

DATE: 10 March 2009 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In Her Voice: New Video and Photography Exhibition Responds to Traditional Views of Courtship, Wedding and Divorce

MONTREAL – Opening March 25, 2009. The **Emet Gallery** presents **Kol Ishah, In Her Voice**. This group exhibition features video and photographic works by three artists: **Melissa Shiff** (Toronto), **Devora Neumark** (Montreal) and **Lucy Levene** (UK). These artists reclaim and rewrite aspects surrounding Jewish marriage rituals, by questioning certain patriarchal traditions of courting, wedding and divorce. The works in this exhibition undo language that normally describes woman as property in various cultural and religious rituals in order for the female voice to actively participate within contemporary ceremony. The title of the exhibition attempts to turn the Hebrew phrase *Kol Ishah*, normally associated with how the voice of women is not to be heard amongst a congregation of men, into an investigation of how contemporary women are making their voices heard.

Melissa Shiff's video of her performance **Postmodern Jewish Wedding** documents the artist's actual wedding in 2003. Shiff deconstructed patriarchal aspects of the Jewish wedding ceremony and rebuilt it in order to celebrate the couple's heritage in a contemporary way. Devora Neumark's **Harei at muteret / Released** is a photographic installation that uses as its base the rewriting of the phrase said by a man to his wife in order to complete the Jewish divorce (Get): *Herein, now and with this you are permitted to any man*. For this work, Neumark has taken only the first section of this utterance: *Herein, now, and with this you are permitted*, in order to undo male ownership of the woman. Lucy Levene's photographic series **Marrying In (Please God by You)** is a portrait project in which she questions the pressure from her family to "marry someone Jewish." By photographing herself with eligible Jewish men in their living rooms, Levene playfully questions arranged courting rituals that are meant to fortify community identity by actively inserting herself into the process. Other photographs from Lucy Levene's series can also be seen at the Joyce Yahouda Gallery (Montreal) in May 2009.

Based at Congregation Dorshei Emet, **The Emet Gallery** engages the community with issues of spirituality, ethics and culture through the photography and multimedia art of accomplished local and international artists, and public programs open to the public. The **Kol Ishah, In Her Voice** exhibition is being presented in conjunction with the **Torat Imeinu** project: events surrounding the recent commissioning of a Torah by a female scribe for the Dorshei Emet Synagogue. This will be the first Torah written by a woman's hand in Canada.

DETAILS: Kol Ishah, In Her Voice, March 25 – September 7, 2009.

Vernissage: Wednesday, March 25, 2009; 5:00pm – 7:00pm

Artist and Curator talks: Tuesday May 5, 2009

Gallery Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays 1pm – 5pm; Tuesdays 1pm – 8 pm.

Additional Hours: During Shabbat or holiday services, public programs, or by appointment.

The Emet Gallery, Congregation Dorshei Emet
18 Cleve Road, Hampstead, Quebec H3X 1A6
(514) 486-9400, info@emetgallery.org
www.emetgallery.org

PRESS CONTACT: Leanore Lieblein (514) 489-5651

E-mail: leanore.lieblein@mcgill.ca

