FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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News Release:
Traveling Exhibition at the University of Alberta—Artwork by Holocaust Survivor Nelly Toll

The exhibition *Imagining a Better World: The Artwork of Nelly Toll* features digital reproductions of the wartime artwork of Nelly Toll, a childhood survivor of the Holocaust. It will be on view at the University of Alberta’s Human Ecology Gallery from October 8, 2017, to March 30, 2018.

In 1943, a sympathetic Christian family hid Nelly Zygmunt and her mother from the Nazis in Lwow, Poland. During their year of confinement, Nelly created brightly detailed watercolor dreams of her ideal world. Her optimistic paintings are an important counterpart to the cruelty depicted by most children of the Holocaust.

The compassionate family that harbored the Zygmunts bricked over an outside window opening and placed a decorative rug over the interior. When visitors came to the apartment, Nelly and her mother were forced to stand on the ledge of the secret window.

After World War II, Nelly immigrated to the United States. She pursued formal art training, earning a master’s degree in art and art history and education from Rutgers University. She attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia and received a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Toll has published three books on the topic of the Holocaust and related art.

“Nelly dared to dream, imagining a better world that manifested in her creation of nearly 60 watercolor paintings,” said Alexandra Nicholis Coon, Executive Director of the Massillon Museum, which conceived and first presented this exhibition about a journey of hope and imagination. The institution received the “Ohio Museums Association Best Exhibition 2014” award and a “Museums for America” award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to facilitate traveling the exhibition. In 2016, Dr. Toll’s artwork was featured in a *The New York Times* article and was on display in the German Historical Museum in Berlin. She was the only remaining living artist featured in the museum’s exhibition of Holocaust art.

A presentation by Dr. Nelly Toll on October 20, 2:00-3:30 pm (student lounge, main floor, Old Arts/Convocation Hall Building, University of Alberta North Campus) will be part of The Wirth Institute’s Central European Café. A small reception will follow in the Human Ecology Gallery from 4:00-5:30 pm.

The Alberta venue is sponsored by The Jewish Federation of Edmonton’s Holocaust Education Committee, The Kule Institute for Advanced Study (KIAS), and The Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies. The exhibition is held in conjunction with Jewish Studies Week.

For more information about the Nelly Toll exhibition and presentation, call Anne Bissonnette at 780-492-3606 or visit [http://hecol.museums.ualberta.ca/ClothingAndTextiles/Exhibitions.aspx](http://hecol.museums.ualberta.ca/ClothingAndTextiles/Exhibitions.aspx).

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The Human Ecology Gallery is located in the south entrance of the Human Ecology Building on the corner of 116 Street and 87 Avenue by the Stadium Car Park (University of Alberta North Campus). The Gallery is open from Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 6 pm. Please call for holiday hours at 780-492-3824. Entrance is free.