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Cover photo by J.T. Morand



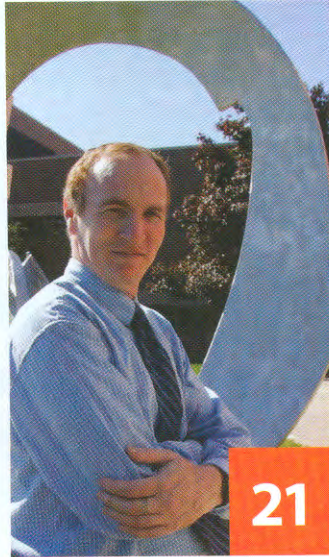
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Photo courtesy of Glenview Park District



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Intelligent Design

Glenview resident Nathan Harpaz, manager and curator of Oakton Community College's Kohenline Museum of Art, on his time as purveyor of what you see.

by J.T. Morand
Editor

What are your responsibilities as manager and curator at Kohenline Museum of Art?

As the manager and curator of the museum, I am in charge of planning a year in advance a schedule of exhibitions, developing and maintaining the permanent collection, and general operation of the museum. Most of the temporary exhibitions I am curating, including input into the concept of the exhibition, selecting the artists and the objects, and, finally, overseeing the design and the installation.

This is your 15th year as manager and curator. What brought you to the museum in 1998?

In 1998, Oakton, for the first time, was looking for a curator. I applied to the job and got it as my experience with the museum field and academia was my main focus of my previous career. Before my arrival, there was a small core of an art collection and very few exhibitions at the museum's space that was built on campus in 1994. The college was looking for a professional to put together a mission for the museum and to develop a systematic exhibitions plan and collection development.

And then in 2001 you also became a Professor of Art History at Oakton Community College. Why did you want to teach?

I dedicated my first three years at Oakton to designing foundations for the museum and to implementing programs. As with my previous career, I always believed in the combination of museum work and college teaching. I started to teach art history classes also for the purpose of engaging students with the museum. Later on, I developed a new course, "Introduction to Museum

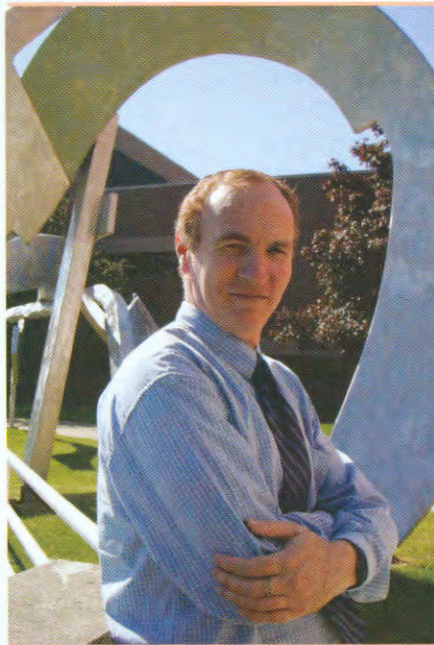


Photo courtesy of Nathan Harpaz

NATHAN HARPAZ

STARTED AS CURATOR AND
MANAGER IN 1998.
DEVELOPED MUSEUM
STUDIES COURSE AT OCC.
TOOK ON TEACHING ART
HISTORY IN 2001.
CURATOR OF ART MUSEUM
AT TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY.
STUDIED ART HISTORY AND
PSYCHOLOGY.

Studies," followed by an internship course. Oakton is the only community college in the country that offers museum studies.

You were also curator for the art museum at Tel Aviv. What's one major difference and one major similarity between that art museum and Kohenline?

The art museum that I was running in Tel Aviv was larger in size, whereas here

at Oakton the museum is a department in the context of the college. At the museum in Tel Aviv, I focused more on emerging artists, while here at Oakton, besides contemporary artists, we are also featuring historical types of art exhibitions and exhibits of art by faculty and students.

How much say do you have in what gets exhibited at Kohenline?

In compliance with college procedures, I am not selecting exhibitions just by myself, but through a committee — the museum's advisory board. The board consists of faculty members and administrators. I present to them exhibitions that I would like to produce and proposals that we receive from artists or institutions, and we make decisions together.

You studied art history and psychology at Tel Aviv University. Why psychology?

In undergraduate school at Tel Aviv University, I studied two majors: art history and psychology, two fields, that as a young student, were very attractive to me. When I had to make a decision before entering a graduate school, I preferred art history and I completed a master of arts degree and later a doctorate in this field. As the field of psychology deals with different types of human behavior, I found it, later, very useful in art history and the museum field. In art history, I found it helpful in areas like visual perception, symbolism, or Jung's theory on collective materials. In the field of museum studies, I apply it to the psychology of the museum's visitors or psychological effects on the design of an exhibition.