

THE COLOR OF MEMORY:
ART BY TWO DAUGHTERS OF THE HOLOCAUST

New York—The searing effect of the Holocaust and its personal impact on two artists is at the heart of the new traveling exhibition, “The Color of Memory: Art by Two Daughters of the Holocaust.” The exhibition consists of works by Julie Meetal and Veronique Jonas, whose paintings and sculptures express the emotional repercussions of the Holocaust on their families and on the Jews of Europe during World War II.

In the exhibition, Julie Meetal shows *Out of Ashes*, a series with eleven paintings, one large sculpture and three smaller pieces. The work directly reflects the stories of her Hungarian parents in the Holocaust and the larger fate of European Jewry. Veronique Jonas’s series of twelve paintings, *The Phantoms of Memory*, poetically envisions the experience of her family and the Jewish community on the Greek island of Rhodes. Meetal’s paintings are accompanied by a prose text written by the artist, while Jonas has composed poems which echo her paintings’ meanings. A documentary section includes a DVD of an interview with Meetal’s parents as well as photographs of Jonas’s family and the Rhodes Jewish quarter.

Julie Meetal paints imaginatively, creating a dream-like nexus of figures, symbols, and saturated color. The paintings begin with canvases that tell of her father’s life during the Holocaust in forced labor and as a partisan fighter. The painting of her mother depicts her family’s experience in Auschwitz, where both of her parents were killed. In a number of paintings, Meetal works in watercolor, almost abstractly, to conjure up those who perished as phantom-like figures. Meetal’s *Memorial Wall*, combines recreations of grave stones from Jewish cemeteries that the Nazis ordered Jewish forced labor to use for paving roads in Poland. The sculpture is a reproduction of a proposed monument for Treblinka, the Nazi extermination camp, where the original stones are preserved.

Veronique Jonas paints with a heightened realism to depict the buildings of the Jewish quarter of Rhodes, both as they appear today as preserved architecture and the ruins of homes, and as it is imagined by the artist. The paintings tell of the loss of nearly the entire Jewish community at the hands of the Nazis, who occupied Rhodes in 1944. Jonas’s parents, who emigrated from the island prior to the war, left an extended family, including twelve of Jonas’s aunts and uncles, who were killed. In Jonas’s paintings, the streets are largely empty of the former Jewish populace, but the city is haunted by photographic images of those who died. The artist shows the text of the Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead, emerging from the walls of buildings. A number of Jonas’s paintings are pervaded by a feeling of life and hope, symbolized by blooming flowers and a bright blue sky.

Julie Meetal and Veronique Jonas, who both live in the Dallas, Texas area, created the work in this exhibition independently. In 2005 when they were both participating in an exhibition in Israel, they found each other engaged in the same mission, and joined together to create the exhibition, *The Color of Memory: Art by Two Daughters of the Holocaust*.

Julie Meetal was born in 1953 in Israel to parents who had emigrated from Hungary. The family moved to the U.S. in 1964. Meetal studied at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, graduating in 1974, and worked in fashion design, while developing her painting. She has shown her work extensively, with solo exhibitions at Texas Christian University, Agora Gallery, New York, and the Dallas Center for Holocaust Studies. She lives and works in Mansfield, TX.

Veronique Jonas was born in 1952 in the Belgian Congo, her parents having emigrated from the Greek island of Rhodes. The family relocated to South Africa, where Jonas went to college. She moved to the U.S. in 1982. For the past 18 years, Jonas who lives in Dallas, has taught art, while pursuing her painting and designing ketubahs, Jewish marriage contracts. She has shown her work widely including a solo exhibition at Art in Encounter, Dallas, the Canton Museum of Art, and the International Yitzhak Exhibition, Akko, Israel.