FROM B1

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The artist, a prolific painter

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## Preserving memories

Portraits of Holocaust survivors focus of Deerfield talk

> **By RICHIE DAVIS** For the Bulletin

edicated to "memory and hope," the "Abraham Proiect" by German artist Marlis Glaser is a series of more than 200 portrait drawings and paintings of German-speaking emigrants and Holocaust survivors and their children in Israel.

The work, begun in 2005, combines biblical, historical and biographical content as well as elements of art history. It has toured Germany, France and Israel and is the work of the daughter of a Nazi soldier who grew up knowing no Jews or anything about them.

Glaser will present a talk and slide presentation about the "Abraham Project" Sunday at 3 p.m. at the Deerfield Arts Bank, 3 Sugarloaf St. She will be joined by her artist son, Samuel Fischer-Glaser.

"What is the weight of a stone through the window of a Jewish home?" was the question Glaser posed with her 2008 exhibition marking the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht and the 60th anniversary of the founding of Israel.

#### An eve-opener

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Artwork by Marlis Glaser and Samuel Fischer-Glaser

southern Germany, but began exploring the stories of Holocaust survivors after her painting the portraits of union workers, communists and social democrats led her at age 32 to paint the portrait of Hannah Erdmann, a Jewish survivor of Theresienstadt, a concentration camp in German-occupied Czechoslovakia, whose story fascinated her.

As Glaser learned more about Erdmann's life, she said, "I started wanting to know about the Jewish people.

Glaser last year received an Obermayer Award — presented to non-Jewish Germans who have made outstanding voluntary con-

SEE HOLOCAUST B2

and the University of Bremen. Post reported. began painting portraits of tributions to preserving the memory of German Jewish mann, who "opened the door A tribute to survivors

#### Jane Trigere, director of the Arts Bank, which officially

In 2005, she began painting portraits of residents of Shavei Trigere's husband, Kenneth Zion, in northern Israel, and Schoen, invited Glaser and found it fascinating that 41 ter finding it on the Internet March 1938 for Palestine, as a group. Six months later, during Kristallnacht, the Rexin-"I was very touched, moved gen synagogue was destroyed and inspired by what she was and many of its Jews deported doing," said Schoen, a book- to Dachau, a Nazi concentraseller who specializes in Gertion camp built in a medieval man Judaica and books on town in Bayaria, Germany, of



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## Holocaust portraits

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#### 'Feel at home'

Jewish life and the Holocaust. the same name.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Among these is a project Marlis Glaser will speak relating to Janus Korczak, a Sunday at the Deerfield Arts

director who remained with Glaser had been anxious on and was exterminated at Tre- her first visit to the collective blinka, an extermination village about how its Germancamp built by Nazi Germany Jewish residents would react, in occupied Poland during but on her first day in the home of community founder Glaser, who studied at the Jacob Frohlich, he told her,

Academy of Arts in Hamburg "Feel at home," the Jerusalem

"At those words, Glaser alanti-Nazi resistance fighters most burst into tears. 'Nobody and through them met Erd- ever said that to me in Germany,' she said ... 'Here I was, to a world she had never the daughter of a Nazi soldier, arriving at the home of a Jew who escaped Nazi Germany ... and he told me to feel at home.'

#### 'What we lost'

Glaser's "Abraham Project" grew out of her work her son to visit this country men, women and children had teaching art to children and speak about her work af- left Rexingen, Germany, in around 2000 at the time of the Second Intifadah Palestinian uprising in Israel, when she felt anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic sentiment began stirring in her country. Her focus was Korczak and his orphans. leading to her own two-year project that resulted in 150 paintings and eventually to her first trip to Israel.

"I wanted to learn more about what we lost in Germany when the Jews were persecuted," she said. She began to study and incorporate into her work biographical, religious and historical detail.

"I found that in Judaism, everything has a meaning.... For me, it was no question: this is

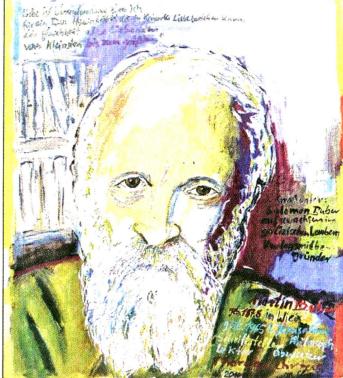
my spiritual and moral world."

Fischer-Glaser. Glaser's son, who has studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich since 2012, his drawings and sculptures have biblical and literary references such as Franz "The Castle." Kafka's Goethe's poem, "Elf King," King Belshazzar from the Book of Daniel, and a 1940 song from the Krakow ghetto by Mordechai Gebirtig.

The inspiration for the work that shows the close connection between religion, psychology, literature and language even includes comedic lines gleaned from nine seasons of "Seinfeld," which he said, "are phrases to capture a brutal reality."

It's a brutal reality that Fischer-Glaser continues to find in daily life, in as seemingly mundane an act as taking the train from Munich, with its destination boldly spelled out at the central station: Dachau.

"It was the strangest thing to board that train to Dachau, he said. "And the fact that hundreds of people board that train every day. And for the vast majority, it's something they don't even think about."



Dedicated to "memory and hope," the Abraham Project by German artist Marlis Glaser is a series of more than 200 portrait drawings and paintings of German-speaking emigrants and Holocaust survivors and their children in

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#### An eye-opener

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As Glaser learned more about Erdmann's life, she said, "I started wanting to know about the Jewish people."

Glaser last year received an Obermayer Award — presented to non-Jewish Germans who have made outstanding voluntary contributions to preserving the memory of German Jewish communities.



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Marlis Glaser will speak Sunday at the Deerfield Arts Bank.

#### A tribute to survivors

"Her art is beautiful," said Jane Trigere, director of the Arts Bank, which officially closed in January after two years of housing exhibits. Trigere's husband, Kenneth Schoen, invited Glaser and her son to visit this country and speak about her work after finding it on the Internet and striking up a correspon-

she was doing," said Schoen, a bookseller who specializes in German Judaica and books on Jewish life and the Holocaust.

Glaser's work reveals relationship between Jewish festivals, illuminations in antique Hebrew books and the poetry of "Song of Songs," and is a tribute to survivors and their families.

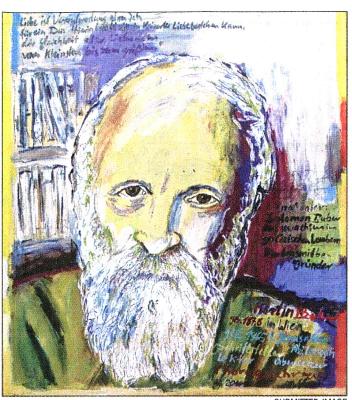
The artist, a prolific painter who focuses on visual narratives based on interviews with her subjects, has done wall installations dealing with the history of the labor movement, the history of the women's liberation, women of the French Revolution and women of the Resistance during World War II. She has devoted much of her work over the past 20 years to themes related to Judaism, to which she recently converted after 20 years of study.

Among these is a project relating to Janus Korczak, a Warsaw, Poland, orphanage director who remained with his orphans rather than accepting freedom for himself, and was exterminated at Treblinka, an extermination camp built by Nazi Germany in occupied Poland during World War II.

Glaser, who studied at the Academy of Arts in Hamburg and the University of Bremen, began painting portraits of anti-Nazi resistance fighters and through them met Erdmann, who "opened the door to a world she had never known," Jerusalem Post reported in her first visit to the collective 2008.

#### 'Feel at home'

In 2005, she began painting "I was very touched, portraits of residents of Shavei



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#### 'What we lost'

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ring in her country. Her focus was Korczak and his orphans, leading to her own two-year project that resulted in 150 paintings and eventually to her first trip to Israel.

"I wanted to learn more about what we lost in Germany when the Jews were persecuted," she said. She began to study and incorporate into her work biographical, religious and historical detail.

"I found that in Judaism, everything has a meaning.... For me, it was no question: this is my spiritual and moral world."

For Fischer-Glaser. Glaser's son, who has studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich since 2012, his drawings and sculptures have biblical and literary references such as Franz Castle." Kafka's "The Goethe's poem, "Elf King," King Belshazzar from the Book of Daniel, and a 1940 song from the Krakow ghetto by Mordechai Gebirtig.

The inspiration for the work that shows the close connection between religion, psychology, literature and language even includes comedic lines gleaned from nine seasons of "Seinfeld," which he said, "are phrases to capture a brutal reality."

It's a brutal reality that Fischer-Glaser continues to find in daily life, in as seemingly mundane an act as taking the train from Munich, with its destination boldly spelled out at the central station: Dachau.

"It was the strangest thing to board that train to Dachau,' dreds of people board that train every day. And for the vast majority, it's something they don't even think about."

Richie Davis can be reached

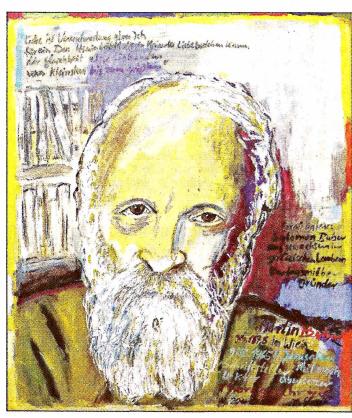
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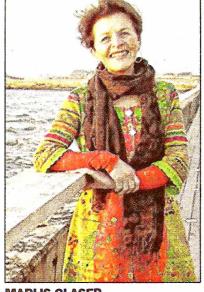
Serving the people of Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region

**MEMORY AND HOPE** 

## German artist's portraits of Holocaust survivors a focus of Deerfield talk

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MARLIS GLASER

Glaser will present a special presentation May 15 at the **Deerfield Arts Bank.** 3 Sugarloaf St., at 3 p.m.

CONTRIBUTED IMAGE

**By RICHIE DAVIS** Recorder Staff

SOUTH DEERFIELD — Dedicated to "memory and hope," the Abraham Project by German artist Marlis Glaser of a stone through the is a series of more than 200 portrait window of a Jewish drawings and paintings of Germanspeaking emigrants and Holocaust survivors and their children in Israel. her 2008 exhibition

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cher-Glaser at 3 p.m. Holocaust Remembrance Day at sundown

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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A8 THE RECORDER | Thursday, May 5, 2016

#### **HOLOCAUST FROM A1**

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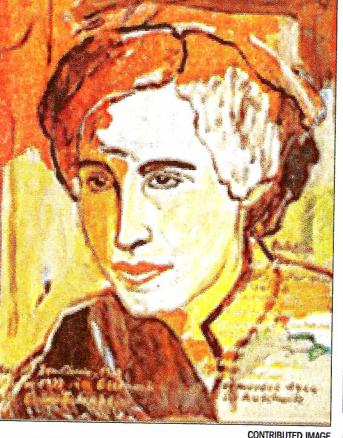
"I was very touched, moved and inspired by what she was doing," said Schoen, a bookseller who specializes in German Judaica and books on Jewish life and the Holocaust.

The South Deerfield talk is not directly tied to today's observance of Holocaust Remembrance Day, yet Glaser's Abraham Project work, revealing relationship between the Jewish festivals, illuminations in antique Hebrew books and the poetry of "Song of Songs," is a tribute to survivors and their families.

The artist, a prolific painter who focuses on visual narratives based on actual interviews with her subjects, has done wall installations dealing with the history of the labor movement, the history of the Artwork by Marlis Glaser and Samuel Fischer-Glaser. women's liberation, women of the French Revolution and anti-Nazi resistance fighters on her first visit to the collec- Israel, when she felt anti-Iswomen of the Resistance dur- and through them met Erd- tive village about how its Ger- raeli and anti-Semitic sentiing World War II. She has dethe past 20 years to themes known," The Jerusalem Post related to Judaism, to which reported in 2008. she recently converted after 20 years of study.

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**CONTRIBUTED PHOTO** 

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