THE POWER OF RESILIENCE AND HOPE

PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE HOLOCAUST: THEN & NOW

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Welcome to a comprehensive two-part project featuring international, contemporary artists whose practice utilizes historical photo-based documents, archival resources, plus new imagery, materials, and processes to contemplate photography's fluctuating role in documenting, interpreting, and understanding the Holocaust (Shoah).

The project functions in the space between art and history as it explores the complex ways in which the past lives within the present. Accomplishments include an exhibit that spans seven gallery spaces, a catalog, an online symposium, a Holocaust timeline, public art, educational workshops, and community partnerships. These multiple activities investigate the concepts of photographic truth and the effects of transgenerational trauma in the creation of visual works that shape cultural narratives and confront hatred and racism.

Communally, the goal is to challenge preconceived narratives and provide a forum for difficult conversations that open minds, ease tensions, and explore our shared humanity.

Henryk Ross. *Seamstresses making mattress to display the value of Jewish industry within the ghetto*, 1941-1944. Courtesy of Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada.

Caption: Seamstresses making mattress covers to demonstrate the value of ghetto slave workshops to the Germans. This was the survival strategy of 'Work is the Way' that was initiated by Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski, the head of the Nazi's Judenrat/Jewish Council, in hopes of keeping the ghetto as a whole alive even though it meant sacrificing a succession of individual lives. The central figure is the 16 year old Lola Bauman, the future mother of Dr. Iris Dauziger of Buffalo, NY, visually connecting of the past to the future present.

The purpose of this CEPA Gallery project is to present photo-based and inspired artistic expressions regarding the transgenerational aftermath of the Holocaust (Shoah in Hebrew). The Holocaust was a result of a millennium of antisemitism, a term coined in nineteenth century Germany that specifically targeted hatred of Jews and identified Jews as a separate race.

The project has been designed to accomplish five major objectives, in two phases at multiple locations. First, a photographic timeline of 1933—1945 that memorializes the tragedies of their forebearers and showcases Jewish resistance photographers. Second, the work of these contemporary, photo-based artists communicates how memory, loss transgenerational trauma, and the exclusion of the other stretches beyond words and numbers. Third, essays that discuss the historic and contemporary photo-based imagery that bridges the gap from the past to today. Fourth, the project's educational activities help to inform people that the demonizing and scapegoating of the Jews never ends with the Jews. Fifth, a multi-part online symposium in which project participants and knowledgeable guests discuss their work and experiences.

The project artists and writers—all of whom were born after the Holocaust and not all Jewish—have assumed the mantle of responsibility regarding memory and remembrance of the Shoah as more Holocaust survivors pass on.

The Holocaust has been largely defined by images made by the perpetrators. Project participants seek to readdress this omission and misstated narrative that portrays the Jews as subhuman vermin who are responsible for all the world's woes and in need of extermination along with their fruitful culture.

Collectively, the project makers reconceive the Holocaust's aftermath through a pictorial process that transforms the visual grammar of the subject matter to reflect on the then and now. Their internally driven work confronts our imagination and historic knowledge regarding how the Holocaust is publicly understood. In a world of furies, these artists utilize the silent language of signs and symbols to take the Holocaust into the territory where words and numbers fail. Their visions serve as aides-mémoires against forgetfulness by shining light into darkness of the worst aspects of human nature, showing us how the past shapes the present.

Seeing is the primary way most people first experience the world. Yet, unlike photo-based works that act as windows on the world, these interpretations do the opposite and encourage viewers to look inside themselves. Combating antisemitism requires acknowledging its existence and standing in solitary against authoritarian belief systems that squash freedom and twist blame and grievance into murderous racism. Abysmally, world-wide rising antisemitism has made the exhibition exceptionally timely. As Deborah Lipstadt, US special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism, stated: "Never has a society tolerated overt expressions of antisemitism and remained a democratic society."

Optimistically, this project makes a case why critically examining history is necessary to acknowledge how hate and trauma can be transmitted from generation to generation. This is significant as we carry history within ourselves and it is present in everything we do. In turn, this opens the possibility of applying the Jewish concept of Tikkun Olam – repairing a broken but beautiful world – to encourage acceptance, inclusion, and cooperation with *Others* who are different from the majority.

See what you think.

ROBERT HIRSCH

Afterword: Project Evolution

This project's roots date back to my watching the 1961 Adolf Eichmann trial in Jerusalem on television with my mother's father whose family was murdered by Nazis and their willing accomplices. Over the years I have wrestled with the incomprehensible. Eventually, this lead to my installation *Ghosts: French Ghost Children* (2014). This was followed by a CEPA exhibition I guest curated: *Wild Things: Disrupting the Photographic Archive in the Time of a Pandemic* (2019), which included facsimiles of Henryk Ross's water damaged Łódź ghetto photographs. This lead to a lecture about Ross's work.

Next, this morphed in a series of essays for the *VASA Journal on Images and Culture*, which can be viewed at: www.vasa-projects.com or www.LightResearch.net. My Holocaust photography presentations for Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo, the Los Angles Center of Photography, and the American Jewish University are available online.

EXHIBITING VISUAL ARTISTS A-F

HANNAH ALTMAN

STEPHEN BERKMAN

NOAH BREUER

STANLEY BURNS

DOUGLAS BUSCH

TOM CARPENTER

ROBERT FLEMING

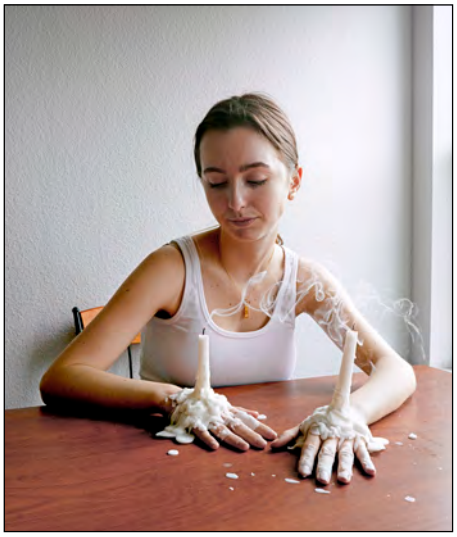
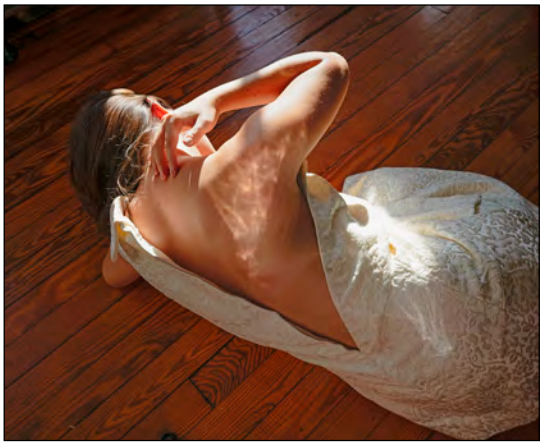
JASON FRANCISCO

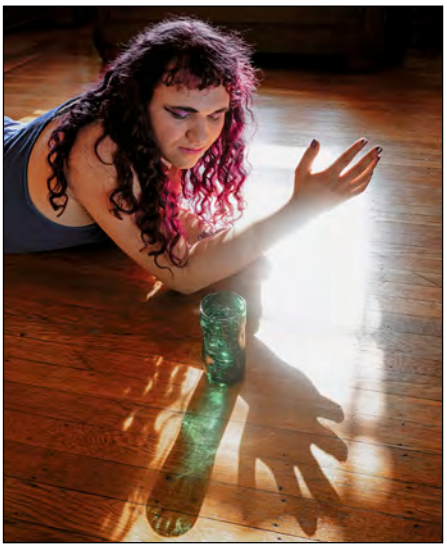
CHARLEY FRIEDMAN

Kavana Series, 2019. 16 x 20 inches. Inkjet prints.

Hannah Altman's photographs portray lineage, folklore, memory, and narrative. Altman explains: "In this work I explore notions of Jewish memory, narrative heirlooms, and imagemaking; the works position themselves in the past as memories, in the present as stories being told, and in the future as actions to interpret and repeat. To approach an image in this way is not only to ask what it looks like but asks: what does it remember like?"

Altman is a Jewish-American artist from New Jersey and based in Boston, MA. She holds an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University. Her work has been extensively exhibited and has been published by the *New York Times, Vanity Fair, Artforum,* and *British Journal of Photography*, among others. Her photobook *Kavana* (2020), published by Kris Graves Projects, is housed in notable permanent collections including the MoMA Library and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Thomas J Watson Library. She received the Lensculture Critics' Choice Award in 2021, became the inaugural Blanksteen Artist in Residence at the Slifka Center for Jewish Life at Yale in 2022, and was selected as an Aperture Portfolio Prize Finalist in 2023.




Predicting the Past from the series ***Zohar Studios: The Lost Years***, N/D. 11 x 14 inches. Albumen prints.

Stephen Berkman's work involves the use of antiquated photographic and optical processes including the historic wet-collodion process, of exposing images onto glass and tin plates, which dates back to the 1850s.

The photographs revolve around notions of time and timelessness as well as the cyclical nature of the Jewish experience. Berkman states that the photograph, *A Wandering Jewess* (N/D), speaks to antisemitism with a foreboding sense of premonition. It presents Jewish Eastern European life before the pogroms and the Holocaust. However, the future is just around the bend and is even more perilous than the past.

Berkman's work is in numerous private and public collections, including the Museum of Photographic Arts and the Portland Art Museum. His work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions at MOPA, Laband Art Gallery, USC Fisher Gallery, and the Howard Greenberg Gallery, among others. Berkman's exhibit on *Zohar Studios* was on

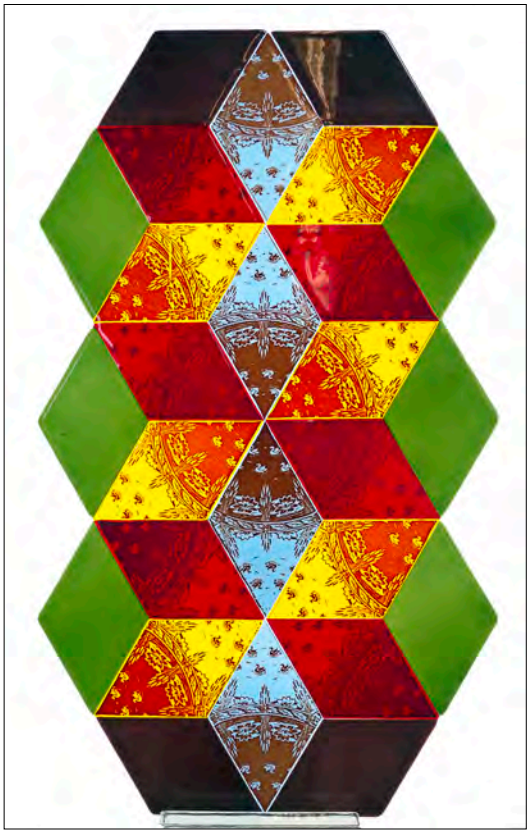
view at The Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco from 2020 through 2021. Berkman's book *Predicting the Past, Zohar Studios: The Lost Years* (2020) was short listed for the Aperture Book Award and featured at Paris Photo 2021. Berkman has also been commissioned to create historical photographs for major feature films, including Martin Scorsese's *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2023).

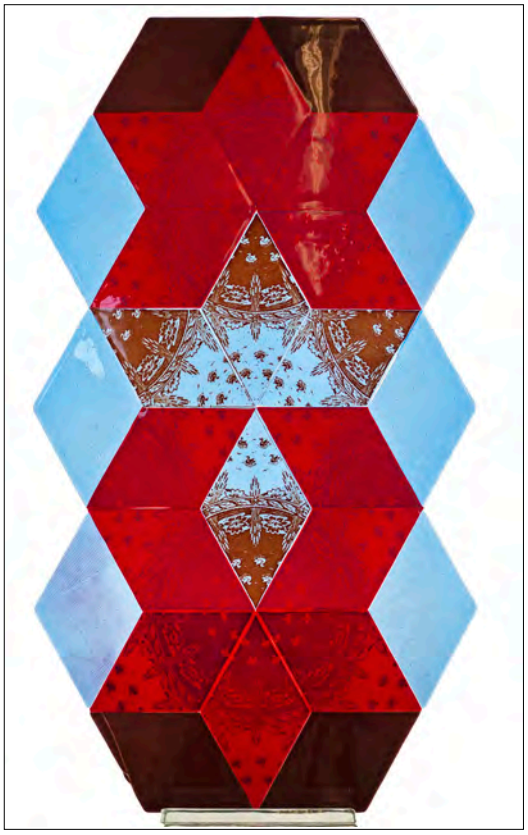
Bohemian Showroom Series, 2019. 72 x 48 inches.
Cyanotype and dye on cotton, wood.

Noah Breuer's artwork investigates early twentieth-century domestic textile design in Europe and the Jewish-owned textile printing companies in Czech Bohemia and Moravia, exploring their role and their visual legacy within that economic and cultural landscape. His family's former textile printing business, "Carl Breuer and Sons" (CB&S), was founded in 1897 in Bohemia. In 1939 the company was seized and sold to Nazi-approved owners along with all other Jewish-owned property in German-occupied areas. Most of his family was murdered shortly thereafter, and the product of their work was lost. Through his research, Breuer amassed a rich collection of primary source material in the form of digital scans and photos depicting designs, printed fabric, and personal letters – providing a springboard for creating an array of printed works that not only tell his family's story of persecution and emigration, but also raise questions about labor, authorship, and appropriation.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Prague had one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe, and during this time, in the nearby town of Dvůr Králové, Breuer's ancestors built a synagogue in 1891. The

Shield Series, 2019. 21 x 24 x .3 inches. Kiln formed glass.





Dvůr Králové Temple thrived along with its congregants, but ultimately was desecrated by the Nazis in 1939 during the Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) pogrom, forgotten and neglected following World War II, and demolished in 1966.

Breuer's glass and steel artworks are windows without a building. They reference the stained glass windows of that lost temple and are printed with Breuer's reimagined collage-like assemblage of CB&S tablecloth designs. The imagery was applied using screen-printed glass frit powder on a variety of colored glass, all of which was fused together in a kiln at 1300°F.

Noah Breuer is an American artist originally from Berkeley, California. His creative work examines themes of family, identity, labor and diaspora. Breuer holds a BFA in Printmaking from the Rhode Island School of Design, an MFA from Columbia University and a graduate research certificate in traditional woodblock printmaking and paper-making from Kyoto Seika University in Japan. Breuer is an Assistant Professor and Print Media Area Head at the University of Buffalo, SUNY.

Without Guilt, Without Shame Series, 1933-1945 & 2010-2023.
11 x 14 inches. Giclée print on fine art bamboo paper.

Dr. Stanley Burns' declarative artwork series, *Without Guilt, Without Shame* (2011-2024) explores the atrocities inflicted upon the Jewish people from a modern perspective by reconstructing, examining, and contextualizing the past. As the foundation of his artwork, Burns utilizes original photographs from his collection of historic photography, images taken by perpetrators and bystanders of the Holocaust. The artworks are designed to stimulate thought and provoke conversation by presenting both familiar and unfamiliar episodes of the Holocaust, from the first German antisemitic acts of 1933 to the end of the war in 1945. Burns digitizes, enlarges, colorizes, and adds words to the images to provide direction for understanding. They resonate with the very well-informed and those with little or no knowledge of the events and are intended to bring new witness to the Holocaust. As a historian, Burns feels tasked with keeping alive the memory of the Holocaust, presenting the past through contemporary art.

Stanley B. Burns, a New York City ophthalmologist, is an internationally distinguished author, curator, historian, collector, archivist, and film/television consultant. Burns began collecting historical photography in

1975 and, in 1977, founded the Burns Archive to share his discoveries. The collection now contains over one million historic photographs. For over forty years, Dr. Burns has worked, consulted, and exhibited with the most prominent Jewish and Holocaust museums, centers, and institutions.

The Weeping Scroll, Darkness into Light: Breaking the Bonds of Bigotry and Ignorance, 2022.
17 inches x 88 feet. Pigment prints on Tyvek scroll
set in 30 x 40 x 16 inches walnut housing.

Douglas Busch's *The Weeping Scroll* (2023) is an interactive 88 foot long photomontage history of Jewish families through the end of the liberation of the concentration camps in 1945. These appropriated images are laid out in chronological order that allows the viewer to go back and forth in time. Resembling a Torah, the scroll is rotated by hand for viewing and serves as a physical and visual representation of the atrocities of the past and a tool for acknowledging our actions to prevent them from repeating. Busch's utilization of thousands of appropriated images allows the viewer to find clarity in the sequencing and visualization.

Busch's remembrance helps participants engage with the sensitive and traumatic history to open a space for philosophical and humanistic reflection. *The Weeping Scroll* provides an opportunity for the international community to unify and look into the mirror of society with the goal of preventing the cyclical madness of extreme bigotry we find ourselves in today.

Busch is known for using the world's largest portable view cameras and negatives to produce the world's largest photographic contact prints. His photographs have been exhibited in many one-person shows in museums across the United States and Europe along with accompanying books. His work is in the permanent collections of numerous museums such as the J. Paul Getty Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Wilhelm Hack Museum, and the Mannheim Museum of Art, Germany.

Transcending Darkness with Light, 2024. 16 x 18 x 6 inches. Lithophanes.

Tom Carpenter's *Transcending Darkness with Light* (2017-2024) is a backlit installation of multiple lithophanes. Carpenter created these hand manipulated porcelain lithophanes from three-dimensional molds based on images of Jewish children murdered in the Holocaust. Its physicality invites touch, creating an intensely personal sensory realization that involves viewers with its concrete existence, but challenges them with its ephemeral quality.

Carpenter explains: "Lithophanes inherently play with the concept of light overcoming darkness. This is symbolic of hope, remembrance, and resilience emerging from one of history's darkest periods. The illumination of the children's images through these mediums serves as a metaphor for bringing their lost stories out of the darkness of forgotten history into the light of collective memory. The ethereal quality of light passing through a lithophane creates a ghostly, yet tender image. It's akin to a fleeting memory or a gentle whisper from the past, reminding us of the ephemeral nature of life and the enduring power of memory. By depicting individual children, the lithophanes

transform abstract statistics of loss into personal stories of real lives. They serve as individual memorials, giving a face and identity to the otherwise nameless victims, making the inconceivable scale of the Holocaust more relatable and poignant."

Carpenter has had solo exhibitions at the University of Rochester's Hartnett Gallery and Insite Gallery in Buffalo. He holds an M.A in Multidisciplinary Studies from Buffalo State College and a BS in art education from Nazareth College. Carpenter has taught Electrophotography internationally, including workshops at the Whitney Museum of American Art. He teaches at Westside Academy, a small alternative high school in Rochester, New York. His work was recently included in the exhibition *Yes, we copy! Strategies of Imitation in Art since 1970* at the Solothurn Fine Arts Museum in Switzerland.

Clings and Burns, 2023. 53 minute, Two channel film.

Robert Fleming's *Clings and Burns* is a 2-channel film dealing with his father's role in the B-29 firebombings of Japanese cities in World War II from November 1944 to August 1945. Fleming states "It consists of a fictional legal deposition of his father (from beyond the grave), with the artist as the prosecuting attorney, together with photographs taken by his father during the war and archival film footage of the bombings. One of the themes addressed in the work is how uncomfortable facts continue to get set aside (erased) to create a society's myths, in this case in service of reinforcing the idea of the good war. How can things that are clearly immoral and atrocious if the "other side" does them or if one loses become okay if you win or your side carries out the action. The work also wrestles with understanding how a good person comes to participate in actions that are illegal now and that were atrocious then. It asks viewers to confront the question of what kind of world we live in and make."

Untethered from the series ***Unbalanced***, 2022.
54 x 60 inches. Oil on unprimed linen.

Fleming's painting *Untethered (top image)* and the two monoprints (bottom images) in the exhibition come from his *Unbalanced* body of work. The artist's recent prints and paintings are his response to the crises that have confronted and continue to confront humanity, in particular the personal cost of racism, political conflict, and authoritarianism. Photographic imagery – historical and present day – is sometimes a starting point, or used as a juxtaposition with his drawn figures. The backgrounds of the two monoprints in particular are from historical photographs very much related to this exhibition.

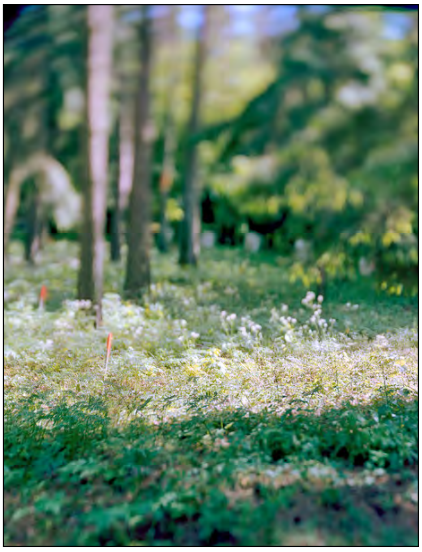
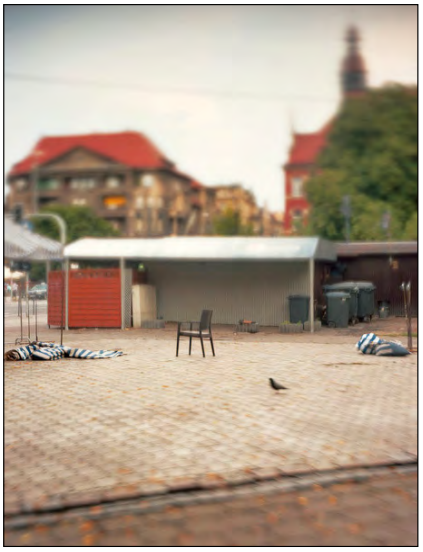
Robert Fleming's practice includes painting, printmaking and other media (including film). He worked as a lawyer for a number of years while maintaining an art practice, and is a co-founder of Mirabo Press, a printmaking studio and edition production facility in Buffalo, NY.

Alive and Destroyed: A Meditation on the Holocaust in Time,
2016. 17 x 22 inches. Inkjet prints.

Jason Francisco affirms: "I am a visual artist working in the spaces between photography and writing, historical research and poetics. Much of my work focuses on new directions in the art of witness, in a form that is documentary in spirit and conceptualist in method. Since 1990 my photoworks, image-text works, writings and filmworks comprise more than 200 projects across a range of topics, geographies and artistic modes. Of key concern to me is how collective trauma shapes public memory, how historical wounds appear and disappear in everyday life, and how cultures of remembering and forgetting interact. Likewise I have been keen to explore the affinities between traumatic historical experience and photography as a medium."

"Much of my focus has concerned the complicated aftermath of the genocide of the European Jews, in the places where it actually happened. At the center of my work for the last decade has been my long-term project *Alive and Destroyed: A Meditation on the Holocaust in Time* (Daylight Books, 2021). *Alive and Destroyed* is an experimental work of documentary art that wrestles with the complications of remembering genocide. It raises thorny and provocative questions around Holocaust memory, documentary impulses, mourning, and

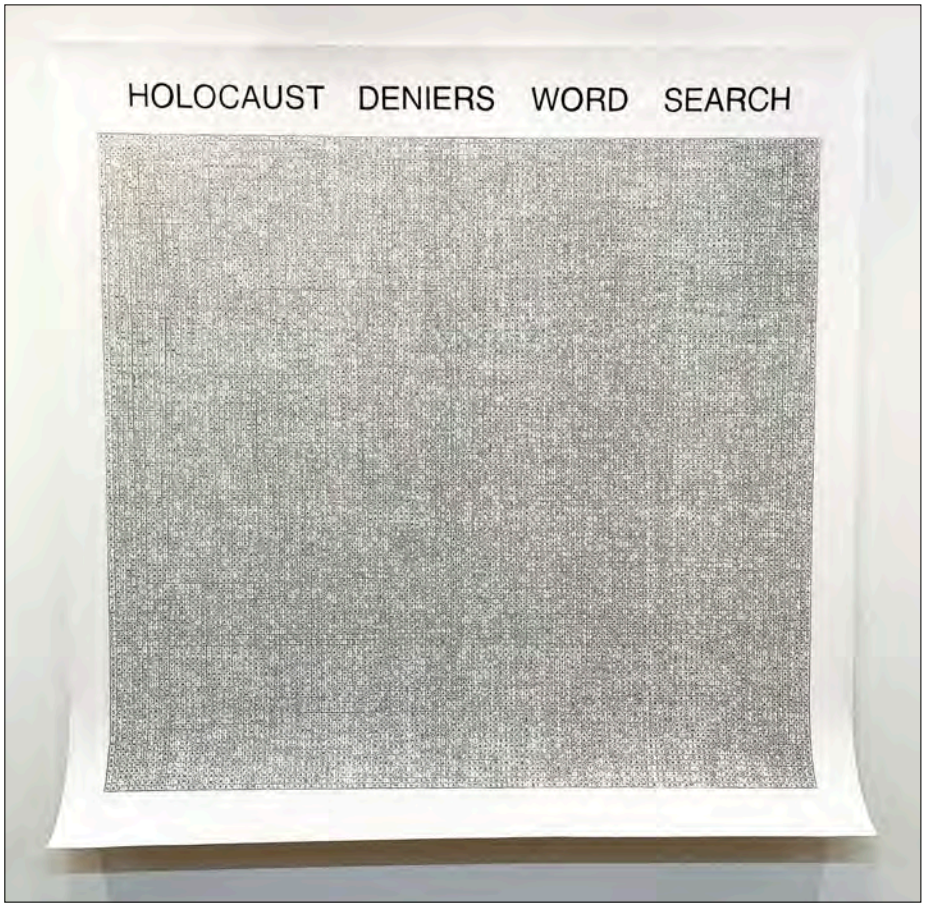


meaning-making. The photographs were made mostly in forgotten locations across the vast geography of the genocide, using a large format camera, and without digital manipulation. The photographs form a mysterious testimony that summons the awareness of presence and absence equally and dicrepantly. Unlike most documentary work, which trades on the conceit that photographs allow vicarious mastery over what they show, the pictures in *Alive and Destroyed* are direct and fragile, immediate and unresolved. My goal is a historical report delivered as a visual poem, toward a de-objectified, de-instrumentalized remembrance of the twentieth century's most notorious crime."

Francisco is a member of the Film and Media Department at Emory University, Atlanta, GA.

HOLOCAUST DENIERS WORD SEARCH, 2019.
60 x 60 inches. Silkscreen on Fabriano Cuatro Blanco paper.



Charley Friedman's work is concerned with the residue of humanity—from God to garbage—and how American cultural identity is constructed around signifiers that have no inherent significance beyond what is ascribed to them. Exploring the ways that objects take on value from sacred to consumable, Charley Friedman questions how objects become meaningful and how society agrees to this assignation of value. Through sculpture, performance, photography, drawing, and video, he tackles how we internalize and filter the world through magical thinking, institutionalized religion, and consumer culture (including their rituals, values, and sacred items) that reinforce our own ego-centric world view. The work is psychological and pungent, with an underlying interest in eliciting emotion from the viewer. Friedman's approach is to use humor as a material. Humor has no mass or volume yet is infinitely malleable. It magnifies vulnerabilities and prejudices, revealing individuals' humanity. Humor allows the ideas to take root in the body; it comes from the gut and is inherently emotional. The crux of Friedman's practice is to explore the absurd, tragic, and contradictory nature of living that humor can uniquely portray.

Friedman's *Holocaust Deniers Word Search* is comprised of 25,000 hand-painted letters compiled from hundreds of words associated with the genocides of the last two centuries, such as the Holocaust, Native American, Rwandan, and Armenian massacres. The piece creates a conceptual bridge between our present moment in a time when facts are promoted as fake. It explores how we as humans select what we want to see. The ordinary word search functions in the same way: the answers are right in front of you, yet seemingly invisible.

Friedman has an MFA from School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Tufts University, Boston, MA and a BFA from Macalester College, St. Paul, MN.

THE POWER AND THE PITFALLS OF HOLOCAUST PHOTOGRAPHY

BY DANIEL H. MAGILOW

The Power of Resilience and Hope: Photography and the Holocaust – Then & Now demonstrates that even as Holocaust photographs have established a familiar and horrifying visual lexicon of atrocity that has powerfully shaped postwar cultural memory, they are neither straightforward nor unproblematic representations. Whether created by Jewish photographers, camp liberators, or—most frequently—Nazis and their local collaborators, instantly recognizable photographs like those of the boy in the Warsaw Ghetto, Auschwitz's *Arbeit macht frei* gate, (Work Sets You Free) mass shootings of civilians, and the emaciated bodies of survivors have forcefully imprinted themselves onto the collective consciousness. So much so, in fact, that thousands of Holocaust photographs in museums and repositories remain unseen and unexamined while a handful of famous images continue to be reproduced and recirculated, often uncritically and indiscriminately. The artworks in this exhibition not only appropriate and replicate this visual language of atrocity, but also complicate and repudiate its cliches. In so doing, the exhibition invites viewers to reconsider the complex ways photographs have shaped posterity's ongoing engagement with the twentieth century's paradigmatic catastrophe.

Historic images of Warsaw Ghetto and Auschwitz's *Arbeit macht frei* gate. Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC.

tIconic image figures centrally in many of the artworks. To use anthropologist Cornelia Brink's term, famous Holocaust photographs have acquired so much cultural capital that they have become "secular icons," instantly recognizable representations invested with a quasi-religious authority and the (highly problematic) power to distill complex histories of antisemitism and genocide in a singular image.[1] Phillip Schwartz's 2018 series *Modern Martyrs* literalizes this sacralization of the Holocaust by combining the traditions, iconography, and materials of Eastern Orthodox icons with photographic icons. One piece in the series imitates the horrifying Ivanhorod Einsatzgruppen photograph, which captured the instant before a German soldier executed a woman shielding her baby. Taken in Ukraine in 1942, this atrocity photograph was excerpted from a larger and more compositionally confusing image. The cropped photograph, which leaves only one killer and one pair of victims, carries a powerful rhetorical punch because it represents Holocaust history as a set of oversimplified binaries (e.g., soldier/civilian, innocent/guilty, armed/unarmed, male/female, perpetrator/victim). Schwartz recreates this secular icon as a gilded Eleusa (Greek for "tenderness" or "showing mercy"), the Eastern Orthodox depiction of the Madonna and child. Golden halos envelop the victims' heads, while

© Phillip Schwartz. *Madonna and Child*, 2017, 12.5 x 9.5 inches. Egg tempera and gilding on gesoed wood. Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC.

Phillip Schwartz, *Saint, Edith Stein,* 2017. 14 x 11 inches. Egg tempera and gilding on gessoed wood. Courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC.

the executioner's halo is ominously black. Forming the backdrop to Schwartz's modern icon is a rectangular red frame of gessoed wood with the text of Isaiah 22:4: "Look away from me, let me cry bitter tears; comfort me not for the destruction of my beloved people." Martyrs die for political causes or religious beliefs, which invites hard questions. Are Holocaust victims martyrs worthy of religious adoration? Or is their elevation to martyrdom more indicative of posterity's desire to redeem their deaths and thus to make sense out of senseless mass murder?

David Levinthal's 1993–1994 series of pigment print transformations *Mein Kampf (My Struggle)*, a sequel to his 1972–1975 series *Hitler Moves East*, approaches the Ivanhorod Einsatzgruppen photograph quite differently. Levinthal's images evoke scenes of Third Reich pageantry and Eastern front combat photographs. They are intentionally blurry because, in the artist's words, "the softness of focus added a feeling of believability."[2] The central provocation of Levinthal's images,

©Zbigniew Libera. *Lego Concentration Camp,* 1996. Box with Lego bricks. Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, Poland.

however, is that he creates them not with living people, but with figurines and toy soldiers. The unexpected and absurd contrast of play and genocide is jarring, but also conducive to uncomfortable, taboo-breaking laughter. The juxtaposition evokes Levinthal's own early-1970s photographs of Barbie dolls in pornographic poses as well as Zbigniew Libera's inflammatory 1996 artwork *Lego Concentration Camp*. Despite its humor and precisely because of it, *Mein Kampf* exposes the extent to which mass culture has commodified the Second World War and the Holocaust and, in books, films, and even toys, has transformed human suffering into another consumable.

Where Levinthal's toys highlight the Holocaust's trivialization and commodification, Stanley Burns' polemic series *Without Guilt, Without Shame* (2010–2023) also emphasizes photography's role in mediating Holocaust memory. Subtitled *Enhanced German Snapshots of the Holocaust*, the series consists of black-and-white photographs from German soldiers' private snapshot albums that Burns has augmented in two ways: first, by

Top two © David Levinthal. *Untitled* from the series *Mein Kampf*. 1993-1994. 20 x 24 inches. Inkjet print.

Bottom © David Levinthal. *Untitled* from the series *Hitler Moves East*, 2019. 13 x 19 inches. Inkjet print.

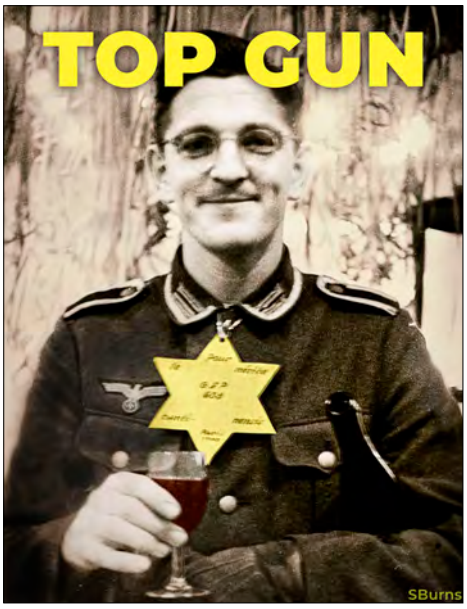
superimposing pop-art-like, capitalized sans-serif captions onto them; and second, by adding bold, yellow accents suggestive of the yellow stars used to brand Jews. One enhanced snapshot attacks France's longstanding unwillingness to acknowledge the full extent of its wartime collaboration with Nazi Germany. Burns highlights the words "*Interdit aux juifs*" (Jews forbidden) on a sign at a public park and adds a bitterly sarcastic caption, also in yellow, "FRENCH HOSPITALITY." In another photograph, three corpses, their bodies colored yellow, dangle beneath the gallows under the words "GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM," recalling the postwar German lament that the Nazis turned the land of *Dichter und Denker* (poets and thinkers) into one of *Richter und Henker* (judges and executioners). By repurposing the private photographs of low-level German soldiers, Burns' series not only gives lie to the common postwar German protests that only a few, ideologically committed Nazis perpetrated crimes or the excuse "we didn't know." More broadly, it also emphasizes how such complex histories inhere photographs, even Holocaust photographs whose meanings as evidence of antisemitism (the park sign) or mass murder (the hanging) seem self-evident.

Transforming, recreating, and remediating iconic perpetrator-produced photographs is, however, only one way *The Power*

© Stanley B. Burns. *German Expressionism*, 2012/1940. 11 x 14 inches. Giclée print on bamboo paper.

of Resilience and Hope: Photography and the Holocaust – Then & Now confronts genocide and its aftermath. Other artists find in the surviving but fragmentary material traces of the murdered and persecuted—especially in photographs of them—opportunities to reflect on memory's power and pitfalls. Memories and photographs are emotionally impactful, but also fragile, manipulable, and susceptible to decomposition. To examine memory's ongoing entanglements with traumatic history and the vanished Jewish past, these artists adopt diverse formal strategies: they composite photographs, montage them with other media, and use archaic photographic processes.

For instance, Miriam Mörsel Nathan's series *Lost Childhood* evokes a tumultuous family Holocaust history that profoundly influenced the artist, but which she never knew firsthand. *Lost Childhood* consists of monoprints, works created through a process that generates unique images. These images depict composited silhouettes whose blotchy, faded surfaces suggest deteriorating film stock. Memories of the past remain sharp in the silhouettes' outlines, but within the lines, the details have faded. To create these ethereal images, Mörsel Nathan used photographs from prewar Prague and stories from her mother



Left © Stanley B. Burns. *French Hospitality*, 2012/1940. 11 x 14 inches. Giclée print on bamboo paper.

Right © Stanley B. Burns. *Top Gun*, 2010/1941. 11 x 14 inches. Giclée print on bamboo paper.

© Miriam Mörsel Nathan. *Martin & Fredy*, 2008. 37 x 28.5 inches. Ink monoprint on Hahnemühle paper. Edition of one. Lily Press, Rockville, MD.

about her parents' traumatic and itinerant wartime family history. The artist's father Marek Mörsel escaped Europe for the Dominican Republic, the only country of thirty-two at the 1938 Évian Conference on the Jewish refugee problem that agreed to accept refugees. Zdenka Mörsel was to have followed her husband, but she could not obtain exit papers and was ultimately incarcerated in the Theresienstadt Ghetto. Yet she managed to survive and joined her husband in 1947. Miriam Mörsel Nathan was born that year in the Dominican Republic and in May 1948, the family emigrated to the United States.

While *Lost Childhood* emerged from the transgenerational effects of one family's traumatic history of wartime dislocation, its title has broader implications. For one, the series' name *Lost Childhood* nods to Yehuda Nir's (1930–2014) popular and widely taught Holocaust memoir *The Lost Childhood,* which recounts Nir's childhood spent on the run and in hiding in occupied Poland.[3] It also reminds us of the Holocaust's devastating cumulative toll on children. The Nazis and their collaborators disproportionately targeted Jewish children, ultimately murdering as many as 1.5 million. Describing the fate of children during the Holocaust, historian Debórah Dwork notes the grim truth that "all very young children (and their mothers) were sent to the left (to the gas chambers), as were most pre-teenagers."[4]

With their haunted, ephemeral, and transient qualities, Mörsel Nathan's monoprints instantiate the influential notion of postmemory; scholar Marianne Hirsch's term for describing how media, particularly

photography, transmit the memory of trauma across generations. This transmission is rarely smooth or easily deciphered, a point that *Lost Childhood* powerfully illustrates with its fragility and fragmentary character. Mörsel Nathan has stated: "My work reflects a history I inherited, a memory of experiences and loss I absorbed but did not have. And though I live my life in the present, this memory of a time I did not know wraps itself around me indelibly."[6]

Tatana Kellner's 1993 *Holocaust* series is similarly interested in the tensions that attend the transmission of memories of the Shoah, as well as the disconnection between public and private images of those memories. Kellner was born in Prague in 1950 to Holocaust survivors. In Czechoslovakia and across the Soviet bloc, authorities propagated Holocaust histories that focused disproportionately on communists' suffering and concurrently downplayed the specific targeting of Jews. Kellner has stated that at school, she was to "toe the line," even if, at home, she learned, "not to trust them."[7] Works such as her 1993 montage *Family History* represent these clashes of public and private narratives of genocide by assigning different roles to iconic atrocity images and family portraits. At the work's center stand

© Tatana Kellner. *Auschwitz*, 1992. 54.5 x 122.5 inches. Acrylic and silkscreen on canvas.

photographs of concentration camp fences, iconic symbols of the often perpetrator-centric narratives of the Holocaust. Around the edges, however, are family photographs made by and for the victims alone. They orbit the narrative told by the iconic photographs and tell private stories to a smaller, private audience of family members.

Stephen Berkman critiques how Jewish history is narrated in a different and often quite humorous way: through anachronism. Through obsolete photographic technologies, such as the wet collodion process, his images evoke an era when Jewish life—but also antisemitism and pogroms—thrived in Eastern Europe. Berkman's works may resemble nineteenth-century photographs, but he poses his models in strange positions or inserts details that one could never find in genuine nineteenth-century photographs. In one, a figurine of a Hasid peers into a gramophone cylinder. In another titled *A Wandering Jewess*, a man hikes up a mountain path with an ornate chair on his back on which a woman sits holding a parasol. Such works confront the problematic but frequently unexamined historical assumptions that guide how we approach old photographs of Jewish life. We bring to them knowledge that the photographers and the photographed lacked. We know that Jewish Europe would soon become a "vanished world," the title of photographer Roman Vishniac's photobook that focused disproportionately on shtetl life's squalor and disconnectedness from

© Stephen Berkman. *Belve de Yid, Matzi Ball Western* film negative from *Ephemera* section, N/D. 12 x 6 inches. Inkjet print.

© Roman Vishniac. *Antisemitic Boycotts Changed Peddlers into Beggars,* Łódź, Lublin, or Warsaw, circa 1935-1938 ©Mara Vishniac Kohn, Courtesy International Centery of Photography, New York.

© Stephen Berkman. *A Wandering Jewess*, N/D. 11 x 14 inches. Albumen print.

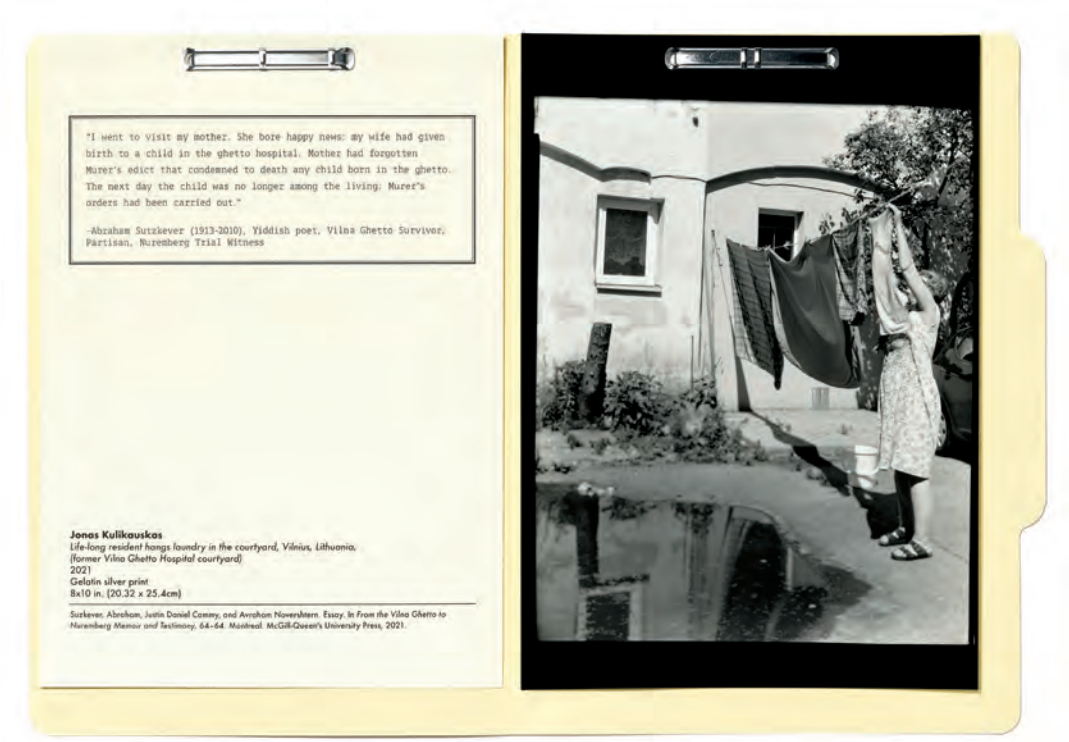
the modern world.[8] The scholar Jeffrey Shandler aptly describes prewar photographs of Jewish life as taking place in "the time of Vishniac."[9] Berkman's works critique this melancholy temporality, because through their theatricality, humor, mysticism, or sheer bizarreness, they expose how illogical it is to interpret Holocaust photographs with the benefit of hindsight. Narrating the Jewish past as an unrelenting series of catastrophes, a tendency that historian Salo Baron famously termed the "lachrymose [tearful] conception of Jewish history," flattens it and reduces its richness.[10] In this narrative, which Berkman contests, Jews become important not for how they lived, but for how they died and for the massive voids they left behind.

One final example from the exhibition draws attention to these voids by using the camera to frame and highlight absences that might otherwise be overlooked. Jonas Kulikauskas's 2021 series of gelatin silver contact prints *I Often Forget* captures contemporary scenes from Vilnius, the Baltic capital that Jews knew as Vilna, the "Jerusalem of Lithuania." Kulikauskas reanimates the Vilna ghetto by exposing it as a palimpsest in which historical layers lurk within everyday spaces. In one image,

a woman pins her wash to a clothesline. In another, a kick scooter speeds by a graffiti-covered door. In still another, the sun shines on an empty courtyard. As the series' title suggests, one can easily forget that the city was once a thriving center of Jewish intellectual and cultural life. But between September 6, 1941 to September 24, 1943, Vilna's old Jewish quarter also became a ghetto and a waystation for Jews en route to their murders. Formally, Kulikauskas presents the photographs of former spaces of the Vilna ghetto like forensic reports. The photos are fastened with brads to the right side of a manilla folder, while the left side offers a title, caption, description, and a block quote from an erstwhile ghetto inhabitant. *I Often Forget* repurposes file folders, the literal tools of the Nazi officials who facilitated murder not by pulling triggers, but by doing their jobs as so-called *Schreibtischtäter* (desk murderers), the human cogs in a criminal machine. In Kulikauskas's work, office supplies not

© Jonas Kulikauskas. *Sifters No. 1–3,* 2023. 8 x 10 inches. Gelatin silver prints. Installation containing three shifters, each containing twenty-one photographs made at the Great Synagogue of Vilna excavation site.

only protest historical amnesia of the Nazi past. They also offer a cautionary tale about the dangers of the administrative state. We see through the works in *The Power of Resilience and Hope: Photography and the Holocaust – Then & Now* the diverse strategies that artists have adopted in the past half century to force viewers to confront the myriad historical, ethical, and conceptual problems that surround the seemingly straightforward category of "Holocaust photography." These artists pose provocative but difficult questions. What assumptions do we bring to such images? Can Holocaust photographs only be read as evidence of atrocity, or do they also belong to other traditions of artistic, religious, and vernacular image-making? How do public representations of genocide both shape and contrast with private family memories? Has posterity's fascination with the Holocaust fundamentally minimized, diluted, trivialized, and commercialized it? Can



© Jonas Kulikauskas. *Life-long resident hangs laundry in the courtyard,* Vilnius, Lithuania, (former Vilna Ghetto Hospital courtyard), 2021. 18 x 23 inches. Gelatin silver print and text page (each 8 x 10 inches) in an open A4 manila folder with metal clasp.

we look at victims through perpetrators' perspectives without acknowledging the ethical problems of sharing a murderer's subject position? Do we remember the Holocaust as it actually was or as we want it to have been? Thorny issues like these preoccupy the artists in the exhibition, and while they cannot always answer these questions, they can certainly pose them well.

Notes

1. Cornelia Brink, "Secular Icons: Looking at Photographs from Nazi Concentration Camps," *History & Memory 12*, no. 1 (2000): 135–50.

2. "Interview with David Levinthal," *Yield* 7 (December 2018): 21. https://007.yieldmagazine.org/21/ (accessed December 2, 2023).

3. Yehuda Nir, *The Lost Childhood: A World War II Memoir* (New York: Scholastic, 2002).

4. Debórah Dwork, *Children with a Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 221.

5. Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 21–22.

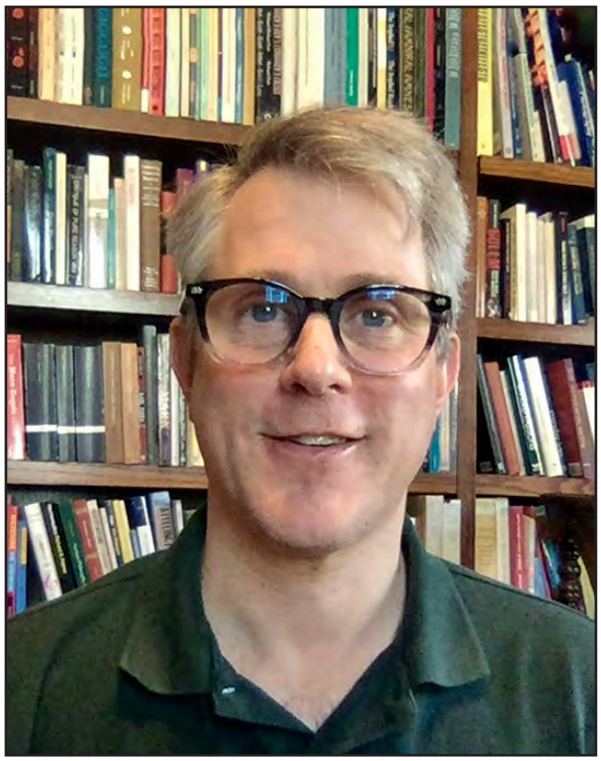
6. Miriam Mörsel Nathan, "about the artist …." https://www.miriammorselnathan.com/about-the-artist/ (accessed December 2, 2023).

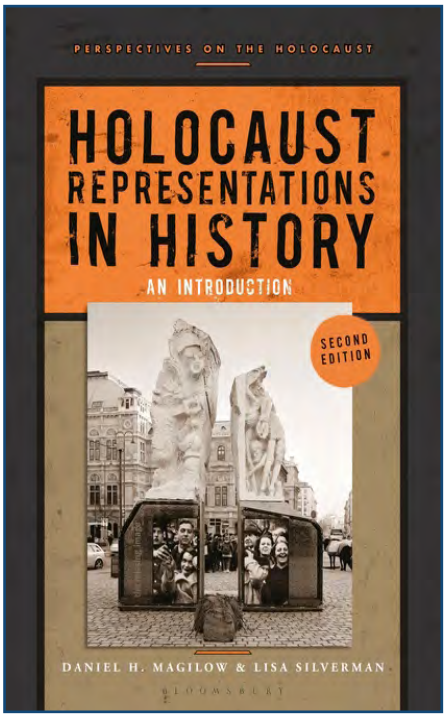
7. Tatana Kellner, "Statement," https://tatanak1.ic.tc/statement (accessed December 2, 2023).

8. Roman Vishniac, *A Vanished World* (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1983).

9. Jeffrey Shandler, "The Time of Vishniac: Photographs of Prewar Eastern European Jewry in Post-war Contexts," *Polin: A Journal of Jewish Studies* 16 (2003): 313–334.

10. Salo Baron, "New Emphases in Jewish History," *Jewish Social Studies* vol. 25, No. 4 (October 1963): 240.





Dr. Daniel H. Magilow is Professor of German in the Department of World Languages and Cultures at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he is also an affiliated faculty member with the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Jewish Studies, the Cinema Studies Program, and the Department of History. He earned his PhD in German from Princeton University; serves on the Academic Board of the Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University; and was the Pearl Resnick Postdoctoral Fellow at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2005-2006. Dr. Magilow is Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* with Helene Sinnreich. His teaching and research has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Getty Foundation, and the University of Tennessee Humanities Center on Photography and Film that explores the intersections Holocaust Studies, Weimar Germany, and postwar memory.

www.wlc.utk.edu/?people=daniel-magilow

Knoxville, Tennessee

EXHIBITING VISUAL ARTISTS H-K

ROBERT HIRSCH

LIGHT RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

FREDERICK WRIGHT JONES

TANANA KELLNER

JONAS KULIKAUSKAS

CLAUDIA KUNIN

Ghosts Montage # 1 from the series ***Ghosts: French Holocaust Children,*** 2014. 18 x 32 inches. Inkjet print.

During World War II, over 11,000 Jewish children were deported from France to Auschwitz and other Nazi death camps. These children were among more than 75,000 French Jews deported for extermination under the Nazi's "Final Solution to the Jewish Question." Of those transported, only 2,564 survived the Shoah. At most 300 of these Jewish surivors were children.

Ghosts: French Holocaust Children (2014) is a three-dimensional photo-based installation that commemorates these children's abbreviated lives that had no future, only an end. The project draws upon historical photographs collected by Nazi-hunters Serge and Beate Klarsfeld. Hirsch expressionistically reinterpreted these documents through two- and three-dimensional photographic representations to convey a haunting sense of lost human possibilities. This 600 plus portrait anthology is a composite of a historical archive and a photo-based narrative. It's post-documentary approach of outer and inner realities, constructs stories of the limits of human behavior regarding antisemitism and wickedness through an examination of loss, identity and memory.

The Nazi objective was a world without Jews. Consequently, these portraits serve as a form of resistance against emptiness and nothingness by functioning as visual testimonies of the Holocaust. Instead of lists and statistics, these photographs allow viewers to come face to face with these young people and recognize ourselves in their portraits.

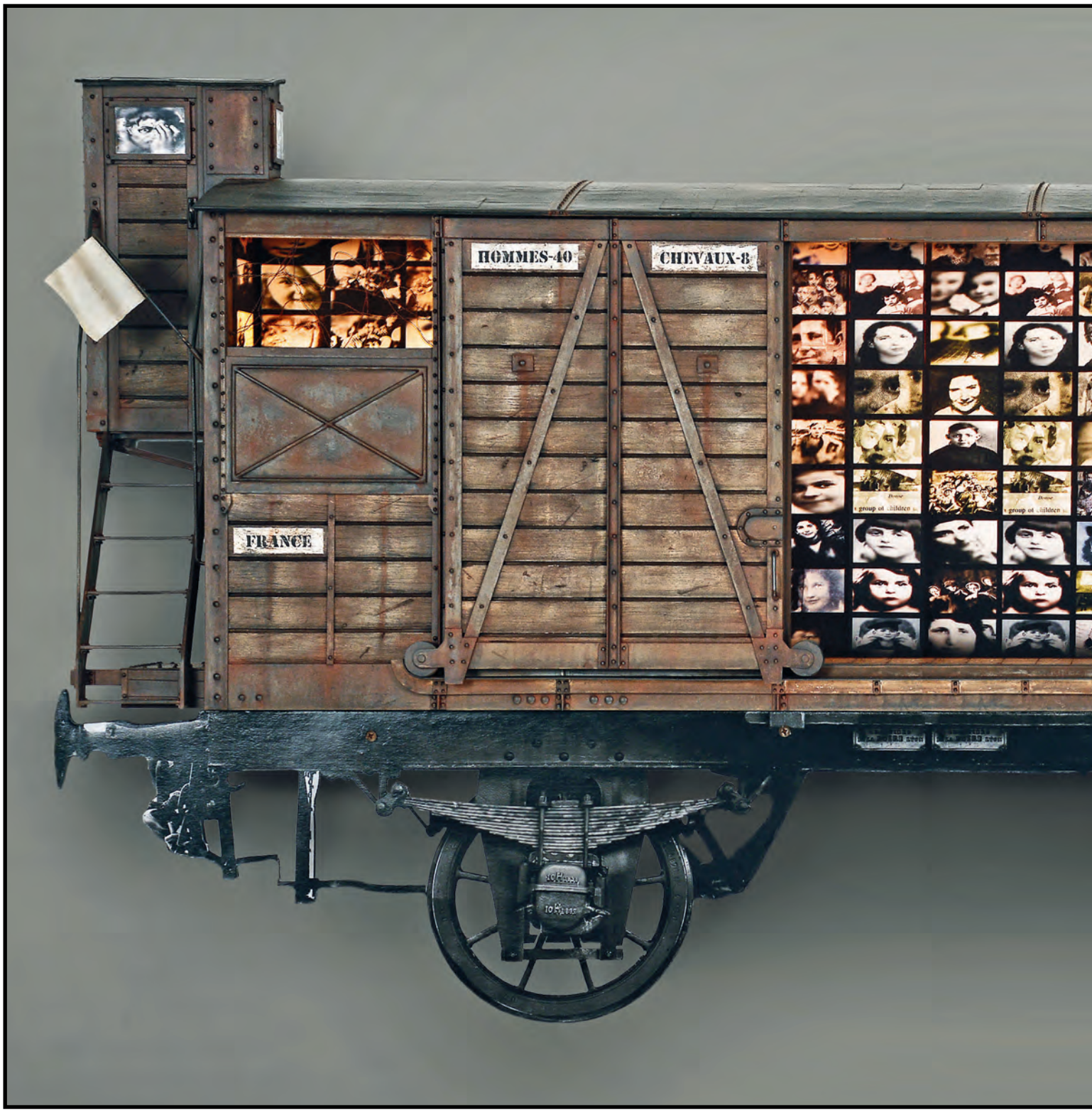
What we think and do is grounded in history. Therefore, subjects that seem immeasurable, incommunicable, and unnamable must be

Original photograph Altered

Original Altered

Original photograph Altered

reflected upon to stay relevant. Engaging with the Holocaust keeps the worldwide issues of racism and genocide center stage, allowing us to examine these ethical time bombs whenever they occur. Ultimately, *Ghosts* is ballast against the drift toward amnesia, conspiracy theories, and the denial of reality. In an era of information warfare and the passing of the eyewitnesses, we must turn to other examples to bear witness and keep alive the memory of those who antisemites brutally murdered.



Light Research Collaborative. ***Ghosts Boxcar #3***, from the series ***Ghosts: French Holocaust Children,*** 2014. 6 x 0.5 x 2.5 feet. Mixed media with inkjet print.

This project (and previous page's project) was made possible with the collaboration of bob Collignon (IG: @bobCollignon), Richard Schulenberg, and Anne Muntges. (www.annemuntges.com)

NRAACP Golem, 2011.
23.5 x 10.5 x 6 inches, Mixed media.

Frederick Wright Jones' artistic discipline is body-related and relies on controlling and transforming ones surroundings to give it agency. Jones elaborates: "It is not necessarily figurative rather related to the human condition: The violence of survival and the beauty of another day. Our bodies remain the site where a history of stolen physical labor meets the modern escapist needs for exercise and entertainment, where enslaved people meet professional athletes. My ethical stance hovers between dutiful responsibility and post-punk cynicism. I invite the audience to interact, to shift from spectator to collaborator to perpetrator."

Jones's work seeks an in-between space where the functional meets the metaphorical. With peripheral eyes, He looks at history and social conventions: family, relations, the noises, and images that surround us.

The Golem's face is modeled after the silent horror film, *Der Golem* (1915), which was directed by Paul Wegener and Henrik Galeen.

The *Golem* came out of the NRAACP action figure series. The name conjoins the National Rifle Association with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored people, to form the National Rifle Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

This project looked at how contemporary U.S. American ideologies on community, protection, and rights were shaped by the history of a violent racial apartheid state. The Golem represents the desire for safety by any means when communal identity and outside perceptions clash.

Frederick Wright Jones was born in Boyertown, Pennsylvania. He received his MFA in Sculpture and Emerging Practices at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Inspired by myth, pop culture, and the utilitarian, his tactile objects work to materialize forces we neither see nor measure, and to dissect the contradictions of narrative. An Associate Professor at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Jones is currently working with the mapping of history and memory. Slightly peripheral, he travels between his families in Pennsylvania, Hamburg-Germany, memory, and rememory.

Ancestors Burning, Not Yet Consumed from the series ***Holocaust***, 1993.
72 x 78 inches. Hand altered gelatin silver prints mounted on wood.

Tatana Kellner is the daughter of Holocaust survivors, born in Czechoslovakia, and immigrated to the U.S. in 1969. As a child she was told to "toe the line" at school, but at home she learned, "not to trust them;'' conflicting advice that created the lens by which she sees the world. In *Fifty Years of Silence* (1991-1994) Kellner preserves her parent's memory of internment in several concentration and extermination camps during World War II. "I traveled to some of the camps to understand what my parents were describing. I photographed the sites as they were then, to fully describe the experience and created large scale photographs to help others begin to realize the magnitude of the Holocaust."

Kellner's *Ancestors Burning, Not Yet Consumed* uses clustered montages, portraiture, and larger than life scale to pull the viewer in and help them understand. This body of work about the consequences of the Holocaust was inspired by the artist's visit to Israel in 1994.

While at a residency at MacDowell, she was contemplating that trip while using scrap photographs to stoke a fireplace. As the photographs began to burn, she realized that was exactly how these relatives she never knew perished. This became the impetus for this series. Her process-based work is rooted in printmaking and photography – mediums for the masses – to explore politics, economy, the environment, and social justice issues in conversation with viewers.

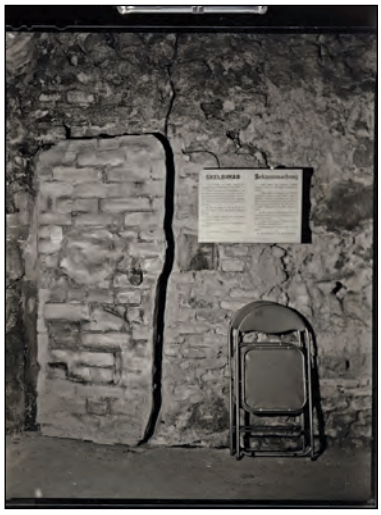
Kellner is a co-founder of Women's Studio Workshop, an artists' workspace in Rosendale, NY. She has been exhibited in numerous venues across US, Canada, and Europe and she has had over 50 solo exhibitions and is the author of 22 limited edition artists' books.

I Often Forget, 2021. 18 x 23 inches. Gelatin silver print and text page (each 8 x 10 inches) in an open A4 manila folder with metal clasp.

Jonas Kulikauskas is an interdisciplinary artist inspired by his Lithuanian heritage, family, and faith. His photographic installation, *I Often Forget* (2023), explores the fragile layers of time in everyday spaces, illuminating histories, conflicts, resistance, survival, confusion, and trauma relating to the Holocaust, ethnic nationalism, and cultural desecration.

Kulikauskas explains: "My parents were World War II refugees who fled Lithuania and eventually settled in Southern California. Our family spoke Lithuanian at home, and my siblings and I spent every Saturday at a Lithuanian Catholic school. We learned Lithuanian history, language, songs, and folk dances and spent our summers at Lithuanian Scout Camp. I embraced my Lithuanian heritage and sent my son Matas to the same places. At Lithuanian school, Nazi occupation was discussed, but the Holocaust was never mentioned. Looking back, I realize how much this disturbs me. It disturbs Matas, too."

In this time of rising worldwide antisemitism, Kulikauskas attached a World War II-era lens to a large format camera loaded with black-and-



white film to photograph what used to be the Vilna Ghetto in Vilnius, Lithuania, where 40,000 Jews were imprisoned and systematically murdered during 1941-1943. The images are produced as 8 x 10-inch gelatin silver contact prints that are paired with excerpts from historical diaries that relate to the subject or location of the photograph. These pairings are then inserted into A4 size file folders, chained to walls and pedestals, creating a hauntingly intimate and tactile experience for the viewer.

The broader *I Often Forget* exhibition was curated by Mika Cho at the Ronald H. Silverman Fine Arts Gallery, California State University (2023), and partially funded by the Fulbright Program and the Puffin Foundation. Contributors included Dr. Jon Seligman, Israel Antiquities Authority, Jerusalem, Israel, Saulius Sužiedelis, Professor of History, Emeritus, the Vilna Gaon Museum of Jewish History, Rita Glassman, Cantor.

Spectre Of Memory, 2015/2023. 22 minutes.
Screen size varies. 3D digital video.

Claudia Kunin informs us: "Growing up, I was aware of a heavy weight of sadness my mother kept deep inside her. Occasional nuggets of her history as a Jew in Salzburg during World War II were shared, but details were elusive. It didn't feel right to press her with questions, it was my job to bring her joy and make her forget the past as much as possible. Unfortunately, my mother suffered from early onset Alzheimer's and the story of how she survived the horrors of WWII remained a mystery until she passed away. After her death, I went to Austria to research exactly what happened. Through discoveries made in public archives and a treasure trove of information that my mother's aunt had saved, I was able to puzzle out her compelling story."

Spectre Of Memory (2015/2023) is an animated film pieced together from the fabric of my mother's past to tell the story of how she survived as a Jew in occupied Austria during WWII. The photographs and letters that comprise the source material have been layered, montaged together, then animated and made into a short 3-D film that addresses the intersection of memory, history, and spirit. It is my reckoning with my mother Charlotte's mysterious past."

Kunin's work transposes photographic stills into 3-D photographic animations. Her previous exhibitions include the Annenberg Space for Photography, the Museum of Photographic Arts, the Maison de Daguerre in Bry-sur-Marne, the Jewish Museum of Vienna, and the Museum of Jurassic Technology. Ms. Kunin's work is in the collections of the Museum of Photographic Arts, the George Eastman Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the National Portrait Gallery, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Her archive will be housed in the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of American History's Photographic Collection.

Digital video viewed with 3-D glasses.

NAZI GENOCIDE:
HISTORY AND HOW NOT TO LOOK

BY DR. ZOÉ SAMUDZI

John Berger began *Ways of Seeing* (1972), his influential textual contribution to art history, with a simple but taken for granted statement: "Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak."[1] Berger illustrates a world structured by a mystified seeing: an undemocratic regime of visuality that systematically organizes the very ideologies and phenomena we come to understand as fact. It is this primal relation between seeing and knowing-believing that underpins our understanding of the Nazi Holocaust because of the image's power against language's inability to sufficiently capture the horrors of this European genocide at the time of its occurrence—and even now.

The affective power of the Shoah[2] lies in its incommensurability: a violence whose sheer magnitude and ruthlessness defies phrasal articulation and situation into the historical arc of a purportedly civilized western modernity. This failure to readily put into words, *le différend*, is also a negation of language. It is "the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be:" the impossibility of utterance characterized by "the feeling of pain which accompanies silence."[3] The utility of photographic seeing, then, is the bridging of the unfathomable and fathomable and the slotting of photographic evidence into the gaps left by this wordlessness. But against the imaginative limits of the Shoah atrocity itself, can photography really allow us to exceed the barrier imposed by the absence of language in order to permit an accurate understanding of the abjection of Nazi genocide spatialized across Eastern Europe? There are at least two million documented photographs of the Shoah, an archival vastness as overwhelming as the eleven

million people murdered by its genocidal policy. The photographs serve as powerful evidence to counter both the array of genocide denialisms and historical amnesias alike. Where words can continue to fail, where our efforts at public pedagogy fall short, one need only sift through extensive documentations of deportations, slave labor, entrapping prison and camp architecture, murderous soldiers, and much more and bear witness to the visual testimonies — a meta-archive composed of often competing narratives and truths of perpetrators, survivors, and witnesses alike —they individually and collectively yield. But do these photographs animate desired reactions of solemn education or do they, in their volume and thematic familiarity as icons of horror, “pacify or anesthetize the retrospective viewer”[4] and situate them into a regime of memory fabricated by the institutions and narrators able to posit a hegemonic set of understandings?

The potency of historical memory is in its transmissibility across time and generations of *rememberers*: as the alternatively continuous and rupturous “structure of inter- and transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge and embodied experience” described by Marianne Hirsch as “postmemory.”[5] But what does it

1. U.S. Army Signal Corps. *A German mother shields the eyes of her son as they walk with other civilians past a row of exhumed bodies outside Suttrop, Germany. The bodies were those of 57 Russians killed by German SS troops and dumped in a mass grave before the arrival of troops from the U.S. Ninth Army. Soldiers of the 95th Infantry division were led by informers to the massive grave on May 3, 1945. Before burial, all German civilians in the vicinity were ordered to view the victims.* United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC.

actually mean to deploy the photograph as a part of a system of mechanically reproduced[6] postmemory that seeks to *normalize* the *exceptional* by describing it as an archetype disconnected from other histories?

* * *

Within the genre of historic Holocaust photography, it is possible to loosely establish five categories of images: ghetto photography, spectacles of Nazism, executions, photographs taken during and after the Allied liberation of the concentration camps, and documentations of the Nuremberg trials.

The photographs in Jewish ghettos illustrated the first stage of antisemitic deterritorialization in Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic and elsewhere: the aftermath of the dispossession of now-landless Jewish families in open-air prisons where they would be forced to live and languish before their eventual deportation to concentration and death camps when the ghettos were liquidated. A continuation of medieval European ghettos, first established in Venice in the sixteenth century to segregate the city's Jewish communities, movement in and out of these sealed neighborhoods were heavily policed and regulated by Nazi officials. The photographs produced within the genre of these spaces could serve as evidence of successful anti-Jewish policy and/or ethnographic documentation of the spectrum of antisemitic caricatures. Furthermore, the images taken by Jewish photographers, many of which were commissioned by Nazi administrators, sought to celebrate economic productivity of their forced labor regime. Others served as empathetic memorializations of the endurance of everyday Jewish ghetto life and clandestine capturing of forbidden subjects like summary and public executions, deportations, and widespread suffering.[7] As an employee of the statistics department of the Łódź ghetto in Poland, the second largest in Nazi-occupied Europe, Henryk Ross's photographs were used during his witness testimony in the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem. Less officially, though, life persisted amidst the abjection: even as appearances were marred by the yellow stars ghetto residents were required to have on their outerwear, people were married, children played and went

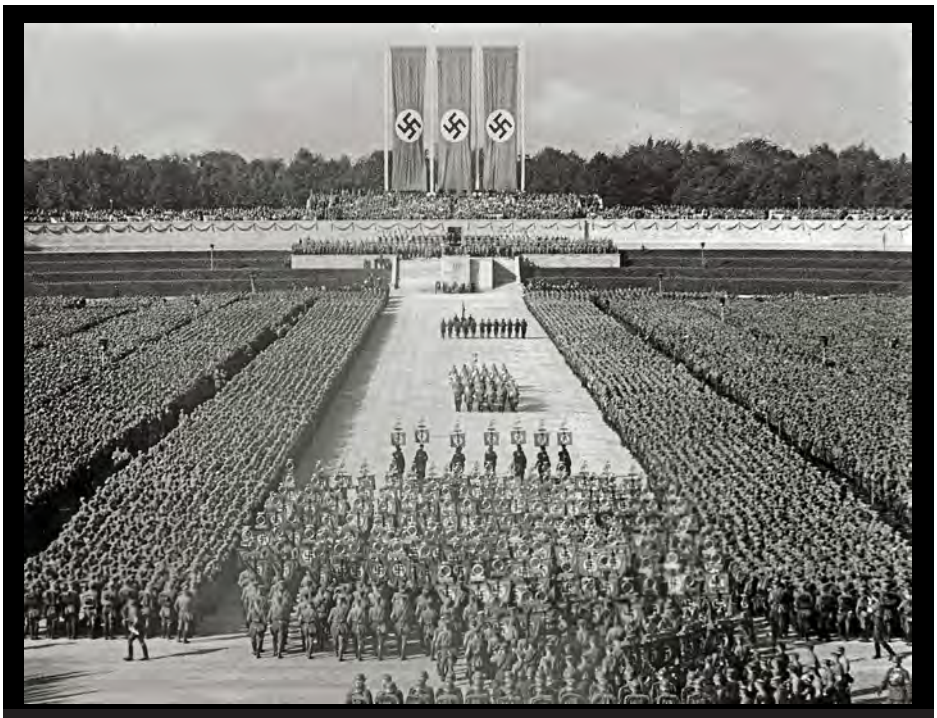
to school, babies were born, community members socialized. The juxtaposition of degrees of attempts at normalcy against the contained deprivation and precarity of the ghetto jolts the viewer.

By contrast, the photographic grandeur of the National Socialists' might is canonical: propagandistic rendering of politics to pure aesthetic defines fascist art. It is examined and praised through Leni Riefenstahl's masterful cinematographic idolization of marching troops as the foot soldiers of the God-Führer himself. The aerial photography, sweeping crowd shots, and distorted perspectives of the 1934 Nuremberg rally in *Triumph of the Will* (1935) beautified the German war to come: one of German vengeance for the humiliation of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, a victory made possible by the "dreamt-of metallization of the human body"[8] through perfected Aryan military collectivity. But arguably more chilling than this naked propaganda are the images of uniformed Nazi *humanness*. The diaristic snapshots of and by prison guards and nurses at play,

2: Henryk Ross. *Man who saved the torah from the rubble of the synagogue on Wolborska Street*, 1940. 1 5/16 x 1 7/16 inches. 35 mm cellulose nitrate negative. Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario (Gift from *Archive of Modern Conflict*, 2007), Ontario, Canada.

the recreational activities of smiling indoctrinated youths, dinner parties and private zoos just beyond the grounds of gas chambers and crematoria comprise a snapshot of an unsettling psyche in which routine humiliation and torture, nuclear parts of the party's violent supremacist ideology, are *simply* work and duty to one's country that can be as easily compartmentalized as anything else. But rather than critically illustrating the balance of dehumanizing violence and playful kinship, they are taken as further evidence as the unique monstrosity of the party members and a decade long collective madness that swept the German people: even in our interpretation of that history, horrified deference to fascist spectacle prevails.

Images of the dead, then, become evidence of the efficiency of the machinations of the genocidal German state. Photographs and videos of executions not only serve as illustrations of the routine brutality of the Final Solution, they also construct a relational frame in their depiction of perpetrators rather than simply an abject victimhood. Within this frame are photographs of the Allied (and, secondarily, Soviet) liberation of concentration camps, including the images taken by the photographic units that, for



3. A still from Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will,* 1935.

the first time, conclusively documented and internationally publicized evidence of the atrocities to which the Holocaust's victims had been subjected throughout the war. The almost impossibly emaciated concentration camp survivors have come to shape the Holocaust imagery rather than its most arguably spectacular characteristic: the industrialization of death by means of extermination facilities that have remained relatively unimaged.

Finally, the images of the Nuremberg trials and the broader process of denazification present the affective impressions of the conclusion of an era: not only the end of the regime, but the commencement of a cultural-political process of *exorcising* Hitler from Germany, and a Europe reunited against authoritarianism. With Germany's military defeat and the end of its reign of terror in Eastern Europe came the further removal of former top Nazi officials from power, the disbanding of all organizations associated with Nazi ideology, and the trials of high-ranking party members as well as military and medical officials. But beyond the punishment (including executions) of the party's top brass was the democratization of German guilt: the German people would be held collectively responsible for Nazi crimes, a sense of responsibility that still comprises the core of German national identity.

After over a century of camera-mediated seeing, and in the midst of a visual epoch of near-instantaneous recall and image dissemination, philosophies of the photograph and the kind of ethical labor it performs has transformed dramatically. We are no longer dependent upon centralized publications of atrocity images to begin to conceive of and understand historical, present, or even future violence. Where shifted gazes refuse the political impoverishment of the idea of unimaginability—and, in fact, the international circulations of racialized images of mass violence teeter on the border of gratuitous—we are caught at something of an impasse. If we can see so much with so much ease, how do we ensure the realization of the refrain "Never Again" if we hold the Shoah as an atrocity that is simultaneously made material by human actions and ideology and as a phenomenon whose

machinations and consequences exist beyond regular human comprehension? How can the image demystify the preternatural viciousness whose exceptionalism it has been deployed to reify for nearly eight decades?

Along with the *The Auschwitz Album* (a photo album illustrating the inner workings of Auschwitz II-Birkenau during a period of accelerated deportation of Hungarian Jews in 1944), the so-called *Sonderkommando* photographs are some of the few existing photographs of the processes around the gas chambers. The four photographs are very different from the standard images of the camps—taken, after all, by a Jewish prisoner rather than party officials. The frame, as a result, is rushed and unsteady: the images are imprecise as the photographer could not properly aim his camera, taking care to avoid the attention of any SS officers patrolling the grounds. We can look at one disquieting photograph, of women undressing in the birch woods, and know their fate; another photograph, taken from a hidden position inside of one of the gas chambers, depicts bodies burning in cremation pits, evidence of, perhaps, the aforementioned women's extermination, or rather, an attempt to erase that evidence—

4. Alberto Errera. *Burning of the dead bodies*, 1944. Sonderkommando photograph courtesy of Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Germany.

4A. Detail.

those individuals murdered and then posthumously desecrated. Taken shortly after the photograph of the undressing women, there is an image of a clearing within that birch forest: a frenetic shot from the hip accidentally aimed too high, a capturing of the sky into which the ashen smoke of victims would rise and dissipate.

French art historian Georges Didi-Huberman described these photos as particularly harrowing because the *Sonderko-mmando* had the most intimate knowledge of the everyday workings of the gas chambers and crematoria: they bore witness to the most abject mundanities of mass extermination — they heard the cries of their fellow prisoners, they cleaned up bodies reduced to viscera and ash— and therefore their knowledge had to be kept most secret. But, between "the imminent obliteration of the witness [and] the certain unrepresentability of the testimony,"[9] Alberto Errera, Greek Jewish officer and part of the Greek resistance, took the only known photographs of the practice of cremating the gassed bodies. In spite of it all, as per Didi-Huberman's refrain, Errera managed to "snatch an image from that hell." Ignoring life-threatening risks, and "in spite of our inability to know how to look at them as they deserve,"[10] Errera and the constellation of resistance fighters who smuggled the images out of the camp collectively compelled a moral-ethical demand to see beyond the political firewall that now forecloses parts of Shoah memorialization from our imaginations. We are forced to see through the distorted carceral frame of the prisoner that *partook* in what we've deemed unimaginable: we are presented an opportunity to know otherwise because we are forced to imagine for ourselves.

This twinned gaze of visual production and historical re-remembering is also shifted in another far less discussed photograph, one that duly compels us to focus on the quotidian death-making rather than its spectacular conclusion. Photographs of executed victims of the Nazis campaign are hardly scarce, but rarely do we see the figures behind the camera. In their positioning as aberrations of normal German history, the mythologization of Nazism affords cover to the compliant Germans who were auxiliary actors in the war machine. But in the 1941/42 photograph made in

5. Ken Gonzales-Day. *The Wonder Gaze: Lynching of Thomas Thurmond & John Holmes in Saint James Park*, 1933, San Jose, CA, Erased Lynching Series, 2006. 40 x 85 ¼ inches. Inkjet print. © 2023 Ken Gonzales-Day. Used with permission.

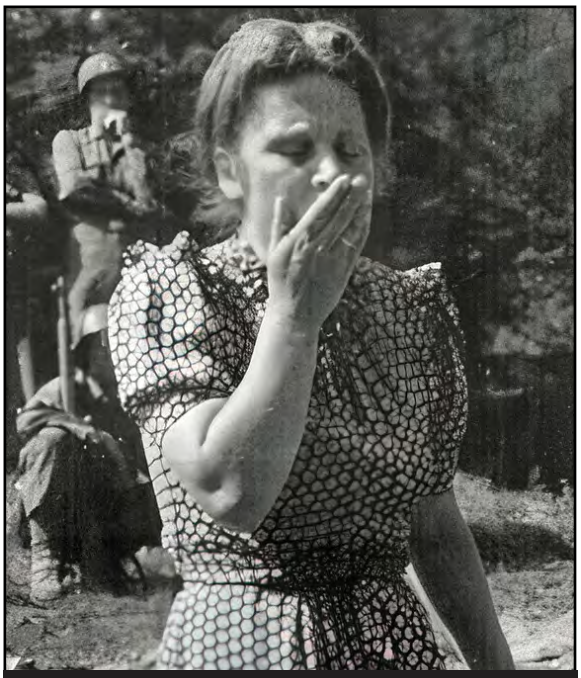
Orel in the far western part of the Soviet Union, the real subjects of interests are the multiple camera-wielding Wehrmacht soldiers attuned to the hanging Soviet partisans. Standing in the snow, one man appears to smirk while others look on with an imagined constellation of indeterminate expressions: steely focus, hardened ambivalence, apathetic obligation, calculating coldness. The gathered men recall assembled civilian audiences in the southern American states gathered to participate in the leisure activity of watching *lynchings* throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century. In order to *understand* the Shoah, following Didi-Huberman's urgent provocation, we must also inhabit the very human actions and processes that made possible the racial, partisan/political/ideological, interpersonal, and technical registers of Nazi perpetrators — all of which can be distilled through understanding the production of gazes and the multiplicity of actors beyond the recited pantheon of antagonists: beyond Hitler, Goebbels, Ohlendorf, Himmler, Eichmann, and so on.

The masculine hegemonic gaze, reverted here by catching perpetrators in the act of commemorating their killing, is not simply the frame through which one is able to see: it is a structure and structuring of looking, of knowing, and of building the material and immaterial world. The gaze, too, is the paradoxical

6. Koll. *Wehrmacht Soldiers Photograph Execution of Partisans, Central Soviet Union near Orel*, 1941/42. 5.1 x 7.1 inches. Courtesy of the German Federal Archives, Koblenz, Germany.

imbrication of the attempt to educate about the National Socialist genocidal campaign (and prevent its recurrence) with its excision from history: a disconnection of Nazism from other practices of European colonialism and of antisemitism from other legacies of race-crafting.

Part of the general process of Nazi chattelization was the surgical excision of personal effects; its visual documentation illustrates the quieter aftermath of an intimate violation of an otherwise impersonal genocidal machine. On September 23, 1940, as a part of the Aktion T4 eutha-nasia campaign, Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler ordered Schutzstaffel doctors and dentists to extract teeth from the mouths of the living and dead alike. Three months later, Himmler's second decree ordered the systematic collection of this dental gold to



7.A. Cpl. Edward Belfer. Detail. See next page.

7. Cpl. Edward Belfer. *A German woman is overcome as she walks past the exhumed bodies of some of the 800 slave workers murdered by SS guards near Nammering, Germany, and laid here so that townspeople may view the work of their Nazi leaders*, Nammering, Germany, 1945. Courtesy of the National Archives, College Park, MD.

fund the mobilization of the genocidal Final Solution. In order to access capital, Nazi investments had to be liquidated—the teeth were melted down into gold bars—in order to be exchanged for currency, which could be then use to purchase materials from neutral states and further fund the war effort. The afterlives of these dental procedures is found in the generation of profit and circulations of capital: because this transformation of teeth into finance capital was made possible by enthusiastically cooperative Swiss banks that exchanged their francs for gold, Switzerland was ordered to pay tens of millions in compensation after the end of the war.[11] The myth of neutrality is always entangled with naked complicity.

Many of the unmelted remnants were discovered by the Allied soldiers when the concentration camps were liberated. One can only imagine the horror and incredulity of anyone that might encounter these masses of gold from rings and teeth, personal effects and

8. Allan Smith. *Tech Sgt. Claude L. Campellone (left) and Tech 4 Charles Henry look over the gold fillings that were found in Dachau. The fillings were removed by the Germans when the prisoners died or were killed.* May 1945. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC.

9. U. S. Army Signal Corps. *A display of boxes of gold caps and dentures removed from prisoners in Buchenwald and recovered by American troops after the liberation of the concentration camp.* May 1945. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC. Courtesy of Arnold Bauer Barach.

dental necessities horrifically and grimly expropriated from victims in order to better fund their slaughter. Some of the most devastating photographs are ones in which the bodies of the victims themselves, and the spectacle of their demise, are absented and we as viewers and rememberers are left with their resonances and images of others attempting to understand what they are seeing, like a mother shielding her sons from carnage or boxes of thousands of glasses and teeth and dentures. Memory practice in the photographic age of post-truth digitization demands an alternative approach that turns away from an overreliance on commodified spectacles of brutality and attends to more nuanced visual-historical testimonies. These visualized constellations of dispossession may be a start.

Notes

1. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 1.

2. Throughout this essay, and out of personal preference, I will use the biblical Hebrew word "Shoah" (meaning "calamity" or referring to "destruction") rather than "Holocaust" in reference to the National Socialist genocide(s) in Eastern Europe.

3. Jean-François Lyotard (trans. by Georges Van Den Abeele), *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 13.

4. Griselda Pollock, "Photographing Atrocity: Becoming Iconic?" in *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis* (eds. Geoffrey Batchen, Mick Gidley, Nancy K. Miller, and Jay Prosser) (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 65.

5. Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* by (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012), 6.

6. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in Illuminations: Essays and Reflections (ed. Hannah Arendt) (London: Mariner Books, 2019), 166-195.

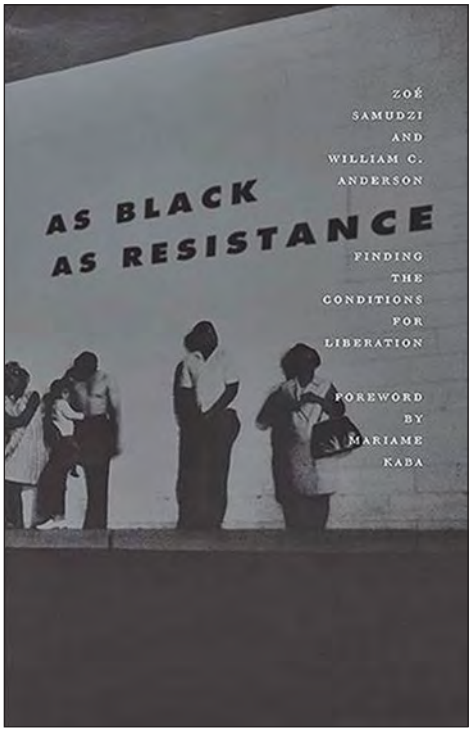
7. *The Face of the Ghetto: Pictures Taken by Jewish Photographers in the Litzmannstadt Ghetto* 1940-1944 (catalogue to the exhibition) by Topography of Terror Foundation (2010), 24-37.

8. Benjamin, 194.

9. Georges Didi-Huberman (trans. By Shane B. Lillis), *Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 6.

10. Ibid, 3.

11. Xavier Riaud, "Nazi Dental Gold: From Dead Bodies to Swiss Bank." 2015. *Vesalius* 21(1): 32-53.



Dr. Zoé Samudzi is the Charles E. Scheidt Visiting Assistant Professor of Genocide Studies and Genocide Prevention at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University. She holds a PhD in Medical Sociology from the University of California, San Francisco and is a Research Associate with the Center for the Study of Race, Gender & Class (RGC) at the University of Johannesburg. Dr. Samudzi is a writer and critic whose work has appeared in *Art in America, Artforum, Bookforum, The New Inquiry, The Architectural Review, The New Republic, the Funambulist,* and other outlets. She is an associate editor with *Parapraxis Magazine*, a contributing writer at *Jewish Currents*, and co-author of *As Black as Resistance: Finding the Conditions for Liberation* (AK Press). She is represented by Alison Lewis at the Francis Goldin Literary Agency.

Worcester, Massachusetts

EXHIBITING VISUAL ARTISTS L-R

JASON LANGER

DAVID LEVINTHAL

JOAN LINDER

DEBBIE MORAG

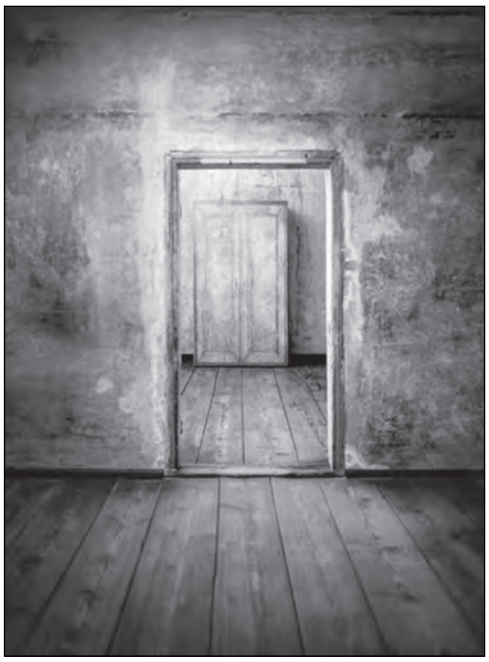
MIRIAM MÖRSEL NATHAN

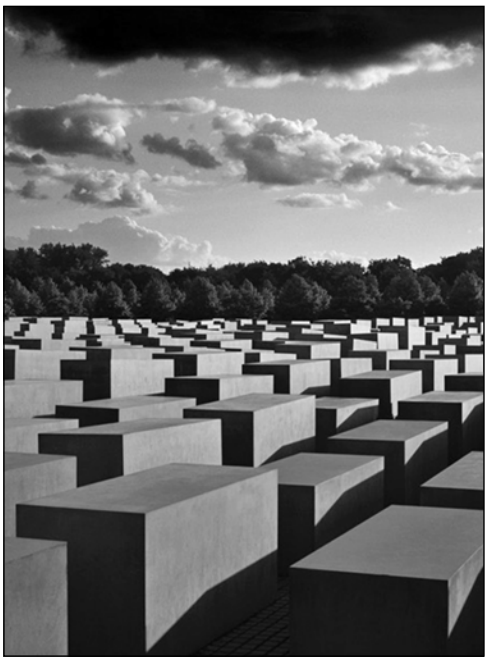
GAIL REBHAN

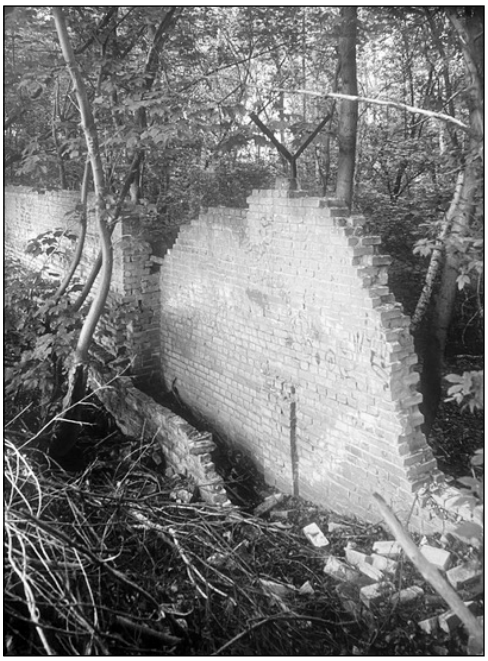
Berlin: A Jewish Ode to the Metropolis Series, 2009-2014.
24 x 30 inches. Pigment prints.

Jason Langer tells us: "My photographic exploration of the Holocaust is related to transgenerational trauma and confronting childhood fears about Germany and German people. I grew up on Kibbutz Mishear HaEmek, Israel in the 1970s. Each year I, along with the other children, were brought to the Holocaust Memorial and asked to stand in silence and remember those who had lost their lives so that we may live someplace safe. Between 2009 and 2013, I explored the city of Berlin from the point of view of that of an eight-year-old boy, concentrating on places important to the history of the Holocaust and places where Jewish people were deported or hidden. This is a story of confronting and reconciling childhood fears.

For five years, two weeks at a time, I walked the streets of Berlin with two cameras loaded with black-and-white film. I made photographs that are a combination of architecture, portraits and landscape, communicating to the viewer a sense of a Jewish person walking in the city, paying attention to important places related to Jewish history, while confronting my internal attitudes and prejudices about Germany.







Although I was born in 1967 in Tucson, AZ. I feel the Shoah inside, buried under the layers of my family's fears and my childhood experiences. I imagine it's in my kids too. Knowing that I'm a link in a chain of survivors comes with weight I cannot take lightly or cast aside."

Langer is a widely exhibited and published photographer known for his noirish visions of figures in urban settings.

Hitler Moves East Series, 1972-1975. 13 x 19 inches. Pigment prints.

While at Yale, **David Levinthal** collaborated with Doonesbury cartoonist and fellow graduate student Garry Trudeau, to create *Hitler Moves East: A Graphic Chronicle*, 1941-43. The photographs, taken from 1972-1975, explore a history of Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union. Levinthal and Trudeau's storytelling approach is both methodical and spontaneous. This became indicative of Levinthal's dramatic staged photography, which recreates historic images by utilizing toys with heightened emotional effect that blends fantasy and reality.

Levinthal reflects: "This was my first significant body of work that would become the root of all of the work that shaped my career as an artist. Over time, I realized that it was the purest, and the most honestly raw body of work that I would ever do. The series and the book gave me a focus and a realization that I was doing something special. Each succeeding body of work have been built on each other and I developed skills that I would refine and extend over the years."

Mein Kampf, 1993-1994. 17 x 22 inches. Pigment prints.

The power of Levinthal's *Mein Kampf* series (1993-1994) comes from his recreations of actual historic images. Unlike their black-and-white sources, Levinthal employed Polaroid's 20 x 24 inch camera with its vivid colors and glossy surface to bring the past into the present, thus confronting viewers with the terrors of Hitler's genocidal Final Solution. His uninhibited storytelling of charged social subjects can operate as a change agent, emboldening viewers to look inward and act when they witness something in the world that needs fixing.

Levinthal has received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and a Guggenheim Fellowship. His work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the Whitney Museum of American Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The Menil Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Untitled, 2024. 104 x 104 inches. Ink and pencil on paper.

Joan Linder explains: "*Untitled* is a life-size drawing of a set of bookshelves that depicts, in pen on paper, an idiosyncratic library from a particular time and place, now history itself. The bookshelf on the left has titles on Judaism, Jewish identity, Jewish history, the Holocaust, Israel, liturgy, literature, poetry, theology, spirituality and antisemitism. The bookshelf on the right focuses on post-war American do-it-yourself domestic themes: self-help, self-reliance, self-improvement, home improvement, homemaking, health, nutrition, and language. Through text, this piece reflects on identity and the American Jewish experience in a post-Holocaust era."

Linder continues: "In a culture hyper-saturated by electronic imagery, I use traditional materials—quill pens and bottles of ink—to create large-scale images, exploring the processes of observation and mark making. Through continual acts of observation translated through the hand, I describe a response to my subject matter that is as contemporary as my means are old-fashioned. A personal scrutiny, through drawing of my immediate surroundings, becomes an examination of a larger contemporary experience: a transformation of the personal to the universal. This drawing brings together my interest in domestic space, gender roles, and experience growing-up the child and grandchild of Holocaust survivors.

Joan Linder has exhibited nationally and internationally at venues that include the Bronx Museum, Queens Museum, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and the Buffalo AKG Art Museum.Her public art

commissions in steel, tile and glass are part of the collection that include the Metropolitan Transit Authority and Public Art for Public Schools in NYC. Her many awards include residency fellowships at MacDowell, Yaddo, Smack Mellon and a Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant. Linder holds an MFA from Columbia University, a BFA from Tufts University, and is a Professor of Art at University at Buffalo SUNY. She is represented by Cristin Tierney Gallery, NYC.

INDELIBLE, 2020. 36 x 54 inches. Inkjet prints on polyfabric.

Debbie Morag's *Indelible* (2020) addresses the memories of Holocaust survivors including Morag's parents, who like so many others, attempted to erase the memories of the horrors they went through in an attempt to simply continue with their lives.

For this project, Morag invited twelve women, daughters of Holocaust survivors who lived through Auschwitz, to act as models. Participants were dressed in long white shirts, given an old brown suitcase, and asked to bring an object that had been of value to their parents. Together, they set out on a journey to confront family memories.

Morag elaborates: "As the photographer and the thirteenth subject, I keenly felt the gap between the external gaze and the internal one. I shared a common fate with the other women, living through the same experiences, yet simultaneously took the role of observer. I subjected them to a kind of coerced uniformity – same garment, same suitcase, same pose, against the same white background. I tried to bring them to the place where as much like their parents, they were stripped of

personal identity, rendering them nearly invisible, except for a number and one object. Nevertheless, each remained a separate entity, with her own thoughts, her own hands conveying anger, insult, pain, her own expressive face and form of introspection, which retains the disturbing memories. The subject's identity cannot be erased, neither by whipping, starvation, or humiliation."

Debbie Morag was born in the Displaced Persons (DP) camp Bergen Belsen. Her parents were both survivors of Majdanek and Auschwitz concentration and death camps.

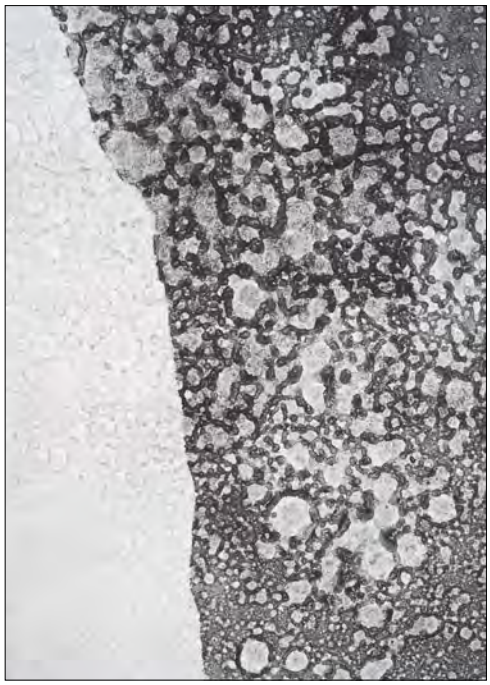
Lost Childhood Series, 2008. 30 x 22 inches.
Monoprints on Hahnemühle paper.

Through **Miriam Mörsel Nathan's** drawings and prints, using repetition and various materials, she explores a landscape of absence, loss and fragmentation.

Although these monoprints were specifically created for the opera *The Lost Childhood* (2013) by composer Janice Hamer, the process and thematic threads throughout are consistent in all of Mörsel Nathan's work. Images are purposely incomplete or abstract, often torn and pieced back together. As she tries to reconnect fragments and narrative the process becomes a kind of re-building and repair, with absence always present.

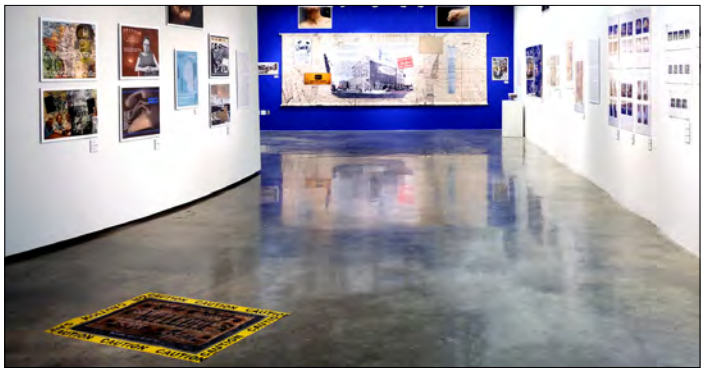
The source material for these prints comes from a portion of a pre-WWII family photograph of her aunt Antonia, her uncle Marton and their son Fredy who were murdered in Auschwitz. In these monoprints she is documenting lives lived.

This work is an elegy, both universal and personal.



Miriam Mörsel Nathan's work has been seen in numerous exhibitions, both in the U.S. and abroad, including the Jerusalem Biennale. Her monoprint *Greta* (2009) is in the Library of Congress collection. A published poet, she has read her poems at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Jewish Museum, NY, among others.

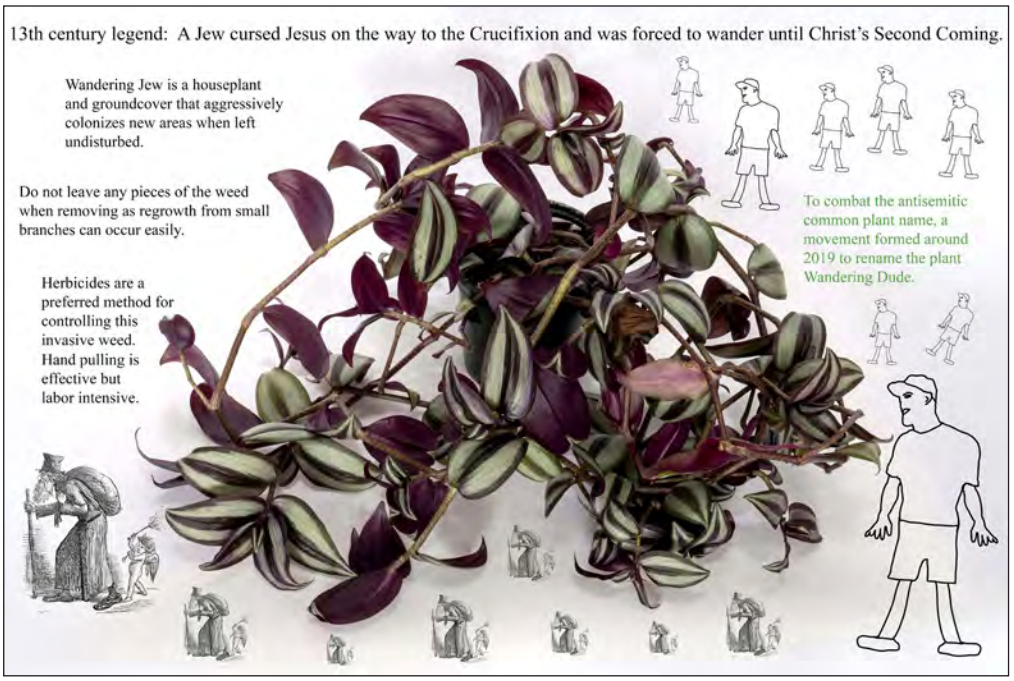
Welcome Until We're Not (floor mat), from the series ***Immigration / Assimilation***, 2023. 24 x 36 x .75 inches. Sublimation printing on vinyl, latex backing.



Gail Rebhan is a first-generation American born to Jewish parents who fled Germany and Poland during the rise of Nazism. Her art reflects this inheritance. In *Immigration / Assimilation* (2014-2023), she documents the experience of several individual Jews under Hitler's reign in Europe and their immigration stories. She began with her parents and relatives and broadened to include other families. Recent work confronts current and historical events including the startling present day rise in American antisemitism.

Many of Rebhan's photo collages are the result of extensive historical research. They incorporate old passports, shipping manifests, newspaper articles, naturalization papers, photographs, clothing, and objects of symbolic importance. Using layers of various opacities, diverse time periods and objects are blended together. Text incorporated into the image completes the story.

Wandering Jew, Immigration from the series
Immigration / Assimilation, 2018-2020.
16 x 20 inches. Pigment prints.



Rebhan has always been aware and thankful for her parent's immigration to the United States. She elaborates: "If my parents were not allowed to immigrate, they most likely would have perished in the Holocaust. People are often surprised to find out that my parents were immigrants. I suspect that is partially because immigration today is primarily seen as a racial issue. Throughout United States history every wave of immigration is simultaneously viewed with hostility and welcomed. Like so many first generation born Americans, my story is one of survival and success that reflects individual, family, and ethnic struggle. The United States is a nation of immigrants. This is what makes America great."

Rebhan is a Washington, D.C. based photographer and Professor Emerita of Photography at Northern Virginia Community College. In conjunction with her first museum retrospective *Gail Rebhan, About Time* at the American University Museum in Washington, DC, MACK Books published *Gail Rebhan, About Time* with running commentaries by Sally Stein. Rebhan received her MFA from the California Institute of the Arts.

RE-ENVISIONING THE PAST:
A REFLECTION ON THE CONTEMPORARY WORKS OF ART IN "THE POWER OF RESILIENCE AND HOPE"

BY LAUREN WALSH

The moments of the past do not remain still; they retain in our memory the motion which drew them towards the future, towards a future which has itself become the past, and draw us on in their train.
- Marcel Proust

To revisit the Holocaust today is an endeavor that carries with it enormous burdens, but also creative possibility and the opportunity for extended engagement and learning. The CEPA Gallery's exhibition is comprehensive, and investigates ways that photo-oriented artistry can shape social narratives and re-examine history. Ultimately, this show provides a space for a greater community to encounter and connect with the legacy of the Holocaust and to examine the role that photography specifically, and visual arts more broadly, can play in the present-day understanding of the Shoah.

Beyond that, this exhibition provides a vital space for reflection on the contemporary world, rife with conflict, injustice, racism, and hatred. "The Power of Resilience and Hope" compels visitors to confront deeply uncomfortable pasts and, importantly, to contemplate society of today. And it does so with a forward-looking vision—one of possibility and renewal. The title of the show itself articulates this promise: to deeply and emotionally engage with history, and to appreciate delicate yet unbroken resilience, is to walk cautiously forward with hope for the future, equipped with knowledge, principles, conviction, and empathy.

Nearly all the contemporary works play with photography in some capacity, though not necessarily in any traditional documentary format as quite a few move toward montage, fine art, and other creative, multimedia practice. Many of the artworks explore the importance of historical awareness and the phenomenon of inherited trauma across time and place; but others also emphasize the fragility of memory or the loss of the past. All together, these productions open space for visitors, whether or not one has a personal connection to this kind of trauma and atrocity. These are the goals of art and these are the combined successes of the many artists in this show.

We are all taught that history can repeat itself and that we must study the past in order not to reprise historical catastrophes. But some scholars also suggest that forms of forgetting have a place, too; sometimes in the aftermath of atrocity, a degree of "unremembering," these theorists say, can allow the passage of social healing. This exhibition doesn't take a stand on this debate, but allows the visitor to contemplate varied perspectives: What do we know now? What has been lost? What does this mean for the past, the present, for the dead, the survivors, for subsequent generations? And how can we bring this understanding—shaped here through visuals attendant to the Holocaust—to bear on other genocides, crimes against humanity, and pervasive racism?

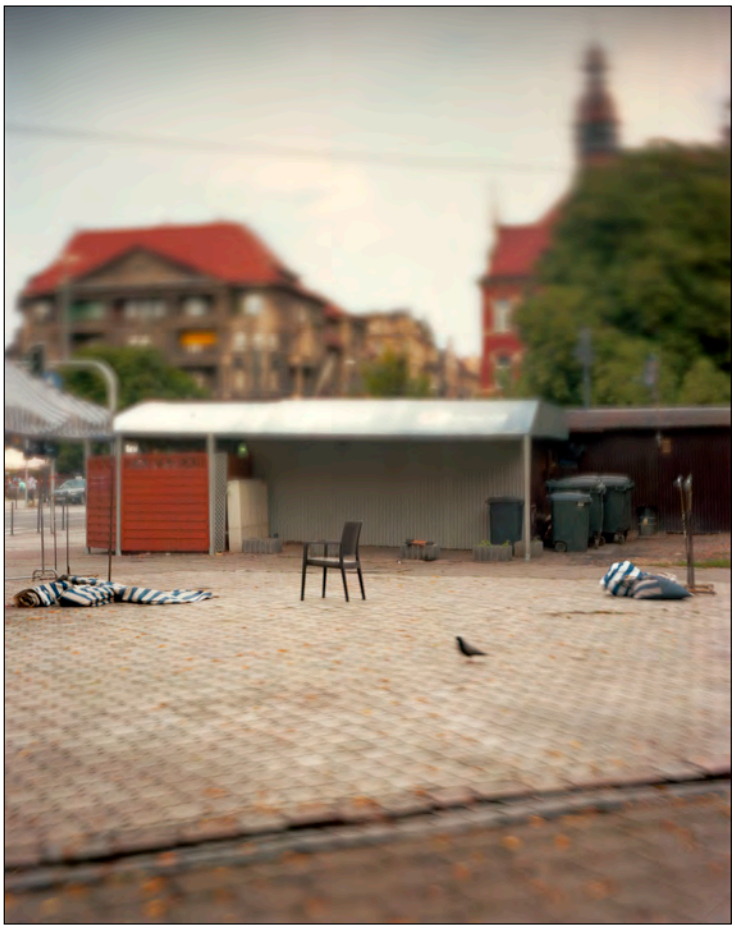
DESTABILIZING OUR EXPECTATIONS

When one takes in the art, what is immediately palpable and powerful is the experience these works open for the viewer, frequently in ways that destabilize traditional expectations, encouraging us to re-think and re-approach the legacy of trauma. For instance, there is Jason Francisco's *Alive and*

Destroyed: A Meditation on the Holocaust in Time, which explores the inheritance of loss and the complications of witnessing. As Francisco explains:

> *These photographs are prompts for a contemplative experience that itself is the primary task of the project, and in this sense, it is more accurate to call them presentations than representations. There is a documentary element inside them—it is important that I actually went into the world to make them—but the work is not, in the end, a "document" in the conventional sense of the genre.*

For Francisco, who spent years on this project, working in Central and Eastern Europe, "the photographs are much closer to the idiom of poems than to the idiom of reports."



© Jason Francisco. From the *Alive and Destroyed* series, 2016. 17 x 22 inches. Inkjet print.

Jason Langer, likewise, confronts the viewer with disquieting, startling scenes. Traveling to Berlin for his project, *Berlin: A Jewish Ode to the Metropolis*, Langer was keen to challenge the pre-existing notions he held around German identity and to "uncover reminders of the Jewish people who had lived there." He invites us into his experience, one motivated by an attempt to "confront and unwind my attitudes about Germans, Germany, Berlin, and my Jewish inheritance." The journey is, at times, surreal. As Langer describes: "these images are part discovery, part remembrance, and part fantasy." Certain visuals are unexpected, on the surface disconnected from the Holocaust, and they ask us to pause and consider: Why is this here? What does it mean? How does it relate?

© Jason Langer. *Cinema*, 2013. 24 x 30 inches. Inkjet print.

© Jason Langer. *Spree Park*, 2012. 24 x 30 inches. Inkjet print.

The photograph of a lone individual viewing Marlene Dietrich on screen in *The Blue Angel* (1930) brings us into the time period in question. Dietrich herself was a vocal critic of the Nazi regime and, in the late 1930s, renounced her German citizenship. But the felled Tyrannosaurus rex, in another image by Langer, announces no affiliation to this historical realm. In fact, it exists in an abandoned amusement park in Berlin, which was created post-WWII and now lingers as a ghostly space, no longer operational. While Langer is clear that this specific image is not directly connected to the Holocaust, it is nevertheless a haunting visual reminder of how time can wind up frozen in space (the snow in the photograph only adds to this metaphor).

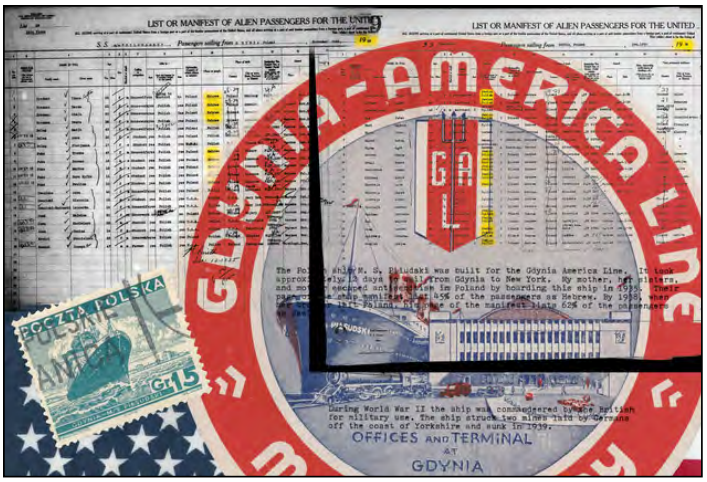
All told, Langer's body of work is about inhabiting a sphere of imagination toward expanding one's consciousness of the departed past. "I imagined walking the same streets where Jewish people walked freely before they were deported or killed by the Nazis," states Langer. "I also tried to imagine what it must have been like to be deported and sent to death camps." Langer's imagery rethinks the standard visuals, creating an experience that simultaneously unsettles and obliges a new encounter with the location of a traumatic past. This work reminds us that spaces carry memory, even when we cannot immediately see it.

THE TERRAIN OF ABSENCE

A landscape of absence might be said to characterize many of the works in this exhibition, with artists addressing that concept in novel ways. Some turn toward research to help fill gaps and deepen viewer experience. Noah Breuer, for instance, collects primary source material—including photographs and scans of patterned fabrics and personal letters—as his artwork engages with the legacy of Jewish-owned textile companies in Czech Bohemia and Moravia and engenders compelling questions around appropriation and authorship. Breuer explains, "While I have significantly changed the form and context in which these twentieth-century domestic textiles are being seen and exhibited, I must acknowledge that I have created a body of artwork by quite directly referencing existing design motifs made by anonymous designers." Yet Breuer, whose Jewish ancestors' textile business was seized by the Nazis, adds that his work "has always been about acknowledging and honoring the labor and craftsmanship of the designers."

© Noah Breuer. *Swing Girls*, 2018. 54 x 45 inches. Cyanotype and reactive dye on cotton.

© Gail Rebhan. *Banned Books*, 2018. 16 x 20 inches. Inkjet print.



© Gail Rebhan. *M S Pilsudski*, 2017. 16 x 20 inches. Inkjet print.

Meanwhile, Gail Rebhan creates photographic-collages that incorporate archival newspapers, old passports, shipping manifests, stamps, and other objects that chronicle the past. In the frame of the collage, the multiplicities of these artifacts allow time periods to blend in one space.

Likewise, Jeffrey Wolin collapses time in his project *Written in Memory: Portraits of the Holocaust*. Pairing photographs of survivors with the written account of their memories from time past, Wolin creates objects of both yesterday and today, using the photographic subject's words to literally frame their image. The past inflects who we are in the present, a recognition forced by this art, which operates on a devastatingly intimate level. For example, Rena Grynblat, the subject of one image, shares her never-ending agony for her baby who was taken away, likely to Treblinka:

> *I still keep looking. If I see somebody that's - he'd probably be in his 40's, maybe more - and he has the most beautiful navy blue eyes and I say "maybe this is my baby, maybe this is my son." And I said, "I wish I would have seen him being taken away - I would not look for him anymore. Then I know this is it, that's the end." But this way you go with a burden all through your life thinking what happened to him.*

© Jeffrey A. Wolin. *Rena Grynblat,* 1993/2023.
17 x 22 inches. Inkjet print.

This series compels the viewer to engage with the enormity of the Holocaust, but on a personalized level, as each portrait—even when it depicts other people—focuses on one survivor. The sum total is simultaneously an individualized yet collective completed opus.

And although in the space of an exhibition, visitors encounter a finished product, the process of getting there is critical to many of these productions, part and parcel of the artwork's identity. As Miriam Mörsel Nathan explains of *Lost Childhood*, a series of monoprints commissioned to accompany an opera of the same name:

> *I chose the process of printmaking to create this body of work. Making prints asks for repetition and the transference of an image onto paper. It is a kind of stamping into the paper, and it echoes, in my mind, the stamping of official documents, passports and papers so often not obtainable. I created a stencil of a family photograph but used only the silhouette of the images in order to underscore the concept of absence. Additionally, I used solvent to disrupt the ink before printing in order to give a visual sense of disintegration. In some way, the process itself felt like a destruction and a rebuilding as the print emerged, much like— in an abstract way— lives destroyed and re-built, with absence always present in some way.*

Mörsel Nathan describes her work as “an elegy on the aftermath of the Holocaust,” stating that she hopes viewers “will be moved and ultimately *feel* something that cannot be fully expressed, understood or experienced in words but, through image, can at least be approached.”

© Miriam Mörsel Nathan. *Fredy*. 2008. 37 x 28.5 inches. Ink monoprint akua intaglio Hahnemuhle, edition 1/1, Lily Press, Rockville, Maryland.

“I bring you, the viewer, an image set in an ephemeral space and you know intuitively that loss has occurred, that something is not right. And you know this because I have interpreted a simple photograph. I have pieced together a visual narrative from a still image of a boy. I’ve given you something that once was whole, but now is not, and by working with the image I am trying to make it whole again—which I cannot do, but which I try to do over and over again.”

-Miriam Mörsel Nathan

© Nan Smith. *Unity*, detail from CEPA exhibit, 2023-2024. 96 x 2.5 x 8 inches. Porcelain.

Just as absence becomes metaphor for Mörsel Nathan, so too much of the artwork in this show operates on multiple levels, moving between the literal and the figurative. For example, Nan Smith's mixed media work *Unity*, which presents a creative blending of photography and sculpture, depicts scenes at the Wailing Wall, or the Kotel, positioned above an array of children's shoes: what look to be ballet slippers, tennis shoes, and sneakers – in short, the accoutrements of childhood. The playfulness of the kids' wear, however, is unsettled by the greater context. Smith observes, "The contemporary children's shoes reflect the Holocaust where shoes of the dead children and adults were evidence of the killing." But in the spirit of "The Power of Resilience and Hope," she adds, "The contemporary children's shoes replicated in lustrous white porcelain speak to the continuation of life and the value of generations." Ultimately, then, *Unity* confronts the viewer with a monstrous past as well as a belief in the future. "For the six million murdered, there was no next generation. Those who survived knew the value of family and children," says Smith.

It is in ways like Smith's that a number of the artworks connect with the present day – whether through overtly depicting contemporary objects (modern-style tennis shoes) or by taking up current news events. Mizin Shin's *Use Your Voice #StopAsianHate* is one of the most overt examples of this, a series of screen-prints, each showcasing the title of the artwork written out and translated to many different languages, in recognition of the reality that hatred and racism occur globally. Another work, Ronit Kertsner's film *Refugee Lullaby*, addresses the plight of asylum seekers in the social media age.

Even visual creations that look backward offer immensely resonant lessons for today. "One of the themes addressed in the work is how uncomfortable facts continue to get set aside ('erased') to create a society's myths," explains filmmaker Bob Fleming of his movie *Clings and Burns, Erasing Nagoya Project*, also a part of this extensive exhibition and focused on WWII. It could be said that Fleming asks us to consider how we collectively reinforce certain convenient notions, how we stop questioning when we ourselves may be implicated. In

© Douglas Busch. *The Weeping Scroll*, *Darkness into Light: Breaking the Bonds of Bigotry and Ignorance*, 2022. 17 inches x 88 feet. Pigment prints on Tyvek scroll set in 30 x 40 x 16 inches walnut housing.

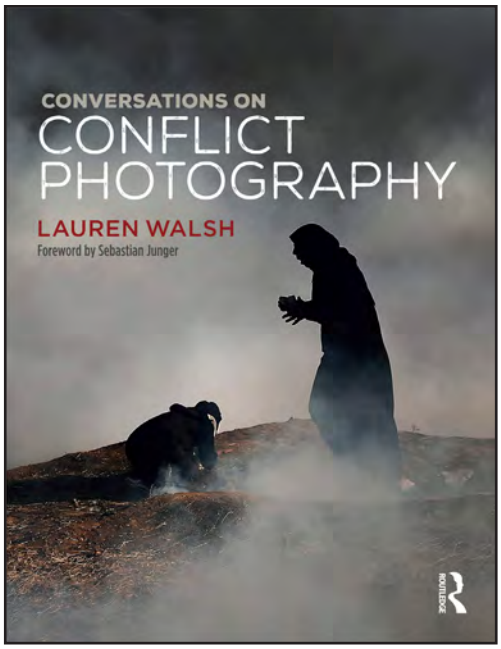
that spirit, “The Power of Resilience and Hope,” as a vast and multifaceted exhibition, offers viewers the same possibility: to set aside convenience and to look outward and into the past and to absorb the historical lessons of this show; but just as equally, to turn one’s gaze inward, to think about our role as consumers, creators, and citizens of the contemporary world.

Many of the artists featured in this exhibition have explicitly spoken about our current moment. “Unfortunately, hate-filled rhetoric and violence have again been awakened across our country with all forms of racism on the rise,” states David Levinthal. And Douglas Busch rightly observes, “Genocide continues to exist in our world, despite a commitment by so many to never witness these atrocities again.”

But these artists are dedicated to using their talents, creativity, and insight to combat such injustices. Speaking of his interactive photomontage production, *The Weeping Scroll*, Busch adds, “this work helps highlight my belief that we can teach tolerance through art therefore breaking the bonds of bigotry, ignorance, and intolerance through education.”

Sometimes the Holocaust is treated as a static thing, a distant past, a historical event from the previous century, albeit one of utterly profound magnitude. But the collective consciousness that holds the memory of the Holocaust is alive and updating, constructing and reimagining its current relation to the past. Education, as Busch observes, plays a role. In turn, “The Power of Resilience and Hope” contributes to this complex social-cultural process of collective memory: in honoring the devastation of the Shoah and the resilience of survivors, while inviting viewers to re-envision how this past and this knowledge can foster progress today and in the decades to come.[1]

1. Quotes in this essay come from email interviews conducted by the author. In the case of Rena Grynblat, the quote is a direct transcription from the work of art.



Dr. Lauren Walsh teaches at New York University, where she is the Director of the Gallatin Photojournalism Intensive. She is also the Director of *Lost Rolls America*, a national archive of photography and memory. Walsh's newest book is *Through the Lens: The Pandemic and Black Lives Matter*. Her other books include *Conversations on Conflict Photography* and *Shadow of Memory* (co-author); and she is co-editor of *The Future of Text and Image* and *The Millennium Villages Project*, and editor of *Macondo: Memories of the Colombian Conflict*.

She has published widely in mainstream and academic journals. In addition to her appearances on CNN, Al Jazeera and BBC, Walsh has appeared as an expert on photography in radio programs, podcasts, and documentary films. She is the co-director of *Biography of a Photo,* an in-progress documentary about two iconic photographs of conflict. Walsh heads media literacy initiatives both in the US and abroad, and is the lead educator, who oversaw of-the-moment development of media/visual literacy curricula for the Content Authenticity Initiative. Walsh focuses particularly on photojournalism, with a specialty in conflict photography and peace journalism. She has been awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award from NYU.

EXHIBITING VISUAL ARTISTS S-W

PHILLIP SCHWARTZ

BECCA SCHWARZBERG

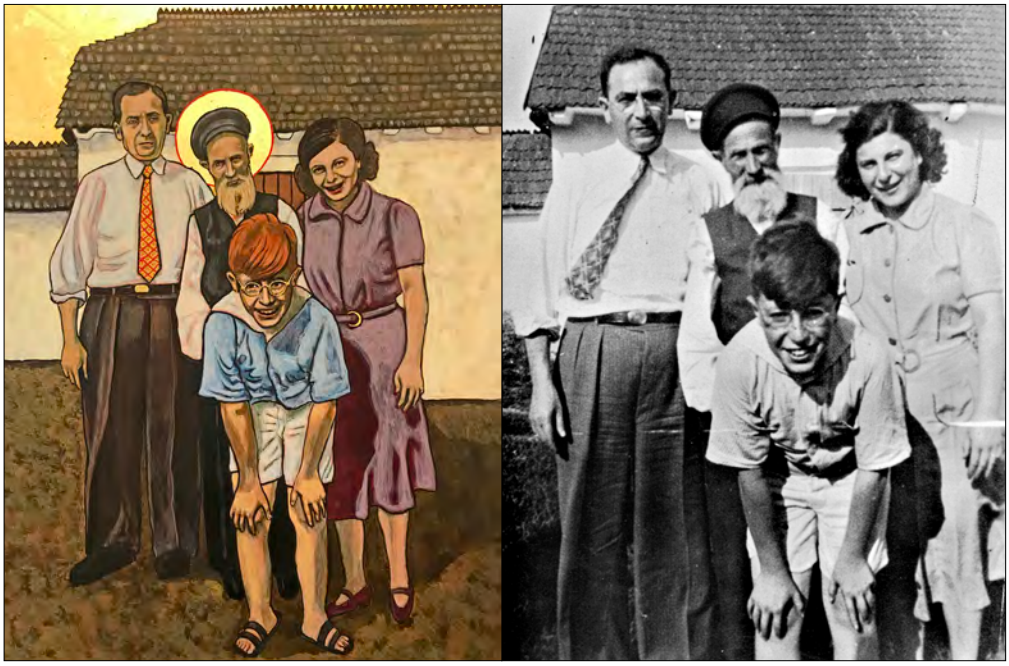
MIZIN SHIN

NAN SMITH

LLOYD WOLF

JEFFREY WOLIN

Modern Martyrs series, 2018. 11 x 14 inches.
Egg tempera, gilding, silver leaf on gessoed wood.



Phillip Schwartz's body of work references the sacred iconography of Eastern Europe, where many of the atrocities of the Holocaust were perpetrated. These pieces are based on photographs taken by the Nazis during the Holocaust; photographs taken inside the ghettos by the Jewish residents themselves; photographs taken at the camps at the time of their liberation; and one precious family photograph from 1939, which was taken during a trip made in an unsuccessful effort to convince his father's family to leave their shtetl, Yedenitz, and flee Europe. A major concept behind the work is to isolate moments and individuals so that one can focus on the humanity of the individuals depicted so that they can be seen apart from the mass suffering inflicted by the Nazis on entire groups of people.

Schwartz tells us: "My Jewish heritage and culture have been very important parts of my life. I listened intently to the stories of the old country told by my grandfather, even when they were told to me in tearful Yiddish that I didn't understand. I've read a lot of Jewish literature and history including accounts by survivors of the Holocaust. My love for icons led me to study iconography in classes and in monasteries. I have had the great opportunity of being able to learn from extremely accomplished American, English, Russian, and Greek iconographers."

Schwartz attended the school of the Museum of Fine Art in Boston. After receiving a travelling scholarship in 1989, Schwartz traveled to Eastern Europe. He spent an unusual amount of time in museums as a child, in part because his father was an art historian and because he loved being surrounded by art from various periods.

And Then There Were Four, from the series ***Reverberations***, 2023. Dimensions vary. Clay, fabrics, wood, moss, glass.

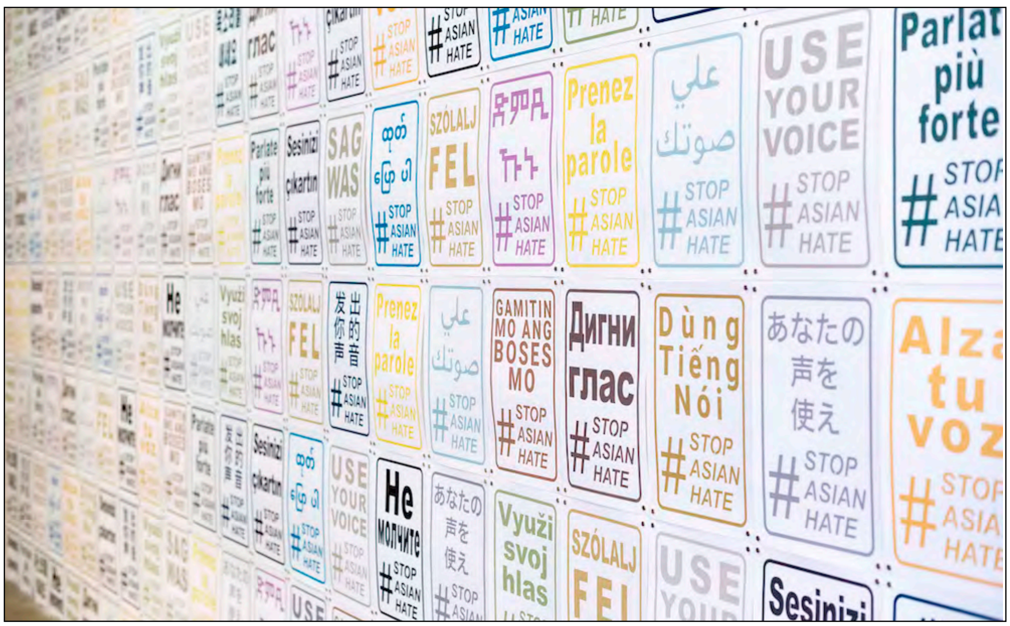
Rebecca Schwarzberg informs us: "I grew up in the shadow of the Shoah. It was everywhere and nowhere, wrapping my life in a sorrow that I felt but did not understand. My father was a survivor. He never spoke about his experience, but it permeated the air around him and filled our home with tangible grief. Even in times of happiness, the burden he carried was right there, in his eyes, in his reactions, in every choice. My father was a self-taught figurative sculptor whose work filled our home. The life-size sculptures silently oozed his story of hunger, death, abandonment, and devastation. The story of pain and suffering radiated into the walls, into the air, into the food, and into me. The way I see the world is permanently shaped by being the child of a survivor."

Schwarzberg continues: "I understand on a cellular level, that the freedom I was born into is not guaranteed to last. The reverberations of intergenerational trauma have formed my perspective from the inside out. Like my father, I use sculpture as an avenue to understand my experience of being human, to search for meaning and find healing that is uniquely tied to the artmaking process. I carry forth my father's legacy as an artist while inhabiting the unique space of the second generation, carrying the grief and loss of so many I will never know. exploring the thread of interconnection to trauma that lives in the blurry space of mine and not mine."

Schwarzberg tells us her *Reverberations* (2023), "is a project that I am just beginning and yet have always been living. I aim to address the generations of my family whose lives were overshadowed by genocide and how this truth continues to reverberate into generations to come."

Rebecca Schwarzberg is a figurative sculptor and doll maker. Her work exists where these two mediums intersect and explores her experiences of being human and the process of searching for understanding, growth, and transformation over time.

Use Your Voice #StopAsianHate, 2021. 18 x 12 inches. Screenprints.



Mizin Shin's *#Stop Hate* (2023) project started as a response to rising hate crimes as a way to speak out against racially motivated prejudice and violence through the representation of the kinds of hashtags widely used to mobilize activists across social media networks. The signs are produced using a blind embossing technique that invites audiences to change their viewing positions to get a better look at the design on the prints. These movements mirror perspective-taking and getting outside our own bubbles when it comes to viewing issues of bias and prejudice. The revised and updated strategy expands upon the original premise and will be displayed as a public art project.

#Stop Jewish Hate, #Stop Black Hate, #Stop Antisemitism, #Stop Homophobia , #Stop All Hate from the series ***#Stop Hate***, 2023. 12 x 12 inches. Embossed prints.

For this project, Mirabo Press is collaborating to host a public workshop where participants can create and print their own signs. By making and displaying these signs, the project signals to community members their own control in intentionally developing a space where it is safe to appreciate and celebrate the diversity shared among all of us.

Born and raised in South Korea, Mizin Shin is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Art & Art History at the University of Rochester and a co-founder of Mirabo Press in Buffalo, NY. Leading numerous printmaking workshops with a number of art organizations, Shin focuses on both traditional and contemporary printmaking practices to promote a multidisciplinary approach to the medium. Shin's work has been shown nationally and internationally at institutions across the United States, Belgium, Spain, the UK, India, and South Korea.

Unity, 2017/2023. 50.5 x 96 x 10 inches.
Photographic china paint decal on porcelain tile, porcelain, wood, latex paint.

Nan Smith elaborates on her installation which was constructed specifically for this exhibit, using previous works with newly made editions: "The *Kotel* for me is a space where the Jewish soul is alive. The artwork titled *Unity* (2023) resulted from emotional and intellectual experiences in Israel as I returned to the homeland, a Jew in diaspora. The *Kotel*, also known as the *Wailing Wall*, is a gathering place. The remains of the Second Temple's *Western Wall* hold the history and the ancestry of a sustained culture. *Unity*, pictures Jews in the communal act of prayer. At the *Kotel* I photographed Jews from around the world: Mizrahi Jews, Ashkenazi Jews, Ethiopian Jews to create my *Unity* image. Water is used as a symbol of purification. Israel is the homeland of the Jewish People and this artwork symbolizes that home.

"Israel has proven to be the transformational place for Jews through generations. The porcelain children's shoes reference the Holocaust, but speak of Judaism now and in the future. Porcelain is a material that was historically viewed as an alchemical substance that was valued more than gold. The porcelain children's shoes indicate the continuity and significance of generations."

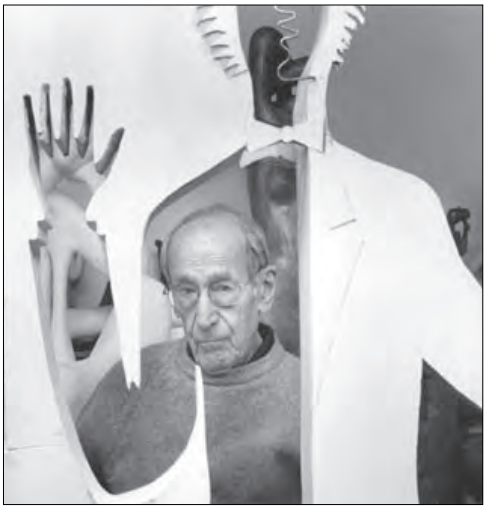
I am using shoes replicated in porcelain worn by children today: sneakers, Mary Janes, and ballet shoes. Adjecent to blue porcelain candles, the shoes are white, with pale blue accents referencing the

colors of the Israeli flag. The glazed interiors are lustrous, a symbol of the pure energy felt in the Holy Land. The glost surface on the inside of the shoes reflects the inner core of goodness found in a people who love family, community, and have the dedication and resilience to make the world a better place."

Nan Smith has exhibited her sculptures and installations nationally and internationally. A Professor Emerita at the University of Florida's School of Art + Art History, Smith has travelled and worked as an artist in Israel on four occasions.

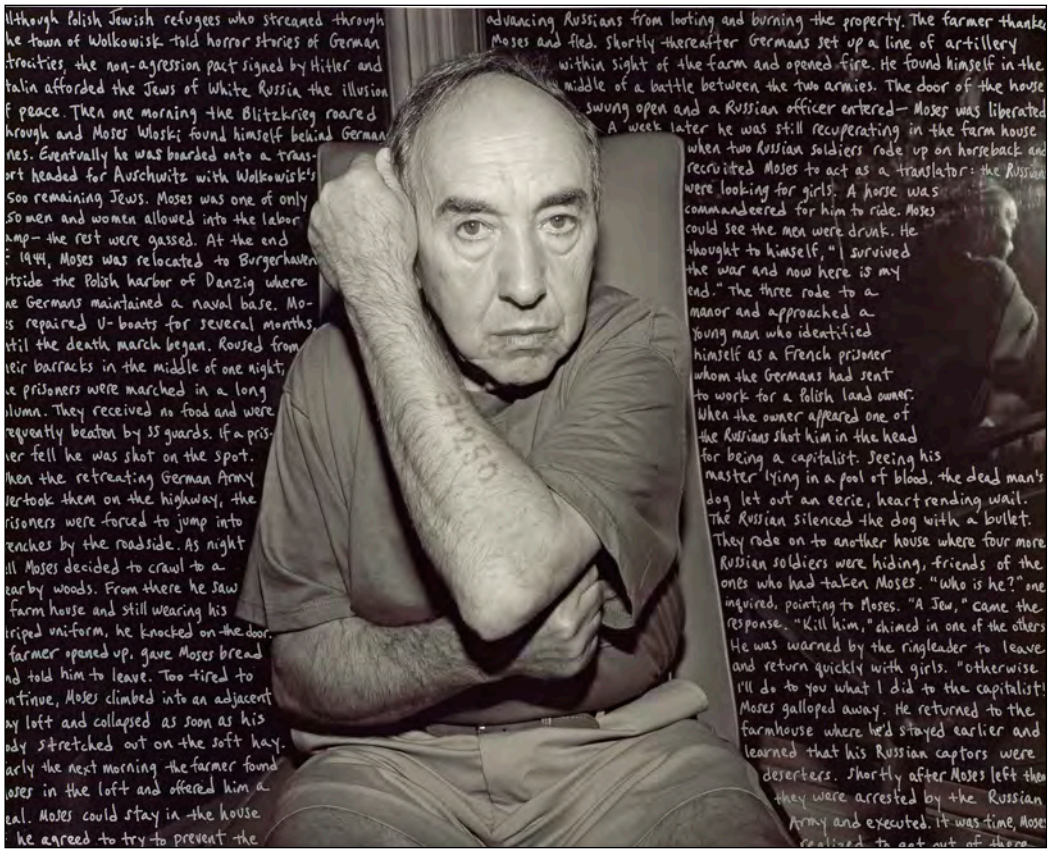
Great Love Stories: from the series ***Holocaust Survivors' Marriages***, 2006-2007. 43 x 43 inches. Pigment print on polyfabric.

Lloyd Wolf's photographs are from work sponsored by *MOMENT* magazine. They depict couples who survived the Holocaust. The text, in collaboration with writer Lisa Newman, shares their moving stories and hard-earned wisdom.



The son of a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, Lloyd Wolf is an award-winning photographer with work included in the collections of the US Library of Congress, the Katzen Museum of Art, the Museum of Jewish Heritage, American University of Cairo, and many others. He has been in over 150 national and international exhibitions, including 50 solo shows. Primarily focused on social documentary photography, he has worked on assignment for *The Washington Post Magazine, National Geographic Explorer, Elle, People, Vogue, Ms., Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Newsday, Smithsonian, AFL-CIO, NIH, HBO's Real Time*, and many other publications and organizations.

Written in Memory from the series *Portraits of the Holocaust*, 1988-1995. 16 x 20 inches. Inkjet print on Innova paper.



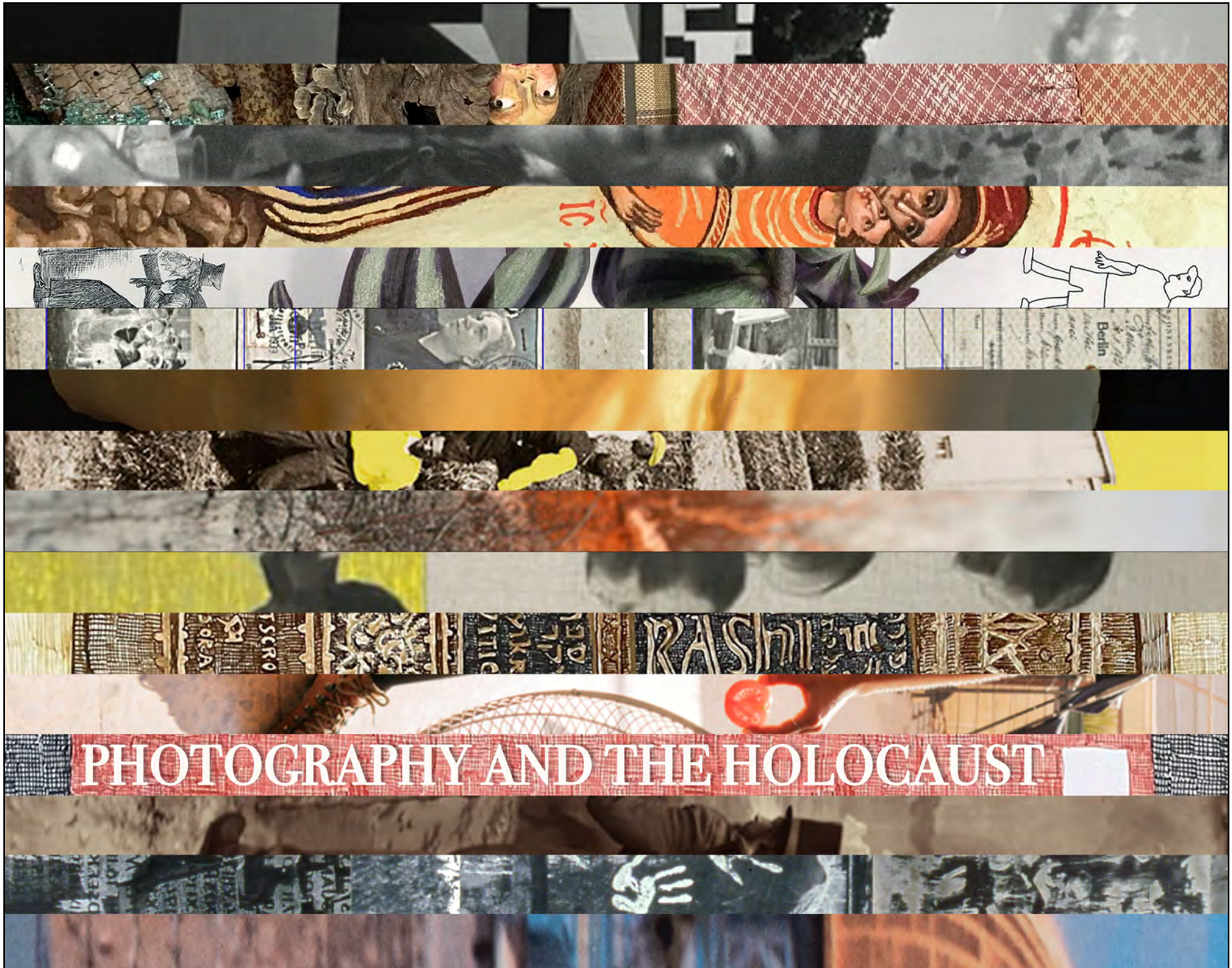
Jeffrey Wolin's *Written in Memory* (1988-1995) is a series of photographic portraits of Holocaust survivors masterfully combined with text written directly on the prints of the survivors' memories, bearing witness to the strength of each person and the resourcefulness and resilience of all Holocaust survivors.

Wolin tells us: "In 1988, I made a photograph with inscribed text of Mišo Vogel, an Auschwitz survivor living in Indiana. For the narrative, I used notes I had taken while talking with him during our portrait session. I wanted to show his tattoo, which is in and of itself a powerful visual statement about the brutality of the German war against the Jews. I also had him hold a photograph of his father who died at Auschwitz. This image acted as a window that transported Mišo back to a terrible time in his past.

"During my Guggenheim Fellowship year, 1991-1992, [I continued the project and] decided to build a [larger] series of images around the photograph of Mišo. I began each session by videotaping the survivors' stories prior to making portraits with my still camera. This

enabled me to get a sense of the visual elements I wanted to include in their portraits and to excerpt whole chunks of their testimonies verbatim, letting the individuals speak for themselves. I looked for small, intimate details in survivors' narratives rather than grander, more generic experiences or statistical data. It is my hope that by opening a window to an individual through their image with a powerful accompanying story, an audience will empathize with the survivors."

Jeffrey Wolin is Ruth N. Halls Professor Emeritus of Photography at Indiana University. His photographs have been presented in over 100 exhibitions in the U.S. and Europe and are in the collections of numerous museums including: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and Cleveland Museum of Art.


PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE HOLOCAUST

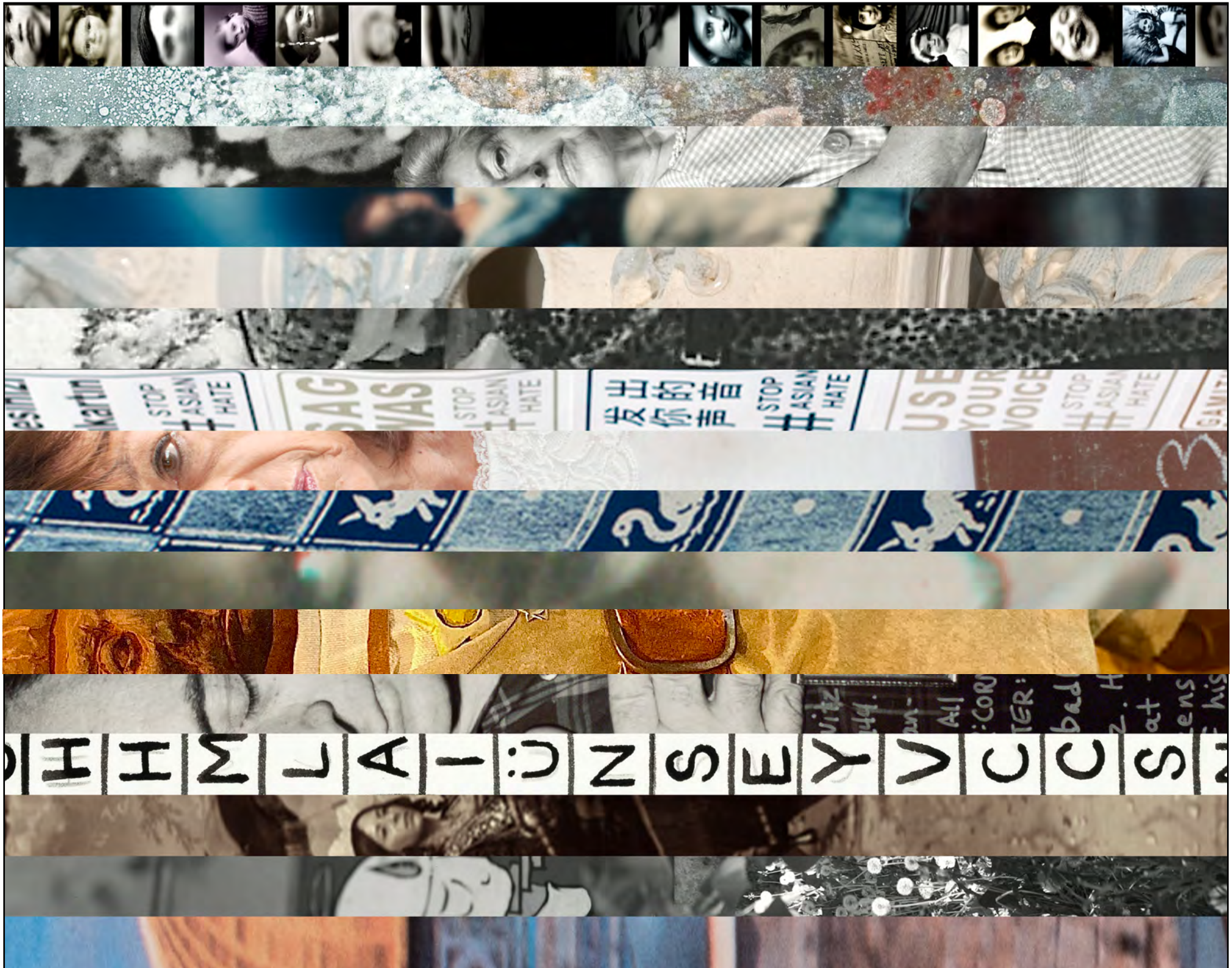

STOP
ASIAN
HATE
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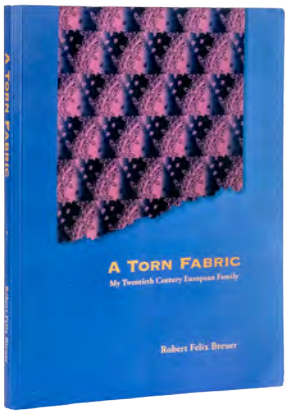
EXHIBIT READING ROOM, EXCEPTIONAL SELECTION TO BE HANDLED.

JASON LANGER

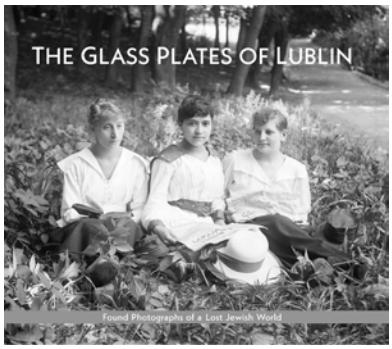
NOAH BREUER

JOAN LINDER

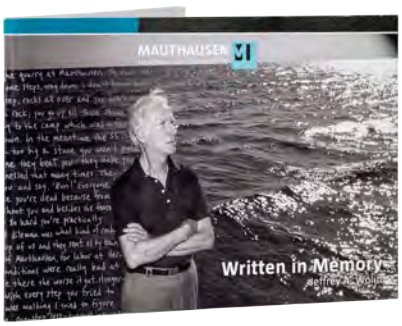


ROBERT BREUER

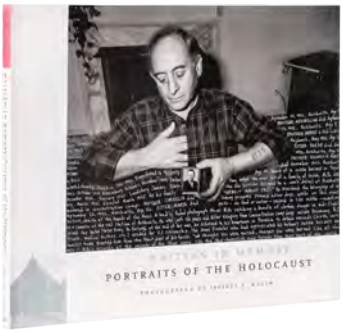
ROBERT HIRSCH

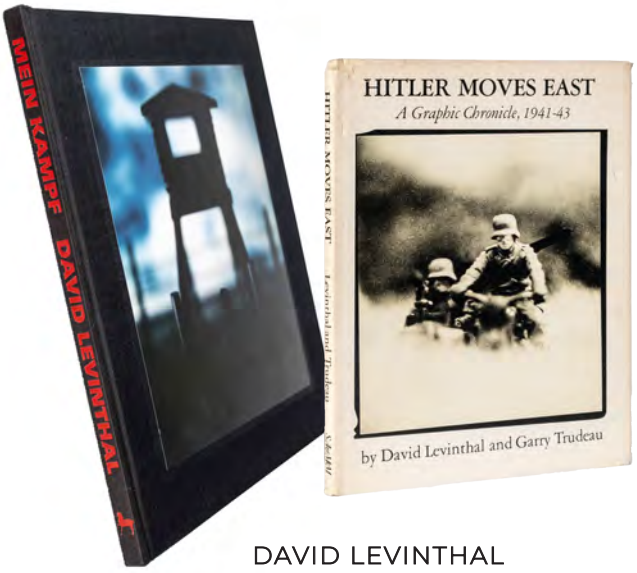


PIOTR NAZARUK & LISA NEWMAN



JEFFREY A. WOLIN





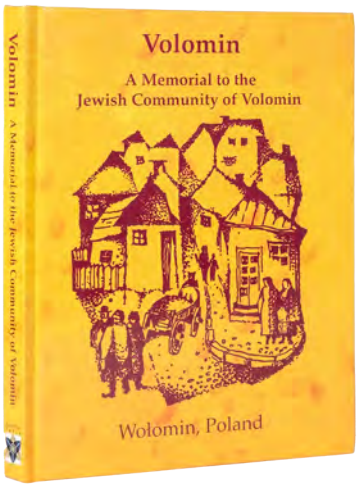
DAVID LEVINTHAL

STEPHEN BERKMAN

GAIL REBHAN

DEBBIE MORAG

JONAS KULIKAUSKAS

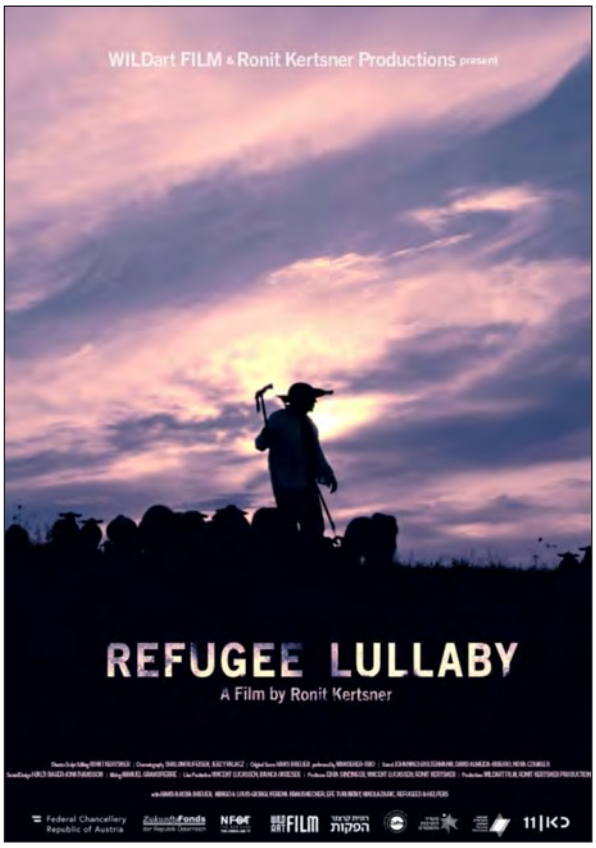


BRIAN SNYDER

MAX HIRSHFELD

RONIT KERTSNER

Refugee Lullaby, 2019. 73 minutes. Film.



In the seemingly peaceful and picturesque Austrian countryside resides Hans Breuer: shepherd by day, activist by night. Just hours outside of Breuer's modest rural cabin, the tranquility is disrupted as thousands of refugees cross his country's borders seeking asylum. He cannot sleep at night knowing there are refugees that need help, only a two hour drive from his home. Using a private Facebook group to connect, Breuer volunteers his time to help the refugees with everything from collecting food and water to driving them safely across the Hungarian border. He even sings them beautiful Yiddish lullabies from his childhood.

Yet his acts of kindness are not motivated out of charity, but solidarity. His father, a Jewish dissident, escaped Austria before World War II. Being exposed to his family's history of activism at a young age shaped his perception of the world.

Filmmaker Ronit Kertsner showcases the brave, compassionate and inspiring strength that Breuer harnesses everyday in this powerful and inspiring portrait. As an added treat, the film features an original score by Breuer himself.

CLAUS BREDENBROCK

The Nazis, The Rabbi and the Camera, 2022.
45 minutes. Film.

Photographer and rabbi Frank Dabba Smith doesn't believe in simple theories. "Black-and-white views don't get anyone anywhere," he says. That's why, even as a young man, he traveled to Germany, the country that, on the one hand, is responsible for the death of his relatives in Poland, but, on the other, gave birth to Frank Dabba Smith's greatest passion - the Leica 35mm camera.
As a young student, Frank had also read how Leica company boss Ernst Leitz II helped Jews in and around Wetzlar during the Nazi era. He later contacted the Leitz family. The grandson of Ernst Leitz II, Knut Kühn-Leitz, had had a very close relationship with his grandfather until his death in 1956. But he had never said anything about the National Socialist era, and certainly not about his help for the oppressed.

The film takes us to the original locations of the action in Wetzlar, New York and Frankfurt am Main. In addition to Frank Dabba Smith and Jill Enfield, Oliver Nass, great-grandson of Ernst Leitz II, also comments on the events of that time.

ALAN ADELSON

Łódź Ghetto, 1989. 103 minutes. Film.




An atmosphere of funereal quiet pervades *Łódź Ghetto*, Kathryn Taverna and Alan Adelson's powerful documentary chronicling the history of the Polish ghetto where more than 200,000 Jews were forced into slave labor by the Nazis before being sent to death camps.

Visually, the film, which was four years in the making, tells its story through 1,000 photographs taken by ghetto dwellers, an unknown German photographer's color slides and six minutes of Nazi film mixed with film of the ghetto today. Its script, compiled from diaries and other writings left behind by the inhabitants, is read in a tone of reflective sorrow by a dozen actors.

Alan Adelson is Executive Director of the *Jewish Heritage Project* in New York.

Łódź Ghetto, directed by Kathryn Taverna and Alan Adelson; written and produced by Mr. Adelson; cinematographers, Jozef Piwkowski and Eugene Squires; edited by Ms. Taverna; music by Wendy Blackstone. Distributed by Mr. Adelson and the Jewish Heritage Project. At Film Forum 1, 57 Watts Street. Running time: 103 minutes. This film has no rating. With the voices of: Jerzy Kosinski; Theodore Bikel, Nicholas Kepros, Barbara Rosenblat and David Warrilow.

LÁSZLÓ NEMES

The Son of Saul, 2015. 1 hour 47 minutes. Film.

The shape of the screen is unusually narrow in *Son of Saul*, the 38-year-old Hungarian filmmaker Laszlo Nemes's debut feature. Nearly square, it evokes an earlier era, when all movies looked this way, and also emphasizes the claustrophobia of the story and the setting. We are in a Nazi death camp, and really in it, to a degree that few fictional films have had the nerve to attempt.

Son of Saul is filmed in long, restless takes, with no soundtrack besides the grim cacophony of a death camp — the slamming of doors, the sifting through possessions — and is set over the course of a day and a half in October 1944. It follows Saul Ausländer, a Hungarian member of the Sonderkommando, the Jews forced to dispose of the human remains from the gas chambers, as he tries to rescue a dead boy's body from meeting the fate of the ovens. But when he thinks he recognizes his son's body, Saul sets out to save the boy from incineration.

Son of Saul has won praise from Claude Lanzmann, whose 1985 documentary, *Shoah*, Mr. Nemes had grown up watching, and who in 1994 had famously written about *Schindler's List* that the Holocaust was "unrepresentable" in a fiction film. Mr. Nemes had wanted the film to make an impact, but he said he could not have predicted its success. "I hope it stays with people, so that it becomes personal," he said. "People have to project themselves into this film."

The Son of Saul won an Academy Award for best foreign-language film.

CEPA's History, Mission & Vision

Founded in 1974 during an intense period of creativity and artistic exploration in Buffalo, CEPA Gallery is Western New York's premiere visual arts center. One of the oldest photography galleries in the nation, CEPA remains an artist-run space dedicated to the advancement of contemporary photo-related art. Throughout its history, CEPA has earned international acclaim for its unique array of visual arts programming and dedication to the artistic practice. Recognized as one of the most relevant and important alternative art spaces in the United States by the European Journal of Media Art, CEPA's Visual Arts program curates world-renowned exhibitions; its organizational structure is celebrated for efforts to maximize resources through collaboration; and its educational programming is recognized among the best in the nation having earned a 2013 National Arts & Humanities Youth Programming Award. Each season, CEPA brings an impressive roster of national and international artists into Erie County for exhibitions, public art initiatives, residencies, educational and community-based programming. The projects CEPA commissions give voice to marginalized communities, promote diverse ideas and perspectives, and help to increase dialogue around issues pertinent to local audiences. Its commitment to serving artists and the artistic practice, to engaging new constituencies with exhibitions and installations of importance is continually recognized and celebrated. CEPA's unique ability to mutually serve the interests of working artists, WNY's diverse communities, and international audiences is what separates it from other cultural organizations and is the reason for its continued success and growth.

CEPA Gallery is registered New York State 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that is generously supported by Joy of Giving Something, Inc., Hodgson Russ LLP, CEPA Members and Board members, plus numerous individuals.

CEPA programs are made possible with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, the County of Erie, County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz and the Erie County Legislators, and the City of Buffalo.

CEPA promotes photographic and related media artists of all levels, supporting the arts community through exhibitions, education, and critical public access to image-making resources. Providing individuals, schools, and nonprofits with workshops, classes, and community spaces that are accessible to all ages, abilities, and incomes.

To be an incubator of artistic creation where excellence in programming drives connection with art as an essential facet of life and community.

Located in Buffalo's historic Market Arcade Complex, CEPA is a contemporary photography and visual arts center with impact in both local and national communities. With three galleries of changing exhibits and events, multimedia public art installations, arts education programs, and an open-access darkroom and digital photo lab, CEPA creates a vibrant presence in the heart of downtown Buffalo.

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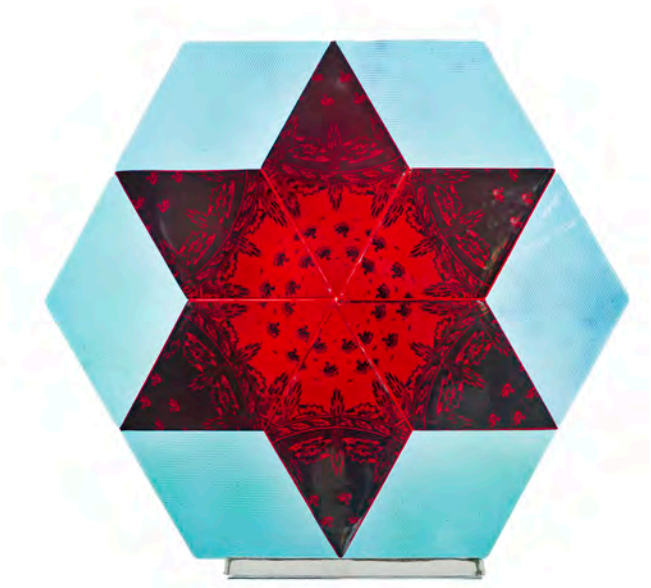

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Scan to see full exhibition checklist.

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