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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Fritz Ascher Society Celebrates the Publication of *Immortality, Memory, Creativity, and Survival:* *The Arts of Alice Lok Cahana, Ronnie Cahana and Kitra Cahana*

New York, NY - The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized, and Banned Art is pleased to announce the forthcoming publication of *Immortality, Memory, Creativity, and Survival: The Arts of Alice Lok Cahana, Ronnie Cahana and Kitra Cahana*. Rachel Stern, Executive Director of The Fritz Ascher Society states, "This innovative interdisciplinary publication investigates the long term effect of trauma and memory. Looking at three generations of the Cahana family and their art in the context of biological and psychological research, a complex understanding develops of how trauma and especially the Holocaust experience is remembered. This publication offers an important contribution to the fields of Holocaust studies, art history, history, psychology, and biology."

Alice Lok Cahana (1929 - 2017) was a teenager from Sarvar, Hungary who survived four different camps in the last year of the war, losing every member of her extended family, except for her father and including her beloved older sister, Edith—who survived, only to perish from illness immediately after liberation: she entered a hospital, and Alice never saw her again.

Alice swore an oath to herself while in the camps that, if she survived, she would become an artist and draw rainbows out of the ashes of her experience. She not only became an artist, she produced three offspring, and among them her oldest son, Ronnie, intensely responsive to his mother's history, became a poet. Ronnie's oldest daughter, Kitra, became a filmmaker and photographer whose singular touch of empathy with her subjects in part reflects, as she has said, growing up in the shadow of her grandmother's experience.

One of Kitra's more extraordinary bodies of work focuses on her father after a brain-stem stroke forced him into an initial bed-ridden condition, not able to breathe on his own, but still writing poetry in his mind. The family rallied around him, and began to write out his poems by following his eye-blinks, one letter at a time.

This powerful story of personal survival against crushing odds is explored against multiple backgrounds. The first essay, by Ori Z Soltes, who also edited the volume, explores the arts of the multi-valent Cahana family and is illustrated with 51 full-color images as well as 30 archival and recent photographs that carry from Alice's grandparents to the array of her husband, three children, and nine grandchildren—whose

numbers, like their creativity, defeated Hitler's exterminationist ambitions.

This essay, placing Alice and her family within a historical and art historical context, is supplemented by three essays by prominent figures in the psychological and scientific community. Larry R. Squire and John T. Wixted write about remembering and how the processes of different sorts of memory are shaped in different parts of the brain. Natan P. F. Kellermann writes about old and new theories of trauma and whether and how they may be transmitted from one generation to the next within the DNA. Eva Fogelman, a path-breaking authority on the consequences of Holocaust trauma for the children and grandchildren of survivors, discusses the research on that growing area of interest against the backdrop of interviews with Ronnie and Kitra and other members of the Cahana family.



Detail of Alice Lok Cahana, *Raoul Wallenberg—Schutz Pass*, 93 1/4 × 112 inches, mixed media on canvas and paper, 1981. Courtesy Cahana family archives



Kitra Cahana, *The Cult of Maria Lionza: Fire*, 2009
©Kitra Cahana

Immortality, Memory, Creativity, and Survival: The Arts of Alice Lok Cahana, Ronnie Cahana and Kitra Cahana is edited by Ori Z Soltes and published by The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized, and Banned Art.

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