



The Fritz Ascher Society  
for Persecuted, Ostracized, and Banned Art  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**“Send in the Clowns,” October 19 - 30, 2020**

<https://fritzaschersociety.org/send-in-the-clowns/>

**#sendintheclowns #digifas #fritzascher**

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“Send in the Clowns” is an interactive 2-week digital engagement project sponsored by Allianz Partners which explores the clown as a figure between tragedy and comedy, between self-identification and stage—a character designed to (literally) mask the performer’s true feelings behind a facade of happiness. “Send in the Clowns” uses the prominence of the “clown” figure in Fritz Ascher’s work as a lens through which to explore the duality of the clown both historically and today. Using social media platforms as well as Zoom, “Send in the Clowns” includes two virtual roundtables—one entitled “The Clown on Stage,” featuring a commedia dell’arte scholar, an art history and theology scholar, and the founder of a clown school in Minnesota; the other “The Hospital Clown: Between Joy and Sadness,” featuring the founder of Red Noses Clowndoctors International and two clowns currently working in the pediatrics wards at American hospitals—as well as further posts exploring Ascher’s interest in the subject, and Twitter and Instagram takeovers by a current clown and a theater scholar.

## Clowns Take Over FAS Social Media

Throughout the two weeks, we will feature commentary on Ascher's work by current clowns via FAS' social media channels.

### Week #1 Highlight Events, October 19 - 23, 2020: *The Clown on Stage*

October 21, 2020, 12-1 PM ET

#### Zoom Roundtable, "The Clown on Stage"

How do we define "the clown," historically, in art, and today, in practice? What is the appeal of the clown in performance, and how has the clown subject impacted popular culture? This roundtable pools the expertise from a diversity of fields to place Fritz Ascher's interest in "the clown" in the context of historical and contemporary performance and imagery. Roundtable moderated by Elizabeth Berkowitz, PhD.

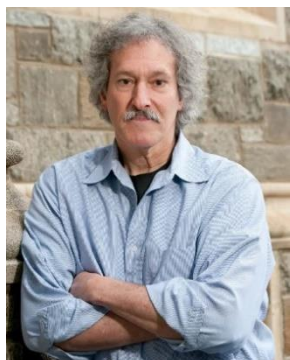
Registration Link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_UBDY-ubeRY6fyBLWZztFA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UBDY-ubeRY6fyBLWZztFA)

#### *Featured Speakers:*



**Matthew R. Wilson**

Matthew R. Wilson is a director (SDC), actor (AEA, SAG-AFTRA), and fight director (SAFD, SDC), as well as a scholar and playwright. He teaches at The George Washington University's Corcoran School of the Arts & Design and serves as Director of Graduate Studies for its Academy for Classical Acting in partnership with The Shakespeare Theatre Company. Dr. Wilson previously served as the International Coordinator of SAT's worldwide Commedia dell'Arte Day and as Chair of Movement & Physical Theatre for the Southeastern Theatre Conference. He has studied, taught, and performed Commedia across Europe and North America including six years teaching at Antonio Fava's *Stage Internazionale di Commedia dell'Arte* in Reggio-Emilia, Italy. Wilson earned a Helen Hayes Award as founder and former Artistic Director of DC's Faction of Fools Theatre and has toured the world with *The Great One-Man Commedia Epic* since 2004. Selected publications include chapters in *The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell'Arte* (Routledge 2015), the play *A Commedia Christmas Carol* (Playscripts 2013), and the forthcoming book *Commedia dell'Arte in History and Performance* from Routledge Press. Visit [www.matthewwilson.com](http://www.matthewwilson.com) for more information.



**Ori Z. Soltes**

Ori Z. Soltes teaches at Georgetown University across a range of disciplines. He is former Director the B'nai B'rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum. In that capacity he has curated over 80 exhibitions domestically and internationally. Soltes has authored or edited 24 books and scores of articles and exhibition catalogue essays including *Our Sacred Signs: How Jewish, Christian and Muslim Art Draw from the Same Source*; *Mysticism in Judaism*; *Tradition and Transformation: Three Millennia of Jewish art and Architecture*; and *Magic and Religion in the Greco-Roman World: The Beginnings of Judaism and Christianity*.



**Tricia Manuel / "Pricilla Mooseburger"**

Tricia Manuel is the unmistakable Pricilla Mooseburger! She got her start clowning with Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey in 1982. She is the owner of Pricilla Mooseburger Originals supplying high quality clown costumes and make-up for over 25 years. She is the founder of Mooseburger Clown Arts Camp and received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement award from the Midwest Clown Assoc. and Clowns of America International. She was honored with the Lifetime of Laughter award from the International Clown Hall of Fame for her contribution to clown arts education and 24 years of Mooseburger Clown Arts Camp. She launched a new virtual program The Joyful Journey bring together clowns from all over the world! Her e-newsletter Mooseburger Newz is followed by thousands providing free clown arts education.

**October 22, 2020, 12-1 PM ET**

**Twitter Takeover, Matthew R. Wilson, PhD, "Commedia dell'Arte and the Clown in Popular Culture"**

Actor and theater historian Matthew Wilson takes over the FAS Twitter account to discuss the history of the Commedia dell'Arte, key themes in the genre, and how the Commedia dell'Arte has impacted popular culture. *Submit your questions in advance by writing to [info@fritzaschersociety.org](mailto:info@fritzaschersociety.org)*

**Week #2 Highlight Events, October 26-30, 2020: *What Clowns Do***

**October 28, 2020, 12-1 PM ET**

**Zoom Roundtable, "The Hospital Clown: Between Joy and Sadness"**

One of the more appealing aspects of the clown subject to artists like Ascher was the divide between a public persona committed to joy and happiness, and the pain or sadness that might lurk beneath the real, human surface. Hospital or healthcare clowns straddle this divide every day of their professional lives—working to bring happiness to child patients who are often in circumstances that might otherwise inspire grief or pain. This roundtable features three professional hospital or healthcare clowns, including the founder and Artistic Director of Red Noses Clowndoctors International, who will reflect upon their experiences in the field, their most popular programming, as well as coping mechanisms they use to ensure that their audience receives only positivity from their encounter. Roundtable moderated by Elizabeth Berkowitz, PhD.

**Registration Link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_p6UJLVUQcS-N0RgcC3b8g](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_p6UJLVUQcS-N0RgcC3b8g)**

## ***Featured Speakers:***



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### **Giora Seeliger, Artistic Director and Founder of Red Noses Clowndoctors International**

Giora Seeliger is a renowned clowning expert, actor and director. He founded RED NOSES in 1994 in Austria/Europe and built up 11 RED NOSES organizations in Europe and the Middle East as well as many artistic programs as “Emergency Smile,” where clowns work worldwide with people affected by crisis. As he is responsible for the high artistic quality within the group, he developed a rigorous curriculum that every clown has to go through.



### **Harry Page / “Flash” the Clown**

Harry retired from Chrysler Corporation in 2001 and shortly thereafter moved with his wife to Knoxville, Tennessee. In the development where they lived there was a group of people who organized the Volunteer Clowns of Tellico Village, and Harry soon joined. The clown trope visited assisted living, nursing homes, and the area hospitals, and Harry soon focused solely on hospital clowning at Fort Loudon Hospital and the University of Tennessee Medical Center. In 2016, Harry and his wife moved to Marco Island, FL, where he has been clowning at Naples Community Hospital and the Golisano Children’s Hospital.



### **Ed Stephan / “Dumbbell” the Clown**

Ed is currently clowning at Golisano Children’s Hospital in Ft. Myers, Florida. As “Dumbbell,” Ed entertains children, staff, and visitors. Ed’s work at Golisano Children’s Hospital includes participating in special events held at the Hospital and the offsite offices.

**October 29, 2020, 12-1 PM ET**

**Twitterview, Giora Seeliger, Artistic Director and Founder of Red Noses Clowndoctors International, “Ask A Healthcare Clown!”**,

Giora Seeliger, Artistic Director and Founder of Red Noses Clowndoctors International, takes over the FAS Twitter account to answer your burning questions about clowning, the role of a healthcare clown, and anything else that comes to mind! *Submit your questions in advance to [info@fritzaschersociety.org](mailto:info@fritzaschersociety.org)*