

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

January 23, 2007

[Andrea Estrada](#)

New Portraits of Holocaust Survivors Premieres at Film Festival

Video Portraits of Survival: Volume Two, a 90-minute program of four video portraits featuring local residents who are Holocaust survivors, will premiere at the 2007 Santa Barbara International Film Festival. The films will screen Tuesday, Jan. 30, at 7 p.m. at the Marjorie Luke Theatre, 721 E. Cota St.

A question-and-answer session with the filmmakers and film participants will follow.

Produced by Janet Walker and Kwame Braun, professors of film and media studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Santa Barbara filmmaker Renée Bergan, the films are a continuation of

"Video Portraits of Survival: Volume One," which premiered to an enthusiastic audience at last year's Santa Barbara film festival.

The films are inspired by "Portraits of Survival: Life Journeys During the Holocaust and Beyond," a permanent photographic and narrative exhibition housed at the Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara.

The film project was produced in association with Dr. Elizabeth Wolfson, director of the Portraits of Survival program at the Jewish Federation.

This second volume was encouraged by Roger Durling, executive director of the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, and made possible by support from the

offices of UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang and David Marshall, Dean of Fine Arts & Humanities.

"I was thrilled to showcase 'Video Portraits of Survival, Volume One' at the 2006 festival," said Durling.

"It was one of the most important films we showed."

Durling was so impressed with the project he urged Walker and Braun to produce the second volume.

Yang described the films as an important resource for education and research that will influence many generations.

"These video portraits inspire us with the courage and convictions of those whose lives were forever changed by the Holocaust, while reminding us all of the need for tolerance, understanding, and the willingness to speak out against injustice," he said.

The portraits in Volume Two include "Gela," by Bergan, and "Juliane Heyman: Out in the World," "A Fugue in One Voice," and "somehow, yes: Fred Jamner and Art Kern," by Walker and Braun.

In "Gela," Gela Baser Percal describes how her family sought refuge in a forest in Poland early in the war.

One day, while she and a sister were buying provisions from a sympathetic Pole, the rest of their family was captured by the Nazis and shot to death.

To survive, Gela passed herself off as a non-Jewish Pole and allowed herself to be sent into Germany as a slave laborer. Eventually, she married an American serviceman and moved to the United States.

"Juliane Heyman: Out in the World" tells how Heyman, along with her parents and brother, evaded the Nazis and eventually escaped to the United States.

She explains how her wartime experiences instilled in her a taste for adventure and travel.

In "A Fugue in One Voice," Nina Morecki tells the harrowing story of crawling unhurt from an execution pit and escaping the Nazis by fleeing into the dark of night.

She survived the rest of the war working for a time in a German post office, and eventually made her way across the front to the Russian side.

"somehow, yes: Fred Jamner and Art Kern," describes the friendship forged between Jamner and Kern, who met in France at a home for Jewish refugee children.

Jamner and his older brother had been sent from Germany to France in November of 1938, following Kristallnacht. Evacuated to the United States in 1941, Jamner and Kern kept in contact and their close friendship continues to this day.

Walker, one of the project's two co-directors, received her Ph.D. from UCLA in 1987. Her primary area of specialization is documentary film, and she is the author of four books, including "Trauma Cinema: Documenting Incest and the Holocaust" (University of California Press, 2005).

Braun, the project's other co-director, received his M.F.A. from New York University. In addition to teaching at UCSB, he is an independent documentary filmmaker whose African videos have screened at international ethnographic film festivals, including New York City's Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival.

He also has taught film and video production at Chicago's Columbia College and at UCLA.

Filmmaker Renée Bergan is an alumna of the Department of Film and Media Studies at UCSB.

Her film "Sadaa E Zan (Voices of Women)," a documentary about Afghan women, received the Social Justice Award for Best Documentary at the 2003 Santa Barbara International Film Festival, as well as an Audience Award and Best Director Award at the New York International Independent Film & Video Festival in 2004.

Tickets to the screening of "Video Portraits of Survival: Volume Two" are available at the door and through the Lobero Box Office.

Related Links

[Portraits of Survival](#)

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.