



ein museum der **wienholding**

Media Information, March 2025

G*d

Reflections between Heaven and Earth

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| Exhibition venue | Jewish Museum Vienna Dorotheergasse 11, 1010 Vienna |
| Exhibition period | April 2 to October 5, 2025 |
| Opening | April 1, 2025, 6:30 P.M. |
| Press conference | April 1, 2025, 10:30 A.M. |
| Opening hours | Jewish Museum Vienna Dorotheergasse 11, 1010 Vienna Sunday to Friday, 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. |
| Press photos | https://www.jmw.at/presse |

The Jewish Museum Vienna is a Wien Holding museum.

*G*d. Reflections between Heaven and Earth*

For some, God is the origin of all being, for others, an illusion. God brings people together and divides them – but who or what is God? The exhibition *G*d. Reflections between Heaven and Earth* approaches this phenomenon through seven questions that often have more than just a religious answer.

Starting from Jewish conceptions of God from biblical times to our individualized, Western present, the exhibition shows a broad spectrum of positions – artistic explorations as well as outstanding religious objects. Contemporary art, with its personal accesses, and historical ritual objects that express a collective religious relationship, engage in a dialogue that addresses not only religious tradition, but also abstract themes.

Additional dimensions of the exhibition explore the tensions between religion and science, the question of divine providence, and human free will.

Visitors are invited to rediscover God through an interplay of aesthetics and sensuality: human projections and existential hopes become tangible, visible, and audible. So, is there a God? Or a Goddess? Historical and modern perspectives – from the Shoah and religious criticism to neuroscience and artificial intelligence – question and challenge the traditional image of God.

The exhibition *G*d. Reflections between Heaven and Earth* will accompany the 130th anniversary of the Jewish Museum Vienna in 2025. Opened in 1895, it is the world's first Jewish museum.

"When it comes to God, things get personal. People are as diverse as their relationship to God – this ranges from strict piety to radical rejection. The topic leaves no one untouched."
Domagoj Akrap, Curator, Jewish Museum Vienna

"The exhibition, with its international perspective, demonstrates how deeply this theme affects people around the world. We are looking forward to bringing God closer to our visitors and enabling God to be experienced in a sensual and aesthetic way."
Daniela Schmid, Curator, Jewish Museum Vienna

Seven Themed Rooms – Seven Questions

Each room of the exhibition is dedicated to a central question and presents a dialogue between historical religious sources and contemporary artistic interpretation:

What is G*d's name?

examines the holiness and mystery of the divine names.

How does G*d manifest Himself?

challenges the ban on images using selected ritual objects and their symbolism.

Where does G*d live?

reflects on the experience of divine presence in the face of loss and deeply felt absence during the Shoah.

What does G*d do?

shows examples of divine action and the dialogue between spiritual creation and modern technology.

How is G*d perceived?

explores human concepts and mental constructions of the divine.

How can we reach G*d?

analyzes the diverse paths and challenges of approaching the divine.

Why G*d?

questions God and His significance for faith and identity, as well as for questions of life, suffering, and redemption.

Tradition Meets Innovation

By juxtaposing historical Judaica with contemporary art and modern media, *G*d. Reflections between Heaven and Earth* provides a dynamic space in which centuries-old debates about the nature of God meet current issues in science and technology. The exhibition connects religious traditions with contemporary questions – such as the impact of the Shoah on the perception of the divine or the role of artificial intelligence in redefining creation.

Tactfully curated by Domagoj Akrap and Daniela Schmid, the exhibition combines theological, art historical, and social perspectives and brings together outstanding international loans with never before seen treasures from the world's first Jewish museum. The 72 exhibits – from precious ritual objects to exceptional contemporary artworks – make different conceptions of God visible. Presented for the first time in Austria in this context is a unique historical model from the 17th century of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. International loans feature works from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Jewish Museum New York, the Venetian Jewish Community, and the Tate Modern, London. Additional highlights include Anselm Kiefer's *Merkaba – The Seven Heavenly Palaces* (2007), Nir Hod's work *GOD* (2024), created especially for the exhibition, and Eliyahu Fatal's contemporary work *Torah Scroll* (2020). The exhibition is complemented by extraordinary objects such as a Viennese Torah crown from 1851 from the Muzicant Collection, as well as rarely shown exhibits from the Jewish Museum Vienna. The

diversity of the artworks opens a multifaceted discourse on the divine name, its representation, and its significance in religion, art, and identity.

Exhibition Concept by MVD Austria / Pretterhofer Arquitectos

The design follows the concept of God as the creator of the world ("Bore Olam"). The architectural approach is based on the duality of the material and the immaterial, reflecting the central themes of creation—heaven and earth—through its choice of colors and materials. Carefully placed openings make the sequence of blue-toned rooms visually comprehensible, linking the chapters and exhibits in a continuous visual dialogue.

The contrast between simplicity and grandeur, between groundedness and transcendence, is heightened by the juxtaposition of raw, porous bricks with refined, elaborately crafted artifacts—a spatial reflection of the idea of a world created from opposites.

Supporting Program

The exhibition's event series begins on April 22 with a workshop and lecture by **Annabel Gottfried Cohen** on spiritual communication with the deceased in Ashkenazi Judaism, introducing customs such as the *Keyver Oves* (visiting ancestors' graves), *Feldmesterins* (cemetery measurers), and *Klogerins* (mourning women). On June 4, in cooperation with Christie's, the lecture "57 Years of Israeli Contemporary Art" by **Roni Gilat-Baharaff** will explore the development of Israeli art from the late 1960s to the present day. A special high point of the program will be a discussion on July 22, 2025, with the 2023 Nobel Prize winner in literature **Jon Fosse** and the exhibition curators about the parallels between Jewish mysticism and his work *A Shining*. On September 3, the Austrian Film Museum, in cooperation with the Jewish Museum Vienna, will present the film *Words with Gods* (2014), which was screened at the 71st Venice International Film Festival. **Amos Gitai**, one of the film's directors, will be present.

Further information about all events can be found on our website: www.jmw.at

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| Curators | Domagoj Akrap, Daniela Schmid |
| Exhibition design | MVD Austria / Pretterhofer Arquitectos |
| Graphics | Manuel Radde and Philipp Doringner |
| Exhibition production | Cornelia Regehr |

Publication *G*d. Reflections between Heaven and Earth*, edited by Domagoj Akrap and Daniela Schmid, catalog for the exhibition at the Jewish Museum Vienna, April 2–October 5, 2025, 260 pages, paperback, € 32.90, ISBN: 978-3-95565-707-9

Admission The ticket is valid at both locations: the Jewish Museum Vienna, Dorotheergasse, and the Museum Judenplatz.

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Photos and press material on current exhibitions can be found on the Jewish Museum Vienna website at www.jmw.at/presse.

We would like to thank Annabelle and Patrick Dumont as well as other sponsors for their generous support in making this exhibition possible.

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