

# A Legacy of Remembrance

## The Concept

During World War II, in a Nazi concentration camp at the outskirts of Krakow, Poland, 28,000 people, mostly Jews, were imprisoned. At the conclusion of the war, the camp commandant, Amon Goeth, was tried and convicted of war crimes by the restored Polish government and subsequently hung. He was responsible for killing between 8,000 and 12,000 Plaszow concentration camp prisoners. The story of this death camp was told in the movie, *Schindler's List*. The series of paintings in this exhibition looks at the Plaszow camp from a different perspective. The artist has interpreted several situations and people that were only peripherally dealt with in the movie. The beauty of a painting is that it captures a moment in time, allowing the viewer the ability to study that individual moment. Multiple paintings allow the viewer to study the pictured moments chosen and interpreted by the painter in a way that film cannot duplicate. The value of the painting exhibition is that it is one of many references for remembering and gaining perspective on the Holocaust and, at the same time, educating viewers. The more references available, the more difficult to forget or change the narrative of the Holocaust. The paintings are another form of documentation of events that actually happened.

## Specifications

The exhibition is made up of 77 paintings, drawings and prints. Fifty-one works are individual drawings of Holocaust Survivors, with appropriate background information detailing information about their experience. The majority of the paintings are large scale acrylic on unstretched and raw canvas. Some of the paintings are 18 feet wide.

Depending on venue size, the exhibition can be customized to meet size demands without diminishing impact.

### **About the Paintings, Drawings and Prints**

The paper works are not mounted or framed, nor are the works on canvas stretched, as is the traditional way of presenting fine art. The artist has chosen to present the works as simply as possible, believing that the events they describe are so horrific that it is difficult to look at them as traditional works of art. To this end, framing and canvas stretching might interfere with the viewer having the opportunity to have an uncluttered and direct viewing of each work. During the Holocaust, men, women and children were identified, classified, gathered and, in most instances, subsequently murdered. Can we imagine the psychological and emotional state of the people depicted in this exhibition? What of the people who lived through and survived the Holocaust? How were their lives changed? What have we learned? What should each of us do? Posing these questions is the purpose of the exhibition.

#### **1. Next Stop, Auschwitz**

This drawing is based on an iconic photograph of the Krakow ghetto being emptied by Nazi soldiers. Krakow, Poland, prior to World War II, was home to one of the oldest and most important Jewish communities in Europe. Beginning in 1941, all Jewish inhabitants of Krakow were ordered to relocate to the Krakow ghetto. In 1942, the entire Jewish population of greater Krakow (including 29 villages) was forced to move into the ghetto. On June 1, 1942, the ghetto was surrounded by German police and SS. 7,000 Jews were assembled and escorted to the train station. On June 5, 4,000 more Jews were deported to the Belzec extermination camp. On March 13 and 14, 1943, the Nazis carried out the final liquidation of the Krakow ghetto, under the command of Amon Goeth. Some Jews from the Krakow ghetto were moved to the Plaszow concentration camp, most were

sent to Auschwitz and other facilities where they were murdered.

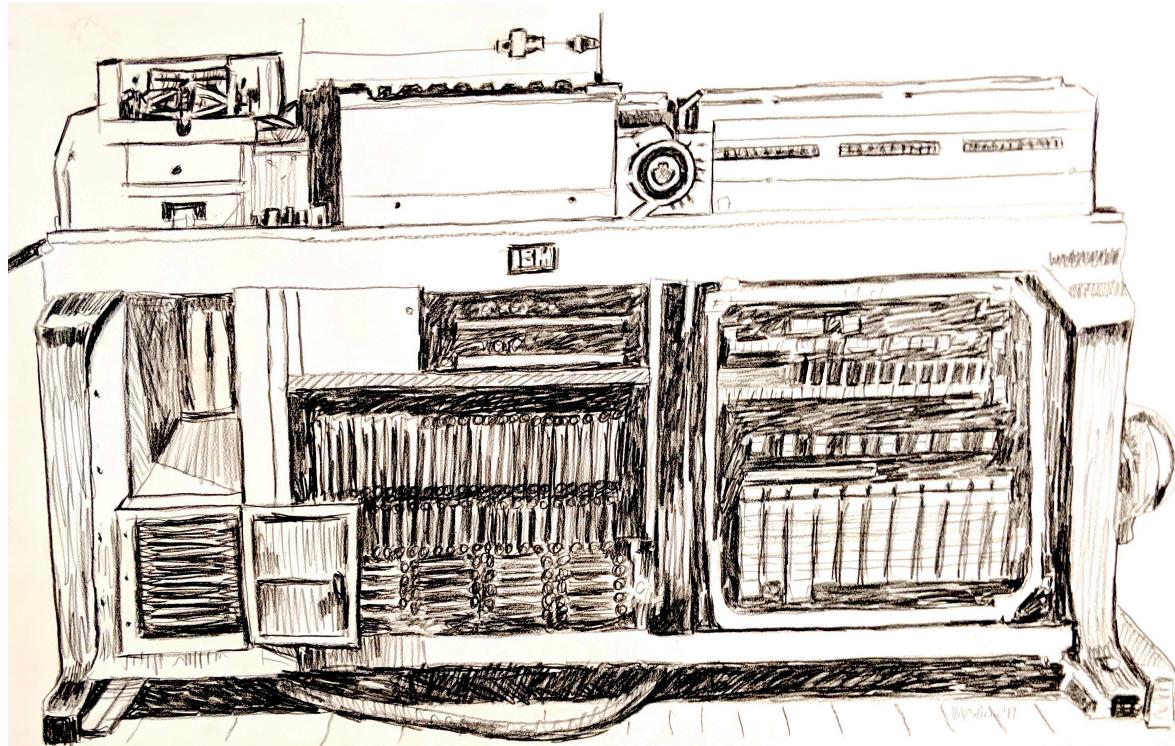


Size: 5' x 7', Charcoal and Acrylic on Paper

## 2. IBM and the Holocaust

Between 1933 and 1945, Nazi Germany and its allies established more than 42,000 camps and other incarceration sites (including ghettos). The sites were used for a range of purposes, including forced labor, detention and murder. The concept of massively organized information came to fruition in 1933, when IBM, through its German subsidiary, Dehomag, leased Hitler the advanced technology of the Dehomag Hollerith machine with punch card technology. The first use of the machine was to create a census. Later, the machines were placed in every major concentration camp. Applications of the technology were designed by Dehomag and IBM engineers. Throughout World War II, IBM, through its German subsidiary, maintained this technology in all locations. People were moved from

place to place, worked to death, gassed and incinerated and catalogued through the automation of the Dehomag machine.



Size: 30" x 42", Charcoal on Paper

### 3. Krakow Ghetto in Flames

The Krakow Ghetto being burned down while Nazi soldiers watch. A campaign of terror against the Jews by the Nazis began in 1940 and a formal ghetto was initiated in 1941. From the Krakow ghetto, Jews were sent to concentration camps to be used as forced labor or to be murdered. (This photo that this painting is based on was credited as showing the Krakow ghetto burning, but there is no evidence that it actually happened. The photo may actually show another location.)



Size: 4' x 6', Acrylic on paper

#### **4. Krakow Ghetto Brothers**

Homeless and often orphaned, ghetto children were left to fend for themselves. They frequently witnessed the murder of parents, siblings and relatives. They faced starvation, sickness and the despair of loneliness. If they were picked up and sent to camps like Auschwitz, they were often killed immediately upon arrival.

At Auschwitz, Dr. Mengele would routinely torture Jewish children, sometimes putting them in pressure chambers, testing drugs on them, castrating male children and freezing others to death. Chemicals were dripped into their eyes in an attempt to change eye color. When he was done with them, he would inject chloroform into their hearts to kill them and then perform pathological examinations of their internal organs.

Mengele was not alone. Other camp doctors would do the same. And at the end of the day, these masterminds of death would return home to their families, kissing their children goodnight after tucking them

into bed. Murder, torture, brutality and other inhuman atrocities were ordinary, everyday occurrences. At the end of the war, these monsters were found to be psychologically normal.



Size: 5' x 8', Acrylic on canvas

## 5. Mengele's Children

The Nazi's used 1,600 trains to transport Jews and others from thousands of cities and towns throughout Europe to meet their deaths in transit ghettos, concentration camps, and forced labor and extermination camps. The trains were called "death trains." The majority were made up of freight cars and cattle cars. Trains were made up of at least 50 cars per train, holding 100 to 200 men, women

and children per car. Trains operated 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week. Without the trains, the scale of Holocaust killings would not have been possible. When the trains arrived at their destination, Nazi selection officers would immediately choose who was fit to work and who would be immediately gassed. Dr. Josef Mengele, worked at the medical facility at Auschwitz. He personally selected inmates for the human experiment program he initiated and managed. He personally experimented on hundreds of pairs of twins. After experimenting on them, they were all murdered. His medical experiments earned him the name "Angel of Death."



Size: 9' x 18', Acrylic on Canvas

## 6. They Were Just Jews

Executions were commonplace. Executions were carried out by shooting, gassing, hanging and starvation. Execution by hanging took place sporadically, usually in public. The use of hanging was typically to intimidate prisoners. Outside the Krakow/Plaszow train station, Jews were hung continually. The Krakow/Plaszow train station was a crossroads on the way to Auschwitz. At the train station people would be separated by destination to the Plaszow labor camp and Auschwitz. In concentration camps, commandants, camp directors, or the head of the political department could order executions. People regarded as a

threat to the Third Reich were sentenced to death without trial.



Size: 7' x 8', Acrylic on Canvas

## 7. 20,000 Bodies Per Day

The crematoria at Auschwitz - Berkenau had a capacity of cremating 20,000 bodies per day. Of the six million Jews exterminated during World War II, two million were murdered on the spot by the military and mobile death squads. The remainder were shipped to their deaths and most cremated at facilities like the crematoria at Auschwitz – Birkenau.

In 1939, an Engineer, Kurt Prüfer, designed the "heated cremation oven" to be delivered to Buchenwald. Prüfer worked for Topf and Sons, a company that had branched out into building ovens for civil crematoria use. Topf and Sons employees perfected their product by

standing in front of the gas chambers at Auschwitz, timing the death and incineration of thousands of victims to perfect a more efficient disposal technique. Bodies were piled one on top of another into a single chamber to be incinerated.



Size: 9' x 18', Acrylic on Canvas

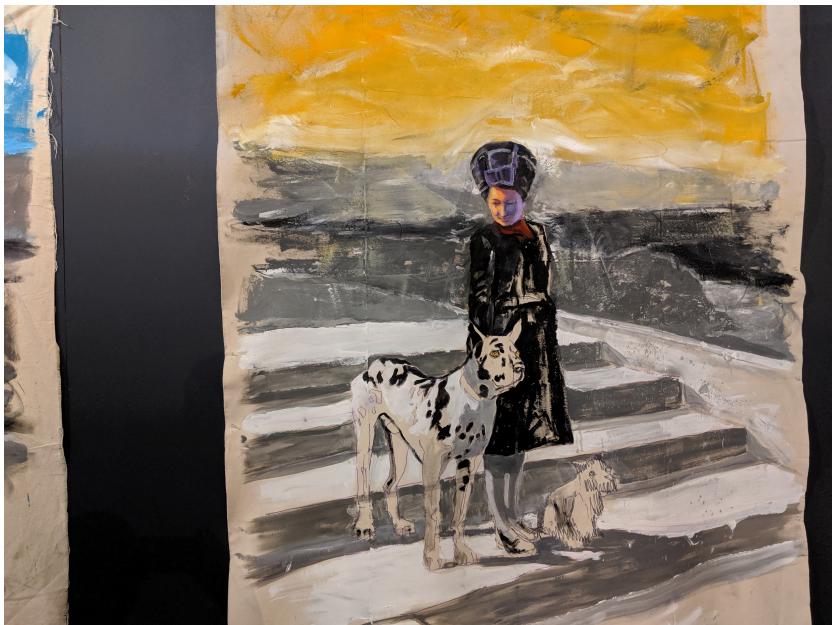
## **8. Parenting, Dog-Walking and Courting at Plaszow**

Amon Goeth, the Commandant of the Plaszow Concentration Camp, and his mistress, Ruth Irene Kalder, lived in a luxurious two story villa overlooking the Plaszow Camp. Goeth personally presided over the murder of approximately 12,000 to 18,000 people while in his position at the Plaszow camp. They lived what appeared to be ordinary lives. Enjoying the best accommodations, wine, fresh vegetables and fruit, along with beef, fish and fowl. Except each morning, Amon Goeth woke and went to work. The work – overseeing the labor and murder of camp inmates. In these paintings, we see Goeth holding one of his children, Ruth Irene Kalder walking their dogs and Goeth enjoying Kalder's company in their backyard. At the same time, Goeth would routinely sit on his villa's balcony which overlooked the camp and kill inmates with his rifle. For years, Kalder would deny that Goeth did anything wrong. Finally, years later, in an interview Kalder admitted that she knew what was happening to the Jews and said, "I should have done more to help the Jews." The next day, she committed suicide.

Various sizes: 6' x 7', 6' x 9', 6' x 7' Acrylic and Charcoal on canvas



Parenting



Dog-Walking



Courting

## 9. Amon Goeth's Mug Shot

Amon Goeth was arrested on September 13, 1944 by the SS Criminal Police for "corruption and brutality." He had joined the Nazi party in 1940 and became a member of the Waffen-SS. He was assigned to SS headquarters in German-occupied Poland. He worked in Operation Reinhard, the plan to evacuate the Jews from ghettos in Poland to three death camps: Treblinka, Sobibor and Belzec. Operation Reinhard was the beginning of the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question in Europe." Goeth accepted bribes from Jews during the selection process, sending them to labor camps rather than the Belzec death camp.

In 1943, Goeth received a promotion to Commandant of the Plaszow labor camp. In this position, he supervised the liquidation of the Tarnow ghetto and the Podgorze ghetto in Krakow. He took advantage of the situation by stealing property from the Jews, including furs and furniture. Goeth considered himself to be a cultured man.

After the war ended, the American military turned Goeth over to the

Polish government. He was tried and hung as a war criminal.



Size: 32" x 42", Acrylic on Paper

## 10. The Last Jew in Vinnitsa

Based on a photo taken during the Holocaust, it shows a man near the town of Vinnitsa about to be shot by a member of *Einsatzgruppe D*, a mobile death squad of the Nazi SS. The victim is kneeling by a mass grave already containing bodies. The photo was shot around mid-1941. During this time there were numerous massacres of Jews. Those spared were sent to labor camps. The image has become iconic. It was taken during the Holocaust, rather than after its end, and presumably by someone complicit in the killing. The focus is on a solitary killing, rather than a multitude.

After the German army invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, confident of victory, the Germans turned from forced emigration and imprisonment of Jews to mass murder. Special action squads, or *Einsatzgruppen*, made up of Nazi SS and police closely followed the advancing German army. Their job was to kill any Jews they could find in the occupied Soviet territory. The mobile killing squads entered towns and cities

after the army and rounded up Jews, Communist party leaders and Gypsies. They would be marched to open fields or forests where they were shot or gassed in gas vans, then dumped into mass graves.



Size: 5' x 9', Acrylic and charcoal on canvas

## 11. What Might Have Been

Over one million children under the age of sixteen died in the Holocaust. These children were taken from their families, victims of the Nazi regime. All members of Jewish families and Gypsy families were subject to arrest and deportation. They often witnessed the murder of parents and siblings. We are left to wonder what might have been had these children lived. Would some of them have become scientists and physicians, finding the cure for cancer? How many more great authors would we have today? How many more philosophers, explaining the intricacies of life would we have? How many playwrights and Broadway musicals? How many violin concertos? How many Supreme Court judges? How many generations of families joining the cycle of life, experiencing sunrises, sunsets? The joy of raising a family dog or cat. The experience of loving another human being and making families of their own? Oh, what might have been.



Size: 8' x 7', Acrylic on Canvas

## **12. Amon Goeth**

Amon Goeth was born in Vienna and joined a Nazi youth group at seventeen. In 1930, he joined the SS. He was a model officer and was rewarded with a posting to Aktion Reinhard, the SS operation to liquidate more than two million Polish Jews. He was then posted to the position of commandant at the Plaszow concentration camp. Life at Plaszow was made unbearable by Goeth. Prisoners were fortunate if they survived more than four weeks. On Yom Kippur 1943, 50 Jews were taken from the barracks and were shot. Often, prisoners were publicly hung. Torture was a daily event. Goeth had two dogs, trained to tear prisoners apart. The dogs were frequently used to eat prisoners alive. Every day, Amon Goeth went to work as the "Butcher of Plaszow". In the evening, he returned to his villa and his mistress, Ruth Irene Kalder. Goeth made murder an everyday, ordinary experience. Kalder lived her life with him as if nothing out of the ordinary was happening in Plaszow. They were both monster.



Size: 48" x 96", Acrylic on Paper

### **13. Monika Hertwig**

Monika Hertwig was just one year old in 1946 when her father — Nazi commander Amon Goeth — was convicted of murdering tens of thousands of people and hanged for his crimes. Though she spent much of her early years unaware of her father's crimes, Goeth's murderous legacy has haunted his daughter for much of her adult life. At age 13, Monika's grandmother told her that her father was Amon Goeth, the Nazi Commandant of the Plaszow concentration camp and responsible for thousands of murders. In a documentary titled *Inheritance*, filmmaker James Moll tells the story of how Monika, more than fifty years after the Holocaust, contacted Helen Jonas, who as a teen was forced to serve as Goeth's personal maid. Jonas was 15 years old when her family was sent to the Plaszow concentration camp. She was one of approximately 1,200 Jews saved by Oskar Schindler.



Size: 60" x 60", Acrylic on Canvas

## **14. Monika Returns to Plaszow**

At the request of Monika Hertwig, Helen Jonas returned to the villa in Plaszow where she worked as Amon Goeth's personal maid. Jonas forced Hertwig to face the past of her father. Through this meeting, Monika admits that she understands the monster that her father was. The meeting was documented in James Moll's film, *Inheritance*.



Size: 7' x 9', Acrylic on Canvas

## **15. Jennifer Teege**

Jennifer Teege said her Nazi grandfather would have had her killed. In 2008, Jennifer Teege discovered that her grandfather was Amon Goeth, the Nazi concentration camp commandant of the Plaszow camp. Her mother, Monika Hertwig, never told her. By chance, in a Hamburg library, Jennifer discovered Monika Hertwig's book "*I Have to Love My Father, Right?*" Jennifer's mother, Monika, had told her nothing about her grandfather. As a child she never knew her father – a Nigerian student with whom Monika had a brief affair. Monika had

given her up for adoption as a small child. She grew up in a foster family that adopted her when she was seven years old. She saw her mother once when she was twenty years old. Monika thought it would be better if she never knew anything about her grandfather. So she was completely shocked when she did find out. She read the book and learned details about Monika, her grandmother and grandfather, Amon Goeth. Jennifer had seen the movie Schindler's List, but never made the connection. Learning about her family history provided the impetus for her to write her book *Amon My Grandfather Would Have Shot Me*.



Size: 5' 5', Acrylic on Canvas

## **16. Helen Jonas**

Portrait of Helen Jonas, Amon Goeth's housekeeper at Plaszow, now living in Boca Raton, Florida and featured in the documentary Inheritance. In Inheritance, Helen Jonas meets Monika Hertwig, Amon Goeth's illegitimate daughter and they both visit Goeth's home at Plaszow and discuss what happened there.



Size: 5' x 6', Acrylic on Paper

## **17. Time To Hunt**

Amon Goeth on the balcony overlooking the Plaszow camp, with his rifle, where he would terrorize and murder Jewish prisoners.



Size: 5' x 6', Acrylic and Charcoal on Paper

## **18. Trained To Kill**

Portrait of Rolf, one of Goeth's two Great Danes, trained to kill Plaszow inmates. The trainer of the two dogs was killed by Amon Goeth because Goeth felt that the dogs liked the trainer more than Goeth.



Size: 4' x 5', Acrylic on Paper

## **19. In the Forest at Birkenau**

At Auschwitz II – Birkenau, the trains unloaded men, women and children on the platform where they were selected to go to the gas chamber or forced labor. Mothers were not separated from babies or small children. They were immediately sent straight to the gas chambers. Everyone on the platform seems calm in photographs, because, for the most part, they did not understand what was about to happen to them. After being separated, the group that was going to the gas chambers would be walked into the nearby Forest in Birkenau. They did not realize that their lives would soon end. The closest

crematorium was hidden by a fence. In this painting you see people waiting calmly, unaware of what was only a few feet away.



Size: 8' x 10', Acrylic on Canvas

## 20. Partying at Auschwitz

Located in an idyllic hillside setting near the town of Porabka, about 20 miles from Auschwitz, a retreat for Nazi SS guards was built and staffed by Auschwitz prisoners until 1945, when the Red Army arrived. The painting is based on a July 22, 1944 photo of female SS auxiliaries on a day trip to the hut with SS officers. They all appear to be enjoying an excursion to the countryside. On the same day, transports of Hungarian Jews arrived at Auschwitz, where most of them were murdered upon arrival. The SS auxiliaries travelled to the rest and relaxation hut by bus. We are left to wonder if these young women

survived the war, married and had families, what they told their children about how they spent the last months of the war.



Size: 9'x 14', Acrylic on Canvas

## **21. Survivor Portraits**

50 Survivor portraits have been made by the artist, using photographs as source material. Each portrait is a line drawing on acetate, drawn with a Stabilo pencil. The drawings were scanned and saved as digital files that can be printed on virtually any kind of paper. Each printed portrait includes the identity of the Survivor, along with the biographical information pertinent to each one.



Size: 18" x 24" each, artist enhanced digital prints

## **About the artist**

Mark Cohen is an award-winning graphic designer, marketing communications executive, teacher, painter and printmaker. His subject matter utilizes contemporary and past iconic figures from all walks of life, including politics, popular culture, entertainment and war and peace. He has chosen to paint many of the human "monsters" in contemporary life, including Jared Loughner, James Holmes and many more. One of these monsters, Amon Goeth, the commandant of the World War II Nazi Plaszow Concentration Camp spurred him to create a series of paintings about Plaszow and three generations of women associated with Goeth. Most of the paintings are large scale works that demand notice. They have energy, impact and size. They exhibit a sparse and concise pictorial composition that combines abstract expressionism and pop art in their execution. In these paintings, viewers can investigate issues of anti-Semitism, genocide and the psychological effects on the women associated with Amon Goeth. These same issues are seen in perpetrations of other heinous acts that we see in the media on an all too frequent basis. The artist's intention is to remind viewers that more than 70 years after the Holocaust, we live in a world of not only continuing anti-Semitism, but hateful biases that result in genocides and senseless killings around the world. The artist hopes that all of us will do everything possible to end hatred and promote understanding toward all people.

## **Reviews**

I want to thank you for yesterday afternoon. It was wonderful to see your paintings displayed in such an appropriate environment. They have so much meaning for us as Jews and hearing you describe the process you went through made them just more so. You spoke about becoming enraged when thinking of what ordinary lives these monsters led and how it was just in a day's work for them to murder the Jews. When Mark and I visited Birkenow, I experienced that same rage standing in front of what remains of the crematorium there. It is an unspeakable horror and one we should never forget. Thank you for sharing your feelings and your thoughts and your art. I know it's not easy but you performed such a mitzvah for us. Those of us who knew you a little before, know you much more deeply now. You left us nowhere to look but at the horror, wanting to make things better in our world today.

***Elaine Feldmesser***

The exhibit is moving. I was honored to be invited.

***Jeanne Martin***

I watched the Mark Bradford 60 minute piece tonight and even went on line to see the piece Anderson Cooper bought from him. I thought of you Mark as I watched him create his Mark and I loved how he created layers and chipped/tore/peeled away to discover the piece beneath. I was also amazed that he used (mostly) only paper. I think you are that kind of artist as well - maybe not the same medium but how you create to discover.

***Rabbi Howard Shapiro***

Nancy and I are grateful as well for the meaningful day, for knowing you and for you opening up your heart, mind and soul to us and for everyone else who made the day possible. It will be a warm memory for us for some time to come.

***Barry Horowitz, M.D.***

Xo

***Pam Weiner, Ph.D.***

Must see exhibition about the Holocaust. The incredible artist, my friend, Mark L. Cohen, is dedicating his life and his art to raising awareness for the injustice and hate that is so pervasive in the world "Never Again" has never rung so true for so many!

***Jan Savarick***

I have now seen Mark Cohen's artwork displayed multiple times in multiple venues. The style of his bigger-than-life works command your attention, telling stories that are bold and important about the Holocaust and its effects. It is hard to turn away as he reminds us how ordinary people were able to segregate activities of daily living from their sometimes monstrous behavior. Simply put, this exhibition is powerful and should be seen by as many people as possible.

**Rabbi Cookie Olshein**

## **Availability**

Dates

Holocaust Documentation & Education Center

August 4 – October 13, 2019

Dania Beach, FL

Available

November – December 31, 2019

January – December 31, 2020

January – December 31, 2021

All tour dates can be customized to meet your scheduling needs.

## **Contact Information**

Please contact Mark Cohen at 561.379.7779 or [mark@4cohen.com](mailto:mark@4cohen.com) for more information.

## **Artist Video**

15 minute video of Mark Cohen discussing why he created the works, the significance of the method of presentation and what he hopes viewers will take away from the exhibition is available for viewing.