

# RISD MUSEUM

*Dorner Prize*, March 25, 2019-June 2, 2019

Dorner Prize, a juried competition for RISD students to create site-specific, temporary projects at the RISD Museum, was first established in 1995. These artistic interventions can take the form of a physical, digital, or programmatic encounter, and can examine, critique, or celebrate the Museum's collections, architectural idiosyncrasies, habits of visitation, and or/web presence. Jurors this year are Dominic Molon, Curator of Contemporary Art, and Kourtnie Aileru (RISD MFA D+M 2017), Critic, Sculpture Department.

Dorner Prize, named for distinguished RISD Museum director Alexander Dorner (tenure 1938–1941), is made possible by a generous anonymous gift.

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Shterna Goldbloom, American, b.1992, (RISD MFA 2019, Photography)

*Feygeles*, 2019

Digitally embroidered velvet, goat and calf parchment pigment print, silver-plated

Courtesy of the artist EXL1.20195

Feygeles aims to make visible that which has historically been hidden. Handmade contemporary Torah scrolls reveal photographs and interviews with LGBTQIA Jews who have struggled to find ways of integrating their history and family traditions with their sexuality and gender. Feygeles, a Yiddish slur meaning both gay and little bird, expresses both the Queerness of these Jews and their flight.

Each scroll is open to a different degree, just like my subjects' identities. The scrolls (both visible and not) have printed images of Queer ex-Orthodox and Orthodox Jews. The subjects that are not out yet are kept safe and hidden in a closed Torah scroll with a digitally embroidered cover. Subjects who are out in varying degrees will be shown partially, and the final scroll will display a proud Queer Jewish couple embracing their child. Excerpts from my subjects' interviews describe some of the nuances of a feygele's experience.

The placement of this work in the RISD Museum calls for visibility and for the inclusion of Queer Jewish narratives and perspectives within a museum context. This project is in honor of Eliyahu Ben Menachem Mendel.

-Shterna Goldbloom

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Nathan Wong, American, b. 1997, (RISD BFA 2019, Printmaking)

*Intermediary*, 2019

Meditation performance on saffron-dyed silk and cotton cushions

Courtesy of the artist EXL2.20195

Outside of museums, statues of Buddha and Buddhist relics are passionately cared for, eagerly prayed to, frequently visited, and colorfully adorned with flowers, jewels, gold offerings, and saffron-dyed silks. The monks and nuns that care for these cultural treasures are dressed in shades of maroon, orange, and pink, offering contrast to the often gold-leafed surfaces. This is my experience of Buddhism, observed during visits to temples with my grandmother and family throughout Myanmar and Los Angeles.

This performance piece references the RISD Museum's Buddha Mahavairocana (Dainichi Nyorai), located in the Asian galleries on the sixth floor. The larger-than-life Buddha there appears quiet, lonely, almost asleep, and without evidence of prayers or offerings. Asian galleries at many museums—not just the RISD Museum—are presented almost universally as dark, meditative galleries focused on an archeological view of objects. In my performance piece, I bring that quiet, spiritual energy to this brightly lit and lively gallery, questioning the practice of othering Asian art in Western museums.

I invite everyone to join the meditation, but I ask that visitors participate in the tradition of removing shoes before entering the sacred space. Please also be respectful of the silence.

- Nathan Wong