



PHILADELPHIA HOLOCAUST
REMEMBRANCE FOUNDATION

May 7, 2025

Dear Members of the Art Commission,

We look forward to presenting at your May 14th meeting where we will seek your final approval for our proposed mural at 1631-37 Arch Street, a wall that provides a backdrop for the Horwitz-Wasserman Holocaust Memorial Plaza.

On February 12, 2025 we had the privilege of presenting the concept design for the project. Ella proceeded to use the information collected through our community engagement meetings to create her final design which you are presenting here. The final design has received overwhelming support and approvals from our organizations, our steering committee, as well as Parks and Recreation.

We also completed the full review by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and received approval last month.

Please see the attached proposal for a more detailed explanation of Ella's process along with final images of her mural design. We look forward to the presentation and answering any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With Kind Regards,

Eszter Kutas

Executive Director

Philadelphia Holocaust Remembrance Foundation

215.809.2474

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May 14, 2025

*A MURAL AT THE
HORWITZ-WASSERMAN
HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL PLAZA*

Ella Ponizovsky Bergelson

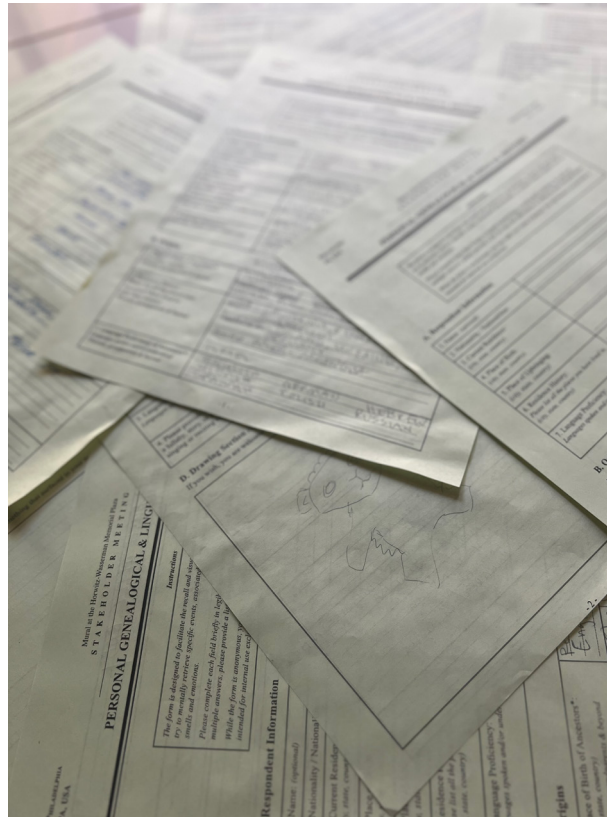


COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEMORY FORMS

A vital component of the project is community engagement, which informs the selection of texts and languages featured in the mural. Through collaborative efforts, the mural becomes a collective canvas that reflects Philadelphia's diverse voices, embodying the city's rich cultural and linguistic heritage. This process not only democratizes the creation of the mural but also ensures that it resonates deeply with both the local community and visitors.

In the Memory Form, participants were asked to share a title or a line from a lullaby, story, or poem that was significant in their childhood. I am incorporating these contributions into the illustration, selecting samples that resonate with the theme. By utilising lullabies, stories, and poems, I aim to highlight the disruption of intergenerational bonds caused by geopolitical shifts and displacement, as these forms serve as vessels of family heritage and folk narratives—building blocks in the architecture of cultural memory.

From 98 submitted forms, nearly 70 contributions were selected for the mural, reflecting voices in 28 languages.



LANGUAGES

29 Languages, based on the memory forms:

English
Yiddish
Hebrew
German
Polish
Russian
Spanish
French
Italian
Hungarian
Arabic
Czech
Ladino
Ukrainian
Portuguese
Turkish
Javanese (Bahasa Jawa)
Hakka Chinese
Bahasa Indonesia
Gaelic (Native Irish)
Sanskrit
Korean
Farsi
Greek
Uzbeki
Latin
Arameic
Amharic
Romanian

TEXTUAL CONTENT
POLYPHONY & LINGUAL AUTONOMY

TEXT EXAMPLES

Drawn from nearly 70 contributions included in the final design:



HANNAH SZENES

Hannah Szenes was a Jewish-Hungarian poet and paratrooper who immigrated to British Mandate Palestine in 1939. In 1943, she volunteered for a British military mission to parachute into Nazi-occupied Europe to help rescue Jews. She was captured in 1944 in Hungary, tortured, and executed at the age of 23.

Before her mission, in 1942, she wrote "Walk to Caesarea".

It is one of the most famous Hebrew songs, often associated with remembrance and mourning, particularly in connection with the Holocaust.

Walk to Caesarea 1942

*My God, my God,
may it never end
The sand and the sea,
The murmur of the water,
The lightning in the sky,
The prayer of man.*

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת חֶבְרֹאֲךָ כְּאַהֲבַתְּךָ לְעַצְמְךָ

And you shall love the other as yourself.

LEVITICUS 19

A commandment from the Torah, emphasizing the importance of loving others as one loves oneself. It is a central principle in Judaism, famously highlighted by Rabbi Akiva as a great rule in the Torah.

In a broader context, this commandment underlines ethical and mutual conduct in interpersonal relationships and society.

SHEMA YISRAEL

The prayer originates from the Torah and has been recited as a central declaration of Jewish faith for thousands of years. Its first appearance is in Deuteronomy 6:4, which was given to the Israelites by Moses as part of his final speeches before their entry into the Land of Israel.

Historically, the recitation of the Shema as a formal daily prayer likely began during the Second Temple period (circa 515 BCE–70 CE). The Mishnah (Berakhot 2:2) records that it was already an established practice to recite the Shema twice daily, in the morning (Shacharit) and at night (Ma'ariv), following the Torah's command:

"When you lie down and when you rise up."
(Deuteronomy 6:7)

By Talmudic times (circa 200–500 CE), the Shema had been solidified as part of Jewish liturgy.

The prayer also became a key element of Jewish martyrdom—historical accounts describe Jewish people reciting the Shema in times of persecution, affirming their faith even at the moment of death.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה
יְהוָה יְחִיד
יְהוָה אֶחָד
יְהוָה אֶחָד
יְהוָה אֶחָד
יְהוָה אֶחָד
יְהוָה אֶחָד
יְהוָה אֶחָד
יְהוָה אֶחָד
יְהוָה אֶחָד

*Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is One.
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with
all your soul, and with all your might.
And these words that I command you today
shall be upon your heart.
You shall teach them diligently to your children,
and speak of them when you sit in your house,
when you walk on the way, when you lie down,
and when you rise up.
You shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they
shall be for frontlets between your eyes.
And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house
and upon your gates.*

KADDISH

A central prayer in Jewish liturgy. It originates from ancient Jewish texts and is recited in various contexts, including at funerals and during mourning rituals, to invoke peace. The prayer emphasizes a universal hope for peace, reflecting Jewish values of harmony and community. The Kaddish is recited at funerals and during mourning periods. It's not actually about death, but rather a prayer that praises God and expresses hope. By reciting it, mourners honor the deceased and reaffirm their faith, even in grief.

*He who makes peace in His skies,
May He bring peace upon us*



Der Golem erhob sich,
eine riesige Gestalt,
stumm und gehorsam.

The Golem rose, a towering figure, silent and obedient.

THE GOLEM OF PRAGUE

The Golem legend originates from Jewish folklore, particularly in 16th-century Prague. According to tradition, Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel (the Maharal of Prague) created a man-like creature from clay to protect the Jewish community from antisemitic attacks and blood libel accusations. The Golem was brought to

life using mystical Kabbalistic rituals and Hebrew letters, typically the word "emet" (truth) written on its forehead. Eventually, the Golem became uncontrollable, and the Rabbi deactivated it by erasing a letter to change "emet" to "met" (dead).

MODA ANI

A Jewish morning prayer recited immediately upon waking, thanking God for restoring the soul after sleep, which is considered a small form of death in Jewish thought. It is a relatively late addition to Jewish liturgy, first mentioned in the 16th century. Rooted in the belief that sleep is a temporary return of the soul to God, the prayer acknowledges divine mercy and the gift of a new day.

Emerging from the mystical circles of Safed, "Moda Ani" reflects Kabbalistic ideas about the soul's nightly journey and divine judgment. The final phrase, "Rabbah emunatekha" ("Great is Your faithfulness"), is taken from Lamentations 3:23 and highlights God's trust in humanity. Today, it remains a universal and simple expression of gratitude, often one of the first prayers taught to children.

*I give thanks before You,
Living and Eternal King,
for You have mercifully restored my soul within me.
Great is Your faithfulness.*



CHAD GADYA, LADINO & RASHI SCRIPT

Chad Gadya, a traditional Passover song, tells a layered narrative of vengeance, beginning with a kid bought by a father, and escalating through a chain of events involving various characters and creatures. Each character enacts revenge on the previous one, culminating in divine intervention. This theme of retribution reflects a deeper moral and philosophical contemplation found in Jewish tradition and ancient literature, emphasizing the cyclical nature of violence and the ultimate pursuit of justice and redemption.

Ladino is a Judeo-Spanish language traditionally spoken by Sephardic Jews, especially those descended from Jews expelled from Spain in 1492. It preserves many elements of medieval Spanish, enriched with Hebrew, Turkish, Greek, and other regional influences. Traditionally, Ladino has been written using Rashi script, a semi-cursive Hebrew typeface historically used for printing rabbinic commentaries, especially those by Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (Rashi). This connection reflects the blending of Spanish linguistic heritage with Hebrew textual traditions in Sephardic culture.



DONNA DONNA

Aaron Zeitlin, 1940

Yiddish

ווער נישט א קינד, קינד מיין.
זיי א פארגעסן! צוויי!
ניט צו געבן זיין יאס שווע.
ניט צו געבן זיין יאס צוויי!

אין א געזאגטע.
אין א געזאגטע.
אין א געזאגטע.
אין א געזאגטע.
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אין א געזאגטע.

TUMBALALAIKA

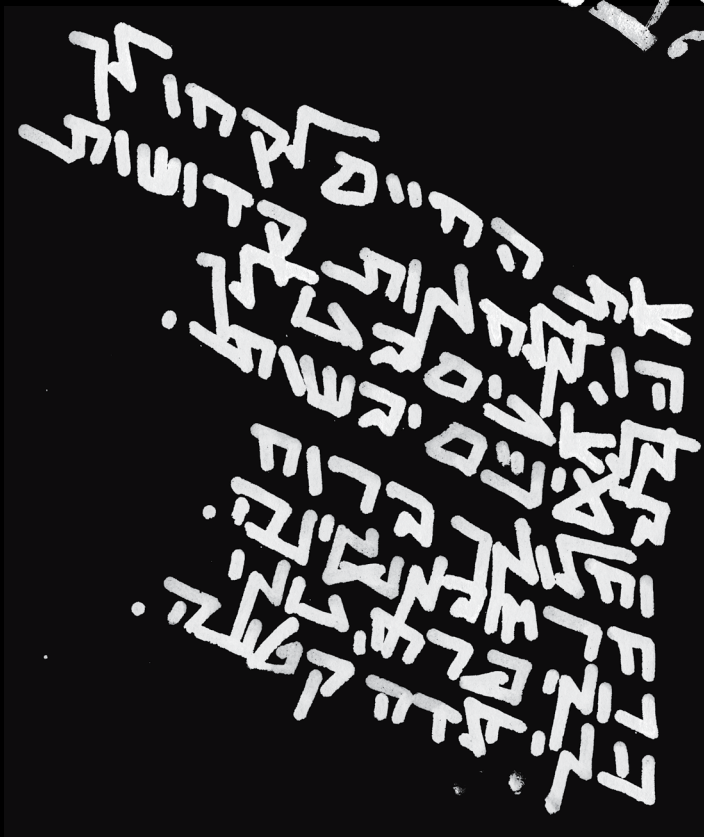
Yiddish

SONG OF THE HYACINTH

Lea Goldberg, 1940

Hebrew

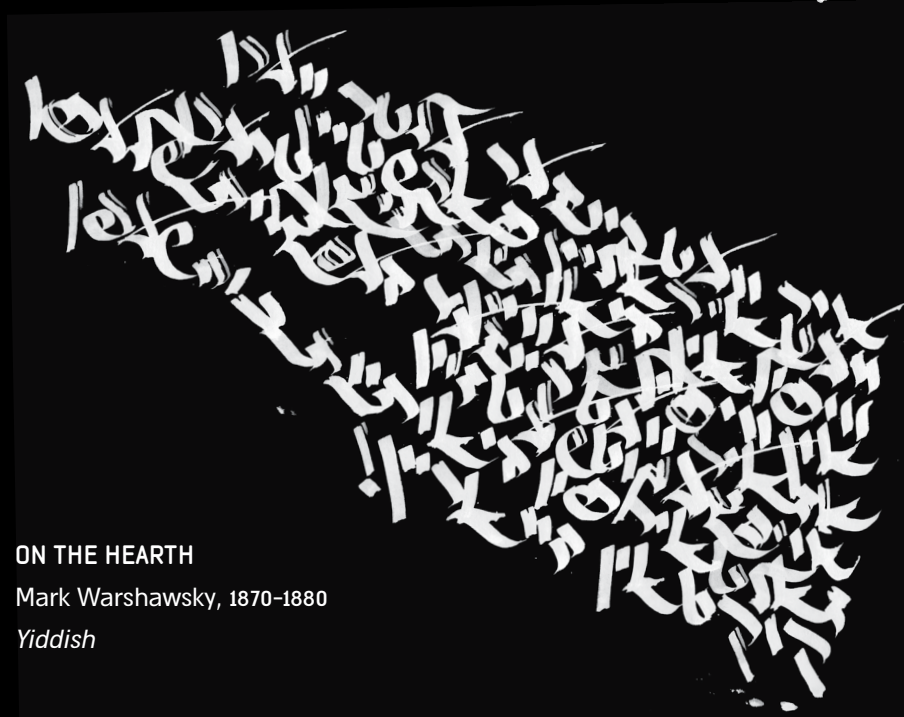
זיכרה זיכרה חסרת נצחיה הזכרה



FLOWER

Tzruya Lahav, 1985

Hebrew



ON THE HEARTH

Mark Warshawsky, 1870-1880

Yiddish

OVER THE RAINBOW
Yip Harburg, 1939
Japanese

OVER THE RAINBOW
YIP HARBURG
1939
JAPANESE

ZECHARIAH 4:6
Babylonian

OVER THE RAINBOW
YIP HARBURG
1939
JAPANESE

OVER THE RAINBOW
Yip Harburg, 1939
Japanese

OVER THE RAINBOW
YIP HARBURG
1939
JAPANESE

ROCK-A-BYE BABY
1956
N'Ko

BLUE MOON
YOU SAW ME STANDING ALONE
WITHOUT A DREAM IN MY HEART
WITHOUT A LOVE OF MY OWN
YOU KNEW JUST WHAT I WAS THERE FOR
YOU HEARD ME SAYING A PRAYER

BLUE MOON
Lorenz Hart, 1934
English

OVER THE RAINBOW
YIP HARBURG
1939
JAPANESE

THE MAGIC PENNY

Malvina Reynolds, 1950

English

Money's dandy and we like to use it
But love is better if you don't refuse it
It's a treasure and you'll never lose it
Unless you lock up your door

Закрывай глазки, баю-бай

TIRED TOYS ARE SLEEPING

Zoya Petrova, 1964

Russian

KADDISH

Aramaic

דאס איז אַ פּאַנצער פֿאַר אונז

قلبي في الشرق

MY HEART IS IN THE EAST

Yehuda Halevi, 1130s

Arabic

MI GAVE MY LOVE

Korean

나는 내 사랑을 주었어요

ከቶደንግጥ፣በርታ!

BE STRONG

Amharic

请不要带走我的阳光

YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE

Chinese

GOODNIGHT MOON

Margaret Wise Brown, 1947

Russian

СУДКОМНОМ НОЧН ЗВЪЗДАМ
 СУРОВОМНОМ НОЧН ВЪЗДУХ
 СУРОВОМНОМ НОЧН СУМ ПОВСЮДА

Yarın ola hayrola

TOMORROW WILL TAKE CARE OF ITSELF

Turkish

TECHNIQUE: LAYERING & DISPLACEMENT

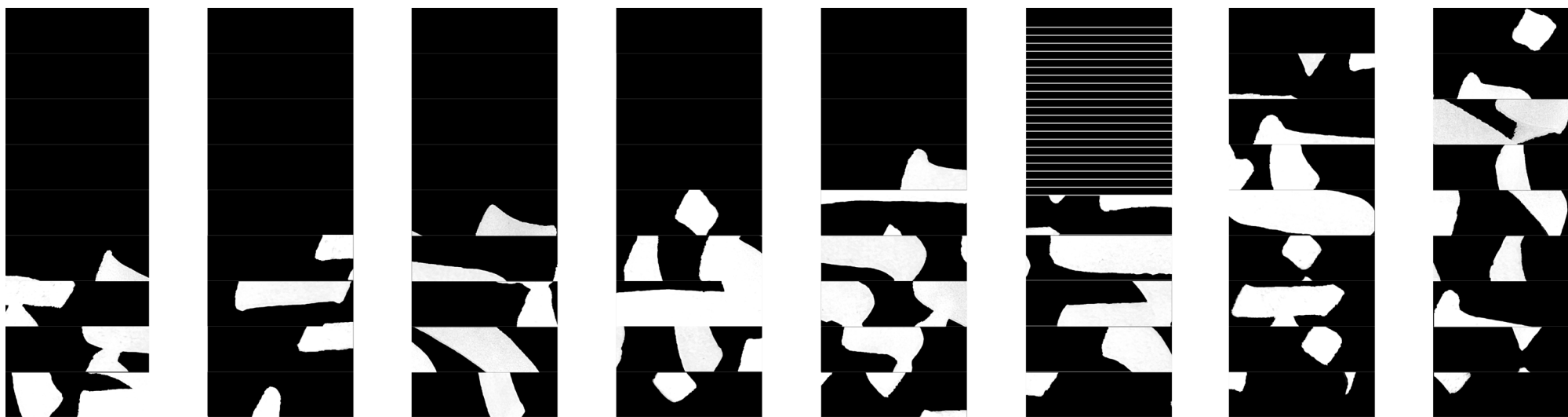
The creation process itself mirrors the thematic essence of displacement and diversity. Employing a method of layering and displacing (writing, shifting and overwriting again), the mural juxtaposes various eras, languages, and perspectives, with texts superimposed upon one another to form a complex visual narrative. This act generates multiple distinct puzzles that cannot be pieced together, as each segment embodies the essence of every position it has previously occupied. Each piece stands independently as a testament for a rich multilayered existence.

This method not only symbolises the fragmentation and reconstruction of displaced identities and their continual reshaping. It also challenges fixed thinking patterns by overlaying new narratives atop the preexisting ones, reflecting on the mutable nature of memory. It is commenting on the phenomena of cultural erasure manifested in uprooting and assimilation as on the manipulation of historical narratives by authoritarian leaders, with the Nazis serving as a prime example.

Recalling the random aspect akin to the cut-up method into the strategy, the mural leverages this chance-based literary technique, where fragmented texts

are reassembled into new narratives. This approach, rooted in the practices of the Dadaists harnesses unpredictability to reveal deeper subconscious meanings.

According to the principles of Japanese calligraphy and watercolour drawing philosophy, each colour layer must possess its own independent perfect composition. Only then, when combined they form the final, complete artwork. This guiding principle is fundamental to my approach.



A single layer



Mural illustration























CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102
Tel: 215.686.7660

Zachary Frankel
Chair

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director

21 March 2025

Lindsey Rosenberg
Mural Arts Philadelphia
1727-29 Mount Vernon Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Re: 1631-37 ARCH ST; Install mural

Dear Ms. Rosenberg:

On 14 March 2025, the Philadelphia Historical Commission reviewed your application for 1631-37 ARCH ST and its Architectural Committee's report and recommendation of 25 February 2025. At that time, the Historical Commission voted to approve the application, pursuant to Standards 2 and 10 and Section 6.15.a. of the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations.

To complete the processing of your application, please submit an application reflecting the proposal approved by the Historical Commission to the Department of Licenses & Inspections using eCLIPSE, the Department's electronic commercial licensing, inspection, and permit service enterprise, which can be found online at this link:

<https://eclipse.phila.gov/phillylmsprod/pub/lms/Login.aspx>

If the Historical Commission's approval authorizes its staff to review details, you may provide those details through eCLIPSE or transmit them directly to the Historical Commission's staff using instructions, which can be found online at this link:

<https://www.phila.gov/media/20240731132849/PHC-Business-Instructions-7-31-2024.pdf>

You have the right to appeal the Historical Commission's decision, pursuant to Section 14-1008 of the Philadelphia Code, which reads:

Appeals. Any person aggrieved by the issuance or denial of any permit reviewed by the Commission may appeal such action to the Board of License and Inspection Review.

Such appeal must be filed within 30 days of the date of receipt of notification of the Commission's action. The Board of License and Inspection Review shall give written notice of any such appeal to the Commission within three days of the filing of the appeal.

Information about the Board of License and Inspection Review is available online at this link:

<https://www.phila.gov/departments/board-of-license-and-inspection-review/>

If you have any questions regarding the review or appeal processes, please do not hesitate to contact the staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission at preservation@phila.gov.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Farnham'.

Jonathan E. Farnham, Ph.D.
Executive Director



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
PARKS & RECREATION

ONE PARKWAY
1515 Arch Street, 10th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1587
Telephone: 215-683-
Facsimile: 215-683-

May 6, 2025

Alex M. Smith, Director
Commissioners
Philadelphia Art Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Horwitz-Wasserman Holocaust Memorial Plaza Mural

Dear Alex and Commissioners:

I am writing to express the Department of Parks and Recreation's support for the mural project for the Horwitz-Wasserman Memorial Plaza. Through presentations by the Philadelphia Holocaust Remembrance Foundation and Mural Arts Philadelphia, our senior staff was able to review both the preliminary and final design of the mural. We believe the proposed mural is an exciting addition to the Memorial Plaza and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. We also appreciate the partner organizations' and artist's efforts in engaging the community.

We hope for your approval and look forward to the mural's installation later this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Allen".

Robert Allen
Director of Property & Concessions Management
Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

CC: Eszter Kutas, Executive Director, Philadelphia Holocaust Remembrance Foundation
Leigh Ann Campbell, Deputy Commissioner, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation



PHILADELPHIA HOLOCAUST
REMEMBRANCE FOUNDATION

April 29, 2025

To: Philadelphia Art Commission

The Philadelphia Holocaust Remembrance Foundation (PHRF) together with Mural Arts Philadelphia is excited to seek the Philadelphia Art Commission's final review and approval of artist Ella Ponizovsky Bergelson's mural design for the Horwitz-Wasserman Holocaust Memorial Plaza. Over the last few months, Ella has been working on her final design based on a community engagement process that took place over this past winter.

Ella is prepared to present her final design to the Art Commission on May 14, 2025. While she will be presenting virtually from Berlin, representatives from PHRF and Mural Arts Philadelphia will be in person to present and answer any additional questions.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to sharing the final design with you and the Commissioners.

With Kind Regards,

Eszter Kutas
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PHILADELPHIA HOLOCAUST
REMEMBRANCE FOUNDATION

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