

## [Virtual Keynotes for Conference "A Jewish Europe? Virtual and Real-Life Spaces in the 21st Century"](#)

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Type:

Event

Date:

May 3, 2022 to May 5, 2022

Location:

Sweden

Subject Fields:

Digital Humanities, Cultural History / Studies, Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies, Jewish History / Studies, Modern European History / Studies

The conference *A Jewish Europe? Virtual and Real-Life Spaces in the 21st Century* will take place at University of Gothenburg, Sweden, next week. Amidst the current revival of academic, cultural and civil interest in the notion of "Jewish Europe", it aims to explore the development, role, influence and shape of virtual spaces in different forms related to contemporary European Jewry. How are digital practices related to real-life practices and spaces performed and inhabited by Europe's Jewry? What do virtual spaces reveal about Jewish engagement with the geographical location and the idea of Europe? And, ultimately, what do virtual spaces tell us about the existence and future of a "Jewish Europe"? What do they say about transcending the borders of "Jewish Europe" and fostering membership in a global Jewish presence?

While the conference is on-site, we hereby invite you to virtually attend the two keynotes given by Ruth Ellen Gruber and Diana Pinto.

### **Ruth Ellen Gruber: *Life after Life: Shifting Virtualities (and Realities) 20 Years after Virtually Jewish***

May 3, 2022. 9.30-10.45 (CEST/GMT+2)

My book came out in a world in which our relationship to cyberspace was quite different than it is today. Back then, there was no Facebook. No Twitter. No YouTube. No Instagram. No TikTok. And no COVID pandemic that kept us at home and forced us to live more of our lives - including our Jewishness - online. All of this has caused a change in our thinking, and in our ways of acting and interacting. But what is real? What is "virtual"? And where does authenticity fit in? Questions and experiences like these have led me to explore the notions of "new authenticities" and "real imaginary" spaces, where borders (and identities) blur. In many ways, the description of my concept of "virtually Jewish" provided more than a decade ago by the Polish writer and Jewish activist Konstancy Gebert and sociologist Helena Datnerring more true than ever: "a place where Jewish culture is no longer Jewish property, but rather an open field in which anybody can use the props and [use them] as they see fit."

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*Ruth Ellen Gruber is a journalist, author, editor and researcher, who has published and lectured widely and won awards for her work on Jewish heritage and contemporary Jewish issues in Europe, as well as her work on the European fascination - and embrace - of the American Wild West, its mythology and its music. She has chronicled European Jewish issues for more than 30 years - she coined the term "Virtually Jewish" to describe the way the so-called "Jewish space" in Europe is filled by non-Jews - and is Coordinator of the website [www.jewish-heritage-europe.eu](http://www.jewish-heritage-europe.eu), an online resource for Jewish heritage issues that is a project of the Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe. She had a Guggenheim Fellowship to work on the project "Sauerkraut Cowboys, Indian Dreams: Imaginary Wild West in Contemporary Europe." Among her other awards is Poland's Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit, one of the highest awards that Poland grants to foreign citizens. And she was the Arnold Distinguished Visiting Chair in Jewish Studies at the College of Charleston, SC, for Spring Semester 2015.*

### **Diana Pinto: Jewish Spaces in a Topsy Turvy Europe**

May 5, 2022. 11.00-12.15 (CEST/GMT+2)

What is the role of Jewish Spaces in today's convoluted Europe? Can a concept created in the optimistic early 1990's to define the place where Jews and non-Jews interacted around Jewish themes in a pluralist democratic context, still remain valid thirty years later, particularly in the wake of Russia's invasion of the Ukraine? At a time when multiple Jewish pasts (above all the Holocaust), a heterogeneous Jewish present and increasingly divided Jewish communities are both actors and victims in highly polarized societies? Can such Spaces defuse the exceedingly emotional and confused language which has overtaken political discourse not just in Europe but throughout the Western world, including in America and Israel? If so how should they be recast?

*Diana Pinto is an intellectual historian and writer based in Paris. She is Italian, French and American and was educated at Harvard University (B.A. and Ph.D.). In the 1990's she was the Editor in Chief of *Belvédère*, a french pan-European review and subsequently a Consultant to the Political Directorate of the Council of Europe for its civil society programs in Eastern Europe and Russia. In her 1996 article "A new Jewish identity for post-1989 Europe", Policy Paper (1996), she launched the idea of "Jewish spaces" as the spaces where Jews and non-Jews could reflect on the themes of Jewish history, memory, life, literature, music etc. in newly defined contexts where Jewish imprints remained central. Such spaces were meant to mark a new pluralist presence in a reunited Europe. She subsequently directed the Ford Foundation's Voices for the Res Publica program as a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, London. She has lectured and written widely on European and Jewish topics and is the author of *Israel has Moved* (2013).*

**To attend, please email [maja.hultman@gu.se](mailto:maja.hultman@gu.se) before May 1, 2022.** An email with the zoom webinar links will be posted to you the day before the conference begins.

The conference is organised by Dr Maja Hultman (Centre for European Research at University of

Gothenburg) and Professor Joachim Schlör (The Parkes Institute for the Study of Jewish/Non-Jewish Relations at University of Southampton), and generously supported by The Wenner-Gren Foundations, Riksbankens jubileumsfond, The Parkes Institute for the Study of Jewish/Non-Jewish Relations, a donation made in memory of Jack and Gretel Habel, refugees from Nazi Germany, and The European Association for Jewish Studies.

Contact Info:

Dr Maja Hultman, University of Gothenburg

Contact Email:

[maja.hultman@gu.se](mailto:maja.hultman@gu.se)