



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
AMERICAN JEWISH
HISTORY
A Smithsonian Institution Affiliate

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**ARTIST PHILLIP RATNER'S SCULPTURES CAPTURING THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE
ARE NOW ON VIEW AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY**

**Acquisitions include ten *Ellis Island Immigrants* statues, cast with metal from the interior
of the Statue of Liberty, and an *Emma Lazarus* sculpture**



A selection of sculptures by Phillip Ratner on display at NMAJH.

PHILADELPHIA—The **National Museum of American Jewish History** (NMAJH) has recently acquired a series of sculptures by artist **Phillip Ratner** that bring to life the immigrant experience in America. Ten sculptures represent the millions of immigrants who passed through Ellis Island between 1892 and 1954. Approximately 24 inches tall, these works were created in

the early 1980s and cast with metal from the interior of the Statue of Liberty following its renovation. They are the original models for Ratner's larger sculptures that have been on display on the grounds of the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration since 1990. Additionally, NMAJH acquired Ratner's 2017 sculpture of Emma Lazarus, whose well-known sonnet "The New Colossus" is engraved on the Statue of Liberty's pedestal. The newly-acquired sculptures can be viewed on NMAJH's free-of-charge first floor and at the entrance to the third floor "Dreams of Freedom" gallery.

Ivy Barsky, NMAJH's CEO and Gwen Goodman Director, says, "We are incredibly appreciative that Phillip Ratner chose NMAJH as the home for these sculptures. Not only do these artworks capture the spirit of those who bravely journeyed to our shores at the turn of the century, but they will also resonate with more recent arrivals to this country."

"Telling the story of my grandparents coming to this country and making it their home—a story that connects many Americans—is a passion of mine," shares **Phillip Ratner**. "I am thrilled to see these works on view at NMAJH, especially at a time when our nation's stance on immigration is a constant news headline."

Ratner was inspired to create the *Ellis Island Immigrants* series, in part, by old photographs of his grandparents, all of whom emigrated from Ukraine to the United States. He intended to present the reality of the condition in which people arrived to Ellis Island in the thousands every day. The immigrant sculptures portray a range of people, from a working man to a huddled family of four to a young couple, for which Ratner's grandparents provided the model. Ratner intentionally softened the details of the immigrants' faces so that the individuals may represent a variety of backgrounds and nationalities.



Phillip Ratner and his 36-inch-tall statue of Emma Lazarus, donated to NMAJH by Barbara and Dennis Davison.

A graduate of the Pratt Institute and longtime teacher in the Washington, D.C. area, Ratner works in sculpture, painting, etched glass, tapestry, drawing, and the graphic arts. His work is included in numerous permanent collections, including the Smithsonian Institution, the United States Supreme Court, and the Library of Congress.

The *Ellis Island Immigrants* series has been generously donated by Phillip Ratner. *Emma Lazarus* is a gift of Barbara and Dennis Davison.

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About the National Museum of American Jewish History

The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the more than 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Museum hours are Wednesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm. Museum admission is \$15.00 for adults, \$13.00 for senior citizens and youth, free for children 12 and under, Museum Members, and active military with ID; reduced prices available if purchased online. Connect with the Museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Pinterest](#). For more information, visit NMAJH.org or call 215.923.3811.