

LOCATED IN THE CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY 15 West 16th Street New York, NY 10011-6301 yivo.org • 212.246.6080

## Newsletter FALL 2019

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research is dedicated to the preservation and study of the history and culture of East European Jewry worldwide. For nearly a century, YIVO has pioneered new forms of Jewish scholarship, research, education, and cultural expression. Our public programs and exhibitions, as well as online and on-site courses, extend our global outreach and enable us to share our vast resources. The YIVO Archives contains more than 23 million original items and YIVO's Library has over 400,000 volumes—the single largest resource for such study in the world.



### LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

On July 6, 2019, I received an award from the president of Lithuania for YIVO's work in the preservation of the prewar Jewish archives of Lithuania through the Edward Blank YIVO Vilna Online Collections project. I was proud to accept this award because it acknowledged the excellent collaboration

between YIVO and our Lithuanian partners. Importantly, it recognizes the value of this work in helping to recover Lithuania's Jewish past that can provide a foundation for building the kind of multicultural, liberal, and democratic society that many in Lithuania wish for their country. Through this project and our numerous other projects and programs, YIVO is playing an increasingly visible role in the contemporary world of furthering the values of tolerance, openness, and liberal democracy. At a time when the forces of darkness are building around the world, this role is more important than ever. It is what political scientists call "soft power." It is the power of culture based on knowledge and historical truth. Preserving our traditions and our history preserves this power. Join YIVO as a member or donor and help us continue to be a force for good in the world.

Jourston Brent

Jonathan Brent Executive Director & CEO

### Contact

tel 212.246.6080 fax 212.292.1892 **yivo.org** 

General Inquiries

Archival Inquiries Archives@yivo.cjh.org Photo/Film Archives | photofilm@yivo.cjh.org Sound Archives | soundarchives@yivo.cjh.org

Library Inquiries LIBRARYINQUIRIES@YIVO.CJH.ORG

### **Travel Directions**

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research is located in the Center for Jewish History at 15 West 16th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, New York, NY 10011.

#### by subway



Hours [ closed on major federal and jewish holidays ]

Gallery Hours Sun 11:00am-5:00pm Mon+Wed 9:30am-8:00pm Tue+Thu 9:30am-5:00pm Fri 9:30am-3:00pm Sat cLOSED Administrative Hours Mon-Thu 9:00am-5:00pm Fri 9:00am-4:00pm

Library Hours Mon-Thu 9:30am-5:00pm

### **NEWS FROM YIVO**

### REFLECTIONS ON YIVO'S 2019 Ukrainian Jewish Literary Tour

YIVO's sold-out Saints and Sinners Literary Tour of Ukraine visited numerous sites of major Jewish figures throughout Ukraine, among them the good, the bad, and the ugly. Our intrepid scholar, Samuel Kassow, led the group of 23 travelers, providing a unique perspective on the lives and works of important Jewish writers in the very places they lived and worked.

Starting in Kiev at the Sholem Aleichem Museum, we saw artifacts and a presentation about the great Yiddish writer. We also visited the Vernadsky Library, home to one of the largest and most important collections of Judaica in the world. The library has hundreds of *pinkasim* (communal record books) and rare original recordings from Sh. An-ski's 1912 ethnographic expedition. Just outside Kiev, we stopped at Babi Yar, where approximately 33,000 Jews were murdered by the Nazis and their Ukrainian henchmen over two days in September 1941.

We visited the *shtetlekh* where Sholem Aleichem was born and raised considered the birthplace of his literary craft—and the tombs of Hasidic master, Rabbi Levi Yitzhak, the founder of the Hasidic movement, the Ba'al Shem Tov, and Reb Nakhman of Bratslav.

In Odessa, once home to the third largest Jewish community in Europe, we walked to the homes of writers Isaac Babel, Hayim Nahman Bialik, Vladimir Jabotinsky, Mendele Moykher Sforim, and Sholem Aleichem, among others. We discussed their lives and works and read from their writings. Sam Kassow read Isaac Babel's description of Benya Krik's wedding in an Odessa courtyard – in the very courtyard in which it took place.

Participants got a taste of the richness of Ukrainian Jewish culture—from the saints to the sinners—all where it took place, where the smells and the tastes of life are still the same. ①

### READ MORE AT: yivo.org/LiteraryTour2019

REFLECTIONS ON YIVO'S 2019 Lithuania & Poland Study Tour by ELINA BLOCH This June, travelers from the United States, Israel, and Australia joined YIVO's fourth annual Lithuania and Poland Study Tour. Noted historian Dr. Samuel Kassow took the participants on an unforgettable journey of historical and personal discovery. Being exposed to our recent past and seeing the places where the greatest tragedy in our history occurred was an unparalleled experience. Meeting the dynamic

young Jews rebuilding new communities and recognizing a past that we thought was obliterated was deeply moving. And hearing the voices of the Jewish Culture Festival, the largest Jewish festival in Europe, was a one-of-a kind cultural pleasure.

In Lithuania, tour participants visited the National Library and the Central State Archives—YIVO's partners in the landmark Edward Blank YIVO Vilna Online Collections project, an international preservation and digitization initiative to virtually reunite YIVO's prewar library and archival collections located in New York City and Vilnius. We also attended the unveiling ceremony of the YIVO Commemorative Plaque at 18 Vivulskio Street, the site where YIVO's original building stood from 1933 until its destruction in 1944. In Poland, we discovered the remarkable treasures of Warsaw and Krakow, walked through the magical Białowieża Forest, and visited historical sites at Łódź and Lublin.

As Beryl Benderly, one of the tour participants, remarked: "They say that travel broadens, but I think that the trip we just shared did something different. It deepened—deepened my understanding of my shtetl ancestors and my sense of connection to the world they lived in and how it shaped me and all Jews."



### SAVE THE DATE — NOVEMBER 20, 2019 YIVO's Gala Award Dinner HONORING:

**Roberta Grossman**, an award-winning filmmaker with a passion for history and social justice, has written, directed, and produced more than 45 hours of film and television. Her films tell stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things in the name of justice. Grossman wrote, produced, and directed *Who Will Write Our History*.

**Dr. Samuel Kassow**, the Charles H. Northam Professor of History at Trinity College, is recognized as one of the world's leading scholars on the Holocaust and the Jews of Poland. He is widely known for his 2007 book, *Who Will Write Our History? Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive,* and has won numerous awards.

### WITH MASTER OF CEREMONIES:

Producer **Nancy Spielberg** grew up immersed in filmmaking and is an accomplished businesswoman and philanthropist. She is executive producer of *Who Will Write Our History*, which tells the story of the secret buried archive of the Warsaw Ghetto.

For more information, please contact Elina Bloch: ebloch@yivo.cjh.org • 917.606.8287

### New Board Member: Jon Richmond



Jon Richmond is the Trustee of The Shine Trust, a philanthropic organization based in Los Angeles, California dedicated to supporting numerous American and Israeli organizations. When not focused on philanthropic matters, Jon manages investments for the principals of Wexford Capital based in Palm Beach, Florida and Greenwich, Connecticut. An attorney by training, Jon spent many years as a senior executive at The Walt Disney Company, Twentieth Century Fox, and Newscorp. Jon also practiced investment banking

as a Managing Director at Houlihan Lokey in Los Angeles. Jon received his B.A. in Economics and English from the University of California at Berkeley and his J.D. from UCLA School of Law. He resides in Los Angeles, California.

### YIVO's Jonathan Brent Receives Lithuanian State Award

On July 6, 2019, the Cross of the Knight of the Order for Merits to Lithuania was conferred upon YIVO Executive Director and CEO Jonathan Brent by H.E. Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania. The award was given to Mr. Brent in recognition of his work in pro-

moting cooperation between Lithuania and YIVO and for the preservation of the prewar Jewish archives of Lithuania.

The award followed an unveiling ceremony on June 20, 2019 of a plaque at the site where the original YIVO building once stood, at 18 Vivulskio Street, Vilnius, Lithuania (then: Vilna, Poland). The YIVO building was at the center of the Jewish scholarly world from 1933 until its destruction in 1944, after being ransacked by the Nazis. The plaque was installed to honor YIVO's contributions to both the Lithuanian and Jewish communities.

YIVO's 2019 Ukrainian Jewish Literary Tour participants were given a tour of the Odessa Catacombs, where anti-Nazi partisans hid during World War II.

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Participants of YIVO's 2019 Lithuania & Poland Study Tour pose in front of the Lithuanian Central State Archives in Vilnius.

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H.E. Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of the Republic of Lithuania, and Jonathan Brent, YIVO's Executive Director and CEO, at the Order for Merits to Lithuania Conferment.



### YIVO Chief of Staff Attends Smithsonian Affiliates Conference in DC

In June, Shelly Freeman, YIVO's Chief of Staff, attended the Smithsonian Affiliates National Conference in Washington, DC. As well as mixing with Smithsonian affiliates and learning about the latest developments in museums and institutions across the country, Shelly met with several representatives from the National Museum of American History – one of the top

three Smithsonian museums in DC.

As a result of those meetings, YIVO will embark on several exciting collaborations with the Museum including: participating in the Museum's *Entertaining America* 2021 exhibit and its monthly *Cooking up History* program. This will involve a live cooking demonstration by guest chef Joan Nathan of a recipe from YIVO's *Vilna Vegetarian Cookbook*. YIVO will also be a regular contributor to the Smithsonian *Folklife* magazine and there will be a YIVO concert inspired by the life's work of Ruth Rubin hosted by the Museum at a date still to be confirmed.

### Horowitz Foundation Internship – 5 Years of Success

This summer marks the successful 5th year of YIVO's highly competitive internship program established by the Horowitz Family Foundation and aimed at training future Judaica librarians and archivists. Since 2015, YIVO has hosted interns from Germany, Austria, Poland, and the U.S. Internship alumni now work for the

British Library, our own YIVO Institute, or are building careers as Jewish educators and scholars. In 2019, the Award was divided between three talented and enthusiastic recipients: Elana Weber (St. John's University), Joshua Johnson (Washington State University), and Yoav Varadi (Columbia University and Jewish Theological Seminary).

### All of YIVO's Finding Aids are Now Accessible Online

550 finding aids, every finding aid created for YIVO's collections, are now available to view in PDF form online. Visitors to the YIVO Archives can use these finding aids to search collections in advance, identify items of interest, and better understand what a collection contains. These PDFs will aid research being done in the

YIVO Archives. The Archives receives 1,100 visitors and 5,000 inquiries annually. Many acclaimed books on Jewish history and culture draw on research in our collections. Explore the collections and their finding aids at: **search.cjh.org** 

English Translations of Yizkor Books to Be Available Online Via YIVO Library Catalog The YIVO Library has received a generous donation from JewishGen.org in the form of translations into English of 70 Yizkor books (memorial volumes commemorating destroyed Jewish communities in Europe). These translations, which will be available in both print and electronic format, complement YIVO's rich collection of Yizkor books. Electronic translations will be searchable online via the YIVO Library catalog, thus enhancing and improving library patrons' experience. Hard cover versions of

these books and others can be ordered through the JewishGen Yizkor Books In Print website: jewishgen.org/Yizkor/ybip.html

Explore Jewish history and culture and access our unique collection of archival materials from the comfort of home with YIVO'S SHINE ONLINE EDUCATIONAL SERIES.

Learn more about our course offerings: yivo.org/Shine

Recipients of this summer's Horowitz Foundation Internship.

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From the left: Elana Weber, Joshua Johnson, Prof. Rosemary Horowitz (founder of the Award), and Yoav Varadi.



The 2019 Summer Program cohort is our largest in more than a decade, with 75 students ages 16-76 from countries around the world, including Argentina, Canada, England, Germany, Japan, Israel, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Switzerland, and Ukraine. New additions to this year's Summer Program include: a Yiddish refresher course taught by Dovid Braun, a Workshop on Teaching Yiddish taught by Miriam Trinh and Eliezer Niborski, a course on Jewish Food in the Yiddish Press

taught by Eve Jochnowitz, and a Yiddish Civilization Lecture Series featuring ten lectures from leading scholars in the field on topics ranging from theater and Yiddish literature to Yiddish linguistics, the history of YIVO, and Yiddish anarchist poetry. Students also went to see *Fidler afn dakh* (*Fiddler on the Roof*) and visited CYCO, the last surviving Yiddish bookstore in New York City. The program continues to train the next generation of Yiddish scholars, teachers, and students, fostering the continuation of Yiddish language and culture.

### **Fall Classes**

Register for fall classes at **yivo.org/Classes**.

### The World of Isaac Bashevis Singer

Instructor: Sheva Zucker

#### 6 SESSIONS | THURSDAYS | 6:00PM-8:00PM STARTS THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2019

Explore the world of Isaac Bashevis Singer, one of the greatest Jewish writers of all time and the only Yiddish writer to win a Nobel Prize.

### Beginner Yiddish • Instructor: Paula Teitelbaum

**10 SESSIONS | MONDAYS | 6:00PM-8:00PM** STARTS MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2019

For students who are new to the Yiddish language, or need a review. Learn the alphabet, elementary grammar, holidays, stories, and songs.

### Intermediate Yiddish • Instructor: Leyzer Burko

**10 SESSIONS | THURSDAYS | 6:00PM-8:00PM** STARTS THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

Students who are comfortable with the *alef-beys* and basic conversation will enhance their skills in speaking, reading, writing, and listening.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### Yiddish Anarchism: New Scholarship on a Forgotten Tradition

(JANUARY 20) Despite the importance of Yiddish anarchism to the histories of both the U.S. Left and the Jewish community, it has been largely forgotten and written out of historical scholarship. This conference, the first of its kind, highlighted emerging scholarship on the world of Yiddish-speaking anarchists. It brought together an interdisciplinary group of scholars whose research examines the origin, evolution, and contributions of Jewish anarchism in New York and beyond. Hundreds of people attended this conference, which was written about in the *Times of Israel, JTA*, and *Jewish Currents*.

### and all the days were purple

(APRIL 9) YIVO celebrated the launch of and all the days were purple, a "ravishing" (*The New Yorker*) new album by YIVO's Director of Public Programs, composer Alex Weiser. The album features songs that set Yiddish and English poems to music and search for the divine while reflecting on the longing, beauty, and tumult of life. These new songs emerge in part from Weiser's encounters with Jewish music and Yiddish literary culture while at YIVO. And all the days were purple ranked on both the Classical Albums Billboard Chart and the Classical Crossover Albums Billboard Chart.

### Carnegie Hall's Migrations Festival Comes to YIVO: The Musical Legacy of Eastern European Jews

(APRIL 10) Participating in Carnegie Hall's Migrations Festival, YIVO hosted an event to explore Carnegie Hall's musical program *From Shtetl to Stage*. Mark Slobin, acclaimed scholar of East European and American Jewish music, discussed a range of Yiddish theater songs, novelty numbers, concert music, and songs of social movements. Chana Pollack, archivist of *The Forward*, looked at how Jewish immigrants were offered a platform for entry into the American dream. Daniel Kahn, Eleanor Reissa, and Lorin Sklamberg spoke about the music they would perform in *From Shtetl to Stage*, and on the continued influence of Jewish music in today's musical culture. YIVO's participation in these programs was written about in *The New York Times, Forbes Magazine*, and Tablet Magazine.

### Memory of the Past and the Battle for a Promising Future

(MAY 6) Catholic priest Father Patrick Desbois, founder and president of Yahad-In Unum, came to YIVO to speak about the organization's work identifying mass Jewish killing sites and collecting forensic evidence of the executions. Father Desbois discussed Yahad-In Unum's efforts to uncover genocidal practices around the world, gather testimony from Yazidi survivors of the ISIS crimes perpetrated in Iraq and Syria, and facilitate their difficult return to society by providing psychological and humanitarian aid.

### **RECENT ACCESSIONS**

### **YIVO Receives the Archive** of Nachman Blumental

YIVO has received the archive of noted historian, scholar, and Holocaust survivor Nachman Blumental. His archive includes materials he collected while in Poland and documents about his work in Nazi war crime trials. His archive also contains original Nazi documents, materials he gathered while investigating the murders of his wife and son by Polish officers who collaborated with the Nazis, and songs and poetry from the ghettos, including many original documents from the Łódź Ghetto.

(From top): Nachman Blumental, 1949; Post office stamp and coin from the Łódź Ghetto, collected by Nachman Blumental. YIVO Archives.

### **Unique Donation Made** to the YIVO Library

In May 2019, the YIVO Library received a generous donation from Dr. Daniel Halevy consisting of items from the library of his grandfather, Rabbi Meyer Abraham Halevy. These items include many 18th-20th century rare Romanian Jewish books and

pamphlets not previously held by the YIVO Library, as well as other Jewish books in Hebrew, German, French, and Ladino. Among the items donated is a unique kabbalistic manuscript of Ets Haim by Hayvim Vital, redacted by Meir Poppers, from the late 17th to mid-18th century. The first printed edition of this magnificent opus was published only in 1782.

Pages from the manuscript of Ets Haim by Havvim Vital. YIVO Library.



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### **EXHIBITIONS**

## Rise of the Yiddish chines

The Typewriter and Yiddish Literature

### **On view at YIVO** through 2019

Featuring vintage typewriters, rare literary manuscripts, and more from the YIVO Collections

### YIVO IN THE MEDIA

#### **Public Programs:**

▶ The Jewish Week • Up To Their 'Oyern' In Yiddish Work (JULY 16, 2019)

Forbes • Carnegie Hall To Celebrate Yiddish Music And Culture At Migrations Festival Concert Monday Night (APRIL 15, 2019)

► The Forward • From Alex Weiser, A New Musical Home For Yiddish (MARCH 27, 2019)

#### YIVO's History and Archives:

Smithsonian Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage Magazine • Yiddish Wedding Hop: The Archives of Song Collector Ruth Rubin (JULY 10, 2019)

▶ The New York Times • The Holocaust Survivor Who Deciphered Nazi Doublespeak (JUNE 24, 2019)

► The Algemeiner • In Downtown New York City, YIVO's Archive Uncovers a Lost Jewish World (FEBRUARY 28, 2019)

► JTA • A YIVO conference finds a new audience for Yiddish anarchism (JANUARY 22, 2019)

► Jewish Renaissance • London's Yiddish Theatre (JANUARY 2019)

### **Exhibitions:**

- The Wall Street Journal Typing in Yiddish (MAY 9, 2019)
- ► Tablet Magazine The Immigration Debate—in Cartoons (FEBRUARY 27, 2019)

# FALL SEASON PROGRAMS

FOR TICKETS & MORE INFORMATION: yivo.org/Events | 917.606.8290



UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL PROGRAMS TAKE PLACE AT YIVO, 15 WEST 16TH STREET, NYC, LOCATED IN THE CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY.

#### TUESDAY **SEP 03** 7:00pm LECTURE

### The Greatest Yiddish Writer You've **Never Heard Of: Yankev Dinezon**

This image-filled presentation commemorates the 100th anniversary of author Jacob Dinezon's passing, with Emmy Awardwinning filmmaker, author, and publisher Scott Hilton Davis, translator Tina Lunson, and Yiddishist and teacher Sheva Zucker.

THURSDAY **SEP 05** 7:00pm PANEL

In partnership with the Consulate General of the Republic of Lithuania in New York and the Lithuanian Culture Institute

MONDAY **SEP 16** 7:00pm PANEL

### The Challenges of Multiculturalism in Contemporary Lithuania

Under the auspices of Litvak Days NYC, this celebration of Lithuanian Jewish heritage will feature a presentation by Professor Tomas Venclova entitled, "Lithuanians and Jews: What's Changed and What Hasn't Over the Last Forty Years?" Professor Venclova will then be joined by Jonathan Brent, Professor Saulius Sužiedelis, and Rabbi Andrew Baker to discuss the challenges of rebuilding a multicultural society in Lithuania in the Post-Soviet era.

**Bundism's Influence Today** Today we are witnessing a revival of the ideas of the Jewish Labor Bund, an organization that was a powerful force in Russian and Polish Jewish communities during the first half of the 20th century. This panel is made up of Molly Crabapple, Irena Klepfisz, Jenny Romaine, and Jacob Plitman—activists and cultural workers ranging in age from their 20s to their 80s—and moderated by Jack Jacobs. The panel will discuss what they see in Bundist ideas, and how it affects their current political and cultural practices.

SUNDAY **SEP 22** 1:00pm ANNUAL NUSAKH VILNE MEMORIAL PROGRAM

### **Nusakh Vilne Memorial**

Join us for our annual event commemorating the Jewish community of Vilna through poetry, music, and presentation, including readings and performances by Rivka Augenfeld, Michael Fox, Ellen Perecman, Ruth Baran-Gerold, and Mikhl Baran. Chaired by Elliot Palevsky, the program will include a presentation on the forthcoming YIVO Bruce and Francesca Cernia Slovin Online Museum by the museum's Chief Curator, Karolina Ziulkoski.

MONDAY **OCT 28** 7:00pm FILM SCREENING

### Who Will Write Our History

This film recounts the incredible story of Emanuel Ringelblum, who secretly led a team of writers and intellectuals to document Jewish life in the Warsaw Ghetto in order to bear witness to the Nazis' attempt to wipe out the Jewish people and all traces of their culture and history. 96 minutes. In English, Yiddish, and Polish with English subtitles.

WEDNESDAY **NOV 06** 7:00pm

BOOK TALK

### Antisemitism and the **Russian Revolution**

Join YIVO for a presentation on Brendan McGeever's new book, Antisemitism and the Russian Revolution. The evening will include an introduction by Jack Jacobs, and be capped off with a panel discussion with McGeever, Jacobs, Andrew Sloin, Polly Zavadivker, and YIVO's Jonathan Brent.

THURSDAY **DEC 05** FRIDAY **DEC 06** SATURDAY **DEC 07** SUNDAY **DEC 08** OPERA See website for times

Presented by the 14th St Y. co-sponsored by the YIVO Institute

### State of the Jews

Location ► 14TH STREET Y, 344 EAST 14TH STREET, NYC

The opera State of the Jews follows Theodor Herzl in the last year of his life, as his efforts to secure a Jewish homeland become increasingly desperate. It includes scenes from the Sixth Zionist congress, in which Herzl proposes Uganda as a possible land for Jewish settlement, and Herzl's visit with Pope Pius X, in which he seeks the Pope's support for a Jewish State. Interwoven with this public historical narrative is the more intimate story of Theodor's conflicted relationship with his wife, Julie Herzl, and the toll his political views and activities took on their family life. The opera is written by YIVO's Director of Public Programs Alex Weiser (music) and Director of Education Ben Kaplan (libretto).

### YIVO UK

SEE YIVOINSTITUTE.UK FOR FULL DETAILS.

THURSDAY **SEP 19** 7:30pm LECTURE

Presented by JW3,

co-sponsored by YIVO UK

MONDAY

TUESDAY

**SEP 23** 

**SEP 24** 

WEDNESDAY **SEP 25** 

PERFORMANCE AND Q&A

See website

for times and full details

Presented by

Solihull School,

co-sponsored

by YIVO UK

### The Book Smugglers

Location ► JW3, 341-351 FINCHLEY ROAD, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

This event features a presentation by David Fishman, who will discuss the incredible story of the Paper Brigade, as well as how the work to rescue Jewish culture and heritage from oblivion continues to this very day at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

### Eva Schloss at Solihull School

Location ► SOLIHULL SCHOOL, 793 WARWICK ROAD, SOLIHULL, UNITED KINGDOM

Solihull School and YIVO UK will host three events about the extraordinary family history of Holocaust survivor Eva Schloss, stepsister of Anne Frank. The programs include a performance of And Then They Came for Me, a critically acclaimed play about Eva's remarkable life story, as well as an opportunity to view The Promise, an exhibition about the artistic talents her brother Heinz cultivated while hiding from the Nazis for two years.

Unable to attend our programs? Watch past YIVO events at yivo.org/Video.