

Media Release



A culture of celebrations: photographs of Sydney's Jewish community

25 February 2016

The State Library of NSW's new photography display offers an intimate glimpse into Sydney's dynamic Jewish community, opening on 1 March as part of Multicultural March 2016.

Photographer D-Mo Zajac spent five years capturing cultural and religious events, including the quintessential Jewish celebrations Shabbath, Hannukah, Bar Mitzvah's and Bat Mitzvah's.

The display features 18 images from D-Mo's rich archive, including her first photograph taken in 2010 when she was welcomed into the home of Rabbi Dovid Slavin and his family in Bondi to celebrate Hannukah, or the "Festival of Lights".

"The project became a very personal journey for me when I discovered my own Jewish heritage in the process," says D-Mo.

D-Mo has been documenting refugee and migrant communities in Australia and overseas since 2008. A migrant herself, D-Mo says that her photography has undoubtedly been influenced by her own experiences; "Taking photographs is often more of a reflection of who we are than the subjects."

Originally a cinematographer, D-Mo had a successful career in film and television in Europe, but had difficulty finding steady work as a filmmaker in Australia. In order to pay the bills, she took up still photography. D-Mo says the decision has proved to be a blessing, as "over time I began to love the challenge and art of telling an entire story in just one frame."

According to State Library curator Anni Turnbull, the display "highlights the depth and diversity of Jewish culture and the importance of ritual."

Building on the strengths of the State Library's digital photography collection, the Library recently acquired 43 of D-Mo's photographs of Sydney's Jewish community, including the 18 featured in the display.

D-Mo will discuss her photographic journey in conversation with Anni Turnbull at the Library on Thursday 10 March at 6pm. Free, bookings required: bookings@sl.nsw.gov.au.

As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting cultural diversity, the State Library will be holding a range of free events, including tours, talks and bilingual story time for children as part of Multicultural March. For more details, visit <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/whats-on>

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Celebration: Jewish Community Photographs is a free display at the State Library of NSW from 1 March to 5 June 2016. www.sl.nsw.gov.au

D-Mo Zajac and Anni Turnbull are available for interviews.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact:
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