

# AS SEEN THROUGH THESE EYES

A FILM BY HILARY HELSTEIN NARRATED BY MAYA ANGELOU



PARKCHESTER PICTURES PRESENTS

# AS SEEN THROUGH THESE EYES

Produced in Association with SUNDANCE CHANNEL  
A HILARY HELSTEIN FILM

A new feature documentary about a brave group of people who fought against Hitler and his reign of destruction using the only weapons they had . . . the expression of the human spirit.

Contact: **HILARY HELSTEIN** for more information **310.259.1241**

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## SUMMARY

**Poet Maya Angelou** writes: "I know why the caged bird sings." So does director **Hilary Helstein**, who has traveled the world over the past decade, compiling interviews with survivors who have given us something that history couldn't; a journal of the Holocaust as seen through the eyes of the artist, through the eyes of people who by the very act of creating, rebelled and risked their lives by doing what they were forbidden to do.

As Maya Angelou narrates this powerful documentary, she reveals the story of a brave group of people who fought Hitler with the only weapons they had: charcoal, pencil stubs, shreds of paper and memories etched in their minds. These artists took their fate into their own hands to make a compelling statement about the human spirit, enduring against unimaginable odds. It features **Simon Wiesenthal**, the children of Terezin (*60 Minutes*) and Dina Gottliebova Babbitt, personal artist to Dr. Mengele (*New York Times, People Magazine*). The score features music by Sony BMG's **Anna Nalick** and Grammy-winning **Lorin Sklamberg** of the Klezmatiks.



"I made over a thousand pictures. I don't want to forget."

—KARL STOJKA  
*Gypsy survivor, artist*

"My Family in Auschwitz" by Gypsy survivor Karl Stojka

## THE STORY

Picasso's words resonate, "I have always believed that artists should not remain indifferent to a conflict in which the highest values of humanity and civilization are at stake." The mission of **As Seen Through These Eyes** is to combat prejudice, intolerance and bigotry through a series of moving interviews with these survivor-artists. Each conversation brings with it the realization that every painting or sketch on a torn scrap of paper is its own Holocaust diary. Their words—and their images—are profoundly moving, communicating horror and hope artistically.

One only needs to absorb the evocative drawing of train tracks leading into the mouth of Death's head, its victims' plight compassionately captured by the artist, whose signature reads Simon Wiesenthal. His art, and that of all the other survivor-artists, are documents echoing the message "Never again!"

What is most heartrending is the art of the children; images from creators who were forced to become immediately what they would not have time to become naturally. Ela Weissberger, one of the few surviving child artists also performed in a rare

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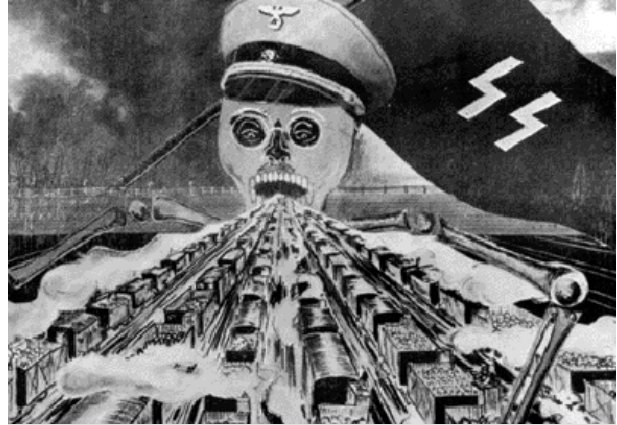
camp opera. Having played the “Cat” in *Brundibar*, she is one of merely 100 child survivors among the 15,000 children who lived in the “model ghetto” Theresienstadt. In her interview, she speaks on behalf of the murdered children, “Please remember my friends. They cannot speak for themselves so I speak in their words.” We see children’s artwork and images of the ghetto and its random camp deportations, revealing what life was like for these innocent victims.

The film is partially scored with the melancholy harmonica music of **Henry Rosmarin**. Henry’s harmonica was his very last possession, smuggled through three concentration camps, until it too was taken from him. A gaunt figure and a week away from the gas chamber, he was brought to face the camp commandant who was blowing into a harmonica but could not play. “Play me Schubert, you miserable dog!” barked the commandant. Upon finishing the song, Henry was given the job to play for the SS in their mess hall. This job continued through the end of the war. As he plays these solos through his tears, he tells us, “It may look like just an instrument, but to me it is a lifesaver.”

Just as Rosmarin was spared, so were the lives of other artist-survivors. Dina Gottliebova Babbitt was forced to paint Gypsy portraits by Dr. Mengele in the course of his monstrous experiments, and survived by doing so. Karl Stojka, a Gypsy child who was Mengele’s errand boy, painted over 1,000 related canvases because he doesn’t “want to forget anything. These images are burned into my mind.” Samuel Bak’s first exhibition at age nine in the Vilna Ghetto helped save his life as he earned recognition as a child prodigy. And Judith Goldstein made a promise to her father in the very same ghetto that, if she survived, she would “paint to tell the world what really happened.”

These are the stories of people whose drive was to preserve their sense of self worth despite being stripped of all dignity. Their muses did not desert them during their struggle to survive, but empowered them to create in the face of death, leaving us with an undiluted record. As Simon Wiesenthal said, “I made it as a witness!”

There was one other, however, who did not communicate as an artist, although he tried. His realization that he would be unsuccessful as an artist fueled his desire to paint a larger picture of his twisted vision, and the signature on that canvas reads Adolf Hitler. **As Seen Through These Eyes** exposes the irony that its artists succeeded in the very arena in which their oppressor failed. ■



“Oh Lord, do not forgive them,  
for they know what they do!”

—**SIMON WIESENTHAL**  
*Holocaust survivor, artist, Nazi hunter*

A sketch made by Simon Wiesenthal, during his captivity on the  
Death Block in Mauthausen concentration camp in 1945.

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## THE CREATIVE TEAM

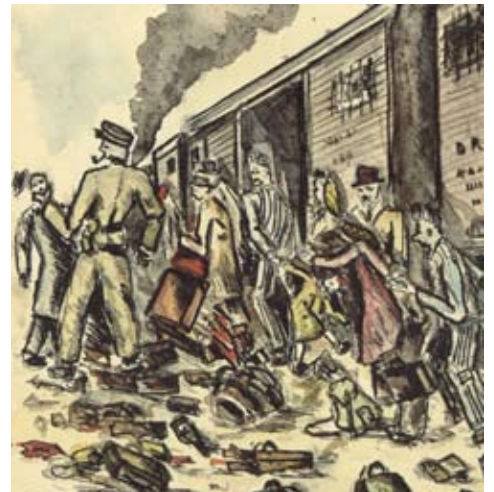
**Hilary Helstein** (Director/Producer/Writer) began her career in the world of humanitarian causes. With her work with Steven Spielberg's *Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation*, she directed and produced over 200 segments and interviewed many prominent Holocaust survivors, military liberators and rescuers; among them, Simon Wiesenthal, Nobel Prize recipient Walter Kohn, and renowned Rabbi Graudenz, part of the Sugihara rescue committee. In addition, she traveled to remote areas to interview survivors with unique experiences, including several members of the Varian Fry rescue mission, Chief of Staff of the US Army, and a "Mengele twin." Hilary's expertise was utilized to train other interviewers and for quality assurance throughout every English-speaking region in the world. She reviewed an additional 300 testimonies.

Hilary's deep passion for film and the arts led her to her most recent creation of the Los Angeles Jewish Film Festival. As Festival Director, Hilary has facilitated completing two successful years of this citywide event. Brought on as the Cultural Arts Director at the JCC at Milken, Hilary single-handedly produced this film festival to bring to the LA community a week-long event featuring the newest American and International films celebrating the diversity of the Jewish culture. Her role included: fundraising; soliciting sponsors; selecting and programming films; developing partnerships with organizations like the ADL, Jewish World Watch and JDate, and consulates and synagogues throughout the city; organizing event venues; creating the festival brochure and program guide; all publicity, marketing and advertising; and talent coordination.

Prior to that, in 2005, Hilary produced and directed a documentary on world renowned Rabbi Harold Schulweis. The film, *Harold M. Schulweis: The First 80 Years* was screened at an event for an audience of over 1200 people including Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and significant clergy including Rabbi Harold Kushner and Cardinal Mahoney.

In addition to filmmaking, Hilary has worked in another capacity in the cultural arts. In 2004, she curated an exhibition of paintings, *Samuel Bak: Between Worlds* on surrealist, Samuel Bak for the Finegood Gallery. Prior to that, Hilary co-curated the art exhibit, *Memory and Meaning: the Holocaust Through the Eyes of the Artist*, for the Jewish Federation's Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust. She worked with over 40 artists and personally brought to it the most recognized artists in this genre including Art Spiegelman and Mindy Wiesel.

Ms. Helstein was segment producer for the documentary series, *America!* which aired on the Odyssey Network. In addition, she directed an educational project for the Museum of Tolerance and an oral history project for CalArts. Hilary started her career in LA in film development for actor Tom Hanks.



"Arrival at Auschwitz" by Alfred Kantor. Prisoners were forced to pay for their train tickets on a one-way trip to extinction.

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## THE CREATIVE TEAM (cont.)

**Michael Jacobs** (Executive Producer) is the youngest playwright to ever open on Broadway. At twenty-two years old, his play *Cheaters* ran at the Biltmore Theater and then internationally. His next play, *Getting Along Famously* opened Off-Broadway at the Hudson Guild Theater.

In television, Michael has enjoyed long runs with several half-hour comedies he has created, written and produced. Among these are, *Boy Meets World*, *Dinosaurs* and *Lost at Home* for ABC, *My Two Dads* and *The Torkelsons* for NBC, and *Charles in Charge* for CBS. *My Two Dads* was the winner of The People's Choice Award for Best New Comedy. *Dinosaurs* was nominated for two Emmy Awards and won one, as well as being the recipient of the Environmental Media Award three years in a row.

*Boy Meets World* and *Dinosaurs* went on to be syndicated, and along with *The Torkelsons*, also run on The Disney Channel. *Charles in Charge* was a pioneer of first run syndication, and is seen all over the world.

In motion pictures, Michael produced Quiz Show, which won the New York Drama Critics Award, and was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Picture.



Gypsy Girl by Dina Gottliebova, is one of many gypsy portraits ordered by Dr. Mengele, whose fascination with genetics kept the artist alive during her wartime interment.

**Jerry Offsay** (Executive Producer) left his position as President of Programming for Showtime Networks in 2003 to form his own production company, Parkchester Pictures. In the first year after his departure he executive produced six films, three of which were accepted at the Sundance Film Festival. He also was the creative consultant on *Keeping Up With the Steins*.

During his ten-year tenure at Showtime Networks, he was responsible for all programming functions of Showtime Networks Inc. and for more than tripling Showtime's original programming slate of series and films. Many of these programs have appeared in the Venice, Toronto, Sundance and Cannes Film Festivals and have garnered Emmy®, Golden Globe™, and CableACE awards, among others.

Jerry green-lit *Soldier's Girl* and *Tennessee Williams' The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* which both won a total of 5 Golden Globe nominations. Critically acclaimed projects that have aired under Jerry's management included: *The Believer*, *Hiroshima*, *12 Angry Men*, *Mandela and deKlerk*, *Inherit the Wind*, *Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman*, *Bojangles*, *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* and *The Day Reagan Was Shot*.

Amongst the television series that Jerry was responsible for green-lighting are *Queer as Folk*, *Soul Food* and *The L Word*.

Prior to joining Showtime Networks, Jerry served as Executive Vice President, ABC Productions for Capital Cities/ABC Inc., where he was responsible for all production and distribution. Before assuming his position at ABC Productions, Jerry was President, RKO Pictures. He served as executive producer on films including *Eight Men Out*, *Diabolique*, and *Hamburger Hill* as well as co-producer on *Narrow Margin*.

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Children living in the Theresienstadt Ghetto performed in the play *Brundibar*, which was filmed for propaganda purposes by the Nazis in 1944. Immediately afterward, all but two of the cast went to the gas chamber.

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## THE CREATIVE TEAM (cont.)

**Irv Weintraub** (Executive Producer) moved to Los Angeles in 1975 at the age of 21 upon graduation from Pace University, where he earned a B.A. in Public Accounting.

He joined Deloitte & Touche, becoming a partner in 1986, and served as Director of Retail Service for their Southern California office, specializing in providing accounting and consulting services to both publicly and privately held retailers.

Irv joined the William Morris Agency in 1990, where he held the position of Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. In 2004 he was promoted to Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

Irv is involved with numerous charitable and civic affiliations which include: AIPAC, American Jewish University, Jerusalem Foundation and Venice Family Clinic. He is also a Member of American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and Member, California Society of CPA's.

**Michael Rosendale** (Producer) began his career in TV news, shooting and editing for the ABC affiliate in Richmond, Virginia. He quickly moved into film working on Michael Mann's *Manhunter*. He was Unit Manager on Oliver Stone's *Platoon*, shot in the Philippines during the Marcos revolution.

Michael then set up his own production company, *Task at Hand Productions*, where he produced three major industrial programs including the 1993 Telly Award-winning, *Caremark and A.I.S* for the International Aids Conference in Amsterdam, and five one-hour episodes of *Kilroy!*, the top rated BBC talk show. For MTV, he produced *Forget Your Name: a Documentary of the Rave Underground*. Clips of it aired on *60 Minutes*, *20/20* and *Dateline*. He also produced numerous music videos for Polygram, A & M, and Warner Brothers.

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## THE CREATIVE TEAM (cont.)

Warner Brothers also commissioned Michael and his Academy Award-nominated co-producer, Nick Redman, to make *A Turning of the Earth: John Ford, John Wayne and the Searchers*. This highly acclaimed documentary won the Gold Plaque at the 2000 Chicago Film Festival. Rosendale and Redman also co-produced and directed *From Dollars to Donuts*, a documentary on the making of *The First Nudie Musical*, featuring Cindy Williams and Ron Howard.

**Amy Janes** (Producer) Upon graduating from the University of Colorado in Boulder with a BFA in Film Studies, Amy was invited to sit on the board of the non-profit, art based organization Project YES (Youth Envisioning Social change) which provides leadership opportunities for young people through the arts and service learning.

In pursuit of her master's degree in film with an eye on teaching at the college level, Amy found herself in Los Angeles in the Producer's Program at UCLA. While studying for a MFA she worked hand-in-hand with the ArtsBridge Foundation.

Amy put aside her desire to teach at the higher level to further her knowledge of the film industry. She is the Head of Film Production at Parkchester Pictures, working with Jerry Offsay, the former President of Programming for Showtime Networks. Together they are developing and producing a slate of feature films and documentaries. ■



"She Was All Alone" by Gypsy survivor Karl Stojka.

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## Partial Credits List

Parkchester Pictures Presents  
Produced in Association with  
**Sundance Channel**

A **Hilary Helstein** Film

Written, Directed and Produced by  
**Hilary Helstein**

Narrated by  
**Maya Angelou**

Executive Producers  
**Michael Jacobs**  
**Jerry Offsay**  
**Irv Weintraub**

Producer  
**Michael Rosendale**

Producer  
**Amy Janes**

Editors  
**Sean Hubbert**  
**Tanya Phipps**

"Art of the Soul"  
Words and Music by  
**David Pomeranz, Judith A. Proffer**  
& **Spencer Proffer**

Performed by  
**Anna Nalick**

Produced by  
**Spencer Proffer**

Arranged by  
**Patrick Seymour**  
courtesy of Columbia Records  
In association with  
**SONY BMG MUSIC**  
**ENTERTAINMENT**

Score composed and conducted by  
**Lawrence Brown**

Participating artist-survivors  
**Ela Weissberger**  
**Yehuda Bacon**  
**Willi Groag**  
**Frederick Terna**  
**Inge and Alfred Kantor**  
**Judith Goldstein**  
**Samuel Bak**

**Karl Stojka**  
**Dina Gottliebova-Babbitt**  
**Simon Wiesenthal**  
**Henry Rosmarin**  
**Trudie Strobel**

Additional interviews  
**Tony Kushner**  
**Aaron Simon Gross**

Additional narration written by  
**Maya Angelou**

Additional music by  
**Jon Kaplan** and **Al Kaplan**  
**Alan Lindgren**

Camera  
**Henryk Tzvi Cymerman**  
**Mike O'Neal**  
**Sam Dlugach**  
**Steven Poster**  
**Raoul Prado**  
**Oscar Goldberger**  
**David Stein**  
**Steve Steinberg**  
**Craig McCourry**

Historical Consultants  
**Stephen Feinstein**  
**Michael Berenbaum**  
**Sybil Milton (in memoriam)**  
**Phillip Silver**

Researchers  
**Ben Lustbader**  
**Sarah Howard**

Consultant  
**Jack Jacobs**

Business Affairs  
**Aron Baumel**  
**William Morris Agency**

Support provided by  
**Sundance Channel**  
**The Gonda Family Foundation**  
**Los Angeles Holocaust**  
**Monument Memorial**

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**Commission** in cooperation  
with the **National Endowment for the**  
**Humanities.**

This project is sponsored by  
**International Documentary**  
**Association**

Additional support provided by individuals  
**Ivy Helstein**  
**Louis G. Gonda**  
**Jona Goldrich**  
**Max and Anna Webb**  
**Helen Mars**  
**Lisa and Alan Stern**  
**Andrew Stevens**

Offline Facilities  
**Post Logic Studios, Hollywood**  
**The Post Group**

Online Facility  
**Post Logic Studios, Hollywood**

Online Editor  
**Matthew Johnson**

Online Edit Assistants  
**Dan Clarke**  
**John Aiken**

Sound Editing and Mixing  
**Jamie Santos**  
**Al Judd**

Music Editor  
**Larry Brown (MPSE)**

Telecine  
**Chris Santa Cruz**

Titles  
**Bill Coffin**  
**Boyd Stepan**

"*Brundibar*"  
Produced by  
**Alexander Goldscheider**  
Courtesy of & Licensed by kind permission from  
**ROMANTIC ROBOT**

"*Brundibar*"  
Sung by  
**The Children of Terezin**  
Written by **Hans Krása**  
Words by **Adolf Hoffmeister**  
Produced by  
**The Nazi Ministry of Defense**  
From the film "*The Führer Gives a City*  
*to the Jews*"  
Courtesy of & Licensed by kind permission from  
**TRANSIT FILMS**

"*Vilna*"  
Sung by  
**Lorin Sklamberg**  
Written by  
**L. Wolfson and A. Olshansky**  
Courtesy of & Licensed by kind permission from  
**THE CONGRESS FOR JEWISH**  
**CULTURE**

"*Shtetl, Shtetl*"  
Performed by  
**Jon Kaplan and Al Kaplan**  
Written by  
**Smercke Kaczerginski**  
Courtesy of & Licensed by kind permission from  
**THE WORKMEN'S CIRCLE**

"*Itzach*"  
Written and performed by  
**Alan Lindgren**  
Courtesy of & licensed by  
**Audio Rangers Music**

"*Bulgarian Chants*"  
Arranged and performed by **ZAR**

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## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

“I hope and pray you will be as inspired by these extraordinary people as I have been, I am now and shall forever be.” —**Maya Angelou**

“So glad we went to see “*As Seen Through These Eyes*”. I went to Solomon Schechter before high school so I was immersed in the Holocaust history, but never saw it explained from this perspective... truly moving and chilling. My parents were crying — my dad was born in Germany in 1938. The art featured in the film was incredible. This is the kind of story where there aren't even words to express how worthwhile its telling is...” —**Rachel Heller, Editor, Sun Newspapers**

“Very moving, powerful and well made. Highly recommended.” —**Eyal Sher, Jerusalem Foundation, Inc.**

“Very powerful film and beautifully done. I have told anyone about it who will listen.” —**Ashley Nasser, The Edison Group Publicity Firm**

“What an amazing film! What an amazing contribution to the world!” —**Stacey Zackin, Director, ATID for Young Professionals**

“Thank you for telling my story... all our stories. The world must never forget. This film is a mitzvah for us.” —**Sigi Hart, Holocaust survivor**

“The film was great, thanks for showing it to us and reminding us... and me, as an artist, the true value of art and what it can do, which is; ameliorate the illness that can seep inside all mankind.” —**Debra Sugarman, Filmmaker**

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