

# FACING SURVIVAL | DAVID KASSAN

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**CONTACT:** Robin Cavanaugh

[rcavanaugh@hmh.org](mailto:rcavanaugh@hmh.org) / 713-851-4478

## *Facing Survival | David Kassan* Exhibition Coming to Holocaust Museum Houston

**Houston (June 26, 2024)** . . . Holocaust Museum Houston is proud to announce a compelling and transformative exhibition, *Facing Survival | David Kassan*, opening in Houston July 12, 2024. This extraordinary showcase features the masterful paintings and drawings of acclaimed artist David Kassan, capturing the poignant stories and portraits of more than 24 Holocaust survivors ([link to photos](#)). The exhibition promises to be an unforgettable experience, inviting audiences to bear witness to the strength and resilience of those who persevered through unimaginable adversity.

Through the evocative paintings and sketches meticulously crafted by Kassan, the exhibition unveils the individual journey of each Holocaust survivor. By intertwining the visual representation of the survivors with the sketches revealing Kassan's artistic process, this exhibition transcends conventional forms of testimony, forging a poignant visual language that surpasses the limitations of spoken or written word. Preceding the creation of each portrait, Kassan deeply engaged with the survivors, filming their testimonies and comprehending their intricate histories. His profound connection with his subjects enables him to capture not just their present visages, but the essence of their harrowing pasts.

Houston's own Ruth Steinfeld is featured in the exhibition. Ruth and her sister Lea, z"l, were deported with their parents in 1940 to Gurs in the French Pyrenees. To save their daughters, just 7 and 8 years of age, Ruth's parents released them to the care of the French Jewish humanitarian organization OEuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE). They spent the remainder of the war in French orphanages and with a foster family until their grandfather brought them to the United States in 1946. He died six months later so the girls were moved to Houston to finish their education. Ruth Steinfeld's portrait includes her proud display of the French Legion of Honor medal, the highest honor in France, bestowed upon her in October 2021 for her continued role in teaching young people about the Holocaust.

"While a picture captures a moment in time, a portrait captures the undeniable spirit of the subject matter," said Linda Burger, Interim CEO of Holocaust Museum Houston. "The art of David Kassan communicates in a purely visual language that extends beyond the survivor's verbal and written word. Kassan's combination of portrait art and testimony will leave an indelible mark on all who experience it."

On view July 12, 2024, through January 5, 2025, the exhibition provides visitors with an immersive and moving experience that invites reflection, empathy and an appreciation for the resilience of the human spirit. In addition to the artworks, the museum will host special events and guided tours, offering visitors a deeper understanding of Kassan's creative process and the stories behind the powerful portraits.

*Facing Survival | David Kassan* is funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance. Title Sponsors of *Facing Survival* include Humanities Texas and National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Ronald Grabois Family Endowment Fund. To learn more, please visit [hmh.org/facingsurvival](https://hmh.org/facingsurvival). Tickets are available at [hmh.org/tickets](https://hmh.org/tickets).

HMH's Lester and Sue Smith Campus is located at 5401 Caroline Street in Houston's historic museum district. The Museum is closed Mondays except Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day and Labor Day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. Admission is \$22 for adults; \$16 for seniors (ages 65+) and AARP members; free for active duty military and their families through Labor Day, September 2, 2024; always free for children and students through age 18 and college students with valid student ID; and free to all visitors Thursdays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The Bagel Shop @ The Museum is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. Parking is available in the Museum's adjacent lot for \$8 for a four-hour period. Tickets are available exclusively online. For more information, visit [hmh.org/visit](https://hmh.org/visit).

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