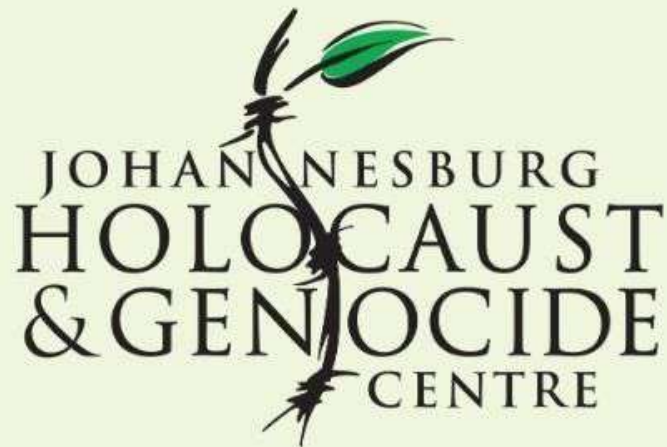


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SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

– 2023 –



A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR, TALI NATES

As you will read in this September 2023 newsletter, the Centre continues to be abuzz with daily activities, including workshops with schools and other groups, in person and online engagements, education workshops for educators, events, international book launches, conferences, exhibitions and walkabouts, films and more. These high-quality offerings would not be possible without our dedicated staff, board members, partners, donors and supporters, survivors, volunteers and interns. I would like to thank each and every one of you for your tremendous support!

In the past months some of the highlights included the facilitating of the Change Makers Programme (CMP) in Johannesburg and Mozambique thanks to a partnership with the Open University UK, and its launch in Asia thanks to funding from the Nippon Foundation. Diverse projects continue including a university study tour to Poland and other seminars and conferences, many international and national guest speakers and so much more. The JHGC was also one of the organising institutes of the 83rd commemoration and reunion held at the [Beau Bassin Jewish Detainees Memorial & Information Centre](#) in Mauritius. As always, this newsletter contains only some highlights of the JHGC's myriad of activities and you can access much of our past [webinars](#) and [podcasts](#) freely online.

We wish all our Jewish friends a Happy New Year– Shana Tova, and well over the fast.

With my warmest wishes,
Tali Nates



Tali Nates speaking at the 83rd Commemoration of the deportation to Mauritius, September 2023

MAY

May was an action-packed month. The JHGC was full of visitors to exhibitions, events, and educational programmes.

The month started with the opening of a new exhibition in collaboration with the Sylt Foundation, Elias Mendel's ***Letters to Yesterday***. The exhibition examined Mendel's German Jewish history through his interventions in an extensive family archive.



Elias Mendel explaining his exhibition during the opening walkabout of *Letters to Yesterday*

One of our most attended events was the book launch of Jonny Steinberg's newest book, ***Winnie and Nelson***, in collaboration with Jonathan Ball Publishers. Another highlight included launching another fascinating and meaningful book, ***I am Ella***, about Ella Blumenthal - a 102 year old Cape Town based Holocaust survivor. As part of our range of programmes, we hosted film screenings, including ***Reckonings***, a film that explores the formation of the Claims Conference. During May, we collaborated on a number of webinars, including a special GFH Talking Memory programme marking the 80th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.



Tali Nates interviewing Joanne Jowell, author of *I am Ella*, at her book launch, May 2023

Jonny Steinberg and Hlonipha Mokoena, during the book launch of *Winnie and Nelson*, May 2023

The audience watches a message from Gideon Taylor, President of the Claims Conference at the screening of *Reckonings*, May 2023

In May, our education team welcomed over 20 schools and adult groups to the JHGC. In addition to our regular school education programmes, we were able to use Elias Mendel's exhibition as an opportunity to share his art and creative process with grade 11 learners from the National School of the Arts.

In the middle of the month, the JHGC facilitated an Educator Training Workshop in Bloemfontein which included teachers from across the Free State, supported by The Claims Conference. The workshop aimed to expand participants' knowledge of the Holocaust, genocide and human rights, and help them develop new methodologies for engaging and challenging their learners.

The JHGC's Education department continued working and building relationships with international partners in the genocide education and human rights sectors including the African and Middle East Leadership project (AMEL). The JHGC ran workshops as part of their curriculum with the goal of building resilient, inclusive societies that are free from discrimination, persecution, and violent coercion. The online and interactive workshop introduced the history of the Holocaust with a focus on the choices made by individuals and institutions in order to better understand the consequences, apathy, indifference and silence while encouraging pluralism, and active citizenship.



Elias Mendel speaking to a National School of the Arts student about his artwork, May 2023



Participants during the Educator Training Workshop in Bloemfontein, May 2023

LIBRARY

Our Reference library continues to be well utilised and is ever-expanding thanks to generous donations by our community. It has also been a year since the JHGC opened its lending library and we have been thrilled to see JHGC Volunteers and Members enjoying our selection of reads. The library doesn't only collect books about genocide and World War Two but related human rights themes such as racism, homophobia, hate speech, and xenophobia.

After reviewing our book collection, we still have some gaps and have created a [wishlist](#) of selected books. If you have any of these books and would be willing to donate them to the library, you would be assisting in furthering towards providing accessible information to all. This would benefit the Centre greatly.



Part of our exceptional library

JUNE

June welcomed the opening of a returning exhibition to the JHGC, ***Eva's Story: The Promise***. The exhibition explored the story of Holocaust survivor Eva Schloss, her brother Heinz and his artwork. Born in Vienna in 1929, Eva's family fled after the Anschluss to Holland and after it too was occupied, went into hiding. During his time in hiding, Heinz quelled his fears by painting and writing poetry. They were all betrayed and deported to Auschwitz. Eva and her mother survived but her father and brother were killed just weeks before liberation.



A visitor viewing *Eva's Story: The Promise* at the members only exhibition opening, June 2023

On the 1st of June, our Holocaust Survivor Group enjoyed a lively and enjoyable performance by the King David Victory Park Choir. The survivors interacted with the learners, creating a meaningful and uplifting morning for all.



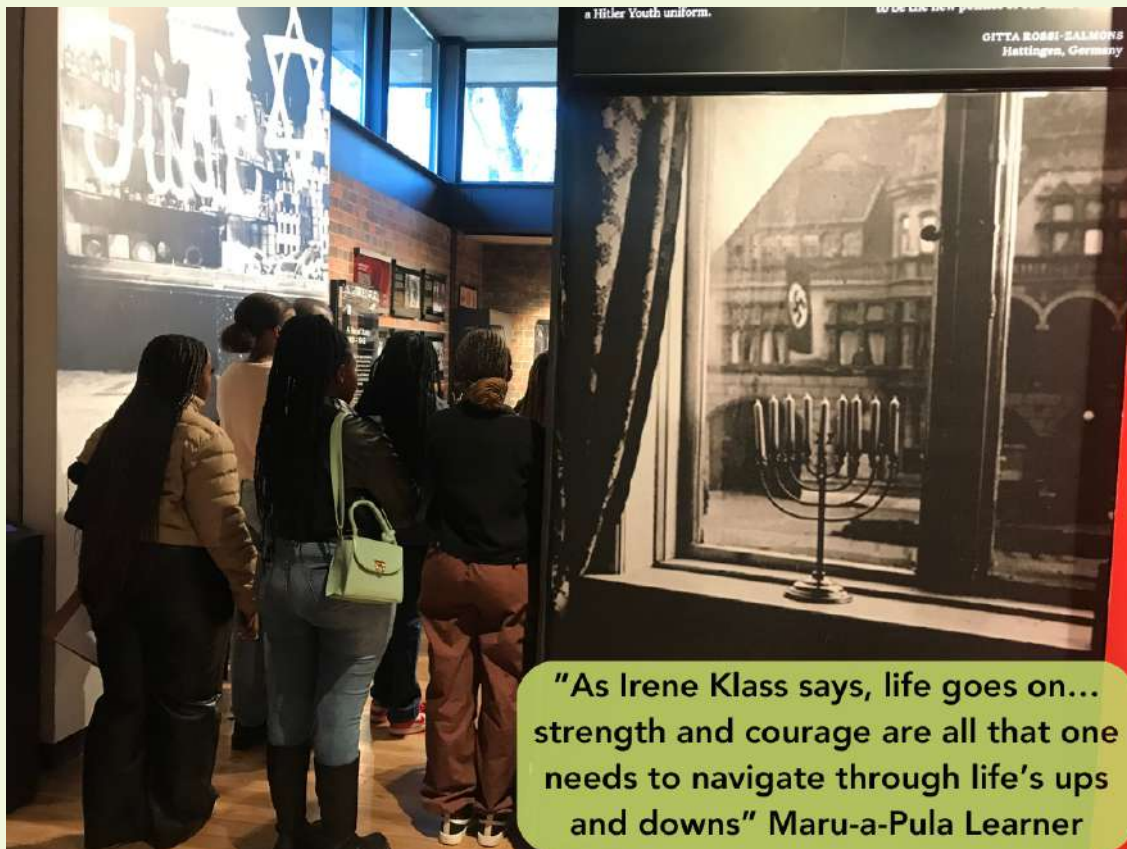
Survivor Helen Lieman, and volunteer Betty Slowatek speaking to a King David Victory Park student, June 2023



Survivor Helene Sieff dancing with a King David Victory Park student, June 2023

June also saw a number of in person and online public events. We hosted Pedro Tabensky, founding director of the Allan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics and professor at Rhodes University, who discussed ethics and education as practices of freedom. Online highlights of the month included a collaboration with Ghetto Fighter's House looking at the Iasi Pogrom in Romania, with Lyonell Fliss, a Johannesburg survivor discussing his childhood experiences of the pogrom.

A number of schools and university groups visited the Centre in June, including MBA students from GIBS. Learners from Maru-a-Pula in Botswana, travelled all the way to Johannesburg to attend a workshop exploring genocide in the 20th century through the two case studies of the Holocaust and the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda. They were joined by survivor Irene Klass who shared her experiences of the Holocaust.



Learners from Maru-a-Pula school in the JHGC permanent exhibition, June 2023

ARCHIVE

The JHGC archive continues to grow and develop, with our collections of tangible and intangible archival material being catalogued and researched. Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, we have made great progress and are now researching items further and sharing new images and stories.

Our collection is being digitised and recorded, making public access available. We have been at work cleaning and evaluating the objects in our permanent exhibition, and most of them are now available to explore on our online platform [E-Hive](#), available globally. We have received interesting new donations ranging from family collections, to unique individual items, as well as testimonies – some of which are being recorded for the first time. We are constantly surprised by the interesting items that find their way to us, and the fascinating stories which are yet to be revealed.

We continue to explore the collection’s interesting artefacts and stories in our popular **ArchiveFriday** series on social media, and look forward to sharing more in depth knowledge on our collections in the new year.



Archive volunteer training, September 2023



Click on the video to watch our ArchiveFriday on a piece of barbed wire fence from the Otwock Ghetto in Poland



Click on the video to watch our ArchiveFriday on Christine Niwemfura, a survivor of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda

JULY

In July, the JHGC took a short break from public events. However, our education team was very busy this month working with schools and a range of community organisations.

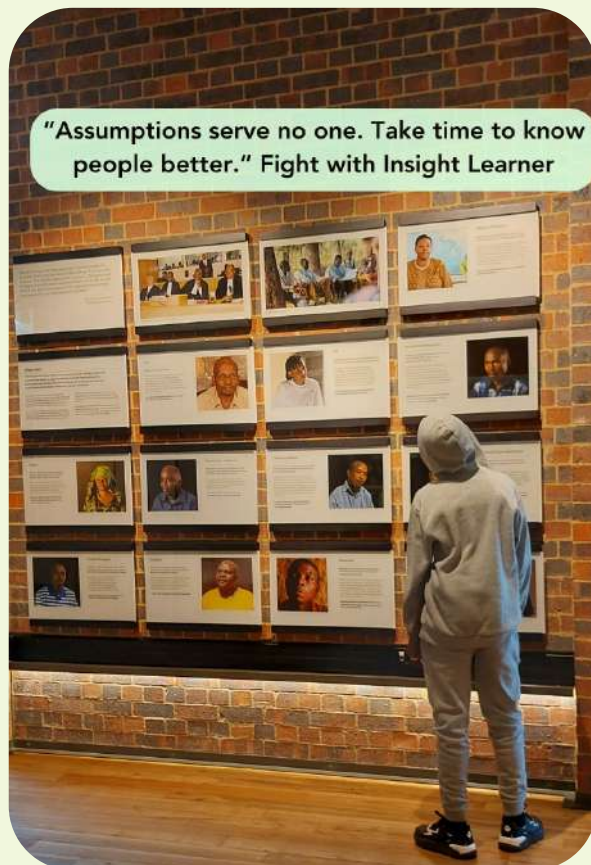
One such organisation was **NextUp**, which supports learners to successfully bridge the transition from high school into post-school training and work. The organisation offers learners numerous opportunities to build their confidence, resilience, and experience in order to achieve and maintain fulfilling and successful lives. One such opportunity was to work with JHGC educators on a programme that equipped them with the knowledge and confidence to teach their peers, parents and community about the history of the Holocaust using JHGC pop up exhibitions guided and hosted in their own space.



NextUp learners being taught to guide the JHGC pop up exhibition, July 2023

With the generous support of the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS) the JHGC was able to sponsor learner groups through **Rays of Hope**, an organisation partnering with the Alexandra community to create sustainable change through learning and development programmes and **Fight With Insight**, a thriving inner city community programme in the heart of Johannesburg.

The workshops explored genocide in the 20th century through the history of the Holocaust and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. They included a discussion on identity, stereotyping and 'othering', a guided tour of our permanent exhibition spaces, and through New Dimensions in Testimony, a partnership with the USC Shoah Foundation, also an interactive conversation with Holocaust survivor Pinchas Gutter. Throughout the morning, learners were encouraged to make connections between the past and the present and to become active citizens in their own families, schools, and communities.



"Assumptions serve no one. Take time to know people better." Fight with Insight Learner

Learner from Fight with Insight in the JHGC permanent exhibition, July 2023



"I will respect each and every person just the way they are because I learnt that misjudging and treating other people badly can lead to making bad decisions. And I will love everyone just the way they are and stop doing racism and xenophobia." Rays of Hope Learner

Rays of Hope learner in the JHGC permanent exhibition, July 2023

In July, members of the JHGC staff, Jordan Saltzman and Vix Appelbaum joined the Austrian Service Abroad students, staff from our sister Centres in Durban and Cape Town, and UCT students for a study seminar in Poland, led by Tali Nates. They visited many sites and had deep learning conversations with experts in the field about Jewish life before the Holocaust, Holocaust history, memory and making connections to the present and future.



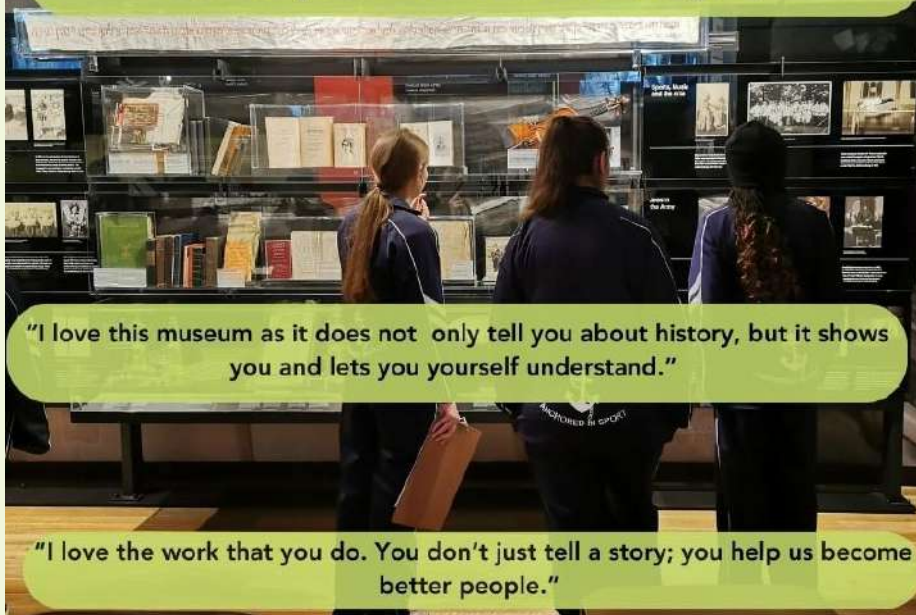
Delegates of the Poland study tour at Płaszów concentration camp, July 2023

LEARNER FEEDBACK



"I learned that the way we act today can affect the future. Be kind, we have the power to change certain aspects of ours, and other's lives."

"Textbooks don't really show you the pains that people go through. The fact that I got the chance to hear someone tell me what they went through is something that I will hold with me for a long time."



"I love this museum as it does not only tell you about history, but it shows you and lets you yourself understand."

"I love the work that you do. You don't just tell a story; you help us become better people."

AUGUST

The education team started August facilitating several hundred students from Eqnisweni Secondary School visiting in the first week of the month. The grade 9 students benefited from hearing about life experiences during the Holocaust, engaging with artefacts and photographs in the exhibition, and working in small groups.



Eqnisweni Secondary School learners doing an exercise about moral choices, August 2023

We were privileged to host three international experts in Holocaust Education in August, Dr Yaron Nir Freisager, a history researcher specialising in Jewish ghettos writings in Poland during World War II, and the inaugural scholar in the Holocaust and Genocide studies fellowship by the JHGC, Hebrew University, and Sylt Foundation. We also hosted Sarah Levy, Educational Consultant, Overseas Education and Training Department at Yad Vashem. Additionally, we hosted Dr Tamir Hod, a historian in the field of World War II and the Holocaust, as well as the impact of Holocaust

remembrance on Israeli society. Our guests shared their knowledge, experience and resources with the public, staff, volunteers, and educators.

In addition to a busy month for education, August started with a new exhibition in collaboration with the Sylt Foundation. ***I see something you don't see*** shows the work of Gil Shachar, an Israeli sculptor based in Germany. The exhibition highlights several of Shachar's thematic interests including questions concerning perception, illusion, invention, and the concept of "imagination". The exhibition had several walkabouts during August and will be open until the end of September.



Gil Shachar giving a walkabout at the opening of *I see something you don't see*, August 2023

As August was Women's Month, we hosted two events focusing on women. The first was by Dr Yaron Nir Freisager on women in the Holocaust which highlighted the unique positionality of women's experiences in the Holocaust. The second was a panel discussion in collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Museum in Mthatha. The panel looked at silent voices, the challenges of women in leadership, resilience during the Holocaust and 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, and why we study difficult histories. The event created interesting dialogue between a range of people regarding women's experiences.



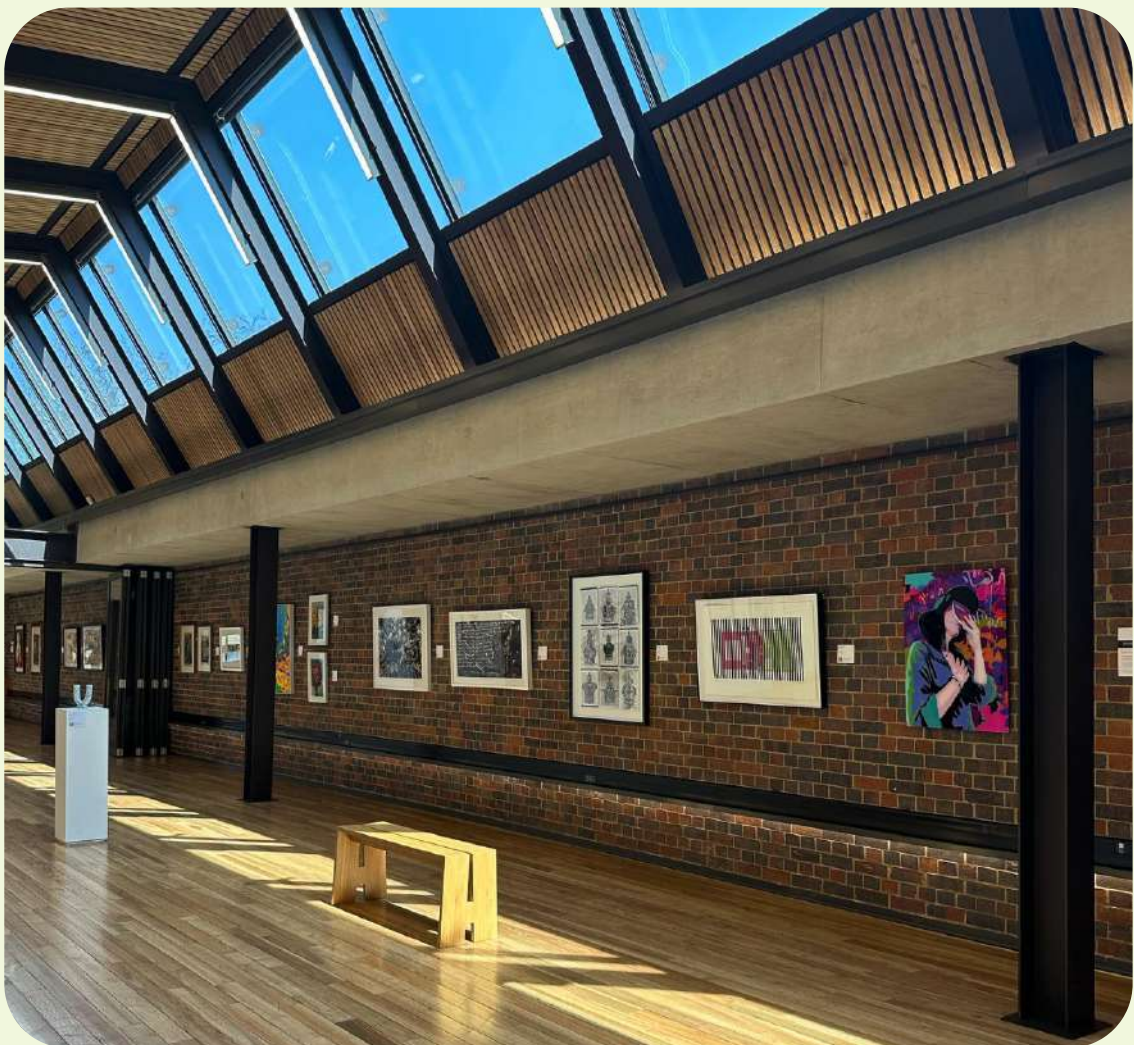
Panelists Dr. Nomvuselelo Songelwa, Karyn Kadish, and Sizakele Shongwe at the Women's Day panel, August 2023



Panelists Christine Niwemfura and Tali Nates at the Women's Day panel, August 2023

HOSTING STIMULATING CONVERSATIONS

Looking back at the events, collaboration and exhibitions we've hosted at the JHGC in the past few months, it has been a great pleasure to host people from all across the globe. We had German and South African young people, who came together to discuss the unjust states of German National Socialism and South African Apartheid. We had the privilege of hosting the Nelson Mandela Museum who held their Human Rights prize giving for learners from across the country at the JHGC. The Centre has also been buzzing with exciting events one of which was held by the Malka Ella fertility fund who had an art exhibition fundraiser. We ended August with the coming together of social workers and psychologist for an important workshop. We have had thousands of guests that we have hosted in the past few months and we look forward to welcoming more visitors to our beautiful space.



Malka Ella exhibition, August 2023

[Click here to learn more about using our space](#)

SEPTEMBER

In early September, we were involved in organising the 83rd commemoration and reunion of ex-detainees, who were deported in 1940 to Mauritius where they were held in prison by the British authorities for almost 5 years. The reunion included 38 ex-detainees and families (among them four who were born on the island), diplomats from Germany, Austria, Britain, and Israel, the Vice President of Mauritius, religious leaders and distinguished guests from Mauritius and around the world. The three-day events included a moving opening ceremony at the St. Martins' Jewish Cemetery where 126 Jewish detainees are buried, a visit to the Beau Bassin prison, to the Rose Hill Concert Hall where the detainees performed and to the Port Louis Harbour. It concluded with a meeting with the President of Mauritius and a closing ceremony at L'AMICALE Centre.

The event was organised by Tali Nates the director of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre, Dr. Roni Mikel-Arieli from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Owen Griffiths the President of the Beau Bassin Jewish Detainees Memorial & Information Centre and with the support of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation Southern Africa.



Gideon Ickowitz, a survivor born in detention in Mauritius lighting a candle at the opening ceremony in Mauritius, September 2023



People gather at the St. Martins' Jewish Cemetery, September 2023

September has also seen the opening of our new exhibition, Chayala Rosenthal: Wunderkind of the Vilna Ghetto Theatre, produced by the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre. The exhibition focuses on Chayala Rosenthal, a remarkable talented performer who was one of the few survivors of the Vilna Ghetto who survived labour and concentration camps as well as a death march. After liberation, she gained recognition performing globally and settling in Cape Town.

It will run until the end of the year. The opening was accompanied by a screening of the film ***The Paper Brigade***, an award winning Belgian documentary, that tells the moving story of the resistance group "The Paper Brigade", a group of Jewish writers, scholars, and librarians who desperately tried to rescue Jewish cultural treasures in Vilna during the Nazi occupation.

Although the month has not yet ended, the JHGC has been busy in many different realms. School and group workshops, conferences, seminars and four Educator Training Workshops in Johannesburg and Limpopo supported by The Claims Conference were some of the other highlights of September.



The exhibition *Chayela Rosenthal: Wunderkind of the Vilna Ghetto Theatre* at the JHGC

PODCASTS

It has been another busy and successful year for the JHGC's Podcast Series, with over 20 podcasts broadcasted so far in 2023. The Series highlight scholars, academics, activists and artists. One of this year's highlights was the inclusion of the ***Sleepwalking Through the Assault on Democracy*** series as required listening by the Florida International University's CWGS Center for Women's and Gender Studies department.

The episodes on Dangerous Women & Dangerous Men were of particular interest to this university. Another highlight was the new series ***Standing Up to the Assault on Democracy***, a conversation with memory activists and artists who are making a difference around the world.

[Click here to listen to our podcasts](#)

All of our activities would not be possible without the generosity of our community. Please consider making a donation.

[**MAKE YOUR DONATION HERE**](#)

You can also Support the crucial work of the JHGC by becoming an annual member. This membership will offer you access to exclusive events for one year, including many private openings to international temporary exhibitions, workshops by top scholars, film screenings, and other special events. Membership for the year costs R360.00 per person.

[**CLICK HERE TO ENQUIRE ABOUT MEMBERSHIP**](#)



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