

A fresh view of remembering

By Victoria Donohoe
FOR THE INQUIRER

The display “Entering From the Inside: The Art of Memory” at Temple Judea Museum in Elkins Park explores the way we live with our environment in constant flux.

This evolving interactive exhibit chronicles the history and culture resulting from the merger 26 years ago of Temple Judea in East Oak Lane with the larger Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, using recorded interviews with members of both congregations and a variety of religious objects.

It does this by combining touchy-feely aspects with an awesome amount of subtle high-tech — including the sound of interviewees quietly reminiscing, as suggested by the old saying “If only those walls could speak.” Here they do.

This fresh approach to remembering adds an extra dimension to the display, since it takes into account past, present and future.

Guest curator Michele Brody carefully organized the show. Much was considered in her interpretive portrayal of the Temple Judea interior, most notably its architecture and the exceptional quality of the many ceremonial objects and other art that the temple had collected. Such works became the museum centerpiece at the merger, and many of them are on view.



Installation by Michele Brody at Temple Judea Museum at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Elkins Park.

The value of an exhibit like this is that it gets us thinking about human factors in the buildup of communities, their relocation, merger, name change without harm to identity, and capacity to thrive — expressed here as “greening,” with fast-growing rye grass that is watered through copper pipes.

Fascinating show.

Temple Judea Museum at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Old York & Township Line Rds., Elkins Park. To Nov. 14. Mon.-Thu. 9-5, Fri. 9-8. Free. 215-887-2027.