

Mid Manhattan Library
presents

Between Carnival and Purim

Brazilian and Jewish Cultural Encounters

An Illustrated Lecture with Alex Minkin





Wednesday, March 1, 2017
6:00 PM in the Corner Room

MID-MANHATTAN LIBRARY

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One of the first dialogues between Brazilian and Jewish cultures took place at a so-called Yiddish Avenue. This neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro, where the majority of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe settled in the 1920s, was also referred to as Little Africa, with Jews and African Brazilians living side by side and attending samba performances on adjacent streets.

In celebration of the Brazilian national holiday of Carnival, and less than two weeks before Jewish festival of Purim, this multi-media presentation explores the history of cultural integration of Jewish community in Brazil.

Brazilian Judaica scholar Bernardo Sorj noted that despite the fundamental difference between Brazilian culture of “optimistic fatalism” and Jewish tradition of “pessimistic willfulness,” the immersion into Brazilian culture is highly therapeutic for the Jews, as it is an excellent antidote for their historical traumas.

While commercial relations and open mindedness of Brazilians led to increasing cultural connections, the process of integration of Jewish community coincided with the development of Carnival as Brazilian cultural icon. The evening will feature videos from Carnival shows with Jewish themes. The impact of these performances on the image of the Jews in Brazilian society and its lessons for the Jewish community will be discussed.

Religious context of Jewish-Brazilian interactions will be introduced. The evening will conclude with overview of works by Brazilian artists inspired by Klezmer music and Brazilian films with Jewish themes.

About the presenter:

Alex Minkin is an independent scholar and social activist, focusing his research on Brazilian culture. He is the founder of Ticún Brasil (www.ticunbrasil.com), an innovative social justice NGO that implements educational, social and art projects in Rio de Janeiro, as well as organizes Brazilian cultural events in New York since 2008. He has lectured at Brazilian Endowment for the Arts and published articles on Brazilian culture in *Jewish Currents* and *Sounds and Colours*. He is currently working on a book *Seven Waves of Umbanda* that traces the origins of this Brazilian religion.



Image Opposite page:-Carnival 2012 in Rio © Ewan Palmer:

All programs are FREE and subject to last-minute change or cancellation.