



WASEDA University Press Release

For Immediate Release

March 16, 2015

Remembering Auschwitz 70 years after liberation Exhibition of Mieczysław Kościelniak Paintings and Symposium

Waseda University is pleased to announce two events commemorating liberation of the Auschwitz Birkenau. German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945) seventy years ago.

On the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, people around the world are looking back at the catastrophe of war and repeating the vow of "never again". On January 27, 2015 three hundred survivors joined world leaders at the camp to commemorate the anniversary of liberation. With the passage of time, the survivors have grown quite elderly, giving urgency to the duty of passing the lessons of that tragedy on to the next generation.

To that end, the Waseda University Cultural Affairs Division, co-organized with the Polish Cultural and Information Center in Tokyo and the Embassy of the Republic of Poland with cooperation of Ms. Michiko Nomura, will host an exhibition of paintings by Mieczysław Kościelniak and a symposium on the lessons of this history.

Exhibition: Paintings from Auschwitz by Mieczysław Kościelniak

Date/time: March 24 to April 23, 10:00-18:00 (Closed Sundays)

Place: Waseda University Okuma Memorial Tower (Nishi-waseda 1-6-1, Shinjuku)

Admission: Free

An Opening Event will be held on Tuesday, March 24, from 11:00-11:15, in front of the Okuma Memorial Tower. Attendees will include Cyryl Kozaczewski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Japan; Marta Karsz, Deputy Director of the Polish Cultural and Information Center in Tokyo; Kaoru Kamata, President of Waseda University; and Michiko Nomura, owner of the artwork.

Symposium: What does Auschwitz have to teach us today?

Date/time: Saturday, April 18, 13:00-17:30

Place: Waseda University Toyama Campus Bldg.36 Room 382 (Toyama 1-24-1, Shinjuku)

Greeting: Cyryl Kozaczewski, Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Japan

Keynote Address: Michiko Nomura, author

Panelists: Ayaka Takei, Associate Professor, Gakushuin Women's University

Shinichi Furuya, Lecturer, Waseda University

Haruka Miyazaki, Lecturer, Hokkaido University of Education

Coordinator: Koichi Ouchi, Professor, Waseda University

To cover any of the above events, please provide the following information by email or fax:

Name (plus # of accompanying staff), Company, Email, Telephone, Event Name

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About the exhibition:

Mieczysław Kościelniak was a Polish painter, graphic designer and draftsman who was arrested in 1941 and sent to the Auschwitz Birkenau. German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945). While imprisoned he made hundreds of paintings depicting the everyday life of prisoners, fully aware that he might be killed if found out by his captors. Mieczysław's paintings not only depict the horrors prisoners experienced at the camp, but also the perseverance of individuals despite their hellish circumstances.

After Kościelniak's death, his wife entrusted author and Waseda graduate Michiko Nomura with nineteen of her husband's paintings, saying, "My husband did not want the next generation to repeat the same mistakes." For twenty years Nomura maintained the collection and organized exhibitions across Japan. Nomura's desire for the youth of Japan to learn from Kościelniak and his works before she returns them to Kościelniak's homeland led to this exhibition at Waseda, her alma mater. "I expect this to be the last exhibition in Japan. Now, 70 years after the war, there is no end to conflict and terrorism around the world, so I especially want young people, who have no first-hand knowledge of war, to experience these works."

The exhibition also includes reproductions of art by Jan Kowski, a fellow artist who was imprisoned at Auschwitz-Birkenau and shared workspace with Kościelniak.

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