



CONTACT:
Alysa Landry
Communications Associate
alandry@gratz.edu
Dodi Klimoff
Executive Assistant to the President
dklimoff@gratz.edu
Naomi Housman
Director of Institutional Advancement
nhousman@gratz.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 23, 2021



MAUS AUTHOR ART SPIEGELMAN HEADLINES HOLOCAUST TEACH-IN

MELROSE PARK, Pa.—Art Spiegelman, the Pulitzer Prize-winning artist, illustrator and author of *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, will speak Sunday, March 7, 2021, during the biennial Arnold and Esther Tuzman Memorial Holocaust Teach-In at Gratz College. The entire Teach-In program will be presented online.

First published in serial form beginning in 1980, *Maus* is the true story of Spiegelman's parents—Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust—portrayed in graphic memoir. Jews are depicted as mice and Nazis as cats in this narrative framed by the modern-day relationship between Spiegelman and his father.

Maus appeared in book form in 1986 when Volume I, *My Father Bleeds History*, was published. In 1992, the same year Volume II, *And Here My Troubles Began*, was published, *Maus* became the first graphic novel to win the Pulitzer Prize.

“We are honored to have a Pulitzer Prize-winning author whose two *Maus* books are iconic and powerful contributions to the public understanding of the Holocaust,” Gratz President Dr. Paul Finkelman said.

Among works of Holocaust literature, *Maus* often ranks with Elie Wiesel’s *Night* and *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Dr. Finkelman noted. Unlike Wiesel and Frank, Spiegelman is not a Holocaust survivor, but rather the child of two survivors.

“The children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors have the role of keeping the memory alive,” Dr. Finkelman said. “They must tie the motto of ‘Never Again’ to the notion of ‘Never Forget,’ and Spiegelman’s work is the most important book connecting the generation of the survivors with the generation of their children.”

Spiegelman’s presentation at 1 p.m. ET, on March 7, will be in the form of a conversation facilitated by Rabbi Lance J. Sussman, Ph.D., immediate past chair of the Gratz Board of Governors. The biennial Holocaust Teach-In, a major event in the Philadelphia area for the past 10 years, is made possible by the financial support of the Arnold and Esther Tuzman Holocaust Education Fund. Both Holocaust survivors, Arnold and Esther each fled their homes as teens to escape the Nazis.

Esther was hidden by a Polish Catholic farmer. After imprisonment in a Siberian labor camp, Arnold served in the Polish-Russian army. Still in uniform after V-day, Arnold gave a ride to a beautiful young woman named Esther. They married in 1946 and immigrated to the U.S. in 1947.

The biennial Tuzman Memorial Holocaust Teach-In honors Arnold and Esther, said their son, Marty Tuzman. It also honors the memories and experiences of all second-generation Holocaust survivors.

“As a child of Holocaust survivors, my bedtime stories were often bits and pieces of Holocaust stories,” Tuzman said. “That trauma was transmitted to me, and for most of my younger years, I ran away from it.

“Now I’ve come to feel that there’s an incredible responsibility for the children of survivors to tell these stories as we experienced them,” Tuzman continued. “Those who survived Auschwitz are passing, so it’s up to the children of survivors to remember our parents, the grandparents we never met, and all the millions of people who never had the chance to become parents or grandparents.”

The Holocaust Teach-In also includes a “Teaching *Maus*” workshop for educators at the high school and college levels, and a private conversation with Spiegelman for Gratz students only. Dr. Gary Weissman, an adjunct professor at Gratz and an associate professor of English at the University of Cincinnati, will lead the teaching workshop.

During his session, Dr. Weissman will discuss *Maus* as a graphic narrative that operates on three levels: Artie’s experiences as a child of Holocaust survivors and his efforts to gather and tell his father’s story; his father Vladek’s experiences of being Jewish in Nazi-occupied Europe and surviving Auschwitz; and Spiegelman’s ruminations on depicting his father’s story in comic book form.

Workshop participants will learn how, by attending to Spiegelman’s unique strategies for rendering events often described as unimaginable, students can learn much about the representation, memory and traumatic impact of the Holocaust.

“*Maus* has become part of the Holocaust literature canon,” Dr. Weissman said. “It’s taught all the time: in college, high schools and even middle schools. There are books about *Maus*. There is curriculum about how to teach *Maus*. In studying *Maus*, so much can be learned about the Holocaust, how it’s represented, what we can know about it, and what its traumatic impact is on subsequent generations.”

Hearing Spiegelman talk about his own work adds yet another dimension to Holocaust memory, Dr. Weissman said. It’s been nearly three decades since Spiegelman won the Pulitzer Prize for *Maus*, so listening to him reflect on the last thirty years will be illuminating.

“The culture has changed since Spiegelman created this work,” Dr. Weissman said. It will be interesting to see how he looks back on *Maus* and views it in the scheme of Holocaust memory that has taken shape since the 1990s.”

The Arnold and Esther Tuzman Memorial Holocaust Teach-In begins online at 12 p.m. ET on Sunday, March 7 when Spiegelman provides a tour of his library and art studio during an invitation-only session for Teach-In sponsors. The main program with Spiegelman begins at 1 p.m., and the two afternoon workshops run concurrently, from 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. The Teach-In concludes at 3:45 p.m.

Registration is required. General admission is \$18. For sponsorship information or to register, visit www.gratz.edu/teach-in

About Gratz College

Gratz College, a private non-profit institution based in the Philadelphia area, is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). Founded in 1895, Gratz College is the oldest independent college for Jewish studies in North America. Today, Gratz enrolls a diverse population of students from around the world with many programs that reflect its historic focus on Jewish studies and education. An early adopter of online education, Gratz offers blended and fully online degrees in a broad range of studies, including the world’s only online Doctorate in Holocaust and Genocide Studies and a Doctorate in Education Leadership. Gratz also offers eight master’s degree programs, including a Master’s in Education and a Master’s in Nonprofit Management; two undergraduate completion programs; various graduate and undergraduate certificates; a robust continuing education program; and Gratz Academy (formerly the Jewish Community High School).

Gratz College
7605 Old York Rd.
Melrose Park, PA 19027
215-635-7300