

## *Notes From the Margin*

My idea for this installation came into being in New York in the spring of 1990 from a simple drawing of barbed wire. To me the barbed wire is symbolic of the Holocaust viscerally and conceptually as it is restrictive, enclosing, dangerous and can be electrified.

*Barbed Wire Light* references the entrapment and crisis as well as the spirituality and transcendence of the camp's prisoners. Originally there were three barbed wire fixtures, to represent the family of man, woman, and child.

I then took the idea for my installation further and recognized the important contribution it could become to my beloved native city of Lublin which was profoundly affected by the Nazis. It was at this point that I approached the director of the Majdanek Museum with my concept. I was pleasantly surprised when it was agreed upon that I would be able to create my installation within the original confines of a Majdanek barrack. I was asked by the approving board of Majdanek survivors to broaden the scope of the entire installation, which had come to be known as *Shrine for An Anonymous Victim*, by making 52 fixtures, as opposed to the original three, this number symbolizing the 52 different nations represented at Majdanek during its existence as a concentration camp.

From its inception to the final stages of creation my project has undergone a metamorphosis and grown to include other elements. Lighted bulbs represent life while the unlit bulbs signify death. The placement of the 52 fixtures floating as a family from the ceiling is ethereal and unifies the souls of the victims who hover over the black death of the collective gravestone gravel. The white gravel on the opposite platform embodies the souls of the victims who have escaped the physical trappings of death. The entire installation is situated in such a manner so that the viewer is forced to walk around the parameters of the installation emphasizing the meditative experience. As one does walk and look at the work, they also approach the far wall of the barrack where a free-standing, secular altar encourages further contemplation. The only way out is to complete the circumference of the room and travel back alongside the work and out of the barrack itself, thereby liberating oneself physically as well as emotionally. *Shrine for An Anonymous Victim* as I hope this memorial will speak for those who were never able to speak for themselves.