

## University of Haifa

The Senate of the University of Haifa, by virtue of the authority vested in it by the constitution of the University and in accordance with the recommendations of the President and the Executive Committee

hereby confers upon

**Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett**

the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy, Honoris Causa**

In recognition of her scholarship, originality and broad vision; for proving that a breakthrough requires breaching existing barriers and the amalgamation of diverse disciplines – a concept that stands at the heart of the University of Haifa's own commitment to academic excellence; for her outstanding contribution to the fostering of fruitful dialogue between the humanities and social sciences in the field of Jewish studies, and for being one of the pioneers in the field of interdisciplinary research into performance art; and for her leadership and dedication in establishing the permanent exhibit at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw which, thanks to her efforts, preserve the rich history of Polish Jewry.

Conferred on 12 Sivan 5777/June 6, 2017  
Haifa, Israel



**Mooly Eden**

Chairman of the Executive Committee



**Prof. Ron Robin**

President



**Prof. Gustavo Mesch**

Rector



## PROFESSOR BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett was born in Canada in 1942 and lived in Israel in the early 1960s. During her time in Israel, she studied at Ulpan, worked on Kibbutz Revivim, taught crafts to boys with special needs and conducted research on textile art in Jerusalem.

In 1967, she completed her master's degree in English literature at the University of California and in 1972 completed her doctoral studies at Indiana University.

Prof. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett taught at a number of leading universities in the U.S. – the University of Texas at Austin, Columbia University, and the University of Pennsylvania. In 1981, she joined the founding faculty behind the first ever academic department for Performance Studies, created at New York University.

Prof. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's research explored the immigration stories of Jews in Toronto, and contributed considerably to an understanding of how personal stories, which take shape in social interaction, reflect and create identities. Later in her research, Prof. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett initiated groundbreaking interdisciplinary research linking folklore, anthropology, cultural studies, museum studies and performance studies. Of the generations of students she has taught, many have become leading researchers in their fields and hold academic posts around the world.

Prof. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has authored numerous publications including *Image Before My Eyes: A Photographic History of Jewish Life in Poland, 1864-1936* (with Lucjan Dobroszycki), the book she co-authored with her father, *They Call Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland before the Holocaust*, which won a number of prestigious awards; and *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums and Heritage*, a core textbook in the fields of museology and tourism studies. The former two books accompanied exhibitions she curated at leading Jewish museums in the United States and Europe, as well as documentary films in whose production she participated.

In 2006, Prof. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett accepted an invitation to head the team that designed and established the core exhibition at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw where she is Chief Curator. She led an international team of historians and scholars in other disciplines who specialize in the history and culture of Polish Jews, and top exhibition designers in a project that would become the flagship of museums in the Jewish world. The museum, which opened its doors in 2013, is a gem of a museum, attracting millions of visitors and received the 2016 European Museum of the Year Award, the first time a museum in Poland received this award. The museum also hosts a rich program of educational, cultural, and artistic activities for visitors in Poland and from abroad, while also attracting significant academic interest.