



TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE
FOR GRADES 9–12

LEARN ABOUT

**HOLOCAUST
REMEMBRANCE**
through the art of
GERSHON ISKOWITZ

ART CANADA INSTITUTE | INSTITUT DE L'ART CANADIEN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE 1



**RESOURCE
OVERVIEW**

PAGE 2



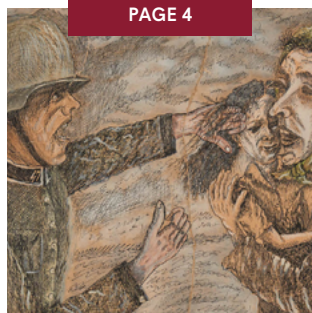
**WHO WAS
GERSHON ISKOWITZ?**

PAGE 3



**TIMELINE OF
HISTORICAL EVENTS
AND ARTIST'S LIFE**

PAGE 4



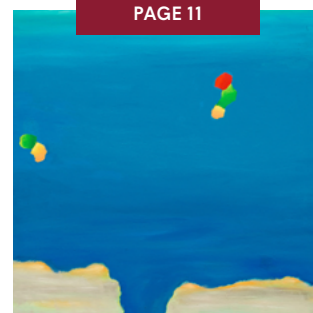
**LEARNING
ACTIVITIES**

PAGE 8



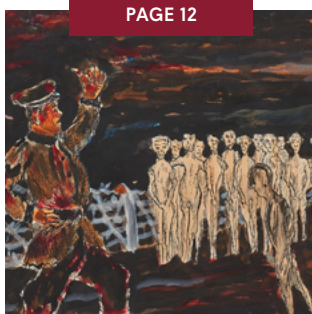
**CULMINATING
TASK**

PAGE 11



**HOW GERSHON
ISKOWITZ MADE ART:
STYLE & TECHNIQUE**

PAGE 12



**ADDITIONAL
RESOURCES**

READ ONLINE



**GERSHON ISKOWITZ:
LIFE & WORK BY
IHOR HOLUBIZKY**

DOWNLOAD



**GERSHON ISKOWITZ
IMAGE FILE**

RESOURCE OVERVIEW

This teacher resource guide has been designed to complement the Art Canada Institute online art book [Gershon Iskowitz: Life & Work](#) by Ihor Holubizky. The artworks within this guide and the images required for the learning activities and culminating task can be found in the [Gershon Iskowitz Image File](#) provided.

Gershon Iskowitz (1919–1988), a Polish-born Canadian artist, saw first-hand the rise and regime of the anti-Semitic German chancellor Adolf Hitler and his Nazi party. Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazis forced more than six million Jews out of their homes and placed them in concentration camps where most were killed (including Iskowitz’s family). This historic event, now known as the Holocaust, saw Hitler and his followers target Jews as well as other minorities (including the LGBTQ population and people with disabilities) in a systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored genocide of those who were deemed “sub-humans.” This guide explores why, as an artist, Iskowitz felt a critical need to produce work about the Holocaust. It also addresses the importance of remembering the Holocaust today and ways to do so.

Curriculum Connections

- Grades 9–12 Social Studies
- Grades 9–12 Visual Arts
- Grade 12 The Writer’s Craft

Themes

- Anti-Semitism
- History and memory
- Racism

Teaching Exercises

The exercises in this guide explore Iskowitz’s Holocaust-related art and encourage students to think about the importance of documenting and remembering tragic moments in history.

- Learning Activity #1: Analysis of Iskowitz’s Documentation of Jewish Persecution and Anti-Semitism ([page 4](#))
- Learning Activity #2: Empathy through Memory Art ([page 6](#))
- Culminating Task: Infographics of Remembrance: The Holocaust in Monuments and Art ([page 8](#))

A Note on Using This Guide

This resource explores the art and life of Gershon Iskowitz with an emphasis on his experiences during the Holocaust. It is important to approach this difficult content with respect, empathy, and care. In the teaching exercises, the themes of remembrance and memory are examined using Iskowitz’s work and experiences as a starting point for discussion. If students have no knowledge of the Holocaust, we recommend exploring the list of external resources on [page 13](#) in order to provide students with an important context for the content and activities in this guide. As well, educators are encouraged to reach out to leaders of the Jewish community for their advice and guidance in studying the Holocaust (please see the list of external resources on [page 13](#) for suggestions).



Fig 1. Gershon Iskowitz, *Through Life*, c.1947. This sketch was inspired by Iskowitz’s memories.

WHO WAS GERSHON ISKOWITZ?



Fig 2. Gershon Iskowitz in his studio, 1986.

Gershon Iskowitz (1919-1988) was born in Kielce, Poland. As a child, Iskowitz showed an early interest in drawing. He was about to begin studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw when the Nazis invaded. They established the Kielce Ghetto, a few square blocks surrounded by barbed wire and locked gates where the city's Jews, including Iskowitz and his family, were forced to live. From the ghetto, under Nazi order, Iskowitz was sent to Henryków labour camp, then to Monowitz-Buna labour camp (a camp that was part of Auschwitz), and finally to Buchenwald concentration camp. While he was imprisoned, Iskowitz created drawings to preserve his sanity and forget about his hunger. After the war ended, while in a displaced persons camp near Munich, Iskowitz continued to explore his artistic abilities. He used his art to figure out how to carry on as a survivor in the horrific aftermath of the Holocaust, including the loss of his parents, two brothers, and sister, who died in Nazi camps.

In 1948 Iskowitz immigrated to Canada under the sponsorship of his uncle. Iskowitz arrived at Pier 21 in Halifax and travelled by train to Toronto, where he established himself in the city's artistic scene. He painted and drew bright and colourful memories of pre-Nazi life in Kielce as well as painful images of scenes he witnessed during the war. He also began painting Canada's countryside, eventually making **abstracted** landscapes, largely inspired by a flight over Churchill, Manitoba. He saw a naturally abstracted landscape when looking from the plane through the clouds below. For the rest of his career, Iskowitz would try to capture some semblance of these flashes of brilliant colour in his paintings.

In the decades to come, Iskowitz would have many solo exhibitions, including a retrospective in 1982 at the Art Gallery of Ontario. His art speaks to survival and resilience despite persecution and hardship. It reveals the expression of difficult experiences, a search for happier memories, and the joy found in his new life in Canada.

Iskowitz died in Toronto in 1988. His legacy lives on in the Gershon Iskowitz Foundation, which he established in 1985. Today the foundation awards the annual Gershon Iskowitz Prize, an award that gives Canadian artists a significant grant and a major solo exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario.



Fig 3. Gershon Iskowitz, *Ghetto*, c.1947. Vicious barbed wire criss-crosses this image of a mother and child in the ghetto.

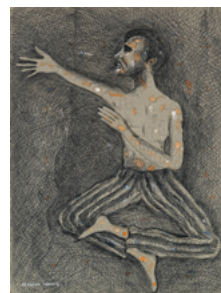


Fig 4. Gershon Iskowitz, *The Wall*, 1952. The figure in this work reaches out as if imploring the viewer.



Fig 5. Gershon Iskowitz, *Not Titled*, c.1987. The ovoid forms in this painting are a hallmark of Iskowitz's later abstract style.

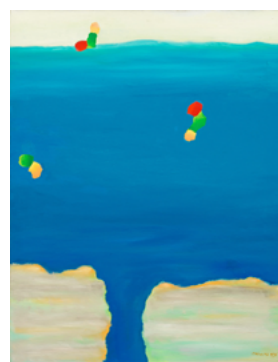


Fig 6. Gershon Iskowitz, *Lowlands No. 9*, 1970. This work depicts what Iskowitz saw from his plane as it dipped downwards over the northern landscape.

NATIONAL & WORLD EVENTS

GERSHON ISKOWITZ'S LIFE

Following a major electoral victory for the Nazi Party, Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) becomes the chancellor of Germany.

1919

Gershon Iskowitz is born in Kielce, Poland.

Buchenwald concentration camp opens.

1933

1937

In June, 937 people (mostly Jewish refugees) travelling on MS *St. Louis* are refused entry into Canada (many later die in the Holocaust). On September 1, Germany invades Poland, beginning the Second World War.

1939

Iskowitz creates *Action*, his earliest surviving drawing of the Kielce Ghetto.

1941

The Kielce Ghetto is formed in Poland.

1942

Iskowitz secretly creates drawings while imprisoned in Buchenwald.

The Nazis engage in the systematic killing of Jews. The Kielce Ghetto is liquidated.

1944

Following the war, Iskowitz is liberated and moved to the Feldafing displaced persons camp.

The Second World War ends. Displaced persons camps are established for refugees and survivors.

1945

While there, he studies at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich.

1947

Canada changes its immigration policies, and over the following eight years the Canadian Jewish community sponsors approximately 35,000 Holocaust survivors and their dependents, enabling them to settle in Canada.

1948

Iskowitz immigrates to Canada under the sponsorship of his uncle.

1954

Iskowitz's art appears in the first recorded exhibition of his work in Canada.

Jewish Federations of Canada—UIA (United Israel Appeal) is recognized as a registered charity. Chapters across Canada work to strengthen Jewish life and raise funds for programs in Canada, Israel, and overseas.

1965

Iskowitz's art becomes increasingly abstract after he travels to

1967

Churchill, Manitoba, where he takes a flight over the sub-Arctic landscape and the coast of Hudson Bay.

1970s

Iskowitz creates many of his iconic large abstract paintings. In 1972 he represents Canada at the prestigious Venice Biennale.

1982

The Art Gallery of Ontario holds an important retrospective of Iskowitz's work.

1985

Iskowitz establishes the Gershon Iskowitz Foundation.

1988

Gershon Iskowitz dies at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto.

2005

The United Nations General Assembly designates January 27 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.



Fig 7. A photograph of Buchenwald concentration camp.



Fig 8. Mourners at a mass grave of the victims of the Kielce pogrom, 1946.



Fig 9. Jewish immigrants on board the General Sturgis arrive in Halifax in 1948.



Fig 10. The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, in Berlin, Germany.



Fig 11. Gershon Iskowitz, *Action*, 1941. A German soldier tries to forcibly remove a girl from a woman's arms.



Fig 12. Iskowitz's temporary travel document, Military Government for Germany, Munich, May 3, 1948.



Fig 13. Gershon Iskowitz, *Lowlands I*, 1969. A typical example of Iskowitz's abstraction of the landscape.

LEARNING ACTIVITY #1

ANALYSIS OF ISKOWITZ'S DOCUMENTATION OF JEWISH PERSECUTION AND ANTI-SEMITISM

We often think about art as being about a presentation of what is beautiful. However, art is equally important as a record of history. Iskowitz, like many other artists who survived the Holocaust, felt an obligation to document the Holocaust for two reasons: he wanted to tell the story of the people who died to honour their memory, and he wanted to shed light on what happened in the hopes that the world might learn from it. This exercise asks students to study and discuss four works of art by Iskowitz that document this historical period and engage in a conversation about their importance.

Big Idea

Persecution

Learning Goals

1. I understand and can define the term "anti-Semitism."
2. I can explain how racism led to disastrous consequences under the rule of Adolf Hitler.
3. I can respectfully and thoughtfully analyze art of the Holocaust and understand its importance.
4. I understand that art can play a powerful and important role in documenting history.

Materials

- [Gershon Iskowitz Image File](#)
- [Gershon Iskowitz: Life & Work](#)
- Paper
- Pencils or pens
- "Who Was Gershon Iskowitz?" biographic information sheet ([page 2](#))

Process

1. Begin by reviewing the terms "Holocaust" and "anti-Semitism." It is important that students have strong knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust, Adolf Hitler, and the Nazi regime before they are introduced to the artist and his work. Introduce students to Gershon Iskowitz using the biographic information sheet.
2. Tell students that they will be viewing works created during and depicting the Holocaust. Students should be made aware that these images and their contents may be disturbing. Ensure students know how to seek help when confronting these difficult topics.



Fig 14. Gershon Iskowitz, *Selection, Auschwitz*, 1947. A horrific scene of a guard determining who will be killed and who will remain a prisoner.

Learning Activity #1 Continued

3. Show the class the following four images from the [Gershon Iskowitz Image File](#) and introduce each image. As well, give the class links to commentary on each of the works as they are discussed in [Gershon Iskowitz: Life & Work](#) by author Ihor Holubizky.

i) *Action*, 1941 (for commentary, see the subsection “[Kielce to Buchenwald](#)” in the Biography chapter of *Gershon Iskowitz: Life & Work*)

ii) *Buchenwald*, 1944–45 (for commentary, see “[Buchenwald](#)” in the Key Works chapter of *Gershon Iskowitz: Life & Work*)

iii) *Barracks*, 1949 (for commentary, see the subsection “[A Witness to the Holocaust](#)” in the Significance & Critical Issues chapter of *Gershon Iskowitz: Life & Work*)

iv) *Untitled (“B-3124”)*, 1951 (for commentary, see the subsection “[Kielce to Buchenwald](#)” in the Biography chapter of *Gershon Iskowitz: Life & Work*).

4. Divide the class into four groups. Explain to the class that each group will do an analysis and interpretation of one of Iskowitz’s works of art and explore how it is a testament to the atrocities of the Holocaust and the persecution of European Jews. While looking at the works, students should consider and address the questions listed below.

- What is your first impression of the work of art?
- What is happening in the work of art?
- What captures your attention?
- How does this work of art make you feel?
- What clues tell you when and where this work of art was created?
- What message does Iskowitz want to communicate with this work of art?
- Give two or three reasons why this work of art is an important historical document.



Fig 15. Gershon Iskowitz, *Action*, 1941. This drawing records an incident in the Kielce Ghetto.



Fig 16. Gershon Iskowitz, *Buchenwald*, 1944–45. One of Iskowitz’s few surviving drawings from inside Buchenwald.



Fig 17. Gershon Iskowitz, *Barracks*, 1949. In this painting Iskowitz portrays the barren and close living quarters of the concentration camps.



Fig 18. Gershon Iskowitz, *Untitled (“B-3124”)*, 1951. At Auschwitz, Iskowitz’s left arm was tattooed with the prisoner number B-3124.

5. Have each group present their thinking to the class, along with the artwork they were analyzing. Engage in a full-class discussion to identify similarities and themes in students’ analyses.

LEARNING ACTIVITY #2

EMPATHY THROUGH MEMORY ART

After the Second World War ended, Iskowitz moved to Canada alone; the rest of his family had died during the Holocaust. In Toronto, the city he would call home for the rest of his life, Iskowitz began creating “[memory works](#)”: a series of drawings and paintings, many of which focused on the life of European Jews before the Nazi regime (examples include *Side Street*, c.1952–54, and *Korban*, c.1952). These works, all rendered in a stark, naive style, were artistic representations of Iskowitz’s memory and emotional ties to his past. One way for students to understand Iskowitz’s memory works is to consider rituals, routines, and celebrations in their own lives and the consequence of losing them.

Big Idea

Loss and remembrance

Learning Goals

1. I understand why Gershon Iskowitz painted memory works when he came to Canada.
2. I can identify examples of rituals, routines, and celebrations from my own life and reflect on how I might remember them if they were no longer part of my existence.
3. I can create a memory work in the style of Gershon Iskowitz that exemplifies an aspect of my life that is important and one that I would want to always remember.
4. I can use research, art, and language to build empathy with the experiences and traumas of others.
5. I can show empathy and sensitivity to the experiences of others.



Fig 19. Gershon Iskowitz, *Side Street*, c.1952–54. A couple embraces on a quiet, deserted street in Kielce, Poland.

Materials

- [Gershon Iskowitz Image File](#)
- “How Gershon Iskowitz Made Art: Style & Technique” information sheet ([page 11](#))
- Markers and pencil crayons
- Paper

Process

1. Show students the following works by Gershon Iskowitz: *Side Street*, c.1952–54, and *Korban*, c.1952 (available in the [Gershon Iskowitz Image File](#)). Explain to students that these two artworks reveal aspects of Iskowitz’s life that were lost during the Holocaust. *Side Street* shows the streets of Kielce, where Iskowitz grew up. *Korban* depicts Jews getting ready for the holiday of Passover.



Fig 20. Gershon Iskowitz, *Korban*, c.1952. The title of this painting refers to the *Korban Pesach*, the Hebrew sacrifice of a lamb at Passover, practised since the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt in biblical times.

Learning Activity #2 Continued

2. As students explore the works, examine carefully the style and techniques used, giving students guidance with the “How Gershon Iskowitz Made Art: Style & Technique” information sheet.
3. Have students independently brainstorm a list of aspects from their own lives that are part of their family’s ordinary routine. To facilitate the activity, ask students the following guiding questions:
 - Does your family have regular holiday or birthday activities?
 - What routines do you most enjoy with your friends?
 - What parts of the city do you most enjoy looking at?
 - How do you spend time with your family or friends on the weekend?
4. Ask students to share their lists. Ask students to imagine their country is at war and their family’s political circumstances have changed. What activities, celebrations, and pastimes might be impacted by these changes?
5. Give students paper and pencil crayons or markers, and have students create their own memory works in the style of Gershon Iskowitz. Explain that the works they are creating should be based on their own everyday memories and aspects of their lives that represent meaningful experiences.
6. Ask students to create short artist statements that explain the personal meaning of the works, the components of their lives that the works document, and how they would feel about the loss of these aspects of their lives.
7. Have students share their memory works and their artist statements. This sharing should be prefaced with a discussion of empathy, framed around questions such as, “How can we feel what others are feeling?”, “How can art help us understand each other?”, “What would I hope others gain from viewing my work?”



Fig 21. Gershon Iskowitz, *Market*, c.1952–54. This bright painting shows a happier time in Kielce, Poland, as citizens take their purchases home from the market.

CULMINATING TASK

INFOGRAPHICS OF REMEMBRANCE: THE HOLOCAUST IN MONUMENTS AND ART

A 2018 survey by the U.S.-based Claims Conference revealed that seven out of ten Americans say fewer people seem to care about the Holocaust than they used to. A 2019 Canadian study of Holocaust remembrance revealed that 40 per cent of its respondents did not learn in school that roughly six million European Jews were murdered by the Nazis during the Second World War. Yet Holocaust remembrance is critical because it both honours those who perished during this historic event and aims to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again. This culminating task asks students to study a monument, museum, artist, writer, or work of art dedicated to Holocaust remembrance. Students will then create an infographic that presents their subject in a graphic format that educates others about its importance.

Big Idea

Remembrance

Learning Goals

1. I can identify a range of possible ways that we can remember the Holocaust.
2. I can create a work that engages meaningfully with Holocaust remembrance.
3. I can use graphics to communicate a clear and important message.
4. I can identify how knowledge of the Holocaust is critical to social justice.
5. I can research the historical and social impact of a specific concept and communicate my understanding.
6. I can show empathy and understanding as I research and share my findings.

Success Criteria

To be added to, reduced, or changed in collaboration with students.

1. Meaning of the infographic is clear and has impact.
2. Infographic presents a strong combination of text and image.
3. Infographic is an effective call for attention to an aspect of Holocaust remembrance.



Fig 22. Gershon Iskowitz, *Miriam*, c.1951–52. This work depicts Iskowitz's neighbour in Poland.

Culminating Task Continued

Materials

- Access to online and print resources
- Chalkboard and chalk
- Markers
- Paper
- Pens and pencils
- Poster board

Process

1. Ask students to name examples of people, places, or things that, like the art of Gershon Iskowitz, are dedicated to the importance of remembering the Holocaust. Create a list on the board.
2. Share with students a number of the world’s most important works of Holocaust remembrance (see list at the end of this culminating task). Discuss their significance.
3. Explain to students that one effective way to communicate a message is through an infographic. Provide students with three examples of infographics:

- i) Canadian immigration in 2011: <http://www.canadafaq.ca/Images/canadian-immigration-infographic.jpg>
- ii) History of genocide by the numbers: <https://graphs.net/history-of-genocide-by-the-numbers.html>
- iii) What is climate change?: http://www.canadiangeographic.com/educational_products/activities/products_climate_change_infographics/Climate-Change_EN.pdf

For more on strong infographics, see <https://visual.ly/political-infographics> and <https://www.pinterest.ca/greyhousecanada/canadian-infographics/>.

4. Discuss what makes an infographic successful and co-construct a list of success criteria for the students’ infographics. Useful tips for infographics are listed below.

- Keep your graphics simple.
- Tell your story in sections so it flows.
- Don’t use too many colours.
- Make it readable.
- Match up your visuals with data.
- Don’t be too repetitive.
- Include powerful statements.

5. Ask students to pick a topic from the list “Works of Remembrance: The Holocaust in Monuments and Art” with a view to creating an infographic about their chosen monument or artwork.

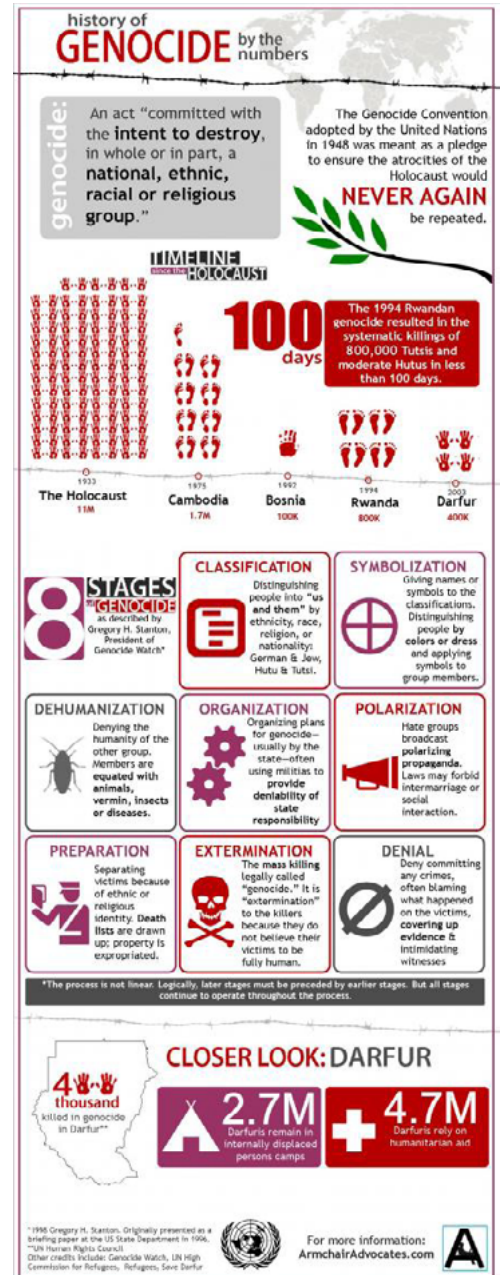


Fig 23. Infographic showing the history of genocide by the numbers.

Culminating Task Continued

6. Provide students with time to research and compile detailed research notes. Students should then brainstorm a variety of sketches or ideas for their final infographics. These sketches and research notes can be shared with both their peers and their teacher for feedback before embarking on their final products.
7. Provide students time to create their infographics. Once complete, students can display their infographics and engage in a gallery walk. Alternatively, students can present their infographics and give a brief oral presentation.

Works of Remembrance: The Holocaust in Monuments and Art

Monuments and Museums

- i) The National Holocaust Monument, Ottawa, Canada
<http://holocaustmonument.ca>
- ii) Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin, Germany
<https://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/en/home.html>
- iii) Yad Vashem—The World Holocaust Remembrance Center
<https://www.yadvashem.org>
- iv) Anne Frank House, Amsterdam, Netherlands
<https://www.annefrank.org/en/>
- v) The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Film and Video Archive
<https://www.ushmm.org/collections/the-museums-collections/about/film-and-video-archive>

Visual Art

- i) Artwork by Charlotte Salomon
<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/salomon-charlotte>

Literature

- i) *The Diary of a Young Girl/The Diary of Anne Frank* by Anne Frank (multiple editions; first published in 1947)
- ii) *Survival in Auschwitz* by Primo Levi (multiple editions; first published in 1947 under the title *If This is a Man*)
- iii) *Night* by Elie Wiesel (multiple editions; first published in 1960)
- iv) *Maus* by Art Spiegelman (multiple editions; first published in 1991)

Films

- i) *Shoah*, 1985, directed by Claude Lanzmann
- ii) *Europa Europa*, 1990, directed by Agnieszka Holland



Fig 24. Gershon Iskowitz, *It Burns*, c.1950–52. People run from the flames as a fire rages through the Kielce Ghetto.

HOW GERSHON ISKOWITZ MADE ART: STYLE & TECHNIQUE

Here are a few of the important artistic concepts that characterize the art of Gershon Iskowitz. For more information see the [Style & Technique](#) chapter of *Gershon Iskowitz: Life & Work*.

MEMORY WORKS

Iskowitz expressed his emotions and experiences in ink and watercolour “memory works” that focused on his childhood in prewar Poland and what he endured during the Holocaust. Iskowitz’s memory works are stark—not incredibly detailed—and naive, which reveals his lack of formal art training. Though sometimes called childlike, a naive style often means that the viewer’s emotional response, or what the work is communicating, is more important than academic techniques.

LANDSCAPE

Iskowitz began to draw and paint landscapes in the 1950s. In oil paint on canvas and on board, Iskowitz used bright colours to capture rural scenes of trees and sky, as well as different types of light. Some of his landscape drawings in pen and ink employ [pointillism](#) (creating whole pictures using only tiny dots), cross-hatching, or short and wavy strokes or lines. Even though he made many sketches outside, Iskowitz often painted the landscape from memory, trying to capture his experience of a place.

ABSTRACTION

In the late 1960s and 1970s Iskowitz’s painting moved from representational, where objects and people are depicted more literally in the work, to [abstract](#), where colour, lines, and shapes are used to create art that doesn’t seem to represent anything recognizable. Despite this change in style, Iskowitz continued to describe his paintings in terms of the landscape: the earth below as seen through small gaps between the clouds or the sky above seen through leaves in the trees and the dappling of sunlight.

Iskowitz used both oil paint and watercolour to make his abstract works. Iskowitz would layer his oil paint, waiting for one surface to dry before adding the next, stacking colours and shapes on top of one another until he was happy with the result. In watercolour, he used control and precision to avoid overbleed (losing the shape) or muddying the strong patches of colour.

Iskowitz’s abstract paintings often contain ovoid (egg-shaped) forms that appear to be floating on a neutral background. Sometimes he would paint the ovoids onto a background colour; other times he would paint the background last, around the ovoids. He often worked with multiple canvases to create very large-scale works, using two (diptychs), three ([triptychs](#)), and sometimes up to six or seven canvases or panels to make his pieces. By using different techniques, colours, and sizes, Iskowitz created paintings that had different moods and feelings.



Fig 25. Gershon Iskowitz, *Condemned*, c.1944–46. This memory work is a harrowing portrait of a prisoner in Buchenwald concentration camp.



Fig 26. Gershon Iskowitz, *Sunshine*, 1955. This is one of Iskowitz’s early representational landscapes.



Fig 27. Gershon Iskowitz, *Untitled*, 1977. Iskowitz’s watercolours are delicate and jewel-like.



Fig 28. Gershon Iskowitz, *Northern Lights Septet No. 3*, 1985. This large work is made up of seven individual panels.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Supplementary Materials Provided by the Art Canada Institute

- The online art book *Gershon Iskowitz: Life & Work* by Ihor Holubizky: <https://aci-iac.ca/art-books/gershon-iskowitz>
- [Gershon Iskowitz Image File](#) with artworks and images related to this lesson
- “Who Was Gershon Iskowitz?” biographic information sheet ([page 2](#))
- Timelines of national and world events and Gershon Iskowitz’s life ([page 3](#))
- “How Gershon Iskowitz Made Art: Style & Technique” information sheet ([page 11](#))

GLOSSARY

Here is a list of terms that appear in this resource guide and are relevant to the learning activities and culminating task. For a comprehensive list of art-related terms, visit the Art Canada Institute’s ever-growing [Glossary of Canadian Art History](#).

abstract art

Visual art that uses form, colour, line, and gestural marks in compositions that do not attempt to represent images of real things. Abstract art may interpret reality in an altered form, or depart from it entirely. Also called nonfigurative or nonrepresentational art.

Pointillism

A painting technique developed in 1886 by Georges Seurat and Paul Signac as an offshoot of Impressionism. In this style, rather than broken brushstrokes, artists used thousands of small dots of intense and complementary colours that coalesced to make their images. In this way they developed an understanding of how the human eye works and the reality of light as a spectrum of colour.

triptych

A triptych is an artistic work in three panels or parts. It may refer to a suite of relief carvings or paintings, or to a series of three literary or musical works meant to be considered together as reflections on a single theme.



Fig 29. Gershon Iskowitz, *Escape*, 1948. Before his liberation in 1945, Iskowitz made a desperate attempt to escape. As he scrambled over the fence, he was shot in the leg and fell, breaking his hip.

External Resources

The following external resources can be used to augment the learning activities and materials provided by the Art Canada Institute. They are to be used at the teacher's own discretion.

Yad Vashem—The World Holocaust Remembrance Center

<https://www.yadvashem.org>

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Film and Video Archive

<https://www.ushmm.org/collections/the-museums-collections/about/film-and-video-archive>

Since 1967, the Jewish Federations of Canada-United Israel Appeal has worked in partnership with Jewish Federations and regional communities across Canada to strengthen Jewish life and raise funds for programs and services in Canada, Israel, and overseas. Please see below a list of provincial Jewish Federations. They can provide educational information as well as connect you to smaller, local chapters or community organizations.

- [Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA](#)
- [The Atlantic Jewish Council](#)
- [Montreal Federation CJA](#)
- [Regional Jewish Communities of Ontario \(RJCO\)](#)
- [Jewish Federation of Ottawa](#)
- [UJA Federation of Greater Toronto](#)
- [Jewish Federation of Winnipeg](#)
- [Calgary Jewish Federation](#)
- [Jewish Federation of Edmonton](#)
- [Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver](#)



Fig 30. Gershon Iskowitz, *Torah*, 1951. Here Iskowitz depicts the pogrom in Kielce. One person carries Torah scrolls as he runs to safety.

FIGURE LIST

Every effort has been made to secure permissions for all copyrighted material. The Art Canada Institute will gladly correct any errors or omissions.

Fig 1. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Through Life*, c.1947, pen and black ink, watercolour, and gouache on illustration board, 52.7 x 42 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Joey, Toby, and Alan Tanenbaum, Toronto, 1998 (39902). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 2. Gershon Iskowitiz with painting design for a limited edition Art Gallery of Ontario umbrella, 1986, Gershon Iskowitiz Fonds, E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

Fig 3. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Ghetto*, c.1947, watercolour, gouache, and pen and black ink on card, 35.5 x 48.4 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (39904). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 4 Gershon Iskowitiz, *The Wall*, 1952, pen and black ink and oil paint on grey laid paper, 60.5 x 45.5 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Joey, Toby, and Alan Tanenbaum, Toronto, 1998 (39913). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 5. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Not Titled*, c.1987, oil on canvas, 96.5 x 83.8 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (AGO.128908). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 6. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Lowlands No. 9*, 1970, oil on canvas, 121.9 x 93.9 cm. Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of the Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation, 1995 (VAG 95.26.7). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation. Photo credit: Ian Lefebvre.

Fig 7. A photograph of Buchenwald concentration camp, date unknown. Photographer unknown. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington. Courtesy of Judith Saul Stix. © United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Fig 8. Mourners and local residents watch as men shovel dirt into the mass grave of the victims of the Kielce pogrom, 1946. Photographer unknown. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington (14393). Courtesy of Leah Lahav. © United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Fig 9. Jewish immigrants on board the General Sturgis arrive in Halifax in 1948. Photo courtesy: UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Fig 10. Flowers lie on a slab of the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin following the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 31, 2018. Courtesy of The Chilliwack Progress Associated Press. Photo credit: Markus Schreiber.

Fig 11. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Action*, 1941, pen and black ink, watercolour, and gouache on wove paper, 39.2 x 52.3 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Joey, Toby, and Alan Tanenbaum, Toronto, 1998 (39900). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 12. Temporary travel document, Military Government for Germany, Munich, May 3, 1948. Gershon Iskowitiz Fonds, E.P. Taylor Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Gift of the Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation, 2009 (LA.SC114.S3.2). Courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Fig 13. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Lowlands 1*, 1969, oil on canvas, 49.5 x 33.7 cm. Private collection. Courtesy of Waddingtons. © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 14. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Selection, Auschwitz*, 1947, pen and black ink, watercolour, and gouache on illustration board, 40.8 x 50.3 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Joey, Toby, and Alan Tanenbaum, Toronto, 1998 (39905). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 15. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Action*, 1941, pen and black ink, watercolour, and gouache on wove paper, 39.2 x 52.3 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Joey, Toby, and Alan Tanenbaum, Toronto, 1998 (39900). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 16. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Buchenwald*, 1944–45, watercolour on paper, 39.5 x 52.3 cm. McMaster Museum of Art, Hamilton, Levy Bequest Purchase, 1993 (1993.003.0001LB). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation. Photo credit: John Tamblyn.

Fig 17. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Barracks*, 1949, watercolour, pen and black ink, and gouache on wove paper, 38.3 x 50 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Joey, Toby, and Alan Tanenbaum, Toronto, 1998 (39906). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 18. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Untitled ("B-3124")*, 1951, felt marker on paper, 35.5 x 43 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (AGO.129173). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 19. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Side Street*, c.1952–54, watercolour, coloured ink, and gouache on illustration board, 50.9 x 63.5 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Joey, Toby, and Alan Tanenbaum, Toronto, 1998 (39914). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 20. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Korban*, c.1952, gouache on board, 43.5 x 53 cm. McMaster Museum of Art, Hamilton, Gift of Gerard Jennings in memory of Walter Moos, 2013 (2013.002.0001). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation. Photo credit: Robert McNair.

Fig 21. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Market*, c.1952–54, coloured ink, gouache, and pen and black ink on illustration board, 51.9 x 60.7 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (39922). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 22. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Miriam*, c.1951–52, coloured ink, watercolour, and gouache on illustration board, 37.7 x 26.8 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (39912). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 23. Infographic showing the history of genocide by the numbers. <https://graphs.net/history-of-genocide-by-the-numbers.html>.

Fig 24. Gershon Iskowitiz, *It Burns*, c.1950–52, coloured ink and gouache on illustration board, 50.9 x 63.4 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Joey, Toby, and Alan Tanenbaum, Toronto, 1998 (39917). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 25. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Condemned*, c.1944–46, pen and black ink and watercolour on cream wove paper, 71.3 x 54.4 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Joey, Toby, and Alan Tanenbaum, Toronto, 1998 (39901). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 26. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Sunshine*, 1955, oil on board, 50.8 x 61 cm. University of Lethbridge Art Collection, Gift of M. Wiltshire (1993.46). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 27. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Untitled*, 1977, watercolour on paper, 42.8 x 56 cm. Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (Dr.1995.23). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 28. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Northern Lights Septet No. 3*, 1985, oil on canvas on shaped plywood in seven sections, overall: 233.5 x 410.2 cm. University of Lethbridge Art Gallery, Gift of the Iskowitiz Foundation (1995.91). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 29. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Escape*, 1948, oil on paper, mounted on corrugated cardboard, 28.3 x 40 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Gift of Joey, Toby, and Alan Tanenbaum, Toronto, 1998 (39924). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.

Fig 30. Gershon Iskowitiz, *Torah*, 1951, gouache and brush and black ink on illustration board, 43 x 53.3 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (39909). © Gershon Iskowitiz Foundation.