

Curriculum vitae: Journey from Prague to Sydney

Jana Vytrhlik



Jana Vytrhlik, PhD (2021) in Art History and Jewish Studies, University of Sydney, is an art historian with over four decades interest and specialization in historical Judaica. Jana is a Guest curator at the A.M. Rosenblum Jewish Museum at The Great Synagogue in Sydney, where she develops exhibitions, oversees the collection management and regularly contributes with research essays and presentations. Jana was born in Prague where her life-long interest in Judaica objects and synagogue architecture started in the renowned Jewish Museum in Prague during the late 1970s. In 1981 Jana fled to Austria and with the status of a political refugee arrived in New Zealand in 1982. Her professional career resumed in 1986 after Jana migrated to Australia and started working in the Powerhouse Museum, now Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, in Sydney. She held several senior positions between 1986 and 2014, including Cultural diversity unit leader, Education department head and manager of Research development. The highlight was her exhibition and catalogue *Precious Legacy: treasures from the Jewish Museum in Prague*, at the Powerhouse Museum in 1998-1999. Before commencing her doctoral research in 2015, Jana worked as an independent researcher and curator with the key Jewish collections in Sydney and Melbourne. During this time, Jana's knowledge of European languages not only brought her closer to the many Holocaust survivors, it facilitated translations of a number of letters and documents from the Holocaust era, safeguarded in Australian archives.

In 2015 Jana started her doctoral research in the Judaica collection in The Great Synagogue in Sydney. Her focus on artefacts and life of the Jewish community in early colonial Sydney now complements her in-depth knowledge of the European Judaica's history and art history. At the present, Jana continues her honorary curatorial work at The Great Synagogue in Sydney, while embarking on a major revision of her dissertation, and other research and curatorial projects.

RESUME

Name **JANA VYTRHLIK**
Born 1952 in Prague, Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic)

Contact details

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Nationality dual, Australian and Czech

Languages

Fluent	English, Czech
Working	German, Russian, Slovak
Reading	French, Polish
Learning	Biblical Hebrew

Qualifications

2015-2020 PhD, Dissertation *The journey of the Dutch silver rimmonim to The Great Synagogue in Sydney: The search for Australian Jewish visual legacy, 1838-1878* Art History-Jewish Studies, University of Sydney [awarded March 2021]
1995 National Accreditation, Translator & Interpreter, Czech <-> English, NAATI, Australia
1976 PhDr, Doctoral thesis *Jewish and Folk Art in Boskovice Moravia*, Art History and Theory, Palacky University, Olomouc, Czechoslovakia

Employment and Honorary Positions

2015-current Guest Curator, Rosenblum Jewish Museum, The Great Synagogue, Sydney
2014-2016 Curator, Sydney Jewish Museum, Sydney
1986-2014 Manager, Research Development, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney
Manager, Education & Program Development, Powerhouse Museum
Coordinator, Cultural Diversity Projects, Powerhouse Museum
1986 Migrated to Australia from New Zealand
1982 Arrived in New Zealand, political refugee status
1981 Fled Czechoslovakia to Austria, political refugee status
1978-1981 Editor, Publishing House Artia, Prague
1977-1978 Curator, State Jewish Museum, Prague

BOOKS

- Portrait from memories: 50th anniversary of the death of Eugen Bárkány (1885-1967)*, Sydney (2017), ISBN 9780646973265, in Czech, English summary. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/228826922>
- Precious Legacy: treasures from the Jewish Museum in Prague*, Powerhouse Publishing, Sydney (1998), ISBN 1863170758 <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/573725>
- Kids, customs and culture*, co-author, Powerhouse Publishing, Sydney (1995), ISBN 1863170545

SELECTED ARTICLES

- AM Rosenblum Jewish Museum: New Treasures*, The Great Synagogue Sydney (2020), 45-47.
- Deciphering the Cypher*, Silver Society of Australia Newsletter (4) (2020), 16-18.
- A Journey of a Kiddush Cup*, The Great Synagogue Sydney (2019), 52-53.
- Review: Benjamin J. Elton, The Architecture of The Great Synagogue Sydney, 2019*, Australian Association of Jewish Studies Newsletter (74) (2019), 10–12.
- Symbol of Jewish continuity: The Torah finials from The Great Synagogue in Sydney*, Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal, 23 (4) (2018), 619–639.
- The language of artefact*, Language and Culture, University of Sydney, (40) (2017), 34–40.
- George J. Cohen's Monogram: A chance discovery*, The Great Synagogue Sydney (2015), 44-46.
- Tracing the Journey of Paul Celan's Poetry*, Review of Esther Cameron, Western Art and Jewish Presence in the Work of Paul Celan, H-Net Reviews (2016).
www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=45448
- A remarkable story of survival: Treasures of the Jewish Ghetto of Venice*, Museums Australia Magazine, 23 (4) (2015), 28-30.
- Highlights of Museum Acquisitions*, Sydney Jewish Museum (2015), 32-34.
- Silver of The Great Synagogue in Sydney*, Silver Society Newsletter (2) (2014), 14-15.
- Moritz Kohn–Terezin Archive*, Sydney Jewish Museum (2014), 27-29.
- European Silver Judaica*, Silver Society Newsletter (1) (2014), 6-7.
- History Postcard from Berlin*, History Teachers' Association of Australia Journal (2) (2012), 47-50.
https://www.academia.edu/17290971/Postcard_from_Berlin_Teaching_History
- Restoration and Renewal in Dresden*, World of Antiques & Art (2012), 78-81.
- Rescued from obscurity: hand written illuminated prayer books from Bohemia and Moravia*, World of Antiques & Art (2009), 12-17.
- Oral histories, precious memories and family stories*, ARTery, (2004), 18.

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Visit to the Sydney's oldest synagogue: virtually, Limmud Oz Sydney, with Zac Levi, June 2021.
(forthcoming)

Imagining the Temple of Solomon: An unexpected link with the Jews in Australia in 1840s, Australian Association of Jewish Studies Conference, Sydney Jewish Museum, February 2020.

The Egyptian revival style in early synagogue architecture in Australia, 1844-1850, University of Sydney, Art History seminar, May 2019; and Hobart Synagogue, Hobart, October 2019.

Jewish studies or art history? Revisiting traditional boundaries, Australian Association of Jewish Studies Conference, Monash University, Melbourne, February 2019.

From Amsterdam to Sydney: On the trail of the oldest Torah finials in Australia, The Great Synagogue, Sydney, March 2018.

Judaica Australiana: an emerging theme in the history of art, University of Sydney, Art History seminar, September 2017.

Unpublished curatorial texts

Exhibition *First 140 years, The Great Synagogue in Sydney, 1878–2018*, AM Rosenblum Jewish Museum, The Great Synagogue, Sydney, May 2018.

Exhibition *Great personalities: Portraits from the AM Rosenblum Jewish Museum*, AM Rosenblum Jewish Museum, The Great Synagogue, Sydney, May 2016.

Curator's Corner, The Great Synagogue, Sydney www.greatsynagogue.org.au/curatorscorner

Recent Awards & Scholarships

2021 Laura Bassi Scholarship editing grant for PhD thesis publication

2017 University of Sydney Doctoral Research Travel Grant (Silver Judaica in New Zealand)

2016 University of Sydney Doctoral Research Travel Grant (Jewish Museum, Amsterdam)

2015-2019 Australian Postgraduate Scholarship Award, APA, University of Sydney

2011 Travel Scholarship, International Academy for the Arts, Dresden (Royal Collections)