

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST THROUGH THE ART OF MIRIAM BRYSK

Association of Jewish Libraries Conference

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Holocaust survivor Miriam Brysk and school librarian Margaret Lincoln have undertaken a collaborative project offering a new approach to the essential task of teaching today's learners about the Holocaust. As a team, they demonstrate how inclusion of artwork and 21st century technology enriches existing curriculum.

Miriam Brysk's story is most inspiring. She and her family survived the Lida Ghetto massacre, hid among Partisans, and came to the US after WWII. Miriam earned a doctorate in biological sciences from Columbia University and was a professor at the University of Texas. Upon retirement in 2000, she returned for the first time to the ghettos and camps of Eastern Europe where images of her lost family entered back into consciousness, while childhood fears reemerged as nightmares.

Miriam's art career (utilizing original photographs and computer graphics technology) was launched through that return trip. Resulting works reflect Miriam's life and stories of friends and relatives who perished during the Holocaust. Miriam feels a deep inner need to portray their suffering, to restore to them their dignity as Jews, to honor and remember them. Miriam's major exhibits, "In a Confined Silence" and "Children of the Holocaust" have been viewed in Holocaust Museums, art centers, and universities throughout the US. She recently completed a third exhibit "Scroll of Remembrance" is based upon the *Megillat Hashoah: The Holocaust Scroll*, a powerful newer liturgical text that was created in 2003 to be read during observances of Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom ha-Shoah).

In her memoir, *Amidst the Shadows of Trees*, Miriam recounted her wartime experiences in Poland. She then began compiling a collection of her art to be published in book form. As a friend and United States Holocaust Museum (USHMM) Teacher Fellow, Margaret Lincoln approached Miriam about including in this publication curriculum support material, encouraging Holocaust educators to incorporate these artworks into their teaching in a meaningful way

Miriam and Margaret began to connect with colleagues. Technology bridged constraints of time and geography. Through professional listservs, teachers were requested to create lessons utilizing the art of Miriam Brysk following USHMM's *Guidelines for Teaching About the Holocaust*. Slides from Miriam's exhibits were posted online so as to be downloadable for classroom use. Lesson submissions were field-tested, critiqued by USHMM Teacher Fellows and updated to include Common Core Standards. A Moodle based version of several lessons, adapted for delivery on an iPad, was developed.

During today's presentation, lessons from the disciplines of English Language Arts and Social Studies will be shared. Dialog and interaction among participants is welcomed. Time has been set aside for a Q&A. It is hoped that our conversation about "Teaching the Holocaust through the Art of Miriam Brysk" can be ongoing as we are inspired to make a positive difference in the lives of our students.

Today's AJL presentation is at <http://www.lakeviewspartans.org/files/filesystem/HolocaustArtAJL.pdf> on the Lakeview Schools server.

An audio version is available at <http://youtu.be/Saz76ISFZ9g>

Follow-up discussion takes place at <http://midwestholocaustconsortium.ning.com/>

Miriam's memoir and art/lesson plan book may be obtained from <http://www.gihonriverpress.com/>

Holocaust Art & Remembrance is available for preview or download from Michigan's REMC Moodle Hub at <http://moodlehubpreview.remc.org/course/view.php?id=67> or <http://bit.ly/1oAVBwP>

Holocaust Art & Remembrance

ONLINE SOURCES

Recommended sites provide support for Holocaust study:

- [Holocaust Collection - Footnote.com](#)
- [iWitness from USC Shoah Foundation](#)
- [Museum Fellowship Teaching Resources](#)
- [New York Times Learning Network: The Holocaust](#)
- [PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust](#)



Life Unraveling

decidedly evil or virtuous outcomes. You will be able to apply this learning on a personal level, making connections to your present day life and community. This lesson will utilize mobile devices and we hope to create an online ebook documenting our learning.

This series of three lessons is part of a World War II unit in World At War, an elective class taught at Lakeview High School in Battle Creek, Michigan.

The lessons use the work of Holocaust survivor and artist [Miriam Brysk](#) to consider the theme of Bystanders, Resistance and Perpetrators. As a student, you will come to grips with the big ideas or over-arching concepts of how individuals treat one another through a study of war in the 20th century. A [Teacher's Page](#) is available.

We will consider how actions in our own lives yield both good and bad results. In the context of war and genocide, however, action (or inaction) can have

Online Sources (useful suggestions from Moodle site)

[Holocaust Collection – Footnote.com](#) <go.footnote.com/holocaust>

Over one million Holocaust-related records from The National Archives and Records Administration.

[iWitness](#) <iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/>

View over 1,000 video testimonies of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses from USC Shoah Foundation.

[Museum Fellowship Teaching Resources](#) <mandelproject.us>

Site offers book reviews and thematically arranged lesson plans: Prewar Life, Introduction, Nazism, Ghettos, Final Solution, Rescue/Resistance, Children, Literary Connections, Universal Lessons, and Global Connections.

[NYT Learning Network Resources: The Holocaust](#) <learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/04/09/the-holocaust>

Lesson plans and links to articles from New York Times historical archives.

[PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators](#) <yu.edu/azrieli/research/prism-journal>

Peer-reviewed journal of Azrieli Graduate School of Yeshiva University with scholarly and practical resources.

[A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust](#) <fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust>

Overview of people and events in Holocaust through photographs, documents, art, music, movies, and literature from Florida Center for Instructional Technology at College of Education, University of South Florida.

[Teaching the Holocaust with Primary Sources](#) <eiu.edu/~eiutps/holocaust.php>

This themed resource set from Eastern Illinois University uses Library of Congress [primary source documents](#) on the Holocaust. Primary source analysis tools are available in PDF and Word Document format.

[USHMM Teaching Materials and Resources](#) <www.ushmm.org/educators>

Downloadable files and links to Teaching Guidelines, Holocaust Encyclopedia, Lessons, Identification Cards, Photographs of Artifacts, Personal Histories, Victims of the Nazi Era, and [films](#) that are viewable online.

[Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive](#) <holocaust.umd.umich.edu>

Site offers an extensive repository of interviews from University of Michigan Dearborn's Mardigian Library.

[Yad VaShem](#) <www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education>

Locate educational materials in English from Holocaust Martyrs' & Heroes' Remembrance Authority. Lessons, ceremonies, testimonies, primary documents, photographs, maps, and a Holocaust Encyclopedia are included.

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