

Survivor-Centred Visual Narratives

Summer 2026 Newsletter

Dear Colleagues,

As we settle into the fall term, we have much to reflect on since our break in the spring. With several graphic novels well underway, we are delighted to celebrate five new releases this year: *Solange wir zusammen sind: Eine Kindheit in Srebrenica* by Anneli Furmark and Almasa Salihović (translated by Johann Ulrich; Avant-Verlag, 2026), *Das Geheimnis des Jüdischen Krankenhauses: Nach den Erinnerungen von Klaus Zwilsky* by Gilad Seliktar (translated by Rita Seuß; C.H. Beck, 2026), *Nous ont-ils oubliés ?* by Gilad Seliktar (translated by Hélène Duhamel; Éditions çà et là, 2026), *Gib nicht auf! Wie eine junge Ezidin den Völkermord überlebt* by Birgit Weyhe and Jilan (Avant-Verlag, 2026), and *Al-Fazia': The Horror - Surviving Syria's Prisons* by Tobi Dahmen and Akram Al Saud (University of Toronto Press, 2026).

Alongside these publications, we are continuing to facilitate the development of complementary teaching resources. At our Annual General Meeting in Winnipeg this June, we discussed how to deepen our commitment and foundation of human rights in our educational materials. To further support teachers working with the graphic novels, Yugoslav Wars Research Cluster Co-Lead Dr. Franziska Zaugg is hosting an upcoming workshop at the University of Fribourg on November 18. She will be joined by curriculum developer Dr. Tatia Gruenbaum and graphic artist Jared Muralt.

As our research outputs begins to emerge, we are delighted to share SCVN's research assistant Ghada Youssef was one of the top five winners of the 2026 SSHRC Storytellers Challenge, and our documentary film 'Why We Dance' has won three awards at

international film festivals. We also have a call for papers for a special edition of the Journal of History:"Historical Testimony and the Arts." It will be co-edited by SCVN director Dr. Charlotte Schallié and Holocaust Research Cluster co-lead Dr. Mark Celinscak.

Looking ahead, our priorities continue to be supporting the publication processes and dissemination of each graphic novel, developing the teaching resources and connecting with project partners to amplify the outreach of both the graphic novel and educational materials.

We look forward to sharing some exciting graphic novel and film updates this fall.

Charlotte Schallié, Andrea Webb, and Jennifer Sauter

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Teaching Resources

Iraq & Syria Research Cluster

Al-Faẓia' Teaching Resources

As part of the project's educational initiatives, Dr. Tatia Gruenbaum of the Technical University of Braunschweig has developed a set of teaching materials to accompany the graphic novel *Al-Faẓia' (2026)* by Tobi Dahmen and Akram Al Saud. Available in both English and German, the teaching materials titled 'Life in Moments' include four mini units that were designed to empower upper-secondary students to think critically and compassionately about the experiences of survivors of violent authoritarian rule. 'Life in Moments' includes four lessons with key terms and a reference list. Visit our Educational Resources page to download a PDF of the materials or view the online flipbooks.



Holocaust Research Cluster

Two Roses Teaching Resources

Continuing our run of new educational materials, we also developed a suite of classroom-ready tools based on *Two Roses (2026)* by Miriam Libicki and Rose Lipszyc. "Arts-Based Holocaust Remembrance," by Andrea Webb, Alyssa Wood, and Cass Minkus, is an open educational resource based on both *Two Roses* and *A Kind of Resistance*. It draws on current classroom practices, pedagogy, and curriculum to give teachers the tools to bring Holocaust education into the classroom in an engaging, comprehensive, and respectful way. It will also be available in French, translated by SCVN research assistants Alemna Alurugo and Jacqueline Rutherford. Follow the link to the Pressbooks website to view or download the resource.



Yugoslav Wars Research Cluster

Upcoming Teachers' Workshop at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland

On November 18, Research Cluster Co-lead Dr. Franziska Zaugg is hosting a one day workshop titled '(Gewalt-) Geschichte als Comic? Neue Möglichkeiten der Vermittlung / (Violent) History as a Graphic Novel? New Possibilities for Communicating and Teaching' for teachers at the University of Fribourg. It will provide an overview of graphic novels as part of historical scholarship, share approaches from the SCVN project, and explore how to teach violent histories through graphic novels. Project artist Jared Muralt will share insights on his experiences working with a Roma survivor of the Yugoslav Wars in the upcoming graphic novel *Ružica's Last Summer*. The workshop also includes Dr. Tatia Gruenbaum, who is developing the teaching resources for our graphic novels published in German. Registration and more details about the workshop can be found here.



Events & Programs

Community Building

Call for Papers: Journal of History - Special Issue

The Journal of History is inviting scholars from a broad range of disciplines to contribute to a special issue entitled 'Historical Testimony and the Arts.' It will be co-edited by SCVN director Dr. Charlotte Schallié and Holocaust Research Cluster co-lead Dr. Mark Celinscak. This issue will examine how historical testimony can be used to both represent and understand the past. What are the uses of testimony for researchers, artists, and audiences? What are the limits of those forms of representation in their use of these accounts? How can art and other forms of representation challenge our understanding of history? Submissions are due on **December 4.**

Read the full call for papers on the University of Toronto press website.

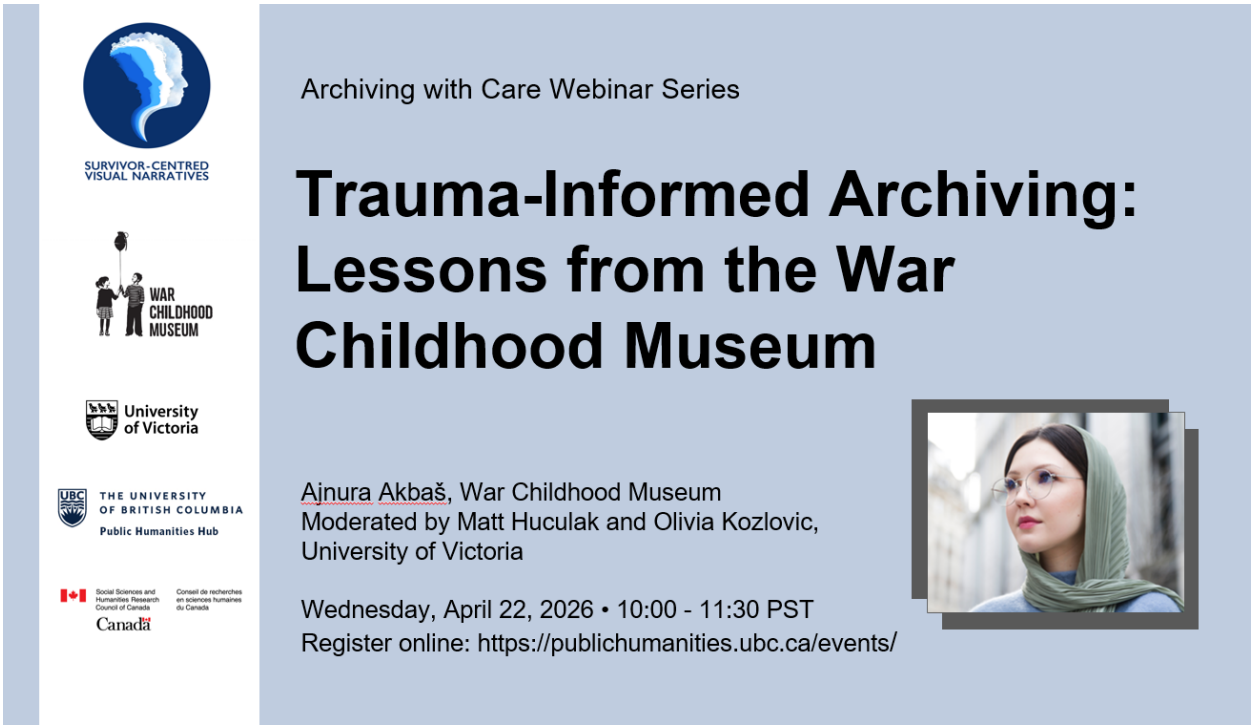
Please direct any inquiries to jh_editor@utpress.utoronto.ca.



Archiving with Care Webinar Series

This spring, we concluded the 'Archiving with Care' webinar series with two more fantastic webinars. The series, co-hosted by the UBC Public Humanities Hub, explored archival practices as a collaborative, participatory, and care-based methodology through conversations with SCVN researchers, archivists, and survivors.

The third webinar in the series, 'Trauma-Informed Archiving: Lessons from the War Childhood Museum' took place on April 22. Dr. Ajnura Akbaš, a community liaison for the Yugoslav Wars Research Cluster and a researcher from the War Childhood Museum in Sarajevo, spoke about community-engaged approaches to documenting and archiving the 1992–1995 Bosnian War. The webinar was moderated by Dr. Matt Huculak and MA candidate Olivia Kozlovic.



On May 5, 'Oral Histories in the Archive: Stories from Turtle Island and Rwanda,' the fourth and final webinar in the series, brought together SCVN's Rwanda Research Cluster co-leads Erin Jessee and Fransiska Louwagie and journalist and storyteller Duncan McCue from the Turtle Island Research Cluster. The webinar was moderated by Turtle Island Research Cluster co-lead Biz Nijdam and explored how cultures with rich oral histories can be documented and archived with care. Follow the link for more info.



Exhibits

Buchenwald Memorial hosts 'Emmie Arbel. The Colour of Memory'

An exhibition of original water colours, sketches, and excerpts from the graphic novel *Emmie Arbel: The Colour of Memory (Emmie Arbel. Die Farbe der Erinnerung)* is featured at the Buchenwald Memorial in Germany from July 24 to October 25, 2026. The exhibit is titled 'Emmie Arbel. The Color of Memory. An exhibition with paintings by Barbara Yelin,' and is part of the German Academy Rome Villa Massimo's Festival of Scholars where Barbara Yelin had a one year artist residency.

Presentations & Events

Presentations in New York: LaGuardia Community College & Parsons School of Design

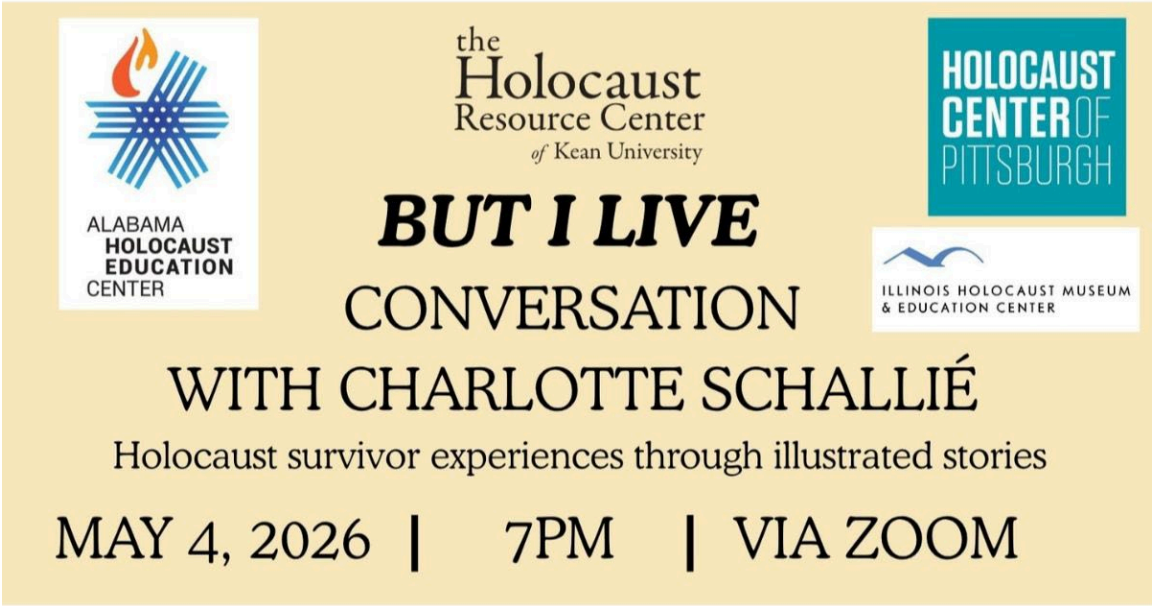
On April 29, Dr. Charlotte Schallié presented in Nora Krug's class at the Parsons School of Design and at the LaGuardia Community College in New York City on the many projects undertaken by SCVN. As part of this presentation, Charlotte discussed how the graphic novels from this project grew from collaborations between survivors, artists, and scholars, resulting in empathetic, accessible ways to learn. Charlotte also described how the project uses documentary filmmaking to share how artists and survivors co-create graphic narratives from testimony with the ultimate goal of educating audiences to help prevent future human rights abuses.



Charlotte presenting to LaGuardia Community College students in New York City.

'But I Live' Webinar at Kean University's Holocaust Research Center

On May 4, Kean University’s Holocaust Research Center hosted a public webinar with SCVN director Dr. Charlotte Schallié. The webinar was co-sponsored by the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh, the Alabama Holocaust Education Center, and the Illinois Museum & Education Center.



Healing Trauma in the Anthropocene: Workshop at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences

Project manager Jennifer Sauter was invited to participate a three-day workshop on 'Healing Trauma in the Anthropocene' from May 26-28, at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, Sweden. This workshop was co-organized by the Stockholm Resilience Centre, the Global Resilience Partnership, and the Anthropocene Laboratory.

It brought together international expertise spanning anthropology, psychology, human geography, museology, sustainability, organizational science, and the arts to explore the role that healing may play in how individuals and communities adapt or transform in the face of Anthropocene challenges. It focused on learning from different contexts, experiences and approaches to develop and spread capacities seen in the presence of healing at different scales for the psychological, emotional, and existential challenges of the Anthropocene. Jennifer's reflections from workshop can be read here.



Workshop participants on the final day of 'Healing Trauma in the Anthropocene.' Photo courtesy of Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and the Anthropocene Lab.

Annual General Meeting: Human Rights Education and Partner Connections

Our Annual General Meeting took place from June 10-12, in Winnipeg, Canada, and was facilitated by local host, Kjell Anderson with the University of Manitoba at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. We gathered researchers, students, educators and partners to deepen our shared commitment to human rights through education and visual arts. We reflected on ethical methodologies, co-create public-facing outputs, and strategize dissemination pathways that honour survivor agency and challenge epistemic injustice. A summary of each day by Ana-Maria Costa is available on our blog as Day 1 and Day 2, as well as a reflection by Marie-Chantal Plouffe.



The following illustration was created by Kara Sievewright as part a series of the graphic recordings she developed documenting converations at the AGM.





The Canadian Museum for Human Rights and the group tour of the permanent exhibit. Photo credit: Jennifer Sauter.

'Drawing Justice: Graphic Novels and Human Rights' Panel

On June 11, as part of the SCVN Annual General Meeting, the Agowiidiwinan Centre in Winnipeg hosted a panel discussion with journalist Duncan McCue and intergenerational survivor Mike Auksi, who have been working closely with the Turtle Island Research Cluster on the upcoming graphic novel *Indian's Do Cry: A Father-Son Hockey Story*. Duncan and Mike were joined on stage by Sonya Ballantyne and Candida Rifkind for a conversation on graphic novels, visual storytelling, Indigenous narratives, and human rights. The panelists explored collaborative, arts-based approaches that centre community, lived experience, and survivor agency, and discussed how visual narratives can educate, advocate, and move people to action. The full recording is available here.



From left to right: Sonya Ballantyne, Candida Rifkind, Duncan McCue, Mike Auksi and Kjell Anderson on the "Drawing Justice" panel at the 2026 SCVN AGM. Photo credit: Maddy Nowosad.

Awards

Ghada Youssef Wins SSHRC Storytellers Challenge

One of the most exciting updates we get to share with you this summer belongs to SCVN research assistant Ghada Youssef, who last month was announced as one of the five winners of the 2026 Storytellers Challenge! The challenge, presented by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada, invited postsecondary students to show Canadians, in up to three minutes or 300 words, how social sciences and humanities research is impacting our lives, our world, and our future for the better. In her video submission, Ghada summarized the project's goals, outputs, and its commitment to honouring survivors' voices. In June, Ghada flew to Montréal, Quebec, to present her submission to a jury and live audience at the Storytellers Showcase.

Ghada's selection was featured in a UVic News article. You can read about it and watch the video on our blog and at the Government of Canada website.

Congratulations to Ghada on this well-deserved recognition!



'Why We Dance' Wins Third Award to Date

In the time since our last newsletter, Marc Ellison's documentary short film *Why We Dance* has continued to receive critical and audience acclaim. Only a few months ago in April, 'Why We Dance' won the Indie World Film Award for Best Documentary Short, its third award to date. 'Why We Dance', which had its first public screening at the University of Kigali on April 17, documents the collaborative journey between Jerome Irankunda, a survivor of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, and graphic artist Michel Kichka, as they worked to transform Jerome's experiences into a graphic novel. The official trailer for 'Why We Dance' is available to watch on our Youtube channel.



Jerome and Michel in conversation in 'Why We Dance'. Photo credit: Marc Ellison.

Filmmaker Spotlight

Marc Ellison



Marc Ellison and Jerome Irankunda filming 'Why We Dance,' October 2024.

In November of last year, SCVN research assistant Ghada Youssef interviewed Marc Ellison, the filmmaker behind two SCVN documentaries about the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi: 'Why We Dance' and 'A Compassionate Heart,' which tell the stories of Jerome Irankunda and Madeleine, Mukarwego, respectively. In the interview, Marc reflects on his experiences filming with Jerome and Madeleine, on their stories, as well as on the ethics of filming traumatic memories and the role that film plays in preserving and transmitting collective memory. Below is an excerpt from the interview, which you can read in full on our blog.

Ghada: These two documentaries... will be used in genocide and human rights education, so they will be shown at travelling exhibits, in the classroom, even online for the general public. What kind of response do you hope for from the diversity of audiences?

Marc: Yeah, that's a good question. We've talked about the fact that the primary role of documentaries is engage, inform, and educate.

But I think as much as we've just talked about the doom and gloom of trauma, I think ultimately both of the documentaries are quite uplifting. They have quite positive endings. And that's why Jerome's story is called 'Why We Dance': the importance of reconciliation, of the battle to move on.

And the strength of character that Jerome and Madeleine have that they're not victims; they are survivors...

I guess the hope is for people to relate to them as human beings and not as victims.



Marc filming a conversation between Madeleine and Joel, one of the men responsible for her brother's death. Photo credit: Erin Jessee.

Communications & Connections

Follow our social media accounts for project updates and stories:

- Instagram: @survivorvisualnarratives
- LinkedIn: Survivor-Centred Visual Narratives
- Facebook: 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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