

BOOK PROSPECTUS

THIS WAY, Marco Sonzogni, Ph.D., editor

Introduction

Visual representations of war are undeniably controversial and pose ethical challenges to artists, especially those who attempt to depict, without sentimentality or melodrama, wartime atrocities on the magnitude of those committed by the Nazis during the occupation of Poland in WWII and the subsequent annihilation of millions of civilians, Poles and non-Poles, Jews and non-Jews, who perished in the gas chambers and slave labor camps at Auschwitz and Dachau (to name but two of the most well known). Creative freedom, historic authenticity, accurate memory, moral probity; these are just some of issues that the artist must address in this context. Films have perhaps been subject to the most intense scrutiny, notably those made at Auschwitz; Wanda Jakubowska's *Ostatni Etap* (1948), Andrzej Munk's unfinished *Pasazerka* (1963) and Andrzej Wajda's *Landscape after Battle* (1970), but also, notoriously, Gillio Pontecorvo's *Kapo* (1959), which engendered two landmarks in film criticism; Jacques Rivette's "On Abjection" (1961) and Serge Daney's "The Tracking Shot in Kapo" (1992). On the other hand, when the creative work is a contemporary cover for a collection of stories written by a survivor of Auschwitz and Dachau shortly after liberation and based upon those experiences, the challenges here may prove technically less complex, but the artist's obligation is no less important. The specific book in question is *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* and its author is the Polish poet Tadeusz Borowski (1922-1951).

Project

This Way is a scholarly work that uses Borowski's stories to explore the relationship between verbal and visual representations of war and genocide through critical analyses of book covers selected from an international competition for a new cover of *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*. *This Way* includes an extensive critical apparatus: foreword, introduction, academic essays, commentaries on the book covers, afterword, and notes. Authors and advisors include noted authorities on the Holocaust, Holocaust literature and Holocaust representation.

Authors

Foreword: Berel Lang, Ph.D., *Visiting Professor*, Wesleyan University
Introduction/Commentaries: Marco Sonzogni, Ph.D., *Senior Lecturer*, Victoria University
John Bertram, *Coordinator*, Venus febriculosa
Critical Essay: Alicia Nitecki, Ph.D., *Professor Emeritus*, Bentley University
Critical Essay: Simone Gigliotti, Ph.D., *Senior Lecturer*, Victoria University
Critical Essay: Dov Bing, Ph.D., *Professor*, University of Waikato

Advisors

John Guzowski, Ph.D., *Professor Emeritus*, Eastern Illinois University
J. Marek Haltof, Ph.D., *Professor*, Northern Michigan University
Jae Jennifer Rossman, M.L.S., *Assistant Director for Special Collections*, Robert B. Haas
Family Arts Library, Yale University
Barbara Girs

Competition Sponsor

Venus febriculosa, *Coordinator*
Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Los Angeles, *Patron*

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Occasions

70th anniversary of the opening of the concentration camp at Auschwitz
Poland's Presidency of the EU

Participating Institutions

Victoria University of Wellington
School of Languages and Culture
School of History, Philosophy; Political Science and International Relations
Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Research
Victoria University Press
Embassy of Poland in New Zealand
Polish Association in New Zealand
New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO
Wellington Holocaust Research and Education Centre
Moriah School, Wellington

Library of Congress Headings

Auschwitz (Concentration Camp); WWII; Poland--History 1939-1945; Holocaust Memoirs;
Borowski, Tadeusz, 1922-1951; Illustration of books--21st century

Projected Publication Date

27 January 2011, International Holocaust Remembrance Day
On 27 January 1945, the advancing Soviet army entered the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp complex, liberating more than 7000 remaining prisoners, for the most part ill or dying. Days earlier, the SS had forced nearly 60,000 prisoners to evacuate the camp and embark on the infamous 'Death Marches' in which many thousands lost their lives. In 2005, the UN General Assembly designated 27 January as the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, the day upon which, every year, the world would mark and remember the Holocaust and its victims.

Sponsorship Opportunities

The project is currently seeking: \$5000 in completion funds to offset the cost of four-color printing by Victoria University Press; and an additional \$1000 to be awarded to the winner of the related book cover competition.

Promotion

The book will be promoted by a number of cultural and educational institutions in New Zealand, the United States and Europe.

Subject Biographical Information

Tadeusz Borowski (1922 -1951) Polish writer and poet best known for his brilliant and unsettling short story collection *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* (originally published in Poland in 1959 as *Wybor Opowiadania*) based on Borowski's experiences from 1943-1945 as a prisoner in Auschwitz and Dachau and later in a camp for displaced persons (Andrzej Wajda's fantastic 1970 film *Landscape After Battle*, filmed at Auschwitz, is based on Borowski's story *The Battle of Grunwald*). When first published, Borowski's unflinching and almost clinical accounts resulted in accusations of decadence and nihilism, but now his unadorned prose appears truly courageous in its clarity and honesty.

Author/Advisor Qualifications

Berel Lang, Ph.D., Visiting Professor, Wesleyan University
Professor Lang is a noted authority on representing the Holocaust. Author of Holocaust Representation: Art within the Limits of History and Ethics (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Act and Idea in the Nazi Genocide (University of Chicago Press, 1990); and Philosophical Witnessing: The Holocaust as Presence (University Press of New England, 2009).

Alicia Nitecki, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of English, Bentley University
Nitecki was two years old in 1944 when she and her family were arrested and deported to a labor camp in Lauterbach. She has spent the latter part of her professional life immersed in the literature of the Holocaust.
Author of *Recovered Land* (UMass Press, 1995). Translator of *We Were in Auschwitz*, Siedlecki, et al. (Welcome Rain, 2000); *Postal Indiscretions: The Correspondence of Tadeusz Borowski* (Northwestern University Press, 2005); *The Old Guard*, Mieczyslaw Lurczynski (SUNY Press, 2010); *Letters from Under the Mulberry Tree*, Gustaw Morcinek (unpublished); *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories: True Tales from the Holocaust and Life After*, Henryk Grynberg (Penguin, 2002)

Marco Sonzogni, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer in Italian, School of Languages and Cultures, Victoria University of Wellington. Widely published academic and an award-winning editor, poet and literary translator currently working in a new experimental area of research: the study of the book cover as a form of inter-semiotic translation.

J. Marek Haltof, Ph.D., Professor of English, Northern Michigan University
He has written extensively about the representation of the Holocaust in Polish cinema, particularly the works of Andrzej Wajda, Wanda Jakubowska, and Andrzej Munk.
Author of *Polish National Cinema* (Berghahn, 2002); *The New Polish Cinema* (co-editor), (Flicks Books, 2002); *The Cinema of Krzysztof Kieslowski: Variations on Destiny and Chance* (Wallflower Press, 2004).

Simone Gigliotti, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer, School of History, Philosophy; Political Science and International Relations, Victoria University
Author of *The Train Journey: Transit, Captivity, and Witnessing in the Holocaust* (Berghahn, 2009); *The Holocaust: a Reader* (co-editor), (Blackwell Publishing, 2005)

Dov Bing, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Waikato.
Author of numerous journal articles and papers on the Holocaust and Holocaust Denial, among them *The Nazi Persecution of the Jewish Community of Holland: Collaboration and Heroism* (1998) and *The Techniques of Holocaust Denial* (2000).

John Guzowski, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Contemporary American Literature, Eastern Illinois University. Born in a Displaced Persons camp in 1948 to parents who met in a slave labor camp, he has spent his life using his stark and powerful verse to peer through his parents' eyes, wringing poignant beauty from their terrors. Author of *Lighting and Ashes* (Steel Toe Books, 2007) and *Third Winter of War: Buchenwald* (Finishing Line Press, 2007).

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Jae Jennifer Rossman, M.L.S., Assistant Director for Special Collections, Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library, Yale University. Curator of the 2002 Yale University Exhibit on Polish designer and publisher Anatol Girs, who published *We Were in Auschwitz* by Janusz Nel Siedlecki, Krystyn Olszewski and Tadeusz Borowski.

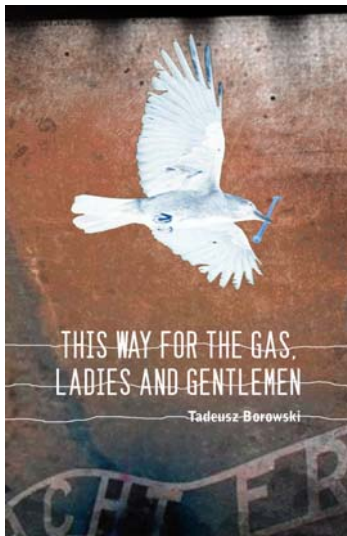
Barbara Girs Daughter of Anatol Girs who was, like Borowski, a survivor of Auschwitz and Dachau; the designer and publisher of *We Were in Auschwitz* (for which Borowski wrote four stories that later appeared in *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*); and friend of and mentor to Borowski.

Contact Information

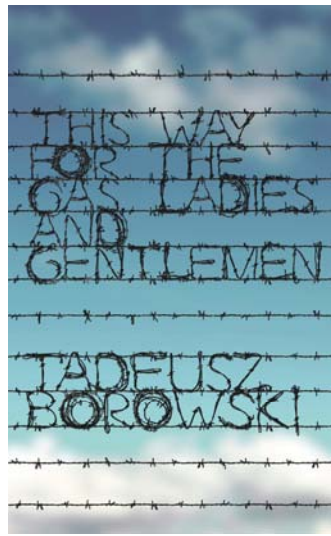
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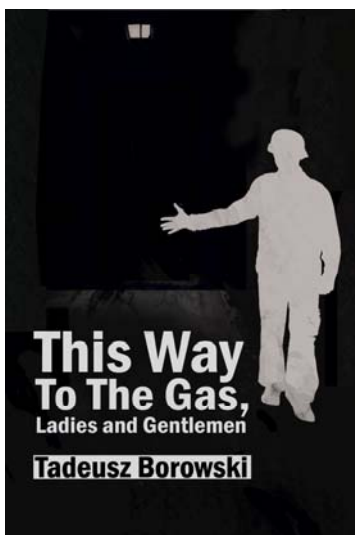
Sample Book Covers



Suzene Ang (Singapore)



Anna Zyško (Poland)



Andrew Wielens
(Ireland)



Gary Gowans (Scotland)