

Artistic Responses to Fascism

Dr. Rachel E. Perry

Course Description:

More than half a century later, the Holocaust remains one of the most traumatic events of modern Western experience. Drawing from a wide variety of media and genres, from high and low culture, directed at private and public spaces of reception, we will examine some of the many drawings, paintings, multimedia installations, graphic novels, video performances, sculptural monuments and conceptual counter-monuments, photography, and architecture used to represent the Holocaust both during the event and afterwards.

The first half of the semester surveys the art created during the period of the Holocaust by individuals in exile or in hiding, in the camps and ghettos. We will explore how victims used artistic expression as both a means of documentation and as a form of “creative resistance” to communicate their protest, despair or hope. In addition to artistic responses to Fascism, we will examine Nazi aesthetics and cultural politics and their campaign against “degenerate art.” The second half of the semester will cover artistic representations “after Auschwitz.” Despite Theodor Adorno’s injunction that “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric,” artists have struggled over the past 70 years with the paradox of trying to represent the unrepresentable. We will analyze how artistic representations vary geographically and across generational lines, between the victims and survivors and the second and third Post-Holocaust generations for whom the Holocaust constitutes a mediated, “vicarious past.”

In addition to developing visual, analytical skills, we will encounter ethical, pedagogical, theological and philosophical dilemmas such as: What is the relationship between the historical event and representations of it, between what happened and how it is passed down to us? How has memory and awareness of the Holocaust been produced and transmitted through representational practices and cultural forms? What is—or should be—the primary role of art about the Holocaust: didactic, redemptive, cathartic? Are some media or genres more, or less, suitable to the task? What strategies have been and are being used to represent the Holocaust in the visual arts? What place does comedy or parody have? When does representation fall prey to sentimentality or melodrama, and at what costs? Can a representation of the Holocaust be beautiful, sublime or enjoyable or does aesthetic pleasure trivialize and exploit the pain of others?

Course Requirements:

In addition to frontal lectures with PowerPoint presentations, this course requires active participation. It is imperative that you come to class prepared to discuss and respond to course readings. It is strongly suggested that you print copies and bring these texts to class with you as we will devote a portion of each class to close textual and visual analysis.

Required readings: PDF files of assigned articles and other documents may be downloaded or printed directly from the Moodle website under Course Library. Because this class only meets once a week, it is critical that you leave yourself enough time to read the material each week so that you will be able to discuss new concepts and arguments in class discussions.

Grade Distribution:

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|-----------------------------------|------|
| • Oral Presentation – Work of Art | 15 % |
| • Response Papers (x2) | 30% |
| • Final Presentation | 15% |
| • Final Paper | 40% |

Oral Presentations: There is one oral presentation on a work of art made during the Shoah and one contemporary work.

Short Response Papers – 3-5 pages. Each paper assignment asks you to consider the representational strategies found in media treatments of the Holocaust in the light of the theories and modes of analysis explored in class. No late submissions. TBA

Final Research Paper: For the seminar or referat, you will work independently on an original research project. Please begin thinking about topics early in the semester!

- Submit preliminary list of sources, annotated bibliography of at least 5 key sources and thesis statement by midterm period (April 1 at the latest).
- Powerpoint presentations in class the last two weeks of the semester.

Office Hours: By appointment. I can be reached at 054-772-1169. Email: perryrub@bezeqint.net

Course Schedule:

Week 1 (February 27): **Introduction**

Week 2 (March 6): **The Rise of Fascism: Artistic Responses and Fascist Aesthetics**

Film Screening: *Good Morning Mr. Hitler*, *The Eternal Jew*, *Triumph of the Will*

Readings:

- Lynn Nicholas, "They Had Four Years" in *The Rape of Europa*, 1995.
- Peter Adam. "The Great German Art Exhibit" in *Art of the Third Reich*, 1992.
- Neil Levine, "Judge for Yourselves!"-The "Degenerate Art" Exhibition as Political Spectacle," *October*, Vol. 85 (Summer, 1998).
- Rachel Perry, "Hitler's Sculptor" International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem. <https://www.yadvashem.org/education/educational-materials/lesson-plans/germanys-sculptor.html>

Web sites: <http://www.greatesttheft.com/> and <http://therapeofeuropa.com/>

Week 3 (March 13): **Art in the Ghettos, Camps and in Exile**

Readings:

- Mary Felstiner, "Charlotte Salomon's Inward-turning Testimony," *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory*, ed. Hartman (1994)
- Pnina Rosenberg. "Mickey au camp de Gurs" by Horst Rosenthal: Humour in the Art of the Holocaust" Stirling French Publications: University of Stirling (10), pp. 1-16.
- Ziva Amishai-Maisels, "The Complexities of Witnessing," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Volume 2, Issue 1, Pp. 123-147.
- Sybil Milton, "Art of the Holocaust: A Summary" Randolph L. Braham (Ed.), *Reflections of the Holocaust in Art and Literature*, City University of New York, New York, 1990, pp.147-152.

Web sites: <http://www.jhm.nl/collection/themes/charlotte-salomon>
<http://www.osnabrueck.de/fnh/english/default.asp>

Week 4 (March 20): **Oral Presentations of Works from the Shoah**

Film Screening: *Night and Fog*

Week 5 (March 27): **Cinematic Representations: Fact or Fiction?**

Film Screening: *Shoah*, *Schindler's List*

Reading:

- Imre Kertesz, "Who Owns Auschwitz?"
- Lawrence Langer, *Preempting the Holocaust*, Yale University Press, 1998
- Claude Lanzmann, Seminar at Yale 1990; "Why Spielberg has distorted the truth," *Village Voice*, 3/29/94, "Schindler's List is an Impossible Story"
- Elie Weisel, "Art and the Holocaust: Trivializing Memory," *NY Times*, 1989

YAD VASHEM seminar: April 1-4

Week 6 (April 10): **Is the Shoah Comic? MAUS and Beyond** (*Deuxieme Generation*, *The Search*, Pascal Croci, *Episodes from Auschwitz*, *Snow White in Auschwitz*)

Reading:

- Terrence Des Pres. "Holocaust Laughter?" *Writing and the Holocaust*. Ed. Berel Lang. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988. 216-233
- Art Spiegelman, *Maus*, vols. 1-2. Selections from *MetaMaus*.

- M. Hirsch, "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory" in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*. Ed. Zelizer, Rutgers, 2001
- James Young, "Maus" in *At Memory's Edge: After Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, Yale Press, 2000.

Week 7 (April 17): **Photography's Dilemma: Is Seeing Believing?**

Film Screening: Hersonski, *Film Unfinished*, 2011. Jablonski, [Fotoamator, 1998](#).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvUdffAhFH4> selections

Readings:

- Selections from Susan Sontag, *On Photography*. Picador, 2001. Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images Malgré Tout*, 2003.
- Young, "Sites Unseen: Shimon Attie" in *At Memory's Edge*, ch. 3
- James Young, "David Levinthal," *At Memory's Edge*, ch. 2.

Recommended :

- Andrea Liss, *Trespassing Through Shadows*, Minnesota, 1998.
- Janina Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust*
- Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye*, Chicago Press, 2000.

Passover April 19-26

Week 8 (May 1): **Memorialization and Monuments**

Reading:

- James Young, "Memory, Countermemory and the End of the Monument" in *At Memory's Edge*, ch. 4, 5.
- Nathan Rapoport, "Memoir of the Warsaw Ghetto Monument"
- Hans Haacke, "Und ihr habt doch gesiegt"
- Matthew Baigell, "George Segal's Holocaust Monument"

May 8 – Yom Haatzmaut, no class

Week 9 (May 15): **Mirroring Evil/Fascinating Fascism**

Reading:

- Norman Kleeblatt, "The Nazi Occupation of the White Cube" in *Mirroring Evil*, The Jewish Museum, 2002.
- Stephen Feinstein: "Zbigniew Libera's Lego Concentration Camp"
- James Young, "David Levinthal," *At Memory's Edge*, ch. 2.
- Alan Schechter, www.dottiecommies.com

Week 10 (May 22): **Israeli Artists Respond**

Reading:

- Dalia Manor, "From Rejection to Recognition: Israeli Art and the Holocaust," in Stephen Feinstein, Ed. *Absence/Presence*, 2005.
- Tami Katz-Frieman, "Don't Touch My Holocaust," in *Impossible Images: Contemporary Art After the Holocaust*, ed. Shelley Hornstein. New York University Press, 2003
- Adi Ophir, "On Sanctifying the Holocaust," An Anti-Theological Treatise', *Tikkun* 2, 1987.

Week 11 (May 29): **The Future of Holocaust Memory: Normalizing the Holocaust?**

Weeks 12 and 13 (June 5 and 12): **Final Presentations**

Submission of short papers (referats) – 14th July 2019

Submission of seminar papers – 27 October 2019

Web sites:

<http://lastexpression.northwestern.edu/>

<http://fcit.usf.edu/HOLOCAUST/arts/art.htm>

<http://art.holocaust-education.net/>

<http://chgs.umn.edu/museum/>

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/99/>

http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/museum/art_museum.asp

<http://www.gfh.org.il/Eng/>

<http://www.bterezin.org.il/>

Select Bibliography:

Agamben, Giorgio. "What is a Camp?" excerpt. *The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings*. Eds. Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003. 252-256.

----- . *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. New York: Zone, 1999. Read excerpts: "Preface," pages 11-15, and sections 2.1-2.7 from chapter 2, "The Muselmann," pages 41-54.

Amishai-Maisels, Ziva. "The Complexity of Witnessing", in *After Auschwitz: Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art*. Edited by Monica Bohm-Duchen. Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Sunderland; Lund Humphries, London, 1995, pp. 25-48.

----- . *Depiction and Interpretation: The Influence of the Holocaust on the Visual Arts*. Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1993.

----- . "Haunting the Empty Place," in Stephen Feinstein, Ed.

Absence/Presence: Critical Essays on the Artistic Memory of the Holocaust. Syracuse University Press, 2005.

----- . "Chagall's White Crucifixion," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, 1991.

----- . "The Artist as Refugee," in *Art and Its Uses: The Visual Image and Modern Jewish Society*, ed. Ezra Mendelsohn and Richard Cohen, New York, 1990.

Attie, Shimon: *Sites Unseen – European Projects, Installations and Photographs*. Burlington, VT, 1998.

Azoulay, Ariella. "The Spectator's Place: Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun," in *Death's Showcase: The Power of Image in Contemporary Democracy*. MIT Press, 2001.

----- . "The Return of the Repressed," in *Impossible Images: Contemporary Art After the Holocaust*, ed. Shelley Hornstein. New York University Press, 2003.

Baigell, Matthew. *Jewish-American Artists and the Holocaust*, New Brunswick, NJ, 1997.

----- . *Jewish Artists in New York: The Holocaust Years*. New Brunswick, 2002.

Baskind, Samantha and Ranen Omer-Sherman, eds. *The Jewish Graphic Novel: Critical Approaches*. New Brunswick, NY, 2008.

Bathrick, David. "Teaching Visual Culture and the Holocaust." *Teaching the Representation of the Holocaust*. Eds. Marianne Hirsch and Irene Kacandes. New York: MLA, 2004. 286-300.

Blatter, Janet, and Sybil Milton. *Art of the Holocaust*. Rutledge Press, New York, 1981; Pan Books, London, 1982.

Braham, Randolph L. Ed. *Reflections of the Holocaust in Art and Literature*. The Csengeri Institute for Holocaust Studies, Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York; Columbia University Press, New York, 1990.

Chicago, Judy. *Holocaust Project: From Darkness into Light*. New York, 1993.

Costanza, Mary, S. *The Living Witness: Art in the Concentration Camps and Ghettos*. Free Press, New York; Collier Macmillan, London, 1982.

Czarnecki, Joseph P. *Last Traces: The Lost Art of Auschwitz*. New York, 1989.

DeCoste, F.C. & Bernard Schwartz, *The Holocaust's Ghost: Writings on Art, Politics, Law, and Education* (Edmonton, Alta., Canada 2000).

Feinstein, Stephen. Ed. *Absence/Presence: Critical Essays on the Artistic Memory of the Holocaust*. Syracuse University Press, 2005. Andrew Weinstein, "From the Sublime to the Abject: Six Decades of Art"

----- "Zbigniew Libera's Lego Concentration Camp: Iconoclasm in Conceptual Art About the Shoah" in *Other Voices* 2, no. 1 (2000)

Ficowski, Jerzy, ed. *The Drawings of Bruno Schultz*. Evanston, Ill. 1990.

Flitterman-Lewis, Sandy. "Documenting the Ineffable: Terror and Memory in Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog*." *Documenting the Documentary: Close Readings of Documentary Film and Video*. Eds. Barry Keith Grant and Jeanette Sloniowski. Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State, 1998. 204-222.

Friedlander, Saul. *Reflections of Nazism: An essay on Kitsch and Death*. Indiana University Press, 1993.

----- Ed. *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution."* Harvard University Press, 1992.

Geis, Deborah, ed. *Considering Maus: Approaches to Art Spiegelman's Survivor's Tale of the Holocaust*. Tuscaloosa, Il, 2003.

Godfrey, Mark. *Abstraction and the Holocaust*. Yale University Press, 2007. (Morris Louis, Barnett Newman, Frank Stella)

Goldfarb, Mira. "Sacred Signs and Symbols in Morris Louis: The Charred Journal Series, 1951," in *Complex Identities: Jewish Consciousness and Modern Art*, ed. Baigell and Heyd, New Brunswick, NJ, 2001.

Gong, Catherine. *George's Kaddish for Kovno and the Six Million*, 2009.

Green, Gerald. *The Artists of Terezin*. Hawthorn Books, New York, 1969.

Hirsch, Marianne, *The Generation of Post Memory: Writing and Culture after the Holocaust*, (New York 2012).

Hornstein, Shelley. Ed. *Impossible Images: Contemporary Art After the Holocaust*. New York, 2003.

-----, Ed. *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*. Bloomington, Ind, 2003.

Kaplan, Louis. " 'It Will Get a Terrific Laugh': On the Problematic Pleasures and Politics of Holocaust." *Hop on Pop: The Politics and Pleasures of Popular Culture*. Ed. Henry Jenkins, Tara McPherson, and Jane Shattuc. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002. 343-56.

Katz-Freiman, Tami, "Don't Touch My Holocaust," in *Impossible Images: Contemporary Art After the Holocaust*, ed. Shelley Hornstein. New York University Press, 2003.

Lamberti, M.(1995). Making Art in the Terezin Concentration Camp. *New England. Review*, 17.. Pp. 104-112.

Langer, Lawrence. "Preempting the Holocaust," in *Preempting the Holocaust*. Yale University Press, 1998. (Judy Chicago – see Alvin Rosenfeld)

-----, "Landscapes of Jewish Experience: The Holocaust Art of Samuel Bak," in *Preempting the Holocaust*. Yale University Press, 1998.

-----, "Bak's Variations on a Theme by Bak," in Stephen Feinstein, Ed. *Absence/Presence: Critical Essays on the Artistic Memory of the Holocaust*. Syracuse University Press, 2005.

The Last Expression: Art and Auschwitz. Exh. Ca. Evanston, Ill, 2003.

Levi, Neil, and Michael Rothberg. "Literature and Culture After Auschwitz: Introduction." *The Holocaust: Theoretical Readings*. Eds. Neil Levi and Michael Rothberg. New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2003. 273-276.

Lipman, Steve, *Laughther in Hell. The Use of Humor during the Holocaust* (Northvale 1991).

Liss, Andrea. *Trespassing Through Shadows: Memory, Photography and the Holocaust*, University of Minnesota, 1998.

Milton, Sybil. "Art of the Holocaust: A Summary", Randolph L. Braham (Ed.), *Reflections of the Holocaust in Art and Literature*, City University of New York, New York, 1990, pp.147-152.

Novitch, Miriam, Lucy Dawidowicz and Tom L. Freudenheim, *Spiritual Resistance. Art from Concentration Camps, 1940-1945*. Philadelphia, 1981.

Novitch, Miriam, and Lucy Dawidowicz. *Art from the Concentration Camps, 1940-1945*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1981.

Richardson, Michael. "'Heil Myself!': Impersonation and Identity in Comic Representations of Hitler." *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory*. Eds. David Bathrick, Brad Prager, and Michael D. Richardson. Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2008. 277-297.

Rosenberg, Alvin. *The End of the Holocaust*. Indiana University Press, 2011.

Rothberg, Michael. *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*. University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Rosenberg Pnina, "Art During the Holocaust", *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd edition, Macmillan, 2006.

------. *L'art des indésirables: l'art visuel dans les camps français* L'Harmattan, Paris, 2003.

------. "Women Artists in the Camps/Depictions of Women," *The Last Expression: Art and Auschwitz*. Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, Illinois, 2003.

------. *Images and Reflections: Women in the Art of the Holocaust*. The Ghetto Fighters House Museum, 2002.

------. "Mickey Mouse in Gurs: Graphic Novels in a French Internment Camp," *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice* 6 (3), pp. 272-293, 2002.

Seeing Through 'Paradise': Artists and the Terezin Concentration Camp, exh.cat. Boston, 1991.

Shultze, Deborah and Edward Timms, *Pictorial Narrative in the Nazi Period: Nussbaum, Salomon and Daghani*. London, 2009.

Steinberg, Michael P. and Monica Bohm-Duchen, Eds. *Reading Charlotte Salomon*. Ithaca, NY, 2006.

Sujo, Glenn, *Legacies of Silence: The Visual Arts and Holocaust Memory*, Barbican Gallery, London, 2003.

Toll, Nelly. *Without Surrender: Art of the Holocaust*. Running Press, Philadelphia, 1978.

Van Alphen, Ernst. "Deadly Historians: Christian Boltanski's Intervention in Holocaust Historiography," in *Caught By History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature and Theory*," Stanford, 1997.

Wyszogrod, Morris. *A Brush with Death: An Artist in the Death Camps*. Albany, NY, 1999.

Young, James. *At Memory's Edge: After Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, Yale University Press, 2000.

------. Ed., *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, Munich, Prestel, 1994.

------. *The Texture of Memory*. Yale University Press, 1993.

Zelizer, Barbie. Ed. *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, Rutgers, 2001.

------. *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye*, University of Chicago Press, 1998. "Collective Memories, Images, and the Atrocity of War." "Covering Atrocity In Image" pp. 1-15.

Artists Witness the Shoah: Camp Drawings from the Collections of Beit Lohamei Haghetat and Yad Vashem. Sheffield, Graves Art Gallery, 1995.

Art under the Nazi Regime

Ades, Dawn. et al., *Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators 1930-45.* Thames and Hudson in association with Hayward Gallery, London, 1995.

Adam, Peter. *Arts of the Third Reich.* Harry N. Abrams, New York; Thames and Hudson, London, 1992.

Barron, Stephanie (ed). *Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany.* Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Harry N. Abrams, New York, 1991.

Cone, Michèle C. *Artists under Vichy: A Case of Prejudice and Persecution.* Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 1991.

Golomstock, Igor. *Totalitarian Art in the Soviet Union, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy and of the People's Republic of China.* Collins Harvill, London, 1990.

Grosshans, Henry. *Hitler and the Artists.* Holmes & Meier, New York, 1983.

Hinz, Berthold. *Art in the Third Reich.* Translated by Robert and Rita Kimber. Pantheon Books, New York, 1979; Blackwell, Oxford, 1980.

Lehmann-Haupt, Hellmut. *Art under a Dictatorship.* Octagon Press, New York, 1973.

Nicholas, Lynn. H. *The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe's Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War.* Knopf, New York; Macmillan, London, 1994.

Petropoulos, Jonathan. *Art as Politics in the Third Reich.* University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London, 1996.

Speer, Albert. *Inside the Third Reich.* Translated by Richard and Clara Winston. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London; Macmillan, New York, 1970.

Taylor, Brandon and Wilfred Van der Will. *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design, Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich.* Winchester School of Art Press, Winchester, 1990.

Wistrich, Robert S. *Weekend in Munich: Art, Propaganda and Terror in the Third Reich.* Pavilion Books, London, 1995.