

Last Folio

Photographs by Yuri Dojc. Film by Katya Krausova.

**Canadian première of a deeply moving memorial to
the Holocaust and lives interrupted.
Opens at the Art Gallery of Hamilton on October 22**



Yuri Dojc *Torah fragment, attic, Bardejov, 2006* Chromogenic Print. Courtesy of the artist.

The Art Gallery of Hamilton is very proud to present *Last Folio*, a multi-media exhibition of photography and film that revisits the history of the Holocaust in Slovakia. The exhibition opens October 22, 2016 and will remain on view until May 14, 2017.

Time had stood still since 1942 in Bardejov, Slovakia, until nearly 10 years ago when Canadian photographer Yuri Dojc returned to visit his family's former home. On the eve of World War II, many of the villagers had fled, and those remaining were taken away to concentration camps.

Serendipity led Dojc, along with a documentary film team to the local Jewish school, which had been locked since the day those attending were deported to concentration camps. All the schoolbooks were still there; including essay notebooks with corrections--even the sugar was still in the cupboard. The decaying books, which were lying on dusty shelves, the last witnesses of a once thriving culture, are treated by Dojc like the survivors they are--each one captured as a portrait, preserved in their final beauty, silent witnesses to the horrors of history.

Amongst the hundreds of books and fragments photographed one stands out especially--one which miraculously found its way from a dusty pile to its rightful heir--a book once owned by Dojc's grandfather, Jakab Deutsch. This book will be on display in the exhibition.

"*Last Folio* is a moving photographic journey of memory and loss," said Shelley Falconer, President and CEO of the Art Gallery of Hamilton. "The AGH is deeply honoured to be the first Canadian institution to exhibit together the complete series and film."

The multi-media exhibition includes more than 30 photographs of objects and interiors, abandoned synagogues, portraits of Holocaust survivors and a documentary film of Dojc's artistic journey by international film and television producer/director and writer, Katya Krausova, who collaborated closely with Dojc throughout the project. A 20-minute edited version of the film shot during his numerous trips to Slovakia is included in the exhibition. Together with the survivor portraits they create a greater context from which to view the photographs.

The documentary film, also entitled *Last Folio*, undertakes a personal journey into the past and present of Slovakia's Jewish community. Through interviews with Shoah survivors who remained in Slovakia, as well as the story of Yuri's parents who spent the war in hiding, the film looks at both the help Slovakian Jews received and the anti-Semitism they experienced. It is Dojc's stunningly beautiful photographs that let us experience the vibrant cultural history of Slovakian Jews through the now abandoned schools, synagogues and mikvahs (ceremonial baths) he lovingly captures with his camera.

"The images in *Last Folio* are a last memento of the culture and people who used those books," said Yuri Dojc. "Most of them are forgotten--they don't have relatives or graves. I tried to memorialize them. This is not a documentary but my personal salute to a vanished culture and a vanished people. These images absorb me totally. They represent more than what I saw that first day."

Throughout the run of the exhibition, the AGH will be presenting a broad range of educational and related programming for school children and adults, using *Last*

Folio as a means to deepen understanding of the Holocaust, genocide and the memorializing power of art.

Last Folio Opening Programming

Thursday, October 20, 7:00 p.m.

Screening of *Last Folio*, the documentary film. AGH BMO World Film Festival. Yuri Dojc and Katya Krausova in attendance.

Art Gallery of Hamilton, 123 King Street West, Hamilton, ON www.aghfilmfest.com

Sunday, October 23, 3:00 p.m.

Official Opening of *Last Folio* exhibition. Yuri Dojc and Katya Krausova in attendance.

Art Gallery of Hamilton, 123 King Street West, Hamilton, ON

Free admission. www.artgalleryofhamilton.com

Thursday, October 27, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Artist Talk and Tour with Yuri Dojc

Art Gallery of Hamilton, 123 King Street West, Hamilton, ON

Free admission. www.artgalleryofhamilton.com

For more information about *Last Folio* special programming visit

www.artgalleryofhamilton.com

About the Art Gallery of Hamilton

Founded in 1914, the Art Gallery of Hamilton is the oldest and largest public art gallery in southwestern Ontario. Its permanent collection, which is focused on historical Canadian, 19th-century European and Contemporary art, now numbers more than 10,000 works and is recognized as one of the finest in Canada. The AGH is a vital creative hub and centre of lifelong learning that enables people of all ages to enrich their lives by gaining a deeper understanding of art. Visit www.artgalleryofhamilton.com for more information.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Admission:

AGH Members: Free; Adults, \$10; Students/Seniors, \$8; Children (6-17), \$4; under 5 years, Free. Friday Free Night: Free admission on the first Friday of the month.

Gallery Hours:

Tuesday & Wednesday, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.; Thursday, 11 a.m.–8 p.m.; Friday, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.; Saturday–Sunday, 12 noon–5 p.m.

The AGH will be closed on December 25, December 26, 2016 and January 1, 2017.

The Art Gallery of Hamilton is located at 123 King Street West, downtown Hamilton, Ontario, L8P 4S8. [T] 905.527.6610 [E] info@artgalleryofhamilton.com

GROUP TOURS

To arrange for a Group Tour, please contact: Laurie Kilgour-Walsh, Educator
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