

Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies

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Judy Chicago's "Holocaust Project" Coming to Lehigh University

Bethlehem, Pa.—The "Holocaust Project: From Darkness into Light," by internationally known artist Judy Chicago, with photography by Donald Woodman, will be displayed at Lehigh University's Zoellner Arts Center from February 9 through June 11, 2000. This is the first time the touring exhibition will visit the mid-Atlantic area. At showings in Austin, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, and Tampa, the imaginative and controversial installation was viewed by record audiences. The public is invited to meet Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman at an opening reception Thursday, February 10, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in Zoellner's Main Gallery.

Eight years in the making, "The Holocaust Project" takes visitors on a journey into one of the darkest periods of modern history through a series of works including a tapestry, stained-glass pieces, and large-scale tableaus combining painting and photography. The artists, while honoring the uniqueness of the Holocaust, use it as a prism to view other victim experiences and to explore the human condition in the modern world. The exhibition addresses such subjects as racism, genocide, homophobia, the unethical uses of technology, and the development of weapons without regard for human consequences. According to Judy Chicago, "this project is an inquiry into the questions the Holocaust raises for us today."

Professors Laurence J. Silberstein and Ricardo Viera are bringing the exhibition to Lehigh because of its value as a teaching tool. It will be the cornerstone of the College of Arts and Science's Project 2000, "The Holocaust: Critical Reflections on Modernity," organized by the Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies and the LU Art Galleries. The goal of the semester-long project is to critically assess the values and institutions of modern life at the end of the 20th century. Twelve Lehigh professors, teaching courses in art, English, history, international relations, languages, philosophy, ethics, religion, and theater, have integrated tours of the exhibition into their curriculum. "We want to create a cross-disciplinary discussion about the implications of the Holocaust for our understanding of modernity," says Laurence Silberstein, who directs the Berman Center. "Judy Chicago's exhibit is the perfect catalyst for such a discussion, as evidenced by the enthusiastic response to the project throughout the University."

Artist Judy Chicago will present a public lecture on the aesthetic and philosophical challenges involved in representing the Holocaust in art Tuesday, March 14, at 7:45 p.m. in Baker Hall at the Zoellner Arts Center. In her presentation, accompanied by slides, Chicago will examine various artistic approaches to the Holocaust--those of survivors as well as other contemporary artists--and explain how she and her husband and collaborator, Donald Woodman, came to create the "Holocaust Project."

Judy Chicago, a pioneer of contemporary feminist art, is best known for the "Dinner Party", a multimedia installation that represents the symbolic history of women in Western civilization. One of the ten works of art that have "rocked the ages" according to a recent *Newsweek*, the monumental project has been seen by approximately one million viewers during its fourteen exhibitions. Donald Woodman's photography has appeared in *Vanity Fair*, *Art in America*, and *New York Newsday*.

"Holocaust Project: From Darkness into Light" is open to the public free of charge. The exhibition at Lehigh has been underwritten by donations from the Snider Foundation; the Maxwell Strawbridge Charitable Trust; Martin D. Cohen, Esq.; and Lehigh alumni and families: the Helene and Allen Apter Foundation; Mr. and Mrs. Allen Apter; Richard Globus and Stephen Globus; Geraldine and Irving Schaffer; and Shelley and Max Stettner.

Gallery hours are Wednesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. During those hours, 45-minute audiocassette guided tours are available. Guided group tours for 15 or more led by trained docents will be offered Sunday through Tuesday. To schedule a group tour, call Pat McAndrew, Tour Coordinator, at 610 758-6881.

Six gallery lectures have been scheduled, all at 4:15 p.m. in the Main Gallery of Zoellner: February 17, "Judy Chicago's Contested Territories: From the *Dinner Party* to the *Holocaust Project*," Lucy Gans, Lehigh Univ.; February 24, "The Long-Run Consequences of Ethnic-Cleansing Campaigns," Chaim Kaufmann, Lehigh; March 2, "The Holocaust Project(ion): Identity, Appropriation, and Judy Chicago," Oren Stier, Florida International Univ.; March 9, "Women in the Holocaust: Different Treatment? Different Response?" Alice Eckardt, Lehigh; March 30, "Making Memories: Images of Polish-Jewish Life before the Holocaust," Robert Cohn, Lafayette College; and April 5, "Bringing the Holocaust Home: American Jews and the Work of Mourning," Laura Levitt, Temple Univ.

Lehigh's Year 2000 project will culminate May 21 through 23 with a Berman Center conference "Representing the Holocaust: Practices, Products, Projections" in Baker Hall at the Zoellner Arts Center. Artists, photographers, curators, and members of the academic community will examine the problems and limitations of representing the Holocaust in art, photography, museums, and monuments. Two evening lectures are open to the public. On Sunday, May 21, at 8:00 p.m., Peter Novick, author of *The Holocaust in American Life*, discusses "What's Special about Representing the Holocaust?" Comix artist Art Spiegelman, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his path-breaking work *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, speaks Monday, May 22, also at 8:00 p.m.

Other area universities and community groups are participating in the project. A full schedule of educational events has been planned throughout the Lehigh Valley as part of a community-wide cooperative effort to focus public attention on human rights issues at the end of the millennium. For more information on the exhibition, conference, and educational events, call the Berman Center at 610-758-4869 or visit the Center's website at www.lehigh.edu/~inber/project2000.html.