

*ish*  
4089 Langeland St.  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45223



To the *ish* community:

***The Rabbis say “Seven is the perfect number. More than that, it is Judaism’s most sacred number. Seven is completeness and wholesomeness.”***

Today marks the seventh anniversary of the first ever *ish* Festival in 2017. As we celebrate this milestone, we enthusiastically look forward to the future. Since its inception, *ish* has centered on people-focused design, uplifting artists, empowering change-makers, and creating inclusive, innovative spaces rooted in Jewish culture. Through our rich offerings of year round arts-based experiences, *ish* has fostered public connection, curiosity, and creativity. With programming including the biannual *ish* arts and cultural festival, the emerging artist fellowship, the Jewish Teen Initiative and the Mimouna celebration, *ish* delights in highlighting diverse voices, identities, traditions, and arts disciplines from across the globe.

As our organization evolves, we will continue to empower community members who address social needs through innovative and intentional work. We remain committed to our essential vision: to imagine a future world of courage, consciousness, and compassion, realized through the healing and transformative power of arts, creative experiences, and Jewish wisdom. By collaborating with creators, leaders, and problem solvers, *ish* strives to promote individual and communal well being.

In the new year, we plan to refocus our work to better support artists, visionaries, and change agents. Through embracing an advisory role, we will provide the guidance, framework, and resources necessary for outstanding creative voices to offer incredible experiences to the public. We hope to foster life-long relationships between artists and our community members, drawing on our distinct expertise in user-design thinking. We are excited to use the knowledge gained over our tenure in the Cincinnati Jewish space, and leverage the beautiful partnerships that we have built to collectively address social challenges. Through elevating the work of forward-thinking individuals, we will continue to invest in our communities. As we represent the artists, adventurers, and architects that we believe in, we will extend both material and intellectual support to their work grappling with complex and urgent issues.

With this shift in model, we are reshaping the scope of our work away from producing public events towards helping individuals take the lead in direct-to-public engagement. **At the close of this calendar year, *ish* will be sunsetting our public programming.**



We have an expansive view of the range of voices we hope to nurture in the next phases of *ish*. As we reimagine the future of *ish*, we are open to possibilities beyond our prior programming focus. Through intentional listening sessions, we welcome your perspectives on how we can best support our community through promoting the work of exceptional individuals. As we continue to encourage storytelling, dialogue, and action, we want to include you in the conversation about the next steps in *ish*'s journey. We treasure the opportunity to incorporate your input into our plans for the future.

In the upcoming months, we invite you to celebrate the past and present of *ish* while helping us to envision what's next. Please join us at the BLINK Parade, the evening of Thursday, October 17, to kick-off the spectacular light-based art phenomenon of [BLINK](#). Watch as thousands of community members march through the "Future City" adorned in illuminated costumes, carrying lighted props, puppets and luminous sculptures, and making music to inspire and entertain. Over the next few weeks, we encourage you to listen, download and share our [Teen Think Talk Podcast](#), created by six teens to foster engagement, understanding, and community connection through meaningful conversations and identity exploration. Finally, please stay tuned for upcoming announcements of opportunities to share your perspectives and celebrate this upcoming transition with us. We look forward to walking hand-in-hand with you as we enter this next stage of our organization, strengthening our communities through centering the individuals at the heart of them.

We are beyond grateful to have reached this milestone. We couldn't have done it without the incredible support from our ongoing funders - a big special thank you to the Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati, the Ohio Arts Council, Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, and ArtsWave. And thanks to YOU for fueling our work these past seven years!

-Your Friends at *ish*