



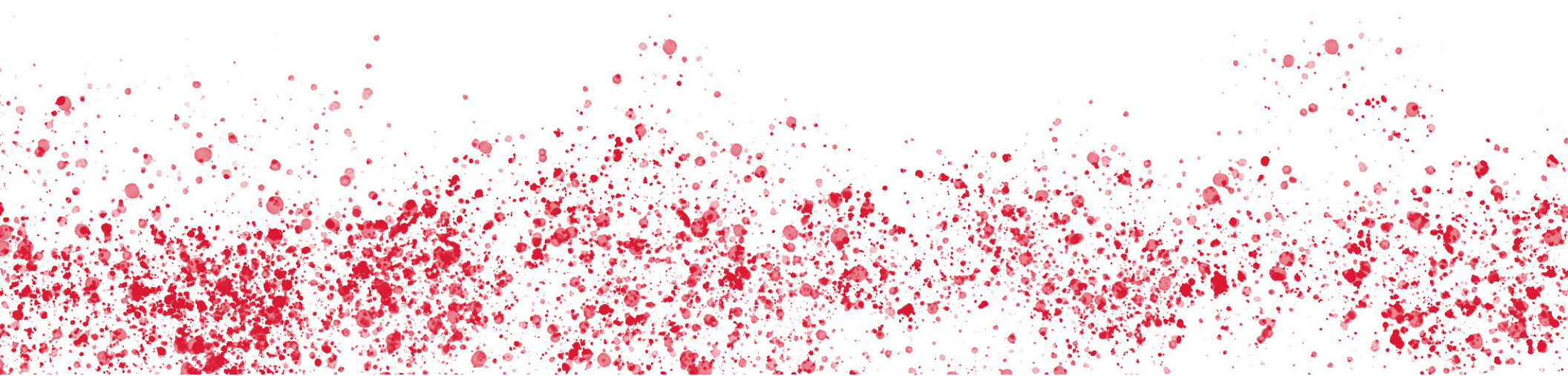
UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha

**THE SAMUEL BAK MUSEUM
AND ACADEMIC LEARNING CENTER**

SAMUEL BAK

“HIS ART EXPLORES **PROFOUND QUESTIONS ABOUT HUMAN NATURE**. IT CALLS OUR ATTENTION TO THE INJUSTICES AND INEQUALITIES IN OUR SOCIETY. AND WHILE HIS WORK ALERTS US TO THE DARKNESS OF HUMAN NATURE, BAK ALSO **ENCOURAGES US TO WORK FOR A BETTER WORLD.**”

— MARK CELINCAK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SAM AND FRANCES FRIED
HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE ACADEMY





SAMUEL BAK

“While Bak’s art traverses dark and difficult subject matter, it is also very much about beauty, joy and hope. The **hauntingly beautiful, profoundly moving** art of Samuel Bak inspires us all to be hopeful that we can make sense of the complex world we share.”

— Mark Celinscak

Executive Director, Sam and Frances Fried
Holocaust and Genocide Academy



About the Artist

Samuel Bak was born in Vilna, Poland, in 1933 at a crucial moment in modern history. As Hitler and his brutal Brownshirts ascended to power in neighboring Germany, Bak was finding and creating beauty — exploring his natural talents as an artist and discovering his lifelong love for painting. Bak’s artistic talent was first recognized when his work was exhibited in the Ghetto of Vilna at age 9. In 1939, Poland was invaded by the Germans, and Bak and his family experienced the terrors of Nazi control firsthand. Bak and his mother survived — two out of a couple hundred from a town that once counted up to 80,000. His father and four grandparents all perished at the hands of the Nazis, his father just days before liberation.

At the end of World War II, Bak fled with his mother to the Landsberg Displaced Persons Camp, where he enrolled in painting lessons at the Blocherer School in Munich. In 1948, they immigrated to the newly established state of Israel. Bak studied at the Bezalel Art School in Jerusalem and later in Paris at the École des Beaux Arts. In 1959, he moved to Rome where his first exhibition of abstract paintings was met with considerable success.

Over the following seven decades of artistic production, Bak weaved his Holocaust experience with his personal story to create an iconography of Jewish modern history. Pucker Gallery, which has represented Bak since 1969, writes: “His art depicts a world destroyed, and yet provisionally pieced back together, preserving the memory of the 20th-century ruination of Jewish life and culture by way of an artistic passion and precision that stubbornly announces the creativity of the human spirit.” Bak has exhibited in numerous major museums, galleries and universities and is considered a preeminent artistic voice and world-renowned artist.

BAK FINDS A HOME IN OMAHA

In 2019, two internationally recognized institutions, both housed at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the Sam and Frances Fried Holocaust and Genocide Academy and the Natan and Hannah Schwalb Center for Israel and Jewish Studies, partnered with Pucker Gallery to bring the work of Samuel Bak to Nebraska.

The exhibition of 70 paintings, “WITNESS: The Art of Samuel Bak,” drew 4,500 visitors, including more than 2,000 high school and middle school students. Bak visited UNO for several days in September to participate in various programming, including “A Conversation with Samuel Bak” held in the Strauss Performing Arts Center. He also met with UNO students for discussions of his work and the Holocaust. In addition, the Fried Academy and the Leonard and Shirley Goldstein Center for Human Rights sponsored an “Arts and Human Rights” symposium in honor of the work of Samuel Bak, featuring scholars and speakers from around the world.

Thanks to the passion, knowledge and expertise in Holocaust, Jewish and human rights studies at UNO, which Bak recognized and connected with immediately, the artist recently made an extremely generous gift to the university: 500 works of art spanning his prolific career, valued at \$18 million.



This extraordinary gift presents an unprecedented opportunity: to build a permanent home for these deeply significant works at UNO.

JOIN US

The Samuel Bak Museum and Academic Learning Center will be a one-of-a-kind, multidisciplinary institution that brings the work of Samuel Bak to Omaha and the Midwest. Touching on subjects that range from art and history to international relations and politics to moral philosophy and human rights, the Samuel Bak Museum and Academic Learning center will celebrate an artist whose work and life offer students a singular educational experience while forging new connections and collaborations across campus and the world.



“WITNESS: The Art of Samuel Bak” drew thousands of visitors and brought together colleges and institutions across UNO and Omaha.

THE SAMUEL BAK MUSEUM AND ACADEMIC LEARNING CENTER



MISSION: Create a Global Educational Experience and Inspire a Meaningful Contribution to Human Knowledge

The Samuel Bak Museum and Academic Learning Center will be a teaching museum committed to inspiring meaningful discussions and thoughtful reflection among students, faculty, staff and the greater community and region. It will create direct experiential learning opportunities while awakening the community to the richness and diversity of the human experience and inviting curiosity and collaborative learning.





"In the art of Samuel Bak ... presence is ever haunted by absence." – Mark Celinscak, Executive Director of the Sam and Frances Fried Holocaust and Genocide Academy

LEARNING FROM THE PAST TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT

At this moment in history, teaching students about the Holocaust may be more important than ever. A wave of far-right political parties has gained popularity in Europe and elsewhere around the world. As recently as August 2020, rioters stormed the German parliament building carrying the flag of the pre-1918 German Empire.

Meanwhile, according to the Anti-Defamation League, historical understanding of the Holocaust is lacking. In the U.S., nearly one-third of Americans and more than four in 10 millennials vastly underestimate the number of Jews killed during the Holocaust, and almost half of Americans cannot name a single concentration camp. Educating students about the Holocaust, along with other examples of hate, collective violence and genocide, is not only necessary for a full understanding of our shared history, but it can have significant positive effects. A recent U.S. college survey by Echoes and Reflections showed Holocaust education improved students' attitudes towards diversity and tolerance and made them more likely to stand up against hate and intolerance.



According to the Pew Research Center, fewer than half of Americans (43%) know that Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany through a democratic political process.





WHAT BAK'S WORK WILL MEAN FOR STUDENTS

The Samuel Bak Museum and Academic Learning Center will be much more than a gallery exhibition. Samuel Bak's work helps teachers and students make important connections between history and the moral choices they confront in their own lives. It offers a framework and a vocabulary for analyzing the meaning and responsibility of citizenship and the tools to recognize bigotry and indifference in their own worlds.

The Samuel Bak Museum and Academic Learning Center will explore Bak's work on the Holocaust and other examples of hate, collective violence and genocide to help educators teach history and ethics. The museum will help students learn to combat prejudice with compassion, indifference with participation, myth and misinformation with knowledge.



As a teaching museum, the Samuel Bak Museum and Academic Learning Center will draw on and expand collaborations across campus, including with the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media and the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences, while building new connections with institutes of academic learning around the world. For example:

- Academic centers across UNO will offer related minors, such as Holocaust and genocide studies, public history, museum studies, human rights studies and medical humanities

Through continued collaboration with the Fried Holocaust and Genocide Academy, the Goldstein Center for Human Rights and the Schwalb Center for Israel and Jewish Studies, UNO will remain a leader in creating dialogue around these essential issues.

- The university will partner with K-12 schools to develop Holocaust-related teaching materials and

- UNO may develop a travel program to Bak's hometown, now the capital city of Lithuania, in partnership with the Samuel Bak Museum in the Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum, Vilnius University or a planned museum to be built on the site of the old Vilnius Synagogue.

- Other planned partnerships include local arts museums and organizations,

These types of multidisciplinary partnerships provide a diverse array of direct experiential learning opportunities to students while encouraging meaningful discussions and reflections about visual testimony, art and social justice, memory and moral philosophy.

CREATING AN ARTISTIC, HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE FOR OMAHA, THE NATION AND THE WORLD

Samuel Bak's decision to bestow 500 works of art to UNO is a monumental gift for the university, Omaha and the entire Midwest region. It is a privilege to house this essential and profoundly beautiful collection, which will be a globally recognized asset for students and the surrounding community to experience. As a regional and national destination, the museum will provide an instrumental experiential learning tool for K-12 students and the broader community.

Bak's gift presents significant opportunities to enhance the educational experience for students while creating an unparalleled artistic and historic resource for the surrounding community. It also provides an opportunity to build on the university's expertise in Holocaust, Jewish and human rights studies while enhancing understanding and acceptance of others among students and the community. It will also facilitate the enriched development of teaching strategies and curricula in these areas.

To fully appreciate this gift and realize the opportunities it presents, it is essential that the

university and community come together to support the Samuel Bak Museum and Academic Learning Center. [REDACTED]

CAPITAL OPPORTUNITIES

Your gift [REDACTED] will first ensure Bak's collection is securely shipped to the university, professionally photographed and reproduced in a digital catalog for widespread viewing and expertly framed by PSG Framing in Boston.

[REDACTED] will transform it into a one-of-a-kind resource that includes classrooms, programming spaces, an auditorium or lecture hall, offices for the new resource center and archival storage. In addition, prominent naming opportunities in recognition of your generous gift will be available.

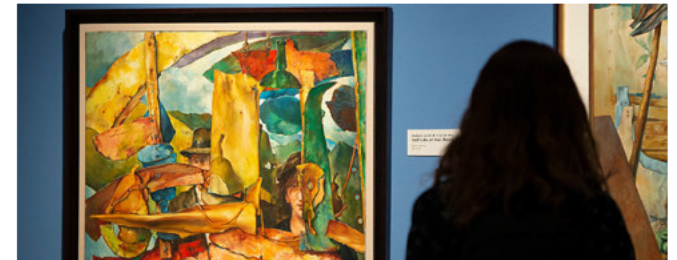
PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

[REDACTED]

Your gift will support the hiring of an executive director and talented individuals to oversee museum operations and develop collaborations with local, national and international arts and culture organizations, partnerships that will be essential to the museum's growth.

THANK YOU

Thank you for your consideration of a generous gift to support the creation of the Samuel Bak Museum and Academic Learning Center. Your generosity will ensure Bak's profoundly moving work is viewed and experienced by thousands of people in Omaha and the Midwest, while the history he so hauntingly and beautifully captures permeates the curricula across disciplines, prompting new collaborations and fostering formative connections and better understanding and acceptance of others. Thank you.





UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Omaha

 University of Nebraska
FOUNDATION