

CINCINNATI SKIRBALL MUSEUM PRESENTS

# THE GUIDING HAND

THE BARR FOUNDATION  
COLLECTION OF  
TORAH POINTERS

APRIL 11, 2024–JULY 28, 2024



SKIRBALL MUSEUM  
CINCINNATI

Support for this exhibition and its public programs is provided by

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*Please take this booklet with you as a memento of your visit.*



## **ABOUT THE GUIDE**

This guide provides information about each of the Torah pointers on view in this exhibition. Each display case carries a number (1–11). The guide begins with Case 1 where you will find a photograph and description of each yad in that case. Follow along in the guide for the most thorough experience of this eye-catching exhibition.

## **ABOUT THE EXHIBITION**

You are about to be dazzled by over 100 antique and contemporary Torah pointers, known by the Hebrew word *yad* for hand. The yad is used to keep one's place in the Torah scroll, the central text of the Jewish faith, which is densely hand-written in Hebrew. Created by artists from different ages and cultures and made of diverse materials including wood, precious metals, jewels, ceramics, paper, and more, these yads chronicle the timeless, universal aesthetic guide in reading the Torah.

The collection was formed by Virginia resident Clay H. Barr, who began collecting Torah pointers nearly three decades ago in memory of her late husband, Jay D.A. Barr. In addition to acquiring pointers that represent the historic forms of the object, she continues to commission creative new yads from contemporary artists such as Tobi Kahn, Wendell Castle, and Albert Paley. Transcending religious iconography, this exhibition appeals to all who appreciate the beauty and craftsmanship of fine art.

## **ABOUT THE ACCOMPANYING ONLINE EXHIBITION OF THE TORAH POINTERS IN THE SKIRBALL MUSEUM'S CORE COLLECTION**

As a complement to *The Guiding Hand: The Barr Foundation Collection of Torah Pointers*, the Skirball is offering an online exhibition of the Torah pointers in its permanent collection.

Visit <https://csm.huc.edu/category/torah-pointers-yads/>. Some of these yads are on display in the Torah section on the third floor of Mayerson Hall. Be sure to see them after you have finished visiting the special exhibition.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Special thanks are due to Clay H. Barr whose thoughtful entries in *The Barr Collection* catalogue informed this guide.



### **CASE 1**

Jennifer McCurdy (American b. 1955)

*Torah Pointer*

2018

Porcelain, gilded gold leaf

McCurdy is a ceramic artist living on the island of Martha's Vineyard. She has been working with porcelain for over thirty years. For the last few years, she has been exploring structural questions: How thin can the high fire porcelain be before it collapses in the fire? How much can it be cut away and still maintain structural integrity? How can the structural form be integrated with the visual, as in nature? The top of this yad, her first, is a miniature version of one of the magnificent bowls for which she is renowned.



### **CASE 1**

Anika Smulovitz (American b. 1974)

*In Honor of the Matriarchs*

Boise, Idaho

2012

Sterling silver, antique mother-of-pearl buttons and embroidery needles

Smulovitz was born in Phoenix, Arizona and has been a metalsmith and professor of art at Boise State University since 2003. Her work includes jewelry, sculpture, body adornments, and Jewish ceremonial objects that serve a ritual function. She notes that creating Torah pointers is of particular interest, because through design and decoration, they have a “potential to reference any portion of the Torah or comment on the rituals involved in reading the text.” The shaft of this yad is made of antique mother—of-pearl buttons and a massing of embroidery needles forms its point. For generations, women were prohibited from reading the Torah, yet despite this inequity, they perpetuated Judaism through practicing customs and observing traditions in the home.



### **CASE 1**

Moshe Zabari (Israel b. 1935)

*Torah Pointer*

1967

Silver

Hallmarked

Born in Jerusalem, Zabari is known for a modernist approach to silver Judaica. He studied with Ludwig Yehuda Wolpert at both the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem and the Tobe Pascher Workshop for modern Jewish art at the Jewish Museum in New York. Zabari was artist-in-residence at the Tobe Pascher workshop for 30 years and succeeded Wolpert as its director in 1981 before returning to Israel in 1988. To create continuity with past generations, Zabari incorporates Jewish sources and ancient art into his contemporary designs. This piece is distinctive in that it slips over the finger like a ring rather than being held. Reflecting Wolpert's influence this small yad is enhanced at the top with the raised Hebrew word *EMET*, meaning truth.



### **CASE 1**

Tom Herman (American b. 1957)

*Lily of the Valley Torah Pointer*

2014

Jade, gold, and carved pearls

Despite losing three fingers in a childhood farming accident, Herman nevertheless founded Seven Fingers Jewelers in adulthood. He is inspired by the nature that surrounds his Hudson Valley, New York studio. Seeing his exquisite jewelry at a craft show, collector Clay H. Barr commissioned Herman to design a yad to honor her late and much beloved mother. Lily of the Valley was her favorite flower, and this piece reflects her elegance and beauty.



### **CASE 1**

Linda Gissen (American 1937–2015)

*Rachel Weeping for Her Children*

2000

Welded metal

For nearly five decades, Linda Gissen created sculptural and functional works of art in metal, glass and enamel. Based on the first public Holocaust memorial in the state of Virginia, this yad represents “not only the tragedy of all those who were murdered, but also the loss of the children with all their future generations and all that they might have been.” The handcrafted barbed wire chain symbolizes the enslavement not only of people, but also of ideas, and reflects the haunting memories of the Holocaust. Gissen’s *Yarzeit (Memorial) Lamp/Kristallnacht* can be seen in the third-floor core collection gallery.



### **CASE 1**

Jennifer Banks (American b. 1966)

*Torah Pointer and Stand*

2007

Pointer: ebony, copper, silver

Stand: copper, silver, multiple layers of resin mixed with red pigment

After the stand, a vessel made of copper and sterling silver, was soldered together, more than a hundred small pieces of tubing were attached to the surface. The stand was then coated with several layers of resin mixed with red pigment. Next the resin was sanded back to a smooth surface. Each tube was then filled with the individual sterling silver nubs. Finally, the legs were riveted on. The same process was used to fabricate the pointer. The sterling rod of the pointer and the chain element were attached with a *tang*, like the blade and pommel of a knife.



### **CASE 1**

Seth Rolland (American b. 1963)

*Torah Pointer*

2001

Padauk and maple woods glued together then turned on a lathe, sanded and buffed

Rolland has been handcrafting custom furniture in Washington state since 2001. He obtains wood only from forests known to be sustainably harvested. His concept for this yad is that “it should fit comfortably in the hand, be a joy to the reader and point one’s energy and attention to the Torah.” Collector Clay H. Barr lives in the home built by Rolland’s grandparents, which she and her late husband Jay purchased in 1964.



### **CASE 1**

Wendell Castle (American 1932–2018)

*Torah Pointer and Table*

2004

Table: rosewood and maple in 5 shaped sections

Hand: carved signfoam with acrylic paint

Pointer: silver with stained walnut handle

Born and educated in Kansas, Castle joined the faculty of the School for American Craftsmen at Rochester Institute of Technology where he remained as artist-in-residence until his death. A founding father of the American Studio movement, Castle is noted for his bold and whimsical design using wood, plastic, stack lamination, veneer and metal, which led to the development of handcrafted modern design furniture as a major art form. Early in the establishment of this collection, collector Clay H. Barr had lengthy discussions with the artist regarding his vision for a yad. A furniture maker above all else, he decided to fabricate a Parsons table as the base of the only yad he ever produced. Castle’s unique pieces are found at museums internationally and throughout the United States.



### **CASE 1**

*Torah Pointer*  
Alsace, France  
19th century  
Porcelain

This humble yad is significant for its absence of gems and precious metals. Porcelain was an uncommon material for Torah pointers when it was made and remains a rare choice today. The shaft is an uneven green color with a mottled white hand.



### **CASE 1**

Spencer Tinkham (American b. 1992)  
*Torah Pointer*  
2020  
Carved from a skateboard

Commissioned by collector Clay H. Barr, this yad made by a self-taught wood carver is constructed entirely from Barr's grandson's skateboard. After disassembling the skateboard, three strips from the middle of the deck were cut, laminated, and sculpted. The bunny has special meaning for Barr, as her nickname for her late husband Jay D.A. Barr was "the Bun." The top of the yad stems from a small crystal bunny in the Barr collection of crystal bunnies in different styles. The rubber tip of the yad is a sanded skate wheel attached to the wooden handle. The piece is finished with nine coats of varnish and polished to a mirror finish.





### **CASE 1**

Unknown Artist

*Torah Pointer*

South Pacific

1940s

Spent brass casings from an M-1 Garand rifle

This exceptional yad exemplifies that necessity is the mother of invention. Fashioned in the South Pacific during World War II, the pointer utilized spent bullets from the most commonly used firearm of the American military throughout the Second World War and the Korean War. It features a .30-06 bullet functioning as the hand and a .45 ACP bullet as the finial. The yad enabled the maker to read the Torah in a combat zone according to traditional etiquette using the most unlikely of materials.



### **CASE 1**

Michelle Oka Doner (American b. 1945)

*Radiant Figure*

New York, New York

2001

Bronze, sterling silver, cast and hand fabricated

Inspired by her lifelong study of the natural world, the scope of Doner's production encompasses sculpture, furniture, jewelry, public art and functional objects.

In her statement about this work, she writes: "*Radiant Figure* evokes the connection between the human body and the mind. The shape of the head is replaced by symbolic rays of light. As a yad, this tiny sculpture becomes a ritual object amplified by the notion of enlightenment. The visualization of mystical, radiant and expanding energy is cast in silver while the earthbound human form is depicted in cast bronze. This disparate use of materials addresses dichotomies between spirit and flesh."



### **CASE 1**

Holly Anne Mitchell (American b. 1970)

*Torah Pointer*

Indianapolis, Indiana

2018

Handmade recycled newspaper over wood

Mitchell began exploring newspaper as an artistic medium in 1990 while studying metalsmithing at the University of Michigan. She was challenged to create a piece of jewelry which did not consist of any traditional jewelry materials such as metal or precious stones. She chose colorful comic strips because of their bold, vibrant patterns and the characters' facial expressions. She has been exploring this material ever since.



### **CASE 1**

Ben Caldwell (American b. 1967)

*Torah Pointer*

Nashville, Tennessee

2019

Sterling silver on naturally shed mule deer antler

Hallmarked

Caldwell carefully crafted the silver to fit two separate pieces of antler together. He studied various yads to design this most unique piece. The sterling silver band covers the joint and he applied sterling silver on the burr to create an end cap. The yad was buffed and polished to a high shine.



### **CASE 1**

George Worthington (American b. 1956)

Denise Nielsen (American 1951–2021)

*Torah Pointer*

Saugerties, New York

2010

Hand turned from a single segment of a holly tree

Worthington is a self-taught artist who collaborated with his late wife, Denise Nielsen, a professional artist who also taught fine arts. Working with wood because of its natural flexibility, infinite shades and natural colors, George cut the primary image, and Denise honed it to perfection.



### **CASE 1**

Janna Syvänoja (Finland b. 1960)

*Torah Pointer*

Helsinki, Finland

2002

White paper and wire

Syvänoja uses a slow and meditative process, creating art jewelry from recycled paper. Using such fragile material, she is able to create depth in form, each slice meticulously layered by hand.



### **CASE 1**

*Traveling Torah Pointer*

Budapest, Hungary

19th century

Silver with gilded shaft in twisted ribbed case

This miniature yad was intended for portability and has its own tiny carrying case.



### **CASE 1**

Irina Zaytceva (American b. 1957)

*Torah Pointer*

Princeton, New Jersey

2012

Hand built and hand painted high fired porcelain

After graduating from Moscow Art Institute with an MFA in book illustration in 1982, Zaytceva was introduced to ceramics. She immigrated to the United States in 1998 where she has exhibited widely. Her work is in public collections in the United States and Russia. In making this yad, Zaytceva applied a gold luster after the final firing, adding a magical Byzantine quality to the work. The yad is unusual because it is left-handed.



### **CASE 1**

Michael Manthey (American b. 1950)

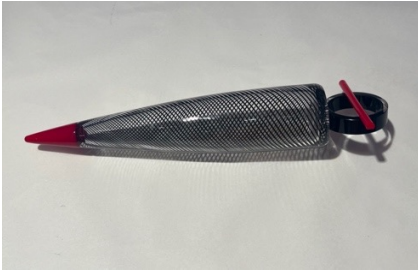
*Scepter*

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

2008

Rutilated quartz, sterling and fine silver, 14k gold

German-born artist Michael Manthey came to his creative practice following an accident in which he broke his neck. During his rehabilitation he began to make sketches for designs and wax and wire molds that would eventually become jewelry. Another accident led to Manthey losing the tip of his thumb. Rather than wearing a traditional prosthetic, he fashioned himself a silver thumb cap with a manicured nail that is both stronger and more nimble for jewelry making.



### **CASE 1**

David Benyosef (American b. 1986)

*Torah Pointer*

Boston, Massachusetts

2018

Blown, cut and polished glass

For this yad, Benyosef used the mezza filigrana technique, which involves creating parallel threads in a loose spiral winding around a vessel from top to bottom, forming a fishnet pattern of diamonds. He also used incalmo glass technique, which involves constructing an object by fusing two or more blown glass elements.



### **CASE 1**

Rory Hooper (England b. 1975)

*Torah Pointer*

London, England

2017

Stainless steel

Hooper was born in Jerusalem where he attended the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design. He immigrated to London, England in 2012 and earned his MA at the Royal College of Art. The concept for this Torah pointer came from the simple physical act of pointing at the scroll. Similarly, it was like taking a photo of that moment but in three-dimensional form. "I scanned my arm pointing and 3D printed in stainless steel."



### **CASE 1**

Ina Golub (American 1938–2015)

*Torah Pointer*

Mountainside, New Jersey

1993

Multi-colored beads over peyote wood; sterling hand  
by Kurt Matzdorf (German-American 1922–2008)

Born in Newark, New Jersey, Golub graduated from Montclair State College in 1960 and earned her M.A.T. degree from Indiana University in 1965 where she majored in crafts. World-renowned for her Judaic fiber art, Yeshiva University in New York City mounted a 30-year retrospective of her work in 1996. Matzdorf, a jewelry designer and metalsmith, was Professor Emeritus at State University of New York at New Paltz and founded the metals department there.



## CASE 2

*Torah Pointer*

Northern Italy

19th century

Red coral and parcel gilt silver

This yad is one of the three inaugural Torah pointers for the Barr collection purchased from the Moriah Gallery in New York City. Carved of red coral, its corkscrewed shaft coils into a parcel gilt silver ball finial. A matching ball knob and cuff above the ringed hand emphasize the extended finger.



## CASE 2

*Torah Pointer*

Continental Europe

19th century

Ivory

This yad was part of the original acquisition from New York's Moriah Gallery that initiated the Barr Collection. The tapered shaft emulates a twisting rope, has a ball finial, and terminates in a delicately sculpted cuff above a hand with an elongated finger.



## CASE 2

*Torah Pointer*

England

19th century

Ivory, agate, silver

This yad is unusual in its combination of ivory, agate, and silver. The handsome orb of striped agate is secured in a carved silver crown, while the tiny hand bears a simple ring on the pointing finger. The delicate chain is attached in the middle rather than at the knop on top, defying common practice.



## CASE 2

*Torah Pointer*

United States

Early 19th century

Brass, silver

An example of early American Judaica, this brass pointer from the Federal period features an elaborate columnar shape with a winged bird finial. The bird holds a bell in its beak. The atypically flat hand at the base of the yad is engraved in Hebrew "Holy Congregation B.R." Likely it was used in a now shuttered synagogue on the Lower East Side of New York City.



## CASE 2

Swed Masters Workshop

*Torah Pointer/Scroll and Stand*

Jerusalem, Israel and New York, New York

2006

Silver and gold, parchment, illumination

Now in its third generation, Swed Masters Workshop specializes in Judaic works of art that can be found in the collections of connoisseurs around the world. The yad carries intricate Hebrew carving on the finial and terminates in a hand with pointed finger. The scroll features the Hofheimer-Barr Family Tree alongside hand painted illumination.



## CASE 2

*Torah Pointer*

Vienna, Austria

Circa 1900

Metalwork encrusted with garnets and turquoise

This yad is noteworthy for both the carved ivory section of the shaft and the elegant hand. The sides of the jeweled crown are unsecured.





**CASE 2**

*Torah Pointer*

Russia

Circa 1890

Twisted ivory and silver

Fully marked



### **CASE 3**

Sheila Giolitti (American b. 1958)

*Torah Pointer*

2019

Layered plexiglass and pigmented bonding agents

The artist's mission statement for this work is as follows: "My mission was to create a yad that spoke of who the people this collection is named for, or at least create something that gave them a sense of place. Clay and Jay Barr grew up in Norfolk, Virginia, a place surrounded by water and natural beauty. Their much-loved home sits on a lot surrounded on three sides by the Lafayette River. I have strived to create something that appears delicate, fragile, full of life and a little mysterious. Yet made durable and strong through the choice of materials employed. A rolling wave seemed the perfect metaphor to celebrate their life."



### **CASE 3**

Liaung-Chung Yen

*Torah Pointer*

Henrietta, New York

2023

Aquamarine slices, 18k gold beads with diamonds, one marquis diamond on tip

Liaung-Chung Yen was born and raised in Taiwan and his jewelry and artistic aesthetic are influenced by both Chinese culture and art. He received his Master of Fine Art in Metals and Jewelry at Savannah College of Art and Design. Prior to this he studied Industrial Art at the National Taiwan University of Art. He is a former Visiting Assistant Professor in the Metals and Jewelry Design Department of American Crafts, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York.



### **CASE 3**

Amy Roper Lyons (American b. 1961)

*Torah Pointer and Stand*

Summit, New Jersey

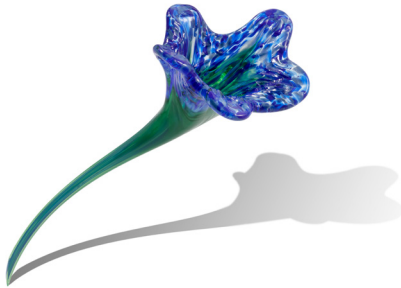
2019

Sterling, vitreous glass and enamel

Lyons used the plique-à-jour (French for “letting in daylight”) technique to create this yad and stand.

The enamel is applied in cells with no backing in

the final product, so light can shine through the transparent or translucent enamel. The framework was computer generated and printed in 3D, then cast in sterling.



### **CASE 3**

Joshua Solomon (American b. 1980)

*Torah Pointer*

Norfolk, Virginia

2018

Blown glass

Collector Clay Barr met Solomon at the Lincoln Center Craft Show in New York City, thought she lives less than a mile from the artist in Norfolk, Virginia. Solomon received his BA in Studio Arts from Bard College. He apprenticed with glass artist Barry Entner in Rhinebeck, NY and worked with glass artist Minh Martin in Staunton, Virginia. Solomon is an instructor at the Perry Glass Studio at the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk and also owns Solomon Solutions which specializes in the creation of commissioned sculpture and custom blown glass.



### **CASE 3**

Donald Friedlich (American b. 1954)

*Torah Pointer*

Madison, Wisconsin

2006

Glass with 22K gold tip and cap

Friedlich received his BFA in Jewelry and Metalsmithing from Rhode Island School of Design in 1982. He is the recipient of numerous awards including a National Endowment for the Arts New England Regional Fellowship and the 2001 Renwick Gallery Acquisition Award at the Smithsonian Craft Show. In 2003 he was the first artist-in-residence at the Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, New York. His work has been exhibited widely in Europe and the United States.



### **CASE 3**

Kenny Pieper (American b. 1959)

*Torah Pointer*

Burnsville, North Carolina

2020

Blown glass

Born in Birmingham, Alabama and raised in the mountains of North Carolina, Pieper studied at the Penland School of Crafts while in high school. After attending the California College of Art & Design in Oakland, he spent sixteen years working as a glass blower in the San Francisco Bay area before returning to North Carolina to teach at Penland. After building his own studio, he developed expertise in the intricate tradition of Italian glass, especially with Reticello, a cane technique invented in Murano, Italy during the sixteenth century. It involves a type of blown glass made with canes organized in a criss-cross pattern to form a fine net. This yad, his first, with its varying segments and exquisite crown, is an example of Reticello craftsmanship.



### **CASE 3**

Richard Bitterman (American 1932–2015)

*Torah Pointer*

Chicago, Illinois

2000

Lucite and silver

Signed by the artist

A self-taught artist based in Chicago, for 45 years Bitterman created memorable jewelry and Judaic art objects as a noted metalsmith.



### **CASE 3**

*Torah Pointer*

United States

20th century

Enamel in swag design

This substantial yad was made by a Russian émigré to the United States who arrived in this country in 2000.



#### **CASE 4**

Sylvia Lupien (Canadian)

*Torah Pointer*

Montreal, Canada

2000

Sterling with gold and red moonstones

Hallmark of material, identification only

A self-taught artist, Lupien has been working as a jeweler for more than thirty years. She divides her time between the production of small jewelry pieces and larger, sculptural works.



#### **CASE 4**

Miriam Halpern (American)

*American Torah Pointer*

1981

Gold, silver, enamel, copper, seashell

This yad is decorated with the Star of David, hand, and ocean wave motifs. A heavy foxtail link chain is attached.



#### **CASE 4**

Marian Slepian (American 1934–2019)

*Torah Pointer*

2002

Cloisonné enamel, sterling silver

A master in cloisonné for over 45 years, Slepian was a graduate of the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. Cloisonné is created using art glass fused to fine pewter with pure silver wires. Once the design is created, it is repeatedly kiln fired at 1500 degrees. Slepian decorated this yad with representations of the 12 tribes of Israel and other symbolic images.



#### **CASE 4**

Carolyn Morris Bach (American b. 1958)

*Torah Pointer*

Rhode Island

2014

Fine silver, sterling silver, copper, petrified wood, fossilized walrus tusks, ivory, and badger hair bristles

Hallmarked

Bach's life as an artist began with a ceramic class in a progressive Michigan high school where a perceptive teacher noted her talent and encouraged her to pursue jewelry design. She continued her studies at the Rhode Island School of Design in both jewelry and metalsmithing, receiving a BFA in 1980 and an MFA in 1981. She lives in rural Rhode Island surrounded by small creatures and wildlife which she often incorporates in her work. Bach's style is unique, visionary, and readily recognizable in American Craft jewelry. Owls appear frequently but by special request a rabbit is included here because the collector's nickname for her late husband was "the Bun."



#### **CASE 4**

Seth Michael Carlson (American b. 1985)

*Torah Pointer*

Chicago, Illinois

2017

Ethically sourced sterling, 18k yellow gold

Carlson earned his BFA in metals and jewelry at Savannah College of Art and Design, Georgia in 2007 and was artist-in-residence at the Rochester Institute of Technology. While pursuing a degree in art therapy at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, he started a metalsmithing group on Chicago's south side for teenagers. Carlson's yad takes the form of a polyhedron, a solid or surface that can be described by its vertices (corner points), edges (line segments connecting certain pairs of vertices), faces (two-dimensional polygons), and that has a three-dimensional interior volume.



#### **CASE 4**

John Iverson (American b. 1953)

*Torah Pointer*

Sag Harbor, New York

2010

Sterling, gold, coral and two colors of pearls

Born in Hamburg, Germany, Iverson immigrated to the United States in 1978. He is known for his “natural casting,” transforming leaves and branches into bronze, gold, and silver botanical jewelry.



#### **CASE 4**

Namu Cho (American b. 1955)

*Torah Pointer*

Bethesda, Maryland

2018

Gold, diamonds

Born in Seoul, South Korea, Cho learned goldsmith techniques at Kook Min University where he earned a BFA and MFA. He studied painting and sculpture at Bowling Green State University in Ohio where he earned a second MFA. Cho maintains a limited edition jewelry studio and is an adjunct professor at both Baltimore’s Maryland Institute of Art and Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland. This yad demonstrates the Syrian chiseling and inlay technique called “Damascene,” which involves hammering gold into indentations that resemble painting or drawing on steel. The fan-like top is sprinkled with diamonds while the point is defined by a simple gold ring.





#### **CASE 4**

Clara Ines Arana (American)

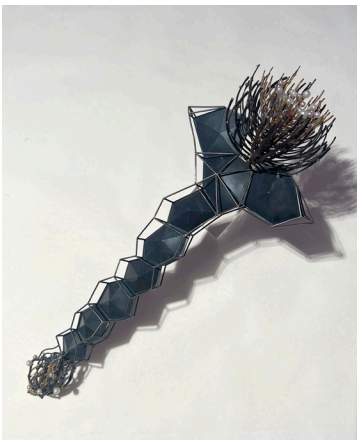
*Torah Pointer*

Laurel, Maryland

2008

22k and 18k gold, sterling, onyx, patina

Born in Manizales, Colombia, Arana currently resides in Portland, Oregon. She emulated her father and grandfather as a jewelry designer, earning her BFA in jewelry and metal at the Institute College of Art, Baltimore, Maryland.



#### **CASE 4**

Bonsang Cho (American b. 1979)

*Torah Pointer*

Durham, North Carolina

2019

Sterling, gold, gold wash, pearls

Cho was born in Seoul, South Korea and immigrated to the United States in 2005. He earned a BFA in metals and jewelry from Hanyang University in South Korea and an MFA at Savannah College of Art and Design in 2012. Cho is known for juxtaposing traditional metals with laser welding.



#### **CASE 4**

Ido Noy (Israel b. 1979)

*Torah Pointer*

Jerusalem, Israel

2017

Copper, brass, stainless steel, silver and gold

Born in Kfar Vradim, Noy graduated from the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem in 2006 and earned his masters and PhD at Hebrew University in

2012 and 2018 respectively. This yad calls to mind the detritus that is found on the streets of Tel Aviv. It was hand-crafted from 3D printing.



### **CASE 5**

Joanne Russo (American b. 1956)

*Torah Pointer*

Saxtons River, Vermont

2011

Basketweave with black wooden beads, red vinyl beads, white fish vertebrae, glass seed beads, porcupine quill

Russo holds a degree in fine arts from the University of New Hampshire and studied with Raymond Weare, the last of Maine's Mount Agamenticus

basketmakers. The stem of her pod-shaped basketweave pointer is coiled and the pointed end of the yad is a porcupine quill.



### **CASE 5**

Marit Meisler (Israel b. 1974)

*Torah Pointer*

Jaffa, Israel

2012

Cast concrete and enamel

A graduate and teacher at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem, Meisler created a yad that has an architectural quality using cast concrete and enamel. The yad was commissioned by the collector, Clay H. Barr, to honor her father who was in the concrete business.



### **CASE 5**

Bruce Metcalf (American b. 1949)

*Torah Pointer*

2018

Carved wood, gold

Metcalf was born in Amherst, MA and currently teaches at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He is known for contrasting familiar, mundane objects with the unfamiliar in an effort to create whimsical yet restrained works of art in smooth wood and metal. Collector Clay H. Barr was drawn to an unfinished lily-like brooch when she visited the artist's studio and requested that the flower influence the design of his yad. Metcalf obliged her twice-over, carving an imaginative lily shaft ornament in addition to a floral tip. Gilding enhances the darkness and colors of this piece.



### **CASE 5**

Bennett Bean (American b. 1941)

*Torah Pointer*

2012

Pit fired, painted, and gilded earthenware

Born in Cincinnati, Bean began designing and executing Japanese inspired pots at Claremont University in California. His pieces, especially bowls, are asymmetrical, non-functional, fluid, and often lined with gold. In describing his first yad, he commented, "Don't look at the finger or you will miss the teaching that it points to."



### **CASE 5**

Reddish Studio

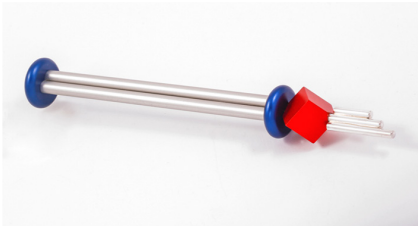
Naama Steinbock (Israel b. 1975) and Idan Friedman (Israel b. 1972)

*The Grenadine*

Jaffa, Israel

Cast aluminum, silver plated coral beads, polystyrene  
2012

Steinbock and Friedman met during their studies at the Industrial Design department of Holon Academic Institute of Technology in Israel. They founded Reddish Studio in 2002 to produce jewelry, furniture, a variety of housewares and Judaica. In describing this yad the artists stated: “*The Grenadine* yad was created as part of our search after new aesthetic expressions and beauty in overlooked places. It was made by perpetuating delicate polystyrene grains in metal. We treated the yad as functional handheld jewelry that could gracefully bridge between the read and the holy text. The symbolic form of a small cloud will mediate between matter and spirit.”



### **CASE 5**

Yaakov Greenvurcel (Israel b. 1952)

*Torah Pointer*

Jerusalem, Israel

1999

Polychromatic pieces of anodized aluminum

Born in Poland, Greenvurcel immigrated to Israel in 1957. He is an award-winning graduate of the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem. A silver tzedakah or alms box by Greenvurcel can be seen in the core collection on the third floor of this building.



### **CASE 5**

Philipp Aduatz (Austria b. 1982)

*Torah Pointer*

Vienna, Austria

2012

Polyurethane with black glossy finish

Aduatz received his degree in Industrial design in 2007 and has been working at the intersection between design and art ever since. All of his works come in limited editions and are fabricated with innovative materials and fabrication technologies. Collector Clay H. Barr first encountered Aduatz's work at the Park Avenue Armory Craft show where the artist was exhibiting an oversized black polyurethane chair.



### **CASE 5**

David Poston (England b. 1948)

*Torah Pointer*

Suffolk, England

2018

Olive wood covered with recycled tin cans, 24K gold tip

Born in Russia to English parents, Poston graduated from the jewelry design course at Hornsey College of Art (now Middlesex University). He worked as a freelance designer-jeweler using mainly non-precious metals and other materials from 1970 until 1984, and then again from 2000 to the present day. In the intervening twenty-five years, Poston was in rural Africa developing sustainable livelihoods. Collector Clay H. Barr noted the artist's Coca-Cola can artwork in the silver gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and invited him to fashion a yad.



**CASE 5**

Agelio Batle (American)

*Torah Pointer*

San Francisco, California

2000

Graphite

Batle's reverence for organic shapes grew from formal studies in biology and art, but it was countless hours spent in the wilderness that gave him an intimate understanding of nature's geometry. Batle earned his BA in biology from the University of California and his MFA from California College of Arts and Crafts. His body of work includes stage design, art installation, performance art, and drawing. His yad features spiral carvings along a horn-shaped stem.



**CASE 5**

Salima Thakker (Belgium)

*Torah Pointer*

Antwerp, Belgium

2012

Oxidized and goldplated silver

Thakker is a jewelry designer born and raised in Antwerp to an Indian father and Belgian mother. She studied at the Royal Academy, Antwerp, and later earned her MA at the Royal College of Art, London, England.



## CASE 6

Marjorie Simon (American b. 1945)

*Never Again*

2021

Milled steel, 18K gold, sterling silver brass vitreous enamel on copper, carnelian, model train track, resin, carborundum grains

A jeweler, enamellist, writer, and teacher, in 2014 Simon embarked on an installation project regarding

human sheltering during World War II. Upon reviewing her work from this period, collector Clay H. Barr challenged Simon to create a Holocaust yad; the subsequent two-year collaborative effort resulted in this piece. An authentically rendered German boxcar sits at the apex of the pointer and the cynical motto, "Arbeit Macht Frei" (Work sets you free), erected most notably at Auschwitz concentration camp, is cut out on the front. On the other sides, vines with a brown leaf at the base gradually evolve to green as they climb, representing the rising hope, resiliency, and tenaciousness of the Jewish people. The distinctive tip is carnelian, and its color becomes nearly transparent as if letting in light for all.



## CASE 6

Stacey Lee Webber (American b. 1982)

*Torah Pointer*

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

2017

Patterned copper pennies

Webber was born in Indianapolis, Indiana and studied at Ball State University in Muncie and University of Wisconsin-Madison. She currently resides in Philadelphia. Her work evokes pride in America's working class, as is evident in the design of this yad. It has the scale of the original keyhole saw and is made from patterned copper pennies. The handle shows Lincoln's profile and the blade depicts both the Lincoln profile and the image of the Lincoln Memorial that appears on the reverse of the coin.





### **CASE 6**

*Afghanistani Torah Pointer*

Early 20th century

Parcel gilt silver, turquoise, coral

At 18 inches, this yad is among the longest in the Barr collection. In Afghanistan, the Torah would be housed in a *tik*, a wooden case, and would be read in a vertical position. Thus, the yad would rest in the crook of the reader's arm and extend forward to the parchment. The richly applied text in classic "Caucas" style, rooted in Central Asia and the Caucasus, is a passage from Deuteronomy stating, "And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel." The yad is profusely ornamented with coral, turquoise and semi-precious stones.



### **CASE 6**

Ghiora Aharoni (American b. 1969)

*Torah Pointer*

New York, New York

2019

Stainless steel

A Yemenite born in Israel, Aharoni immigrated to the United States after receiving a scholarship to study at Yale University School of Architecture. He founded his multi-disciplinary studio in New York in 2004, where he creates works of art that are represented in major museums including the Vatican, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Morgan Library in New York City. This yad references a phrase in the Zohar (the book of Jewish mysticism) "a spark of impenetrable darkness," a metaphor for a spiritual light that is too intensely powerful to comprehend. These sacred words form an interlocking piece, achieved by the positive space of the text in the base and the negative space of the text on the shaft. The hand is symbolic of the ritual gesture in Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism that represents patience, focus, and discipline—that connects the wisdom of "light" we receive from sacred text to those attributes.



### **CASE 6**

*Torah Pointer*  
Probably English  
Circa 1800  
Ebony and silver

This yad is unique because the pointed silver hand is usually cast from one piece. In this case, it is sculpted from two halves and is hollow. A beautifully stylized cuff and hand chased-middle and top pieces complete the design.



### **CASE 6**

*Torah Pointer*  
Cochin, India  
Late 19th century  
Wood

This multi-section wood pointer has a mother-of-pearl likeness of the Ten Commandments at the top and three moveable beads in the center segment.



### **CASE 6**

*Torah Pointer*  
Palestine  
Circa 1925  
Wood and ivory

This yad is a product of the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, founded by Boris Schatz during the time of the British Mandate in Palestine.



### **CASE 7**

*Torah Pointer*

Holland

18th century

Silver and parcel gilt

This rare yad has the unexpected feature of an extended finger holding a quill. The shaft is surmounted by a crown and a ring holder with an oval medallion.



### **CASE 7**

*Torah Pointer*

Probably American

Circa 1920

Brass

This Arts and Crafts yad is decorated with two lions climbing branches. The yad terminates on one end with a hand with an extended finger and on the other, a crown. Lions and crowns are often found on Torah mantles and other accoutrements for the Torah scroll.



### **CASE 7**

Andrey Antonovich Kovalsky (Russian 1827–1856)

*Torah Pointer*

1867

Silver with oval turquoise inset

Maker's mark appears in two places: on the cuff and near the top above the stone.



### **CASE 7**

Bernard Bernstein (American 1928–2021)

*Torah Pointer*

New York, New York

1971

Sterling silver

Bernstein studied industrial arts at the City College of the City University of New York before pursuing a degree in jewelry and silversmithing from Rochester Institute of Technology. As a graduate student, he was instructed and inspired by Ludwig Wolpert who headed the Tobe Pascher Workshop for modern Jewish art at the Jewish Museum in New York. An accomplished scholar as well as a celebrated teacher and artisan, Bernstein went on to earn a Ph.D. in 1971 from New York University. His thesis, entitled “The Ornamentation of the Torah”, was the first ever doctoral project at an American university that focused on the creation of silver Judaica ritual art. This silver yad was partial fulfillment of his requirements for his doctorate. Bernstein wrote: “A greater variety of material was used in the production of Torah pointers than in any of the other Torah ornaments.” His work is in numerous synagogue and private collections.



### **CASE 7**

*Torah Pointer*

Poland

18th century

Silver

This small pointer is distinguished by its twisted shaft accented with bulbous knobs.



### **CASE 7**

Ludwig Yehudah Wolpert (1906–1981)  
Israeli-American)  
*Torah Pointer*  
New York  
Mid-20th century  
Silver

Born in Hildesheim, Germany, Wolpert was of Lithuanian Jewish descent. He studied silversmithing from an early age at the Frankfurt School of Arts and Crafts and as a young metal worker, was especially inspired by the Bauhaus design movement whose slogan was “form follows function.” In 1933, he fled Germany with his family and emigrated to Israel where he began teaching at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in 1935. In 1956 he relocated to New York City, founding the Tobe Pascher Workshop for modern Jewish art at the Jewish Museum, where he remained until his death. Wolpert’s silver Torah pointer is in Modernist form and carries its original suspension chain. The same Torah pointer, a mezuzah, candlesticks, a Havdalah set, and a Hanukkah lamp by Wolpert can be viewed in the core collection on the third floor of Mayerson Hall.



### **CASE 7**

*Torah Pointer*  
Moscow, Russia  
1877  
Silver gilt and ebony  
Maker’s mark of BC

This slender yad features a flared cuff above a delicate pointing hand. The maker’s mark is from the factory of Vasily Semenov, which began in 1852. The rider (St. Michael killing the dragon) is the city mark of Moscow. 84 denotes the weight of the silver.



### **CASE 7**

Munya Avigail Upin (American b. 1953)

*Torah Pointer*

Belmont, Massachusetts

1999

Woven silver, brass, peach moonstone, bone

Upin is a jewelry instructor and lecturer in Massachusetts and is the recipient of various awards and recognitions. The top of this piece is “twined” fine silver, a traditional basketry technique. The long twisted piece is silver plated brass. The yad is topped with peach moonstone and the tip is bone. In her artist statement for this Torah pointer, Upin writes: “An object, like a yad, must serve a purpose (fit in the hand, feel balanced and be pointed) and yet be unique and creative. It is a challenge and a blessing to be able to design and create ritual objects...I like to think of the metaphors of weaving—ties that bind, lives and generations woven together.”



### **CASE 7**

Liza Nechamkin Glasser (American b. 1973)

*Torah Pointer*

Andover, New Jersey

2000

Silver with carnelian details

Hallmarked

Liza Nechamkin began her career as a creative craftsman in high school, starting with making jewelry, drawing, painting, ceramics, weaving and painting fabric. While at the Rochester Institute of Technology, School for American Crafts, where she earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts, she discovered her true passion for metal smithing, exploring all techniques and objects from rings and pendants to hollowware and flatware. Glasser fabricated specialty objects for Tiffany & Company prior to opening her own studio, Nechamkin Silver Studios, where she restores silver pieces, creates timeless and modern original works, creates high-quality chasing tools, and teaches workshops in silversmithing and chasing.



**CASE 7**

*Miniature Torah Pointer*

Holland

19th century

Silver

The stem of this yad is centered with a band. One end has a spherical knob; the other terminates in a pointing hand.



**CASE 7**

*Torah Pointer*

Austria

19th century

Silver with colored paste stones

Austrian control marks

This yad is distinguished by an openwork terminal set with colored pastes. The shaft is incised with berried foliage.



**CASE 7**

Mila Tanya Griebel (England b. 1963)

*Torah Pointer*

London, England

2018

Hallmarked sterling silver with set rubies

A graduate of the Royal College of Art, Griebel is widely regarded as one of the world's foremost contemporary Judaica silversmiths. The Hebrew inscription on this yad is from the Book of Proverbs 31:10: "A woman of valor who can find? For her worth is far above rubies."



### **CASE 7**

Michael Ende (Israel 1945–2021)

*Torah Pointer*

Jerusalem, Israel

1973

Silver, gold

An eighth generation Jerusalemite, Ende created Judaica in his home city for over five decades. He is best known for his ceremonial objects for home and synagogue crafted from silver inlaid with gold. As an artist at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem he created and produced this yad that he describes as follows: “The top of the pointer was made to resemble the Hurva Synagogue in the Jewish

Quarter and is capped with a gold Star of David. The four-sided middle section is decorated with flora, foliate, and vines [including pomegranates]. The center and top of the yad are fitted with bells.” The pointing hand, with its stylized cuff, is fully marked. Among his many works of art presented to royalty and heads of state around the world was the commission by the Israeli government for the peace medal given to Egypt in 1979.



### **CASE 7**

Avi Biran (Israel b. 1964)

*Torah Pointer*

Jerusalem, Israel

2009

Silver, garnet

A graduate of the Department of Gold and Silversmithing at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem, Biran creates contemporary Jewish ritual objects that pair flawlessly finished designs with humorous elements. In this instance he combines a hammered steel base with the highly polished body of a lion, complete with a garnet eye. Biran’s work has earned him numerous awards and his Judaica is in the collections of museums in Israel and Europe.





### **CASE 7**

Shula Baron (American)

*Torah Pointer*

California

1998

Sterling silver with wire rope

This slender yad has a square profile and modern stylized hand.



### **CASE 7**

Richard Lauret (France b. 1949)

*Metropolis*

Vienne-en-Arthies, France

2017

Gold-plated bronze

Lauret is a multi-faceted artist who designs contemporary furniture as well as Cristofle silverware and Daum crystal. He also designs jewelry, lighting, and monumental sculpture. This yad is Art Deco-inspired.



### **CASE 7**

Henryk Winograd (American 1918—2008)

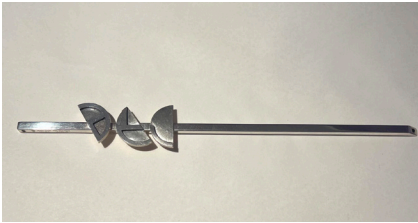
*Torah Pointer*

New York, New York

Circa 1990

Silver and enamel

Winograd was born in Poland to Russian parents. He was descended from a lineage of silversmiths to the Tsar. He immigrated to the United States in the 1970s and soon became a practitioner of the art of repoussé, the intensive process of working a sheet of silver from the back by hammering and rehammering a design into the surface. Each of his works have sharp, high relief and elaborate, delicate detail. He may be best known for his creation of a silver relief sculpture for each battle of the American Civil War. He is the only silversmith in American history to have an exhibition of his work in the Rotunda of Congress in Washington, DC.



**CASE 7**

Boaz Yemini (Israel 1896—1983)

*Torah Pointer*

Jerusalem

20th century

Sterling silver

Mark: Boaz Yemini in Hebrew and English

This yad presents in a straight square form with applied letters spelling the name of God (Shaddai).



**CASE 7**

*Torah Pointer*

Warsaw, Poland

Circa 1880

Silver

This yad features a stylized square section and bears the mark of Teodor Werner (1836–1902) whose trademark was the anchor.



**CASE 7**

*Torah Pointer*

Poland

Circa 1840

Silver

This rare pointer has a flat shaft, which is unusual for a European yad. The cuff and hand are very pronounced. The Hebrew on the shaft may reference a rabbi or the names of the donors who commissioned the yad for their congregation.



### **CASE 7**

Vicki Ambery-Smith (England b. 1955)

*Torah Pointer*

London, England

2022

Silver with red gold, specially cut amber and tanzanite stones

Ambery-Smith is known for her use of architecture as a fixture of her artistic repertoire. This yad was inspired by the Rotunda of the University of Virginia, designed in 1821 by Thomas Jefferson. The building is at the center of the school's Academical Village. Clay H. Barr's late husband, Jay D. A. Barr, received both his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Virginia.



### **CASE 8**

*Torah Pointer*

Italy

18th century

Wood

This very early wooden yad is skillfully carved with a leaf design towards the top. Shell decoration flanks the open rectangular segment which contains a single moveable sphere. The cuffed hand terminates with a damaged pointing finger.



### **CASE 8**

*Torah Pointer*

Germany

1839

Wood

This dramatic wooden Torah pointer, although in rather damaged condition, is historically important as a surviving piece of folk art. A protruding hand once held a pointer, while a support still exists at the top for a finial. Lettering is carved in strong period character and the text is complete: Dedicated to Rav Leib Shaier, "May his light shine, the great Gain Av Beit Din (head of the Court of Justice), and Rosh Mesivta, (head of the Academy), of the holy congregation of Dusseldorf,"; "And his wife the virtuous lady the Rebetzen Hinkdhka, she should live long." Rabbi Shaier, who was rabbi of Frankfurt, was eulogized by the famed Chatam Sofer, one of the leading Orthodox rabbis of European Jewry in the first half of the 19th century.



### **CASE 8**

Hana Bahar Paneth (Israel b. 1936)

*Torah Pointer*

Jerusalem, Israel

1960

Rosewood and sterling silver

Born in Jerusalem, Paneth attended the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design where she studied jewelry, ceremonial art, and Jewish wedding contracts decorated with special calligraphy and Judaic motifs. She has won international art prizes and currently has a permanent exhibition at the Yeshiva University Museum and the Jewish Museum in New York City. Her yad features a sleek and modern design. A spice box by Paneth can be viewed in the core collection on the third floor of this building.



### **CASE 8**

Liv Blavarp (Norway b. 1956)

*Torah Pointer*

Lena, Norway

2012

Dark grenadil, maple, palisander and tooth of whale

Born in rural Norway, Blavarp is a graduate of London's Royal College of Art. Returning to Norway in the mid-1980s, she opened a studio in the town of her birth and continues to work there today, making oversized wood necklaces in organic forms. Recurring theme in her artistic practice are the incorporation of whales' teeth and creating artworks that seem alive. For the body of this yad, Blavarp has carved several woods to a tactile smoothness. The point is an example of her inclusion of a whale's tooth. Blavarp's work can be found in numerous museums in Scandinavia, Scotland, and the United States.



**CASE 8**

*Torah Pointer*

Israel

1891

Wood and ivory

This rare and early yad has an ivory finial finely carved with scenes of ZFAT (Safed) and identified as Ari Synagogue built in memory of Rabbi Isaac Luria, the famed Jewish mystic known as “The Ari.” The Hebrew presentation on the wood mid-section is dated 1891. The lower section has a spiral stem that terminates in an ornately cuffed pointing hand.



**CASE 8**

*Torah Pointer*

Italy

1852

Wood and ivory

The central ivory band of this yad, deeply sculpted with fruit and flowers, is engraved “Padua” and dated “1852 made by my hand.” Additionally, the top is inscribed “Menasseh son of Moses.” The coronet finial and delicate hand are fashioned of carved ivory.



**CASE 8**

*Torah Pointer*

Poland

19th century

Wood

Primitive in its design, this rare folk art Torah pointer has a broken pointed finger and attached string loop.



### **CASE 8**

*Torah Pointer*

Poland

19th century

Wood

This square wooden yad has an upper section carved with Stars of David and other geometrical motifs. It features an unusual crown of four uprights to support a candle. The hollow central stem contains a small wood ball. The lower stem is carved with similar decoration to the upper stem and terminates in a cuffed hand.



### **CASE 8**

*Torah Pointer*

Probably German

Circa 1860

Silver, wood, ivory

The shaft of this yad features a minimal silver chain encircling carved ivory. The wood section has a sculpted bark texture. Silver leaf design appears at the crown and midsection. The pointer terminates in a cuffed hand with extended finger.



### **CASE 8**

*Torah Pointer*

Italy

Late 19th century

Wood and ivory

This yad features a carved representation of the Binding of Isaac from the biblical book of Genesis.



### **CASE 8**

Philip Weber (American b. 1952)

*Torah Pointer and Stand*

Effort, Pennsylvania

2014

Yad: Ebony and sterling silver

Stand: Ebony and osage orange wood

Weber is a self-taught artist.



### **CASE 8**

Fred Tate (American b. 1948)

*Torah Pointer*

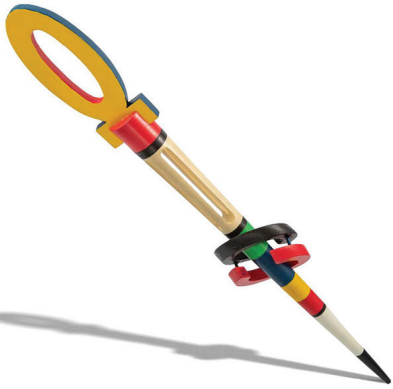
Austin, Texas

2013

Wood root, metal, and pearl

Tate is a jewelry designer known for his ability to create uniquely engineered three-dimensional designs. He studied at California State University and then at Austin Community College where he explored art-metal-welded sculpture.





### **CASE 9**

John Okulick (American b. 1947)

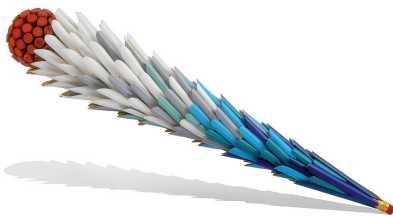
*Cosmic Wand*

Venice, California

2020

Painted wood

Okulick was born in New York and raised on Governors Island by his Italian and Russian parents. Working in a space between painting and sculpture, Okulick is known for geometric shaped wood sculpture and constructions. Having one of his artworks in her home, collector Clay H. Barr commissioned the artist to design his first yad. The final color palette resulted from mutual discussion.



### **CASE 9**

Federico Uribe (American b. 1962 Bogota, Colombia)

*Torah Pointer*

2020

Colored pencils with erasers at top and for the pointer

Uribe makes art that surprises and engages. He creates exquisitely made objects that are assemblages of items such as bullet shells, cut up pieces of colored pencils, colored shoelaces and pins, electrical wires, ties, and plastic waste, just to name a few.



### **CASE 9**

Emanuela Duca (American b. 1952)

*Torah Pointer*

New York, New York

2016

Blackened sterling in volcanic ash texture with white baroque South Sea pearl

Jewelry designer Emanuela Duca was born in Rome and immigrated to the United States in 2005.



### **CASE 9**

Asher Samuel Baum (American b. 2002)

*Torah Pointer*

Norfolk, Virginia

2011

Recycled toilet paper roll, construction paper and chopstick

This yad was made by collector Clay Barr's self-taught devoted grandson when he was 9 years old. Baum is the founder and CEO of the clothing company Chimp Skate.



### **CASE 9**

Steve Ford (American b. 1964), David Forlano

(American b. 1964)

*Tree of Life*

2020

Polymer, steel, gold leaf, sterling silver, glass beads

Tagged with Ford/Forlano stamp and date 2020

A collaboration between Philadelphia artist Ford and Santa Fe artist Forlano, this is the duo's first yad. They regard their art as an abstraction of nature's forms. "The inspiration for this piece is the universal symbol, the Tree of Life, often used to refer to the Torah. Starting with the gold tip, the direction and flow of the structure reaches outward from the word of the Torah to the larger world. The variety of color and pattern of the leaves are also important, as symbols of the diversity of life on earth."



### **CASE 9**

Joël Urruty (American b. 1968)

*Torah Pointer and Stand*

Hickory, North Carolina

2022

Painted wood

The son of Basque immigrants from the south of France, Urruty works in various materials, creating abstract sculptures and wall assemblages. He

earned his BS in Design from San Francisco State University and apprenticed with Master craftsman David Marks before going on to earn an MFA from Rochester Institute of Technology with an emphasis in woodworking.



### **CASE 9**

Harley Swedler (American b. 1962)

*Torah Pointer*

Long Island, New York

2002

Polished cast aluminum grip, stainless steel pointer, held together with brass pins

Swedler was born in Ottawa, Canada and studied architecture there at Carleton University. Continuing his studies in Rome, Italy, he completed a thesis on Jewish mysticism and the Hebrew alphabet. As an architect, he apprenticed with Pasanella + Klein Architects, renovating the homes of Joan Rivers and Itzhak Perlman, and the renowned architect Richard Meier. After immigrating to the United States in the 1990s, he opened his own design studio in New York City and began creating functional art objects, furnishings and spaces inspired by the rites and traditions of Jewish culture. He wrote: “Being both a Jew and an architect, I am warmed by the rituals and traditions which simultaneously link me to a historical past and propel me towards an ideal, utopian future.” The grip of this yad is ergonomically shaped to be a gentle extension of the hand and feels custom fit to each Torah reader. Its patina and wear over time recall communal and ritual continuity “from generation to generation.”



### **CASE 10**

Tobi Kahn (American b. 1952)

*Torah Pointer*

New York, New York

2001

Acrylic on wood

Signed on handle

Born in Washington Heights, New York to immigrant Jewish parents who had fled Europe during the Holocaust, Kahn earned an MFA from Hunter College in New York and later an honorary doctorate from New York's Jewish Theological Seminary for his work as an artist and educator. His art is both spiritual and secular, exploring themes of mortality, memory, and healing, as he believes that art can be a redemptive force. Upon visited Kahn's studio, collector Clay H. Barr chose three pieces of organic material that the artist had gathered during walks in the woods. Kahn combined the three pieces and finished them with acrylic resulting in this interesting yad.



### **CASE 10**

Harold Rabinowitz (American b. 1939)

*Torah Pointer*

New York, New York

2008

Sterling silver

Rabinowitz began making jewelry at the age of sixteen. Five years later he embarked on a course of study at the Tobe Pascher Workshop for Modern Jewish Art at the Jewish Museum in New York under the tutelage of Ludwig Wolpert and Moshe Zabari. In the late 1970s, having developed a solid foundation, his work took on a distinct "Rabinowitz style" that he describes as "sculpture that has a ritual purpose." This yad divides in two and is secured with a textured spherical rosette. Works by Rabinowitz can be found in museums and synagogues throughout the country as well as in private collections throughout the United States, South America, Canada, and Europe.



### **CASE 10**

Akiko Sugiyama (Japan b. 1947)

*Torah Pointer*

Ormond Beach, Florida

2008

Paper and gold leaf on a peapod and pea

Sugiyama's work is a blend of Eastern and Western esthetics. She graduated from the Women's College of Fine Arts in Tokyo with a BA in Oil Painting, where she concentrated on European art and techniques. However, her Asian heritage remained a major creative factor in her work. Working with rice or parchment paper, she paints it and then rolls, folds, cones, curls, crushes, pierces, cuts or rends it

into compositions that reveal the artistic aspects of paper. Sugiyama has exhibited at Philadelphia Museum of Art (PA), The Morikami Museum (FL), Atlanta International Museum of Art and Design (GA), Georgia Museum of Art, Orlando Museum of Art (FL) Deland Museum of Art (FL) and the Tampa Museum of Art (FL).



### **CASE 10**

Nan Nan Liu (England b. 1982)

*Torah Pointer*

London, England

2021

Sterling

Born in He Nan Province, China, Liu currently lives in England. Collector Clay H. Barr initially discovered Liu's work in the silver gallery of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.



### **CASE 10**

Sari Srulovitch (Israel b. 1964)

*Torah Pointer*

Jerusalem, Israel

2011

Silver

Born and raised in Jerusalem, Srulovitch graduated with distinction from the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design with a BFA and earned her MA at the Royal College of Art, London. Her work has been displayed in many exhibitions in Israel and abroad and is to be found in numerous private collections.



### **CASE 10**

Albert Paley (American b. 1944)

*Torah Pointer and Stand*

Rochester, New York

2015

Forged iron

A native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Paley received both his undergraduate and master's degrees from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University. He first became known for jewelry recognizable for its style and sizeable scale and in 1969 he began experimenting with forged iron. He taught briefly at the Rochester Institute of Technology, after which he dedicated himself full time to producing large sculptures. In 1973 Paley achieved international recognition when he was awarded a commission to design the portal gates for the Renwick Gallery in Washington, DC. Since then, more than fifty site-specific pieces have been installed throughout the United States. Because his installations are primarily massive, Paley declined to attempt a Torah pointer for more than 15 years. Persistence prevailed, however, and this forged iron yad and stand ultimately became an addition to the Barr Collection. Paley's *Progression*, a white painted steel sculpture, can be seen in front of the University of Cincinnati's College of Allied Sciences building. Its forms bear an interesting resemblance to those of the yad and stand on display.



### **CASE 10**

Judith Kinghorn (American b. 1940)

*Torah Pointer*

Minneapolis, Minnesota

2019

Shagreen with 22k gold and 22k gold granules

Kinghorn is an award-winning jewelry designer working primarily in high karat gold, sterling silver, and precious stones. Much like ancient jewelry artists, she uses a mouth torch to fuse heavy layers of gold and sterling silver. After seeing her work at the Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show in 2018, collector Clay H. Barr requested a yad in shagreen, the rough and granular textured skin of a shark that became fashionable in the court of Louis XVI in 18th century France. Kinghorn's yad is enhanced with 22k gold and 22k gold granules in an elongated pod at the top and in a miniature version at the point flanking the shagreen shaft.



### **CASE 10**

Attai Chen (Germany b. 1979)

*Torah Pointer*

Munich, Germany

2020

Sterling, enamel, gold leaf and pigments

Born in Israel, Chen has lived and worked in Munich, Germany since 2007. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and earned his BFA in the department of Jewelry and Fashion at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem in 2006. Collector Clay H. Barr noticed his work at an exhibition of jewelry at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Chen's yad was carefully hand constructed from fine sheets of silver and silver dust. No casting was involved.



### **CASE 11**

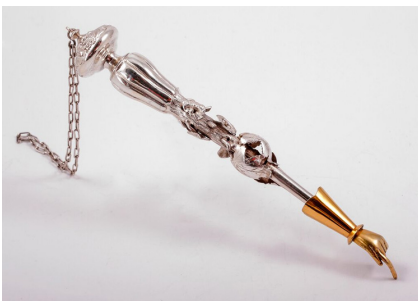
*Torah Pointer*

Alsace, France

Circa 1700

Silver filigree, gold and ruby

This yad was one of three from the Moriah Gallery in New York that initiated the Barr Collection. It is significant for its age and the quality of workmanship. A delicate filigree shaft is segmented with a filigree ball and matching finial highlighted by gold details. An elegantly shaped flaring gold cuff leads to a particularly refined hand with a jeweled extended finger.



### **CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

St. Petersburg, Russia

1882

Silver

This inventive yad is stamped with the hallmark St. Petersburg 1882. Its rotund silver finial evokes the onion domes of St. Basil's Cathedral, an intriguing visual reference for a work of Judaica. Beneath the bulbous endpiece a morning glory vine flourishes forth from a grooved stalk to form the pointer's shaft. Although the maker's mark does not include the name of the craftsman, a final aesthetic anomaly may offer a clue about the mysterious artisan or the person who commissioned the work—the yad's exaggerated cuff concludes in a left hand.





**CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

Morocco

Undated

Silver

This yad has a flat body terminating in a large stylized hand. The engraved inscription is from the Book of Deuteronomy 4:44: "This is the Torah that Moses set before the Israelites."



**CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

Morocco

1900

Silver

This flat silver yad is distinguished by Hispano-Moresque decorative elements including a star-shaped center design with leaf motif and a mihrab-shaped open finial.



**CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

North Africa

19th century

Flat antique metal, gold leaf

This yad has an unusual two-section chain with a name engraved on the disc in the center. The gold leaf shaft of the yad carries a star-shaped finial that is repeated at its middle. The yad terminates in an engraved cuff and hand.



### **CASE 11**

Gerald Benney (England 1930–2008)

*Torah Pointer*

London, England

2001

Silver, 24K gold and red enamel

Born in Yorkshire, England, Benney followed in his mother's footsteps as a silversmith and distinguished himself among the most eminent metalworkers in post-war Britain. Attending an exhibition at London's Jewish Museum, Benney's Torah ornaments caught the attention of collector Clay H. Barr, as did his numerous pieces at the Victoria and Albert Museum. He was renowned for clear lines influenced by Scandinavian design and for enamel work reminiscent of Fabergé. Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip numbered among Benney's many patrons and he became the first craftsman to simultaneously hold four Royal Warrants. His Torah pointer has a sleek design that combines silver and red enamel in a distinctive basketweave pattern that repeats on the crown finial. The banding is 24K gold. Completed shortly after 9/11, the yad, with delicate enamel work, could not be placed under the carriage of a commercial airliner, nor could it be carried aboard because of its dagger-like shape. It remained in England until an acquaintance of the collector with a private plane transported the piece across the Atlantic.



### **CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

India

19th century

Chased silver

Though diminutive in size, the elephant adorning this elegant Indian yad makes a significant visual impact as it surmounts the knob. The trunk arched upward balances the pointing finger of the anatomically rendered oversized hand. Extremely long and heavy, this yad is notable for the finely chased silver often found in artistry from India. This yad would have been held upright in the crook of the arm to read a Torah that was positioned vertically in a *tik*, or case.



**CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

Egypt

Late 19th century

Silver

Historically, on the African continent, yads tended to be flat rather than the baluster shape that prevailed across Europe. This archetypal Egyptian pointer is engraved overall in celestial and foliate scrollwork terminating in a small cuffed hand.



**CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

Poland

Circa 1800

Silver gilt

The faceted shaft of this yad is fashioned with two spherical knobs, the uppermost of which is pierced for the insertion of spices. The other end terminates in a tiny hand.



**CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

Birmingham, England

1888

Silver

This yad carries a Birmingham maker's mark G.U. 1888. It is embossed and chased with foliate decoration surrounding a vacant plaque.



**CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

Morocco

19th century

Brass

This yad features a polygonal shaft chased with a stylized geometric design and Hebrew name Nechemiah Zvi Ha-Cohen above an openwork oval center motif, ending in a stylized hand.



**CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

England

Early 19th century

Silver gilt

This yad has a twisted shaft terminating in a cuffed hand.



**CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

Jerusalem, Israel

Early 20th century

Silver and filigree

The tapering stem of this yad, made at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, terminates in a pointing hand. It is applied with the Bezalel trademark and has an orb terminal surmounting elegant filigree decoration. A yad of the same design can be seen in the core collection on the third floor of this building.



**CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

Amsterdam, Holland

Hallmarked 1784 and 1791

Silver

This yad, with a bent finger, bears the hallmark of William Duyndam. A crown and three crosses is the guild assay mark of Amsterdam and the letter “Z” designates the year 1784. The quadrangular upper segment is surmounted by a spherical knob fitted with a later addition of a ring and hook marked Hendrik Van Laar, Rotterdam 1791.



**CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

Germany

Late 19th century

Silver

This yad is ornamented with circular Jugendstil-like designs. The Jugendstil movement, meaning “Young Style” was popular in Germany at the turn of the 20th century. It was characterized by floral motifs, arabesques, and organically inspired lines. The pointer is topped by a sphere with lion finial.



**CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

Iran (Persia)

Late 19th century

Silver

The word ABA, Hebrew for father, is engraved on the flattened hand of this yad.



### **CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

Continental Europe

1924

Silver

This rare Arts and Crafts yad features a carved crown atop a large sphere. A second slightly smaller ball is at the center of the shaft and an even smaller ball fits into a cuffed flat stubby hand. Each ball carries Hebrew engraving which translates: "This was donated by Abraham Grossman in memory of his mother Mariassa on the fifth of Adar 1924." Arts and Crafts Judaica is quite rare and exemplifies the influence of the period's mainstream artistic style on Jewish ritual art.



### **CASE 11**

*Torah Pointer*

Italian

Probably 18th century

Silver

This exceptionally rare pointer has a knobbed scepter and suspension ring and chain.



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