

Stories of Survival

OBJECT · IMAGE · MEMORY

The award-winning exhibition from
Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center



**When you've lost everything,
a single object can take on
extraordinary meaning.**



**ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM
& EDUCATION CENTER**

Stories of Survival

OBJECT · IMAGE · MEMORY

The award-winning exhibition from Illinois Holocaust Museum featuring stunning collaborative artworks by celebrated photographer Jim Lommasson and survivors of genocide and their families

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION:

A teddy bear, a set of house keys, a typewriter – everyday objects that ordinarily provide convenience or comfort take on deeper meaning and become storytellers, in their own right, when they are remnants left from a world destroyed. *Stories of Survival: Object. Image. Memory.* reflects upon the individual stories of 59 Survivors of the Holocaust and genocides and conflicts including Armenia, Bosnia, Cambodia, Iraq and Syria, Rwanda, and South Sudan, told through photographs and personal reflections. Created by the Illinois Holocaust Museum and photographer Jim Lommasson, the exhibition of digital photographs of precious objects from a Survivor, on which the Survivor or their family member(s) reflect on the objects' meaning directly on the print. The photographs invite audiences to explore how time and distance influence meaning and experience of these objects and their stories.

Through the objects and handwritten memories, themes of childhood, home, culture, and religious practice, but also war, violence, displacement, and exile emerge. These stories of survival resulting from incomprehensible inhumanity represent shared human experiences despite differences of time and place: experiences of resilience and courage, the fragility of life, family history, and hope for the future. The exhibition inspires visitors to reflect on their own families' stories of immigration, the meaning behind their keepsakes and heirlooms, and the common experiences of people as they made their way to a new home. It also draws connections between genocides throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, prodding visitors to ask why the promise of "never again" remains unfulfilled.

The Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center in Skokie, Illinois was founded by Holocaust Survivors in response to neo-Nazi activities in Skokie in 1978. With the mission to "remember the past and transform the future," the exhibition draws from the Museum's significant collection of artifacts from Holocaust Survivors, while also pulling from rich connections with other genocide-affected communities. *Stories of Survival* was honored by both the American Alliance of Museums and the American Association of State and Local History for Excellence in Exhibition.

Stories of Survival is a scalable exhibition and can be adapted to the needs of museums and libraries and comes with educator materials, a family guide, docent scripts, and a beautiful companion catalogue. As part of the exhibition, the Illinois Holocaust Museum has partnered with the Tenement Museum, New York on its "Your Story, Our Story" web platform, which encourages visitors to photograph and share a family object and its significance on social media. Borrowing institutions can continue to contribute to this web platform.

Stories of Survival: Object. Image. Memory. is a project of the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center and photographer Jim Lommasson.

CONTENTS:

Exhibition Components:

- Digital photographic files
- Digital files for overview texts and object labels
- Audiovisual component (*equipment must be provided by hosting institution*)
- Exhibition catalog (*available for purchase*)

Accompanying Materials:

- Press kit (*including high resolution images and exhibition style-guide*)
- Educational materials including a family guide and pre- and post-visit packets

Exhibition Fees:

\$2,500

AVAILABILITY:

Beginning 2024

ABOUT THE ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM & EDUCATION CENTER:

The mission of Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center is expressed in its founding principle: Remember the Past, Transform the Future. Dedicated to preserving the legacy of the Holocaust, the Museum honors the memories of those who were lost and those who survived by teaching universal lessons that combat hatred, prejudice, and indifference.

The Museum fulfills its mission through the exhibition, preservation, and interpretation of its collections; and through education programs and initiatives that foster the promotion of human rights and the elimination of genocide.

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER:

Jim Lommasson is an award-winning photographer and author living in Portland, Oregon. Lommasson is a recipient of the Dorothea Lange–Paul Taylor Prize from The Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. Lommasson’s work has been exhibited nationally at museums and galleries including The Arab American National Museum, The Ellis Island National Immigration Museum, Japanese American National Museum, The Portland Art Museum, and Blue Sky Gallery, Portland.

PLEASE DIRECT ALL INQUIRIES TO:

Arielle Weininger
Chief Curator of Collections and Exhibitions
Illinois Holocaust Museum
and Education Center
9603 Woods Drive, Skokie, IL 60077
Phone: 847-967-4817
Email: Arielle.Weininger@ilhmec.org

Stories of Survival

OBJECT · IMAGE · MEMORY

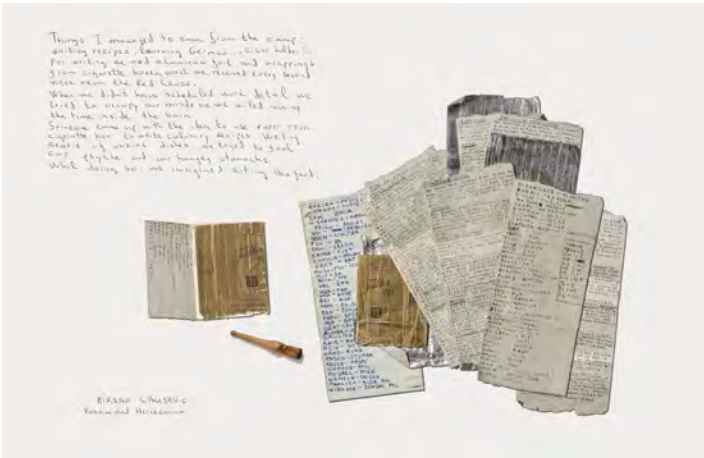
Installation Images



Stories of Survival

OBJECT · IMAGE · MEMORY

Selected Object Images



Mirsad Causevic's Recipes (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992)
On loan courtesy of Mirsad Causevic

"Things I managed to save from the camp: writing recipes, learning German, "cigar holder"...For writing we used aluminum foil and wrappings from cigarette boxes, which we received every second week from the Red Cross. When we didn't have scheduled work detail we tried to occupy our minds as we wiled away the time inside the barn. Someone came up with the idea to use paper from cigarette box to write culinary recipes. Writing recipes of various dishes, we tried to fool our psyche and our hungry stomachs. While doing so we imagined eating this food." — Mirsad Causevic



Domino Set of Othman Al Ani (Baghdad, Iraq, 1992)
On loan courtesy of Othman Al Ani

"I brought this dominoes with me from Baghdad because it's mean the great times I spent with my friends. I chose this dominoes from all other stuff because I know those old times may not back again. When I went to see my friends for last time before leaving my country, they gave this dominoes to me to keep it with me to remind me about all great times we spent together." — Othman Al Ani



Domino Set of Olga Weiss (Brussels, Belgium, 1943)
Gift of Olga Weiss, in memory of Reginé and Jacques Kirschenbaum

"This domino set was given to me by "St. Nicholas" (the counterpart of Santa Claus), on December 6, 1943, when I was 7 years old. December 6 was the traditional date when St. Nicholas came down the chimney with gifts for Belgian children. At that time, I was hidden with my parents in a small town outside of Brussels. Because I was attending a Catholic school (under a false name), my parents wanted to be sure that I, like the other children, had received a gift from St. Nicholas, who by the way, wrote his name on the outside of the box, together with mine." — Olga Weiss



Irma Schwarz's Cookbook (Germany, 1930s)
Gift of Ellen Vogel Glass and Ruth Vogel Glick

"Tante (Aunt) Irma was my mother's older sister. As a young girl she went to work in the kitchen of a nearby resort. There she was introduced to gourmet recipes for her handwritten cookbook. Thus she became a fabulous cook. But after immigrating to Milwaukee, Wisconsin in May 1939, with our extended family, she only would cook for her husband and son. Unfortunately her only child, Arnold Schwarz passed away in 1948 at age 18 of acute Leukemia. As was the custom, single girls started their own hand-written recipe books and added on throughout their life. My mother, Hannah Vogel also had such a book, which I still treasure." — Ellen Vogel Glass