



A LIVING
MEMORIAL
TO THE
HOLOCAUST

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 20, 2008

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Fascinating Public Program Schedule Enriches New Exhibition

Woman of Letters: Irène Némirovsky and Suite Française

at the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

New York, NY—*Woman of Letters: Irène Némirovsky and Suite Française*, the compelling new exhibition at the **Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust**, examines the life, work, and legacy of this enthralling, often controversial, literary figure. To complement this one-of-a-kind exhibition, the Museum will present a **series of interviews, tours, and enlightening discussions with Némirovsky's family, scholars, and historians** that explore this story of identity, family, and loss.

These programs will begin **September 24** with *Irène Némirovsky: A Daughter's Discovery*, which will feature Irène's daughter, **Denise Epstein** in conversation with Némirovsky translator **Sandra Smith**. On **October 26**, Professors **Michael Marrus** and **Robert O. Paxton** will offer important historical context for the period in which Némirovsky wrote and lived in a discussion entitled *Jews in Vichy France*. On **December 8**, **Ruth Franklin**, editor, *The New Republic*, **Susan Suleiman**, professor of Comparative Literature, Harvard University, and others will discuss *Irène Némirovsky and the Jewish Question*. Tickets to the September 24 event are \$15 adults, \$12 students/seniors, \$10 members. Tickets to the October 26 and December 8 events are \$10 adults, \$7 students/seniors, and free for members. Tickets may be purchased online at www.mjhnyc.org, or by calling the Museum's box office at 646.437.4202.

About the Programs

Wednesday, September 24

Tours begin at 5 P.M.

Discussion at 7 P.M.

Irène Némirovsky: A Daughter's Discovery

With Denise Epstein, daughter of Irène Némirovsky, interviewed by Sandra Smith, Robinson College, Cambridge, U.K.

Fifty years after her mother's death, Denise Epstein discovered and transcribed the first two parts of the remarkable, unfinished five-part novel, *Suite Française*, now a worldwide bestseller. Denise will discuss her mother's life and work with Némirovsky translator and literature professor Sandra Smith. Join us for a highlights tour of *Woman of Letters: Irène Némirovsky and Suite Française* led by the exhibition organizers.

Tours begin at 5 p.m. and continue every 30 minutes until 6:30 p.m. Space is limited. Pre-registration is required. Call the Museum box office at 646.437.4202 to reserve your spot.

Dr. Sandra Smith, a Senior Teaching Member of Robinson College, Cambridge, U.K., began work as a professional translator with her commission for *Suite Française*. She has now translated several more of Irène Némirovsky's works, including a biography and new translations of four classics.

MORE

Denise Epstein is the only surviving daughter of Irène Némirovsky. Now 78 years old, she lives in Toulouse, France.

Sunday, October 26, 2:30 P.M.

Jews in Vichy France

With Michael Marrus, Dean of Graduate Studies and the Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Professor of Holocaust Studies at the University of Toronto, and Robert O. Paxton, Robert O. Mellon Professor of Social Sciences Emeritus, Columbia University.

In 1941, the Vichy government worked with the Nazis to begin rounding up Jews for the concentration camps. Between 1942 and 1944, nearly 76,000 Jews were deported to concentration camps from France.

Robert Paxton and Michael Marrus, the world renowned scholars and authors of *Vichy France and the Jews*, will provide historical context for the experience of Irène Némirovsky and other Jews of France during World War II.

Robert Paxton is an American historian specializing in Vichy France and Europe during World War II. Paxton is best known for his 1972 book *Vichy France, Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944*, in which he argues that Vichy collaboration with Germany was a voluntary program entered into by the Vichy government, not forced upon it by German pressure. He is currently a professor emeritus of history at Columbia University.

Michael Marrus is a Canadian historian of France, the Holocaust, and Jewish history. He is an expert on the history of French Jewry and anti-Semitism, and co-wrote with Robert Paxton the 1972 book on Vichy France described above. He teaches at the University of Toronto.

This program is made possible by a generous gift from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany: Rabbi Israel Miller Fund for Shoah Research, Documentation and Education.

Monday, December 8, 7 P.M.

Irène Némirovsky and the Jewish Question

With Ruth Franklin, editor, *The New Republic*; Susan Suleiman, professor of Comparative Literature, Harvard University; and others TBA

"They say I'm anti-Semitic? It's absurd! I'm a Jew myself, and I'll say it to anyone who will listen!"
— Irène Némirovsky, in an interview by Nina Gourfinkel from *La Nouvelle Revue Juive*, 1930

Join our panel of literary critics and scholars for a fascinating discussion about the enigmatic and complex woman who was Irène Némirovsky, a novelist whose death in Auschwitz left behind not only an epic unfinished novel but heated controversies that continue to cast shadows over her life and work.

Ruth Franklin became a senior editor at *The New Republic* in October 2003. Before joining *TNR*, she worked in *The New York Times'* Warsaw bureau and was a writer and editor for the *Let's Go* travel guide series. Her writing has also appeared in *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Washington Post Book World*, and the *London Review of Books*.

Susan Suleiman has been on the Harvard faculty since 1981 where she is currently the C. Douglas Dillon Professor of the Civilization of France and Professor of Comparative Literature. She has written and edited a number of books and articles on contemporary literature and culture, published in the U.S. and abroad, and has also published poetry and autobiographical works. Her latest book is *Crises of Memory and the Second World War* (Harvard University Press, 2006).

MORE

About the exhibition *Woman of Letters*

Woman of Letters tells the remarkable story of a writer driven to create, of a mother and her daughters, of memory and identity, of legacy and loss. A Russian-born Jewish author, Irène Némirovsky quickly rose to literary celebrity in her adopted France. But her fame and accomplishment, and even her conversion to Catholicism, were not enough to save her when war came; she was deported to Auschwitz in 1942. Among the few items that she left behind was a valise that contained a leather notebook. Haunted by painful memories, her daughters avoided opening it until Denise read it more than fifty years after their mother's death. She discovered not a diary, but a major literary work: the first two parts of an unfinished five-part novel, *Suite Française*. The exhibition illustrates Némirovsky's life and her extraordinary literary gift to the world with stunning and heartbreaking artifacts, including the original manuscript and the valise, never before exhibited.

Co-produced with Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine (IMEC).

This exhibition is made possible through generous funding from: American Express Company, David Berg Foundation, and the Grand Marnier Foundation; leadership gifts from: Nancy Fisher, Fanya Gottesfeld Heller, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council with the generous support of The September 11th Fund, The Robert Sillins Family Foundation; and additional support provided by: The Diller – von Furstenberg Family Foundation, Embassy of France in the United States, Alexis Gregory Foundation, The Felix & Elizabeth Rohatyn Foundation, and Howard J. Rubenstein. Rotunda Salon furnished courtesy of Ligne Roset.

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