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Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross
Exhibition to Open at the
Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

Photographs taken clandestinely and hidden from the Nazis

New York, NY – Photographs forbidden by the Nazis that show the horrors and complexities of life in the Lodz Ghetto in Poland and that were buried for safekeeping and subsequently retrieved by the photographer will be exhibited at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in New York City. Organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), *Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross* is presented by the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust from February 25 to June 24, 2018.

“This extraordinary exhibition is a unique visual record of the barbarity of life in the Lodz Ghetto inflicted by the Nazis, and a testament to Henryk Ross’ heroic and defiant act to record these individual experiences that will forever be part of the historical record,” said Museum CEO & President Michael S. Glickman. “As an institution committed to telling and preserving first-person accounts of the Holocaust, Ross’s photographs represent personal experiences of global significance.”

When Polish Jewish photojournalist Henryk Ross (1910–1991) was confined to the Lodz Ghetto in Poland in 1940, he was put to work by the Nazi regime as a bureaucratic photographer for the Jewish Administration’s Statistics department. For nearly four years, Ross used his official position as cover, endangering his own life to covertly document the lives of others. More than 160,000 Jewish people were trapped in the Lodz Ghetto when it was established—the second largest Jewish ghetto population in German-occupied Europe—and thousands would be deported and murdered at Chelmno and Auschwitz. When the Ghetto was liberated by the Red Army, 877 Jews remained.

Sometimes forced to conceal his camera in his overcoat, Ross took photographs to record the horrors of life in the Lodz Ghetto and to preserve evidence of Nazi crimes.

As liquidation began, Ross buried an astonishing 6,000 negatives near his home—committing to the ground, and perhaps to future generations, “some record of our tragedy.” Henryk Ross survived, and in March of 1945, he unearthed his work with his own hands. Almost 3,000

negatives had survived the Polish winter, making his collection one of the largest visual records of its kind to survive the Holocaust.

Curated by Maia-Mari Sutnik, now the AGO's Curator Emeritus, Photography, *Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross* reveals more than 200 of Ross's photographs, supplemented by artifacts and testimony and presented in the context of Lodz Ghetto history. The exhibition offers a rare learning experience that is also an opportunity to remember and honor the victims of Nazi atrocities.

Ross' photographs ask us to acknowledge the complexity of life in the Lodz Ghetto—the suffering, the birthday parties and wedding celebrations, the violence written onto bodies, the shrinking of life to fit a constricted zone, the pain of separation from family members, and the human insistence on building relationships and maintaining a sense of "normal" life. Henryk Ross fought the Nazis' vision. He committed acts of resistance to create a photographic record of a range of human experiences—from the perspective of a Jewish person deciding where to point his camera.

A soundscape composed of audio testimonies from survivors of the Lodz Ghetto sets the stage at the entrance to the exhibition. Additional audio testimonies are featured throughout the galleries, all from the Museum's collection.

The exhibition is divided into three galleries. The first provides background about Henryk Ross and shows images of his official work. The second section, *Life in the Ghetto*, features images that were taken clandestinely. The third section, *Deportation*, presents Ross' secret photos documenting the Nazis' process of deporting children and adults to the Chelmno and Auschwitz concentration camps.

Printed announcements from the Lodz Ghetto are displayed throughout the galleries stating various edicts, including one telling people that they must give up their cameras or face dire consequences. This presentation of the exhibition will include *Yizkor* (Memorial) books that document and commemorate the Jewish community of Lodz.

Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross is made possible with lead support by R. David Sudarsky Charitable Trust. Major support has been provided by Charina Endowment Fund; Phillip Leonian and Edith Rosenbaum Leonian Charitable Trust; Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Foundation; and The Knapp Family Foundation.

Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross was shown at the Art Gallery Ontario in 2015. In 2017, the exhibition travelled to the Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

General Information

MUSEUM HOURS AND LOCATION

Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, 10 AM to 6 PM
Wednesday and Thursday 10 AM to 8 PM
Friday 10 AM to 3 PM, EST / 10 AM to 5 PM DST

The Museum is closed on Saturdays, Jewish holidays, and Thanksgiving.

The Museum is located at 36 Battery Place in Lower Manhattan.
mjhny.org
646.437.4202

MUSEUM ADMISSION

General Museum admission is \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors, \$7 for students, free for members and children 12 and younger.

Museum admission is free on Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 4 PM to 8 PM

Note: Tickets to public programs do not include Museum admission. Public programs may require a separate fee.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE – A LIVING MEMORIAL TO THE HOLOCAUST

The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust is New York’s contribution to the global responsibility to never forget. The Museum is committed to the crucial mission of educating diverse visitors about Jewish life before, during, and after the Holocaust. The second largest Holocaust museum in the United States, the Museum anchors the southernmost tip of Manhattan, completing the cultural and educational landscape it shares with the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

Since 1997, the Museum of Jewish Heritage has welcomed more than two million visitors; it maintains a collection of more than 30,000 artifacts, photographs, documentary films, and survivor testimonies and contains classrooms, a 400-seat theater (Edmond J. Safra Hall), special exhibition galleries, a resource center for educators, and a memorial art installation, *Garden of Stones*, designed by internationally acclaimed sculptor Andy Goldsworthy.

The Museum receives general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and New York State Council on the Arts.

For more information, visit mjhny.org.

ABOUT THE ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

Located in Toronto, Canada’s largest city of 6.5 million, the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) is one of the largest art museums in North America. The AGO’s collection of close to 95,000 works ranges from cutting-edge contemporary art such as *Untilled* by Pierre Huyghe to European masterpieces such as Peter Paul Rubens’s *The Massacre of The Innocents*; from the vast collection by the Group of Seven to works by established and emerging Indigenous Canadian artists; with a photography

collection that tracks the impact of the medium with deep holdings of works by artists such as Garry Winogrand and Diane Arbus; and with focused collections in Gothic boxwood miniatures and Western and Central African art. Drawing on this collection—as well as collaborations with museums around the world—the AGO presents wide-ranging exhibitions and programs, taking special care to showcase diverse and underrepresented artists. A major expansion designed by Frank Gehry in 2008 with lead support from the family of Ken Thomson makes the AGO a highly-photographed architectural landmark. Visit ago.ca and follow @AGOToronto to learn more.

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