOLLAND ROTTERDAM, 1648 ................................................................. 36
IMAGE 30. KTUBA YAZD, IRAN, 1786 ............................................................................ 37
IMAGE 31. KTUBA IRAN, ISFAHAN, 1860 ....................................................................... 37
IMAGE 32. KTUBA MODENA, ITALY, 1757 .................................................................... 38
IMAGE 33. KTUBA CENERA, Italy, 1753 ........................................................................ 38
IMAGE 34. KTUBA JERUSALEM, 1884 ........................................................................... 39
IMAGE 35. KTUBA ROME, 1795 ................................................................................... 39
IMAGE 36. SIGNING OF THE KTUBA, 1979 ................................................................. 41
IMAGE 37. WEDDING, IN YAKUM, 1979 ....................................................................... 41
IMAGE 38. ZOYA CHERKASSKY ................................................................................. 44
IMAGE 39. HOSSEIN VALAMANESH ............................................................................. 47
IMAGE 40. HOSSEIN VALAMANESH ............................................................................. 48
IMAGE 41. ALOMA TREISTER ...................................................................................... 48
IMAGE 42. FRED EDEKENS ......................................................................................... 49
IMAGE 43. FRED EDEKENS ......................................................................................... 50
IMAGE 44. ARTIST PRINTING OUTSIDE OF JACKET PRINT ..................................... 51
IMAGE 45. QUALITY CHECK OF PRINT ..................................................................... 52
IMAGE 46. CLOSE UP OF PRINT .................................................................................. 52
IMAGE 47. PRINTED LINING ....................................................................................... 53
IMAGE 48. HEAT SETTING OF THE LINING FABRIC ................................................. 53
IMAGE 49. BIRD-PLAY JACKET ................................................................................... 54
IMAGE 50. MIGRATION MOBILE ............................................................................... 56
IMAGE 51. PERSPECTIVE OF SCROLLS - DESERT SCROLL ..................................... 58
IMAGE 52. PERSPECTIVE OF SCROLLS - CITY SCROLL ........................................ 58
IMAGE 53. PERSPECTIVE OF SCROLLS - SNOW SCROLL ........................................ 59
IMAGE 54. MICROTEXT MIRAGE ............................................................................... 62
IMAGE 55. TRAVELLING PATTERNS: FABRICS ON THE ROAD ............................. 62
Interchanging Influences on the Road: Reflection on Jewish Textiles

Introduction

In this study I examine matzah bags, whimples, pages from the Bible and ktubot (Jewish marriage certificates) across cultures, from Yemen to Israel and through Europe. I look at these various artefacts, paying attention to the message they carry and their relevance to Jewish origins, observing the differences and similarities between Jewish cultures around the globe.

I was born in “Tel-Aviv-Yafo” and grew up partly in my grandmother’s kibbutz “Yaqum” and partly in “Holon”, a city in Israel. My parents lived in kibbutz “Yaqum”, near the Mediterranean sea, towards the middle of the country and in kibbutz “Negba”, in the south of the country. My grandparents were: Beatris (Perera) Price (1922 – 2000), who was born in Sofia, Bulgaria, her family originating from Spain; Ytzhak Price (1919 – 1981), who was born in Busko-Zdroj in Poland and together with my grandmother founded kibbutz “Yaqum” in 1947; Pepa (Ginsburg) Stein (1914 – 2006), who was born in Lodz, Poland, and Gezek Stein (1912 – 2002), also from Lodz, were founding
members of kibbutz ‘Negba’ in 1939, bringing with them influences from their
countries of origin and their own family history of travel.

I was always exposed to a mix of languages and different foods and a variety of
family artefacts to look at. As a child I travelled quite extensively with my
parents throughout Europe, such as on short trips to England, France and
Poland; we even travelled to Hungary when it was still a communist country.
After my Israeli military service in 2000, I travelled throughout the east coast of
the USA and Canada and saw how different life and influences can be. I
studied for my Bachelor of Applied Arts at the University of New Brunswick in
Canada and worked there for five years, learning the east coast rural Canadian
culture with all its nuances, including its accent and its foods. Other than
differences in climate and language I also, inevitably, changed my orientation,
as I was no longer a member of the majority population as I had been in Israel.
This affected the way I looked at things.

I arrived in Australia in 2007 to pursue my Masters degree at the University of
Wollongong and had to re learn what I thought I knew: a different kind of
English language, a different culture and different food. In Australia,
although the climate was similar to the one I was accustomed to in Israel, the people were once again different and I undertook another adjustment.

The constant learning is a driving force that teaches me a great deal. In my travels and from the migration stories of my parents, grandparents and myself, I have learned to see things differently, because I have been exposed to different ways of thinking and expression that were confronting at first, but that later helped me to develop greater understanding of diversity, not only of different patterns of living but also in the different ways I could relate to or resolve difficult situations. It has given me a flexibility and creativity I could not have received if I had remained in the one place. It has also provided the basis for my research.

As a textile designer, my research examines designs and embellishments on the every day and sacred objects of Jewish migration. I have taken particular interest in the microtext that is present in some of the artefacts I examined and my research considers the influences, changes and interactions of migration on the decoration and the embellishments of every day and sacred artefacts.
The complex patterns of Jewish migration, though seemingly random, have been the result of many world events. One early example is the affect on Jewish people in Spain of the Spanish inquisition, which lasted from 1478 until 1834. More evidence in the on-going persecution of Jews were the pogroms in Russia from 1881 to 1884 and from 1903 to 1906; as well as pogroms in Poland, one of which was in 1946. Because of those disturbances of the livelihood of Jewish people, Jewish migration became “… an ever changing pattern of dispersion, with the largest concentration of Jews in the world being at one time in East Europe, at another time in the Islamic countries, and today in the United States” (Sowell: 235). The fact is that a vast number of Jewish people are always travelling and migrating from one area to another.

Cultures as well as identities, are constantly being remade. While this is true of all cultures, diasporic Jewish culture lays it bare because of the impossibility of a natural association between this people and a particular land – thus the impossibility of seeing Jewish culture as a self-enclosed, bounded phenomenon (Clifford: 270).

Jewish travellers carry with them distinctive cultural emblems in portable form such as hanukia (nine candle lamp), matzah bags (for Passover) and ktubot (marriage certificates), and these paper or cloth items may be thought of as travelling objects. These are the focus of my study and they are what informed my exhibition “Travelling Patterns: Fabrics on the Road”.
Wandering Jews

Jewish people have been recorded as wandering the globe since God is believed to have told Abraham, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto the land that I will show thee” (Gen 12:1). From then to now,

... Jews [have] settled for centuries in lands with different races, religions, languages, and cultures [and] the evolution of Jewish culture reflects these differences in the respective cultures around them, as well as reflecting the opportunities and rights those cultures permitted or denied to Jews (Sowell: 248).

This notion of change, movement, travel and re-settlement is not unique to the Jewish population, nor is it necessarily an unwanted side effect of migration. “Practice[s] of displacement might emerge as constructive of cultural meanings rather than as their simple transfer or extension” (Clifford: 3). Large numbers of people have constantly been on the move, influencing the cultures around them and also being influenced by the cultures they have found themselves living within. The migration of millions of people from Ireland to North America and Australia in the nineteenth Century brought customs such as the celebrating of St. Patrick’s Day and mass Asian migration since 1975 has led to Asian cultural influences in the western world today.
Among the convict population forcibly conveyed to Australia during the late Eighteenth Century were several Jewish people who were among the first convicts and non-indigenous settlers. Amongst the First Fleet convicts of 1788 were two prominent Jews, Ester Abrahams (1771-1846) and John Harris (b1768), who became influential in the community, even in the area of textiles. Ester Abrahams was deported from England for stealing twenty-four yards of black silk lace and was later married in Australia to Lieutenant Colonel George Johnson. She “became wealthy and owned 2460 acres of land by the time of the 1828 Census” (Rubinstein: 24) and her sons and grandsons became influential and prominent members of the NSW establishment. She is known as “the ‘first lady’ of Australian Jewry, and perhaps of New South Wales” (Rubinstein: 26). John Harris was deported from England for stealing eight silver table spoons. “In 1768 [he] suggested that the early colony establish a police force... and he became a constable on Norfolk Island. Harris is thus sometimes termed the first Australian policeman” (Rubinstein: 26). In contrast to these examples of prominent ex-convicts were the nameless migrant women whose history was fore-grounded in an exhibition “Securing the Shadow” at the Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney, 1994. Anne Brennan and Anne Ferran
researched poor English and Irish girls who left only fragments of textiles as proof of their existence (Brennan: 93).

For any community or religious group, holidays are a way to remember and celebrate historical events. A holiday that this study focuses on is Passover (Pesach), “… a spring festival beginning on the 15th day of Nisan [the seventh month of the Jewish calendar] and lasting seven days in Israel and eight in the Diaspora” (Roth (Ed) 13:163). At Passover, Jewish people are required to feel as if they themselves have left Egypt, as Scripture says, “And thou shalt relate unto thy son in that day saying, Because of this hath the Eternal wrought for me when I came forth from Egypt” (Mishnah: 219).

The Passover holiday, together with its special foods, such as knedlech (matzah balls) and gefilte-fish (fish dish served with carrot), has a particular set of objects that are set on the eating table, one of which is the Seder plate. The Seder is the ceremony in the home that commemorates Passover. The Seder plate is … the most important item on the Passover table… A special Passover plate (ke‘arah) is mentioned in mishnaic times, and throughout history… Illuminated medieval haggadot illustrate a large round
plate on the table in the Ashkenazi [Germanic Jewish] ones, and a wicker basket in some Sephardi [Spanish] and Italian manuscripts (Roth (Ed) 13: 172).

The plate forms part of the narrative of the holiday, and through the different types of foods that are placed on the unique plate, the story of the holiday is told. Two decorated Seder plates with text (images 1 and 2) are discussed in the following pages.

[Narratives are] important components of culture. That is, narratives are not just told by individuals to others or to oneself. They circulate within culture, telling members of a group about their own culture, and therefore about objects. (Woodward: 153).

Because the Jewish population is located in various places around the world where the local cultures differ, the decoration and the presentation of the Seder plate is unique to each region, mirroring both the Jewish tradition and the local traditions of the area. “…objects are situated within broader discourses, narratives, myths and frames that assist in the construction of cultural meaning and its interpretation.” (Woodward: 174). Below are two examples of Seder plates. Image 1 is from Spain, with a Spanish Ottoman design, and Image 2 is from Germany. Both plates are held in the Jerusalem Museum. It is possible that the plates have been passed down through the generations, and in so doing “… a thing may also have acquired
the ‘personal’ history of having passed from hand to hand and place to place. Marks of wear may also be traces of personal history” (Thomas: 80).

The Spanish plate, (Image 1) bears an interesting side story. Its writings have spelling errors so it is proposed that either a non-Jewish person wrote the text, or someone who was a ‘conversor’, a person who was forced to convert to Christianity but continued to observe Jewish customs in secret, did so. It reads “Pesach, Matzah, Maror, Seder”, with spelling errors in the Hebrew text. Inside the plate are blue and brownish concentric bands of geometric patterns with the text in its centre.

The Seder plate shown in Image 2 is from Germany and has eight words that mark the highlight of the Passover Seder. The text is on the rim of the plate while in its middle is a scene of a family sitting at the Seder in their
richly decorated home. The words translate as: \textit{Pesach, Matzah, Maror} (bitter herbs), \textit{Karpas} (green vegetable), \textit{Yachatz} (cut in half), \textit{Korech} (bind), \textit{Barech} (bless), \textit{Halel} (praise).

Another symbol of Passover is a \textit{matzah cover}. \textit{Matzah} is the unleavened bread that was baked before the Hebrews left Egypt. It is remade and eaten at the \textit{Seder} and during the Passover holiday. Images 3 – 11 are examples of different \textit{matzah bags} from Germany, Hungary, Galicia, Rumania and Italy.

The \textit{matzah bags} are used in one of the three major Jewish holidays, \textit{Pesach} or Passover. As opposed to the \textit{Seder} plate, these are made from fabric and are used to house half a \textit{matzah} in the \textit{Seder}. It is for the most part decorated according to the local style of the...
house it comes from. I appreciated the variety of decorations and traditions I discovered. In selecting objects to make for the exhibition I was interested in the different variations of style a matzah bag can have, depending on its place of origin. The matzah bag is used to hide a part of a matzah that is broken in half; the other half is hidden so the children can find it.

All the images of the basic Jewish legendary motifs... reveal such a rich diversity of iconography and styles as to refute the claim of a common, linear descent from lost Jewish manuscript models. They argue very strongly in favour of artistic innovation and originality (Gutmann: 12).

All the matzah bags have unique decorations relating to their country of origin but still retain their Jewish focus.

Image 3. Matzah Bag
Cracow, Galicia, about 1850.
Maker, Mrs. Lazar Rakower (Nee Salomea Fuchs).
Ivory silk cotton satin embroidered with polychrome silk and appliquéd with velvet, border of machine made silk blonde lace and metallic lace.
Diameter 52 cm.
(Jewish Museum: 115)
IMAGE 4. MATZAH BAG
Roumania, inscription date 1896.
Maker: Pauline Rosenberg.
Purple cotton double-mesh canvas (known as Penelope canvas) embroidered with polychrome wool.
36 cm x 36 cm.
(Jewish Museum: 26)

IMAGE 5. MATZAH BAG
Europe, Western Ashkenazic, inscription date 1804/5.
Undyed silk satin embroidered and appliquéd with polychrome silk and painted velvet.
Diameter 42.5 cm.
(Jewish Museum: 114)

IMAGE 6. MATZAH BAG
Chalcis, Greece, 17th century.
Undyed linen embroidered with polychrome silk.
41 cm x 37.5 cm
(Jewish Museum: 114)
IMAGE 7. MATZAH BAG
Eastern Europe, Inscription date 1861/2
Coral silk/cotton Satin embroidered with polychrome silk and beads.
Diameter 37 - 39 cm.
(Jewish Museum: 27)

IMAGE 8. MATZAH BAG
Europe, 19th century.
Maker; S.N.
Undyed silk cotton satin embroidered with polychrome silk
38.5 cm x 40.5 cm.
(Jewish Museum: 23)

IMAGE 9. MATZAH BAG
Heirloom of Adelman family, Romania, inscription date 1890/1.
Pale aqua silk/cotton satin embroidered with polychrome silk.
Diameter about 37 cm.
(Jewish Museum: 23)
IMAGE 10. POUCH FOR APIKOMAN (MATZAH PIECE)
Italy, 18th-19th century.
Undyed linen embroidered with undyed cotton; undyed cotton needle point lace; undyed cotton knotted net embroidered with undyed cotton (known as filet lace or darned net).
37.5 cm x 37.5 cm (when lying flat).
(Jewish Museum: 113)

The diversity of text, colours, and materials exemplifies the variety of influences that affected the Jewish population in decorating and constructing the matzah bag for its single use. While there are differences, there are also similarities, on which I drew the possibility of my own work having one basic artefact with many changing faces.
Travelling microtext in textile and paper medium

This section explores the paper and textile medium that Jewish people took with them as they travelled, and the differences in the decorations and influences that affected those changes. “Travel, ... denotes a range of material, special practices that produce knowledge, stories, traditions, comportments, music, books, diaries, and other cultural expressions” (Clifford: 35). As travelling people, whether because of tragic events or the desire to change life for the better, the Jewish people took textiles with them as the main item they did not leave behind. “Textile arts are an integral part of the social, cultural, and political history of a region, and thus they reflect differences in socio-political histories and cultural traditions among regions” (Belger: 110).

The way people travel and move has not changed. When travelling light, the first thing taken is clothes and something to sleep on. “Textiles Judaica are particularly open to regional and personal expression, firstly because textiles are so vulnerable to damage and secondly, because textiles have always been a living tradition” (Cass: 9). Textiles are still used extensively, whether in decorated bedding, fashion or carpets, even though
they are not necessarily produced in the home or decorated in a traditional way. If one follows the movement of textile and paper-based arts from one area to another and looks for the change and development of the embellishment, one can identify where earlier influences originated. A clear example is the collection of manuscripts from the Ottoman Empire, a combination of Arabic style and the Jewish love of the written word. These are explored in the next section.

Changes that influenced Jewish style and ways of thinking can be seen in the changes that occurred when the Jewish population reached the Ottoman Empire, around 1260. These incorporated a unique use of sampler text and religious text in art works from the Ottoman Empire. “… the Islamic world’s concern for purity of the Arabic language stimulated Jews to re-examine Hebrew grammar and style” (Sowell: 246). The designs of the Arabic elements and colour palette used in the Ottoman Empire influenced the art of the Jewish population within its borders as the artists flowed in and out of cultures around them. The French critics, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, identify artists as nomadic itinerants. “The artisan is the itinerant, the ambulant. To follow the flow of matter is to itinerate, to ambulate. It is intuition in action” (Deleuze & Guattari: 409).
The Arabic decorating style of *arabesque*, with its emphasis on words as a decorative element, was incorporated into Jewish artwork, creating a hybrid of Muslim and Jewish influenced art. This influential change in style is easy to see in the drastic transformation in style and decoration after the Jewish people were introduced to the Muslim culture after 1260, especially in the written letter. Images 12 to 15 show manuscripts with distinct tiny scripts known as ‘microtext’, which are discussed in the following pages.

Written characters have been important since the invention of text: “characters were considered not only to represent the object, as a word or pattern does, but also to hold the spirit of that object” (Paine: 131). Literacy, text and books or scrolls are important in the Jewish tradition since one has to read and understand prayers. In the past, all male children above the age of five were taught how to read and write in Hebrew.

The high literacy level of the Jewish population and their interest in the written word was recognized by others in the ancient world. Joseph Gutmann notes in his book *Hebrew manuscript painting*, “Muhammad spoke of the Jews as the ‘people of the book’” (Gutmann: 8). Literary traditions
and the written word are still important and they constantly appear in all aspects of life, including embellishments and textiles.

The use of minute scale writing is unique in the manuscripts from the Ottoman Empire and the application of this microtext can create many variations and different styles, even for the same piece:

... the use of micrography (minute script) for the masorah (which) appeared in Hebrew manuscripts of the early Muslim period and continued to be employed in Hebrew manuscripts of medieval Christian Europe. Primarily geometric or floral designs occur in the Muslim Hebrew manuscripts; they also assume the shapes of animals and human figures in Hebrew manuscripts of Christian Europe... the practice of having the letters themselves form the shape appears to be particular to Hebrew manuscripts. (Gutmann: 14)

Below are discussed examples of manuscripts and Bibles from the Ottoman Empire, some of which are Arabic in appearance and some are Jewish in appearance. The following two images, (Images 12 and 13), show text used to create an image, in a style that is known as *arabesque*. The first example is the Arabic version, while the second is a mimic in Hebrew. Images 14 and 15, while still using text, are different in that they are made from text but still retain their image identity. “Artistic traditions emerge from the complex interaction of internal and external influences and, equally important, the forces within a
society which motivate artists to innovate and work to high standards” (Weir: 20)

The manuscript below, (Image 12), is from Yemen and is typical of the Fifteenth Century, according to Gutmann. Its design relates to metal bowls found in the Middle East and Near East area. The colour palette is reminiscent of Muslim art but “the Hebrew micrography itself is … unparalleled in Islamic decorations” (Gutmann: 40). The concept of taking the essence of the surrounding area’s influence and making it unique to Jewish custom is apparent in the way the text is manipulated, and in the way the *arabesque* motifs have been taken to a new level by the Jewish scribes.

*Image 12. Pentateuch*
Pentateuch.
London, British Library Ms. Or. 2348
Sana’a, Yemen, 1469. 415 x 280 mm.
(Gutmann: 41)

Please see print copy for image.
Image 13 is from the same book as image 12 and keeps the same style, but is in Arabic. According to Gutmann, it has “the Muslim month and year and the Arabic equivalent of Jewish names” (Gutmann: 43). This provides evidence of the notion that Jewish people embraced the cultures into which they moved or found themselves within.

Image 14 below, comes from a Spanish manuscript (Gutmann: 49) and it depicts a different use of microtext, which decorates all the edges of the image and the edges of the design within the image. All the spaces within the elaborate design are also filled with microtext. As it came from another area of the Ottoman Empire, the colour scheme is similar to the previous illustration.
from Yemen. Having come from Spain and at an earlier time, the use of the
microtext is vastly different, although still apparent. In this image the microtext
creates lines and borders, but not shapes of its own.

Please see print copy for image.

In the image below, (Image 15), from the early Fourteenth Century, the entire
image is created from microtext. This page comes from Germany and does not
have the traditional Muslim *arabesque* characteristics. According to Gutmann,
“The use of micrography in Germany probably started in the twelfth century”
(Gutmann: 82). This can be seen as an example of the movement of ideas and
influences between Jewish people, who were merchants and
peddlers moving from one area to another, moving ideas and influences with them.

Image 15. Pentateuch
Pentateuch. Copenhagen, The Royal Library, Ms. Heber, II
Bavaria, Germany, early fourteenth century.
395 x 295 mm.
(Gutmann: 83)

Image 16 is a carpet page from a Bible from Lisbon, which is heavily decorated with microtext, and its central geometric shape of a circle within a rectangle is created by microtext. Unlike the example above, the text does not form animal shapes but geometrical and flower shapes, similar to the common decorative elements found in Spain.
Even though the Jewish people adhered to the same faith and same ideas, rules and regulations, there was allowance of change in the way the regulations were seen and taken into effect, depending on the area that was settled. When examining different Jewish manuscripts,

...no unique Jewish style emerges; there is no independent medieval Jewish artistic evolution. This, of course, reflects the circumstance that Jewish history, unlike that of other continuous entities, developed and evolved primarily within multiple societies, cultures, and civilizations, and bears the imprimatur of its long, diverse, multicultural existence (Gutmann: 12-13).

Although the essence of the texts is the same, these diverse examples show that there is a different flavour in delivering it and in illustrating it, in the cases where illustrations are present.
Artists today also use microtext. Anne Brennan stitched her grandfather’s words into fabric; to her it is “not a work about language, so much as it is a work about voices, whose soft, insistent, whispered babbles as an ineradicable part of its raison d’être” (Brennan: 92). Anne Brennan’s detail ‘Memory Drawing’ from the installation “Un/familiar”, 1994 (image 17) is similar to, yet different from the parts of my installation that deal with microtext. My words are fleeting and light, no more permanent than a shadow of a leaf, and are made of children’s songs from my childhood. By contrast, her lines of text that form furniture are written in black on the walls, recreating a permanent house, built from memory of the objects.

Please see print copy for image.

Image 17: ANNE BRENNAN
Anne Brennan
‘Memory Drawing’
(detail of installation “Un/familiar”), 1994; graphite text on wall. Photography: I. Lobergs (Brennan: ix)
Textiles were always connected to the Torah in one way or another, whether it be its elaborated cover, the curtain that covers it, or its binding. Women, who traditionally were not allowed near the sacred scrolls, created all of those highly decorated textiles. Image 18 shows a textile fragment found in 1947 at the Cave of Letters in Nachal Hever (Hever River) in Israel. It was taken there with other artefacts by Jews fleeing the Hadrian legion in the Bar-Kochba revolt, which lasted from AD132 to AD135. It is suggested that the textile might have been used as a wrapper for a Torah-scroll (Broshi: 146-7).

![Image 18. Textile Fragment patterned in red, yellow and blue](image)

As well as for manuscripts, text was used in the binding of the Torah scrolls, also known as whimples, “first mentioned in 1530” (Jewish Museum of Australia: 24). A whimple is a Torah binder that was made from the child’s
circumcision sheet. It is cut into four and then embroidered with text and images representing, “the name of the child, date of birth and blessings, then dedicated to the synagogue during the child’s first visit and used to bind the Torah scroll from which he reads the Bar Mitzvah” (Jewish Museum of Australia: 24), which is the Jewish traditional coming of age ceremony. In Germany, these were made from circumcision sheets, but in Italy they were made “by women who embroidered them on the occasion of their betrothal or wedding or in memory of departed relative” (Jewish Museum of Australia: 24).

I examined whimples as a new concept, focussing on their cutting and embroidery, since I come from a secular family and was not familiar with these religious artefacts that are dedicated to the synagogue in the name of babies after they are circumcised. It was interesting for me to discover them and their meaning, as a personal artefact as well as an artefact with religious connotations. Images 19 – 26 are whimples, or Torah binders, from Germany, Amsterdam and Italy.
**IMAGE 19. WHIMPLE, GERMANY, 1674**
Unbleached linen, polychrome embroidery in silk with stem stitch, one section joined with blue herringbone stitch; inscription (Embroidered in Hebrew)
16 x 300
(Jewish Museum of Australia: 24)

**IMAGE 20. BINDER FOR THE TORAH SCROLL**
Europe, Western Ashkenazic,
Inscription date 1836
Undyed linen, painted.
19.5 cm x 340 cm
(Jewish Museum: 18-19)

**IMAGE 21. BINDER FOR THE TORAH SCROLL**
Possibly eastern Germany, inscription date 1762
Undyed linen embroidered with silk.
18 cm x 348 cm.
(Jewish Museum: 18-19)
IMAGE 22. BINDER FOR THE TORAH SCROLL (DETAIL)
Europe, Western Ashkenazic, inscription date 1750.
Undyed Linen embroidered with silk.
20.50 cm x 197.5 cm.
(Jewish Museum: 99)

IMAGE 23. BINDER FOR THE TORAH SCROLL (DETAIL)
Italy, inscription date 1582/3.
Maker: Honorata, wife of Samuel Foa.
Undyed linen embroidered with red silk (Punto scrito).
19 cm x 285 cm.
(Jewish Museum: 48)
IMAGE 24. Binder for the Torah Scroll (Detail)
Italy, inscription date 1764/5.
Maker: Bella Judith, daughter of Emanuel Finzi of Rivarolo.
Red cotton embroidered with white linen.
18 cm × 290 cm.
(Jewish Museum: 48)

IMAGE 25. Torah Binder
Amsterdam? 1830.
Silk, Metal Thread and linen,
9 × 247 cm
Cream silk damask with stylized motif of flowers and leaves and branches embroidered with Hebrew inscription in gold thread and silk; undyed linen lining; silk cord.
(Swetchinski: 85)
As the whimples or Torah binders show, text and textiles can be intertwined with a person’s birth and may travel with him until his death. In the German tradition each documented a person’s name, birthday and different blessings. “During the late Renaissance, Italian women … made new textiles to bind the Torah. Whereas in Germany, the circumcision cloth is transformed into a binder” (Cass: 10). This shows that there is no real separation between text and textiles; text does not belong solely in manuscripts. “Not only is cloth catalytic in consolidating social relations; easily invested
with meaning, it also communicates identities and values” (Schneider: 412).

Although the whimpels embroidered for betrothal and wedding occasions as mentioned above are uniquely Italian.

A marriage practice that is still in use today is the signing of the ktuba (-ot) or a marriage contract.

Social practice is in no way separate from the material world: material things are media which are drawn upon and deployed in social action. Consequently the material world is continuously reworked in the unending performance of social life (Thomas: 60).

Every area and country had its own style of ktuba decoration and writing. Even within one country there are several styles, since the ktuba can be customized for the couple. Today, the ktuba is still used when marriages take place and it is still heavily decorated and customised. Below, (Images 27 – 35) are examples from ktubot from different eras and different areas that were settled by Jewish people. The decoration and illumination of those contracts “reflect the diverse artistic trends of each community” (Katz: 204).

The following ktuba, (Image 27) is from Minorca (Spain) and it is elaborate, filled with motifs from Jewish custom and displaying Spanish decorative elements. It is over filled with designs and text similar to the
Ottoman use of every free space on the paper, uses Jewish motifs relating to marriage and depicts strong women referred to in the Bible. Since a wedding was considered one of or the most important days in a woman’s life, the images and writings are directed towards the woman. In this instance the influential women of the Bible are depicted: Ester the queen, who changed the course of history for the Jewish people; Deborah, who was a prophet; Judith, who killed Holofernels, an enemy general; and finally, Potifar’s wife, whose advances Joseph refused.

Please see print copy for image.

Image 27. KTUBA, MAHON, MINORCA, 1751
Bridegroom: Moses Canzino. Bride: Dona Rachel bat David Abudarham. The text of the Ktuba appears on the right, the terms of the contract on the left. Three of the miniatures depict women of valour - Deborah, Judith, and Ester. The fourth shows Joseph repulsing Potifar’s wife. The signs of the Zodiac decorate the margin. Parchment, 22 x 31 in. (55.8 x 78.7 cm). Jerusalem, Michael Kaufman Collection. Photo Davis Harris, (Roth (Ed) 10: unnumbered page)
Parchment, 16 x 21 in (40.6 x 53.3 cm) Jerusalem, Michael Kaufman Collection. Photo, David Harris Jerusalem. (Roth (Ed) 10: unnumbered page)

Name of Groom: Isaac Pareira. Name of Bride: Rachel, daughter of Abraham da Pinto. (Katz, Kahane and Broshi: 205)
Bridegroom: Hananiah called Hillel, b. Joseph ha-Kohen. Bride: Abigail bat Joseph Hawo(?). At the top of the text: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem..." in the form of a seven branched Menora. Paper, 28 x 30 in (71 x 76 cm). Jerusalem, Michael Kaufman Collection, Photo David Harris, Jerusalem. (Roth (Ed) 10: unnumbered page)

Name of Groom: Ezekiel, son of Joseph. Name of Bride: Leah, daughter of Elijah. (Katz, Kahane and Broshi: 208)
IMAGE 32. KTUBA MODENA, ITALY, 1737
Bridegroom: Ephraim b. Kalonymus Sanguini. Bride: Luna bat Mordecai Pano. The outer Margin is decorated with signs of the Zodiac, while the inner one is framed by a micrography script compromising passages from the Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs. Parchment, 28 x 23 in (71 x 59.6 cm) London, British Museum, ms. 6706. (Roth (Ed) 10: unnumbered page)

IMAGE 33. KTUBA CENEDA, Italy, 1753
Bridegroom: Issac b. Jacob Alpton, Bride: Clara bat Judah Pincherele. Above and below the arcade framing the text are the signs of the Zodiac. The inscription at the top reads "A woman of valor is a crown unto her husband." Parchment, 24 x 32.5 in (61 x 82.5 cm) Jerusalem, Michael Kaufman Collection. Photo Davis Harris Jerusalem. (Roth (Ed) 10: unnumbered page)
The primitive design and execution are typical of Ktubot of the period in Erez Israel. The names of the parties are undecipherable. Jerusalem, Sir Issac and Lady Wolfson Museum in Hechal Shlomo. Photo David Harris, Jerusalem.

(Roth (Ed) 10: unnumbered page)


Photo David Harris Jerusalem. (Roth (Ed) 10: unnumbered page)
The decorated marriage certificates or *ktubot* have been an essential component of marriage traditions since Biblical (*Torah*) times. They are used to protect the interest of the woman in the marriage, and are still in use today in Jewish weddings. "According to the *Mishnah* 4:7-12, the usual terms of a *ktubbah* are binding upon husband and wife even if no document has been drawn up" (Roth (Ed) 10:932). Similar marriage certificates were used in 1751 (Image 27) and in 1979, when my parents were married, differing only in the style of decoration from the oldest ones found. The essence is the same, although the style differs, showing the artistic trends at the time they were created.

Images 36 – 37 are from a contemporary Jewish wedding, one of the first parts of which is a signing the *ktuba*. Even today it is highly decorated and important in the ceremony and it is still valid in the religious court. In the image below (image 36) the groom signs the *ktuba* or marriage agreement prior to the wedding. It is also presented under the canopy in the actual wedding as proof, as shown in the next image (image 37).
Microtext and pattern designs on textiles are a unique way to personalise recorded experiences. Some people write journals to express their experience; others might use text as part or a complete form of drawing. Since each person’s handwriting is unique, so is the personal experience.
Even though moving and wandering is not new and people have moved throughout history, as times change, moving around and travelling change as well. For example, my grandparents moved from Poland to Israel, and from Bulgaria to Israel and settled in Israel in the 1930s. In essence, though wanderers themselves, their experience was vastly different from mine. In the 1930s some came illegally on a boat to Israel through the British border control and some legally by way of acquiring a visa. Visas allow people to travel legally, including me in 2008. I moved from Israel to Canada, from Canada to Australia, and now plan to move to Germany. In the same vein that one cannot step into the same river twice, wandering or travelling from place to place can seem repetitive and similar, but each move by each individual is different from all others, influenced by different people and cultures.

From the whimples and the ktubot or marriage certificates, I took the importance of text and the influence of microtext and combined microtext in every piece of work I exhibited. From the matzah bags and the whimples I took the idea of decorating and treating fabric in a personal way and I executed this in the series of scrolls where the fabric was dyed in a style I developed in my studies in Canada and which was incorporated with the microtext that I wrote relating to my status and situation at the time of making the work.
Travelling contemporary artists

My study of traditional Jewish artefacts has shown the importance of objects that move across cultures. Colin Woodward, in his comparative study of material culture (2007), states that although “objects have various symbolic meaning for people” (Woodward: 85-86), this symbolism can be played with and rebuilt, giving light to new meanings. Objects are not separate from the society in which they sit; they have “…important cultural meanings” (Woodward: 85-86). They can be an object from one’s home or an object in a gallery; either one has the potential to become a symbol in its own right. The attachment of an object to a fixed symbol can change since “… in modern societies, … meanings and interpretations attached to images are relatively flexible and fluid, objects have careers or trajectories whereby their meaning for consumers changes over time and space” (Woodward: 29). Artists can take a traditional symbol and turn it on its head, or simply play with its meaning. Contemporary artists that chose to represent travel and migration in their art are not necessarily Jewish, but they still relate to the changes and the flow of influences that occur when a person or a community relocates, takes objects and adds or turns their symbolic meanings around.
Zoya Cherkassky, a Russian Israeli artist, portrays one version of the ‘Wandering Jew’ in her exhibition “Collection Judaica”, a 2002 exhibition at Tel-Aviv’s Rosenfeld Gallery. There is an embroidered pillow titled ‘Hayehudi Hanoded’ in translation: The Wandering Jew (image 38). A pillow can be versatile in its uses, from cushions on couches in Europe, to pillows used as chairs in the Ottoman Empire. A pillow can be an item of luxury used in houses or a multi functioning item for those travelling. A pillow is something to sleep on, be used as a chair, or just to rest against on hard ground or a souvenir from home in a distant place. The pillow depicts a religious Jew travelling, bag in hand, holding his walking stick. The influence of the environment is yet to interrupt the walking Jew on the pillow and until he settles down, he picks up influences from around him and possibly keeps them in his bag for future use.

Please see print copy for image.

Image 38. Zoya Cherkassky
Zoya Cherkassky
‘Hayehudi Hanoded’ (The wandering Jew)
2002
Embroidered pillow 36 x36 cm
“Collection Judaica” exhibition 2002 (Rosenfeld Gallery website)
From a global perspective, nomads move from one area to the next and assimilate some aspects of the new place while maintaining some of the elements they bring with them. The poem below by the Polish Australian poet Maria Lewitt, captures the essence of the nomadic immigrant and suggests that the most important and valued things immigrants bring with them to their new lands are not physical ‘contraband’ such as gold, diamonds, or similar things, but memories of their past, their values and attitudes, ones that would guide them in the new place and be synthesised with the new culture they find themselves in.

**Smugglers**

We were met
By brisk efficiency,
   Passport. Landing Permit.
   Name. Nationality.
   And yes —
   Anything to declare?

   Hands shuffled,
   Fingers lifted,
   Eyes looked
   Scanned.

Nothing was confiscated.
We were free to go.
   Our bodies bent
   Under the heavy cargo
   Of our past.
   We smuggled in
   Values and slanted opinions.
We failed to declare
Ever-lasting nostalgia,
Memories of distant people,
Already fading cities
And lost sunsets.

Nobody asked, nobody cared.
We were left alone.
And wherever we go,
We leave a trail
Of unsuspected contraband,
Sometimes polluting, sometimes enriching
Our adopted home.

**Maria Lewitt** (in Kable: 58)

Unlike Zoya Cherkassky, or Maria Lewitt, who describe the journey with less attention to the influences of the journey, Australian artist Hossein Valamanesh describes the conclusion of a journey, what happens after the traveller has already moved into another area, and compares it to the idea and action of the nomad after he or she has reached his or her destination. His account is first hand, describing his journey from Teheran in Iran to Australia. He attempts to make a bridge between the old home and the new home, to see the present with the eyes of the past, relating to the new environment arriving with light luggage, if any. Valamanesh’s works are inspiring in their simplicity of colours and his minimalist approach. A distinguishing characteristic of nomads is having few possessions, and what travellers do have is usually modular,
folding or rolled and transported to the next destination. In the following piece ‘The Runner’, (Image 39), this simplicity and essential approach is apparent.

Image 39. Hossein Valamanesh
Hossein Valamanesh
‘The Runner’, 1999
Red sand, lotus leaves on plywood and linen, Persian carpet, rope, 5 panels 183 x 306 cm, overall, rolled carpet 60 x 15 cm.
Collection of the artist.
(Valamanesh: 15).

Valamanesh’s work ‘Longing Belonging’ (image 40) reminds me of the carpets at home in Israel, and seeing it in the Australian desert reminds me of either an attempt to make the desert into a home, similar to homes of the past, or a reminder of the home in the new place. In my eyes the fire element has been a cleansing element for many cultures and it can also represent the sanctity of the home. The missing hole in the middle of the carpet relates to the past that is no longer there and to the pieces that can always be filled with new experiences, perhaps creating the installation on the ground that may ground the artist in his new home.
Another migrant Australian artist, Aloma Treister, born in Baghdad to a Jewish family in 1944, moved to Iran in 1948, then moved to Australia in 1973, incorporated in her paintings the Muslim influence that surrounded her (Aloma Treister website). One example of this influence is seen in Treister’s work ‘Scroll’ (1999), image 41 below.

**Please see print copy for image.**
A unique artist who works with light, shadow and text is Fred Erdekens, (1951 -) from Belgium. He creates objects on walls and furniture from twisted metal utilising words and sentences. In his installation ‘Could suggest something...’ from 1999 in Brussels, a twisted metal wire created words in the shadow formed by the lighting, suggesting something mysterious that escapes the light, and becomes clear only in the shadow.

Please see print copy for image.

Image 42. Fred Edrekens
Frederick Edrekens
‘Could suggest something...’, 1999
Copper, light source
14 x 220 x 18 cm
(Fred Erdekens website)
Just as Erdekens’ twisted metal brings clarity through the use of shadow, the children’s songs in my exhibition come from a similar place. They are present through the microtext element, suggesting that they are more than just words of songs, and can light the room by giving a translucent feeling, lacking substance but yet instilling something. As in Edrekens’ piece in a second glance the words in the microtext become apparent. The lyrics continue throughout my exhibition in the Bird Play Jacket and the Scrolls; in the scrolls the words are no longer children’s songs but an account of my actions in the past and wishes for the future, embroidered into parts of the scroll. The Australian artist Anne Brennan in her work “Memory Drawing” 1994, (Image 17) also deals with the past, tracing on the wall her grandfather’s words in the form of microtext (Brennan: 92).
"Travelling Patterns: Fabrics on the Road"

I chose to follow the Jewish people reflecting my heritage and my own travelling. The exhibition “Travelling Patterns: Fabrics on the Road” at the FCA Gallery in the University of Wollongong, June to July 2008, incorporates my experience as a traveller with a series of scrolls and jackets. It includes the use of microtext that symbolizes a personal connection to the past and the Jewish people who travelled before me.

Below are images of some of the stages of the process of printing the fabric material for the exhibition. Image 44 shows the printing of the outside fabric of the jacket; while image 45 following it shows quality checking and image 46 shows the close-up of the design.

Please see print copy for image.

IMAGE 44. ARTIST PRINTING OUTSIDE OF JACKET PRINT
Screenhaus, St. Peters, Australia, 2008, Collection of the Artist
Please see print copy for image.

Image 45. Quality Check of Print
Screenhaus, St. Peters, Australia, 2008, Collection of the Artist

Please see print copy for image.

Image 46. Close up of Print
Collection of the Artist

The lining for the jacket was also printed, below, (images 47 and 48) show the printed fabric and heat setting of the ink.
The exhibition consists of: three scrolls; an analog printed full size jacket; a mobile of miniature jackets; and a large-scale projection of microtext on the floor and walls. I also took the nomadic sensibility of open spaces, uncluttered ground, to characterise my exhibition. Yet, the microtext projections as
physical forms took away the void, and instead gave them a ghostly presence that filled the space. Below (images 49 – 55) are details of each of the pieces:

**IMAGE 49: BIRD-PLAY JACKET**

Materials – screen printed cotton, screen printed synthetic lining

Dimensions - 100 cm x 45 cm


The fabric of the Bird Play Jacket (Image 49) is printed with a floral pattern that is created by migrating birds. The lining is printed with microtext depicting children's songs and creating migrating birds in a version of the outside fabric.

The jacket represents my own character and personality. The synthetic cotton blend lining with migrating bird forms harks back to childhood songs I heard from my grandparents. Later in life I discovered some of these
songs were translated versions of the songs my grandparents heard as children in their countries of origin, giving a twist to the meaning. The line of tradition did not break when the older generation migrated and learnt new languages; it simply transformed and continued in an unbreakable line.

The cotton outer fabric of the jacket represents the influences processed and reflected on during my journeys. It is the same shape as the lining but in solid form, enlarging my understanding of the bird image.

Migration is an intangible concept; it has no roots because roots are built during the actual movement of people, which usually involves the movement of few material possessions. For these reasons the songs, the trails and traces migrants leave are very poignant. Even after being reshaped across languages and countries, a cohesive line exists that can be traced and these songs can be sung in any country to any child. The feelings created by migration are strong enough to surpass language and continue to resonate with the next generation. For example, the songs my grandparents taught me as Israeli songs I have come to realise were originally German or Polish in origin.
Materials – cotton, screen printed cotton, synthetic mesh, embroidered.
Dimensions – whole mobile 95cm x 65 cm x 65 cm
Individual items of clothing – Polish – 30cm x 23cm
Spanish – 35cm x 35cm
Israeli – 30cm x 25cm
Moroccan – 23 cm x 27cm


The mobile is created with four different costumes: a Polka outfit, representing

Poland; a flamenco dress, representing Spain; a Moroccan jacket,
representing Morocco and an Israeli dance costume. It is created with the same fabric as the jacket as their main element connecting the two pieces.

The exhibition brought to light the influences that surrounded me when I was growing up. The fabric of the miniature outfits “Migration Mobile” is the same as the jacket fabric, representing how I see those various influences that affected me, each unique, but ultimately interpreted through my multi-cultural, global lens. The mobile installation of the miniature jackets represents me in the way that I interpret my surroundings, letting the light play with the fabric, and having some of it not clearly visible, just as memories are not always readily available. The mobile does not represent the world of the diaspora in Israel, but the diaspora that affected me as I grew in Israel, where my grand parents’ roots were Polish and Spanish and my family friends from Morocco. Being Israeli born, the culture in which I grew also influenced me.

Below is the scroll series “Perspective of Scrolls” (images 51 – 53). These scrolls are backed with the same screen printed cotton as the jacket and the mobile, and they represent three main countries through which I have travelled. Scrolls are important in the Jewish culture because of the resemblance they have to the sacred text, which appear
Scrolls are also a highly useful and utilitarian way to carry texts without having to have the text bound in a book form.

Please see print copy for image.

**Image 51: Perspective of Scrolls - Desert Scroll**
- Materials: shibori dyed cotton, appliquéd and quilted, screen printed cotton
- Dimensions: 41 cm X 150cm

Please see print copy for image.

**Image 52: Perspective of Scrolls - City Scroll**
- Materials: shibori dyed cotton, appliquéd and quilted, screen printed cotton
- Dimensions: 41 cm X 150cm
The scrolls, “Perspective of scrolls – Desert scroll, Snow scroll and City scroll” suggest a moment from my travels, frozen in time. They refer to the east coast of North America, especially east Canada, my travels in Israel in its many different climates from the deserts in the south to the forests in the north, and my time in Australia, with its deserts and tropical areas. Now that I am in Germany, these represent memories that I take and pass on to others; they are not accurate depictions of memories, but momentary glimpses of what has already gone. Each scroll has a microtext incorporated within it in reference to the micrography used to decorate pages of the Bible and other illustrations from the Ottoman Empire (Images 12-16).

The Desert scroll represents what I remember of the “Zin” desert in Israel.

The Snow scroll depicts a beautiful moment remembered.
from New Brunswick, Canada, where the snow covered the mountains and trees in the winter. It forms another piece of the puzzle of my journeys that will remain with me forever. The City scroll represents the way I saw the many urban areas I have visited; it does not depict one or all of the places I've been, but suggests a generalised memory of an area. The Scrolls remind me of my trajectory across countries, half there, half forgotten in the midst of packing for the next part of the journey. Each scroll also contains microtext, further binding them together. Their fabric backing is the same material used in the jacket. The title of the exhibition also is created from micro text of the children's songs used in the exhibition.

The “Microtext Mirage” on walls and floor (image 54) is composed of a Hebrew text of children’s songs that are part of my background. Similarly to Anne Brennan’s work ‘Memory drawing’ discussed above (image 17), I traced the children’s songs of my past that follow and grow as I’ve grown older. The songs are Israeli, but their melody is more often what came with the immigrants from Poland or Spain, and sometimes the songs are translated into Hebrew from their original. It is common to have a children’s song, and sing it to someone who does not speak Hebrew, only to find out he or she will continue the...
song in their native language. Those are the same songs a mother would take with her to a new country and sing to her child to keep what is left from her own home and childhood as well as to pass the songs on. The songs, which I learned as a child, make reference to migrating birds and other animals, and can be found in communities across Europe. In the following translated lines from the songs the duck shape talks about young ducks that don’t want to come home. “Ducks, ducks, come home. We don’t want to, we don’t want to, come to eat, we don’t want to, come to drink, we don’t want to, fine, the wolf will devour you, we’re not afraid…”.

The song around one of the flying birds is about one of the migrating birds in Israel, and it describes it as “I saw in the garden a small Nachlieli (White Wagtail), he had nice long tail, a small black apron on his chest…”. The song around the other flying bird is about a bird and her nest. “Nest to the bird between the trees, and in her nest three eggs, and in each egg, be quiet lest they will be awoken, sleeps a small chick….” The songs around the leaves of the flower are about other animals, one of them for example, is about a horse that pulls a wagon of hay, “Wagon with a horse in the field run, till the rims it is filled with cut hay…” and another song that talks about a rabbit
and his house: “The rabbit has a house between the olive trees, under very sweet cabbage, he has a very green house…”

Please see print copy for image.

**Image 54: Microtext Mirage**
A projection on the walls and ceiling. Dimensions: projection on the floor 300 cm x 300 cm; projection on the wall: 800 cm x 300 cm. “Travelling Patterns: Fabrics on the Road”, 2008, Image from the Collection of the Artist.

The title (image 55) is created with microtext as well. As a title it begins and sums up the exhibition but is also made up of steps and roads that make up the way or the path that took me this far and continues onwards on an open road.

Please see print copy for image.

**Image 55: Travelling Patterns: Fabrics on the Road**
“Travelling Patterns: Fabrics on the Road” Dimensions: Capital letters 15 cm high, total length approx. 300 cm. “Travelling Patterns: Fabrics on the Road” 2008, Image from the Collection of the Artist.
Conclusion

In the beginning of the study I examined some artifacts of Jewish origin, and played with the notion of the Jewish people as the ‘people of the book’ taking into account the importance of text in the Jewish culture. I used the microtext in my exhibition. I wished to depict the process of travelling and the influences it has on the person travelling and the people around the traveller. I based my exhibition around the road, the journey, not the destination. In my exhibition I uncovered some of the process of the journey and influences of travel, using microtext with textiles and some symbols from my own personal travels and some older symbols that influenced me along the way.
Appendix 1.  

Glossary of terms

Matzah (-ot) is unleavened bread. It is eaten during Passover. It is following the story in the Bible, in it “the children of Israel “Baked the mazot of the dough which they had brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavend ; because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not tarry” (Ex. 12:39)” (Roth (Ed) 11:1155). The singular is Matzah and the plural is Matzot. (The Academy of the Hebrew Language website)

Matzah Bags or Matzah cover. The Matzah bag is “a cloth to cover the mazzoth” (Roth (Ed) 13:173). It is used to hide a part of a matzah that is broken in half; the other half is hidden so the children can find it.

A whimple is a Torah binder that was made from the child’s circumcision sheet. It is cut into four and then embroidered with text and images such as “the name of the child, date of birth and blessings, then dedicated to the synagogue during the child’s first visit and used to bind the Torah scroll from which he reads the Bar Mitzvah” (Jewish Museum of Australia: 24).

Nisan is the seventh month of the Jewish calendar. In the Gregorian calendar it falls between March and April, although originally it was “the first month of the Jewish year” (Roth (Ed) 12:1175).

Knedlech are called matzah balls in English. The name itself comes from Yiddish. They are balls of dough made from Matzah flour and served in clear soup in Passover in Polish households, and are “considered a typical Passover dish” (Roth (Ed) 13:172).

Gefilte-fish is a fish dish served with carrot garnish. “Originally, the recipe for gefilte fish called for the flesh of the fish to be removed from the skin, ground up and mixed with other ingredients such as eggs, spices, and ground onions and carrots. The mixture was then stuffed back into the skin and cooked or baked” (Chabad website). Gefilte means stuffed in Yiddish. Today it is a ground fish cooked or boiled served still with its carrot garnish. It is a Passover dish in the Polish Seder table. It is also found on the meal on Saturday as “[F]ish is a standard food for Sabbath” (Roth (Ed) 6:1422).
A conversor is a “designation used in Christian Spain and Portugal for Moorish or Jewish” (Roth (Ed) 5:936) person who was forced to convert to Christianity in Spain during the Spanish Inquisition in seventeenth century but continued to observe Jewish customs in secret” (Roth (Ed) 5:936). To read more about conversors see (Roth (Ed) 15:236-240).

Pesach is the Hebrew name of Passover, “a spring festival” (Roth (Ed 13:163) a holiday celebrating the exodus from Egypt. It is celebrated in the month of Nisan “on the 15th day of Nisan” (Roth (Ed) 13:163). To read more about Passover see (Roth (Ed) 13:163-173).

The Seder is the ceremony in the home that commemorates Passover. “The Seder ("order"), is based on the injunction to parents to inform their children of the deliverance from Egypt: "Ant thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying: It is because of the which the Lord did for me when I come forth out of Egypt" (Ex. 15:8)” (Roth (Ed) 13:166) The Seder follows a standard order: Kadesh, (Sanctification), rehaz (wash), karpas (greens), yahaz (division), maggid (recitation), rahzah (washing), mozi (brining forth), mazzah (unleavened bread), maror (bitter herbs), korekh (binding) shulhan arukh (prepared table), zafun (hidden), barekh (blessing), hallel (palsam of praise), nirzah (acceptance) (Roth (Ed) 13:167-168) on some plates all or some of the actions of the ceremony is written. On the plate in image 2 written words that describe some of the actions and some of the foods on the plate: Maror (bitter herbs), Karpas (green vegetable), Yachatz (cut in half), Korech (bind), Barech (bless), Halel (praise).

The Seder plate it is part of the narrative of the Seder, and through the different types of foods that are placed on the unique plate, the story of the holiday is told. “Seder plates were designed to hold the symbolic food preparations” (Roth (Ed) 5:309).

Masorah - The system of critical notes on the external form of the Biblical text. This system of notes represents the literary labours of innumerable scholars, of which the beginning falls probably in pre-Maccabean times and the end reaches to the year 1425. (Jewish encyclopaedia website)
Hanukia is a nine-candle lamp used in Hanuka celebrations. "There was in use in talmudic times the Greco-Roman polymixos, a many mouthed lamp which was made of clay, stone, or bronze with eight apparatus for wicks fed by a central reservoir on whose surface geometrical or symbolic designs often appear" (Roth (Ed) 7:1288).

Ktuba (-ot) are the marriage certificates given to the bride in Jewish weddings. "The ktuba was instituted for the purpose of protecting the woman "so that he shall not regard it as easy to divorce her" (ket. 11a; Yev. 89ba ; Maim. loc. cit.) (Roth (Ed)10:927)

Microtext or micrography is minute text usually appearing on manuscripts. It can form the shapes of animals, plants or geometrical shapes. (Gutmann:14) To read more about micrography see (Roth (Ed) 8:126ff) under Illuminated Manuscripts, Hebrew, 8:1257-1288
Appendix 2.

List of Images with full references

Image 1. Seder Plate, Majolica, Spain, c. 1450. Dimensions – 56.5 cm

Image 2. Seder Plate, Pewter, Germany, early nineteenth century. Dimensions – 33 cm

Image 3. Matzah Bag, Cracow, Galicia, about 1850.
Maker, Mrs. Lazar Rakower (Nee Salomea Fuchs). Diameter 52 cm. Ivory silk cotton satin embroidered with polychrome silk and appliquéd with velvet, border of machine made silk blonde lace and metallic lace.

Maker: Pauline Rosenberg. Purple cotton double-mesh canvas (known as Penelope canvas) embroidered with polychrome wool. Dimension 36 cm x 36 cm.
Image 5. *Matzah* Bag Europe, Western Ashkenazic, inscription date 1804/5.
Undyed silk satin embroidered and appliquéd with polychrome silk and painted velvet. Diameter 42.5 cm.

Undyed linen embroidered with polychrome silk. Dimension 41 cm x 37.5 cm

Image 7. *Matzah* Bag Eastern Europe, Inscription date 1861/2
Coral silk/cotton Satin embroidered with polychrome silk and beads. Diameter 37 – 39 cm.

Undyed silk cotton satin embroidered with polychrome silk. 38.5 cm x 40.5 cm.
Pale aqua silk/cotton satin embroidered with polychrome silk.
Diameter about 37 cm.

Undyed linen embroidered with undyed cotton; undyed cotton needle point lace; undyed cotton knotted net embroidered with undyed cotton (known as filet lace or darned net).
37.5 cm x 37.5 cm (when lying flat).

Image 11, *Matzah Bag* Berlin c. 1920
Cotton and ink
46 x 46.5 cm

London, British Library
Ms. Or. 2348
Sana’a, Yemen, 1469
415 x 280 mm.
Gutmann, Joseph *Hebrew manuscript painting* / Joseph Gutmann, London : Chatto & Windus, 1979
London, British Library
Ms. Or. 2348
Sana’a, Yemen, 1469
415 x 280 mm.
Gutmann, Joseph Hebrew manuscript painting / Joseph Gutmann, London : Chatto & Windus, 1979

Image 14. Bible
Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library,
Ms. Heb. 4º790
Burgos, Spain, 1260
302 x 270 mm.
Gutmann, Joseph Hebrew manuscript painting / Joseph Gutmann, London : Chatto & Windus, 1979

Image 15. Pentateuch.
Copenhagen, The Royal Library, Ms. Heber, 11
Bavaria, Germany, early fourteenth century.
395 x 295 mm.
Gutmann, Joseph Hebrew manuscript painting / Joseph Gutmann, London : Chatto & Windus, 1979

London. British Museum, Or. ms.2628
(and 2626-7)
fol. (12x 9.5 ins/30.5 x 24 cm.)185 (12 x 9.5 ins/30.5 x 24 cm.).
The British Library
http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/lisbon/accessib/l/pages27and28
.html#content
Accessed 20/05/08

Image 17: Anne Brennan, ‘Memory Drawing’
(detail of installation “Un/familiar”), 1994; graphite text on wall.
Photography: I. Lobergs
Image 18: Textile Fragment patterned in red, yellow and blue, 135 AD
Found in the Cave of Letters, Nachal Hever, Israel
Unknown size

Image 19. Whimple, Germany, 1674 unbleached linen, polychrome embroidery in silk with stem stitch, one section joined with blue herringbone stitch; inscription (embroidered in Hebrew)
16 x 300

Image 20. Binder For the Torah Scroll Europe, Western Ashkenazic,
Inscription date 1836
Undyed linen, painted.
19.5 cm x 340 cm

Image 21. Binder For the Torah Scroll
Possibly eastern Germany, inscription date 1762
Undyed linen embroidered with silk.
18 cm x 348 cm.
Image 22. Binder for the Torah Scroll (detail) Europe, Western Ashkenazic, inscription date 1750.
Undyed Linen embroidered with silk.
20.50 cm x 197.5 cm.
Jewish Museum (New York, N.Y.), Fabric of Jewish life: textiles from the Jewish Museum collection / Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, guest curator, with the assistance of Cissy Grossman, assistant curator.

Image 23. Binder for the Torah Scroll (detail)
Italy, inscription date 1582/3.
Maker: Honorata, wife of Samuel Foa.
Undyed linen embroidered with red silk (Punto scrito).
19 cm x 285 cm.
Jewish Museum (New York, N.Y.), Fabric of Jewish life: textiles from the Jewish Museum collection / Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, guest curator, with the assistance of Cissy Grossman, assistant curator.

Image 24. Binder for the Torah Scroll (detail) Italy, inscription date 1764/5.
Maker: Bella Judith, daughter of Emanuel Finzi of Rivarolo.
Red cotton embroidered with white linen.
18 cm x 290 cm.
Jewish Museum (New York, N.Y.), Fabric of Jewish life: textiles from the Jewish Museum collection / Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, guest curator, with the assistance of Cissy Grossman, assistant curator.

Silk, Metal Thread and linen,
9 x 247 cm
Cream silk damask with stylized motif of flowers and leaves and branches, embroidered with Hebrew inscription in gold thread and silk; undyed linen lining; silk cord.
Image 26. Torah Binder Germany, 1803.
Linen and paint
15.5 x 46.5 cm
Undyed linen; Hebrew inscription, floral and geometric motifs and, extreme left, bird in orange, green and yellow paint.

Image 27. Ktuba, Mahon, Minorca, 1751.


Image 29. Ktuba Holland, Rotterdam, 1648
Parchment
Name of Groom: Isaac Pareira.
Name of Bride: Rachel, daughter of Abraham da Pinto.
(Katz, Kahane and Broshi: 205)
Image 30. *Ktuba* Yazd, Iran, 1786.

Image 31. *Ktuba* Iran, Isfahan, 1860


Image 33. *Ktuba* Ceneda Italy 1753.
Bridegroom: Issac b. Jacob Alpton, Bride:Clara bat Judah Pincherele. Above and below are arcade framing the text are the signs of the Zodiac. The inscription at the top reads” “A woman of valour is a crown unto her husband.” Parchment, 24 x 32.5 in (61 x 82.5 cm). Jerusalem, Michael Kaufman Collection. Photo Davis Harris. Jerusalem. Roth, Cecil (Ed) (1971) *Ketubbot* in Encyclopedia Judaica Vol.10. Jes-Lei Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House. P.926-934
IMAGE 34: Ktuba JERUSALEM 1884

The primitive design and execution are typical of Ktubot of the period in Erez Israel. The names of the parties are undecipherable. Jerusalem, Sir Issac and Lady Wolfson Museum in Hechal Shlomo. Photo David Harris, Jerusalem.


IMAGE 35: Ktuba ROME 1795.


Image 36. Signing of the Ktuba, 1979, Collection of the Artist

Image 37. Wedding, in Yakum, 1979, Collection of the Artist

Image 38. Cherkassky, Zoya

‘Hayehudi Hanoded’ (The wandering Jew), 2002
Embroidered pillow 36 x36 cm
“Collection Judaica” exhibition 2002
Rosenfeld Gallery, “Collection Judaica” exhibition, Tel-Aviv http://www.rg.co.il/artists_prt_item.asp?ArtID=7&PicID=53
Accessed 06/03/08


Red sand, lotus leaves on plywood and linen, Persian carpet, rope, 5 panels 183 x 306 cm, overall, rolled carpet 60 x 15 cm. Collection of the artist.


Image 41. Aloma Treister
‘Scroll’, 1999
Acrylic on Board 120x120cm.
Australian Women’s Art Register
http://www.womensartregister.org/aloma.html (Accessed 08/12/008)

Image 42. Fred Edrekens
‘Could suggest something...’, 1999
Copper, light source
14 x 220 x 18 cm
Fred Erdekens http://www.fredeerdekens.be/ (Accessed 08/12/08)

Image 43. Fred Edrekens
Fred Edrekens ‘Could suggest something...’, 1999
Copper, light source
(Detail)
Fred Erdekens http://www.fredeerdekens.be/ (Accessed 08/12/08)

Image 44. Artist printing outside of jacket print. SCREENHAUS, ST. PETERS, AUSTRALIA, 2008, Collection of the Artist

Image 45. Quality check of print. SCREENHAUS, ST. PETERS, AUSTRALIA, 2008, Collection of the Artist

Image 46. Close up of print. Collection of the Artist

Image 47: Printed lining. SCREENHAUS, ST. PETERS, AUSTRALIA, 2008, Collection of the Artist

Image 49: Bird-play Jacket,
Materials – screen printed cotton, screen printed synthetic lining
Dimensions - 100 cm x 45 cm
The jacket’s fabric is printed with floral pattern that is created by migrating birds. The lining is printed with microtext of children songs creating migrating birds in a version of the outside fabric. “Travelling Patterns: Fabrics on the Road”, 2008, Collection of the Artist.

Image 50: Migration Mobile.
Materials – cotton, screen printed cotton, synthetic mesh, embroidered.
Dimensions – whole mobile 95cm x 65 cm x 65 cm
Individual items of clothing – Polish – 30cm x 23cm
Spanish – 35cm x 35cm
Israeli – 30cm x 25cm
Moroccan – 23 cm x 27cm

Image 51: Perspective of Scrolls - Desert Scroll.
Materials – shibori dyed cotton, appliquéd and quilted, screen printed cotton
Dimensions – 41 cm X 150cm

Image 52: Perspective of Scrolls - City Scroll.
Materials – shibori dyed cotton, appliquéd and quilted, screen printed cotton
Dimensions – 41 cm X 150cm
Image 53: Perspective of Scrolls - Snow Scroll.
  Materials – shibori dyed cotton, appliquéd and quilted, screen printed cotton
  Dimensions – 37 cm x 159 cm


Image 55: Travelling Patterns: Fabrics on the Road.
Aloma Treister

Aloma Treister

Art Gallery of New South Wales, collection,
Accessed 31/11/07

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