

# PRUSSIAN BLUE

Yishai Jusidman

CAG / SFA

Sept 5 – December 15, 2024

What is the subject of this exhibition?

- *Prussian Blue's* subject is the Holocaust and how we represent it. The exhibition grapples with one of the most difficult representational challenges confronting us today: how to evoke the historical trauma of the Holocaust. *Prussian Blue* prompts us to think deeply about the power of art to reveal critical truths regarding our collective commitment to each other as human beings.
- *Prussian Blue* focuses on the architecture and landscapes of the concentration, labor, and extermination camps; none of the paintings image any human figures.

Why art?

- Art has a uniquely powerful capacity to open space for constructive dialogue. By generating evocative aesthetic experiences, art refreshes our capacity for critical and creative thinking. Through art, we can approach difficult topics, thus productively sustaining individual and collective reflection on the human condition.

Who is the artist?

- Yishai Jusidman is an internationally-renowned Mexican artist of Jewish heritage currently based in Los Angeles: <http://www.yishaijusidman.com/en/>

What is the rationale for this exhibition?

- *Prussian Blue* inaugurates the “Nuremberg-ICTY Archives Artists Residency Initiative.” Supported by the Dodd Human Rights Impact Programs and the Gladstein Family Human Rights Institute, this initiative invites artists to create contemporary responses to these important archives. Housed at UConn’s Dodd Center for Human Rights, the Thomas J. Dodd Papers hold records of the Nuremberg war crimes trials (1945-46), while the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia Archives (ICTY) document the United Nations war crimes trials for atrocities committed during the 1990s Balkans conflicts.
- It is particularly appropriate to host *Prussian Blue* here at the University of Connecticut, home of the Thomas J. Dodd Papers, documenting Dodd’s role as a lead U.S. prosecutor in the Nuremberg Trials (1945-46). These archives, singularly important in their own right, also form the bedrock of UConn’s broader commitment to critical thinking on genocide and its prevention, on human rights, and on our aspirations for a more just and equitable world.

Where is *Prussian Blue* being exhibited?

- *Prussian Blue* is a 3-part exhibition being shown at these UConn venues:
  1. The William Benton Museum of Art
  2. Contemporary Art Galleries, located in the Department of Art & Art History
  3. The Dodd Human Rights Center

What is the “prussian blue” of the exhibition title?

- “Prussian blue” refers to the blue pigment used by the artist to paint the exhibition images. This pigment’s chemical cyanide-iron compound is closely related to stains left in some gas chambers by Zyklon-B, the industrially-produced killing agent used by the Nazis from 1942 through 1945.

What are the source photographs for the paintings? Where can I see them?

- Apart from the purely abstract paintings, each of the artworks in the exhibition was painted from photographs, some archival, others more recent, taken after the concentration, labor, and extermination camps had been turned into memorial sites open to the public.
- These photographs, along with explanations as to what they depict, are on view in the “Archive” room of the Contemporary Art Galleries section of the exhibition.

This exhibition is about the Holocaust. What about imaging other genocides and human rights abuses?

- *Prussian Blue* focuses on the historical issue of the Holocaust. To view how other human rights issues are treated in art, visit the exhibition “Encounters with the Collection: Art and Human Rights,” currently on display at Benton Museum. Spanning the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, the exhibition explores the ways that artists confront human rights abuses and make human rights visible. More information at: <https://benton.uconn.edu/encounters-with-the-collection-art-and-human-rights/>

Where can I find more information? How can I engage more with this topic?

- A panel discussion will be held at UConn’s Konover Auditorium in late Fall 2024 [date to be announced]. James Waller, Director of the Dodd Human Rights Impact Programs will converse with the exhibition curators, to situate *Prussian Blue* within larger conversations about representation, memory, and trauma. Sponsored by UConn’s Gladstein Family Human Rights Institute.
  - More information on HRI website, <https://humanrights.uconn.edu/events-calendar/>
  - Other forms of engagement include Holocaust studies and courses at UConn:
    - HRTS 2200 Introduction to Genocide Studies
    - DRAM/HEJS/HRTS 2203 The Holocaust in Print, Theater, and Film
    - HIST/HRTS 3207 Genocide after the Second World War
    - HIST 3418/HEJS 3203 The Holocaust
    - ENGL 3629 Holocaust Memoir
    - HRTS 5450: Contemporary Issues in Genocide Studies - Deeply Divided Societies
    - Graduate Certificate in Holocaust and Genocide Studies (contact: James Waller, Director, Dodd Human Rights Impact Programs, james.waller@uconn.edu)
- And other programming sponsored by the Gladstein Family Human Rights Institute, Judaic Studies, and the Dodd Human Rights Impact Programs.