

The New York Times

Arts

Beside the Guardian of Graves

Two people met, and Venice's Jewish history saw new light.

By ROBIN POGREBIN

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Drawn by this diminishing population, the Israeli artist Hadassa Goldvicht made repeated visits, along the way discovering Aldo Izzo, a former ship captain who for 35 years has been guardian and keeper of the two historical Jewish cemeteries on the Lido in Venice.

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GIANNI CIPRIANO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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Hadassa Goldvicht, whose art installation focuses on Aldo Izzo, the keeper of Venice's oldest Jewish cemeteries. One opened in 1386.

Beside the Guardian of Jewish Graves in Venice

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sohn, senior curator of the Israeli Art department at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, who organized the show. "Aldo is an intermediary between life and death, a remnant of this Jewish population."

Since the tombstones — and sometimes even the contents of the graves — had been desecrated, damaged or removed, Mr. Izzo has made restoring both graveyards his life's work. He has hung the broken headstones that were separated from their grave sites around the cemetery's enclosed border, creating an installation of its own. In one video, he talks about how some of the headstones have a hole at the bottom, where the soul is said to appear when the dead arise.

"For me, the project is not what's on the wall, but all these conversations," Ms. Goldvicht said. "His wife died last year, he's living alone on the Lido and losing his eyesight, and he's still going to the cemetery. Aldo is burying the community."

"It's kind of like a poem," she added. "It's a reduced version of all of it."

An artwork about one man, but also a dying community in Venice.

Ms. Goldvicht straddles several subcultures; she comes from a family of Hasidic and rabbinical background and lives in Jerusalem with her husband, Jonatan Benarroch, a kabbalah scholar, with their daughters, ages 2 and 4.

Yet Ms. Goldvicht is also a product of the art world. Her parents, both filmmakers, lived in New York for three years when she was young. She earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in 2004 from the Rhode Island School of Design and a master's from the School of Visual Arts in New York in 2007. She did an artist residency at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine in 2008.

"My upbringing is complex," she said. "I have a very private relationship with God. I'm not a person who belongs to a community, but I'm fascinated by community."

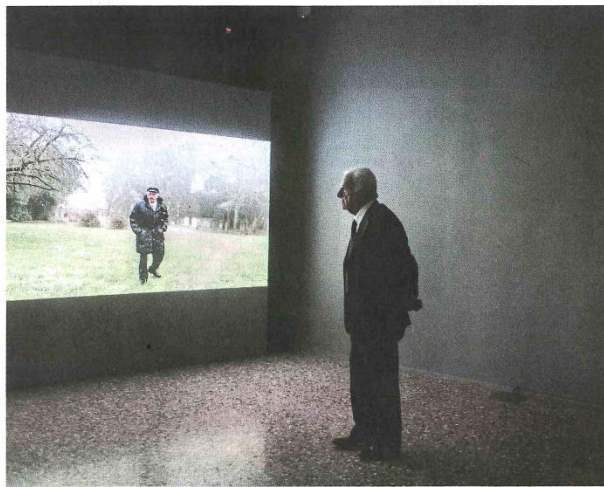
"I feel complete where I am," she added.

A solo exhibition by Ms. Goldvicht, a chapter of "The House of Life," will open on June 15 at Meislin Projects on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

The Israel Museum in 2012 presented Ms. Goldvicht's video installation "Lullaby," which features people at the museum — from the director to the security guards — singing their childhood lullabies. "'Lullaby' is one of the works that's really worth lingering over," the Israeli newspaper Haaretz said in its review of the show. "The work



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIANNI CIPRIANO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



Aldo Izzo, 86, records who has died and who remains among the Jews of Venice.

took over 50 hours, and deals with memory and vulnerability. Some of the singers waver and seem to be cradling themselves while they sing, momentarily returning to childhood."

More recently, in Venice, Ms. Goldvicht said, "I don't draw or paint," adding, "I kind of feel the materials I work with are life."

"The House of Life" started in 2013 as an exploration of Jewish residents in Venice. Goldvicht was an artist in residence then at Beit Venezia, formerly the Venice Center for International Jewish Studies. Her research led her to Mr. Izzo. Last year Venice commemorated 500 years of Jewish life in the city.

"I hope this work is kind of a prayer," she said. "Discussion about fear, and mix between art and life. It's mixed. It's messy."

At the same time, Mr. Mendelsohn emphasized, "The House of Life" is "not a documentary." In addition to videos, the show features framed excerpts from Mr. Izzo's journals and photographs of his cluttered shelves.

"This is an art piece," he said.

The focus on Mr. Izzo was a way of "narrowing it down to something that is personal and universal," he added, "historical and mythical."

Hadassa Goldvicht, 35, with her installation "The House of Life" at the Palazzo Querini Stampalia Museum in Venice. The work includes video, photographs and framed journal excerpts. "For me, the project is not what's on the wall," she says, "but all these conversations."

Of Interest

NOTEWORTHY FACTS FROM TODAY'S PAPER

Georgia peach growers began selling their fruit in the Northeast in the early 1900s, partly to improve the reputation of the Jim Crow South.

Fewer Peaches? The South Is Aghast D1

•
Amazon accounted for 43 cents of every dollar spent online in the United States last year.

Amazon's Shares Briefly Surpass \$1,000, Reflecting Its Power and Growth Potential B7

•
Pejorative local terms for day trippers to the Jersey Shore include "shoobies" and "bennies."

Sandy, of All Things, Helps Open Access to Jersey Shore A17



There are fewer than 500 Jews left in Venice, compared with the 5,000 who filled the ghetto there at its height in the 17th century.

Beside the Guardian of Graves C1



JASON POLAN

Kabul, Afghanistan, is one of the fastest-growing cities in the world; it has already expanded to more than five times its intended size.

Urban Sprawl Up Mountainsides, With Splashes of Color A6

•
Noncommunicable diseases were responsible for 67 percent of deaths in low- and middle-income countries in 2015, but only about 1 percent of the foreign aid and donations dedicated to health care was aimed at preventing them.

A Battle Over Water, Simple Yet Complicated C2

•
The agave plant, from which tequila and mezcal are distilled, can take anywhere from seven years to decades to grow and harvest.

Here, Try Some Mezcal. But Not Too Much. D4

7 DANCE

DanceAfrica radiates heat in Brooklyn. BY GIA KOURLAS

2 TELEVISION

'Poisoned Water,' a look at the Flint crisis. BY MIKE HALE



8 MUSIC

Reviving the elusive early vocal works of Meredith Monk.

BY ZACHARY WOOLFE

NEWS | CRITICISM

Arts

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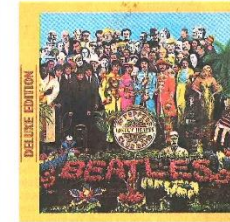
JON PARELES | CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

50 Years in the Life of Sgt. Pepper



The Beatles (clockwise from top left, Ringo Starr, George Harrison, John Lennon and Paul McCartney) promoting "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" (new version, top) in 1967.

A new version of the album remains full of joy and whimsy.



A HALF-CENTURY after its release, the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" is a relic of a vanished era. Like a Fabergé egg or a Persian miniature, it speaks of an irretrievable past, when time moved differently, craftsmanship involved bygone tools and art was experienced more rarely and with fewer distractions.

It's an analog heirloom that's still resisting oblivion — perhaps because, even in its moment, it was already contemplating a broader sweep of time. The music on "Sgt. Pepper" reached back far before rock as well as out into an unmapped cosmos, while its words — seesawing between Paul McCartney's affability and John Lennon's tartness — offered compassion for multiple generations.

We simply can't hear "Sgt. Pepper" now the way it affected listeners on arrival in 1967. Its innovations and quirks have been too widely emulated, its oddities long since absorbed. Sounds that were initially startling — the Indian instruments and phrasing of George Harrison's "Within You Without You," the tape-spliced steam-organ collage of "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite," the orchestral vastnesses of "A Day in the Life" —

DWIGHT GARNER | BOOKS OF THE TIMES

The Rabbit Hole Of Emotions

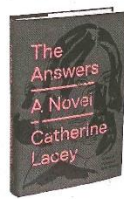
A dystopian novel ponders fame and art, as well as love.

THE NOVELIST CATHERINE LACEY was born in Mississippi — for generations her family has owned the Tupelo Hardware Company, where Elvis Presley's mother is said to have bought his first guitar — but you will strain to find evidence of stereotypical Southern themes or cadences in her work. She never tries to, as the critic Albert Murray put it, "sound a Faulkner chord."

Lacey's sentences are long and clean and unshakable. They glow like the artist Dan Flavin's fluorescent light tubes. In her new novel, "The Answers," she sweeps you up in the formidable current of her thought, and then she drops you down the rabbit hole. She's the real thing, and in "The Answers" she takes full command of her powers.

This is Lacey's second novel. Her first, "Nobody Is Ever Missing" (2014), was about an intense young woman who fled to New Zealand after a failed marriage. The woman felt she was "a human non sequitur — senseless and misplaced, a bad joke, a joke with no place to land."

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The Answers
By Catherine Lacey

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