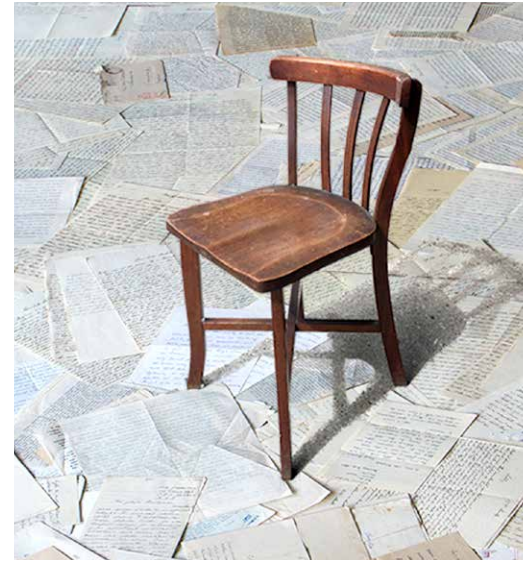


**SYDNEY
JEWISH
MUSEUM**
WHERE HISTORY HAS A VOICE

Sydney Jewish Museum, 148 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst
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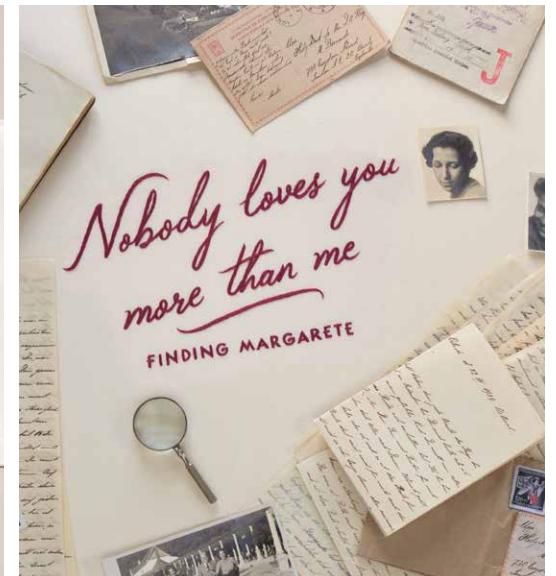
**SYDNEY
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THE FATE OF THINGS

MEMORY OBJECTS AND ART

Sydney Jewish Museum is proud to present an exhibition that recognises the diverse roles the Museum plays in contemporary Jewish life and provides an opportunity for professional artists to showcase their work.

SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM
2 NOVEMBER 2018 - 28 FEBRUARY 2019



Following the death of my mother in 2016, I began the melancholic task of sorting her belongings. Salvaged amongst these were a collection of letters, diaries, photographs, recipe books, embroideries and linen that had been carried across countries and oceans to finally rest here on this shore. As the child of a Holocaust survivor, I became the keeper of these family relics with only partial knowledge of the stories they contained. Sifting through this archive and working with these objects, I have developed artworks to reconstruct this fractured history, to remember those lost and to honour the bonds that bind me. As an inheritor of this trauma, I grieve for my mother, for her loss and the family I was never to know.

Anne Zahalka

The works in this exhibition have their origins in a family history – a history not dissimilar to other families who experienced the trauma of the Holocaust and its aftermath. On migrating to Australia, my parents brought various objects with them that acted as touchstones to a former home and life for them; and have provided me with a sense of connection to my family history. The works I have made reflect my belief in the role that contemporary art can play in imparting meaningful remembrance and solace. While some of the artworks utilise unconventional materiality to address trauma and absence, others refer to the comfort and inclusiveness of Jewish rituals, signalling connection and continuity.

Sylvia Griffin

THE FATE OF THINGS



Artists Anne Zahalka and Sylvia Griffin address loss and family trauma in their collaborative exhibition at the Sydney Jewish Museum, attempting to piece together and make sense of fragmented histories. Both women are first-generation Australians with Jewish heritage: during the war Anne Zahalka's Austrian mother was sent to London on the Kindertransport before eventually arriving in Australia; Sylvia Griffin's parents, Hungarian Holocaust survivors, migrated with her siblings to Australia after the war.

The works in this exhibition refer to transgenerational (or postmemory) trauma – recalling stories and histories shared through family stories, but not directly experienced. They reflect the artists' own reactions and stories stemming from this heritage and their attempts to emotionally reconnect with lost family members, particularly their female predecessors. Presenting videos, photographs, assemblages, sculptures and textiles, with personal objects interwoven amidst many of these works, the artists link with, but also question their respective family's fractured pasts. For example, as well as utilising a variety of family heirlooms, Zahalka works with the collection of letters that her grandmother sent to her mother – transcribing them and using them to create a fragile floor memorial. Griffin explores her mother's collection of dowry linen in a variety of ways – from embroidering around the delicate monogram with her own hair to, in the manner of the ancient Jewish graveside tradition, replicating the monogram in small stones.

The artists play with their personal histories, proposing an alternative experience of family heirlooms and archives through the frame of contemporary art.

MEMORY OBJECTS AND ART