

Peace: Piece by Piece

EXHIBIT PROPOSAL | 2020

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Proposed by

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Dear ,

I am pleased to present my exhibition proposal, 'PEACE: PIECE by PIECE,' which reflects my life, work, and poetry as a Holocaust survivor. The exhibit contains my poetry with accompanying illustrations by young visual artists and musical composers. I believe as a Holocaust survivor, educator, and poet that making my personal story available to a larger audience is valuable in our current unsettling time.

The proposed exhibit will tell the journey of my life. In spite of, or because of all I endured as a very young child I passionately encourage the quest for inner peace through self-development. My path of self-healing is based on Jewish teachings which tell us, "The purpose of living is the celebration of Life."

In addition to the proposal I am attaching my biography, CV, and samples of the commissioned art.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of my proposal. I look forward to your response.

Warm Regards,

Greta Elbogen

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Exhibition Proposal

A. Exhibit Summary

The exhibition will consist of two major elements: selections of poetry from Greta Elbogen's book "God Plays Hide and Seek" will be paired with commissioned art work consisting of paint on canvas, collage, charcoal, projected video, and recorded music. The majority of the art work is produced by young artists from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Through the exhibit the audience will gain insight into Greta's journey from being a "hidden child" and orphan during the Holocaust, to becoming an accomplished psychotherapist, poet, and educator. Due to her upbringing deeply rooted in Jewish tradition she was able to connect to the mystical and transformative teachings which is that suffering could be a way to joy and renewal.

Greta's poems will be presented in a way that complements the commissioned work and vice versa. They may be shaped, backlit, projected, or animated in ways that contribute to their meaning. Commissioned work on canvas will be hung and lit as required. Video materials will be projected onto a white screen or blank wall, and any recorded music played through a built-in or improvised audio system.

B. Artist Statement

My poetry reads like a memoir. It focuses on my personal saga - how I found my way out of deep sadness after experiencing family tragedy during the Holocaust as a young girl. By reaching out to other artists and encouraging them to create work based on a poem of their choosing, they become interpreters of my messages. They are able to contemplate the notions of universal love and compassion. The 'conversations' between us become the final work. This exhibit also offers the audience an unique perspective on how to transform suffering into inner peace and joy, becoming more loving and forgiving. I believe that all of us, if we choose to, are able to leave behind the notion of being victims and embrace life, living it to the fullest.

C. Past Support

Greta's work has been supported in the past by the Austrian Government and the Austrian Cultural Forum of New York. In 2014 she was invited to perform readings of her work, with musical accompaniment, at the Austrian Cultural Forum. The following year Greta's poetry was translated into German and published in Vienna by Theodor Kramer Gesellschaft. During this time Greta was invited on an Austrian book tour promoting her work in literary houses and schools.

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D. Artist Biography:

Greta Elbogen is a psychotherapist, educator, inspirational speaker, and poet. Born Grete Fischmann in Vienna, Austria in October 1937, Greta was the youngest of four children. Her father was from Csorna, Hungary. Her mother was from Frauenkirchen, Austria. Both families practised the Orthodox Jewish tradition. Greta's father, together with his brother, owned a grain business. In 1939, after the annexation of Austria to Germany, the family fled to Hungary. In 1943 Greta's father was collected, together with other Jewish men in Budapest, and taken into slave labor. He perished in Dachau in 1945. Many of Greta's family members vanished, never to be seen again.

In 1944, the Germans, with the help of the Hungarian Arrow Cross, began mass deportations of Budapest Jews. Greta was separated from her mother and older sister, and was taken into hiding with her older brothers. They were among more than a thousand children rescued by Pastor Gabor Sztéhlo who had them hidden as Christians. Greta's mother and older sister were saved by the heroic efforts of the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, who distributed thousands of protective papers. They were able to stay in one of the buildings purchased and declared Swedish properties.

In February of 1945 the Russians liberated Budapest. Greta, now age seven, survived and found her mother, only to be placed in an orphanage due to her mother's incapacitated condition and the bombing of their family home. She grew up in communist ruled Hungary, married, and moved to the United States with her husband in 1957.

While raising 4 children Greta completed her education receiving a B.A. from Brooklyn College and a Masters Degree in Social Work from Hunter College in 1977.

Early in her life Greta began to study the cause of suffering. This investigation led to a life-long journey of self-discovery. Her career includes serving Holocaust survivors in need as well as the Syrian Jewish immigrant population. She was a volunteer for the Shoah Visual History Foundation created by Steven Spielberg. Presently, she is a speaker at the Museum of Jewish Heritage. Her book of poems "God Plays Hide and Seek" was published by Theodor Kramer Gesellschaft.

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E. ARTIST CV

Professional Experience

- **Psychotherapist**, Private Practice, 1990-Present
Counsels individuals, couples and families, with an emphasis on self-healing
- **New York Association for New Americans (NAYANA)**, 1992-1995
Worked with Syrian Jewish Immigrants
- **Sephardic Bikur Holim**, 1988-1992
Served as senior caseworker and fieldwork supervisor for social work students
- **Louise Wise Services**, 1986-1988
Screened families for adoption
- **Self Help Community Services**, 1978-1985
Served as caseworker for elderly Holocaust survivors

Publications

- ***God Plays Hide and Seek***. Elbogen, Greta
Vienna, Austria, T. Kramer Gesellschaft, 2015
- ***Remember Me***. Elbogen, Greta
New York: Self Published, 2008. 2nd edition, 2012
- ***Our Memories***. Silten, Gabriele, ed. Shalom
Greta Elbogen poems, pp. 517-525. Pomona, CA: International Cleveland Child Survivors Group, 2012
- ***Denkt uns Gedichte Zwischenwelt***. Elbogen, Greta
(5 poems in German translation), 27:1-2 August 2010: 16-17
- ***Remember Us***. Abrams, Judy and Evi Blaikie, eds.
A Collection of Memories from Hungarian Hidden Children From the Holocaust, pp. 76-82. Bloomington, IN: AutorHause, 2009

Speaking & Reading Engagements

- **Literary House**, Innsbruck and Vienna, Austria, 2015
- **New Republican Club**, Vienna, Austria, 2015
- **High Schools (3)** in Vienna, Austria, 2015
- **Interfaith Peace Gathering** for Hiroshima & Nagasaki, 2013
- **New Republican Club**, Vienna, Austria, 2011
- **High School** in Burgenland, Austria, 2011

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Holocaust Related Volunteer Work

- Member of the **Speakers Bureau at the Museum of Jewish Heritage**
Delivered several presentations between 2009-present
- Advisor to a **Buddhist Interfaith Monk** in Holocaust and Jewish Studies for his doctoral dissertation, 2011-12
- Trained interviewer for **Shoah Visual History Foundation**. Interviewed 26 Holocaust survivors' experiences, 1995-97

Licenses & Professional Associations

- **Licensed** in Clinical Social Work, 2009-Present
- **Certified** in Clinical Social Work, 1977-09

Awards & Accolades

- **New York City Council** honored Greta Elbogen in 2017 *“for her resiliency, inspiration, and enduring contribution.”* On the occasion of the rededication of Raoul Wallenberg Square, New York
- **New York State Assembly** honored Greta Elbogen in 2017 with a citation acknowledging her as an *“outstanding individual,”* who *“dedicated her career towards the betterment of our society.”*

Education

- **Training in Systemic Family Therapy**
Ackerman Institute for Family Therapy, 1992
- **Certification in Social Work Administration**
Hunter College School of Social Work, 1985
- **Masters degree in Social Work**
Hunter College School of Social Work, CUNY, 1977
- **Bachelors degree in Sociology, with a Minor in Psychology**
Brooklyn College, CUNY, 1975