



Detail, "Ha Lamaot (The Whys)" © susan c desSEL

NYC-based artist susan c. desSEL is among the artists imagining a New Jewish tradition in *Tzedek Boxes: Justice Shall You Pursue* at the Heller Museum.

The Tzedek Box, a ritual object for gathering reminders of our efforts to improve the world, is the inspiration for 27 original works by contemporary artists from across America and around the world now on display at the Heller Museum.

Tzedek means justice; and working toward justice is a righteous duty in Judaism. Dessel titled her micrograph artwork "*Ha Lamaot (The Whys)*", for each Tzedek Box is a container used to hold written reflections on each effort one makes to help create a more just world, be it through volunteering, charitable work, education, or actions. Dessel's "*Ha Lamaot (The Whys)*" suggests the shared roles of heart and mind in meaningful decision-making.

Each box opens so that notes can be retrieved one month after Passover on Yom haTzedek which is celebrated on Pesach Sheini, a Biblical holiday allowing for second chances. The goal on that day is to review one's actions over the past year and dedicate oneself to do even more in the coming year. The idea of Yom HaTzedek and the Tzedek Box Project has been led by Andrew Mandel, a 5th year rabbinic student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and has quickly attracted a team of lay leaders, rabbis, and rabbinic and cantorial students to imagine how the holiday could be celebrated. For Mandel, Dessel's "*Ha Lamaot (The Whys)*" speaks to the importance of having an open heart and an open mind in the pursuit of justice.

The Tzedek Boxes Exhibit will be on display in the Heller Museum Backman Gallery through May 15, 2023. The museum is located at 1 West 4th Street, between Broadway and Mercer Street. (Proof of Covid vaccination is required.)

Open Monday to Thursday, 10am to 6pm; admission is free.  
Free guided tours are available on Tuesday at 11am or 1pm.

For information, contact Curator Nancy Mantell, [nmantell@huc.edu](mailto:nmantell@huc.edu) or phone 212-824-2218  
For tours contact Eleanor Berman, [eberman@huc.edu](mailto:eberman@huc.edu)