

The coat of many colors: A quest for Jewish togetherness

Paintings and drawings by Alexander Vaisman, Israeli artist



Alexander Vaisman



Alexander Vaisman was born in 1967 in Chernovtsy (a Ukrainian city that was formerly known as Czernowitz), a city with a long-standing and strong Jewish tradition, once an important Jewish center in Eastern Europe. Alexander graduated from the Chernovtsy Music College with a degree in violin performance. He made *aliya* in 1991 and currently lives in Natsrat-Ilit with his wife Mila, and four children.

Alexander started his artistic exploration at a young age, covering the apartment walls with colorful floral arrangements when left home alone. Since then, he has added more than 1,000 works in different genres to his portfolio. Besides paintings, drawings and sculptures, Alexander has illustrated a number of books, and has worked as a set and costume designer. (You can view more of Alexander's work in his web gallery at www.vaisman.org.) He has participated in exhibitions in Israel, Ukraine and the United States. Alexander's art has been featured in newspapers, magazines and in the TV documentary, *A Letter to Son*.

Alexander's drawings and paintings illuminate the experience of being Jewish under often difficult circumstances. His works are motivated by a strong sense of belonging to a rich and venerable culture. They reflect the eternal themes of Jewish family life, faith and ritual, as well as the turbulent events of our era.



Many centuries of Jewish life in Eastern Europe shaped a unique civilization that whimsically embraced a profound religious belief and an open-minded world outlook, an energetic entrepreneurship and a spirited quest for social justice, adherence to the tradition and susceptibility to the new influences. Alexander Vaisman belongs to the last generation that observed this civilization in its own domain and he is actively participating in integrating his insights into the new Jewish culture, which is being defined today in Israel and everywhere Jews live now. The title of this exhibition alludes to this great diversity of Jewish experience, which is ably reflected in Alexander Vaisman's art.

The year 2008 marks several anniversaries that are important for the artist. It has been 600 years since his hometown of Czernowitz was founded, and 60 years since his country of Israel won her independence. It is also a centennial year of the Czernowitz Yiddish Conference which played a critical role in the development of Yiddish culture, a rich source of Alexander's inspiration. The exhibition is dedicated to these anniversaries.





Goldman Art Gallery, JCC of Greater Washington

6125 Montrose Rd, Rockville, MD • 301-348-3770

Gallery hours: Sunday-Friday 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

