



EXHIBITION SPOTLIGHTS WOMEN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL COMICS

The Koffler Gallery has focused its energies on a continuing series of projects around the city of Toronto. Koffler exhibitions may be turning up in unexpected places over the next few years as the Koffler Centre of the Arts prepares for the anticipated opening of its new arts and cultural centre at the Sherman Campus in 2014.

In keeping with its status as gallery-in-exile, the Koffler Gallery presents the international touring exhibition *Graphic Details: Confessional Comics by Jewish Women* at the Gladstone Hotel. The ground-breaking, touring exhibition, which opens in mid-February, features the works of 18 Canadian and international artists.

Graphic Details provides the first in-depth look at Jewish women's autobiographical comics through original drawings, full comic books and graphic novels. Artists include **Vanessa Davis, Bernice Eisenstein, Sarah Glidden, Miriam Katin, Aline Kominsky-Crumb, Miss Lasko-Gross, Sarah Lazarovic, Miriam Libicki, Sarah Lightman, Diane Noomin, Corinne Pearlman, Trina Robbins, Racheli Rotner, Sharon Rudahl, Laurie Sandell, Ariel Schrag, Lauren Weinstein and Ilana Zeffren.**

Many of the original artworks on display have never been exhibited in public until now. The exhibition "illuminates the intersection of experiences that make these

diaristic comics so compelling," a Koffler press release advises.

"By turns funny, outrageous, poignant and embarrassingly intimate, the works in *Graphic Details* reflect the artists' individual journeys, refracted through a distinctively Jewish lens in a pop-culture art form. Some bare their bodies. Some expose their psyches. All are fearless about sex, romance, politics, body functions, experiences, emotions and desires."

Graphic Details will be on view at the Gladstone Hotel from Feb. 17 to April 17. The co-curators are **Michael Kaminer**, a New York journalist and collector whose 2008 story on confessional comics in the *Forward* provided the impetus for the show; and **Lightman**, a London-based artist and arts journalist.

Film on Yiddish Theatre: Friends of Yiddish presents the feature film *Yiddish Theatre: A Love Story*, by director **Dan Katzir**. The English-language film is being screened at Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Ave., with refreshments. Admission free. Sunday, Jan. 9, 2 p.m. RSVP by Jan. 6 to Sandy, 416-458-1440 or 416-736-8073.

Theatre Notes

• Crow's Theatre presents *Eternal Hydra*, a play by **Anton Piatigorsky** that spins a literary mystery involving Gordias Carbuncle, an invented Irish-Jewish writer living in Paris in the 1930s. "The play explores several themes, one of which is Jewish identity," said director **Chris Abraham**, who added that the work is reminiscent of both **Tom Stoppard's** *Arcadia* and **A.S. Byatt's** *Possession*. Previews for *Eternal Hydra* begin Jan. 22 at the Factory Theatre and the play runs Jan. 27 to Feb. 12. www.factorytheatre.ca

• *The Apology*, by Toronto playwright **Darrah Teitel**, tells

the story of the philosophical and sexual experiment that led to the creation of **Mary Shelley's** *Frankenstein*. It's at the Factory Theatre, 125 Bathurst St., Jan. 5 to 16. 416-966-1061, www.fringetix.ca

Arts in Brief

• "Cochini – Jewish Women's Folksongs in South India and Israel," an illustrated talk by **Barbara Johnson**, is a rare opportunity to learn about Indian Jewry from a leading scholar. Miles Nadal JCC, Tuesday, Jan. 11, 7-8:30 p.m. Admission free. sharonis@mnjcc.org, 416-924-6211, ext. 154.

• The History of Jewish Publishing, a series of talks with **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**, takes in industrial espionage, forgeries, church censorship and much more. Miles Nadal JCC, Mondays 6 to 7 p.m. from Jan. 17 to Feb. 14 (excluding Jan. 31). \$20 for the series or \$5 per lecture. sharonis@mnjcc.org, 416-924-6211, ext. 154.

• In *Nayman's Terms*, a series of lectures with film clips presented by film critic **Adam Nayman**, continues with "Surfing the New Waves: Contemporary New Wave Cinema" as he looks at Iranian cinema. Monday, Jan. 17, 7 to 9 p.m. \$12 per lecture; students \$6. Presented as part of the Miles Nadal JCC's Media Mondays. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• Active Seniors presents Jewish Toronto: One Community or Many?, a new series with **Harold Troper**. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday Jan. 6, 1:30 p.m. Refreshments. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

At the Galleries

• *Save a Child's Heart*, an exhibition of photographs curated by **Eli Gross**, is at the Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space, Miles Nadal JCC, Jan. 4 to 30. www.mnjcc.org

Sharp character studies from a bygone era

By **JOSEPH SERGE**
Arts Editor

In *The Pool*, a young girl supposedly doing her homework, secretly watches Ficksen, the gardener, outside cleaning the pool.

In *Bottle*, Bella, a nanny, revels in the splendour of her first-ever trip to the beach.

In *The Letter*, a mother anxiously awaits the arrival of a letter from her teenage son whom she hasn't seen since

he left the country.

Jewels and other stories (Tsar Publications) is a collection of short fiction that offers a unique perspective on life in 1970s apartheid-era South Africa.

The author, Dawn Promislow, was born and raised in Johannesburg and left with her family for Britain in 1977, ultimately arriving in Canada in 1987.

The diverse characters in all her stories come from both sides of the apartheid divide – black and white, poor and rich, domestic and house owner.

Ficksen, the black gardener, watches the white children of his employer swim in the pool, yearning to swim in it himself someday.

While Bella, the nanny in *Bottle*, captures the joy of the Indian Ocean in a pop bottle, her husband, a security guard, has to take two buses and walk two miles to get to work. They only see each other one day a month.

Through her strong, remarkable characters, Promislow makes this shameful world of segregated beaches, corrugated tin roofs, pass books, "the natives," the Special Branch and malnourished children come alive.

Several stories are told from the points of view of young children, such as Billy, a poor, hungry boy who loves to listen to his mother's stories about her and her tribe. "Her stories, unlike the stream and her milk, never dried up. They flowed always in her, as fluid and abundant as the most fertile river."

Rivers and water are recurring images in many stories.

Several stories are connected by similar characters, but different viewpoints. In *Billy*, for instance, Billy is taken by his father, a gardener, to spend two weeks at the house of his employers. In *Our Story/His Story*, white siblings eagerly await the arrival of their new guest, the young son of their black gardener.

In *The Letter*, one of the most moving stories in this collection, Rose, a young mother, anxiously awaits word from her son who fled to neighbouring Zambia to train as a "freedom fighter." In *Freedom Fighter*, a young man – Rose's son perhaps? – eagerly waits to be taken across the border to Zambia. Rife with rich imagery and lush description, *Jewels and other stories*, is a wonderful collection of 14 character studies from a thankfully bygone era.



TEATRON Toronto Jewish Theatre presents:

Canadian Premiere of the fiercely romantic drama

Hard Love
by Motti Lerner

Directed by **Ari Weisberg** January 5 - 16, 2011

Hannah and Zvi are reunited after divorcing twenty years earlier. Raised in Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox Mea Shearim, the couple ended their marriage when Zvi turned his back on Judaism and Hannah did not. Now the teenage children from their second marriages have become romantically involved, forcing Hannah and Zvi back into each other's lives.

PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS NOW!

At the Toronto Centre for the Arts (formerly The Ford Centre)
5040 Yonge St. 11am–6 pm, by phone: 416-781-5527
or online: www.teatrontheatre.com

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