

Artivism



Press Release

More than seventy years after the Holocaust, genocide and mass atrocities remain a constant threat to global peace and security. The violence we see today in, for example, Syria, Sudan, Yemen, and Burma serves as a daily reminder of the devastating consequences of the international community's failure to act. Recognizing the warning signs of mass atrocities is an essential step in preventing them and the key to taking action. With this in mind, the Auschwitz Institute for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities (AIPG) presents *Artivism*. Co-curated by Luca Berta, Francesca Giubilei, and Kerry Whigham, *Artivism* is the first exhibition of its kind, located at the intersection of art, human rights, and the prevention of genocide.

Artivism is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that illustrates how the arts are used as a mechanism for preventing and responding to mass violence. The exhibition introduces visitors to the personal, emotional, and historical realities of mass atrocities, inviting attendees to learn about the essential role played by the arts as a grassroots tool for social transformation and a deterrent to systematic violence. It showcases the works of six artists and activist collectives from across the globe: Rebin Chalak from Iraqi Kurdistan, Canada's National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, Elisabeth Ida Mulyani from Indonesia, the South African Intuthuko Embroidery Project, the Argentinian Grupo de Arte Callejero (GAC), and Aida Šehović from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Beyond demonstrating the fundamental role that arts play in preventing large-scale violence, *Artivism* informs visitors about the power and the responsibility that individuals and their communities have to prevent mass atrocities and protect human rights. The exhibition educates, empowers, and transforms attendees into genuine agents for change by highlighting their capacity to contribute to the prevention of mass atrocities. In the exhibition's final section, AIPG has collaborated with the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta, Georgia to present visitors with the 60/60/60 Challenge – a series of concrete steps that each individual can take at both the local and global levels to build a world that prevents genocide.

***Artivism* opens to the public at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights – a national museum of Canada located in Winnipeg, Manitoba – on April 30, 2021 and continues through January 16, 2022.** For further information, please contact info@auschwitzinstitute.org.

Participating Artists

In 2014, the terrorist group ISIL began perpetrating a genocide against the Yazidis, a small ethnic-religious group in Northern Iraq. Yazidis were forced to convert to Islam or be killed, with many female members of the community captured and forced to marry members of the terrorist group. In response to this, **Rebin Chalak** has created a series of masks of Yazidi women survivors. These masks, which will be on display, are used by Chalak to tell their stories and raise awareness around the world of the violence faced by the Yazidi community.

Beginning in 2008, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission collected evidence and testimony from survivors of the national Indian Residential School system, which took indigenous children from their families for over 100 years and forced them to renounce their native cultures, languages, clothing, and relationships. *Artivism* features art created by indigenous artists, which have been loaned to the exhibition by **the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation** in Winnipeg, Canada.

In 1965 in Indonesia, as many as 1.5 million people were killed because of their purported ties to communism. Born in Indonesia and based in Belgium, **Elisabeth Ida Mulyani's** work responds to the enduring realities of this

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violence. *Artivism* will feature two of her works: *Oleh-oleh* (“Souvenir”), a sculptural and sound installation that commemorates the activists kidnapped in the 1990s for speaking out against the dictatorial regime, and *Supervivere*, a photography series that documents the lives of Indonesian exiles who were made stateless when their citizenships were revoked by the Indonesian government in 1965.

Established in 2002, the **Intuthuko Embroidery Project** is a community empowerment initiative established by a group of South African women located in the township of Daveyton, in the province of Gauteng. These women use embroidery as a means of building community, raising money, and telling their own stories of life during and after Apartheid. *Artivism* features embroidery created by the collective.

As many as 30,000 Argentinians were “disappeared” due to their leftist political leanings during the military dictatorship of 1976-1983. Shortly after democracy returned in 1983, a number of laws and public policies granted impunity to the military officers in charge. In response to this, a group of artists known as the **Grupo de Arte Callejero** (“Street Art Group” or GAC) began to create street signs throughout the city of Buenos Aires to mark the homes of the unpunished perpetrators and to raise the visibility of the 30,000 citizens who had been kidnapped, tortured, and killed. *Artivism* features several of these street signs, alongside other media related to their *artist* practices.

Aida Šehović and her nomadic monument *ŠTO TE NEMA* (“Why are you not here?”) commemorates the more than 8,372 Bosnian Muslims who died during the Srebrenica Genocide in July 1995. To accomplish this, between 2006 and 2020 she collected *filđžani* — porcelain cups traditionally used for coffee in Bosnia and Herzegovina — with the goal of having one cup for each victim. Each year on the anniversary of the genocide, Šehović built the monument in the public square of a new city around the world, where passersby were invited to fill the cups with coffee and leave them in the square, undrunk, in memory of the victims. *ŠTO TE NEMA* will be on display at *Artivism*, alongside audiovisual documentation of past editions of the traveling monument.

About the Organizer

The **Auschwitz Institute for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities** is the largest nongovernmental organization in the world for the training of public officials in genocide and mass atrocity prevention. Since 2007, the Auschwitz Institute has educated and provided ongoing support to over 6,000 officials from more than 90 countries. AIPG provides governments with the necessary tools to analyze risks for genocide and other mass atrocities and to design and implement effective policies that mitigate these risks and prevent them from escalating. To accomplish this, the Auschwitz Institute maintains regional offices in Bucharest, Romania; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Kampala, Uganda; New York City, USA; and Oświęcim, Poland.

About the Host

The **Canadian Museum for Human Rights** (CMHR) is the world’s first museum solely dedicated to the evolution, celebration, and future of human rights. One of Canada’s six national museums, the CMHR rises from the Prairie earth in Winnipeg, Manitoba at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, an important meeting place for First Nations and Métis peoples for more than 6,000 years. The Museum explores the subject of human rights with special but not exclusive reference to Canada in order to enhance the public’s understanding of human rights, to promote respect for others and to encourage reflection and dialogue.

The CMHR edition of *Artivism* is generously supported by the Burns Family Foundation and Canada Life.

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Location:

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85 Israel Asper Way Winnipeg, MB
R3C 0L5

Duration:

April 30, 2021 - January 16, 2022

Opening Hours:

10:00 – 17:00, closed Sunday
and Monday

Ticketing Information:

[CMHR website](#)

Curators:

Kerry Whigham, Ph.D.
Francesca Giubilei
and Luca Berta, Ph.D

Organizer:

Auschwitz Institute for the Prevention
of Genocide and Mass Atrocities

Original Graphic Design:

AUT | Design Collective
[www.autdesigncollective.net](#)

Artists:

Rebin Chalak
(Iraqi Kurdistan),
Grupo de Arte Callejero
(Argentina),
Intuthuko Embroidery Project
(South Africa),
Elisabeth Ida Mulyani
(Indonesia),
Aida Šehović
(Bosnia and Herzegovina),
National Centre for Truth
and Reconciliation
(Canada)

With the Support of:

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Canada Life

Technical Partner:

RAVA Films

For More Information:

Artivism Virtual Exhibition
[www.artivismexhibition.com](#)

Canadian Museum for Human Rights
[www.humanrights.ca/exhibition/
artivism](#)

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