

Drawings from 'Al-Fazîa' by Tobi Dahmen



**SURVIVOR-CENTRED
VISUAL NARRATIVES**

Fall 2025 Newsletter

Dear all,

Fall has been a flurry of internal activities for SCVN, as we prepared publications, reflected on our process, and completed our SSHRC Midterm Report.

We have been working with publishers to prepare for upcoming releases in 2026 by reviewing manuscript feedback, determining publication dates, and organizing book launches. As such, *Two Roses* will be released in February, with a book launch at the Toronto Holocaust Museum on March 25, and *Al-Fazîa'* will be published in Germany in May. We are also honoured to announce a new publication deal with Swift Water Books, an Indigenous-led imprint within Tundra Book Group, to publish *Indians Do Cry: A Father-Son Hockey Story* in 2027.

Our first publication, *Emmie Arbel. The Colour of Memory* (2023), was recently recognized by two more prestigious awards: 1) Barbara Yelin received the Grand Prize of the German Academy for Children's and Young Adult Literature (Deutsche Akademie für Kinder- und Jugendliteratur), and 2) Barbara and Emmie Arbel received the 'Against Forgetting – For Democracy' (Gegen Vergessen – Für Demokratie e. V.). Congratulations on the continued celebration and success of your work together!

This fall has also been a reflection on process across the project, as seen in the community workshop hosted by the Rwanda Research Cluster, an interview with Barbara Yelin, two methodology articles by Charlotte Schallié, and interviews with each survivor and artist for *The Malahat Review*. After three years of work, we are beginning to highlight some of the emerging research within the SCVN project.

The most significant point of reflection has been the SSHRC Midterm Report we submitted in October. The report required months of preparation, from documenting activities with our partners to media updates and financial reviews. We reflected upon how the extended graphic narratives created new challenges and opportunities, and we are honoured to be able to share more of each survivor's lived experiences in the expanded versions.

With the increased scope and scale, we are also grateful for the institutional support from our grant host, the University of Victoria, and for our project partners' support as we grow into the next phase.

Thank you for your continued engagement, and we wish you all a restful holiday season.

Charlotte Schallié, Andrea Webb, and Jennifer Sauter

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Project Updates

Rwanda Research Cluster

Wiener Holocaust Library: Panel and Premiere of 'Why We Dance'

On October 23, the Wiener Holocaust Library hosted the panel discussion 'Why Comics? Telling Survivor Stories Through Graphic Novels' with Rwanda Research Cluster Co-Leads Dr. Erin Jesse and Dr. Fransiska Louwagie. It explored how graphic novels can be a powerful medium for sharing stories of the Holocaust and other genocides and mass atrocities. The talk included the premiere of Marc Ellison's film *Why We Dance*, featuring graphic novelist Michel Kichka as he interviews survivor Jerome Irankunda about his life and experiences during and after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. More information is available on the [library's website](#), and the trailer for *Why We Dance* is available on [SCVN YouTube](#).

Project Talk: Why Comics? Telling Survivor Stories through the Graphic Novel Medium



Poster from the Wiener Holocaust Library event: 'Why Comics? Telling Survivor Stories Through Graphic Novels' on October 23, 2025.

Iraq & Syria Research Cluster

'Al-Fazīa' to be Published in German in May 2026

'Al-Fazīa', written as a collaboration between graphic artist Tobi Dahmen and Assad regime survivor Akram Al Saud, is available for [preorder](#) from its German publisher Carlsen Comics. The graphic narrative follows Akram as a young architecture student who moved to Aleppo and was arrested and detained illegally there by the regime. At the same time, the narrative follows Tobi as he records and draws Akram's story. The graphic narrative is set for release on May 26, 2026.

tobi dahmen & akram al saud

al-fazia'

القطيع

das grauen

überleben in syriens gefängnissen



Herausgeben von Ugur Ümit Öngür and Charlotte Schallié

CARLSEN
COMICS

Cover for upcoming German publication of "Al-Fazia" (Carlsen Comics, 2026).

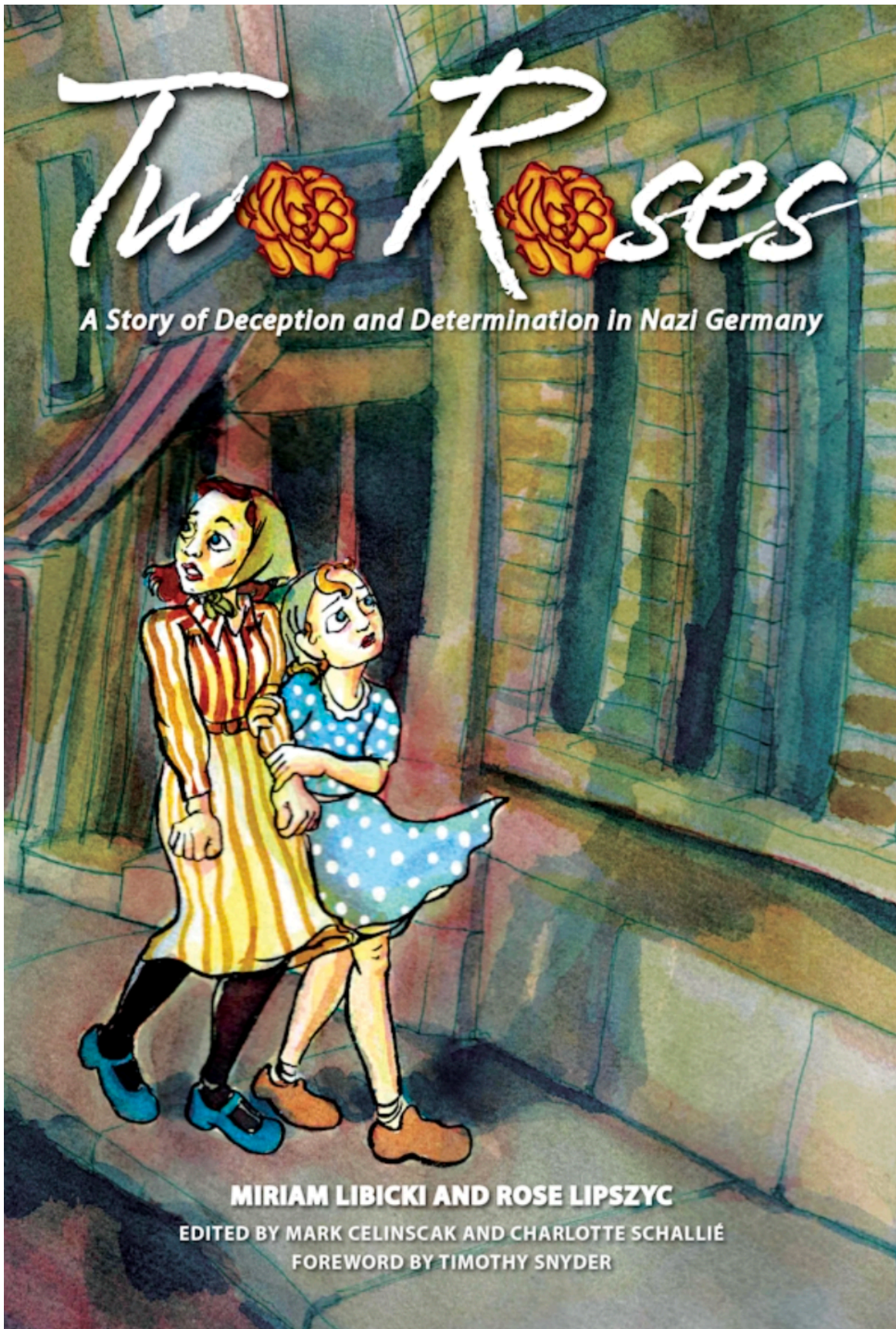
Holocaust Research Cluster

Miriam Libicki Interviews with GraphicMemoirBlog

In September, Jonathan Sandler, host of the [GraphicMemoirBlog](#) and author of *The English GI* (2022), interviewed SCVN graphic artist Miriam Libicki in a blog feature titled 'A Conversation with Miriam Libicki: WWII Graphic Memoirs'. In the interview, Jonathan and Miriam discussed Miriam's SCVN collaborations with Holocaust survivors in *But I Live* and the upcoming publication of *Two Roses*. The interview is available on the [GraphicMemoirBlog](#).

Two Roses to be Published in February 2026

The University of Toronto Press (UTP) will publish *Two Roses: A Story of Deception and Determination* on February 24, 2026. It is available for preorder from the publisher's [website](#) and a book launch is taking place at the Toronto Holocaust Museum on March 25. The book launch programming details will be announced in January.



Cover of 'Two Roses: A Story of Deception and Determination' (University of Toronto Press, 2026).

Yugoslav Wars Research Cluster

'Almasa's Story' Trailer Released

The documentary short film 'Almasa's Story,' directed by Bojan Hadžiabdić, is complete, and the trailer is available for viewing on the SCVN YouTube channel. Filmed in Sarajevo, it depicts graphic artist Anneli Furmark's journey working alongside Almasa Salihović, a survivor of the Srebrenica massacre. It weaves together comic panels from their upcoming graphic narrative *As Long As We Are Together* and conversations with Anneli and Almasa, discussing Almasa's experiences and the lingering impacts of the genocide on the community.



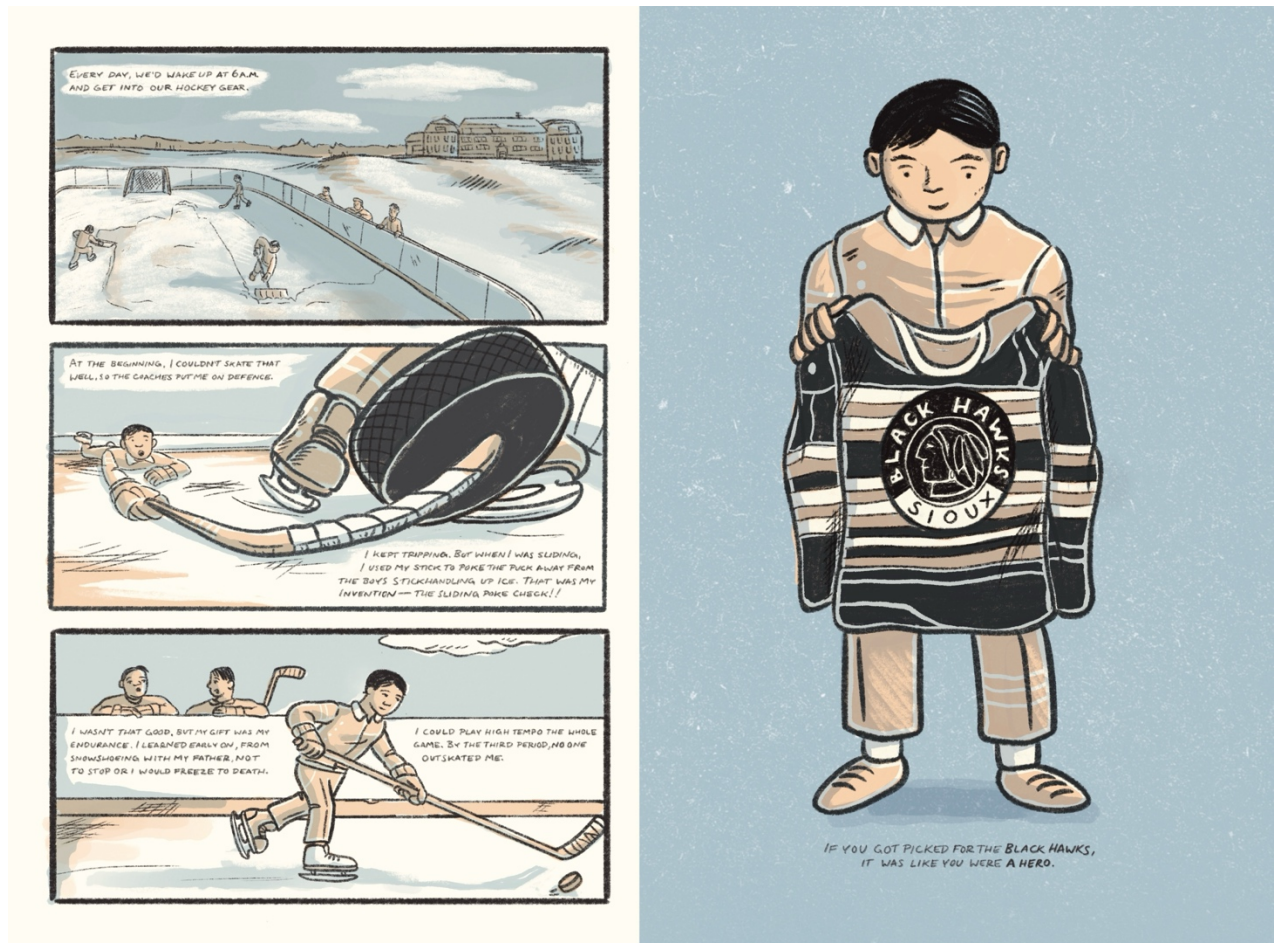
Still from Almasa's Story (2025), directed by Bojan Hadžiabdić.

Turtle Island Research Cluster

Publishing Deal Announced for 'Indians Do Cry'

SCVN proudly announces that *Indians Do Cry: A Father-Son Hockey Story* has signed a publishing deal with Swift Water Books. The graphic novel has come out of a partnership between Anishinaabe journalist Duncan McCue and acclaimed artist Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley, in collaboration with residential school survivor George Kenny and his son Mike Auksi.

Swift Water Books launched in February 2025 under the editorial leadership of David Robertson, an award-winning Cree author. The publishing house, an imprint of Tundra Book Group at Penguin Random House Canada, is dedicated to publishing works by Indigenous writers and illustrators. *Indians Do Cry* joins a slate of highly anticipated titles set to debut in Spring 2026, reinforcing the imprint's commitment to sharing authentic Indigenous stories with young readers and beyond. More info about the deal, the graphic novel, and people involved is available [here](#) on our blog.



Panels from drafts of *Indians Do Cry*. Image credit: Joshua Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley.

Events & Programs

Community Building

New Media Lead: Maya Wei Yan Linsley

Maya Wei Yan Linsley joined the SCVN team this fall as the new Media and Communications Lead. She brings copy-editing experience as an English MA and is a creative force supporting media and web design. As our media team has grown from two students to six this fall, Maya is working with the students to support ongoing content creation including blogs, interviews, media design, translations, subtitles, and transcripts.

The Malahat Review Interviews

Dr. Iain Higgins, editor of the literary journal [the Malahat Review](#), and project director Dr. Charlotte Schallié, are conducting interviews with project survivors and graphic artists to reflect on their experiences and process co-creating the visual narratives. The interviews will continue through the spring, and the reflections will be published in a special issue, 'Drawing on Memory', in fall 2026.



Artist Café - November

Our Artist Café in November hosted the Rwanda Research Cluster's graphic artist, Michel Kichka. He is working with Jerome Irankunda to share Jerome's experiences as a child survivor of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. As a political cartoonist, Michel reflected on the fact that this is the most realistic style he has drawn and his first non-autobiographical work. We look forward to seeing more of his new work in spring 2026.



*Jerome Irankunda and Michel Kichka during the team's March 2024 trip to Rwanda.
Drawing by Michel Kichka and photo credit Marc Ellison.*

Resources

[Methodology Articles and Scholarly Resources Page](#)

We are excited to announce the publication of two articles by project director Dr. Charlotte Schallié. In these articles, Dr. Schallié articulates the methodology that lies at the heart of the SCVN project, underscoring relationality, participation, and care ethics as key elements in the collaborative process. Learn more on our blog [here](#).

In turn, we have recently launched our 'Scholarly Resources' page on the SCVN website to document exciting new research and publications coming out of the project, including related external literature and reviews. At present, the page contains book chapters, journal articles, grey literature, and conference papers, and we look forward to updating the page as more research outputs become available.

Presentations

Rwanda Research Cluster at Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities

This October, the Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities hosted a panel and workshop featuring members of SCVN's Rwanda Research Cluster titled Community Engagement and Intercultural Sensitivity: Ethics, Design and Practice. The event was at the University of Aberdeen led by Dr. Fransiska Louwagie and featured three speakers: Drs. Anna Ball, Erin Jessee, and María Soledad Montañez. The panel and workshop offered insight into both the impactful dissemination and collaborative creation of new knowledge.

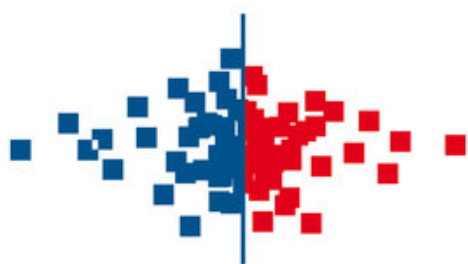


Dr. Anna Ball speaks during the introduction of the workshop. Photo credit: Fransiska Louwagie.

Awards

'Emmie Arbel' Wins 'Against Forgetting - For Democracy' Prize

We are honoured to announce that Barbara Yelin and Emmie Arbel's collaborative graphic novel has won the 'Gegen Vergessen – Für Demokratie' (Against Forgetting – For Democracy) 2025 prize from Gegen Vergessen – Für Demokratie e.V. The award recognizes individuals, initiatives, and/or projects whose outstanding work aligns with the association's goals of developing appropriate forms of engagement with the past and/or right-wing extremism and clearly demonstrates democratic values. More information about the award and accompanying ceremony are available on [Gegen Vergessen's website](#).



Gegen Vergessen
Für Demokratie e.V.

Grand Prize of the German Academy for Children's and Young Adult Literature Awarded to Barbara Yelin



We also want to celebrate Barbara Yelin receiving the 2025 annual [Grand Prize of the German Academy for Children's and Young Adult Literature](#) (Deutsche Akademie für Kinder- und Jugendliteratur), granted in recognition for outstanding achievements in children's and young adult literature. The award ceremony took place in November in Volkach, Germany, and recognized Yelin's 'multifaceted storytelling in the medium of comics', citing her work on SCVN projects *But I Live* and *Emmie Arbel* among other works.

Exhibits

Al-Fazia' Featured in Exhibition at Turm zur Katz

An exhibition featuring Tobi Dahmen's collaborative project with Akram Al Saud, who survived imprisonment and torture under the totalitarian Assad regime in Syria, has just opened at the Turm zur Katz Gallery in Konstanz, Germany. The exhibition's title is *Zeitzeichen: Comic & Erinnerung* (Time Capsules: Comics & Memories) and is curated by frequent SCVN collaborator Jakob Hoffmann. It includes the work of four graphic novelists who explore contemporary histories using graphic narratives. The exhibit runs through March 2026.



Front page of the Turm zur Katz's website hosting the exhibition.



From left to right: Tobi demonstrating the size of Akram's cell, Birgit Weyhe and Nora Krug examining Tobi's panels, and Tobi and Akram in conversation. Photos courtesy of Jakob Hoffmann

Artist Spotlight

Barbara Yelin



Barbara Yelin in a panel discussion: 'Memory as heritage: The next generation at the 'Munich Literature Festival (2023).

We are delighted to spotlight the work of the Holocaust Research Cluster's graphic artist Barbara Yelin. She was part of the original Partnership Development Grant, sparking a five-year collaboration with Holocaust survivor Emmie Arbel resulting in the graphic novel *Emmie Arbel. The Colour of Memory*. It has received several prizes in the second half of the year, as noted in our awards section.

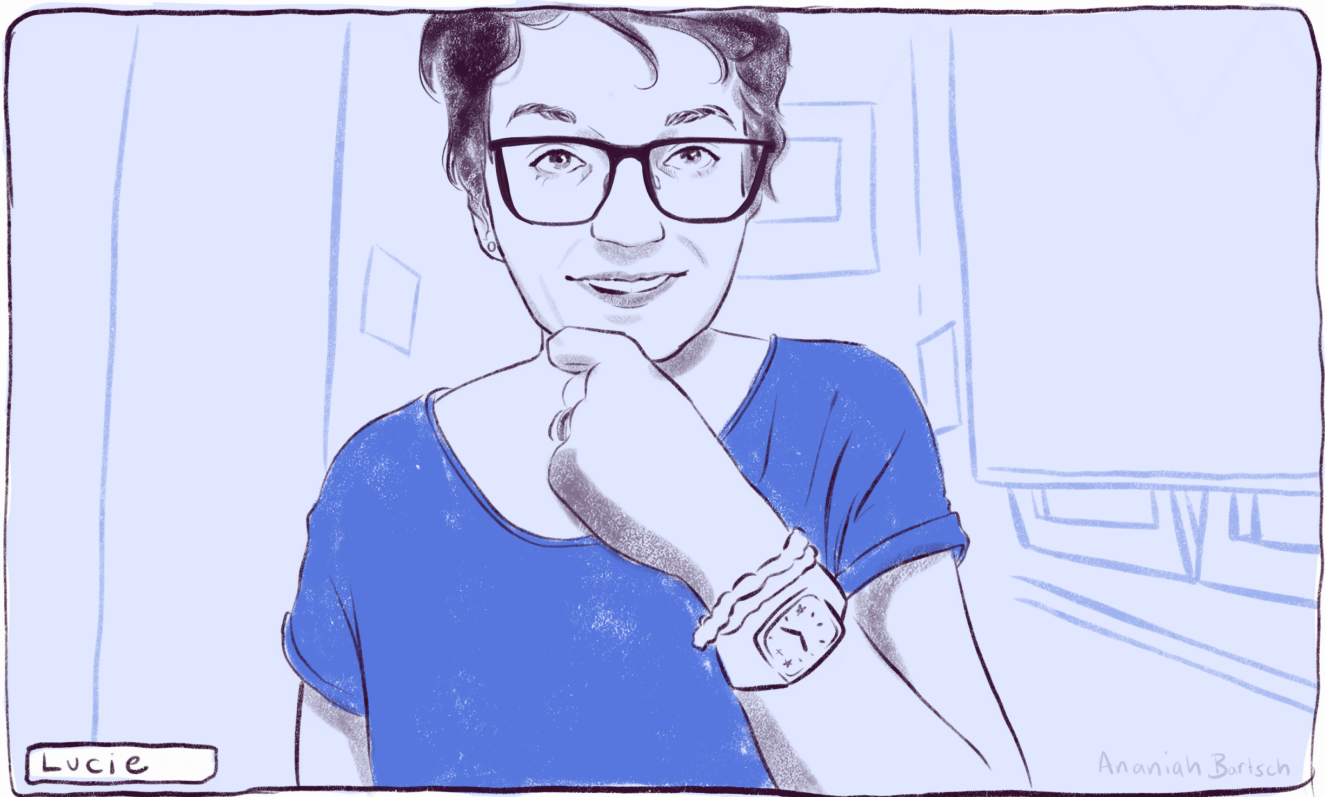
This summer, former SCVN research assistant Lucie Kotesovska interviewed Barbara to discuss the creation of her graphic novel, *Emmie Arbel. The Colour of Memory*. In their interview, Lucie and Barbara reflect upon the novel's critical success, Barbara's collaborative approach to storytelling with Emmie, and the moments of narrative silence and interruption. The full interview is available [here](#).

Student Spotlight

Lucie Kotesovska

We would also like to highlight the work of former SCVN research assistant Lucie Kotesovska at the University of Victoria (UVic) over the last year and a half. Lucie has been involved in countless project activities, from webinar transcription and developing blog posts, to interviews with graphic artists.

In November, undergraduate students Ananiah Bartsch and Lily Schaefer interviewed Lucie as part of a practicum for HUMA 180: Encountering Humanities Research, one of the three courses that make up UVic's Humanities Scholars program. In this interview Lucie reflects on her involvement in the SCVN project, the realities of working with difficult stories, and the lessons she learned from her work as a research assistant. The interview is available to read on our blog [here](#).



Drawing of Lucie Kotesovska in the HUMA 180 interview by Ananiah Bartsch.

Communications & Connections

Follow our social media accounts for project updates and stories:

- Instagram: [@survivorvisualnarratives](#)
- Facebook: [Survivor-Centred Visual Narratives](#)
- LinkedIn: [Survivor-Centred Visual Narratives](#)

Submit stories and updates to commsvisual@uvic.ca to be featured on our social media and blog

Tag us in your content for a re-share!



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