

# Simon Glass

## YAHWEH!



February 6 – March 8, 1997

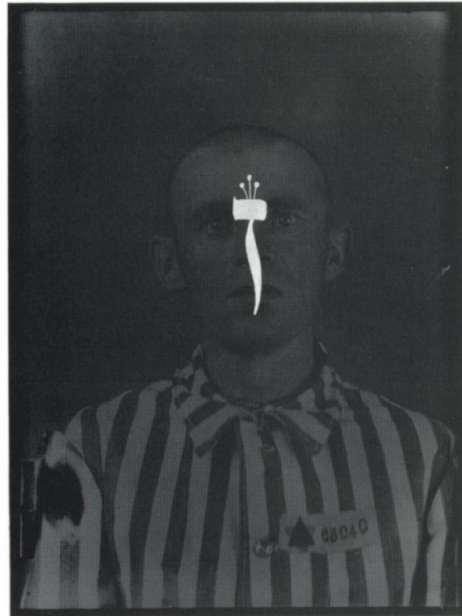
*Opening reception: Thursday, February 6 from 5 to 8 PM*

*YAHWEH!* is an exhibition of new and recent photo-based work by Toronto artist Simon Glass. For almost ten years, Glass has been engaged in a personal exploration of Jewish theology, culture and history. Whereas his earlier work critiqued dominant notions of masculinity and sexuality, his latest work principally addresses the Holocaust.

With the rapid approach of the end of the millennium and its concomitant atmosphere of retrospection and analysis, the Holocaust has emerged as a defining event of the twentieth century. The record-high attendance at the Holocaust Museum in Washington and the current proliferation of books, films and other forms of cultural production on this subject attest to an urgent need to speak, to remember, to bear witness. *YAHWEH!* engages with the current artistic, socio-cultural and political discourses and, through its challenging and unconventional nature, makes a unique and valuable contribution to Jewish cultural memory.

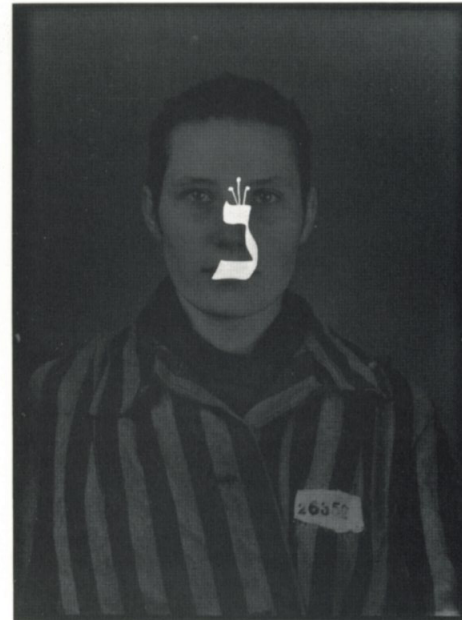
For most Jewish people, images of the Holocaust need not be seen; they are omnipresent, seared in the mind's eye . . . a fundamental and irrevocable part of Jewish consciousness. Holocaust imagery has come to be perceived as iconographic, even sacred. Consequently, it is imbued with a great deal of power—the power to hurt and, perhaps, the power to heal. Through his sensitive, transformative use of this imagery, Glass promotes the act of remembering and facilitates the process of healing.

At this particular moment in history, the awareness of the aging of Holocaust survivors and the spectre of the renaissance of fascism have fuelled fears about the shape and direction of the historical



record. Recent technological developments in image construction combined with contemporary critiques of the documentary form have, in some contexts, conspired to discredit the authority of the

visual evidence of the Holocaust. But, as Carolyn Bell Farrell has observed, "as long as the material fragment of an event serves as a surrogate witness, our memory-work, and our level of consciousness, is hindered."<sup>1</sup> Simon Glass' work reminds us that images do not speak, but are spoken. His artistic interventions maintain a fine balance between the desire to preserve the integrity of his source material and the necessity to make the images "speak."



### Scott McLeod

Simon Glass lives and works in Toronto. He studied photography, printmaking and fine art at the Ontario College of Art, graduating in 1983. His work has been exhibited extensively in recent years, including solo exhibitions at Latitude 53 (Edmonton) and Floating Gallery (Winnipeg) and the travelling group exhibitions *Persistent Documents* and *The Pressing of Flesh*. In 1996, *YAHWEH!* was exhibited at Galerie VOX (Montréal), VU (Québec) and the St. Petersburg Biennale (Russia), and will be presented at The Photographers Gallery (Saskatoon) in April. He has taught photography at the Ontario College of Art and in the Ontario Arts Council's Artists in Education Program, and is currently on the faculty of the Toronto School of Art. Glass is a founding member of Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography, where he has been a participating member for over seventeen years.

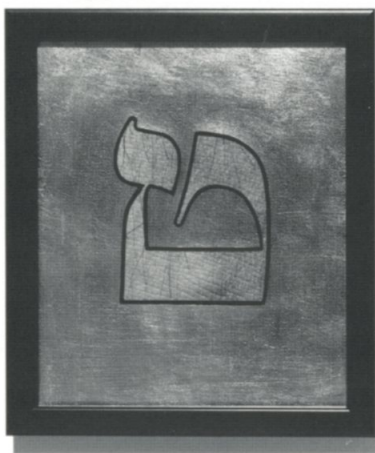
1. Carolyn Bell Farrell, "In the Wake of Memory," *Cyril Reade: Minyan* (Toronto: The Koffler Gallery, 1995), 10.

Above: from *Merciful and Gracious*, 1995, silver prints with gouache, 49 x 39 cm each

Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography is a non-profit, artist-run centre committed to the advancement of photographic art. The centre is supported by its membership and by The Canada Council, The Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, the Ontario Arts Council, the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto—Cultural Affairs Division and the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council.

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The artist gratefully acknowledges the assistance of The Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Archive of the Polish State Museum at Oswiecim (Auschwitz).



Above: from *Book of Formation*, 1993,  
sepia-toned silver prints with gold leaf,  
18 x 15.5 cm each

Front Cover: from *Yahweh*, 1994,  
silver print, 39 x 39 cm

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**Gallery hours:**

Tuesday – Saturday 11 AM – 5 PM  
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