Exhibition Featuring the Workplace on Television Opens in July at the Jewish Museum

Television and Beyond: Workplace Encounters
July 12, 2019–March 20, 2020

New York, NY, June 17, 2019– The Jewish Museum will present Television and Beyond: Workplace Encounters from July 12, 2019 to March 20, 2020, featuring a selection of television clips exploring interactions in the workplace from classics such as The West Wing and contemporary programs like Atlanta and The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel. One of seven sections that make up the Jewish Museum’s third floor collection exhibition, Scenes from the Collection, “Television and Beyond” draws inspiration from the Museum’s National Jewish Archive of Broadcasting.

Workplace sitcoms and dramas have long been an important staple of television programming, creating situations where diverse people, including colleagues of different religions, races, and beliefs, can interact. These interactions can bring out discomfort such as when, for example, people are insensitive to others’ identities, or strive to be sensitive but are tone-deaf to the implications of their words, leading to situations where language becomes charged.

The clip reel on view in the exhibition includes such settings as Mad Men’s Sterling Cooper agency and The West Wing’s White House. On Mad Men, Don Draper and his colleagues struggle to secure an account from a Jewish-owned department store. In The West Wing, a friend and colleague of White House Communications Director Toby Ziegler gets Toby’s rabbi to incorporate the issue of capital punishment into a sermon, hoping to influence Toby to speak to the President about it.

The stereotype of the Jewish lawyer is addressed by Crazy Ex-Girlfriend, Atlanta, and Curb Your Enthusiasm, while Entourage and BoJack Horseman present comic takes on the Hollywood agent, the latter through an animated Jewish turtle. The very use of the word “Jew” in the workplace is the subject of clips from Schitt’s Creek and Black-ish, reflecting anxiety about acceptable ways of discussing religious identity. Clips from The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel explore Miriam “Midge” Maisel’s reluctance and eventual embracing of her identity as part of her stand-up comic persona in the hyper-masculine world of 1950s comedy clubs.

With more than 4,000 holdings, the National Jewish Archive of Broadcasting is the largest and most comprehensive body of broadcast materials on Jewish culture in the United States. Inspired by the archive, Scenes from the Collection includes selection of television clips which change twice a year and examine how Jews have been portrayed and portray themselves, and how mass media has addressed issues of religion, ethnicity, and diversity.

About Scenes from the Collection
The Jewish Museum’s ongoing collection exhibition, Scenes from the Collection, features nearly 600 works from antiquities to contemporary art. Art and Jewish objects are shown together, affirming universal values that are shared among people of all faiths and backgrounds. The exhibition
is a powerful expression of artistic and cultural creativity as well as a reflection of the continual evolution that is the essence of Jewish identity. The unique mix of art and ceremonial objects speaks of the many strands of Jewish tradition, culture, spirituality, and history. Scenes from the Collection is divided into seven different sections, or scenes, highlighting the diversity and depth of the collection. Various scenes change periodically so that different subjects can be examined while audiences are able to see as much of the Jewish Museum’s collection as possible, including new acquisitions.

About the Jewish Museum
Located on New York City’s famed Museum Mile, the Jewish Museum is a distinctive hub for art and Jewish culture for people of all backgrounds. Founded in 1904, the Museum was the first institution of its kind in the United States and is one of the oldest Jewish museums in the world. Devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary, the Museum offers diverse exhibitions and programs, and maintains a unique collection of nearly 30,000 works of art, ceremonial objects, and media reflecting the global Jewish experience over more than 4,000 years.

Location: 1109 Fifth Avenue at 92nd Street, New York City
Information: The public may call 212.423.3200 or visit TheJewishMuseum.org

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