

The Television Project: Some of My Best Friends

Highlights from the National Jewish Archive of Broadcasting Examine Anti-Semitism Through Classic TV Beginning March 18, 2016

New York, NY – With the second installment of its new, ongoing exhibition series, the Jewish Museum will continue introducing visitors to a dynamic part of its collection: the National Jewish Archive of Broadcasting (NJAB). *The Television Project: Some of My Best Friends* will be on view from March 18 through August 14, 2016 exploring the full range of the medium's approach to anti-Semitism, from the satire and humor of the situation comedy to serious dramas that dissect the origins, motivations, and consequences of prejudice. Clips from such programs as *All in the Family*, *Downton Abbey*, *Mad Men*, *Gunsmoke*, and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* will be featured.

Some of My Best Friends features Mary Richards standing up to an anti-Semitic friend in *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, "Some of My Best Friends Are Rhoda;" Jews fighting to prevent neo-Nazis from holding a rally in a predominantly Jewish town in *Skokie*; and Jewish emigrants confronting hatred in the Old West in the *Gunsmoke* episode, "This Golden Land" (featuring a young Richard Dreyfuss) and *Little House on the Prairie*, "The Craftsman." Also included are clips from the first episode of the acclaimed *Mad Men*, where Roger Sterling suggests to Don Draper that their ad agency hire a Jew prior to meeting with a new Jewish-owned client; an *LA Law* segment, "Rohner vs. Gradinger," depicting a confrontation between a Jewish lawyer and his Jew-hating WASP mother-in-law and her close friend; the bigoted Archie Bunker looking for a "Jew lawyer" because Jews are "smarter and shrewder" in Norman Lear's groundbreaking *All in the Family*, "Oh, My Aching Back;" and a scene from *Downton Abbey* showing the family matriarch (Maggie Smith) expressing displeasure at news of a cousin romantically involved with a Jew. In addition, the exhibition includes art and artifacts from the collection of the Jewish Museum relating to anti-Semitism, ranging from paintings by Philip Evergood and Robert Moskowitz to an advertisement from a 1950 comic book featuring Superman lending his voice to the fight for tolerance during Brotherhood Week.

Some of My Best Friends is the second offering in a series of six thematic exhibitions being presented from 2015 to 2018. Each exhibition features a compilation video by curator Maurice Berger. Since the mid-1990s, Berger has produced cinematic "culture stories," syncopated compilations of historic clips from American film and television that explore issues of identity and self-representation. His compilation, *Threshold*, was featured in the 2012 Whitney Biennial. For *The Television Project*, Berger has assembled clips from the NJAB, examining issues of Jewish identity and culture as depicted on American television. Future exhibitions in *The Television Project* will

examine Jews and comedy, Jews and the advertising revolution, and depictions of Jewish masculinity and femininity, each through the lens of American television.

With more than 4,000 holdings, the National Jewish Archive of Broadcasting at the Jewish Museum was established in 1981 to collect, preserve, and exhibit television and radio programs related to the Jewish experience. The programs in the NJAB constitute an important record of how Jews have been portrayed and portray themselves from the 1930s to the present, and how mass media has addressed issues of diversity, ethnicity, and religion.

Maurice Berger is Research Professor and Chief Curator at the Center for Art, Design and Visual Culture, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and Consulting Curator/Curator of the National Jewish Archive of Broadcasting at the Jewish Museum in New York. His critically acclaimed exhibitions have appeared at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, The New Museum, Studio Museum in Harlem, International Center of Photography, Addison Gallery of American Art, Berkeley Art Museum, the National Civil Rights Museum, and other national and international venues. Most recently, he curated *Revolution of the Eye: Modern Art and the Birth of American Television*, which premiered at the Jewish Museum (May 1, 2015 – September 27, 2015) and is traveling to four additional U.S. venues. He is the author of twelve books, including *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Yale, 2010), *Masterworks of The Jewish Museum* (Yale, 2004), and *White Lies: Race and the Myths of Whiteness* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999). His honors and awards include a 2011 Emmy Award nomination from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, New York chapter, and curatorial awards from the Association of Art Museum Curators and the International Association of Art Critics. Berger's essay series, *Race Stories*, "a continuing exploration of the relationship of race to photographic portrayals of race," appears monthly on the *Lens* blog of *The New York Times*.

Support

The Television Project is made possible by The Knapp Family Foundation, the Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, and the Alfred J. Grunebaum Memorial Fund.

About The Jewish Museum

Located on Museum Mile at Fifth Avenue and 92nd Street, the Jewish Museum is one of the world's preeminent institutions devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary, offering intellectually engaging and educational exhibitions and programs for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Museum was established in 1904, when Judge Mayer Sulzberger donated 26 ceremonial objects to The Jewish Theological Seminary as the core of a museum collection. Today, the Museum maintains a collection of over 30,000 works of art, artifacts, and broadcast media reflecting global



Jewish identity, and presents a diverse schedule of internationally acclaimed temporary exhibitions.

The Jewish Museum is located at 1109 Fifth Avenue at 92nd Street, New York City. Museum hours are Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, 11am to 5:45pm; Thursday, 11am to 8pm; and Friday, 11am to 4pm. Museum admission is \$15.00 for adults, \$12.00 for senior citizens, \$7.50 for students, free for visitors 18 and under and Jewish Museum members. Admission is Pay What You Wish on Thursdays from 5pm to 8pm and free on Saturdays. For information on the Jewish Museum, the public may call 212.423.3200 or visit the website at www.thejewishmuseum.org.

#

1/26/16

Press contacts:

Anne Scher, Molly Kurzius, or Alex Wittenberg
The Jewish Museum
212.423.3271 or pressoffice@thejm.org

