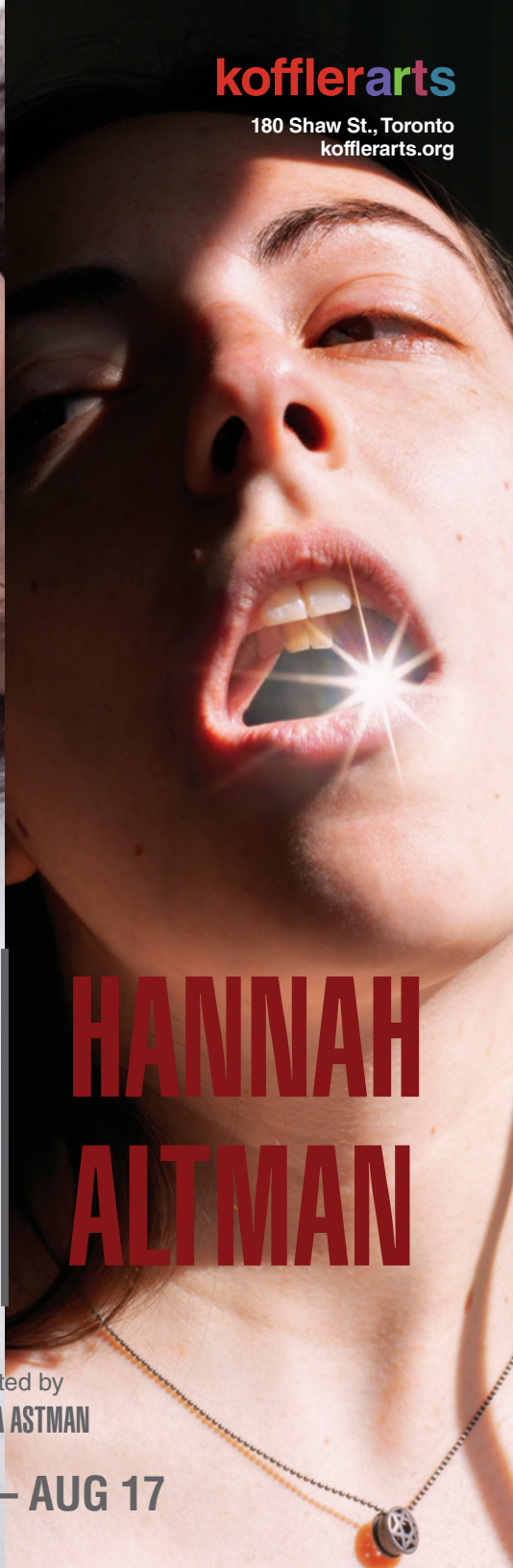




ELINOR CARUCCI

Curated by
BARBARA ASTMAN

MAY 29 – AUG 17



kofflerarts

180 Shaw St., Toronto
kofflerarts.org

HANNAH ALTMAN

ELINOR CARUCCI

HANNAH ALTMAN

It has been an exciting journey to explore the works of two highly accomplished female photographers, Elinor Carucci and Hannah Altman, as I have been interested in their related themes and subjects.

There is a unique dynamic that exists between their practices and a generational shift through their works. In 2021, Altman delved into Carucci's work in an interview as part of a series titled "Photographers on Photographers" on *Lenscratch*.^[1] Altman writes, "Her [Carucci's] images span generations, often using her own body in relation to others to contextualize her overlapping roles: mother, daughter, granddaughter, wife, artist, human." It is evident that Altman feels a deep admiration of and respect for Carucci's practice, especially considering that Altman's work delves into similar territory, including womanhood and rituals. Both are rooted in their Jewish perspective on life, family, and the human condition as evidenced in their images.

I was very familiar with Carucci's work through my teaching at OCAD University, and I referenced it often to interested students who were

exploring similar concepts. Carucci is an award-winning photographer who was a recipient of a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. Her work is exhibited and collected internationally. Carucci is currently on the faculty for the MFA Photography program at the School of the Visual Arts, New York City.

Altman graduated with an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2018, later becoming the inaugural Blanksteen Artist in Residence at the Slifka Center for Jewish Life at Yale University (New Haven, CT) in 2023, and has exhibited *As It Were, Suspended in Midair* at the Kniznick Gallery at the Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University (Waltham, MA) from February 13 through June 12, 2025.

Carucci's works at Koffler Arts are a selection from *Midlife* (2011-2019), a photographic series and corresponding book (The Monacelli Press, 2019) which explore the middle stage of life from a highly personal female perspective. It delves into themes of the body, health, relationships and, overall, brings attention to the challenges of this period in a woman's life.

[1] "Photographers on Photographers: Hannah Altman in Conversation with Elinor Carucci", *Lenscratch*, August 13, 2021, accessed at <http://lenscratch.com/2021/08/photographers-on-photographers-hannah-altman-in-conversation-with-elinor-carucci/>

Altman's work explores themes of ritual and lineage, memory and storytelling, incorporating aspects of Jewish culture. The works at Koffler Arts are from her most recent book, *We Will Return to You* (Saint Lucy Books, 2025). As Altman describes, "From mouth to ear to pen to performance, Jewish myths evolve across the diaspora, braiding themselves into past and future."

Carucci, Altman and I represent collectively three generations of image-makers who explore life from a feminist perspective. It has been an honour and pleasure to "dig deeper" – to quote Carucci from an interview with Altman – into the work and careers of these two very exciting artists who bring a highly personal Jewish approach to their photographic works.

Barbara Astman
Exhibition curator



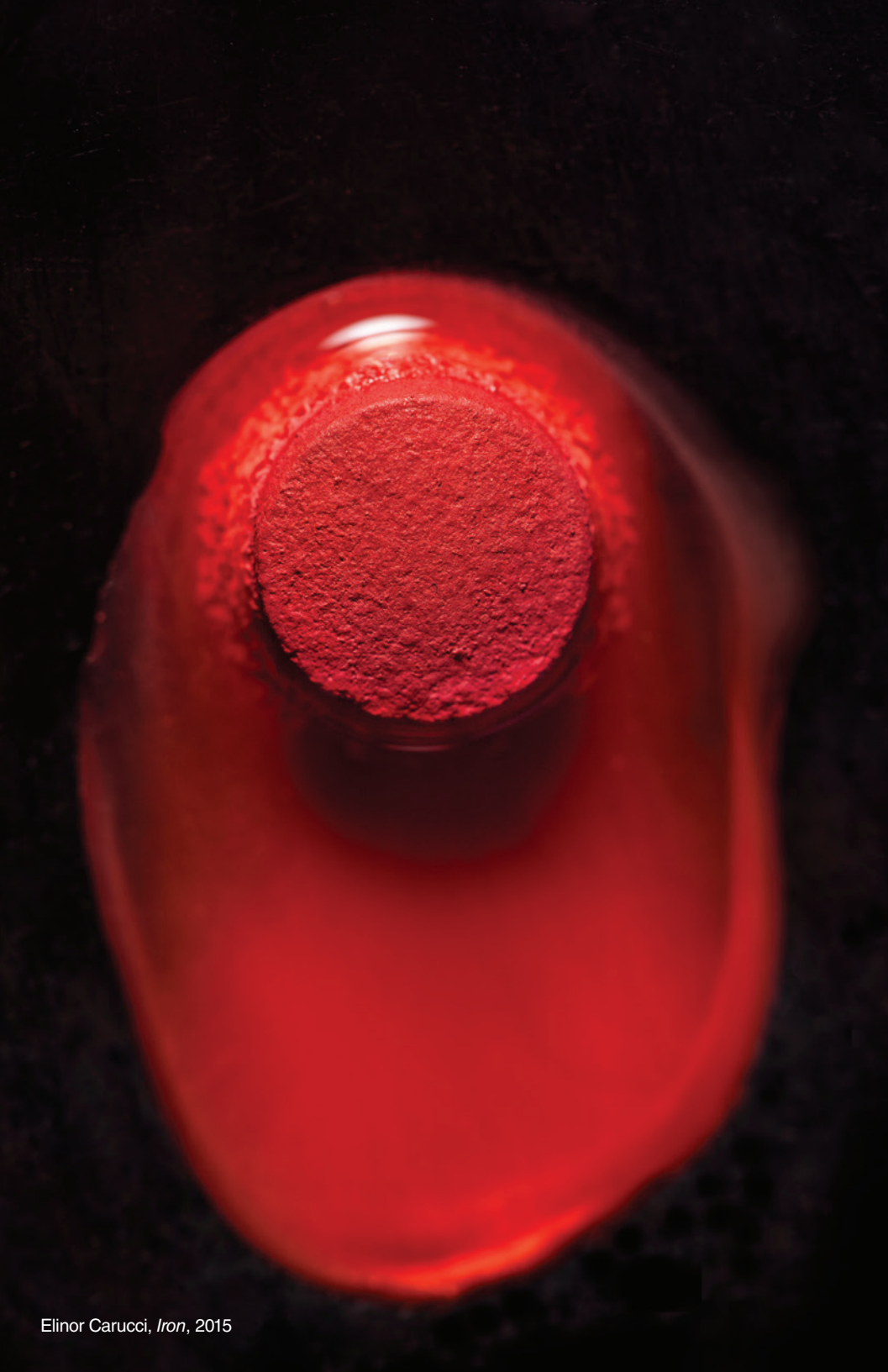
Elinor Carucci
Eran and I, 2013



Hanna Altman
Ladybug Dybbuk, 2021



Hanna Altman
Plagues, 2024



Elinor Carucci, *Iron*, 2015



Elinor Carucci, *Snow and gray roots*, 2015

Midlife, my seven-year-long series, deals with the middle of the life period, a unique, challenging, and emotionally intense time, a time rich with emotions and transitions, and the wisdom and complexity that comes with age.

About 25% of American women are middle-aged, yet our culture and media often ignore this large age group visually, medically, and even in the workforce. In this series, I aim to address the global aspects of middle age, drawing from the deepest and most intimate places in me, a middle-aged woman myself. The themes of this work are human, but focus on intergenerational women, the connection and separation, the support, decades of relationships, women's bodies, physicality and health, our many rules, ones that shift as we age, and on how we love, grow, and pain.

Elinor Carucci

Elinor Carucci is a fine art photographer whose work has been exhibited worldwide in both solo and group exhibitions. Her images have been featured in major international publications and are held in the permanent collections of institutions such as The Museum of Modern Art, The Jewish Museum, and the Brooklyn Museum. Carucci has received numerous prestigious awards, including the ICP Infinity Award (2001), a Guggenheim Fellowship (2002), and a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship (2010). She has published five monographs: *Closer*, *Diary of a Dancer*, *MOTHER*, *MIDLIFE*, and most recently, *The Collars of RBG: A Portrait of Justice* (with Sara Ginsburg). She teaches in the graduate program of Photography at the School of Visual Arts and at Hunter College Art Department and is represented by Edwynn Houk Gallery.



Elinor Carucci, *Kiss trace*, 2015



Elinor Carucci, *Lipstick and facial hair*, 2014



Elinor Carucci, *Halfway*, 2019



Hanna Altman, *Telling You*, 2021

Drawing from a breadth of Yiddish literature and Jewish texts, *We Will Return to You* considers how storytelling is translated and transformed through photographs by evoking the enigmatic, ritualistic, and multi-layered world of folklore.

From mouth to ear to pen to performance, Jewish myths evolve across the diaspora, braiding themselves into both past and future, echoing their origins and never entirely replicating. These photographs mirror this mode of continuity. The images tell tales of looming tension, cyclical repetition, unsettled environments, and open-ended truths that are punctuated by ritual and iconography. With a distinct focus on sun-soaked gestures, objects, and anxieties, the photographs sprawl across the referential and the fictitious to form a visual language that stretches and shifts across lands, generations, and the stories that give it meaning.

Hannah Altman

Hannah Altman is a Jewish-American artist from New Jersey, now based in Boston, Massachusetts. She holds an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University. Her photographs portray lineage, folklore, memory, and narrative. Altman's work has been exhibited at Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, Silver Eye Center for Photography, and Technical Collections Dresden Museum, among others. Publications where her work has appeared include *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, and *Vanity Fair*. Altman was the 2022 Portraits Hellerau Photography Award First Prize Winner, a 2023 Innovate Grant Recipient, and a 2023 Aperture Portfolio Prize Finalist. She became the inaugural Blanksteen Artist in Residence at the Slifka Center for Jewish Life at Yale in 2022. Altman's first photobook *Kavana* (2020, Kris Graves Projects) is in collections including the libraries at the Museum of Modern Art and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Her monograph *We Will Return to You* (2025) is published by Saint Lucy Books.



Hanna Altman, *Embody*, 2023



Hanna Altman
Daf (Page), 2022



Hanna Altman
Interruption, 2021

Barbara Astman belongs to a visionary group of artists who have continued to radicalize visual culture since the early 1970s by defining new ways of seeing. Over four decades, she has explored a wide range of photo-based media and produced work which has received national and international recognition. She is represented in important public, corporate, and private collections including the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Deutsche Bank, New York; and, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. As a Professor Emerita at OCAD University, Toronto, she has been instrumental in inspiring generations of emerging artists. Active in the Toronto arts community, Astman has served on numerous boards and advisory committees. In 2024, Astman was awarded the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts. Astman is represented by Corkin Gallery, Toronto and Paul Kyle Gallery, Vancouver.

I want to thank Matthew Jocelyn, General Director, for approaching me to take on this exhibition. I feel like this was a joint curatorial collaboration with the artists and the Koffler team including managing the marketing and communications from Laura Chapnick-Klein, Director of External Relations, support with texts and video from Josh Heuman, Head of Artistic Engagement, and a seamless installation from Meredith Kenny, Gallery and Productions Coordinator.

Barbara Astman

Exhibition Credits

Artists, Elinor Carucci and Hannah Altman

Curator, Barbara Astman

Installation Technicians, Brett Despotovich and Nina Ankisetty

Koffler Arts

General Director, Matthew Jocelyn

Director of External Relations, Laura Chapnick-Klein

Senior Manager of Marketing and Communications, Melissa Than

Head of Artistic Engagement, Josh Heuman

Gallery and Production Coordinator, Meredith Kenny

Office Manager, Maria Segura

Communications and Outreach Coordinator, Talie Shalmon



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