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119 N. 3rd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106, 215-923-1222 www.ocjac.org

"Signatures of the Soul:

Words & textiles for body & soul" Art Exhibition

May 1-27th 2009

Biography

Elsa Wachs, Artist

Elsa Wachs grew up in Philadelphia and received a Bachelors Degree in Education from Temple University in 1958. Since then she continues to pursue her education in the arts as well as in eclectic studies.

Trained as a painter, Elsa Wachs studied with Samuel Feinstein, a protégé of Hans Hoffman, in the '60's and '70's. She began working with fibers and threads in 1970 and at that time developed her art discipline of creating liturgical along with her secular artwork.

Elsa's work is used and enjoyed in institutions and private collections throughout the United States, England, Canada, Israel, Chile, Australia and France and was taken into space on NASA's Space Shuttle Mission Discovery. She has been an invited artist in many juried shows; artist-in-residence in a number of communities and logo artist for Women's League for Conservative Judaism. She has received the American Jewish Congress Rosh Pinah Award for significant contributions in her field and the B'nai B'rith Community Service Award. She also won 'Most Outstanding Piece' at the Museum of American Jewish History, Contemporary Artifacts. Elsa Wachs was commissioned by the Temple Judea Museum of Keneseth Israel, Elkins Park, PA to create a piece for their permanent collection to commemorate their 150th Anniversary.

Elsa's artwork has won many awards for design, theme and/or originality. In the year 2002 she was awarded 1st Prize in the Art of the Torah Exhibition for her entry "Inverse and Reverse". Elsa is featured in the 2004 The Creative Jewish Wedding Book by Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer as well as one of the artists in Judaic Artisans Today, by Kathryn Morton published in 2000. In 2008 Elsa, along with another artist, presented "Uncompleted Journey", two artistic responses to the Holocaust which will be touring the country. In 2009 Elsa curated a group show featuring 9 other artists entitled "Women with a View" currently showing at the Stratasphere Gallery, Old Kensington, during the month of May '09.

Elsa also writes and publishes limited edition and one-of-a-kind books. She has been a Judaic consultant/ designer to the giftware industry, producing such pieces as the Kirk-Steiff and Gorham Judaic collection and the Simcha dessert set for Lenox China.

Her innovations are being echoed by professional and folk artists nationwide. "The Tallit as Personal Art Form", "The Chuppah as Family History and Heirloom", and "The Special Torah Mantle for Eastern European Holocaust Scrolls" are hallmarks of her work.

Elsa pioneered the movement of creating new, unusual legacy items from bits and pieces of a family's cache of memorabilia. Through her artwork and her lectures and workshops she helps to build bridges between the generations.