

*The Majdanek State Museum
Droga Męczenników Majdanek 67
20 - 325 Lublin, Poland*

PRESS RELEASE

SHRINE FOR AN ANONYMOUS VICTIM

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Majdanek was a Nazi concentration camp in Lublin, Poland. 360,000 people of over 50 different nationalities were exterminated there. It was second in size after Auschwitz.

The Majdanek State Museum was established in 1944 on the actual site of the concentration camp following liberation. It is the first institution of this kind in the world, as well as one of the largest cemeteries in the history of mankind. Today Majdanek remains as a symbol of past inhumanity and suffering.

On July 23, 1999 to coincide with the 55th anniversary of the liberation of the camp, an opening will take place in one of the original barracks, #47 (Prwiantslager B). The concept for this permanent installation, Shrine for An Anonymous Victim, comes from the New York-based artist Jacek Myslewski who was born and raised in Lublin. Myslewski invited for this collaboration composer Zbigniew Bargielski, also of Lublin and now working in Vienna, Tomasz Pietrasiewicz director of Theater N.N. Brama Grodzka in Lublin, and, most inspirationally, Danuta Brzesko Miedryk, survivor of Majdanek, as well as activist and author of Matylda, a recounting of her own experiences in the camp.

Myslewski will create an installation with two platforms in the center of Barrack #47. On one platform, 52 barbed-wired bulbs will be suspended from the ceiling, each 32 cm in diameter, organized in four rows of thirteen. Every bulb will be lit faintly, the light representing the enduring spirit of the victims. On the second platform there will be 72 barbed-wire bulbs organized in four rows of eighteen, but this time they are unlit and placed on the ground, signifying the silence of the dead. At the far end of the barrack, Myslewski will create an altar meant for meditation where twelve drawings, Black Hole, will be displayed.

Barrack #47 is situated within the museum so that it is the last space experienced by the visitor. Ultimately it will stay as a lasting homage to all the victims of Majdanek. It is meant to speak for those who cannot and to stand as a telling reminder of the perpetual nature of injustice which cannot be bound by time or place. In this spirit, Shrine for an Anonymous Victim is to be a non-religious, multinational, and multi-lingual dedication.

As explained by Majdanek Museum Director Edward Balawejder, the effect of this collaboration will be to cleanse and strengthen one's entire experience of the museum.

*Irena Hochman Fine Art Ltd
1100 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10028
T 1 212 772 2227
F 1 212 772 2222*