

University of Michigan

Controversy & Community:
The Future of Holocaust Remembrance in America

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As a high school senior in the spring of 2009, I made the personally difficult choice to join the Los Angeles delegation for the March of the Living, a two-week trip in Poland for Yom HaShoah, and Israel for Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut, Independence Day. Since elementary school, Yom HaShoah ceremonies in my private Jewish day school, looked and felt the same. I would sit in a room with peers and either listen to a Holocaust survivor share their story (many years it was the same survivor), be shown a documentary or student-made video, or both. Regardless of the structure, the content of these ceremonies always terrified me. I was uncomfortable reading about the Holocaust, seeing pictures, watching Holocaust-related films, and on multiple occasions even hoped that on the morning of our annual Yom HaShoah ceremony that I would not feel well enough to go to school. I still cannot accurately explain what possessed me senior year to sign up for March of the Living. However, during my interview with Monise Neumann, March of the Living director for the Los Angeles Delegation, my decision was made after she explained to me that she faced the same challenges as I did with Holocaust material. She assured me that the March of the Living experience was different in not being the cookie-cutter, textbook kind of exposure to the Holocaust, which by that time I came to resent. I had to trust her.

Visiting concentration camp sites and having the opportunity to interact with Holocaust survivors one-on-one completely transformed my perception of Holocaust remembrance. While visiting historic sites from the Holocaust, one does not see graphic images or watch disturbing videos, and listening to a Holocaust survivor tell their story in the concentration camp, ghetto, or city where it all happened did not allow for my peers and I to simply race off to class forgetting about the whole thing. Learning about the Holocaust while physically standing in Poland added the necessary context to make the experience more meaningful. Also, having the chance to speak

with survivors and staff members one-on-one at any point during the trip helped me find personal meaning in the Holocaust in a way that school had never allowed me to develop previously.

My March of the Living experience has greatly influenced my past four years at the University of Michigan. I have interned at the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, have been involved with Conference on the Holocaust, University of Michigan Hillel's Holocaust awareness group, have taken additional coursework on the Holocaust, and have assisted BJELA in writing about my experiences on the March and appearing in the March of the Living segment of the most recent BJELA education video. I have made a personal commitment to include Holocaust awareness and remembrance into my daily life and I know I will continue to do so in the future. But what about everyone else who may not go above and beyond to do so? Holocaust remembrance is still a crucial part of Jewish American culture, so how are public and religious institutions making Holocaust remembrance meaningful for people today? I am part of the last generation able to incorporate survivors into its Holocaust remembrance. However, their inclusion into my Jewish private day school's annual Yom HaShoah ceremonies prior to the March still failed to be meaningful for me. Therefore, I think a reevaluation of our methods is necessary, knowing that they may not be effective today and will certainly have to change in order to be effective in the future.

In this thesis I will discuss two museum exhibits and two synagogue memorials that incorporate controversy and community building, respectively. I argue that these two elements will be crucial in Holocaust remembrance for the future in making it relevant and interactive. The first museum exhibit I will look at is *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery and Art*, a controversial exhibit curated by Norman Kleeblatt first shown at The Jewish Museum in New York City in

2002. *Mirroring Evil* is a collection of artwork from 13 different artists that utilizes various media and focuses purely on the Nazis as its subject matter. In visually disturbing ways, *Mirroring Evil* relates Nazism to different contemporary issues including consumerism, the media, and sex. It forces the viewer to try and understand the Holocaust from the perpetrator's perspective, and also puts them in the uncomfortable position of being identified as perpetrators themselves in our greedy, indulgent, and materialistic society. I chose to discuss *Mirroring Evil* first because it successfully exemplifies how Holocaust remembrance should be used in American public institutions by making it relevant in the context of contemporary societal issues. Its additional controversy is important because it encourages debate in a very controlled and organized manner, and this active and productive discussion is necessary in engaging visitors with the subject matter.

The second museum exhibit I will discuss is Judy Chicago's *Holocaust Project: From Darkness Into Light*, another controversial exhibit first shown at the Spertus Museum in Chicago in 1992. As both an artist and a prominent figure in the American feminist movement, this exhibit comes from a more personally biased and politically charged angle. The 13 works of art follow Chicago's personal journey learning about and struggling with issues of the Holocaust from her primary research to the exhibit's completion. Chicago uses a much more figurative approach to visually representing the Holocaust and emphasizes the victim experience, mostly because she identifies as a victim herself. She connects the Holocaust with issues such as feminism, nuclear activity, genocide, torture, and homosexuality in order to raise awareness about them as global concerns that cause human suffering. Like the Holocaust, she believes they should not be ignored. Like *Mirroring Evil*, she gets visitors thinking and talking, though in ways more directly associated with specific events during the Holocaust.

In evaluating the future of Holocaust remembrance in terms of museum exhibits, I have stressed the importance of placing the Holocaust in the context of contemporary themes and issues. Making these connections specifically through art and exhibiting the results in a museum not only makes use of Holocaust subject matter, but also makes it accessible to wide and varied public audiences and also allows for interactive and engaging dialogue. As we move farther into the 21st century, this “Americanization” of the Holocaust as understood by author Alan Rosenfeld, in his essay featured in *American Jewish Identity Politics*, seems to define how American society will continue to grapple with the Holocaust outside of its textbook definitions.

Utilizing the same criteria of subject matter, location, and context that I use for museum exhibits, I make the transition into synagogue memorials following Judy Chicago’s *Holocaust Project*. The first synagogue memorial that I will discuss is the *White Flame of the Six Million* from the sanctuary of Temple Beth El in Great Neck, New York created in 1970 by Louise Nevelson. As another strong, independent, female artist of the twentieth century, Nevelson brings her uniquely abstract artistic style and point of view into creating a bimah wall, Torah Ark, and Eternal Flame that serve the additional function of Holocaust memorial. However, the bimah wall is first and foremost religious architecture and a work of art. In this section I will evaluate what this means in terms of its effect as a memorial knowing that it may not be the synagogues priority. Finally, I end my discussion with the Schenker Holocaust Memorial Garden at Congregation Beth Emeth in Wilmington, Delaware created in 2008. Here, I will make the argument that Beth Emeth and the city of Wilmington exemplify how cities across the United States should be honoring and remembering the Holocaust, not only in having more than one Holocaust memorial in the city, but more importantly making them relevant to their respective community members.

Throughout my discussion of these four examples in this order, I trace a variety of differences between museums and synagogues in terms of their artworks' subject matter, context, location, and target audience. I will discuss how we understand this shift from disturbing to beautiful imagery, how the viewing experience in museums and synagogues differs in terms of individual and collective memory, and the role Judaism plays in understanding the Holocaust from both a secular and spiritual perspective. From there, we can create a better understanding of how to keep widespread Holocaust memory engaging and relevant for the future.

Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery and Art

If the Holocaust is an event that American society continues to recognize, honor, and study sometimes multiple times per year, the way in which the material is used and understood must be relevant and contemporary in order to be meaningful. Individuals today may now be four generations removed from World War II and the Holocaust, which makes for a very different relationship with it than with those who were either alive during the war, or were children of those who survived. *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* brings a new, fresh perspective to Holocaust representation in focusing specifically on Nazi imagery. Instead of subject matter in representation that employs Holocaust victims for the purposes of memorial that evoke the horror and tragedy of the war, this exhibit concentrates on the perpetrators themselves. The exhibit immediately attracts attention through its controversial use of a subject from the Holocaust that in artistic representation is often considered taboo.¹ This fact alone makes the viewing experience more meaningful in sparking debate and encouraging conversations, both positive and negative, that in turn become education.

¹ Normal Kleeblatt, *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* Catalog, 2002, 13.

Curator Norman Kleeblatt conceived of the idea for the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit. As a curator he has always found interest in provocation and controversy, and describes himself as “...much more of a question asker . . . I think works that raise questions are a lot more important than works that have the quick answers.” Since beginning work at The Jewish Museum in 1975, he was curator for *The Paintings of Moritz Daniel Oppenheim: Jewish Life in 19th Century Germany* in 1981, *The Dreyfus Affair: Art, Truth, and Justice* in 1987, the first exhibit of its kind at the museum for including anti-Semitic material, and *Too Jewish? Challenging Traditional Identities* in 1996. As the child of two survivors, Kleeblatt also maintains an interest in the Holocaust. Therefore, *Mirroring Evil* combines his affinity for Holocaust subject matter and his provocative and thought-provoking exhibits.² While Kleeblatt recognized that there would be controversy, he knew from the beginning that it was necessary in “collapsing the space between the past and present . . . We understand that there would be people who disagree with the work, but I think people have to engage with the work before they make up their mind.”³

Members of The Jewish Museum staff as well as other professors and historians helped with the exhibit’s planning and execution. In the minutes of one of the original meetings to discuss the exhibit and its future implementation, the group discussed the main idea for the exhibit, examples of works of art that might be included, and a title, which, until the latter part of 2000, was *Art After Maus*.⁴ Even though archival information fails to record the specific reasons for the exhibit’s title change, it helps provide context for how Kleeblatt originally wanted viewers to understand the exhibit. He identifies the exhibit with *Maus*, Art Spiegelman’s innovative Pulitzer Prize winning graphic novel from 1981. As a work of nonfiction, it was the

² Daniel Belasco, “Curating Evil: Norman Kleeblatt, the Man Behind the Controversial Jewish Museum Show, Seeks Questions, Not Answers, in Exhibition.” *The New York Jewish Week*. February 22, 2013, 17. Hereafter “Curating Evil.”

³ Kleeblatt quotes in Belasco, “Curating Evil.” *The New York Jewish Week*. February 22, 2013, 17.

⁴ Minutes from scholars committee “Art After Maus Meeting,” December 30, 1999.

first of its kind in visually representing the Holocaust in a contemporary and controversial way by combining Spiegelman's family's World War II experience with animals and cartoons. Just as *Maus* represents a transition from second to third generation Holocaust literature, Kleeblatt hoped *Mirroring Evil* would also mark a transition from representational and historical Holocaust art that depicted victims to more modern and contemporary Holocaust art that depicted perpetrators.

Much more of the discussion focused on the potential reactions to the controversial nature of the exhibit and education that could be provided in order to achieve a higher level of acceptance and understanding among visitors. Very quickly into the meeting, Joan Rosenbaum, director of the Jewish Museum, made opening remarks and addressed the potential "problems" for the exhibit, which sparked questions and varied opinions from the meeting attendees. "It's tough stuff, it's difficult and how to ensure that people will be open minded coming into a gallery, and how do you sort of help them learn something from this art," she mused. "This is a show that is likely to cause a lot of agitation and that there will be a group of people as one of our colleagues said, who will make it their business to give us a hard time over the show," Rosenbaum recognized. "Whether they see the show or not, they're just all ready to hear about it or see one reproduction and they will go to town."⁵

In response, Ellen Handler Spitz, professor in Art History at Stanford noted that, "...one thing that scholars do, intellectuals do, is we sort of have an idea that if we intellectualize about it, we contextualize it, that somehow we can tame it. But in fact, we're never gonna tame it... I think that in fact it's a profoundly disturbing quality that's art, that's the reason it should be shown." She argued that, "the more disturbing it is, in a way, the more reason it is to be shown... And from the disturbance that it gives you emotionally, you can then go I think to try to

⁵ Rosenbaum quotes in "Art After Maus" Meeting minutes, December 30, 1990, 4.

contextualize...one of the things that the show is doing – you ask me well – how can you shock someone? . . . I mean we don't want to make it undisturbing.”⁶

Even though this dialogue acknowledged the exhibit's potential controversy, nowhere did anyone at the meeting vote to not execute it; *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* would become one of the Jewish Museum's temporary exhibits in 2002. Knowing how much controversy the exhibit might cause, planning it had to be thorough and strategic. Meetings that followed helped to not only solidify logistical details, but also worked to answer the exhibit's larger questions that would form the basis of the education programs planned to accompany it.

Meeting minutes from May, 2000 begin formulating answers to questions such as “Why the Jewish Museum?,” “Why an exhibition?,” “What do we want the audience to take away?” These minutes also listed ideas for how to make the exhibit environment safe and comfortable for dialogue and learning with the inclusion of possible chat rooms, comment walls or postcards, and/or supplemental information.⁷ By November 2000, the exhibit advisory board began drafting these strategies more thoroughly. According to minutes, strategies were divided into two separate categories: “Interpretive Strategies” and “Public Relations Strategies.” Interpretive strategies refer to the way the museum was going to handle audience experiences and responses with multiple labels per artwork, immediately acknowledging varied reactions to it, written information about artists' intentions, and frequent interaction through scheduled tours and free audio guides. Public Relations Strategies suggest specific methods for visitors to better understand and experience the exhibit. One of these ideas was to strategically present the exhibit to a group of visitors who have personal connections to the Holocaust, with members of the advisory board present to help facilitate discussion and help manage reactions. The board also

⁶ Spitz quotes in “Art After Maus” Meeting minutes, December 30, 1990, 54-55.

⁷ Minutes from “Art After Maus” Meeting, May 2, 2000, 1-3.

discussed a one-line mantra for the exhibit that would not only communicate its message quickly to all visitors, but also help avoid conflict with revisionists.⁸ While these minutes simply recorded board members' suggestions, by March, 2001, the Interpretive Strategies for meeting minutes were understandably far more concrete in specifically outlining details for an introductory gallery, introductory text panels, a timeline, labels, audio guides, and a final gallery for reading and reflection to accompany the final works of art chosen for the exhibit.⁹

Mirroring Evil is unique in bringing together a diverse group of artists, artistic styles, and media that are never explicitly labeled "Jewish" in order to comment on the Holocaust in some of the most controversial ways. The exhibit is a collection of 13 works of art from 13 different artists, who were born, exhibited artwork, and currently work in cities worldwide. All of the works of art in the exhibit represent artistic variations on the evils and individuals associated with Nazism; however, the works all come from previous collections or exhibitions that more often than not focus on more than the Holocaust as an overarching theme or subject matter. The thirteen artists are Boaz Arad, Christine Borland, Mat Collishaw, Rudolf Herz, Elke Krystufek, Mischa Kuball, Zbigniew Libera, Roe Rosen, Tom Sachs, Alan Schechner, Alain Sechas, Maciej Toporowicz, and Piotr Uklanski.

While Boaz Arad's *Gefilte Fish* was featured in *Food for Thought: A Video Art Sampler*, a second exhibit in the Jewish Museum from October, 2006 to February, 2007, his *Hebrew Lesson* appeared in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit in 2002.¹⁰ In *Hebrew Lesson*, Arad takes short, one-syllable clips from Hitler's German propaganda speeches and assembles them strategically to make the thread sound like a Hebrew sentence. The Hebrew sentence translated into English reads, "Greetings, Jerusalem, I am deeply sorry." The video and sound are both disjointed,

⁸ Minutes from Advisory Board Meeting, November 27, 2000, 1-7.

⁹ Outline of Interpretive Strategies, dated March 12, 2001, 1.

¹⁰ <http://www.thejewishmuseum.org/exhibitions/FoodForThought>, accessed on April 10, 2013.

difficult to understand at first, though the language and the apology within it become more recognizable after it repeats seven times. There is irony in hearing an apology from Hitler using the same language to call for the murder of millions of people. The video tricks viewers and forces them into the awkward physical and mental position of both acknowledging an apology from Hitler and considering the thought of forgiving him for the Holocaust. This contemplation quickly becomes horrific as the viewer recognizes the reality of grappling with such a possibility.¹¹

L'Homme Double, Christine Borland's sculptural work of art featured in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit in 2002, was executed in 1997 and displayed as the focus of one solo exhibition in 1998 in Arhus, Denmark.¹² In the installation, Borland provided six forensic sculptors with two photographs and a written description of Dr. Joseph Mengele and asked them to create physically accurate models of his head. In the end, no two models are alike. Kleeblatt connects this detail to the larger issues of Holocaust representation in highlighting its failure to be objective, ironically through Borland's success of removing both subject and artist.¹³

Mat Collishaw uses and manipulates photography as inspiration for his multi media artwork, and his photograph *Gustav and Helga* from his 2000 *Burnt Almonds* collection was selected for *Mirroring Evil* in 2002. It depicts the eventual suicides of German officers in the context of modern day vanitas paintings, following a final night of indulgences after their defeat in World War II.¹⁴ In this photograph, Collishaw veers away from the masculinity, order, and control often associated with fascism and forces the viewer to confront Nazis in a way that contrasts how they had been visually represented in popular culture. But there is no immediate or

¹¹ Joanna Lindenbaum on Arad in *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 121-122.

¹² <http://www.annaschwartzgallery.com/works/biography?artist=11>, accessed on January 11, 2013.

¹³ Norman Kleeblatt on Borland in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 100.

¹⁴ <http://www.matcollishaw.com>, accessed on January 12, 2013

obvious indicator that the individuals in this photo are Nazis. This plays with our emotional and moral responses as viewers in questioning the level of sympathy that we have for dying bodies, and whether our feelings change, if at all, once we discover that they are, in fact, Nazis.¹⁵

Rudolph Herz's *Zugzwang* featured in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit is an empty gallery space with alternating photos of Hitler and Marcel Duchamp adorning the walls. Herz plays with the many parallels between the two individuals, both direct and ambiguous. Hitler, known as the 20th century's most evil villain and Duchamp, known as the hero of 20th century avant-garde, were both photographed by the same photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann.¹⁶ The title *Zugzwang* refers to a situation in chess where one player is forced to make a move when ideally he would prefer to pass.¹⁷ Herz uses photography, both his own medium and that which directly relates Hitler to Duchamp, and arranges them as a chessboard, which forces them to coexist in a situation where viewers may not wish to see them. Additionally, Kleeblatt recognizes, too, that in commenting on Hitler and his evil ambiguously related to Marcel Duchamp, Herz's installation marks an example of Dada art, the style Duchamp is most known for.¹⁸

The *Mirroring Evil* exhibit features three photos from Elke Krystufek's *Economical Love: Pussy Control, Hitler Hairdo, and Abstract Expressionism*. In these photo collages, Krystufek offers a feminist response to Piotr Uklanski's *The Nazis*, also featured in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit. She re-appropriates images, ones that Uklanski appropriated for his own installation, and juxtaposes them with images of her naked body in varying poses to comment on male domination she finds both in Uklanski's installation and in the art world as a whole. By strategically adjusting the glances of both herself and the featured Nazis towards the viewer, she

¹⁵ Lindenbaum on Collishaw in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 135

¹⁶ Kleeblatt on Herz in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 117.

¹⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zugzwang>, accessed on April 10, 2013.

¹⁸ Kleeblatt on Herz in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 119.

succeeds in getting visitors stuck in what Kleeblatt refers to as a “standoff, [where] each [is] guilty of stealing the other’s likeness and dignity.”¹⁹

Utilizing a minimalist approach to art, Mischa Kuball’s *Hitler’s Cabinet* from 1990 combines light and a large cruciform shaped structure made of inexpensive, unpainted, and unadorned wood in order to project 35 mm slides from rectangular wholes cut out of each arm. The slides project scenes from 1920s and 30s German films, and when projected they become distorted, phantom like forms in an eerie shade of blue. Together with the wood, the whole thing becomes a swastika, as light alone provides the authority to charge a simple wood structure with meaning and commentary on Nazism in between World War I and World War II. The change from permanent wood cross to temporary swastika is a visual representation of Siegfried Kracauer’s *From Caligari to Hitler*, a psychological history of German cinema that foreshadows the rise of Nazism through German film. Just as these random, though specific, film stills suggest the rise of Nazism, so to does Kuball’s installation strategically and temporarily flash, creating a swastika.²⁰

In his *LEGO Concentration Camp Set*, Zbigniew Libera combines one of the world’s most beloved toys with some of the world’s most horrific and deadliest spaces. Libera photographed miniatures that he built and composed these images onto boxes together with the LEGO logo in order to produce the familiar packaging. In this composition of seven boxes in an edition of three, Libera suggests that concentration camps and their subsequent parts are just as iconic in the 20th century as Legos. The installation sparked tremendous controversy and legal battles, understandably with any audience, though more concretely first with the LEGO toy company and then the Venice Biennale. LEGO insisted Libera remove its logo from his artwork

¹⁹ Kleeblatt on Krystufek in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 111-112.

²⁰ Kleeblatt on Kuball in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 106-107.

lest they be associated with its content, but they lost because of a European law that grants artists permission to use products and logos in their work. Libera ultimately withdrew himself from the Biennale after the Polish curator demanded he not show it along with his other featured artworks. Its display in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit allows adult visitors to engage with it, to view the set and immediately associate it with their childhood, establishing a connection to it that is then immediately repelled with the recognition of what the Lego set actually represents.²¹

For his *Live and Die as Eva Braun*, Roe Rosen combined an artist's book of 10 chapters with 60 black and white drawings in order to encourage visitors to identify with Hitler's mistress Eva Braun. While the text references different moments of their relationship, it builds up to and emphasizes the moment where Hitler will kill her before committing suicide. Through images from German picture books, Romantic paintings, and popular culture, Rosen creates an untraditional fairy tale where "playfulness is undercut with signs of violence, trauma, perversion, and destruction," said critic Roger Rothman.²² *Live and Die as Eva Braun* creates a personalized journey for visitors to engage with the notion of evil through the lens of someone who fell in love and lived with it. Almost as if one is entering forbidden territory, Rosen lures the viewer into a personal and private engagement with Eva as she answers their questions and divulges her secrets to them. To what extent did she support Hitler in the Holocaust? Was her nature as evil as his? Was there no soft spot in any part of her heart for all of the people who died by his commands? In excluding images of Hitler, Rosen allows Eva to share more freely and easily.

In his two sculptures *Giftgas Giftset* and *Prada Deathcamp*, Tom Sachs explores his personal cynicism for the understandings of "good" and "evil" proposed by both Holocaust

²¹ Kleeblatt on Libera in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 129-131.

²² Quote from critic Roger Rothman from Kleeblatt on Rosen in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 101-102.

museums and the designer fashion goods industry.²³ I think his rationale is surprisingly unique in being so insightful, yet incredibly simple. In the same way that Holocaust Museums condition visitors to believe that Jews are good and Nazis are bad, so too does the designer clothes industry condition shoppers to purchase anything with a certain label on it. To some degree I would have to disagree because on a very fundamental level both are legitimate in the messages they send. However, on a deeper level, I never considered what else might also be true in both scenarios. Maybe both really do succeed in creating these permanent notions of good and evil, though in reality appear more fluid.

He brings the two together first in *Giftgas Giftset*, a set of three Zyklon-B cans wrapped in the familiar colors and logos of designer brands Chanel, Hermes, and Tiffany & Co. Then, in *Prada Deathcamp*, Sachs constructs a model concentration camp on top of what appears to be a flattened out Prada shoebox, complete with a Prada logo for each barrack and watch tower. While the structure of *Prada Deathcamp* resembles the construction of *LEGO Concentration Camp*, they come with a very different set of meanings. While *LEGO Concentration Camp* is meant to appeal to the child inside of us and openly invites us to sit down and spend hours playing with its pieces, *Prada Deathcamp* is the upscale, designer fashion concentration camp that is clean, sophisticated, and not for children's hands to be playing with lest something break. They act almost as child and parent to the extent that concentration camp models can be defined in such a way. In both, Sachs fuses the Holocaust and the fashion industry together and asks viewers to forego their understandings of what is good and what is evil in an attempt to evaluate their effectiveness when taken out of traditional context.²⁴ In combining the Holocaust with mass consumer culture, Sachs exposes the notion of the Holocaust as a commodity like the fashion

²³ Kleeblatt on Sachs in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 132.

²⁴ Kleeblatt on Sachs in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 133.

industry, which is only recognizable and appealing on the surface through obvious visual cues such as photographs and labels.

Barcode to Concentration Camp Morph and *It's the Real Thing – Self-Portrait at Buchenwald* are the two digital photographs composed by Alan Schechner that were featured in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit. In *Barcode to Concentration Camp Morph*, Schechner digitally transforms a barcode of numbers and lines into an image of Jews in a concentration camp. The numbers atop the lines become the heads of the victims while the lines become the stripes of their uniforms. The larger message of this digital image connects the barcodes and victims. Just as Schechner transforms the barcodes into victims, so too did the Nazis transform victims into barcodes, dehumanizing them to mere numbers. A second image of Schechner's that adds to this discussion of the Holocaust as a commodity is his *It's the Real Thing – Self-Portrait at Buchenwald*. Schechner places a photo of himself, young and healthy, holding a Coca-Cola can, within Margaret Bourke-White's famous photograph of Jews upon liberation at Buchenwald.²⁵

This photo seems to maintain a larger shock value, where viewers may be offended to see a photo of Schechner coupled with a photograph of Jewish Holocaust victims. However, it is interesting to note that the shock value does not come with just seeing an image of survivors in concentration camps, but rather with the inclusion of Schechner holding a soda. We have become accustomed to these photos of victims and they are so overexposed that they no longer spark shock within us to view them. Rather, they become shocking when placed in the context of something modern and contemporary, in the context of something incredibly human. A photograph of a healthy man drinking a coca-cola is not shocking, and as previously mentioned neither is that famous photograph from the liberation of Buchenwald. But both Diet Coke and Holocaust photographs are commodities in our society today, and put together, Schechner

²⁵ Lindenbaum on Schechner in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 114.

succeeds in evoking that shock. This asks viewers to question these commodities together as one entity, and the potential dangers in considering it.

Alain Sechas' *Enfants Gâtés (Spoiled Children)* features five of his signature white cartoon animal sculptures placed atop five white pedestals, each contained in its own white pen. On the surface these figures would appear harmless except that all are made more threatening with Hitler mustaches, rattles adorned with swastikas, and parted hair just as Hitler had it. There are mirrors on opposite ends of the gallery space, extending the line of sculptures infinitely. In using cartoon like animals in installations that feature subjects such as suicide, rape, torture, and decapitation, Kleeblatt notes that Sechas' works such play with contradictions, such as childhood and violence, style and surface, real and reflected, and craft and artlessness. Sechas' use of mirrors to display infinitely many of these animated, childlike animal figures adorned by Nazi symbols connects well to Israeli writer David Grossman and his idea of the little "Nazi inside all of us" as though it was innate rather than acquired.²⁶

Eternity #14 is one of many mock advertisements and videos that Maciej Toporowicz assembled in order to highlight how fascist imagery is often used in contemporary advertising as a means to seduce buyers, and how often it succeeds in doing so. Toporowicz appropriates images of prostitution, depravation, and Nazi architecture and sculpture and pairs them with logos of popular products and companies in order to comment on and add threat to the seductive nature of advertising. He uses the perils of advertising to comment on the evils of the Holocaust. The Nazis created a "brand name," and in advertising (or propaganda), Hitler sold Nazi ideologies to millions of people simply because he sounded great selling it and soon everyone

²⁶ Kleeblatt on Sechas in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 126-128.

was doing it. In advertising, just as in Nazism, you never really question the potential conflicts in purchasing something you want if you want it that badly.²⁷

Kleeblatt cites what Susan Sontag refers to as “fascist fascination” where fascism’s ideas of physical perfection are joined notions of control, submission, ecstasy, and pain. In his photographs and videos, Toporowicz mixes and matches these logos and images, testing and almost mocking viewers to see how closely aesthetics are noticed and understood in looking at an advertisement. In *Eternity #14*, Toporowicz chooses a black-and-white image of the megalomaniacal buildings by Nazi architect Albert Speer with Aryan sculptures by Arno Breker on either side of the main entrance, silkscreened to give it almost a blurry effect. The Eternity logo by Calvin Klein is featured at the top of the photograph, which not only highlights the fact that Calvin Klein often used fascist imagery in advertising, but once again puts the viewer in limbo of both being horrified though refusing to look away.²⁸

Piotr Uklanski’s installation *The Nazis*, featured in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit, also strives to connect the subject of the Holocaust to mass media, and does so using the film and television industry. *The Nazis* is a collection of 166 images of male actors from popular films and television shows who are dressed as the Nazis they played in their respective roles. Uklanski links Nazi evil and Hollywood glamour in a way designed to make viewers feel uncomfortable. Sometimes they are unable to recognize and positively identify with their favorite actors knowing that the collection recognizes and identifies them as Nazis. The installation received negative press worldwide, though *The London Times* reviewer Waldemar Januszczak was able to see the validity and importance of the installation. He recognized flaws in the film industry for

²⁷ Kleeblatt on Toporowicz in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 123.

²⁸ Kleeblatt on Toporowicz in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 124.

what he refers to as “harmless” and “picturesque” representations of Nazis and not the fault of Uklanski for being the one to notice and grapple with it.²⁹

Between a group of artists, only a third of whom are Jewish, and artwork that is never openly identified as “Jewish”, it is understandable that the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit faced tremendous controversy because it dealt with a historic event that is almost always identified as Jewish. It remains one of the most controversial exhibits of its kind because of its subject matter, who was dealing with it, and how it was treated. Kleeblatt and the individuals he conversed with about the exhibit prior to its opening acknowledged and prepared for this, though it nevertheless raises questions about Holocaust art today. The *Mirroring Evil* exhibit was executed by a curator within the limitations of his own vision and creativity; Kleeblatt had the authority to do with the exhibit as he wished in terms of which works were exhibited and how. In terms of the artwork itself, however, no one ultimately besides the artists had the authority to determine what was appropriate subject matter.

The 13 artists in the exhibit used children’s toys, mass media, consumerism, and nudity to create 13 works of art in the 1990s, generations separated from the Holocaust, in order to make a comment about evil through the lens of Nazis. They chose toys, mass media, and consumerism because those are very simple entities that are very relevant to people’s lives today worldwide. We can all associate with toys, famous movie stars, and advertisements that we can admit to seeing everyday. On the surface these are things that make our lives great in allowing us to have fun on top of all the cool things society tells us we have to have. But in practical and realistic terms, we fail to see the risk and potential dangers that come along with such materialism that concretizes such a fixed understanding of what we should and should not be owing, doing, or buying. Whether Schechner who warns of the dangers of the Holocaust as a

²⁹ Kleeblatt on Uklanski in *Mirroring Evil* catalog, 108-110.

commodity today, or Toporowicz who warns of the dangers of seductive advertising, these artists find danger in the largest and most relevant aspects of our lives. If we discover these dangers for ourselves in the context of Nazi evils from history, *Mirroring Evil* hopes visitors walk away lest we face our own downfall.

While majority of this exhibit's controversy lies in the artwork itself, it also exists in the diversity of the 13-featured artists. Further scrutiny of the exhibit's catalog and archival information reveals that three of the 13 artists are Jews, two of the 13 are female, two are Israeli, and only two are American. The Holocaust was a genocide that targeted minorities such as Jews and historically dealt more harshly with women and children over men in killing them in lieu of forced labor. Why are these two groups, then, a minority in this group of artists who visually represent the Holocaust? Additionally, the Holocaust is a subject that is arguably dealt with most in the United States and Israel. Thus, why are Israelis and Americans another minority among the artists of this exhibit? Whose Holocaust is this anyway?

Throughout the 20th and now 21st century, the Holocaust became a "Jewish" tragedy that is dealt with, honored, and memorialized by Jews, which is why we find it most present in Israel and the United States. The six million who perished are honored and remembered in museums, memorials, most notably Yad Vashem in Israel and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC, and Jewish institutions including synagogues internationally. Additionally, Yom HaShoah provides one day a year for Jews collectively to congregate and recognize the Holocaust, just one week before celebrating Israel's Independence Day. While millions of other individuals from varying minority groups perished in the Holocaust, we simply do not find the same culture of remembrance as we do with Jews. Therefore, it is fascinating that Kleeblatt compiled a group of artists that are predominantly not Jewish.

In regards to authority, we have already established that these artists maintain complete control over their own creative instincts, but why did Kleeblatt use his curatorial authority to include a more obvious non-Jewish voice? The answer is that there is no “non-Jewish” voice here. While all 13 artworks use Nazi imagery, most, if not all of them, were previously shown as part of exhibits that were not explicitly about the Holocaust, but rather other contexts such as feminism and consumerism. Through his research, however, Kleeblatt found and collected these 13 artworks and arbitrarily added new meaning to them by placing them into the larger context of Holocaust evils. *Mirroring Evil* is the furthest from what we consider traditional Holocaust art, which depicts the tragedy and its victims that are almost always identified as Jews. This type of art makes Judaism an issue. *Mirroring Evil* does not. In an interview for the *Chicago Tribune*, Kleeblatt explained that, “The Holocaust is the one time that world history and Jewish history come together.”³⁰ He collected these artworks from such a diverse group of artists to comment on the larger question of evil that exists in all humanity today, and in the context of Nazis, make visitors aware of the dangers of hatred in being so easily hidden and overlooked. This exhibit neither ignores Jews as victims nor glorifies Nazis as non-Jews, but rather it pushes religion aside in lieu of universal themes that are relevant to all visitors from around the world.

The unique diversity of artists in *Mirroring Evil* also helps us understand how this exhibit foreshadows Holocaust remembrance for the future. The goal is to alter our approach to Holocaust material so it may become more relevant and relatable for Jews, but also all individuals. That being the case, it only makes sense to include a diversity of artists’ perspectives. If Kleeblatt simply chose Jewish artists, he may have found it difficult to engage non-Jewish audiences, and may have appeared to embrace this notion of Jews having rights to

³⁰ Kleeblatt quotes in Achy Obejas, “‘Mirroring Evil’ Opens the Debate on Nazi Imagery.” *Chicago Tribune*. May 26, 2002, 6.

the Holocaust, which definitely was not part of the goals for the exhibit. A diverse group of artists unidentified with religion comes along with a new artistic approach to representing the Holocaust in a way that would educate and hopefully inspire all museum visitors, both Jews and non-Jews alike.

The *Mirroring Evil* exhibit maintained a much more diverse audience with more varied responses because it was featured in a museum and not a synagogue. Although it was displayed in The Jewish Museum, whose target audience, among others, is Jews, as a public institution it is still frequently visited by non-Jewish audiences. That being said, an exhibit like this is going to be accessible to a much more diverse and numerous group of people with very different perspectives, contributing to a vast array of reactions and responses. Kleeblatt and the original committee that decided to execute the exhibit planned for these very mixed reactions. They anticipated strong reactions from those who favored the exhibit to those who found it extremely offensive. In addition, the exhibit's review in one of the biggest cities in the world, it was expected that reactions from this exhibit would not only be felt by visitors but also expand to the media.

The Jewish Museum received feedback from visitors in the museum, which included Daily Dialogue cards that recorded visitors' written responses to either the artworks or the issues that surround them while present at a daily dialogue, open Dialogue Books were placed within the exhibit as a sort of free for all, where any visitor could record any thoughts at any length while also able to read those of other visitors, and the museum also received direct feedback from letters they received in the mail. Together, I believe they succeeded in transforming the exhibit space into one that was conducive to verbal and written expression and personal support. More importantly, reflecting on one's own feelings about the exhibit while simultaneously

engaging in dialogue with others in a controlled atmosphere like this also allows people to learn something about themselves or others. The goal of the exhibit is for people to walk away having either an opinion of their own or learning something new from the opinion of another about the dangers of evil. After all of the visitors have gone, however, how are we supposed to make sense of all of the recorded responses from museum visitors who took to the time to write down their thoughts?

Daily dialogue cards from the first three days of the exhibition reflect the wide range of reactions visitors had in viewing the different works of art in the collection. Many of the reactions read similarly to this one and include a combination of addressing and/or embracing the controversial nature of the exhibit, citing specific examples of striking artwork, and a take away message. “On the whole this was an exceptionally disturbing and effective exhibit. What stands out as the most chilling was the exhibit of the three canisters of poison gas marked with names of high fashion designers. The Eva Braun exhibit was also especially affecting. I would like a docent to interpret and discuss some of the individual art associated with it.” A second response similar to this one also communicates a positive reaction to exhibit while simultaneously recognizing its importance. “[the exhibit] brought me to the museum. We need to be reminded again and again as we become desensitized so easily. This exhibit is essential. Humor? Levity? Oh no, just a shock to remind me. Thank you.”³¹

Other visitors to record their responses on Daily Dialogue cards focused more on their take away message. That is, how the exhibit’s artwork affected them emotionally in the moment and how it will affect them after they have left. For example, “I looked at the people at the show. I divided the people in two groups. Those who have personally experienced hate for being

³¹ Appendix 1 of Daily Dialogue Card responses from March 17, 2002, Jewish Museum Archives.

Jewish and those who have never felt that hate. Can they really understand it?”³² This response brings us back to the issue of who identifies most with the Holocaust. While this individual seems to believe that it is Jews who have experienced hate that best relate to this material, a second individual proves her wrong. “I have never experienced anti-Semitism. So [I am] able to compare with the form of oppression I feel as a woman in contemporary society. *Obsession*, *Oppression* similar sounding. Oppression so alive today though in different forms. It is important to not let this happen again in terms of Jews, but also realize other hated groups are still oppressed today. We must do something about it.”³³ What this individual takes away from the exhibit proves that people’s varying life perspectives can allow anyone to have a personal experience with the material, regardless of whether it is Holocaust related or not. The goal of the museum is achieved in visitors being able to capture the larger message of the artwork; any visitor who has ever felt oppressed can relate to the notion of evil and its dangers.

The open dialogue book invites more freedom and flexibility in visitors’ responses because there are no space or time limitations. These responses often differ more dramatically in length and content in being purely anonymous, outside the context of a dialogue, and often sometimes respond to another comment already featured in the book. One example is from a visitor who finds meaning in the exhibit from its artistic qualities, which is a unique perspective because of how strongly most visitors react right away towards its subject matter. “One of the most important roles that art plays in human society is that of dissent. Art objects to cliché, to familiarity, it objects to the conditioned responses or the lack of response we have to the artifacts and ideas in our world. Art that makes us second-guess ourselves, by its very nature, makes us uncomfortable and yet nothing can be more important. I congratulate the museum and those

³² Appendix 1 of Daily Dialogue Card responses from March 17, 2002, Jewish Museum Archives.

³³ Appendix 1 of Daily Dialogue Card responses from March 16, 2002, Jewish Museum Archives.

artists for their bravery. Truly, art is not responsible for what is or is not sacred – art is only responsible for make us consider what is or is not sacred. If the art forces us into a horrific conversation with ourselves, that art is accomplished and has not only substance, but also soul. We should never fear that which challenges us to not merely look, but truly see. Marvelous.”³⁴

While some visitors take the time to write lengthy responses in the open Dialogue Books, most others offered comments no more than a few sentences. Though brief, these were usually some of the most powerful. One individual wrote, “As a Holocaust survivor I tried to avoid this exhibition. I thought that it could not express the feelings of horror. But I was wrong. It needs to be shown.” In the same book, another visitor wrote a similar note of similar length, but reacted to it much differently. “Much ado about nothing! This is not art and it is not controversial. Better luck next time.”³⁵ The fact that two individuals with such contrasting points of view can both feel comfortable sharing their thoughts in the same forum contributes to the success of the open Dialogue Books. Also, reading what others have shared only helps to further develop personal reactions to the exhibit by contextualizing it with others.

The resources available to make the viewing experience easier for visitors consequently helped foster a better experience for docents as well. In a letter the museum received from one of the docents of the exhibit, she expressed the positive experience she had on the tour despite initial concerns. “I approached the *Mirroring Evil* exhibition with some trepidation and fear of the unknown. My first open tour reflected a completely opposite point of view, which continued throughout the show’s duration. This was a most exciting surprise for me. I found this experience to be stimulating, provocative, energizing and touching. My knowledge was expanded by the diverse visitors of all ages and origins who freely shared their reaction to the creative ideas

³⁴ *Mirroring Evil* Gallery Responses, Book 1, Jewish Museum Archives.

³⁵ *Mirroring Evil* Gallery Responses, Book 1, Jewish Museum Archives.

explored by the insightful artists.”³⁶ So long as visitors were willing to utilize the educational resources available to them, museum staff succeeded in creating an open-minded environment, where visitors were not only open to enhancing their own experiences, but also being respectful of those that varied experiences happening with people around them.

Reports from the media published both before and after *Mirroring Evil*'s opening vary in subject, tone and personal bias just as much as reactions from museum visitors. As part of the museum's archival records, there is a seven-page list of over 220 international news sources both print and televised that address the exhibit in some fashion. Newspaper articles in particular provide an interesting perspective because the reporters writing about it may or may not have had the opportunity to see or the experience the exhibit for themselves. This is not to suggest that they should have been encouraged or required to; however, seeing the exhibit can influence a reporter's writing almost as much as not seeing it. Regardless, *Mirroring Evil* provides a slippery slope for media simply because of its controversial nature. It is an exhibit that all visitors react to on both ends of the most extreme spectrum. Consequently, printed news reflects this variety, and headlines alone sometimes seem to be enough to anticipate articles' perspectives.

In her article “An Artful Compromise” from March 2, 2002, reporter Marsha Kranes addresses the conflict with Brooklyn Assemblyman Dov Hikind, who asked the Jewish Museum to remove what he felt were the “most troubling” artworks of the exhibit, before it even opened. Later, she writes, “The museum, in a statement, said it would not pull the artwork, but will give viewers a chance to avoid them.”³⁷ Knowing that there is no way to avoid the conflict associated with *Mirroring Evil*, Kranes not only acknowledges the conflict at hand, but is also honest about the museum's response to it. Despite the negative press, which should understand to be an

³⁶ Personal Response to *Mirroring Evil* by docent Judy Schmeidler, Jewish Museum Archives.

³⁷ Sharon Kranes, “An Artful Compromise,” *New York Post*. March 2, 2002, 7.

understatement, once the 13 artworks were finalized prior to the exhibit's opening, they were not changed. This short, unbiased article emphasizes how The Jewish Museum was willing to accommodate wishes of the community, but in a way that did not compromise the integrity of the exhibit.

Reporter Achy Obejas from the *Chicago Tribune* reported on the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit in May 2002, two months after it opened. In his article he featured an interview with Kleeblatt, which I think contributes to more successful articles about the exhibit by offering a response to the controversy from the individual that knows it best. “‘Mirroring Evil’ Opens the Debate on Nazi Imagery” achieves what its headline suggests in balancing the controversy with Kleeblatt’s input without alluding in any to which may be “right.” He writes about Kleeblatt’s background and the exhibit’s accompanying educational activities as much as he talks about visitors’ reactions and the most controversial artworks. He ends his article with a quote from Kleeblatt that neither openly invites nor completely discourages visitors from coming to see the exhibit, allowing readers to form an opinion of their own that would not be seemingly judged by this article. Rather, he explains its significance in redefining evil in our world today, a notion relevant to everyone. “*Mirroring Evil* is not just about the Holocaust, but about the way we live now...it’s a warning about how we glamorize evil...Doing this show made me realize that most mythological and religious iconography depicting evil has been replaced by Nazi imagery and propaganda – that with just a few short years, they erased millennia of production of evil.”³⁸

On March 22, 2002, five days after *Mirroring Evil*’s opening, *The New York Jewish Week* reported on Yeshiva students’ visit to the exhibit and their negative experiences there. Reporter Daniel Belasco quotes a disgruntled Holocaust survivor who announced, “I dropped my museum membership... The Holocaust is beyond comprehension, and so is The Jewish Museum that they

³⁸ Achy Obejas, “‘Mirroring Evil’ Opens the Debate on Nazi Imagery.” *Chicago Tribune*. May 26, 2002, 6.

could do this.” Belasco furthered this sentiment throughout his article in recognizing heated exchanges outside the building, individuals protesting and demanding boycott, and summaries of individuals’ responses to multiple specific works in the exhibit. His only mention of the exhibit’s educational programs came at the very end, where they were mentioned with very little detail and with a tone that made them sound forced and unsuccessful. He describes how “visitors on Sunday were met with a battery of docents and educators bearing photocopied flyers...” as if with cheap unprofessional materials they would be forced to appreciate the artwork. Additionally, the last line of the article reads, “That is not to mention a glossy program calendar of panel discussions, films and lectures with historians, and artists throughout the spring.”³⁹ Not providing any details about these events reflects his disinterest in them and referring to the program calendar as “glossy” simply adds an unnecessary attitude to his tone.

I discovered that this article above, “Hot Issues, Cool Art: Jewish Museum’s ‘Mirroring Evil’ Show Finally Opens to Protest, Curiosity, and Yawns” was not the only article written by Daniel Belasco about the exhibit. In fact, this was his sixth out of seven articles about the exhibit, this one being his feature. His first article, “Jewish Museum’s ‘Nazi Art’ Fracas: Survivors groups consider protests of ‘Lego Auschwitz,’ Other Works in Show,” was published on January 18th, 2002. It introduced the exhibit in the context of its controversy and people who were already anticipating protesting, including Menachem Rosensaft, founding chair of the International Network of Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, who Belasco quoted as “[likening] the museum to a kosher restaurant that now serves pork.”⁴⁰ A week later he published a profile of Norman Kleeblatt, entitled “Curating Evil: Norman Kleeblatt, the Man Behind the

³⁹ Daniel Belasco, “Hot Issues Cool Art: Jewish Museum’s ‘Mirroring Evil’ Show Finally Opens to Protest, Curiosity, and Yawns,” *The New York Jewish Week*, March 22, 2002, 51.

⁴⁰ Menachem Rosensaft quoted in Daniel Belasco, “Jewish Museum’s ‘Nazi Art’ Fracas: Survivors Groups Consider Protests of ‘Lego Auschwitz,’ Other Works in Show,” *The New York Jewish Week*, January 18, 2002, 1.

Controversial Jewish Museum Show, Seeks Questions, Not Answers, In Exhibition.” This article included interview material that tremendously impeded his ability to criticize, so much so that I unknowingly used it previously in this section as a resource to help describe and understand Kleeblatt’s background.

“Showdown at Jewish Museum” was published on March 1, 2002, and highlighted the conflict with Dov Hikind. Whereas the Marsha Kranes article frames this conflict as a peaceful compromise in the museum providing visitors the opportunity to exit prior to viewing the three most controversial artworks, Belasco quotes Joan Rosenbaum saying that the museum would not call off the exhibit merely because, “the invitations were already sent out,” ignoring successful compromising attempts completely.⁴¹ His final article “Nazi Art/Mediocre Draw” laughs in the face of The Jewish Museum staff in having a steady attendance that to Belasco “could have been higher.” While he quotes Museum spokeswoman Ann Scher saying that numbers were “typical for a contemporary art show,” he still degrades the exhibit and once again quotes Menachem Rosensaft, whose words provide closure for how Belasco feels about the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit. “Look, I have a day job that keeps me busy, and we have much bigger concerns over what’s happening in Israel than to worry about the intellectual vagaries of The Jewish Museum.”⁴²

At the end of the day, *Mirroring Evil* is not meant to please or offend anyone. The varied responses to this exhibit cannot be evaluated in order to achieve some kind of answer of whether artworks like these have a place in our society today or not; there simply will never be such a concrete understanding. What is more important is that thousands of people worldwide came to an exhibit about the Holocaust, and if not probably read about it in local media. *Mirroring Evil* got people of the 21st century engaged with the topic of the Holocaust, talking about the

⁴¹ Joan Rosenbaum quoted in Belasco, “Showdown at Jewish Museum,” *The New York Jewish Week*, March 1, 2002, 3.

⁴² Belasco, “Nazi Art/Mediocre Draw,” *The New York Jewish Week*, April 12, 2002, 3.

Holocaust, feeling anything they could about the Holocaust, which I think was the goal of the exhibit. *Mirroring Evil* is significant in its incorporation of contemporary issues into those specific to the Holocaust because it marks what Holocaust remembrance will become in the future.

On March 17th, 2002, the same day that the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit opened, a second exhibit opened in The Jewish Museum, entitled *An Artist's Response to Evil: We Are Not the Last*, by Zoran Music. The exhibit features reinterpretations of drawings of the dead he made during his 2-year internment as a political prisoner in Dachau. While he wasn't a Jew, his drawings show dead concentration camp victims, evoking the traditional feelings of horror and sympathy in the same way Holocaust Art has historically. This exhibit offers museum visitors the opportunity to engage with the Holocaust artistically in a way that is more known to them that tugs at one's heart more than it blatantly offends. It offers balance in combination with *Mirroring Evil* in the Jewish Museum.⁴³

Together, the two exhibits mark that start of a transition from Holocaust remembrance that includes victim-based artwork, Holocaust survivor speakers, and historical documentary films to contemporary and radical remembrance like that in *Mirroring Evil*. In no way is this meant to undermine the extremely powerful role Holocaust survivors still currently play in our personal lives, Jewish communities, or Holocaust Museums today, but rather foreshadow remembrance for the future, when we are forced one day to live in a world without them.

⁴³ <http://www.thejewishmuseum.org/exhibitions/ZoranMusic>, accessed on April 10, 2013.

The Holocaust Project: From Darkness Into Light

Judy Chicago's *Holocaust Project* was an eight-year feat undertaken with her husband, photographer Donald Woodman, from 1984-1992. From the day she first heard American poet Harvey Mudd's poem about the Holocaust in 1984 to the project's completion in 1992, she had conceptualized and performed preliminary research for the exhibit, traveled through both Europe and Israel, and returned to the United States to complete the artwork.⁴⁴ The 14 photo paintings, tapestries, and stained glass windows reflect her journey into the emotional and human experience of the Holocaust and touches on its history, its events, its victims, its perpetrators, and its role in the world at that time. It is important to understand, though, what exactly what happening in the United States "at that time" that may or may not have influenced Chicago's artistic choices. The *Holocaust Project* is a work of the 80s, a decade that understood and dealt with the Holocaust very differently than the 1950s and 1960s and today in the 2010s.

While the Eichmann trial in 1961 made the world aware of the Nazi atrocities during the Holocaust and the Six Day War of 1967 reinforced the message of "Never Again," not until the 1970s did society became comfortable enough to look back and really start to grapple with and memorialize its events.⁴⁵ In addition to increased commemoration ceremonies in synagogues and churches, Claude Lanzmann began to film and produce *Shoah* in 1974 (his nine-hour documentary film that would premiere in 1985)⁴⁶, the TV miniseries *Holocaust* aired on national television in 1978, and Jimmy Carter announced the establishment of the President's Commission on the Holocaust in 1979⁴⁷. All of these major strides in Holocaust awareness and activity in the 1970s set the stage for the boom of scholarship and museums established in the

⁴⁴ Judy Chicago, *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 1993, 1.

⁴⁵ David Wyman, *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, 726.

⁴⁶ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoah_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoah_(film)) accessed April 12, 2013.

⁴⁷ *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, 728.

1980s and early 1990s, most notably the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, and the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, both of which opened in 1993⁴⁸.

Judy Chicago's original name is Judith Sylvia Cohen, but she changed it in the 1960s as a way to express her disapproval with one (among many) patriarchal practices in society.⁴⁹ Though her paternal grandfather was a rabbi, Chicago was mostly inspired by her father, who rejected religion and advocated for ethics and making the world a better place. While in college in the early 1960s, she was involved with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and identified with them as a woman and victim of oppression in the United States. The rising feminist consciousness throughout the 1960s allowed for a transition in her artwork from abstract to figurative that began with *In My Mother's House* in 1963 and would ultimately lead to the creation of her nationally-recognized installation *The Dinner Party* in 1979. *The Dinner Party* was a survey of women's history in Western civilization through a series of table settings. It brought full circle her famous "butterfly/cunt" design, where butterfly and flower motifs representing freedom and liberation, evoked vaginal vulvas.⁵⁰

Meanwhile, in 1971, Chicago collaborated with artist Miriam Schapiro to create the first Feminist Art Program (FAP) that included 21 young female artists at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California. Though it only lasted three years, Chicago and Schapiro successfully created a program that was taught and attended entirely by females who worked in an isolated "feminist studio." The goal was to inspire and reestablish themselves as uniquely female artists in a nonthreatening environment. Within a year, the group remodeled and decorated an abandoned Los Angeles home, forty miles away from Cal Arts, and transformed it

⁴⁸ *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, 729.

⁴⁹ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1303157/Judy-Chicago>, accessed on April 12, 2013.

⁵⁰ Gail Levin, *Censorship, Politics and Sexual Imagery in the Work of Jewish-American Feminist Artists*, 63-96.

into *Womanhouse*, an interactive feminist art exhibit open to the public in January 1972.

According to Paul Harper, author of “The First Feminist Art Program: A View from the 1980s” in *Signs* magazine, the exhibitions style was, “. . . part happening, part environmental art, and part California funk.” He adds that the materials used were “not the traditional ones of fine art but the ordinary substances that women habitually work with in their private lives.” While the overall message of *Womanhouse* was the “entrapping and deadening nature of housewifery,” Chicago, Schapiro, and the FAP students were able to show visitors an example of purely feminist art, establishing it as a genre in and of itself.⁵¹ Despite its failure, Chicago remained bonded to the ideals of the FAP and continued to create solo works of art, which would continue to include politically charged, feminist ideas well into *The Dinner Party* and beyond.

It was not until the end of 1984 when she heard Harvey Mudd’s poem about the Holocaust that Chicago even considered using it as subject matter in her artwork, let alone something she thought about or acknowledged in her everyday consciousness.⁵² Despite a boom in Holocaust awareness, education, and commemoration throughout the 70s and 80s, Chicago and Woodman found themselves among those who were simply uninformed and frankly not interested in the Holocaust. And before the Eichmann trial, this is the sentiment many American Jews maintained in wanting survivors to forget about it and move on.⁵³ Even though it was only a poem that finally sparked her interest in the Holocaust half way through the 80s, she found herself at a point where personally, artistically, and religiously delving into it would be educational, eye opening, and still historically relevant to the United States.

Lanzmann’s 9-hour *Shoah* premiered in 1985, and that is when Chicago and Woodman went to go see it. The viewing was spread out over two days. While Mudd’s poem inspired

⁵¹ Paul Harper, *The First Feminist Art Program: A View from the 1980s*, 726-781.

⁵² *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 3.

⁵³ *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, 726.

Chicago to consider the Holocaust as a subject matter for artwork, seeing *Shoah* solidified her plans. It provoked her to think about herself, her life, and the world around her.⁵⁴ After seeing *Shoah* and planning to pursue this project with full force, Chicago began preliminary research, which, aside from their trip to New York to see *Shoah*, included a trip to Los Angeles, where she visited the Martyr's Memorial and Museum of the Holocaust located in the Jewish Federation building (one of the first established Holocaust museums in the United States founded by survivors⁵⁵) and the Simon Wiesenthal Center. She also travelled to Washington DC where she met Isaiah Kuperstein, the educational director of the Holocaust Museum that was still almost 10 years away from completion. In wanting to explore feminist issues in the Holocaust, she was referred to Dr. Joan Ringelheim, who was conducting research on women and the Holocaust at that time.⁵⁶

Chicago and Woodman traveled to different museums in the United States. Many of them were in the process of being established around this time. Chicago observed that the tone of many of the exhibits asked the question “How could this have happened in such a civilized world?”⁵⁷ As a prominent figure in the feminist movement, Chicago is unlike other museum visitors because while many would agree with this larger question and the notion that we do in fact live in a “civilized” world, she hardly believed we do because of how often women specifically are oppressed. In short, her feminist perspective allows her to be weary of society's larger evils because she identifies herself as a victim. Even though her travels through Europe following these museum visits help to develop and add richness to her perspective. This one simple question proposed in museums frames the entire argument of the *Holocaust Project*.

⁵⁴ *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 15.

⁵⁵ *The World Reacts to the Holocaust*, 729.

⁵⁶ *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 18.

⁵⁷ *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 21.

While it follows her own personal journey of self-discovery and awareness, she also finds parallels with other evils of the world that Holocaust museums at the time did not yet address.

The Holocaust Project: From Darkness Into Light is comprised of 14 life-sized works of art, 12 photo-paintings (some of which include needlework) and two works of stained glass, which were all conceptualized and executed from 1987-1993. Each work of art addresses suffering in the Holocaust (always, but not limited to, Jewish suffering) and simultaneously connects to a larger global issue. The order she created these works reflects a personal journey different from the one she experienced while traveling abroad with Donald. This one coincides with her journal writing as she contemplates and grapples with issues of the Holocaust after her travels, and how she was going to incorporate them into her artwork in combination with her everyday life in New Mexico. Many of the photographs she uses either come from or are inspired by those she and Donald took abroad. Additionally, different imagery she utilizes in her artwork also comes from her experiences in Europe in combination with things she knows, reads about, or researches. However, the final exhibit is organized by subject matter.⁵⁸

The Fall was the first artwork created for the exhibit in 1987 and depicts the historic parallels between the victimization of women and the victimization of Jews. Being a feminist it should come as no surprise that the first image Chicago chose to create dealt specifically with feminist issues related to the Holocaust. The central image of the work joins images of the male body and science, masculinity and rational thought, to justify what Chicago believes to be a total patriarchal domination of our world. We find this physically on the left side of the panel where two black and white male figures holding knives attack a group of three women. The rightmost female figure grieves as she is caught by one of the males, the second confidently tries to fight the other off, and the third poses and blends against a tree whose roots attach to a landscape,

⁵⁸ *Holocaust Project* Catalog, 85.

identified as female with the inclusion of a crying face, that is being run over by another male figure and cattle.⁵⁹

While the left side emphasizes the physical male domination of nature, the right side of the panel highlights the male domination of machines and the Nazis utilizing it to systematically kill six million Jews. The top right of the panel depicts the fiery demise of Neith, the Egyptian goddess of spinning. Below is an image of a spinning Jenny, the first machine of the Industrial Revolution, which is being operated by a female slave. The degrading of women to slave status is mirrored with Jewish persecution as the spinning Jenny doubles as a male, Nazi operated machine to systematically herd crying and protesting Jews into crematoria ovens. *The Fall* was made entirely of needlework and done by a female using a method that historically was exclusively male operated. Chicago forces the viewer to recognize that issues of antifeminism and anti-Semitism still exist in our world today.⁶⁰

Double Jeopardy is a second work of art in the exhibit that also focuses entirely on women, in this case, their experiences during the Holocaust. It is titled *Double Jeopardy* to explain how they were victimized both as women and Jews. At that time, literature about victims' experiences collectively during the Holocaust was more widespread than that of women's experiences specifically. In order to acquire more information about it lest her artwork be misleading or offensive, Chicago initiated a Round Robin discussion with a varied group of geographically scattered women who were qualified to provide insight on the subject including Dr. Vera John-Steiner, Presidential Professor of Linguistics and Education at the University of New Mexico⁶¹, Frannie Yablonsky, a needle worker who assisted Chicago with tapestries for her

⁵⁹ *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 88-94.

⁶⁰ *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 88-94.

⁶¹ <http://www.unm.edu/~vygotsky/>, accessed on April 12, 2013.

Birth Project, and Dr. Joan Ringelheim, a pioneer in the study of women and the Holocaust.⁶²

The excerpts featured in the exhibit catalog mention issues of sexual vulnerability, sexual humiliation, rape, sexual exchange, pregnancy, and abortion,⁶³ while also highlighting the strength women found in themselves and in others and creating relationships using their natural senses of family and community.⁶⁴ The work is a series of panels where experiences of women during the Holocaust are painted in color on top of black and white photographs of male experiences.⁶⁵ Chicago does not fail to acknowledge the suffering of both men and women during the Holocaust, though emphasizes how in many ways their experiences were unique. In one panel she utilizes the famous photo taken from the liberation of Buchenwald. Not only is this a photograph of an entirely male barrack, but it also marks their moment of freedom. Chicago seizes this opportunity to recognize the female prisoners in Buchenwald and their suffering prior to liberation, which nobody was able to see in any circulating photograph.

Double Jeopardy is comprised of six individual photo paintings that also incorporate needlework. In between each image is a vertical stripe with colored women's gender signs atop black and white Jewish stars. Chicago highlights the female connection to sewing by including needlework in each panel that was completed by needle workers from her former *Birth Project*.

⁶⁶ In the introduction of *Women in the Holocaust*, editors Dalia Ofer and Lenore Weitzman trace the peculiarities of the female experience during the Holocaust from the prewar period through imprisonment in concentration camps, and we find many of these examples reflected in Chicago's *Double Jeopardy*. They discussed how Jewish mothers in Nazi Europe were responsible for the psychological upkeep of the home. Therefore, they often disguised their

⁶² <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/holocaust-studies-in-united-states>, accessed on April 12, 2013.

⁶³ *Holocaust Project* Catalog, 125, Joan Ringelheim quote.

⁶⁴ *Holocaust Project* Catalog, 125, Vera John-Steiner quote.

⁶⁵ *Holocaust Project* Catalog, 124-132.

⁶⁶ *Holocaust Project* Catalog, 124-132.

worries about increasing Nazi brutality and complied with what was demanded of them, as Chicago depicts with three women quietly sewing yellow Jewish stars on their clothing beside a photograph of an orthodox man sitting outside who is holding up a sign and appears to be protesting. In the ghettos, women used their senses of ingenuity and adaptability to ensure that their families were fed and their lives were kept as mentally and emotionally stable as possible. We see this reflected in another one of Chicago's photo paintings in *Double Jeopardy*, which uses a photograph of prisoners building a ghetto wall. Painted on top of them are two paintings: one of an older woman serving soup to two other females except herself, and a second of three women sitting together and reminiscing about the Shabbat dinners they can no longer have. Finally, Ofer and Weitzman refer to women's gender specific coping skills in concentration camps, which included creating surrogate families or "camp sisters," and passing time by sharing recipes, cooking techniques, and holiday meal memories with each other. Women were also more conscious of personal hygiene and appearance, and did their best to ensure that their hair and clothing were kept as presentable as possible. Chicago depicts this in another photo painting where a photograph of naked men, lined up, and generally not interacting with one another is placed above a painting of naked women who hold each other, help remove lice from each other's hair, and allow others to lay on them for sleep. In addition to the ways women were often seen as stronger and more enduring during the Holocaust, Ofer and Weitzman also acknowledge the unique hardships of women during the Holocaust. They were often sent to death first if they were pregnant or had young children and they were sexually assaulted and raped by Nazi guards. Both of which we find represented in *Double Jeopardy*.⁶⁷

Pink Triangle/Torture and *Lesbian Triangle* is the third work of art in the exhibit that relates to women, except in this case Chicago focuses on the experience of homosexuals during

⁶⁷ Dalia Ofer and Lenore Weitzman, Introduction of *Women in the Holocaust*, 1-15

the Holocaust and relating that to the larger issue of torture historically. *Lesbian Triangle*, however, demonstrates Chicago's personal affinity for depicting the female experience and focuses on the lesbian experience both before and during the Holocaust. She found inspiration for this work of art after visiting Sachsenhausen, a camp known for its homosexual presence and elaborate flowerbeds. Chicago divided her *Pink Triangle/Torture* into three panels. The left panel features a woman being racked, and, according to Chicago, includes other instruments of torture used in the Inquisition, though as a viewer I fail to see them. The right panel features a woman trying to embrace the shadow of someone who's "lost," which references a South and Central American practice of spray painting silhouettes on sidewalks of those who get arrested. The left panel here describes actual torture practices associated with Catholicism from the Inquisition in Catholic countries of South America while the right highlights this idea of protesting and speaking out against it, both of which include women as subjects. The center panel features a pink triangle, which homosexuals during the Holocaust were forced to wear in the same way Jews wore yellow stars. Inside of this triangle are three suffering women, naked and bald, struggling to squish into the confined space. Two are placed sitting at the bottom corners of the triangle while one is placed in the center, keeled over, with her hands tied from the top of the triangle. Around the triangle is an image of fresh, pink pansies, which Chicago uses to highlight and play with homosexual stereotypes.⁶⁸

Lesbian Triangle depicts three issues specifically: lesbianism in relation to female Kapo, women's natural urge for community, and the treatment of lesbians, or lack thereof, prior to the Holocaust. *Lesbian Triangle* is divided into two parts, though the upper square portion is divided in half. The upper portion first joins two photographs as the paintings base, one of an outdoor guard tower at Struthof, and the second of an indoor barrack from Birkenau. Atop the

⁶⁸ *Holocaust Project* Catalog, 104-111.

photographs, Chicago paints a triangle which is outlined in black not only to blend with the black and white photographs, but to also symbolize the black triangles the “asocials” wore during the Holocaust, the group that more often than not lesbians were part of.⁶⁹

On the left side of the triangle, atop the image of the guard tower, Chicago paints a female SS guard who appears to be holding a whip. At her feet are two naked and bald females, one licking her foot, and one grabbing for the potato in her other hand. This portion describes lesbianism as function of the female kapo’s abusive power and how lesbians were forced to have sex in exchange for food. To the right atop the image of the Birkenau barrack, Chicago paints two pairs of female inmates. In one couple, one female is washing another, and in the other couple, one female is comforting and feeding another. Together, they show the dark and light aspects of the lesbian experiences in the camp, the outdoor and the indoor, the public and the private. The second, horizontal portion below the square features a scene from a smoky bar with lesbians dressed in a wide array of outfits. This contrasts both concentration camp images above in depicting how lesbians enjoyed their freedom before the war, even if they had to do it within the confines of home or bars.⁷⁰

The next five art works pair specific issues of the Holocaust with larger global issues of genocide, nuclear activity, the world’s treatment of children, medical experimentation on animals, and the American slave labor experience. While each pair represents a unique relationship, together they comment on Chicago’s insistence that we do not live in a “civilized world.” Chicago making all of these very strong claims and questionable comparisons sparked a lot of controversy because of how long it took for the Holocaust to really sink into American consciousness after the war. Even in the 1980s the Holocaust was still a very sensitive subject

⁶⁹ *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 104-111.

⁷⁰ *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 104-111.

that people were only slowly becoming more aware of, especially in the United States. This decade marked years of heated debate about the design, content, and mission of what would eventually become the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

Committee members changed frequently and consistently represented a wide spectrum of opinions on what should be displayed, and how. The largest issue of debate was finding balance between recognizing Jews and their suffering, while also acknowledging other effected peoples and the war's larger historical context. Elie Wiesel's personal friend and Holocaust survivor Sigmund Stochlitz believed that survivors would feel uncomfortable having their own oppressors represented in the museum. And others such as Robert McAfee Brown, professor emeritus of theology and ethics at the Pacific School of religion, worried that "gruesome" and visually detailed exhibits would discourage visitors from coming back to the museum, if they chose to visit it at all. The committee had to consider all of these fine lines because of the sensitive nature of the subject, and consequently, a national Holocaust Memorial Museum was not formally opened until after Chicago had first displayed *The Holocaust Project*, which helps explain why it was so controversial to many who viewed it.⁷¹ Her push to portray our world as uncivilized using a very politically charged feminist pretext was simply nothing that anyone had previously seen before, especially placed in the context of the Holocaust. While controversy ensued, these works help characterize her exhibit as a watershed, a transition to how visitors should look at and understand the Holocaust in a way that forces them to question basic assumptions.

Bones of Treblinka and Treblinka/Genocide asks two questions whether the Holocaust is unique relative to other genocides that have also occurred in the 20th century, which has come to be referred to as the "age of genocide," and how unique is the Jewish experience in the Holocaust relative to other persecuted peoples. The artwork is divided into three panels that are

⁷¹ Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory*, 115-133.

all photo paintings. Inspired by her research on shtetl life, the left and right panels represent Jewish female domestic life and male religious life, respectively. They express her disgust at the exclusion of females from Talmud study. The left panel shows a woman with her head covered standing beside a Shabbat table and reciting the prayer over the candles. Below are three houses, which represent a female's role in the home cooking, taking care of the children, and overseeing its maintenance. The right panel features a religious male, wrapped in a *tallit*, wearing *tefillin* on his forehead, and hugging a Torah. Below him is a *cheder*, a religious classroom that features a bookshelf and an ark for the Torah. At the table stands one religious man overseeing a boy reading Torah, and another small group of boys studying and learning from other religious texts. Above both the domestic female and the religious male are photographs of the stones currently found at the site of Treblinka, which feature the names of cities, towns and villages where victims were originally from. These photographs have been altered and situated to mimic a city skyline, to symbolize what people see now when they visit Treblinka. These stones, this reality of the Holocaust, cover up and bury the now dead shtetl culture, which, with the addition of flames, burns away into our memory.⁷²

The center panel features a traditional city skyline of towers and buildings, symbolic of modern day society. Below it are figures representing different decimated cultures that have suffered persecution and genocide as well as extinct species that have also succumbed to their destruction at the hands of the peoples of the entire world, including Armenians, Aborigines, Native Americans, and Africans. Chicago's placement of these figures in line with the male and female Jew associate their people's experiences with those of the Holocaust. However, placed

⁷² *Holocaust Project* Catalog, 94-103.

beneath an actual city skyline, Chicago notes how modern society is consistently built atop the destruction of different cultures and people.⁷³

Chicago created *Bones of Treblinka* as the preliminary work that would eventually become *Treblinka/Genocide*. Both of the panels for *Bones of Treblinka* use the same images of the Treblinka stones in the same way representing a city skyline, except beneath them Chicago specifically depicts the death and destruction of European Jewry. She divides women on the left with males on the right, and as the viewer's eye moves from the top of the composition downwards, groups of faces, heads, and full bodies transform into piles of individual limbs and bones.⁷⁴ At this point in the catalog it really becomes clear how Chicago was very strategic yet flexible in her work in first choosing an aspect of the Holocaust to represent and from there incorporating it with a larger issue that struck her either in passing, or from books she read, people she talked to, or research she conducted. She did allow her everyday thoughts and experiences to influence the work she completed. I find evidence of this in her transition from *Bones of Treblinka* to *Treblinka/Genocide* by incorporating her initial inspiration of Treblinka and the Jewish destruction there, and over time combining details of other genocides she researched and the difficulties women encountered that she found in reading about shtetl life. Together, she achieves this blending of the past and present that we find in almost every work in the exhibit.

See No Evil/Hear No Evil was inspired by a quote from Elie Wiesel, who said, "Without Auschwitz, there would have been no Hiroshima." The artwork explores the parallels between the Holocaust and the potential for nuclear Holocaust, between the deceitful language Nazis used in transporting Jews and the deceitful language in the nuclear industry, between the human

⁷³ *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 94-103.

⁷⁴ *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 94-103.

consequences of the Holocaust and the human consequences of nuclear energy. In the artwork there are images of Adam and Eve on either side, Adam “hearing no evil,” and Eve “seeing no evil,” symbolic of the world’s willful ignorance to both the Holocaust and the current threat of nuclear activity, and how damaging both are to humanity. Beside them are alternating images of the atomic bomb explosion and the crematoria oven, both of which are deadly. Finally, in the middle of the artwork are two long horizontal photo paintings, the top one is of a Jewish transport traveling through the wilderness, packed with people. The bottom photo painting is of a Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) truck transporting their cargo, which includes a train car of people suffering from the effects of the bomb. The point of this work is to raise awareness about the harmful human side effects of nuclear activity and to combine that with raising awareness about the type of hate that leads to events like the Holocaust.⁷⁵ Chicago begs the question to viewers of when they will become aware of and act upon these large, global issues that are physically detrimental to human life.

Im/Balance of Power deals with children and explores their treatment during the Holocaust in relation to their treatment worldwide today. The image is a grid of nine squares, five of them depicting part of an imbalanced scale, which is symbolic of how the world’s priorities do not weigh in favor of protecting and taking care of its children. The center square includes a famous photograph of a small boy with his hands raised outside the Warsaw ghetto and Chicago has painted in a soldier pointing a gun at him. The corner squares feature photographs of malnourished, diseased, abused, and neglected children paired with paintings of nice homes, and people eating large quantities of food. In one corner is another famous photograph of a young Vietnamese girl running and crying from the heat of napalm bomb explosions placed next to a painted image of a pilot shooting atomic bombs on her. The

⁷⁵ *Holocaust Project* Catalog, 112-117.

connection Chicago finds in all of these examples is that children are helpless and powerless. Just as she believes we need to raise awareness about children's suffering in the Holocaust vis-à-vis the Nazis, so to do we need to be cognizant of children's suffering today.⁷⁶

Four Questions considers issues of ethics in human experimentation during the Holocaust and connects it to larger questions of scientific and medical experimentation performed on animals. The artwork features four panels, each blending two images into one, where the arrangement allows you to see one image when viewed from the left, and a second image when viewed from the right. The first one, *Where Should the Line Be Drawn?* combines an image of a high-altitude human experiment at Dachau with a monkey experiment performed in Silver Springs, MD. The second, *When Do Ends Justify the Means?* combines an image of a V-2 rocket, Ebensee tunnel, and a pile of bodies with an image of a "triumphant" moonwalk. The United States space program was built off of secrets acquired from the Nazi V-2 rocket program, which utilized slave labor. The Ebensee tunnel was one example of where thousands of bodies of these slaves were found upon liberation. The third, *What Determines a Quality of Life?* combines the Nazi T-4 euthanasia program with an image of people who enjoy advanced medical care. The fourth image *Who Controls Our Human Destiny?* combines Hitler's sterilization program for racially impure women with an image of surrogate motherhood, where women from racial minorities or third world countries are used as surrogates. Chicago uses the Four Questions structure as a way to mimic those from the Passover Seder, but to put them in a more globally relevant context. In the end, she hopes to make the connection between the Holocaust and animal testing by questioning what happens when advanced technology fails to include an ethical framework.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ *Holocaust Project* Catalog, 133-136.

⁷⁷ *Holocaust Project* Catalog, 146-153.

Arbeit Macht Frei/Work Makes Who Free? compares the slave labor experience of Jews in the Holocaust with the slave labor experience of African Americans in the United States. On either side of the artwork are panels, each containing three paintings. The left panel has three paintings of African American slave labor, while the right has three paintings of Jewish slave labor. Next to these panels is a structure that frames the central image of the artwork that has a metal sign saying *Arbeit Macht Frei, Work Makes Who Free*, and that sits atop two wooden columns, one on the left painted to reflect a plantation column, and one on the right painted like those found at the Auschwitz gate. The central image underneath the sign is another triangle within a larger rectangle that is divided in half to reflect the different slave experiences. The bottom of the triangle features two photographs, one of a southern plantation beside an image of the famous quarry at Mathausen. The tip of the triangle includes two paintings, on the left one of people dancing at a southern cotillion and on the right, people leisurely socializing in Vienna, both meant to contrast the experience of slaves beneath them. Outside of the triangle are photographs of the perpetrators, the KKK and Nazis. The larger message of this artwork was Chicago's realization that much of her comfort in life is built on the suffering of others.⁷⁸

Wall of Indifference, Banality of Evil/ Struthof, and *Banality of Evil/Then and Now* deal with the indifference that not only existed around the world during the Holocaust, but simultaneously warn against indifference that exists in our world today. In *Wall of Indifference*, Chicago takes a photo of a train traveling in the forest of Frankfurt, Germany, and manipulates it to add additional effects. She repaints over the train to include a transport scene, where the train car is filled with people, one woman reaching up outside of one of the windows and another woman throwing her baby from it in hopes of being rescued. On either side of this scene are individuals from Allied countries, identified by symbols and flags of Russia, Britain, and the

⁷⁸ *Holocaust Project* Catalog, 154-158.

United States, and on the opposite side the Red Cross and the Pope. All face outward with their eyes closed, indifferent to what happens behind them.

Banality of Evil/ Struthof and *Banality of Evil/Then and Now* further this idea of indifference and use the photo painting process to recreate family and recreational scenes within photographs of some of the war's most dangerous places. In *Banality of Evil/Struthof*, Chicago takes a photo of the Inn at Natzweiler and paints in a scene of what really happened there, with its patio facing a gas chamber. In the foreground of the final image we find the patio of the Inn, complete with tables and chairs, Chicago has painted in both guards and average people sitting, eating, drinking, smiling, and smoking, all with their backs towards the gas chamber behind them. At one table, a single guard drinks closer to the murderous action, but his hat is pointed down and he rests his head against his right hand, thereby blocking his vision of what is going on. In the background is the gas chamber itself, with painted images of naked people being forced and shoved into it with whips and dogs. In *Banality of Evil/Then and Now* Chicago uses a similar strategy. In this case she juxtaposes a scene with a Nazi guard coming home, playing with his kids, kissing his wife, and petting his dog, and a modern image of a nuclear scientist in New Mexico doing the same thing. Both families appear perfectly happy, one with a home next to a concentration camp, the other with a home next to America's largest nuclear arsenal, aloof to the horrors beside them. Chicago wants to emphasize the reality of these scenarios and how people of the world may not have learned the first time around to be conscious and active about stopping the atrocities that sit in their back yard.⁷⁹ She cites Hannah Arendt, who refers to this phenomenon in the context of the Eichmann trial, characterizing Nazi actions as "sheer thoughtlessness—something by no means identical with stupidity . . . such remoteness from

⁷⁹ *Holocaust Project* Catalog, 121-123.

reality and such thoughtlessness can wreak more havoc than all the evil instincts taken together .

.. ”⁸⁰

Legacy was the work of art visitors saw before the final *Rainbow Shabbat*, and comments on the Jewish survivor experience. It is broken down into three scenes to comment not only on survivors’ struggles to recover but also their “enlarged human and global perspectives.” The left painting is of a torn Israeli flag, symbolic of its struggles both with Occupation and influence of the religious right. Above the left side of the flag are four people: one woman in black from an Israeli peace group, an Ethiopian Jew beside a soldier from their military airlift, and a Holocaust survivor holding a hoe, symbolic of the birth of Israel and the land work associated with it. On the right side of the torn flag are three males, said to resemble Israel’s right wing: a member of the *Gush Emunim* (a Zionist group settled in the Occupied Territories), an orthodox rabbi, and a soldier dressed in riot control gear. In the end, all embrace Israel and its flag. The central image of *Legacy* is a photo painting where a painted female figure is lifting a male figure out of the hell of a ruined crematorium, which is photographed behind them. While the central image embraces the survivors’ triumph in escaping hell, the right panel emphasizes their journeys to move forward. A male figure is punching the face of a Nazi, while below him a mother transmits the legacy of her experience to her child through a metaphorical burnt offering, its flame lingering inside both of them forever.⁸¹

Legacy precedes *Rainbow Shabbat*, which helps to bring a message of hope full circle as the final two artworks visitors see going through the exhibit. *Rainbow Shabbat* (as well as the exhibit’s logo) came about after Chicago was approached by Michael Claude, a stained glass artisan, about the possibility of including that medium into her artwork. It depicts a Shabbat

⁸⁰ *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 123.

⁸¹ *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 159-164.

dinner scene, with people of different races, ethnicities, and religions present, and all of them face rightward towards the woman at the end who is saying the prayer over the candles. To the left, a man stands saying *Kiddush* over the wine. Chicago felt this was an appropriate final image for the exhibit because of its hopeful message for viewers that one day we will all live together in peace.⁸² As memorials became more widely erected throughout the 1980s, I believe that artists did not intend for controversy but rather sought aesthetically pleasing means to remember the Holocaust and honor its victims. Judy Chicago was one of them. She did succeed in visually representing how our work around the world to fight evil is not over.

Simply because I think Chicago achieved her overall goals of the exhibit does not mean I consider it flawless. One aspect of the exhibit that I find questionable is its logo, which combines different colored triangles worn by inmates during the Holocaust with references to flames and barbed wire. The pattern of colors includes yellow twice to emphasize the experience of Jews, and how the Holocaust may have started with their own persecution, but certainly did not end that way. Chicago wanted the logo to become a symbol for strength and survival just like *Rainbow Shabbat*, so both are made of the very richly colored stained glass to both open and close the exhibit. The logo is not just featured at the opening of the exhibit, but is found on all of the exhibit's merchandise. This contradicts Chicago's final work that encourages the removal of labels on people. Additionally the high cost of exhibit merchandise is equally unsettling. In an art review from Bridges Magazine, author Sharon Kahn offers insight about the "inappropriate" nature of having a Holocaust Logo pin. "The logo appears on all the multi-colored and obviously costly heavy-weight papers, brochures, and book marks used to publicized the installation." She adds that, "Everything is first-class, and this, too, is disorienting considering the subject matter.

⁸² *Holocaust Project Catalog*, 137-145.

It says much about our contemporary culture to see a ‘Holocaust Logo Pin’ included in the items for sale in the exhibit gift area—the price being ninety dollars.”⁸³

In addition to merchandising, the exhibit of the artworks also utilized questionable methods because as curator and, more importantly, artist, Chicago has free reign to present her artwork in any way she deems fit. She is cognizant of the pieces’ backgrounds, materials, methods, and personal meanings. While Norman Kleeblatt spoke on behalf of other artists in offering more objective explanations and suggestions for meaning, Chicago really limited a visitors’ ability to establish meaning for themselves. For the *Holocaust Project* exhibition, audio guides and a short preparatory video were provided for viewers. These explained the artwork in a biased fashion, from her perspective, as though force feeding meaning to viewers who were then limited in organizing thoughts of their own. In her article from *The Village Voice*, Elizabeth Hess comments on her viewing experience at the Spertus through her hesitance to use the headset that Donald Woodman insists she wears. “Reluctantly, I take the headphones. It’s an explanatory guide by the artists . . . that tells listeners what to look at, when to look at it, how the artists feel about it, and what it means. Are we in school? As soon as Woodman and Chicago are out of sight, I rip off the headset.”⁸⁴

In terms of the artwork itself, I also take issue with different elements of her composition including her cartoon-like human figures, which I feel take away from the seriousness of what she is trying to depict. Additionally, she adds an unfair amount of subjectivity and exaggeration in depicting suffering that even the most knowledgeable of witnesses would still be unable to achieve visually, such as in *Lesbian Triangle* and *Arbeit Macht Frei: Work Makes Who Free?* While in these two examples the cartoon-like figures seem to almost mock what is being

⁸³ Sharon Kahn, "Art Review," *Bridges*, Summer 1995, 101.

⁸⁴ Elizabeth Hess, "Planet Holocaust - From Feminism to Judaism: Meet the New Judy Chicago." *The Village Voice*, November 2, 1993, 44.

depicted, in other works such as *Rainbow Shabbat*, the cartoon element adds a certain juvenile quality to an already idealist message that the viewer is left with. It encourages peace, tolerance, and goodwill to humanity, though leaves the viewer with no real concrete way to personally go about achieving it.

Reporters in the media also found different aspects of Chicago's subject matter and compositions to criticize, most notably her historical comparisons. Author Sharon Kahn in *Bridges Magazine* recognizes chaos in the artwork itself, saying, "The attempt to reach out in so many different directions blunted the emotional impact of the work." She then argues that the disorganization found in the subject matter is reflected in the details of the composition, and even mentions the cartoon style of Chicago's figures, saying "Here are too many comparisons, an overload of detail and a confusion of images, many of which are cartoon-like and do not carry the weight of the concepts behind them."⁸⁵

In his essay on *The Americanization of the Holocaust*, Alan Rosenfeld sums up what he feels to be the biggest faults with Chicago making all of these radical comparisons between the Holocaust and other global issues, suggesting that "... through analogizing them with the issue of Europe's Jews, nothing but the sensational is added to the public discussion of what truly ails American society. And while the sensational is guaranteed to draw attention, it obfuscates and obscures more than it enlightens."⁸⁶ In the *Holocaust Project*, Chicago alone cannot inspire viewers to take action to try and solve the world's problems including nuclear activity, children's hunger, and medical experimentation on animals. Looking at the exhibit with a 21st century eye, her *Rainbow Shabbat* also encourages a sense of hope for unity and tolerance in a world that simply cannot guarantee it for its future. However, even though these issues sparked criticism,

⁸⁵ Kahn, *Bridges*, 102.

⁸⁶ Alan Rosenfeld, "The Americanization of the Holocaust," *American Jewish Identity Politics*, 62.

Chicago was the first to utilize and explore them, setting the stage for later exhibits such as *Mirroring Evil*.

Her personal journey learning about the Holocaust sparked these realizations that the world was not perfect during the Holocaust just as much as it is not now. Even though Sharon Kahn found the comparisons unorganized, and Rosenfeld insisted they lacked the ability to enlighten, younger audiences seemed to respond positively to the connections because of the relevance the Holocaust played in relation to the problems that more directly affect American populations in the 1990s and today. Multiple reviews discussed the exhibit being shown to younger audiences, such as college students. In one instance, Jay Pridmore of the *Chicago Tribune* reported how students from Columbia College actively engaged in dialogue during their visit to the Spertus Museum, asking questions about bystanders, for instance, when shown *Wall of Indifference*. “The Columbia students agreed with Chicago’s effort to broaden the lessons of the Holocaust,”⁸⁷ he wrote. One student on the trip applauded Chicago’s methods, recognizing that, “there are those today who are just as ignorant as death camp workers.”⁸⁸ Michael Gelbwasser, a reporter for the *Jewish Advocate*, wrote another article that praised Chicago’s work, which was exhibited at Brandeis University’s Art Museum in 1995. The article’s title *Holocaust Art Show Worth Seeing* sets the tone for his open, understanding commentary. When discussing *Banality of Evil/Then and Now*, he thinks, “The drawing and photo blend well together. It truly appears the Germans are ignoring the background events. That’s what the killing of the Jews was – a secondary event few people cared about those days. And it makes one

⁸⁷ Jay Pidmore, "Students Debate Meaning of 'Holocaust Project' Exhibit." *Chicago Tribune*, Nov 26, 1993, 28.

⁸⁸ Pidmore, *Chicago Tribune*, 28.

wonder which massacres we're ignoring today."⁸⁹ This is the exact reaction from viewers Chicago would have hoped for.

While almost every article acknowledged both strengths and weaknesses for the exhibit, the contrast in positive reviews and negative reviews I include speaks highly of the future of Holocaust remembrance. Older audiences expect a certain treatment of the Holocaust, where certain images, concepts, events, or details are just simply left out lest they be respectful and less offensive. Younger generations, however, are more open minded, especially when it comes to the Holocaust because of distance, and more often can pull out lessons from controversial work without immediately criticizing its content. Additionally, harsh critics usually come from a greater, more in-depth understanding of the artwork, where they can better analyze it using particular details, practices, or connections to the larger art world where a college student would not by simply looking at it. At least from my aforementioned examples, *The Holocaust Project* appeals to the younger generation who may better understand the Holocaust when placed in the context of other global issues that are simply more relevant to their lives.

While museum exhibitions must prepare for varying audiences that include people of all ages, in terms of Holocaust education specifically it is the younger generations who will carry its memory with them now, as they grow older, and will pass it on to their kids. Writing this thesis permits me intimate access into *The Holocaust Project* and thus will make for more particular criticism. Do I think she loses focus throughout her exhibit in comparing the Holocaust to a wide array of large global issues? Yes. Do I think Chicago leaves the viewer with a potentially unrealistic message of world peace at the end of her exhibit? Yes. *The Holocaust Project* is not flawless by any means, but it is yet another example of the type of controversial artwork that marks progress in our future understanding and education of the Holocaust. In the same way as

⁸⁹ Michael Gelbwasser, "Holocaust Art Show Worth Seeing." *Jewish Advocate*, Oct 1995, 25.

the artists in *Mirroring Evil*, Chicago makes very strong and very obvious political comments about heated issues that concerned our world during the 1980s and arguably still concern our world today. Naturally, viewers would leave having something to say about it and Chicago was ready for and understanding of such debate.

The nature of these controversial exhibits such as the *Holocaust Project* and *Mirroring Evil* is that they get people talking, that there is heated debate in both directions for why they may be successful or not, which keeps Holocaust discussion active. In both cases too, we find criticism because of their shock factor, but that is what they ultimately try to achieve. Rosenthal discusses this “Americanization of the Holocaust” as threatening, and at the time it probably was based on the nature of how the Holocaust was understood and dealt with visually. He wrote the article almost 20 years ago when memorializing the Holocaust was of utmost importance. Today, with generations so far removed from the actual events of the Holocaust, bringing it into the light of current global issues may be the key to help engage audiences who may be removed from the Holocaust in more ways than simply time.

White Flame of the Six Million

Art found in museums and art found in religious settings immediately influences a work’s meaning, especially when it pertains to the Holocaust because of its identity as both a historical and “Jewish” event. Even though *Mirroring Evil* and *From Darkness Into Light* were both originally displayed in Jewish museums, as public institutions both The Jewish Museum and Spertus Museum appealed to larger and more diverse audiences than any one synagogue would. It also helps that both are located in very large metropolitan cities (New York and Chicago, respectively). Placing Holocaust art in museums allows artists to be more creative and

controversial through varied use of its subject matter and also allows visitors to view it from more secular and global perspectives. In synagogues, Holocaust related artwork tends to take a more modest, memorial approach, which is fair because they are holy places of worship. A synagogue's audience is restricted to its congregation, and art of any subject matter is immediately viewed and understood in a religious context.

White Flame for the Six Million is a Holocaust memorial located in the sanctuary of Temple Beth El in Great Neck, New York, and was designed and created by Louise Nevelson in 1971. Because it is part of the sanctuary's architecture, it serves religious functions in addition to memorializing the Holocaust. It is meant to help beautify the synagogue and, according to Nevelson, is also meant to "stimulate imagination without disturbing meditation."⁹⁰ The memorial itself is an integral part of the synagogue's architecture and encompasses the entire bema wall, with the Torah Ark in the center, and the Eternal Light in front of it hung from the ceiling. It features Nevelson's unique sculptural style of found, natural wood material completely covered in either solid black, white, or gold paint. In this case, white. The entire bema wall is 55-ft long and towers over people who stand in front of it. Four horizontal rows stretch the wall's length (including over the Torah ark doors in the center) and within each is a consistent pattern of vertical, overlapping, curvilinear shapes that resemble flames, or to some abstracted human bodies. Walking into the sanctuary, the wall has a presence; it makes a statement. It is where one's eyes immediately focus upon entering the space because of its central location in the room. Prior to Nevelson completing the ark, she worked with architect Armand Bartos on the design of the entire sanctuary, which was reconstructed and completed in 1970.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Brooke Kamin Rapaport, *The Sculpture of Louise Nevelson: Constructing a Legend*, 2007, 60.

⁹¹ Interview with John Hirsch, Curator of Temple Beth El, January 10th, 2013.

Louise Nevelson was born in Kiev, Ukraine in 1899 and immigrated to the United States two years after her father with the rest of her family in 1905. From there she faced a failed marriage, multiple trips to and from Europe to study art, and a son who was left with her parents in Maine. She rejected the Jewish domestic life society expected of her and instead chose a thriving independent lifestyle as a modernist artist. By 1935, she had her first gallery and museum showings in New York and by 1941 she had her first solo exhibitions. While her personal life faced a multitude of transitions over time, so too did her artwork. However, it consistently reflected her desire to strip herself and the world of its labels lest she be unable to create her own reality. With found wood as her material, she brought her composition of shapes and pieces together by bathing them entirely in black, white, or gold paint. Her inspiration for this method came from artist Hans Hofmann, with whom she worked in Munich following her choice to abandon New York Jewish suburban life. He encouraged discipline through the use of limited colors. At first Nevelson created tabletop sized artworks, but over time her works became larger and larger, from wall displays to room displays and finally large outdoor public displays. Stripping herself of the labels of female, Jew and mother, Nevelson's work reflects her struggles with selfhood through her organization of incomplete shapes and remnants and their transformation into complete and consistent works of art.⁹²

The architecture of Temple Beth El's new sanctuary following its reconstruction in 1970 features wood seats and white walls. Together, the two complement the aesthetics of Nevelson's bimah wall. Light green carpet provides an earthy complement to the natural white and brown palette of the rest of the sanctuary. The architecture of the building as a whole, however, contrasts with its simple color scheme as it makes use of varied geometric shapes and lines in establishing the relationship between the bottom floor and balcony seating. The rigid and varied

⁹² *The Sculpture of Louise Nevelson*, 3-25.

straight lines found in the room's structure oppose although in turn emphasize, Nevelson's ark because of the flowy, curved shapes found in its composition. In his article "Beyond the Box" Lance Esplund, reporter for *The Sun*, describes his admiration for the wall's unique style saying, "Held to the grid, they are stacked in four rows, yet they appear to move vertically, not just horizontally." He continues, "Beautifully suggestive of people, vases, scrolls, air, water, and plant life, the forms read individually and as generational growth. Here, Nevelson is thinking not only outside but beyond the box."⁹³

From a distance, this consistent pattern successfully hides the two doors of the Torah Ark in the center, making it appear part of the wall. The fact that the doors get hidden and are also white makes for a greater impact when they are opened. When I visited the sanctuary, I knew that ark itself had to open, I just did not anticipate how. As I stood in front of the ark as the two large doors were moved aside, I was in awe. Not just because the bimah wall itself stood at least 10 feet above me, but also because of what I saw when it opened. Inside the ark are six individual Torah scrolls, with covers designed by artist Ina Golub. Her work is characterized by Jewish themes and abstract forms that embrace nature and light.⁹⁴ Most notable, however, is Golub's use of rich, bright colors. Each Torah scroll in the ark is draped in a brightly colored Torah cover that features designs mirroring the abstract shapes of Nevelson's structure surrounding them. These Torah covers are colored with different shades of blue, red, yellow, red, orange, purple and pink. Though one of the covers features a little bit of green, the rest do not. It is hard to judge the precise reason why this may be so, but I think green may have been limited because the sanctuary carpet is entirely green. Whether or not this may have been a reason that influenced Golub's color choice, it is also interesting to note that the color green, the most

⁹³ Lance Esplund, "Beyond the Box," *The New York Sun*, 28 March, 2013.

⁹⁴ <http://www.inagolub.com/aboutina.html>, accessed April 10th, 2013.

dominant color in our natural world, is not featured in Torah covers where the Torah is Judaism's most active and living documents. There is the starkest of contrasts between the white walls of the ark and the assorted brightly colored Torah covers draping the scrolls within it. However, the consistency in pattern binds the two together in a very natural and balanced way. For the audience, it makes the Torahs pop, it makes them stand out, and allows them to make an impact independent of the ark they are housed in, which does not overpower their presence.

I was lucky during my visit to Temple Beth El to have had the opportunity to speak with curator John Hirsch and learn about Nevelson and her relationship with Great Neck. In the 1950s she taught in the Great Neck school system as an art teacher in the adult education program to make extra money while living in New York.⁹⁵ According to John, a prominent congregation member named Seymour Meyer took Nevelson's class and became her protégée. After being introduced to Temple Beth El, Nevelson had the opportunity to consult with Bartos, whose architectural style mimicked that of Frank Lloyd Wright in building structures that are seen and experienced as sculptures. In combination with Nevelson's expertise in sculpture, the two were able to work together to finalize the design of the building, which revolved around Nevelson's bema wall, Torah ark, and Eternal flame to make congregants feel as though they were sitting inside of a sculpture. Hirsch emphasized the ark's accessibility in first being a work of art, and then a memorial second. Even though the ark, *The White Flame of the Six Million*, is addressed by name in every Saturday morning "calendar," or program of events, the synagogue and its congregation is really into art, as evident by the works all over the multiple buildings, and also evident by the fact that it has a curator to begin with. As curator, Hirsch understands the religious context of art and how exhibiting it in a place of worship only adds to one's spiritual experience.

⁹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louise_Nevelson, accessed on April 10th, 2013.

“Art creates a spiritual atmosphere,” he explained. “When we read Betzalel, which talks about the building of the Tabernacle, it is all about creating a beautiful space for worship.”⁹⁶

Following my visit to Temple Beth El, I also had the opportunity to speak with Rabbi Jerome Davidson, senior Rabbi at Temple Beth El in Great Neck from 1971-2007, about *The White Flame for the Six Million* and try to understand it from a Rabbi’s perspective to see how it influenced the religious experience in the sanctuary. First, however, it is interesting to note certain discrepancies in their two stories. Rabbi Davidson spoke about Wilfred Kohn, president of the temple at the time, who also took Nevelson’s art class, and also befriended her, so much so that she accepted the commission for the *White Flame* in 1970.⁹⁷ I am inclined to believe that more than one very important member of the congregation wished to take her art class, which I do not find surprising because of how much influence she maintained in the final architecture and design of the entire sanctuary, not just the ark.

Additionally, though, he validated Hirsch’s understanding of the ark as first and foremost a means to create a more spiritual and artistic environment. He believes “it’s about the idea of art being in there for its own sake, about the spiritual feeling you get from art is every bit as significant as if it would have represented the Holocaust.” Neither Hirsch nor Rabbi Davidson wishes to deny that the ark has significance in terms of its relation to the Holocaust. As a Rabbi he often spoke of the bimah wall to congregants in the context of the Holocaust, and confirmation students would write things about it in their classes. In the end, however, to Rabbi Davidson, the ark was a “magnificent piece of art that represents much more. It was there as kind of a spiritual frame of reference for whatever we were doing. Worship in the midst of beauty is

⁹⁶ Interview with John Hirsch, January 10th, 2013.

⁹⁷ Interview with Rabbi Jerome Davidson, January 14th, 2013.

very important. We speak of the holiness of beauty and the beauty of holiness. Sanctity comes from artistic beauty and that's what it has translated itself to be in our sanctuary.”⁹⁸

As part of our interview, Rabbi Davidson also touched on the idea that was widespread in the years following the war, where Jews in America, and even Israel, did not want the Holocaust to become the symbol for how the rest of the world defined and understood Judaism. They did not want Judaism as a whole to be characterized by one tragic event, one historical moment of weakness and despair when a third of its people were systematically slaughtered. Where some memorials portrayed the Holocaust in very graphic and blatant terms to reflect suffering from the Holocaust, Temple Beth El strove for something different. “We never really wanted Jewish life to be an appendage of the Holocaust, sustained by memory of the Holocaust, because it would not be the dramatic experience for the next generation,” explained Davidson. “Yes, we had congregants that were survivors, but you don't want the Judaism to be rooted in that memory in and of itself.”⁹⁹

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Holocaust was a major artistic focus for memorials. Following the Eichmann trial, the world was really able to grasp the horror of Jews' experiences due to the increase in eyewitness testimony. However, we cannot ignore the fact that Holocaust memorial materials were created during that period from 1945-1962, a point stressed by author Hasia Diner in her essay “Before ‘The Holocaust’” in *American Jewish Identity Politics*. “American Judaism of the late 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s functioned as a complex of denominations, synagogues, and seminaries,” Diner explains. “These years saw the creation of new texts linking the practice of Jewish religion to the horrors of Nazi Germany.”¹⁰⁰ In line with

⁹⁸ Interview with Rabbi Jerome Davidson, January 14th, 2013.

⁹⁹ Interview with Rabbi Jerome Davidson, January 14th, 2013.

¹⁰⁰ Hasia Diner, “Before ‘The Holocaust’: American Jews Confront Catastrophe, 1945-1962,” *American Jewish Identity Politics*, 83-92.

Diner's argument, the booming of synagogue congregations and simultaneous recognition of the Holocaust, we can understand why a memorial in Temple Beth El would be included as part of renovations in 1970. While many memorials were figurative, depicting actual scenes and people particular to the Holocaust, more abstract memorials were also created, such as *The White Flame for the Six Million*. Temple Beth El can justify this for a variety of reasons including the fact that Nevelson herself was not particularly religious, her artistic style was very much characterized by abstraction, and at the time of commission, Beth El staff did not request a Holocaust memorial specifically. In many ways the bimah wall naturally developed meaning as a Holocaust memorial and by the time construction was over, it was used as part of Beth El's special processions for Holocaust survivors.

During the 1970s, Nevelson also had two other religious commissions in addition to Temple Beth El in Great Neck, including one at Temple Israel in Boston and a third at the Erol Beker Chapel of the Good Shepherd in New York's St. Peters Lutheran Church.¹⁰¹ Nevelson created *Sky Covenant* for Temple Israel in Boston in 1973. This twenty-five foot sculpture, placed outside of the synagogue, was painted black and made of Cor-ten. It featured a similar geometric pattern of five rows and five columns, and within each square are her characteristic abstracted shapes. Rabbi Roland Gittelsohn of Temple Israel found meaning in Nevelson's play of the incomplete and complete, "as one pushed beyond the separate boxes to encompass the whole, almost imperceptibly an over-all design emerges, a plan, a purposeful blending . . . irresistibly the eye is drawn upward, as our earthly oneness reaches up in aspiration toward the Divine Oneness."¹⁰² Even though Nevelson's work for the Erol Beker Chapel of the Good Shepherd in New York's St Peter's Lutheran Church from 1977 was smaller, white, indoors, and

¹⁰¹ *The Sculpture of Louise Nevelson*, 58-61.

¹⁰² *The Sculpture of Louise Nevelson*, 61.

strictly a wall relief, we once again find her unique style of busy and detailed, yet controlled and refined geometry made consistent with the inclusion of entirely white surfaces.¹⁰³ Whether in a synagogue or church, Nevelson stuck to her artistic style and inclinations for all of her artwork; the fact that she did not make a more figurative ark wall for Temple Beth El was simply because she did not make figurative artwork at all. Regardless of the location, her personal religious beliefs, or lack thereof, trumped any and all desire to be figurative. She related the ark wall to the Holocaust because it connected to the people who were going to view it, as the generation most closely connected to the Holocaust either survivors themselves, or immigrants or refugees from Eastern Europe. While Hirsch recognized that the Holocaust was not Nevelson's ultimate focus in *The White Flame for the Six Million*, he did stress that it was relevant as a theme that occurred in her artwork.¹⁰⁴

Each of the Torah's covers includes its own unique Hebrew word, the six being *Kedushah*, the Hebrew word for holiness, *Shalom*, which means peace, *Mishpat*, which means judgment, *Emet*, which means truth, *Simchah*, which means happiness, and finally *Zachor*, which means remember. The Ark's additional association with the Holocaust comes with the final *Zachor* Torah Scroll, which was originally housed in Prague and confiscated by the Nazis to be displayed in a museum for murdered Jews. It was one of many that was confiscated but eventually rescued and brought to Great Britain to be repaired. These scrolls were then distributed to synagogues around the United States that wished to have one for the purposes of Holocaust representation. Of the six in the ark, the *Zachor* Torah is the only one that was salvaged from the war. According to Rabbi Davidson, the *Zachor* Torah was the most important

¹⁰³ *The Sculpture of Louise Nevelson*, 61.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with John Hirsch, January 10th, 2013.

one in the synagogue and he believed it “was more fundamentally focused on the Holocaust than the ark wall itself”.¹⁰⁵

Rabbi Davidson clearly agrees the artistic qualities of the bema wall predominate its Holocaust implications. Rabbi Davidson was assistant Rabbi at Temple Beth El at the time of the commission and had the opportunity to sit in on multiple meetings where Nevelson was present. In our interview, he explained that at the time of the commission, no one framed the conversation to specifically request an ark wall to represent the Holocaust. Rather, he recalls seeing the final work and asking Nevelson what it was and what she called it, to which she replied “the white flame for the six million.” Apparently most people never heard this conversation. He continues the story at the dedication ceremony, remembering that Nevelson came to speak, “she was a character, a big tall woman with long lashes, always made up, dressed in her own style, she was delightful, but you never knew what would come out of her mouth.” While she addressed a crowd of over 1,000 that day someone asked her what she called it, and she responded, “I don’t know, I have no idea.” After being reminded of her original title *White Flame for the Six Million* by one of the Rabbis that sat in on one of the original meetings, she insisted on having no recollection of calling it that.¹⁰⁶

In addition to the ambiguity associated with the bimah wall’s title, there is no literature to suggest that Nevelson considered the Holocaust throughout the building process for the *White Flame of the Six Million*. First and foremost, Nevelson was commissioned to create a bimah wall, Torah ark, and Eternal light for a reform synagogue. The religious implications of the structure come first because of its placement in a sacred space, as the central focus of the sanctuary. Even though Nevelson was not an actively practicing Jew, as an artist she still had to understand her

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Rabbi Jerome Davidson, January 14th, 2013.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Rabbi Jerome Davidson, January 14th, 2013.

audiences when completing religious commissions. Whether intentionally or not, the title and composition of *White Flame for the Six Million* allude to a verse from the Torah (Deuteronomy 33:2), which refers to it as “fiery law.”¹⁰⁷ Commentary from Midrash adds that, “[The Torah] was written with a black fire upon a white fire.”¹⁰⁸ Just as people consider the black words of the Torah equally significant to the white space around it, so to do I understand *White Flame of the Six Million* to represent this balance. The white shapes and black shapes work together in harmony to create something meaningful, something with movement, something that requires looking and provokes thought. The “white flames” in both cases do not have obvious meaning, and therefore must be interpreted personally. Nevelson successfully characterizes the bimah wall in the same way the Torah would be: beautiful, mysterious, living, and requiring one’s effort to look and contemplate.

The bimah wall’s artistic implications come second because Nevelson was an artist, and this bimah wall is an aesthetically moving and beautiful addition to the synagogue. Furthermore, its abstract composition hinders one’s ability to immediately associate it with any one subject. Lastly, its Holocaust implications come third, because one has to be made aware of its title, of the story of the *Zachor* Torah inside the ark, and of its historical involvement with Holocaust proceedings in the 1970s in order to know there is any connection to begin with. Rabbi Davidson summed up this issue eloquently when he explained that the most effective type of Holocaust memorial is not one that simply depicts its horrible events, but rather one that serves a larger function, in this case a spiritual function. Nevelson is an artist who is detached from her Judaism, but very connected to her sense of spirituality. That translates into art that encourages a spiritual response from viewers, and that seems to be what Hirsch and Rabbi Davidson love most about

¹⁰⁷ Deuteronomy 33:2, as cited by Rabbi Avi Weiss in his Weekly D’Var Torah on Parshat Vezot Ha-Berakha, Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, Bronx, NY, September 28-29, 2002.

¹⁰⁸ Midrash Tanchuma, Genesis 1

the sanctuary, Hirsch from a more artistic point of view that beauty is holy, and Rabbi Davidson from the religious point of view that holiness is beautiful.

As a reform synagogue, Temple Beth El is more open and welcoming to the variety of Jewish beliefs and practices congregant members maintain. This makes for an interesting play between religion and spirituality. Commissioning Nevelson's bimah wall, which is visually subject-neutral, congregants can incorporate it into their spiritual experience in whatever way they like, whether embracing it for its artistic qualities or its religious, if any. At the time of the commission, I do not believe that Nevelson was unaware of what she was creating, a bimah wall, a Torah ark, and an Eternal light, which are all components of a Jewish synagogue, so they are all immediately Judaized. However, her artistic style reflects her personal disconnect with religion, so the bimah wall does not feature any obvious Jewish symbolism or Holocaust imagery, which is why I cannot imagine artwork like this being permitted in a more orthodox setting. The abstraction is meant to encourage these personal experiences that Reform Judaism accepts, whether congregants are more religious or not. They can appreciate it as a spiritual symbol, a Holocaust memorial, both, or neither because nothing is immediately suggested. Its placement in a Reform synagogue makes for this flexibility.

The ark is described as a Holocaust memorial in the synagogue's weekly calendar, though it is more openly discussed in this way with congregants while in services or confirmation classes. This type of exposure makes for a community discussion, where a group of people familiar with each other can converse and commemorate together in their regular place of worship. Hirsch described how in the 1970s, the synagogue used to hold annual processions in the sanctuary, recognizing the survivors who were congregants at the time. Then, audience members could all honor their family and community members together. Even though today

there are no living survivors who are congregation members, the bimah wall has continued to be utilized in Holocaust remembrance though appreciated more so now as a beautiful work of art that contributes to more positive prayer experiences.

The biggest element to keeping Holocaust education alive is dialogue. Getting people talking about it is what is most effective. Even though figurative Holocaust imagery has been completely stripped from this sanctuary in particular, I agree with Rabbi Davidson when he insists that it is for the better because in turn, the beautiful space that Nevelson has created allows for the positive and spiritual environment that may more comfortably handle Holocaust material when it is important to acknowledge it. Over time, blatant and graphic imagery of the Holocaust loses its meaning for those part of future generations because of its overexposure and commodification. As a synagogue that as a whole appreciates and features artwork, *White Flame of the Six Million* was the perfect commission because of the balance it now creates between religion and spirituality, aesthetics and imagery. Holocaust memorial here is fused functionally with beauty and religion, which allows it to be done frequently and meaningfully in a community setting, though it is never forced or disturbing.

The Schenker Holocaust Memorial Garden

The Holocaust processions that Temple Beth El conducted in their sanctuary during the 1970s allowed the congregation's Holocaust survivors to be honored and recognized by a community of surrounding family and friends in the context of prayer. Today, Nevelson's *White Flame of the Six Million* is used as a tool to remember those special ceremonies, knowing that they rarely held today. Those who were related to or connected in some way to the survivors who may have died can bring in that personal element into their experience praying in the sanctuary,

whether they attend every week or just on days where the Holocaust more openly discussed, on Yom HaShoah, for instance. In the same way that Temple Beth El personalizes Holocaust remembrance by limiting it to a community of congregants, so too does Congregation Beth Emeth in Wilmington, Delaware strive to personalize Holocaust remembrance with their Holocaust Memorial Garden.

Congregation Beth Emeth in Wilmington, Delaware is another synagogue that successfully finds balance and meaning in Holocaust remembrance. Artist David Klass designed and executed the synagogue's Holocaust Memorial Garden, which was created during the building's extensive reconstruction from 2006-2008. The original idea for the garden came from Henry and Vera Schenker who are members of the congregation. Henry is a Holocaust survivor. The reconstruction planned for the addition of buildings that would successfully establish an enclosed, outdoor courtyard where the garden is now located.¹⁰⁹ According to Rabbi Peter Grumbacher, senior Rabbi of the congregation from 1982-2009, Klass' design for the garden was chosen over other artists because of its imagery, which, compared to others, was less disturbing, uncomfortably, negative, or grotesque. "The garden is supposed to highlight the Holocaust in a positive way and bring hope for the future," he explains.¹¹⁰ Rather than opting for a design that depicted the horrors and suffering of the Holocaust, Klass' design allows for the type of imagery that one can comfortably look at while still being able to reflect on the tragedy of the Holocaust. Klass as an artist is known not only for his realism in figurative sculptures that reflect his rigorous studies in anatomy, but also for his passion for Judaica in forms such as trees of life, menorahs, eternal lights, arks, ark doors, memorials and donor walls.¹¹¹ His combined passion for figurative sculpture and Judaica make for an incredibly balanced, aesthetically pleasing,

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.bethemethde.org/about-us/our-history>, accessed on April 13th, 2013.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Rabbi Peter Grumbacher, January 6, 2013.

¹¹¹ <http://www.synagogueart.com/about/index.htm>, accessed on April 13th, 2013.

beautiful memorial that is not intended to overwhelm, but rather to inspire quiet contemplation in an outdoor setting.

Though the garden effectively operates as a single memorial, it consists of different elements that serve varied functions. The first and most central component features a broken menorah made of stone that sits atop a dark stone block, together about 6 feet tall. Henry and Vera Schenker not only formulated the idea for the garden, but also helped fund it. Therefore, engraved on one face of the dark stone block that you see upon entering the garden are the names of his parents and other family members who perished in the war. On the ground behind the block are two parallel flat metal beams, crossed perpendicularly with stripes of red bricks, which together create the illusion of train tracks. At the end of these tracks is a small patch of grass, and beside it are two sculptures of children, one male and one female holding hands, the young girl holding an unbroken menorah, and the young boy holding a Torah. There exists a lot of ambiguity in this particular element of the memorial garden. Where are the tracks between the stone block and the children meant to lead? Where are the children supposed to be going? Why is there a patch of grass in front of them?

The way I see it, this part of the memorial represents a journey that, in Judy Chicago's terminology, reflects one that transitions "from darkness into light," while simultaneously could act as a journey from light into darkness, symbolic of never forgetting one's past. In explaining the former, entering the garden you are faced with the block first and behind it the tracks that lead to the two children. The menorah and stone block symbolize Henry's broken life and memorialize those family members whom he lost. In a larger sense, the menorah and stone block act as symbols for all Jewry that was either broken or lost in the war, including the Jewish people. The train tracks on the ground lead to a patch of living, healthy grass, symbolic of the

life Henry and other survivors had the chance to live. Furthermore, the two children hold a complete menorah and a Torah scroll, symbolic of survivors' hold onto strong, Jewish lives following the hardships of the war. Reading this part of the memorial from a second perspective starts with the two children, healthy and bound not only to one another by their hands, but also bound to their Judaism in their grasp on the menorah and Torah. They are sculpted and placed in such a way that suggests forward motion, with the young boy in front of the young girl, guiding her forward. They move forward towards the train tracks in the direction of the stone block and broken menorah, towards six million unnamed Jews' fate of brokenness and destruction. The patch of grass on the ground in front of the children, however, serves to separate and distance them from the darkness and symbolize their reflection and remembrance of the past. This one part of the entire garden memorial helps serve the functions of being both commemorative and hopeful.

The second part of the memorial is a path dedicated to righteous gentiles. It is located behind the stone block, train tracks, and children in the back of the garden when viewing it from the entrance. Greenery fills the circular path's perimeter and interior, and engraved on a stone slab on the back wall reads:

“This path is in appreciation and honor of all the Righteous Gentiles who had the courage, compassion and moral conviction to do everything they could to alleviate the suffering and save lives of the Jews against the inhumane actions of the Nazis.”

Righteous gentiles remain largely unidentified and unknown but their bravery has been documented throughout Europe, the former Soviet Union, the United States including Wilmington, Delaware, and even within the concentration camps.”

A second family in the congregation, Jean and Jack Blumenfeld wanted to make a contribution to the memorial garden, and they chose to honor righteous gentiles because Jean is a convert to Judaism. They acknowledged and commemorated the Holocaust but in a way that also honored righteous non-Jews who were involved in saving Jews.

When standing at the garden's entrance, we find the third part of the memorial against a long, stone brick wall to the right of the broken menorah and block, train tracks, and children. On the wall are 14 individual plaques, each engraved with the name of different ghettos and concentration camps where congregants' family members were located during the war. These include (order from left to right) Westerbork, Lodz, Gross-Rosen, Strzemiesvce, Warsaw, Auschwitz, Theresienstadt, Dachau, Bershad, Neuengamme, Buchenwald, Blechhammer, Nordhausen, and Babi Yar. The congregation's current senior Rabbi Yair Robinson explained how the spelling of "Strzemiesvce" must be an error because of their inability to identify it as either a concentration camp or ghetto.¹¹² After further research, I found that the more common English spelling of that Polish town is "Strzemieszycze" and according to photographs in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum online records, there was, in fact, a ghetto there.¹¹³ It is interesting to note that Rabbi Robinson was unaware that the ghetto actually existed, despite a simple spelling error. However, the fact that the synagogue kept this spelling provided by the congregant, rather than opting for a different spelling, highlights the most important quality of this memorial garden: it is about the congregation and its members.

To what level do these personal connections triumph history? In an intimate community setting such as Congregation Beth Emeth, it seems the former trumps the latter. Just as with other plaques, so long as a congregant is honoring and remembering a loved one who was present in a

¹¹² Interview with Rabbi Yair Robinson, January 6, 2013.

¹¹³ <http://digitalassets.ushmm.org/photoarchives/detail.aspx?id=1121148>, accessed on April 8th, 2013.

camp or ghetto during the Holocaust, anything goes. As an outsider who is very critical about Holocaust remembrance, I cannot discredit their methods because ultimately it is up to them. However, what does that say about Holocaust remembrance if Strzemieszyce was not in fact a ghetto? If communities chose to alter history in this way, I believe it could turn into a serious detriment. Though the fact that I had never seen anything like this before and the fact that all of the plaques represent actual sites, I cannot say I am worried about it either. There is an extent to which this idea of community remembrance can be pushed in terms of personalization, fabricating historical facts and places being part of it, but I do not think Beth Emeth pushes that line at all.

What all three of these elements have in common that helps tie them together as one cohesive memorial is their connection to Congregation Beth Emeth. Henry and Vera Schenker, Jean and Jack Blumenfeld, and those who provided the names of ghettos and concentration camps for the memorial wall are all members of the congregation. While Temple Beth El in Great Neck succeeds in incorporating the community into Holocaust remembrance, Congregation Beth Emeth takes this a step farther, using their survivors and congregants' personal stories and relationships to the Holocaust as the foundation for their Holocaust memorial. Also unlike Great Neck, the holocaust memorial garden is located in what is referred to as a semi-sacred space, where the memorial is found within the synagogue, but not inside of the sanctuaries specifically. Having the garden outdoors and filled with greenery not only adds beauty to the synagogue in being able to see it from multiple windows, but also adds elements of education and meditation that is removed from prayer, making it more versatile as a community space for learning all year round.

The most obvious difference between the Nevelson sculpture and Klass' garden appears in the latter's figurative attributes. It is literal in its representation of the Holocaust. One would know right away entering the garden that its subject matter is the Holocaust. Nevelson's bimah wall is located in the synagogue's sanctuary and because it does not incorporate any sort of personal story or connections to the temple's congregants, it possesses abstract flexibility. It is more aesthetically creative than the memorial garden. Having the opportunity to commemorate a specific group of loved ones makes for a much more personal and meaningful remembrance for those who are remembering them. Just as the congregants of Temple Beth El in Great Neck continue to honor their community of survivors through the lasting impressions of Nevelson's bimah wall, so too will Congregation Beth Emeth continue to honor their community of survivors with the memorial garden.

While visiting Congregation Beth Emeth in Wilmington, I was faced with this larger question of Holocaust art versus Holocaust memorial because of two other examples found in Wilmington separate from the Holocaust memorial garden at Congregation Beth Emeth. I spoke with Connie Kreshtool, who works in the synagogue's gift shop and is also former chair of the Halina Wind Preston Holocaust Education Center, which works statewide operating through the Jewish Federation of Delaware. Learning about the organization's operations made me realize that the Jewish community of the whole state of Delaware structures Holocaust awareness and remembrance around its connection to the people of Delaware in the same way Congregation Beth Emeth structures its remembrance around their congregants. Connie explained that the Halina Wind Preston Holocaust Education Committee does not do any work with Beth Emeth's memorial garden, but rather focuses on non-Jewish community members, conducting programs through schools on Holocaust education, teacher workshops, field trips with students to the

Holocaust museum in DC, and workshops with state and citywide police. More recently, the committee put out a DVD entitled “No Denying,” which includes testimony of survivors, liberators, and righteous gentiles from Delaware. When I asked her about the memorial garden she explained its effectiveness as a teaching tool for those part of the Beth Emeth community as well as for those who do not visit the building regularly, including those who come through the synagogue for special events such as bar and bat mitzvahs. She feels the memorial is limited, however, because one has to be in the building to see it.¹¹⁴

As someone who works with the Holocaust outside of the Beth Emeth community, she cites the Garden of the Righteous at the Jewish Community Center and the memorial statue besides the state building as two other examples of visual Holocaust recognition in Wilmington. The Garden for the Righteous at the Jewish Community Center in Wilmington was first established in November 1981 by Halina Wind Preston. She created plans for the garden because of her experiences in the war hiding for 14 months in sewers of Lvov, Poland and eventually being rescued by two Catholic sewer workers, Leopold Socha and Stefan Wroblewski. Not only was she a resident of Wilmington, but she was also one of the first survivors in the 1950s openly to discuss her experiences during the war. The garden started out as small saplings with wooden markers on them with names of righteous gentiles who lived in Delaware. In 1983, the garden was formally dedicated and a monument was added in addition to bronze plaques that replaced all of the wood markers.¹¹⁵ Most recently, on April 7, 2013, the garden was rededicated and two new trees were planted. Wilmington artist Francisca Verdoner Kan and her daughter Elly dedicated one of these trees in honor of Amsterdam’s Artis Royal Zoo, where she and hundreds

¹¹⁴ Interview with Connie Kreshtool, January 6, 2013.

¹¹⁵ David Lee Preston, “A Holocaust Saga: From the sewers to a Garden.” CNN Opinion. April 9, 2013.

of other Jews hid from the Nazis during the war. The Garden of the Righteous was the first monument in the United States for Christians who helped save lives during the Holocaust.¹¹⁶

However, Kreshtool explained how she finds more visual and artistic impact from the memorial statue than either of the two gardens. Halina Wind Preston's husband, George E. Preston, was a Russian Jew who also survived the Holocaust, having spent time in both Buchenwald and Auschwitz-Birkenau. He served on the committee that helped create the Holocaust memorial in Wilmington's Freedom Plaza.¹¹⁷ Elbert Weinberg created the sculpture, which was dedicated in 1979 by the city of Wilmington in cooperation with the Jewish Federation of Wilmington. The accompanying plaque reads, "HOLOCAUST, 1933-1945, In memory of the 6,000,000 men, women, and children, victims of hatred whom the Nazi's brutality murdered only because they were Jews...and the world remained silent." The sculpture itself consists of three massive irregularly shaped pillars, each featuring the names of two of the six largest concentration camps: Auschwitz, Dachau, Treblinka, Buchenwald, Birkenau, and Bergen-Belsen. Within the cracks of these three pillars are three large, naked, mutilated, hungry, suffering bodies, one male and two females (one carrying a child), symbolic of the suffering that occurred in these concentration/death camps. "The memorial downtown is very striking, and stark, but it's art. Here at the synagogue, this is a lovely memorial, but it's not art," Kreshtool said.

In terms of Holocaust memorials such as this one, we need to consider its function and purpose in order to properly evaluate its aesthetics. The Schenkers suggested the original idea for the Holocaust Memorial Garden at Beth Emeth. The ultimate goal was to create a Holocaust memorial. In this case, different from Temple Beth El, Holocaust implications came first before

¹¹⁶ Clem Murray, "One-of-a-kind Monument Rededicated at Wilmington JCC." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. April 9, 2013.

¹¹⁷ Robin Brown, "Monument to heroes of Holocaust Restored." *Delaware Online*. April 9, 2013.

artistic or religious implications because that is how it was intended. This is why, despite its aesthetic appeal, the memorial garden is not immediately considered a “work of art.” It serves the dual function of both a beautiful Holocaust memorial and outdoor garden with its subject matter as the most important feature. Its purpose and meaning can be extracted quickly when looking at it either in the garden itself, or from a surrounding window. Where future generations of Temple Beth El congregants may have to work harder and take more time to identify *White Flame of the Six Million* as a Holocaust memorial, the Holocaust Memorial garden at Beth Emeth will send a very direct message for its future congregants. They will see and understand the Schenker’s goals with the garden quickly, because its role as a memorial came first and foremost. If congregants themselves take issue with the fact that this memorial only lists the Schenker’s deceased family members, there are two other memorials in the city to view that may better suit their wants in terms of a personalized Holocaust memorial experience. This variety is important because one memorial simply and naturally cannot please everyone.

Halina Wind Preston and George E. Preston were influential figures as Holocaust survivors in Wilmington, Delaware, and contributed a lot towards the establishment of the multiple Holocaust memorials in the city of Wilmington. The couple set the stage for what community Holocaust remembrance is all about, and as a result, the city of Wilmington, and even the state of Delaware, has made it a point to structure their Holocaust awareness around those who live there. I think the Holocaust Memorial Garden at Congregation Beth Emeth in addition to the memorial in Freedom Plaza and the Garden of the Righteous at the JCC set the example for what Holocaust memorial should look like across the United States in highlighting one’s own town and community members in order to foster a unique memorial experience that is sure to be personal and meaningful for years to come.

The heart of this difference between Holocaust representation in museums and synagogues, between these controversial exhibitions and the less visually provocative memorials has to do with the difference between cultural Judaism and religious Judaism. A synagogue cannot display artwork in the same way a museum can from the fact that a synagogue is holy. The physical space and all of its subsequent activities and congregants exist in a purely religious context. It needs to consider aesthetics in order to make the space beautiful though must be cautious about what they display lest anyone feel offended, uncomfortable, or distracted while praying. The synagogue just simply is not an appropriate setting for all Jewish artwork. By contrast, museums (even Jewish museums) are much more flexible as locations for art display because they are public institutions and cater to a much wider audience. When Holocaust art is put on display in a museum, such as that in *Mirroring Evil* or *The Holocaust Project*, the religious elements of Judaism are stripped and it is presented objectively because anyone from the general public can view it and have a meaningful experience. For example, Elaine Gurian, museum consultant and former deputy director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum explains how it is important to find balance between accommodating the religious and secular viewers in a Holocaust museum setting. Gurian believed that, as a federally funded museum, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum should not allow public prayer to occur inside. However, the director of the museum disagreed. The museum would be as open and accommodating of their Jewish visitors in welcoming prayer and closing for Yom Kippur as it would be to the non-Jew who may decide to visit on a Friday.¹¹⁸

Museums and synagogues provide different benefits to Holocaust remembrance based upon the visual material they represent. In the end, meaningful Holocaust remembrance is about everyone finding a personal connection to it. Any institution that involves itself with Holocaust

¹¹⁸ Elaine Gurian, *Civilizing the Museum*, 200

education and remembrance needs to adjust its methods in order for it to more easily and meaningfully enter the consciousness of future generations that will not have the means to meet those who survived. This is not to say that fundamental textbook Holocaust education is irrelevant. If anything, I think learning about the Holocaust is the first step towards establishing any sort of relationship with it beyond that. Without Norman Kleeblatt, Judy Chicago, Louise Nevelson, and David Klass' knowledge of the Holocaust and their subsequent feelings towards it, we would not be able to discuss their artwork in this context. As we move into future generations, farther away from the events of the Holocaust, having it remain strong in our consciousness is crucial. Continuing to actively remember and honor it in America will help ensure our promise to survivors, as well as to each other, that it will never happen again.

Artist Biographies

Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art

Boaz Arad was born in Afula, Israel in 1956 and currently lives in Tel Aviv.¹¹⁹ He received his Bachelor's Degree in 1982 from the Avni Institute of Art and Design and from 1983-2006 he taught art at the Thelma Yellin High School of the Arts in Givatayim, Israel. While also an art teacher at the Camera Obscura School of Art in Tel Aviv from 1993-2004, he studied at their new seminar for Visual Culture, Criticism, and Theory from 1995-1996. Since 2001 he has taught art in the Beit Berl Academic College of the Midrasha School of Art in Israel, and since 2007 he has also taught at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem. Aside from teaching, Arad also had six solo exhibitions from 1985-2009, five of which in Israel and

¹¹⁹ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 137.

one in Stockholm, Sweden, as well as been part of over 60 group exhibitions through 2011. He specializes in film in his art, and in addition to both solo and group exhibitions around the world he also had 34 film screenings from 1999-2010.¹²⁰ His *Hebrew Lesson* was the one featured in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit in 2002 and his *Gefilte Fish* was featured in *Food for Thought: A Video Art Sampler*, a second exhibit in the Jewish Museum from October, 2006 to February, 2007.¹²¹

Christine Borland was born in Darvel, Scotland in 1965 and currently lives in Glasgow. She received her Bachelor's Degree at the Glasgow School of Art in 1987 and her Master's Degree from the University of Ulster, Belfast in Ireland in 1988.¹²² Following her education in 1996, she completed a residency at the Kunstwerke (KW) Institute for Contemporary Art, and from 1998-2001 she was a fellow of fine Art at the Glasgow School of Art. Borland's first solo exhibition was in Glasgow in 1994 and was titled *From Life*. From 1992 through the end of 2009 Borland has shown her artwork in 26 solo exhibitions and was featured as part of over 100 group exhibitions in more than 30 cities worldwide. *L'Homme Double*, her sculptural work of art featured in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit in 2002, was executed in 1997 and displayed as the focus of one solo exhibition in 1998 in Arhus, Denmark.¹²³

Mat Collishaw was born in Nottingham, England in 1966 and currently lives in London, where he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Goldsmith's College at the University of London in 1989.¹²⁴ From 1990-2011 he has displayed his work in 51 solo exhibitions and has contributed work to 164 group exhibitions since 1988.¹²⁵ He uses and manipulates photography

¹²⁰ <http://boazarad.net/about.html>, accessed January 11th, 2013.

¹²¹ <http://www.thejewishmuseum.org/exhibitions/FoodForThought>, accessed January 11th, 2013.

¹²² *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 137.

¹²³ <http://www.annaschwartzgallery.com/works/biography?artist=11>, accessed on January 11th, 2013.

¹²⁴ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 139.

¹²⁵ http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/artists/mat_collishaw.htm, accessed on January 12th, 2013.

as inspiration for his multi media artwork, and his photograph *Gustav and Helga* from his 2000 *Burnt Almonds* collection was the one selected for *Mirroring Evil* in 2002 in depicting the eventual suicides of German officers in the context of modern day vanitas paintings, following a final night of indulgences after their defeat in World War II.¹²⁶

Rudolf Herz was born in Sonthofen, Germany in 1954 and currently lives in Munich. He received his Bachelor's Degree from the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in 1981, his Master's Degree from Ludwig-Maximilians-University in 1989, and his Ph.D. from Carl von Ossietzky-University in 1994. His solo exhibitions from 1988-1999 include *Schauplatz, Kunstforum* at the Stadtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus in Munich, *Autodemontage II* at the Kunstraum in Wuppertal, Germany, *Spate Triumphe des erschöpften Widerspruchs* at the Villa Massimo in Rome, *Rotfront* at the Badischer Kunstverein in Karlsruhe, Germany, *Transit III* at the Halle K in Hamburg, *Transit II* at the Neues Museum Weserberg in Bremen, *Transit I* at the Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst in Berlin, *Flesh for Your Fantasy* at the Kunstbunker Tumulka in Munich, *Rat Race* at the Kunstverein Konstanz in Konstanz, Germany, and *Zugzwang* at the Kunstverein Ruhr in Essen, which was the exhibit chosen for *Mirroring Evil* in 2002. Other than *Mirroring Evil*, his group exhibitions include *Metaformen: Dekonstruktivistische Positionen in Architektur und Kunst* at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in Düsseldorf, *Summer of Photography* at the ICC/MUKA in Antwerp, and *Ansatzpunkte kritischer Kunst heute* at the Kunstverein Bonn in Bonn, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. In addition to his exhibitions, Herz has also won multiple awards for his artwork including a Project Scholarship in Kunstfonds, Bonn in 1998, an award for prizewinner for the competition for the Memorial for Assassinated European Jews in 1997, a scholarship from the German Academy in Villa Massimo in Rome for 1994-1995, the Baldreit Scholarship from the city of Baden-Baden in 1992, the Art Award of Bavaria in 1992,

¹²⁶ <http://www.matcollishaw.com>, accessed on January 12th, 2013.

an award from the City of Munich in 1990, and finally the Scholarship for Contemporary Photography from the Alfred Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach Foundation in Essen in 1987.¹²⁷

Elke Krystufek was born in Vienna in 1970 and that is where she lives today.¹²⁸ She also attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna from 1988-1992, and since 2005 she has worked there as a professor for conceptual painting. In addition to the Academy of Fine Arts in Austria, from 2005-2006 she worked as a professor at the Public Academy of Fine Arts in Karlsruhe, Germany.¹²⁹ From 1990-2012, Krystufek has had 40 solo exhibitions including *Nobody Has to Know* at the Portikus in Frankfurt, *Sleepingbetterland* at the Bahnwarterhaus, Galerie der Stadt Esslingen in Germany, *I Am Your Mirror* at the Sao Paulo Biennial in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and *Migrateurs* at the Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. Additionally, from 1989-2012 she was also featured in 109 group exhibitions including *Presumed Innocent: Childhood and Contemporary Art* at the Musee d'art contemporain in Bordeaux, France, *Peace* at the Migros Museum in Zurich, *Life is a Bitch* at the De Appel Foundation in Amsterdam, *Post-Production* at the EA-General Foundation in Vienna, *Autoreverse 2* at the Magasin Grenoble in France, *Feminin/Masculin* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, *Jetztzeit* at the Kunsthalle in Vienna and De Appel Foundation in Amsterdam, *Aperto* at the Venice Biennale in Italy, and *Economical Love* at the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit at the Jewish Museum in 2002.¹³⁰

Mischa Kuball was born in Dusseldorf, Germany in 1959 and received his Bachelor's Degree from Dusseldorf University in 1984. From 1999-2000 he taught at the Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig and from 2004-2008 he was a professor at the University of Arts and Design in Karlsruhe teaching media art. Since 2007 he has taught media art at the Academy of

¹²⁷ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 141-142.

¹²⁸ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 142.

¹²⁹ <http://www.artnet.com/artists/elke+silvia-krystufek/biography-links>, accessed on January 13th, 2013.

¹³⁰ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 142.

Media Arts in Cologne. His media of choice combines architectural installations and light, and his work *Hitler's Cabinet*, which uses plywood and light projection, was featured in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit in 2002.¹³¹ His solo exhibits since 1987 include *Sling of Memory* at the Kunstverein Ruhr in Essen, *Power of Codes* at the Tokyo National Museum in Tokyo, *Project Rooms* at the Kabinet fur aktuelle Kunst in Bremerhaven, Germany, *In Alphabetical Order* at the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen in Rotterdam, *Moderne, Rundum/Vienna Version* at the Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig in Vienna, *Worldrorschach-Rorschachworld* at the Diözesanmuseum in Cologne, *No-Place* at the Sprengel Museum in Hannover, Germany, *Double Standard* at the De Appel Foundation in Amsterdam, *Projektionsraum 1:1:1* at the Konrad Fischer Galerie in Dusseldorf, *Welt/Fall* at the Haus Wittgenstein Galerie in Vienna, and *Kabinett/Cabinet* at the Kunsthalle Galerie in Cologne.¹³² He has written 50 published works of writing, has had numerous solo exhibitions, and has participated in group exhibitions since 1984 (Kuball website). In addition, Kuball has also won six awards including the Stiftung Kunst und Kultur NRW, Dusseldorf Ministerium fur Familie, Stadtentwicklung und Kultur NRW, Dusseldorf in 1997, the Kunstfonds Bonn in 1996, the Travel Grant from Art & Culture Foundation in Dusseldorf in 1995, the ArtAward of NRW in 1993, the Award of Experimental Photography from the Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach Foundation in Essen also in 1993, the Scholarship for Contemporary Photography of Alphred Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach Foundation in Essen in 1991, the Ars Viva Award of Cultural Association BDI in Cologne also in 1991, and the Ars Viva Award from Kukurkreis in BDI in Cologne in 1990.¹³³

Zbigniew Libera was born in Pabianice, Poland in 1959 and currently lives in Warsaw. He attended Kopernik University in Torun, Poland, though dropped out prior to graduation

¹³¹ <http://www.mischakuball.com/informations.html>, accessed on January 15th, 2013.

¹³² *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 143-144.

¹³³ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 145.

(Raster). From 1980-1986 he became a part of the circle of artists from the Strych gallery and the Kultura Zrzuty art group and co-edited a magazine called *Tango*. Since 1992, he has had 19 solo exhibitions including *A Different Type of Prison* at the America-European Art Associates in New York, *Correct Me If I am Wrong* the Guy McIntyre Gallery in New York, *Correcting Devices* at the Center for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw, *Works With Air and Electricity* at the Na Mazowieckiej Gallery in Warsaw, and his first solo exhibit *Photocollages and Drawings* at the Strych Gallery in Lodz, Poland. In his career he has also been featured in more than 70 group exhibitions including *The Toy Show* at the Nikolai Fine Art Gallery in New York, *Post Conceptual Reflections* at the Center for Contemporary Art in Warsaw, *Medialization* at the Edsvik Konst Gallery in Stockholm, *Beyond Belief* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, *New I's For New Years* at the Kunstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, *Minima Media* at the Kunsthalle Elsterpark in Leipzig, *Emergency: Aperto '93* at the Forty-Fifth Venice Biennale in Italy, *Mystical Perseverence and the Rose* at the State Gallery of Art in Sopot, Poland, *Kunst Europa* at the Kunstverein Bonn in Germany, *AVE Festival* at the Arnheim in the Netherlands, *Supplements: Contemporary Polish Drawing* at the John Hansard Gallery in Southampton, New York, and *Erotic and Satire* at the Foto-Galerie Gauss in Stockholm.¹³⁴ Libera utilized different media in his artwork, such as photography, film, object installations and drawings, and it was his *LEGO Concentration Camp Set* made of Legos provided from the manufacturer that was displayed in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit in New York in 2002.¹³⁵

Roe Rosen was born in Rehovot, Israel in 1963 and currently lives in Tel Aviv. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy and Comparative Literature Studies at Tel Aviv University in 1984, a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts in New York in 1989,

¹³⁴ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 146

¹³⁵ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 130

and a Master of Fine Arts at Hunter College in New York in 1991. Today, he heads the post-graduate visual arts program at HaMidrasha College of Art while simultaneously teaches at the Bezalel Art Academy in Jerusalem.¹³⁶ Since 1986, he has had 21 solo exhibitions including *Lucy: Iconographic Sources* at the Kibbutz Be'eri Gallery at the Kibbutz Be'eri, *Professionals* at the Artists' Studio in Tel Aviv, *Martyr Paintings* at the Museum of Israeli Art in Ramat Gan, Israel, *The Blind Merchant* at the Bugrashov Gallery in Tel Aviv, as well as one exhibition at the School of Visual Arts Gallery in New York and the Sharet Gallery in Givataim, Israel. His *Live and Die as Eva Braun* solo exhibition from 1997 was the collection of his featured in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit at the Jewish Museum in 2002. Since 1985, he has also had art work featured in more than 160 group exhibitions and film festivals including *The Thirty Third Year*, *Artists Against the Strong Arm* at the Beit Ha'am Gallery in Tel Aviv, *The Angel of History* at the Herzliya Museum of Art in Herzliya, Israel, *Regarding Rafie* at the HaMidrasha Gallery in Tel Aviv, *Good Kids, Bad Kids*, "Childness" in *Israeli Art* at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, *Imprisoned Without a Trial* at the Beit Ha'Am in Tel Aviv, *Shades of Sexuality* at the Artists' House in Jerusalem, *Anxiety* at the Museum of Israeli Art at Ramat Gan, Israel, *Happy Paintings* at the Hunter College Art Gallery in New York, *Markings* at the Old Norfolk Street Synagogue in New York, *Annual Small Work Exhibition* at New York University in New York, and *Sir-Lahatz* at the Jerusalem Theater. Additionally, in 1997 he won the Israeli Ministry of Education and Culture Prize for the Encouragement of Artists in the Fields of Plastic Arts and Design.¹³⁷

Tom Sachs was born in New York in 1956 and currently lives and works there. He studied at the Architectural Association in London in 1987 and in that year received their Furniture Prize. He eventually received his Bachelor's Degree from Bennington College in

¹³⁶ <http://roeoerosen.com/CV>, accessed on January 15th, 2013.

¹³⁷ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 146-147.

Bennington, Vermont in 1989. Since 1993 he has had 46 solo exhibitions including *Art/31/Basel* at the Galeria Enzo Sperone in Basel, Switzerland, *Haute Bricolage* at the Mary Boone Gallery in New York, *Creativity is the Enemy* at the Thomas Healy Gallery in New York, *Cultural Prosthetics* at the John Berggruen Gallery in San Francisco, *Tom Sachs* at the Mario Diacono Gallery in Boston, and *Watch Me Work* at the Allied Cultural Prosthetics in New York. Since 1991, his work has also been featured in more than 155 group exhibitions including *American Bricolage* at the Sperone Westwater Gallery in New York, *Coup d'état* at the Alleged Gallery in New York, *New York* at the Gallery F15 in Moss, Norway, *Thirty-third Annual Exhibition of Art on Paper* at the Weatherspoon Art Gallery at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, *Shred Sled Symposium* at the Thread Waxing Space in New York, *Inaugural Exhibition* at the Paul Morris Gallery in New York, and *Red Windows* at Barney's New York.¹³⁸ Sachs' medium of choice is sculpture and it is unique in recreating modern icons. His *Giftgas Giftset* and *Prada Deathcamp*, both created in 1998 were two sculptures chosen for the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit in 2002.

Alan Schechner was born in London in 1962 and currently lives in Savannah, Georgia. He received a foundation diploma in Art and Design from the Waltham Forest College in London in 1980, a Bachelor's in Fine Arts degree in Art and Social Contexts from Dartington College of Arts in Devon, England, in 1991, A Masters in Fine Arts in Electronic Art and Graphics from Coventry University in Warwickshire, England in 1993, and received his SEDA Level II teaching in Higher Education Certificate from Keele University in England in 1997.¹³⁹ Much of his work uses the media of film and interactive performances, and their exhibitions starting in 1991 include *E-Motion* at the Trustees Theater in Savannah, Georgia, *Wired and*

¹³⁸ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 148-149.

¹³⁹ <http://www.dottycommies.com/resume.html>, accessed on January 15th, 2013.

Wonderful at the Institute for Contemporary Art in London, the *Hong Kong Film Festival* in Hong Kong, the *London Film Festival* at the Museum of the Moving image in London, *Capricci Art Exhibition* at the Villa Le Serre & FERT in Turin, Italy, and the *Recontres Video Art Plastique* at the Café des Images in Paris. He also worked with photography as a popular medium in his digital still artwork, and his *Barcode to Concentration Camp Morph* from 1993 and *It's the Real Thing—Self Portrait at Buchenwald* from 1993 were both chosen to be included in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit at the Jewish Museum in 2002.¹⁴⁰ For his artwork exhibitions in various media and his numerous publications, Schechner also won numerous awards for his efforts. In 1985 he received a prize from the “Natural Talent” Art Exhibition at the London Youth Festival in London, in 1992 he won a First Time award from the South West Arts Regional Art Board in Exeter, England, and in 1993, in addition to winning the Jane Sutton Memorial Award in Stoneleigh, England, he won an Intermediate Award from the South West Arts Regional Art Board in England. In 1994 he won the New Production Award from the West Midlands Arts Regional Art Board in England, a Third Prize from Arts on the River in Savannah, Georgia in 1999, A Presidential fellowship from SCAD also in Savannah, and two University Research Awards from Southampton Solent University in England, one in 2009 and one in 2010.¹⁴¹

Alain Sechas was born in Colombes, France in 1955 and currently lives in Paris. Since 1984 he has had 62 solo exhibitions including *Project pour Amiens* at Le Safran in Amiens, France, *Une exposition a cheval* at the Centre d’art contemporain at Le Parvis 3 in Pau, France, exhibitions at the Foundation Cartier in Paris, the Sao Paulo Biennial in Brazil, the Galerie Ghislaine Hussenot in Paris, the Galerie Albert Baronian in Brussels, the Hotel des Arts in Paris,

¹⁴⁰ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 149.

¹⁴¹ <http://www.dottycommies.com/resume.html>, accessed on January 15th, 2013.

the Galerie Wittenbrink in Munich, and the Galerie Crousel-Houssenot in Paris. Since 1984 Sechas has also has work featured in almost 200 group exhibitions including *Premises* at the Guggenheim Museum in SoHo, New York, *Dramatically Different* at the Magasin, Centre national d'art contemporain in Grenoble, France, *Variations op. 96* at the Musee de Cognac in France, *Toys* at the Galerie Jousse-Seguin in Paris, *L'Amour de l'art* at the Biennale d'art contemporain in Lyons, France, *Aperto* at the Venice Biennale in Italy, and *Theater Garden Bestiarium* at the Institute for Contemporary Art, P.S.1 Museum in Long Island City, New York, the Teatro Lope de Vega in Sevilla, Spain, and the Confort Moderne in Poitiers, France.¹⁴² White cats are often found in his artwork, and in *Enfants Gates* (1997), he uses them in a mixed media display utilizing Nazi imagery; this work was chosen to be included in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit at the Jewish Museum in 2002.¹⁴³

Maciej Toporowicz was born in Bialystock, Poland in 1958 and received a Masters in Fine Arts from the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, Poland in 1982.¹⁴⁴ Since 1991 he has had nine solo exhibitions including *SCHOENBERG!* At the Instytut Sztuki Wyspa in Gdansk, Poland, *Planet Japan* at the Kinokuniya Gallery in New York City, *Obsession* at the Pori Art Museum in Finland, *Stairs to Heaven* at the Lombard Freid Fine Arts Gallery in New York City, *A Season in Hell* also at the Lombard Freid Fine Arts Gallery in New York City, *Obsession* at the Galeria Camargo Vilaca in Sao Paulo, Brazil, *Lure* also at the Lombard Freid Fine Arts Gallery in New York City, *Obsession* at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, and *Maciej Toporowicz* at the Galeria Wschodnia, in Lodz, Poland.¹⁴⁵ His group exhibitions since 1990 number over 45 and include *Confronting the Figure* at the Fuller Museum of Art in

¹⁴²*Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 150.

¹⁴³ <http://www.daum.fr/en-us/artists-2/Sechas%20Alain.htm?#/en eu/artists/Sechas%20Alain>, accessed January 15th, 2013.

¹⁴⁴ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 150.

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.maciejtoporowicz.com/Toporowicz/biography.html>, accessed January 16th, 2013.

Brockton, Massachusetts, *Your I* at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College and the Annandale-on-Hudson in New York, *Medialization* at the Edsvik Konst Kultur in Stockholm, *Sex/Industry* at the Stefan Stux Gallery in New York, *Giordano Bruno* at the Goethe Institute in Krakow, *Beyond the Borders* at the Bronx Museum of the Arts in the Bronx, New York, *Construction in Process IV* at the Artists' Museum in Lodz, Poland, and *Sites of Intolerance* at the Institute for Contemporary Art, P.S.1. Museum in Long Island City, New York. In 1991 and 1992 he also won the National Studio Program Award from the Institute for Contemporary Art, P.S.1. Museum, in Long Island City, New York.¹⁴⁶ The focus of his works of art is mock advertisements and videos, appropriating ideal Nazi imagery and architecture into commercial advertisements. His work *Eternity* was chosen to be displayed in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit at the Jewish Museum in 2002.¹⁴⁷

Piotr Uklanski was born in Warsaw in 1968 and currently lives in New York City. Since 1993 he has had 29 solo exhibitions including *A Norwegian Photograph* at the Fotogaleriet in Oslo, Norway, *A Mosaic at DH Smyk* at the Foksal Gallery in Warsaw, *The Nazis* at the Photographers' Gallery in London, *Joy of Photography* at the Glerie Voges & Desein in Frankfurt, *Dance Floor* at the Gavin Brown's enterprise Gallery in New York, *Life as it Should Be* at the Galeria Grodzka in Lublin, Poland, *High Density Color, High Definition Lips* at Jan Kuzinski's shop in Premysl, Poland, and *Pojedynek w pojedynke* at the Bureau of Art Exhibitions in Sandomierz, Poland. His group exhibitions since 1995 number over 54¹⁴⁸ and include *Age of Influence: Reflections in the Mirror of American Culture* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, *Peace* at the Migros Museum in Zurich, *I Love NY* at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, *Assuming Positions* at the ICA in London, *Departure Lounge* at the P.S.1. Museum at the

¹⁴⁶ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 151.

¹⁴⁷ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 123.

¹⁴⁸ http://www.perrotin.com/artiste-Piotr_Uklanski-11.html, accessed on January 16th, 2013.

Clocktower in New York, and *Raw Spaces* at the Real Art Ways Gallery in Hartford, Connecticut.¹⁴⁹ His photo collection *The Nazis* from 1998 was chosen for display in the *Mirroring Evil* exhibit at the Jewish Museum in 2002 and is a good example of his usual art work that incorporates many different types of media to explore many different aspects of culture.¹⁵⁰

The Holocaust Project: From Darkness Into Light

Judy Chicago was born in Chicago in 1939. She received her Bachelor's Degree from University of California, Los Angeles in 1962, graduating Phi Beta Kappa, and received her Masters of Art also from University of California, Los Angeles in 1964. Since then she has received five Honorary Doctorate Degrees from the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, Duke University, Lehigh University, Smith College, and Russell Sage College.¹⁵¹ Throughout her career she has taught and/or been an Artist in Residence at 11 different universities, and has won 18 awards and grants for her artistic and written achievements. Her experience as an author, artist, feminist, and teacher has made for world famous and sometimes controversial artwork including *The Dinner Party* (1974-1979), *The Birth Project* (1980-1985), and *The Holocaust Project* (1993), which use different media to explore issues of art, feminism, history, and Judaism.¹⁵² In addition to her art, Chicago has also written seven books: *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist* (1975), *The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage* (1979), *Embroidering Our Heritage: The Dinner Party Needlework* (1980), *The Birth Project* (1985),

¹⁴⁹ *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* catalog, 152.

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.gagosian.com/artists/piotr-uklaski>, accessed on January 16th, 2013.

¹⁵¹ <http://www.judychicago.com/about/bio.php>, accessed on January 16th, 2013.

¹⁵² <http://www.judychicago.com/about/bio.php>, accessed on January 16th, 2013.

Holocaust Project: From Darkness into Light (1993), *The Dinner Party/Judy Chicago* (1996), and *Beyond the Flower: The Autobiography of a Feminist Artist* (1996).¹⁵³

The White Flame of the Six Million

Louise Nevelson was a world famous American Jewish sculptor, born in Kiev Russia in 1899. Following her high school graduation in Maine and eventual marriage in 1918 after she had moved to the United States, she began to study drawing, painting, drama, and dance, having known from an early age that she wanted to pursue a career in art. She continued her art studies in Munich, where she moved after her divorce to work with Hans Hofmann, though was forced back to the United States when the Nazis closed her personal studio. Moving to the Lower East Side of New York City in 1937, still in the wake of the Great Depression, she found a job teaching at the Educational Alliance Art School, which was a Works Project Association funded program.¹⁵⁴ Her first New York exhibition was in 1941, though her *Moon Gardens + One* in 1958 increased her exposure and popularity upon her discovery by chief curator of the MoMA, where she exhibited *Dawn's Wedding Feast* in 1959. From 1973 until her death in 1988, with her preferred medium wood, painted either black or white, she went on to have 64 solo exhibitions and contribute work to more than 89 public collections.¹⁵⁵ Nevelson's sculpture was modern and creative, incorporating balance with simple materials and colors blended with elements of cubism and abstraction.¹⁵⁶

Schenker Holocaust Memorial Garden

¹⁵³ <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/jchicago.html>, accessed on January 16th, 2013.

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/nevelson.html>, accessed on January 16th, 2013.

¹⁵⁵ http://www.rogallery.com/Nevelson_Louise/Nevelson-bio.htm, accessed on January 16th, 2013.

¹⁵⁶ <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/nevelson-louise>, accessed on January 16th, 2013.

David Klass studied art and architecture at the Pratt Institute, where he graduated from in 1966.¹⁵⁷ Following his coursework, he got a job working for Theodore Roszak, an award winning sculptor, lithographer, and painter.¹⁵⁸ Combining his affinity for sculpture and of living forms, particularly the human body, Klass continued his education at the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons from 1973-1974. His depth of knowledge along with his unique approaches to sculpture has allowed him to instruct other artists throughout his career, while simultaneously putting together his own private and public collections. His works include *Nambu Horse*, a life size bronze horse commissioned for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, *Pegasus*, a welded, 10-foot high sculpture of a horse with wings standing on its back legs made for his personal collection, *Torse de Femme*, a limestone 75-inch high sculpture of the female body minus a head, arms, and lower legs at the Brookgreen Gardens in Pawleys Island, South Carolina, *Nora*, a bronze 64-inch high sculpture of a woman, which is part of his personal collection, *Primitive Mysteries*, a bronze 76-inch high sculpture of a woman with spread arms, which is part of a private collection in Rutherford, New Jersey, *Spirit of Dance*, a bronze 76-inch high sculpture of a man with spread arms and legs as though dancing, part of a private collection in Los Angeles, California, and *Calling*, a bronze 76-inch high sculpture of a man with an outreached hand, part of a private collection in New York.¹⁵⁹ In addition to his sculptures made for secular projects, Klass also incorporated his talent in art and architecture into religious works in creating sculpture for Jewish synagogues across the United States including trees of life, Menorahs, ark doors, eternal lights, donor walls, and memorials.¹⁶⁰ His Holocaust Memorial Garden for Temple Beth Emeth in Wilmington, Delaware, allowed him to utilize his skills in

¹⁵⁷ <http://www.davidklass.com/bio/index.htm>, accessed on January 16th, 2013.

¹⁵⁸ <http://theodoreroszak.com>, accessed on January 16th, 2013.

¹⁵⁹ <http://www.davidklass.com/bio/index.htm>, accessed on January 16th, 2013.

¹⁶⁰ <http://synagogueart.com>, accessed on January 16th, 2013.

sculpting anatomy as well as Judaica with the inclusion of a young boy holding a Torah and a young girl holding Menorah.

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