



Ruben Shimonov

**National Director of Sephardi House and Education
American Sephardi Federation**

Born in Uzbekistan, Ruben is an educator, community builder, and artistic leader passionate about Jewish diversity and intercultural understanding. As a Bukharian Jew who belongs to the ancient Persian-speaking Jewish community of Central Asia, Ruben harnesses his own multilayered identity in his educational, creative and social entrepreneurial work. He is the National Director of Sephardi House and Education at the American Sephardi Federation. ASF's Sephardi House initiative works to enrich Jewish campus life and young leadership with the vibrancy, wisdom and diversity of the Greater Sephardic world. He is also the Founding Executive Director of the Sephardic Mizrahi Q Network, the sole international organization building a supportive and much-needed community for LGBTQ+ Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews. As a visual artist, Ruben uses his multilingual Hebrew, Arabic and Persian calligraphy to build Muslim-Jewish interfaith bridges and spark conversations about multiculturalism. His art has been featured in international publications and exhibits, including at the U.S. Embassy Residence in Uzbekistan.

Ruben has been listed among The Jewish Week's "36 Under 36" young leaders and changemakers. He is an alumnus of the COJECO Blueprint, Nahum Goldmann, Schusterman ROI and UJA Ruskay Institute fellowships for his work in Jewish social innovation and education. Ruben has lectured extensively on the histories and cultures of Sephardic and Mizrahi communities. Among his speaking engagements, Ruben has given talks at New York University, University of Southern California, Jewish Federations of North America and Hillel International, as well as conferences in Greece, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.