

SELECTED DOCUMENTARY PROJECTS

Guest Register, A formative body of work made in 1975 consists of 48 photographs with minimalist texts documenting residents of the rooms in the St. Francis Hotel in Hollywood, California. Facsimile edition, 14x11 inches, casebound, printed tritone, published by Crazy Woman Creek Press, © 2022.

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Penny Wolin from Cheyenne, Wyoming flies into Hollywood on the Wings of Inspiration & Intuition and lands at the St. Francis Hotel. There, in three short weeks as a tenant, Penny creates a body of photographs and text comparable to those of the great Documentary Photographers of the 20th Century, only to be hidden in the photographer's archive for nearly 50 Years — until now.

— Norman Mauskopf, Photographer

Descendants of Light: American Photographers of Jewish Ancestry is a photographic documentary of 70 American photographers of Jewish ancestry. Includes Wolin's original portraits and interviews with each photographer, a selection of each photographers' heirloom family photographs and a sample of the iconic work of each photographer. With these multilayered visual and verbal materials, Wolin gives voice and vision to the photographers' views on photographic medium and its intersection with modern American culture. Casebound, 250pp, 245 photographs with accompanying text, published by Crazy Woman Creek Press, ©2015.

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The entries, arranged alphabetically, offer an intriguing range of opinions, styles, eras, and insights, together with large, beautifully reproduced photographs. Reading photographers on their own work delivers the book's most intriguing moments. A rich, well-documented collection for students of photography and Jewish culture.

— Kirkus Starred Review

The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora

Photographic documentary of 140 years and 5 generations of Jewish life in the Cowboy state. Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, exhibited solo by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Museum of American Jewish History. Case bound, 198pp, 100 duo-tone photographs with text, published by Crazy Woman Creek Press, ©2000.

...

Wolin has created a universal homage to the challenges a minority must make in order to maintain its religious and ethnic identity. This is definitely a unique and important contribution to our understanding of Jewish life in the United States. Highly recommended for collections concentrating in Judaica and the minority experience in America. — Library Journal

Jackalopes, Cowboys and Coalmines, A photographic documentary and National Endowment for the Arts funded exposé of the implications of energy development on the culture of the American Cowboy. Includes excerpted interviews with black and white and color photographs. Held in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Institution. Full color print restoration completed in 2020 in preparation for an online and in-person exhibition. © 1980.

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An examination of the national effort to capture the essence of American society at the Bicentennial. Her survey was not an indictment of the changes in Wyoming. It was, instead, a project that sought to document "America's last frontier...small town societies, and the western spirit."

—Through the Lens of the City: NEA Photography Surveys of the 1970s by Mark Rice.

SELECTED GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

- One Anonymous Donor
Publication funding, *Guest Register*
- Two Anonymous Donors
Completion funding for *Descendants of Light: American Photographers of Jewish Ancestry*
- Kickstarter Campaign
Production funding for *Descendants of Light: American Photographers of Jewish Ancestry*
- National Endowment for the Humanities
Publication grant for *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*
- National Endowment for the Humanities
Book publication grant to document the history and culture of Jews in Wyoming
- Wyoming Council for the Humanities
Research grant to document the history and culture of Jews in Wyoming
- American Film Institute
Directing fellowship to the CAFTS program, Los Angeles, CA
- David Geffen Foundation
Production grant for *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*
- Lucius N. Littauer Foundation
Book publication grant for *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*
- Thickman Family Foundation
Book publication grant for *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*
- Thickman Family Foundation
Research grant for *Descendants of Light: American Photographers of Jewish Ancestry*
- National Endowment for the Arts
Survey grant awarded to document the changing culture of the cowboy

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- Leica Gallery, New York, NY; *Guest Register*; Solo
- Smithsonian Institution National Museum of American History, Washington, DC
The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora; Solo
- National Museum of American Jewish History, Philadelphia, PA; *The Jews of Wyoming*; Solo
- Wyoming State Museum, Cheyenne, WY; *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*; Solo
- Wyoming State Museum, Cheyenne, WY; *Jackalopes, Cowboys and Coalmines*; Solo
- Sonoma Museum of Art, Santa Rosa, CA; *Aftermath: The Tubbs Fire*; Group
- Calabi Gallery, Santa Rosa, CA; *Aftermath: The Tubbs Fire*; Solo
- Calabi Gallery, Santa Rosa, CA; *Descendants of Light: American Photographers of Jewish Ancestry*; Solo
- Museum of American Jewish History, Philadelphia, PA; *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*; Solo
- Judah L. Magnes Museum, Berkeley, CA; *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*; Solo
- Hebrew Union Skirball Museum, Los Angeles, CA; *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*; Solo

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS, continued

- Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis, IN; *Jackalopes, Cowboys and Coalmines*; Group
- New York Public Library, New York, NY; *Recollection: Thirty Years of Photography*; Group
- Osher Marin Isaacs Gallery, San Rafael, CA; *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*; Solo
- Nicolaysen Art Museum, Casper, WY; *Jackalopes, Cowboys and Coalmines*; Solo
- Ucross Foundation, Ucross, Wyoming; *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*; Solo
- ArtCenter College of Design, Pasadena, CA; *Guest Register*; Solo
- José Drudis-Biada Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; *Selected Portraits*; Group
- Barnsdall Municipal Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; *Guest Register*; Group
- Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles, CA; *Selected Portraits*; Group

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- Smithsonian American Art Museum
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art
- Shirley Carter Burden Collection at the New York Public Library
- Shirley Carter Burden Collection at Harvard University
- Munger Collection
- Santa Barbara Art Museum
- The Layton Collection at the Milwaukee Art Museum
- Wyoming State Museum
- David Geffen Foundation
- Progressive Insurance

SELECTED LECTURES

- Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*
- Limmud, Nottingham, England; *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*
- Yiddish Book Center, Amherst, Massachusetts; Soundcloud; *The Jewish Nature of Photography*
- George Eastman Museum, Rochester, NY; *Descendants of Light: American Photographers of Jewish Ancestry*
- 92nd Street Y, New York, NY; *Descendants of Light: American Photographers of Jewish Ancestry*
- Sonoma Valley Film Festival; Program Director; *Films by or About Women; Art, Passion & Politics*
- The Braid, Santa Monica, CA; *Descendants of Light: America Photographers of Jewish Ancestry*
- National Museum of American Jewish History; Philadelphia, PA; *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*
- Toyota Endowed Lecture Series, ArtCenter College of Design; Pasadena, CA;
The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora
- Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA; *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*
- Society for Photographic Education, San Jose, CA; *Visual Literacy in The Cell Phone Age*

SELECTED LECTURES, Continued

- Osher-Marin Jewish Community Center, San Rafael, CA; *Photography of Arnold Newman*
- Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, WY; *Descendants of Light: American Photographers of Jewish Ancestry*
- Jackson Art Center, Jackson Hole, WY; *Photography of Arnold Newman*
- Ucross Foundation, Ucross, WY; *Jackalopes Cowboys and Coalmines*
- Advertising Photographers of America, *It's All Personal*

SELECTED COMMERCIAL PROJECTS

- LIFE magazine; *American Dreamer* column with Anne Fadiman
- LIFE magazine; *American Dreamer* portrait of Ursula K. LeGuin
- LIFE magazine; *American Dreamer* portrait of *Monk in Nebraska*
- Wet Magazine: Gourmet Bathing and Beyond; Cover, Terri Garr
- Wet Magazine: Gourmet Bathing and Beyond; *Different Notions of Cleanliness*
- Wet Magazine: Gourmet Bathing and Beyond; *Process of Aging*
- Playboy magazine; Twenty Questions;
Second City Television; Charlton Heston; Bubba Smith; John Matuszak; Ron Howard
- Discover magazine; John Schwartz, Theorized TOE: *The Theory of Everything*
- Condé Nast Traveler; *As Others See Us*; International travel to Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore and Hawaii
- Rolling Stone magazine; The Band, James Caan, Melissa Manchester, Chaka Kahn, Michael Mann
- Esquire magazine; Jon Jerde
- Forbes magazine; David Geffen, Joe Roth, Eric Schmidt
- Graphis magazine; cover of Michael Schwab; interior of Jamie Odgers
- Travel & Leisure magazine; Monthly portraiture.
- Vogue magazine; Monthly portraiture
- Vanity Fair; Monthly portraiture
- KCRW National Public Radio; Theatrical trailer to highlight radio personalities
- Walt Disney Corporation; Shareholder Annual Report
- Charles Schulz Museum; On-site art installations
- Wolfgang Puck Food Company; Restaurant interiors for Barbara Lazaroff, designer
- Peter Michael Winery; Fifteen foot panoramic murals installed in Lausanne, Switzerland and Sonoma County
- Cedars Sinai Medical Center, *Discoveries Magazine*
- Sonoma Valley Film Festival; Program Director; *Art, Passion and Politics; Films by or about Women*

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SELECTED MEDIA RECOGNITION

- NPR, *Morning Edition With Bob Edwards*; Howard Berkes
- NPR, *All Things Considered*, Ailsa Chang; *Guest Register*
- KCRW, *Press Play*, Madeline Brand; *Guest Register*
- New York Times Book Review, Matthew Specktor; *Guest Register*
- The Guardian, Claire Armistead; *Guest Register*
- Los Angeles Times, Deborah Vankin; *Guest Register*
- Spectrum One News, *Guest Register*
- Harper's Magazine; *The Jews of Wyoming*
- Washington Post, Sarah Booth Conroy; *The Jews of Wyoming*
- Wall Street Journal, William Meyers; *Descendants of Light*
- Kirkus Reviews; *Descendants of Light*
- The Forward; *Even Cowboys Get The Jews*, Andrea Dukakis
- San Francisco Chronicle, Mick LaSalle; Sonoma Valley Film Festival
- Los Angeles Times, *Lost and Found in America*; *The Jews of Wyoming*, Gregory Rodriguez
- San Francisco Chronicle; *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*, Jon Carrol
- Library Journal; *The Jews of Wyoming*, Olga Wise
- Hasselblad Magazine, Portfolio using the Hasselblad Camera
- Outside Magazine; *Jackalopes, Cowboys and Coalmine*

SELECTED TEACHING POSITIONS

- ArtCenter College of Design, Graduate and Undergraduate
- UCLA Extension
- Sonoma State University
- California Institute of the Arts
- Academy of Art University
- University of Idaho
- Meaningful Works Consultancy

EDUCATION

- American Film Institute, Los Angeles, CA, Center For Advanced Film and Television Studies; 1992
- University of California, Los Angeles, CA, Masters research; cultural anthropology; 1984
- Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA, BFA; photography; 1976
- University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY; 1972
- The Windsor Mountain School, Lenox, MA; 1970

- **Rocky Mountain Magazine**, “Penny Wolin has been recognized as one of the extraordinary talents of the region. In an exhibition of her photographs, Wolin’s compelling vision of the impact of Wyoming’s sudden growth is expressed in a show entitled, ‘Energy Development and the Culture of the Cowboy.’” — Staff Writer, October, 1980

- **American Photographer Magazine**, *Getting a Grip on Hollywood*: “She is...a methodical, quiet professional who uses large negatives, poses her subjects carefully and concentrates on details... Unlike so many top photographers, Wolin is good at paying attention to other people and at submerging her ego to that of her subject.” — David Roberts, October 1985

- **Los Angeles Times**, *Alone in the Desert*: “An unlikely people in an unlikely place, the Jews of Wyoming did not become “the cowboy *mensch*es” entertainer Mickey Katz sang about in his Yiddish rendition of *I’m an Old Cowhand*. Their co-existence alongside such an incongruous culture, however, did make them an unusual microcosm of the Jewish experience in the United States.” — Elizabeth Venant, December 13, 1990

- **The Washington Post**, *Kosher Cowboys: The Jews of Wyoming*; At National Museum of American History: “Going through the exhibition takes time as the viewer tries to understand the text and the photographs, both works of art. The words and pictures are so poignant and sometimes so surprising that they are worth the study. Wolin is a fine photographer and a first-class interviewer and her choices of people on whom to focus are inspired.” — Sarah Booth Conroy, August 26, 1992

- **Library Journal**, “Wolin has created a universal homage to the challenges a minority must make in order to maintain its religious and ethnic identity. *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora* is definitely a unique and important contribution to our understanding of Jewish Life in the United State. Highly recommended for collections concentrating in Judaica and the minority experience. — Staff Reviewer, June, 2000

- **San Francisco Chronicle**, *A Menorah Moose and Other Tales*: “She had a wonderful way with black and white portrait work, and a loving approach to her subjects...in my mail arrived a splendid book called, *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora*. — Jon Carroll, September 1, 2000

- **Los Angeles Times**, *Lost and Found in America*: The Jews of Wyoming by Penny Diane Wolin tells the more complex story of adaptation and evolution. Wolin, a documentary photographer who has made a living for the last two decades photographing celebrities, spent 15 years putting together this triumphant epic of the 150-year history of Jews in the Cowboy State. ...Indeed, the book’s wide range of images and personalities is what gives it its dynamism. Wolin has not sought to define what it means to be Jewish in the least populated state of the union. Instead, she seems to revel in the multiplicity of definitions among believers and nonbelievers; those who identify strongly as Jews and those who do not. Her subjects are posed in the settings or with the props that make them unique as individuals. A young member of the Future Farmers of America holds a pig by its hind legs before an open field. ‘I don’t eat them,’ he says. ‘But I give someone else a good product.’” — Gregory Rodriguez, November 26, 2000

• **Getty Museum Curator Emeritus**, “Wolin’s desire to interview Jewish photographers with a view to ascertaining if their faith played a part in their art is an interesting line of inquiry. It will surely contribute new insight to the history of photography.”

— Weston Naef, Curator Emeritus and Founding Curator,
The J. Paul Getty Museum Department of Photographs, October, 2005

• **Through the Lens of the City: NEA Photography Surveys of the 1970s** “Wyoming was not inundated with the mass American culture. There wasn’t a McDonalds in every town nor a Holiday Inn. I could see that was changing and felt compelled to document people and their sense of the changes. Although Wolin didn’t particularly like the influx of corporate services chains, her 1978 survey was not an indictment of the changes in Wyoming. It was, instead, a project that sought to document “America’s last frontier...small town societies, and the western spirit.” A press release from the Wyoming Council on the Arts noted that Wolin’s central concern was “the final and inevitable assimilation of the Old West into the American culture.” Wolin’s survey was less an overtly political act than a nod to a passing way of life.”

— Mark Rice, University of Mississippi Press, Page 52, January 2005

• **The Jewish Week**, *The Camera and the Jewish I: A Photographer’s Search for the Mysteries of American Photography* by Penny Wolin: “Photographer Penny Wolin raises a key question as to why so many Jews are drawn to the field of photography; her piece previews her work-in-progress of crossing the country, interviewing photographers. We caught up with her as she was traveling in her van through the Southwest.”

— Sandee Brawarsky, June 26, 2009

• **Huffington Post**, *A Picture of Persistence, How a Photography Collection Was Born*. In honor of NYPL’s new exhibition, *Recollection: Thirty Years of Photography at the New York Public Library*, Wolin’s work is included, as part of a collection of photography gifted to the library by the estate of Shirley Carter Burden.

— Julia Van Haften, October 1, 2010

• **Kirkus Starred Reviews**, *Descendants of Light: American Photographers of Jewish Ancestry* by Penny Wolin: “The entries, arranged alphabetically, offer an intriguing range of opinions, styles, eras, and insights, together with large, beautifully reproduced photographs. A rich, well-documented collection for students of photography and Jewish culture.”

— Staff Reviewer, December, 2015

J Weekly, “Penny Wolin has been around the block. And across the country. Up and down the coasts. Several times. And each time, she has captured the essence of American photographers of Jewish descent. Each time she has sought answers to why so many Jews or those with Jewish heritage have flocked to the arts, to photography in particular. And then excelled.”

— Shoshana Hebshi, December, 2015

• **Jewish Scholar**, “Penny Wolin has made a major contribution to our understanding of American Jewish culture in her insightful and often surprising work with Jewish photographers. Even when they deny that their Jewish identities have anything to do with photography, Wolin has drawn out connections that shed light upon the full spectrum of Jewish civilization.”

— David Biale, Emanuel Ringelblum Distinguished Professor of Jewish History,
University of California, Davis, February, 2016

- **LIFE Photographer**, “*Descendants of Light* is a careful, elegant, illustrated examination of the preponderance of Jews in the top echelons of professional photography in the 20th century.”
— John Loengard, photographer and former picture editor, *LIFE Magazine*, February, 2016

- **The Los Angeles Times**, “*Guest Register* is at once deeply rooted in a moment in time and universal, both Hollywood nostalgia and — with its subjects’ bushy mustaches, smoldering cigarettes and wide, polyester shirt labels — a snapshot of a decade. It’s about chasing dreams and the freedom to embrace one’s true identity. And it’s a testament to the enduring lure of Los Angeles for those seeking reinvention.”
— Deborah Vankin, September 18, 2022

- **The Guardian**, “I consider this to be my magnum opus. We have our greatest intelligence in our early 20s. I think we spend the rest of our life trying to get back to that age of enlightenment. The hotel taught me many things that I have carried forward to this day. It gave me the confidence and the will to continue being this crazy thing called a photographer.”
— Claire Armistead, September 21, 2022

- **National Public Radio**, *Guest Register* “It became the mantra that no matter how bad things can be in the journey of finding your path ... if this is as bad as it gets, it's not so bad,” Wolin says. “If there was room here for me, at the existential hotel, well, then I have a place to be in the world and people will look after me.”
— Ailsa Chang, NPR, September 18, 2022

- **Brooklyn Rail**, Wolin’s portraits convey the pleasure her subjects seemed to derive from the fact that she knocked on their doors, took the time to hear their stories and let the camera acknowledge their particularity. Diane Arbus once famously remarked that for many people a photograph is a reasonable kind of attention to be paid. In *Guest Register*, Penny Wolin lovingly paid that attention, and it was reciprocated.
— Lyle Rexer, December 23, 2022

- **LensCulture.com**, Take a trip back to Hollywood Boulevard in 1975 and check in at the St. Francis Hotel. Penny Wolin did just that. A wide-eyed artist from Cheyenne, Wyoming, she lived for three weeks among the other dreamers of fame and fortune in this pay-by-the-week residential hotel. Her simple and straightforward approach examines each resident, room by room. In the manner of Bill Owens and Jim Goldberg, she allows the personality and details of each subject to come out in a caption nestled under each picture. The book has a strong presence with its pebbled fabric cover, tipped in leather title, and pages from the hotel’s original ledger, front and back. Some of the most profoundly empathetic and honest portraits I’ve seen.
— Michael Foley, Foley Gallery, November, 2022

- **New York Times Book Review**, “Penny Wolin’s *Guest Register* takes as its subject the residents of the St. Francis Hotel on Hollywood Boulevard: What makes “*Guest Register*” so remarkable is not just its gentle spirit, nor even its democratic reach, but rather the expansiveness that grows out of these things together. Captioned in a way that is at once playful and exacting, and coupled with a brief essay that collapses the space between what Wolin calls “existential Hollywood” and the actual place, these portraits show the opposite of what you might expect: a world in which dreams may be diminished but their originators, these noble occupants of the St. Francis Hotel, are radiant, beautiful, timelessly alive.”
— Matthew Specktor, December 4, 2022