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## **Holocaust Memorial Center Launches *Sifting Through Ashes* with Opening Program, Jan. 22**

*Exhibit Depicting Holocaust Atrocities through Paintings and Photographs  
Runs January 21 – March 27*

**Farmington Hills, Mich., Dec. XX, 2017** – The Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus has announced that its newest special exhibit, “Sifting Through Ashes,” will open Sunday, January 21, 2018. On display through March 27, it is an exhibition of works by artist Bruce Gendelman who captures the atrocities of the Holocaust through a series of nine large-scale richly textural oil paintings and 20 photographs. The exhibition conveys the unique and important role of contemporary art in educating new audiences about the Holocaust in the upcoming “post-witness” era, when all Holocaust survivors will be gone. Following a tour at the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia, the dramatic and moving exhibit expresses the artist’s reaction to Holocaust sites in Poland and Ukraine. Also on exhibit are several sculptures by Holocaust Memorial Center Survivor Speaker Henry Friedman.

The Holocaust Memorial Center will host an opening program for “Sifting Through Ashes” on Monday, January 22 at 7 p.m. featuring Gendelman and Arthur Berger, retired senior official from the United States Department of State and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. During the program, entitled “American Diplomacy and the Holocaust: The Roots of Hatred Explained in History and Interpreted in Art,” Gendelman will share insights on how the history of the Holocaust and its relevance today impacted his work, while Berger will examine FDR and America’s reactions to key pre-Holocaust events of the 1930s. A dessert reception will follow formal remarks. The opening program is made possible through the generosity of Myrna and Spencer Partrich with additional support provided by Lori and Taal Ashmann in memory of Max Markzon, and by the PNC Foundation. RSVPs are required by January 16 to 248-536-9605 or [rsvp@holocaustcenter.org](mailto:rsvp@holocaustcenter.org).

Based in Palm Beach, Florida, Gendelman was raised as a member of the generation of post-war children. His father was an American GI in the Battle of the Bulge who survived by escaping three German POW camps. Gendelman lost great-grandparents, great aunts and countless ancestors in the Holocaust.

Gendelman paints to pay respect to those people and to convey a message about humanity to those who have not learned the lessons of history. According to Gendelman, “As memories of the Holocaust are replaced by history, post-witness contemporary art can serve as a powerful tool to awaken critical conversations. These artworks serve as my humble contribution to that effort.”

Gendelman’s works were inspired by a 2015 trip to Poland and Ukraine, where he toured Holocaust sites with his sister and brother-in-law. The trip was led by Hannah Rosenthal, the former U.S. State Department Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, and Father Patrick Desbois, a Catholic priest who has devoted his life to investigating the mass murder of Jews. During the trip, Gendelman met with Holocaust survivors, witnesses and deniers, which led him to uncover the circumstances surrounding the murders of his great-grandparents, who were rounded up, tortured and then marched into a forest in Bolochev, Ukraine, where they were shot and thrown into a pit.

The Holocaust Memorial Center will display nine of Gendelman’s paintings which he painted using only a trowel, the same type of tool prisoners used when forced to build the camp’s chimneys. The paintings on display will include:

- A series of four, eight-foot tall oil paintings entitled the *Birkenau Barracks Memorials*, which portray Auschwitz II-Birkenau’s towering chimneys, that still dominate the landscape today.
- *Dom Katolicki*, an eight-foot tall oil painting detailing the remnants of the building where Gendelman’s ancestors were tortured. Each painted brick represents the individual lives and lost futures of the 950 Jews murdered there.
- Three large-scale oil paintings called the *Birkenau Deathscapes*. Here, Gendelman drew upon his own nightmares rather than photographs from the Holocaust, depicting a dark and emotional scene where it is not evident if it is day or night.
- The ninth painting is a majestic 12-foot-wide mixed media work called the *Aerial View of Birkenau*. Gendelman incorporated more than 500 pounds of oil paint, wood, string and newsprint on the canvas to depict the precise industrial design of the death camp.

The paintings will be complemented by a display of Gendelman’s photographs of Krakow, Auschwitz II-Birkenau and Tuchow in Poland along with Bolekhiv and Lviv in the Ukraine.

“Bruce Gendelman’s art, in the form of masterful, emotive, larger-than-life paintings and moving photographs, taken from the sites of death camps around Europe, are a sobering reminder about the atrocities and poignant memories still felt by so many today,” said Rabbi Eli Mayerfeld, CEO, Holocaust Memorial Center. “We are honored to have Bruce’s art on display, and it is our sincere hope our visitors, including teachers and students from throughout southeast Michigan and beyond, will learn from his works. This exhibit supports our important mission of education and learning lessons from the Holocaust, which, in a world still filled with hate and bigotry, is more important than ever.”

The exhibit is generously supported by Rozie and Bernie Friedman, Nancy and James Grosfeld, Martina Venter and Frithjof Oldorff, Susan and Norman Pappas, Malke and Gary Torgow, Anita and Ken Volk, Henrietta Weisberg, the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The exhibit is open Sunday through Friday and is free with museum admission or membership. Docent-led tours of the exhibit will be hosted at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, February 4 and Sunday, March 18, and at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, February 12 and Monday, March 12. Sign up for a tour by calling 248-553-2400, ext. 110.

For more information, please call 248-553-2400.

***About the Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus***

*The Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus is a 55,000 square foot museum and Library Archive in Farmington Hills that teaches about the senseless murder of millions and why each of us must respect and stand up for the rights of others if we are to prevent future genocide and hate crimes.*

*The lessons of history are used to create a call to action, teaching visitors through the examples of those who risked their lives to save others, and asking our guests to react to contemporary challenges such as racism, bullying and prejudice. Exhibits include artifacts such as an authentic WWII-era boxcar, text panels, photos, video testimonies, films, paintings, sculpture, and a sapling from the tree located outside Anne Frank's hiding place window that is described in her diary. A daily, guided tour at 1:30 pm is often followed by a live presentation by a Holocaust survivor. Located on the second floor above the museum, the Library Archive is an important resource for academics, the media and families researching their heritage.*

*Hours: Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9:30 am to 5 pm (last admission at 4:00 pm), Monday 9:30 am – 8:30 pm (last admission 7:30 pm) and Friday 9:30 am to 3 pm (last admission 2:00 pm). Wheelchair accessible. Free parking. For additional information, visit [www.holocaustcenter.org](http://www.holocaustcenter.org) or call 248-553-2400.*

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