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Project Title: Vishniac

Institution: Katahdin Foundation

Project Director: Laura Bialis

Grant Program: Media Projects Production

VISHNIAC
A Feature-Length Documentary
August 2019 Narrative

Nature of the request:

Katahdin Productions is requesting support for the production phase of the feature documentary, *Vishniac*, about the life and work of photographer Roman Vishniac. Vishniac is best known for having traversed Eastern Europe from 1935 to 1938, on assignment for the American Joint Distribution Committee, to photograph Jewish life in Eastern Europe. The purpose of the photographs was to raise funds for impoverished Jewish communities. Few predicted that less than a decade later, these communities would be wiped out in the Holocaust, and Vishniac's photographs would provide the last visual records of an entire world. Despite Vishniac's significant contributions to the historical and cultural memory of the life of Jews in the 20th century, a retrospective film about his life and work has never been produced. *Vishniac* will be the first.

The total budget for *Vishniac* is \$1.2 million. To date we have raised \$594,675, including \$75,000 from a development grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, which we used to consult with scholars, research archival material and write a script. Our total estimated completion budget for the NEH production grant period is \$630,940, of which we're requesting \$396,940 from the NEH.

Program synopsis:

From the cosmopolitan streets of pre-war Berlin to Eastern European shtetls to the Princeton offices of Albert Einstein, *Vishniac* takes viewers on a journey, through the lens of one of the foremost photographers of the 20th century. Roman Vishniac is best known for his photographs of Jewish life in Eastern Europe in the years before the Holocaust. To many people, the images are themselves sacred relics of a murdered civilization. But while Vishniac owes his fame to this specific collection, his prodigious body of work depicts an entire era of Jewish history. Through his work, we see Jewish life not only in Eastern European shtetls, but also in Weimar-era Berlin. We witness the Nazi rise to power, Jews in visa offices attempting to leave Europe and Jewish immigrants in America. After the war, his documentation continues with photographs of Berlin in ruins and children in displaced-persons camps.

No less important than his contribution as a documentary photographer, Vishniac was an avid scientist, and made considerable contributions in the field of microscopic photography. His "Living Biology" series, funded by the National Science Foundation, featured some of the first films depicting life through a microscope. He is credited as one of the founders of this field.

Vishniac will explore Vishniac's career and photographs and detail his dramatic life story. Made with the full cooperation of Vishniac's daughter, Mara Vishniac Kohn, and with access to the Vishniac archive of more than 10,000 images, the documentary will delve into the complex person and story behind the photos. It will address controversies surrounding Vishniac, including recent debates about the authenticity of some of his photographs. It will reveal the ruptures in the family because of his flamboyant, often difficult personality. Finally, the film will frame Vishniac's legacy as a key modernist photographer and preserver of memory. Vishniac's collection is vast, unexpected, and causes us to step back in time. Through his iconic images, the film will expose new audiences to a lost world that is quickly fading from our grasp.

Vishniac is directed by award-winning filmmaker Laura Bialis (*Refusenik, Rock in the Red Zone*), who, over a three-year period, filmed more than twenty hours of interviews with Mara Vishniac Kohn. Bialis is joined on the production by producer Roberta Grossman, executive producer Nancy Spielberg, writer Sophie Sartain and editor Chris Callister. Among their credits are the NEH-funded projects *Who Will Write Our History*, *Dorothea Lange: Grab a Hunk of Lightning* and *Blessed Is the Match: The Life and Death of Hannah Senesh*.

Humanities content:

In 1983, a book of Roman Vishniac's photographs, *A Vanished World*, was published to international acclaim. With a foreword by Elie Wiesel, the elegiac collection of pious Jews in prewar Eastern Europe stirred nostalgia for a "lost world" and found its place on coffee tables in the homes of American Jews. Vishniac's images inspired cinematographer Janusz Kaminski's Oscar-winning work on the 1993 film *Schindler's List*. The photographs resonate so deeply that today they are on display, in their own room, at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). "Visitors don't empathize with what they cannot see," observes Judith Cohen, Chief Curator of Acquisitions at the USHMM. "They connect with these photographs on a very human level." However, says Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, director of the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, "Vishniac's work is greater in scope than his best-known and most iconic images, those of Eastern European Jews. And they, in turn, represent more than a history of Jewish piety, poverty and persecution and the trope of a 'vanished world.'"

Vishniac will broaden our understanding of one of the foremost photographers of the 20th century by examining the full scope of his life and work. Through the Vishniac archive of more than 10,000 images, and with the personal recollections of his daughter Mara Vishniac Kohn, we will deepen our understanding of Jewish history and culture in Europe in the decades before World War II. We will enter the world of Jewish artists and intellectuals forced to flee Nazi-occupied Europe and remake themselves in America. We will gain insights into Jewish Americans' responses to the Holocaust and the formation of collective memory when processing trauma. And we will explore the nature of photography itself and its multiple uses in the arenas of art, advocacy, journalism and science.

Humanities themes that will emerge in *Vishniac* include the following:

The diversity of Jewish life in prewar Berlin and Eastern Europe

Sometime between 1935 and 1938, Roman Vishniac photographed a street scene in Warsaw at the corner of Nalewki and Walowa Streets, then the center of Jewish life in the city. "Large shop signs in Polish are in the foreground, and the street is bustling with people, young and old, religious and worldly," says Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. "People lean from balconies high above the fray. It is a beautifully composed photograph Vishniac at his modernist best." This image, and others by Vishniac depicting modern, urban Jews in the 1930s, point to the first theme explored in *Vishniac*—the diversity of Jewish life in prewar Berlin and Eastern Europe.

Vishniac's biographical story illustrates this diversity. In contrast to the impoverished Jews portrayed in his photographs from Eastern Europe, Vishniac grew up in an affluent Jewish family in Moscow. The Vishniacs manufactured umbrellas and parasols and were among an elite class of Jews allowed to live outside the Pale of Settlement. Vishniac's daughter Mara says that in 1904, her father, then age 7, was

introduced to his two great loves, science and photography, when he received a microscope and a camera. From that point on, he rarely wavered in his interests.

Russian Jews experienced widespread anti-Semitism under Tsarist rule, but violence escalated after the chaos of World War I, the Revolution and the Russian Civil War. Forced to flee their home, Vishniac's parents followed other wealthy Jews in emigrating to Berlin. Vishniac initially stayed in Moscow to continue his studies in biology and zoology, but he too made a sudden exit in 1920, joining his parents in Berlin with his new wife Luta, a Latvian woman he had met the summer before.

Once in Berlin, at the age of 23, Vishniac became part of a cosmopolitan center teeming with artists, intellectuals and wealthy émigrés like his parents. University of Colorado professor David Shneer describes Berlin in the 1920s as "the wild capital of Europe. They had cabarets, writer's workshops. It actually was the center of photography in all of Europe." There were Russian newspapers, and Russian could be heard in cafés and markets. Shneer explains that postwar hyperinflation made it very cheap for Russians to live in Berlin. "More importantly," he says, "Berlin is a train ride away from Russia. These people who emigrated did not believe that the Bolsheviks were going to hold power. They saw Berlin as a staging ground for their return."

Despite heavy pressure from his family to go into business, Vishniac continued to pursue photography and biology. He could do this because of his family's wealth. His family owned the apartment building in the upscale area of Wilmersdorf, where he lived with his wife and their children, Wolf and Mara, born in 1922 and 1926 respectively. Mara describes her father as always having a Rolleiflex camera around his neck. He developed his skills by joining amateur camera clubs, including a Jewish camera club, and visiting photography exhibitions. Street photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson and Robert Capa, himself a Hungarian Jew, both spent time in Berlin in the 1930s. "Much of his early work resonates with the graceful geometry and understated surrealism of André Kertész and Henri Cartier-Bresson," says University of Virginia professor John Edwin Mason, "showing that he was fully embedded in the modernist visual culture of his time."

The Vishniacs hosted salons in their apartment, attended concerts and the opera, lectures on art history, world affairs and current events. They also celebrated Jewish holidays and attended synagogue. Vishniac frequented the Berlin Zoo, where many Jews were shareholders. In the early 1930s, he snapped a photograph of polar bears peering out a cage at humans. Titled "People behind bars," the image inverts our normal view of animals on display. In his home, Vishniac had both a darkroom and an aquarium room for his explorations into biology and photomicroscopy. Mara recalls mason jars containing "sea horses and urchins and all kinds of wonderful things. It was a whole ocean in there." The family also had a pet monkey, Jackie, to add to the apartment's menagerie of animal life.

Mara and her brother Wolf were frequent subjects of their father's photographs. This continued after the Nazis rose to power in 1933. Vishniac would position his daughter in front of Nazi posters. "He put me in front of them so that if he was questioned, he could say, 'I'm just taking a picture of my little girl.'" She continues: "I had just started enjoying movies. And very soon after, Jews couldn't go to movies anymore. So you couldn't play tennis, or skate, or go to swimming pools. We were the unwanted."

In 1935, the same year the Nazis imposed severe restrictions on German Jews with the Nuremberg Race Laws, Vishniac received an assignment from the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) that would change his life. He was to travel throughout Eastern Europe to photograph impoverished Jewish communities; the images would be used in the United States to raise money for relief efforts for this

population. For the next four years, Vishniac would travel to cities and shtetls, through what is now Belarus, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and to farming communities in the Carpathian Mountains. In the end, he would travel more than 5,000 miles. He photographed in Zbaszyn at a makeshift refugee camp for Polish Jews on the German-Polish border. He photographed in the Netherlands at a Zionist agricultural training camp, where clog-wearing Jewish youth engaged in manual farm labor. In Berlin, under Nazi rule, he documented applicants in emigration offices, desperate to obtain exit visas.

Each time Vishniac came back to Berlin from his travels, Mara helped him develop photos in the darkroom of their apartment: "I would watch the images emerge, dark areas first. There was this suspense about what the image would be. I didn't know who these slightly exotic people were because my parents were quite assimilated." Although Vishniac met the requirements of his assignment to capture images of the impoverished Jews his large body of work from this period shows a full range of Jewish life, wealthy and poor, urban and rural, assimilated and observant, modern and traditional.

Photography in the 1930s – a tool for advocacy and social change

In one of Vishniac's photos for the JDC, a gaunt girl with haunting eyes stares at the camera from a basement in 1930s Warsaw. The image appears in a JDC brochure with the caption: "One single dollar will feed a Jewish child for a week." At the same time, half a world away, photographer Dorothea Lange captured the Depression-era image *Migrant Mother* in Nipomo, California, on assignment from the Farm Security Administration (FSA). "Vishniac and the FSA photographers and the people who assigned them believed that photography could promote institutional agendas and social change by encouraging viewers, always presumed to be more powerful and affluent, to empathize with the subjects of the photos," says professor John Edwin Mason. Vishniac's photographs of Jews in urgent need of help are emblematic of a second theme in *Vishniac* how photography was used as a tool for advocacy and social change in the 1930s.

Photography had been used for such purposes for decades. In 1890, photographer and social reformer Jacob Riis published a book *How the Other Half Lives* chronicling the inhumane living conditions on New York's Lower East Side. In the early 1900s, sociologist and photographer Lewis Hine documented the cruelties of child labor in the U.S. in an effort to end the practice. Yet in the early part of the 20th century, photographers in America and Europe were more likely to earn their living in portrait studios and by documenting life-cycle events.

In the 1930s, at the height of the Great Depression, and into the 1940s, photographers such as Dorothea Lange and Gordon Parks ventured out of their studios to document the economic hardships around them. With support from the federal government's FSA program, they fanned out across the American South and West to capture images to drum up support for Roosevelt's New Deal policies.

For Vishniac, the assignments came from Jewish relief organizations in response to a rising tide of anti-Semitism and the debilitating economic effects of Nazi restrictions. The Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), founded in New York in 1914, was the leading American Jewish agency providing relief to Jewish communities in Europe. "Vishniac made compelling photographs of a vibrant population of Eastern European Jews before the Holocaust, of verdant farms, sunny villages, and modern cities," notes Yale professor Laura Wexler. "Like the documentary images produced in America by the photographers of the Farm Security Administration, they clearly denote the deserving poor. After all, this was the task the JDC had set: to show a strong and resourceful people who would benefit from help."

In his work for the JDC, Vishniac often focused on the plight of children to augment the urgency of the organization's efforts. "Hunger, fear and disease stalk through the Jewish streets in Poland," Vishniac wrote in a volume of his photographs for the JDC. "The health of the Jewish children is in danger and it is up to foreign organizations to help." Vishniac highlighted the success of JDC activities by documenting schools, children's camps and soup kitchens.

In early November 1938, Vishniac went to the Polish border town of Zbaszyn to photograph Jews banished from Germany but refused entry to Poland. The refugees numbered in the thousands and their desperate situation, captured in Vishniac's photographs, triggered a new wave of relief by the JDC. That same month, however, on November 9th, anti-Semitic attacks swept across Germany. Jewish businesses erupted in flames on Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass. Mara remembers a policeman coming to her family's apartment asking if her father was home. "No," she replied. "Good," he said. "Keep it that way."

After Kristallnacht, Vishniac and his wife Luta sent Mara and Wolf to live with Luta's family in Riga, then later to Sweden to a center for refugee children. Vishniac's marriage had been turbulent for years, and by this time he had a mistress, Edith Ernst. He and Luta decided to stay married amid the upheaval, but Vishniac opted to leave for France, where his parents were living, while Luta stayed in Berlin.

In Angers, just after France declared war on Germany, Vishniac was arrested after not appearing for an interview with the police to register his whereabouts. He spent a month interned at the Camp du Ruchard before Luta, with some help from the JDC, negotiated his release. As war engulfed the continent, he and his family became determined to leave Europe.

Migration to America – the Jewish experience before and during World War II

In December 1940, Vishniac snapped a photo of his wife Luta and son Wolf, then age 18, looking out from the deck of a ship. They were on the *S.S. Siboney*, along with eighty other Jewish refugees, and the Statue of Liberty loomed between them as they approached New York City. Mara hated leaving Europe at the awkward age of 14. "I didn't speak English," she says. "I had no idea about America, and I was a refugee." Fortunately, Vishniac arrived and settled in a city with multiple Jewish philanthropic agencies that could use his services. His experiences in New York in the 1940s, as well as his family's journey from Europe to America, illustrate a third theme in *Vishniac* – the experiences of European Jewish immigrants in the United States before and during World War II.

Prior to leaving Europe, the Vishniacs struggled to obtain visas. Thanks to Luta's efforts and some assistance from the JDC, they succeeded in booking passage to America. Before reuniting with their father in Lisbon, Mara and Wolf returned to Berlin with their mother one last time. They found the apartment which they still owned occupied. When a British bombing raid commenced, they sought shelter in the basement of the building, but encountered a sign reading "No Jews Allowed."

Once the Vishniacs arrived in New York, they found a large Jewish community. Between the 1880s and 1920s, waves of penniless Jewish immigrants had arrived in New York from Eastern Europe, joining earlier, more established Jews from Germany and Western Europe. Many of the new immigrants settled on the Lower East Side, but by 1941, Jewish immigrants from Hungary, Germany and Russia had also taken up residence on the Upper West Side, where the Vishniacs moved into an apartment. "The mass Jewish immigration had largely ended in the 1920s, and by 1930, for the first time, native-born Jews outnumbered those of European nativity," says NYU professor Hasia Diner. Even so, Diner notes, "The

difference between them and other Americans was tremendous. They were maybe four or five percent of the population in the US and definitely not in the American mainstream.”

Despite not speaking English, Vishniac found work as a freelance and portrait studio photographer. He captured street scenes and immigrant communities, but also artists, entertainers and intellectuals who had fled Europe, including Marc Chagall and Albert Einstein. In addition, Vishniac used his contacts at the JDC as a springboard to secure work from other Jewish philanthropic organizations.

Unlike the mandate of the JDC to aid Jewish communities in Europe, these agencies supported local programs, with a focus on children. “Instead of seeking to raise funds by showing poverty, these photographs needed to visualize successful learning experiences,” says Hasia Diner. As opposed to the images from Eastern Europe showing observant men and boys studying sacred texts, these photographs portrayed assimilated Jewish children. Girls studied alongside boys. Clothing and hairstyles matched those of the American mainstream.

During World War II, as he photographed Jewish American life, Vishniac also sought to raise awareness about the plight of European Jews. He sent prints to President Roosevelt, and organized exhibitions of his work at Columbia University, the JDC, the New School for Social Research and the YIVO Institute. But these efforts were largely in vain.

“By the 1940s, Jews in America knew full well that the world of European Jewry was in grave danger and, indeed, was being eradicated,” states Diner. “Within a few years of Vishniac’s arrival in America, it was clear that that world no longer existed and that they, the Jews of America, constituted the largest population of Jews in the world. It was now their responsibility to recreate an active and self-sustaining Jewish culture, in part to compensate for the devastation wrought by the Nazis.”

Although Vishniac helped achieve this recreation through his hopeful New York images, it was his collection of Eastern European images that would, just a few years later, cement his legacy.

Memorializing the Holocaust – trauma and the formation of collective memory

In 1945, at the annual conference of YIVO, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel delivered an address on the loss of Polish Jewry that moved an audience to tears and led to a spontaneous recitation of the mourner’s kaddish. The speech, in part, became the preface of *Polish Jews*, a 1947 book of 31 Vishniac photographs depicting Jewish life in prewar Eastern Europe. “The publisher, in a prefatory note, linked the photographs to the Holocaust,” says Hasia Diner, “informing readers that the book needed to be seen as a visual record of the people ‘only a year distant from catastrophe.’ They were a very good example of Holocaust memorialization, and people spoke about them as memorial documents.” Yet, as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes, “These were not photographs of the genocide. Nor were they photographs that could have anticipated the Holocaust. Rather, they had become photographs ‘in light of the Holocaust.’ And, so they would remain for years to come.”

The changing lens through which Vishniac’s JDC photos were viewed, and their central place in American Jewish consciousness after the Holocaust, comprise a fourth theme in *Vishniac* – how American Jews came to terms with catastrophic loss and how Vishniac’s images shaped the collective memory of a grieving people.

In 1946, Vishniac returned to Europe with a new assignment from the JDC to photograph displaced-persons camps and the aftermath of the war. By this time, he and Luta had divorced. He traveled to Berlin to document the devastation and to reunite with Edith Ernst, his prewar mistress, whom he would marry in short order. When they returned to the U.S., Vishniac found his prewar images captivating the public. In addition to *Polish Jews*, another book of photographs, in which Vishniac's work was included, *The Vanished World*, came out in 1947. The observant Jews in the photographs projected an innocence and religious piety. They were, as Laura Wexler notes, "excluded by modernity and thus fated to be trapped in the murderous vortex of European Jewish history."

"He was commissioned by the JDC to show that these people were very strong and able to adapt and people should send money," Wexler says. "It wasn't that they were doomed. It's exactly the opposite. After World War II, the only story Americans would listen to were that those pictures were of people not resilient but about to be relentlessly and mercilessly killed." Adds USHMM's curator Judith Cohen, "His prewar imagery became embedded in the public imagination as the iconic face of Jewish victimhood."

Vishniac contributed to the mythology surrounding his Eastern European photos. After a falling-out with the JDC over violations of his visa restrictions, Vishniac changed his story about the origins of the photographs, omitting his assignment from the JDC. In Vishniac's new narrative, he presaged the doom of his coreligionists in Eastern Europe and rushed to photograph them before it was too late.

"My friends assured me that Hitler's talk was sheer bombast," Vishniac wrote. "But I replied that he would not hesitate to exterminate those people when he got around to it... I decided that, as a Jew, it was my duty to my ancestors to preserve in pictures, at least a world that might soon cease to exist."

"Jews wanted to believe these stories about Vishniac," David Shneer says, "because it imbued the photographs with a greater memorial value."

It is understandable that the photographs would resonate with traumatized communities and that their meaning would shift in light of the unimaginable atrocities of the Holocaust. It may have helped that the images conjured a distant and exotic world, one far removed from the lives of modern and assimilated American Jews. Vishniac may have added to the mythology with his stories. Regardless of the reasons, for many American Jews, the images became the prism through which the Holocaust was viewed, enduring symbols of what was lost.

Authenticity in photography – journalistic standards vs. artistic license

The false narrative surrounding the origin of Vishniac's prewar photographs is one example of his tendency toward embellishment. Vishniac's daughter Mara confirms that her father was "a fabulist": "Sometimes he spoke 14 languages and had seven degrees, and sometimes he spoke seven languages and had 14 degrees. The trouble was that the exaggerations became too large. He was carried away with his own romance." At one point, Mara and Wolf revolted when they read a draft of an article about their father in which he claimed to have survived an encounter with the Nazis by hiding under a pile of corpses. According to Mara, they vowed never to speak to him again if he didn't correct the story.

This aspect of Vishniac's personality points to a fifth theme that runs through *Vishniac* from the time Vishniac traversed Eastern Europe to decades later when Mara had to sort fact from fiction in shaping

his legacy that of authenticity in photography. When are the facts of utmost importance by journalistic standards, and when does the artist's vision of a deeper truth prevail? And, in the case of Vishniac, are there limits to artistic license when a photographer's account is manipulative or even misleading?

According to University of Virginia professor John Edwin Mason, when Vishniac began photographing religious Jews in Eastern Europe in the 1930s, "the very category of documentary photography was in the process of being invented." Observes Yale University professor Laura Wexler, "The meaning of the photographic document was not yet set in the way it is now understood, as an unmanipulated imprint. For one thing, people other than the photographers often wrote captions. Social services organizations, like those Vishniac worked for, created scenes for photographers to shoot in appeals for charitable support. Vishniac himself wrote captions, some of which were inaccurate. At the time, however, people accepted the documentary photograph as a *correlative* of the real, not its literal copy."

David Shneer concurs that before World War II, photographs were often seen as storytelling devices, not as authentic depictions. He notes that Henry Luce famously ordered directors of his *March of Time* film series to use "fakery in allegiance to the truth." Robert Capa may have staged his iconic "Falling Soldier" image from the Spanish Civil War, and FSA photographer Arthur Rothstein admitted to moving a steer skull in his famous photo highlighting the drought in South Dakota. John Edwin Mason contends that concerns about journalistic accuracy didn't consume photographers at the time. "Vishniac and most of the FSA photographers were self-conscious artists, as well as photographers, who crafted photos that were necessarily subjective. The photographers didn't see this as a contradiction. They saw art and truth as comrades, rather than enemies, in much the same way as the social realist artists of the period."

Scholars have debunked some of Vishniac's captions, in which his passion for storytelling skirts the facts. He said that he used a hidden camera when traveling through villages in Eastern Europe: "Jews did not want to be photographed, due to a misunderstanding of the prohibition against making graven images." This assertion has been dismissed as false. Vishniac said that he dressed in a Nazi uniform on Kristallnacht, eliciting a terrified response from a girl he photographed. This has been deemed untrue.

Yet in the years after the Holocaust, myths surrounding Vishniac's prewar images persisted. As late as 1971, a program for an exhibit of the images at the International Center of Photography in New York claimed, "(Vishniac) was painfully aware of Hitler's plans and, unlike many of his fellow Jews who chose to ignore the magnitude of the impending horror that lay before them, he undertook a four-year program to photograph the Jews of Eastern Europe whom Hitler had vowed to eliminate."

It would only be later that Mara and contemporary scholars would set the record straight. In 2013, with the opening of the Roman Vishniac Rediscovered exhibition, curated by scholar Maya Benton, myths about Vishniac and his work were finally dispelled. More importantly, for the first time, the full breadth of his photography was acknowledged and on display. According to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, it was important to present Vishniac's photographs "on their own terms, and not through the lens of the Holocaust, whether prospectively in anticipation of it, or retrospectively, after the fact." It was also crucial to include Vishniac's contributions in the field of science photography, an endeavor he returned to in the final decades of his life.

Microscopic photography and the tension between art and science

"Here comes an animal who is full of curiosity," narrates Vishniac in a 1950s educational film showing a microorganism. "He wants to learn and see more, and is forever peering around his tiny landscape. Near

him is another who is interested only in searching for food. And now comes a third who is more social. He hates to be alone and is constantly running from one friend to another.”

Vishniac’s passion for storytelling applied even to his biological subjects. In newsreel programs highlighting his science photography, he can be heard anthropomorphizing single-celled organisms and plankton. The particularities in Vishniac’s science work illustrate his eccentric and larger-than-life personality and opened him to criticism in scientific circles. They illustrate a final theme explored in *Vishniac* – the tension between art and science in photography.

Although Vishniac focused on documentary photography in the 1930s and 1940s, he never abandoned his passion for microscopic photography. In 1942 he completed his first sale of scientific images to *Nature* magazine, documenting the nuptial dance of the mayfly. In 1945 his photographs first appeared in *Life* magazine. In the 1950s, he began to focus on his scientific and zoological subjects full time. By then his work was already well known, and in 1950 an exhibition of his scientific photography, *Animals in Action*, took place at the American Museum of Natural History.

As illustrated in a newsreel made about Vishniac and his work, he would often venture into a park to collect pond water to examine. Afterwards, he was fastidious about returning the organisms (which could not be seen to the naked eye) to their original habitat. His daughter Mara recalls her father’s outings with her to parks when she was a child. While Mara and Wolf played, Roman would spend hours photographing mosquito larvae. “He practically raised mosquitos,” she jokes.

Upon winning an award from the New York Zoological Society for their annual photography competition, Vishniac wrote: “I tried to picture the animals in the zoo as personalities. Not an animal did I want to show but the animal with his particular qualities and expressions.” Professor Norman Barker explains, “This anthropomorphic approach, almost unique in its time, permeated Vishniac’s work and led him to becoming the pre-eminent photographer of the life sciences from the 1950s through the 1970s.”

Vishniac’s artistic approach may have enabled his work to reach a wide audience. In the 1960s, he independently produced books and films aimed at biology education for students and the general public. He was awarded a grant by the National Science Foundation to produce *The Living Biology Film Series*, for the purpose of improving instruction in biology in secondary schools and universities. The series was distributed by McGraw-Hill. His microscopic photography was included in a major exhibition of his work in 1971 at the Jewish Museum, and the microscopic photographs went on to be displayed as art pieces in the Neukrig Galleries.

Yet even as he achieved success, Vishniac’s anthropomorphic descriptions opened him to criticism, which contributed to his feeling a lack of respect for his scientific work. According to Mara, this feeling was compounded by the fact that he didn’t hold advanced degrees in science, in contrast to his son Wolf, who would become a leading scientist with NASA researching life on Mars. “Wolf did not feel that Roman was a serious scientist,” admits Mara.

“To be a grandiose storyteller is not greatly respected in science,” notes Wolf Vishniac’s son, astrophysicist Ethan Vishnac. “In the case of my father and grandfather, both were very enthusiastic about science. But my father was enthusiastic about doing it. For Roman, it was that passion coupled with an enthusiasm for telling great stories.”

In 1973 tragedy struck the Vishniac family. Wolf Vishniac, who had created a miniature laboratory to accompany the Viking probe to Mars, fell to his death on an ice slope in Antarctica while researching microbes in the arid environment. For Mara, an unintended realization hit her after her brother's death: "I realized that, my God, I'm going to have to be responsible for my father's books, all the collections, the photographs, the manuscripts. What do I do?"

Part of Mara's work as keeper of her father's legacy was to showcase his scientific images. In recent years, she worked with photographer Penny Wolin to reprint some of her father's most dramatic pieces as large wall installations.

While Vishniac's work straddles the space between art and science, his main contribution may be that of a master storyteller who inspired his audiences with the power of the visual image. Mara explains that what connects his work, both his images of Jews in Europe and films of plankton, was his passion to make the viewer see and *feel* what he did—whether it was his wonder about the microscopic world, the beauty of his ancient culture, or the devastation he felt about his own murdered people. Mara recounts that in 1990, when her father was dying of colon cancer, bedridden and near death, he was visited by Mara's husband, the Nobel Prize-winning chemist Walter Kohn. Kohn described an electron tunneling microscope that could see individual atoms. As Mara describes it, her father, ever the scientist, "who hadn't spoken in days, lifted his head and said, 'What magnification?' Walter told him. Roman let his head fall back and said, 'Then I'm beat,' in German. 'They beat me.'" While that might be true, as science marches on, Vishniac's stunning images endure on their own artistic merit.

Creative approach:

Vishniac's work and life story are very much about the creation of collective visual memory. Therefore, the film will use the language and feeling of personal memory to immerse the viewer in the world that Vishniac inhabited. The main entry point will be through Vishniac's daughter Mara, who eloquently tells the story of her father, his family and his work. The daughter of a photographer, she speaks in vivid pictures, illustrating in rich color. Her personal recollections bring to life their world in Berlin, and her perspective—through the eyes of a daughter and a child—is captivating and complex. Mara passed away in December 2018 at the age of 92, but not before director Laura Bialis recorded more than twenty hours of interviews with her. These interviews form the backbone of *Vishniac*.

Mara had a special relationship to her father's photographs, what she called, "the work." Despite difficulties with her father and a period of estrangement with him in her early adult years, she became the sole heir and protector of his collection. Her burden was almost like caring for a grown sibling who needed to be looked after. She recognized the importance of this archive and was connected to it viscerally. In the film, through carefully placed reenactments, Mara remembers first seeing the images appear in her father's darkroom; she recalls her father's relationship to these subjects. She relives many of the moments in which certain photographs were taken.

Verite footage of Mara today will be woven with subtle reenactments and archival footage of 1930s Berlin to enter the world of her childhood memories. The reenactments will be shot close up, using vintage Super Baltar lenses, and are meant to suggest and evoke, rather than recreate a whole scene. In addition to Mara's POV, the film will frame Vishniac's unique visual perspective on the world. To help achieve this, general archival footage will be treated differently from the Vishniac photographs and film footage, and the audience will be aware when we are looking through Vishniac's lens, as opposed to when we are experiencing the world in which he lived and worked.

During a dramatic part of Vishniac's story, his family was separated – Roman in France, the children sent off to the safety of Sweden, and Luta, his wife, in Berlin desperately trying to obtain visas to America. Personal letters and postcards, voiced by actors, will supplement Mara's narrative to help drive the story. Television news programs from the 1960s featuring Vishniac's work include both archival footage of Vishniac working in his laboratory and in the field as well as interviews with Vishniac. These will be woven into the film at appropriate times.

Interviews with key scholars (shot in a consistent style) will add critical retrospective commentary about Vishniac's work – its importance, the controversies surrounding it, and what the work has come to represent. Interviews with family members, colleagues and curators who have worked with his photographs will fill in details. Together these interviews will help create a deep exploration of this body of work and the intriguing individual behind it.

Collections to be used by the project:

Roman Vishniac Archive, Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, University of California, Berkeley

The Roman Vishniac Archive comprises 50,000 objects including negatives, vintage prints, moving film footage, contact sheets, family photographs and ephemera spanning six decades.

Papers of Roman Vishniac, Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, University of California, Berkeley

The collection contains papers accrued during Vishniac's life (1897 – 1990). Materials include correspondence, newspaper clippings, book manuscripts, notebooks and exhibition announcements, official documents and telegrams .

Roman Vishniac Rediscovered Exhibition, International Center of Photography, New York, and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Selections from the Vishniac Archive used in an ongoing traveling exhibition and catalogue

Roman Vishniac Film Collection, Moving Image Research Collection, University of South Carolina

The collection comprises Vishniac's pioneering work in naturalist cinemicroscopy and photomicroscopy, as well as the films Vishniac produced for the National Science Foundation. The collection contains approximately 295,000 feet of motion picture film; more than 2,000 photographic negatives, slides and prints; associated paper records. The archive also holds a small collection of Vishniac's personal home movies, and other programming created about Vishniac's work.

Archives of the American Joint Distribution Committee

The JDC holds over 350 Vishniac prints, and a limited number of paper files including correspondence connected to Vishniac's work.

Personal papers of Mara Vishniac Kohn

Negatives and prints shot by Vishniac family, as well as personal correspondence

Jewish Museum Berlin

Negatives and prints of work Vishniac did in Berlin; items included in the museum's exhibition and catalogue: *Roman Vishniac's Berlin*

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Film Archive

Archival film footage of Jewish life in pre-war Europe, the rise of Nazi Germany, footage of Kristallnacht

United States National Archives

Archival footage of historical events in Vishniac's story

National Center for Jewish Film

Carpathian Mountains

Outtakes of film photographed and directed by Roman Vishniac for the JDC

Deutsches FilmInstitute - Berlin

Die Versunkenen Welten des Roman Vishniac (transl: *The Vanished World of Roman Vishniac*)

1978 German language documentary produced by Swiss filmmaker Erwin Leiser

NBC / Universal Archives

The Big Little World of Dr. Roman Vishniac, a 1968 NBC News Special

Interviews to date:

Mara Vishniac Kohn

Hans Guggenheim

Artist, family friend of Vishniac family, mentored by Roman

Evy Megerman

Friend of Vishniac family their friendship spanned three generations

Michael Edelson

Professor of Photography and Film; Associate Director of International Center of Photography who worked as an assistant to Vishniac; Author of "The Concerns of Roman Vishniac" and "The Concerned Photographer 2"

Ephraim Vishniac

Grandson of Roman Vishniac, son of Wolf Vishniac

Ethan Vishniac

Grandson of Roman Vishniac, son of Wolf Vishniac

Scholar interviews to date:

David Shneer

Professor of Jewish History, University of Colorado, Boulder

Hasia Diner

Professor, American Jewish History, New York University

Norman Barker

Photomicroscopist, Professor of Pathology and Art as Applied Medicine, Johns Hopkins University

John Edwin Mason
Professor of The History of Photography, University of Virginia

Judith Cohen
Chief Curator of Acquisitions, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Rights and permissions:

In 2017, Mara Vishniac Kohn, Roman Vishniac's heir and the copyright holder of all of his works, granted us the rights to Vishniac's life story and material work for use in this film. No fees were charged for this grant of rights. Costs to be incurred include transferring of some film footage to High Definition standard and scanning of some negatives. In addition, there are several archival programs featuring interviews and filmed footage verite and b-roll with Roman Vishniac. These come from a variety of archives and we will need to pay for transfer and licensing fees if we use clips from these programs.

Humanities advisers:

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is a scholar of Performance and Jewish Studies and a museum professional. Professor Emerita of Performance Studies at New York University, she is best known for her interdisciplinary contributions to Jewish studies and to the theory and history of museums, tourism, and heritage. She is currently Chief Curator of the Core Exhibition and Advisor to the Director at POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw.

Norman Naimark is a Professor of History and Eastern European Studies at Stanford University, and a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution. Naimark has a vast knowledge of 20 century German, Polish, and Russian history and has written extensively about the Russian revolution, wartime Germany and Poland, the Holocaust and Genocide, and post-war Germany. Laura Bialis studied under Naimark while a history major at Stanford, and was inspired to make films on several subjects from his courses. Professor Naimark served as a historical consultant on Bialis' film about post-war Kosovo, an area which he is also an authority. His expertise will provide the film with critical information about what was happening in the background during many periods of Vishniac's life and work.

David Shneer is a Professor of Jewish History and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at University of Colorado, Boulder. His research focuses on 20 Century European, Russian, and Jewish history and culture. Shneer's book, *Through Soviet Jewish Eyes: Photography, War and the Holocaust* looks at the lives and work of contemporaries of Vishniac Russian Jews who lived and worked in the Soviet Union. Shneer has written extensively about issues central to Vishniac's work. He presented "Eastern European Jewish Photographers Beyond Nostalgia: Putting Vishniac in Conversation with Soviet Jewish Photojournalists," to the New York University Seminar: Jews and Photography, in 2007, and contributed an essay "Russian Émigré in Berlin" to *Roman Vishniac Rediscovered*, a 2015 retrospective monograph on Vishniac that accompanied the International Center of Photography's exhibition.

Norman Barker is an expert in photomicroscopy and natural science photography. He is Professor of Pathology and Art as Applied Medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, a Registered Biological Photographer, and a fellow of The Royal Photographic Society and BioCommunications Association. His work appears in permanent collections of museums including The Smithsonian, The George Eastman House, and The American Museum of Natural History. He has written extensively about Vishniac's critical contributions to his own work. Professor Barker has already provided tremendous

support to the project, helping us to better understand Vishniac's role in biological photography, and by making available his own research, which includes details of Vishniac's many assignments.

Hasia Diner is a specialist in immigration and ethnic history, and a Professor of American Jewish History at New York University. Her book *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence After the Holocaust 1945-1962*, deals with how the Holocaust was memorialized by American Jews and American Jewish Culture. Professor Diner has a vast knowledge of American Jewish culture at the time that Vishniac's photographs became well known, and explains the significance of Vishniac's work to Jewish Americans, and how these images became iconic in our cultural memory.

John Edwin Mason has been called a pre-eminent historian by National Geographic Magazine. He is a Professor of the History of Photography and African History at the University of Virginia. Professor Mason is an expert on African-American FSA photographer Gordon Parks. He is currently working on a book about Parks' Life magazine photo-essays on poverty and the black liberation struggle during the Civil Rights Movement. He also has written extensively about other photographers such as Margaret Bourke-White and Jill Freedman. Mason will be tremendously helpful in placing Roman's work in context of other photographers working contemporaneously for FSA projects in the U.S.

Laura Wexler is the founder and director of the Photographic Memory Workshop at Yale University, where she is a professor of American Studies and Women's Gender, & Sexuality Studies. Professor Wexler uses photographs as primary sources, as well as a scholar and theorist of visual culture. She is the primary investigator of the NEH funded *Photogrammar* project, a web-based platform for organizing, searching, and visualizing the photographs created by the Farm Security Administration from 1935-1945. According to Wexler, her work has been profoundly influenced by Vishniac, whom she met at a lecture in 1971 at Yale. With her unique focus on photography's role in ethnic memory, Laura has a special perspective on the substance and complexity that surrounds Vishniac's work.

NOTE: Maya Benton, an adjunct curator for the International Center of Photography (ICP), worked on the initial formation of the Roman Vishniac Archive (initially at ICP) and the *Roman Vishniac Rediscovered* Exhibition at ICP. She has declined to be involved in the project, stating that her time is overcommitted and film projects are not a priority. Because of Benton's deep knowledge of the subject, we continue to be hopeful that she will decide to participate in the future.

ADDITIONAL NOTE: In 2018, the Roman Vishniac Archive was relocated from ICP to the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at the University of California, Berkeley. We have been in close communication with their curator Francesco Spagnolo as they move through the process of cataloguing the collection.

Media team:

Producer/Director: Laura Bialis

Laura Bialis is an award-winning documentary filmmaker. Her most recent film, *Rock in the Red Zone* (2015) is a personal view from the ground in war-torn Sderot, Israel, and an exploration into the lives of musicians creating in a conflict zone. The film was screened in over 80 cities worldwide, released on iTunes and On-Demand platforms in 70 countries, and released on Netflix in October 2018. Bialis directed and produced the critically acclaimed documentary *Refusenik* (2007), a seminal film about the movement to free Soviet Jews, which was released theatrically in fifteen cities before going to digital platforms. She co-directed and produced *View From the Bridge: Stories From Kosovo* (2008), which

premiered at the Slamdance Film Festival, was broadcast on television in Europe, and has been used by the EU and NATO for training staff in Kosovo. Bialis' film *Tak For Alt: Survival of a Human Spirit (1998)*, the story of Holocaust survivor turned Civil Rights activist Judy Meisel, was honored by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and broadcast on PBS through American Public Television. The film has been used extensively in high schools across the U.S. for Holocaust education. *Daybreak Berlin (2001)*, Bialis' MFA thesis film, chronicles the wartime experiences of artist and anti-Nazi resistance activist Ilse-Margret Vogel, living in Berlin during the last days of the war. The film was the winner of the Kodak Student Film Competition, participated in festivals, and aired on public television. Bialis holds a B.A. in history from Stanford University, where she focused her study on Eastern Europe during WWII, and an M.F.A. in production from the University of Southern California School of Cinema Arts.

Producer: Roberta Grossman

Roberta Grossman has written, directed and produced more than 40 hours of film and television. Her current film, *Who Will Write Our History*, about the secret Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto, won the audience award at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, was screened at the Berlin Film Festival and theatrically release in 2019. Grossman co-directed Netflix original documentary film *Seeing Allred (2018)* about women's rights attorney Gloria Allred, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. Grossman's 2012 *Hava Nagila (The Movie)* uses the song Hava Nagila as a portal into 150 years of Jewish history, culture and spirituality. *Blessed Is the Match: The Life and Death of Hannah Senesh*, Grossman's 2008 film, was shortlisted for an Academy Award, aired on PBS, was nominated for a Primetime Emmy and won the audience award at 13 Jewish film festivals. Grossman directed *Above and Beyond (2014)*, for producer Nancy Spielberg, about the American Jewish WWII pilots who volunteered to fight in Israel's War of Independence. Grossman also produced the NEH supported *Dorothea Lange: Grab a Hunk of Lightning*, which aired on PBS/American Masters in August 2014. Grossman was the series producer and co-writer of *500 Nations*, the eight-hour CBS series on Native Americans hosted by Kevin Costner. Her film *Homeland: Four Portraits of Native Action*, aired on PBS in 2005.

Executive Producer: Nancy Spielberg

Producer Nancy Spielberg grew up immersed in filmmaking, working on her brother's early films as cast and crew. She attended Arizona State University and UCLA and, after moving to New York in 1978, studied film at Sarah Lawrence College and the New School. An accomplished businesswoman and philanthropist, in recent years she has turned her energy and talents to producing documentary films. One of her priorities is to help preserve stories and make them educational tools for the benefit of younger generations. Spielberg produced *Above and Beyond*, winner of the audience award at more than twenty film festivals. Spielberg is the executive producer of Sophie Sartain's documentary, *Mimi and Dona*, which was broadcast nationally on PBS in 2015. She is executive producer of *Who Will Write Our History*, about the secret archive of the Warsaw Ghetto, directed by Roberta Grossman, and *On the Map*, a documentary by filmmaker Dani Menkin, which, since its 2016 release, has been screening internationally and receiving multiple festival awards. She also served as consulting producer on *GI JEWS: Jewish Americans in World War II*, which aired on PBS for Holocaust Remembrance Day in April 2018. Spielberg served as consultant on the Oscar-winning documentary, *Chernobyl Heart*, and was executive producer of *Elusive Justice: The Search for Nazi War Criminals*, which aired nationally on PBS.

Writer: Sophie Sartain

Sophie Sartain is the co-director and producer of the Netflix original documentary *Seeing Allred*, which premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. She wrote, directed, produced and shot the documentary *Mimi and Dona*, which aired nationally on PBS/*Independent Lens* in 2015 and was named one of the top-ten TV programs of the year by Neil Genzlinger of *The New York Times*. Sartain's other credits include

the 2014 documentary *Above and Beyond* (writer); the 2012 documentary *Hava Nagila (The Movie)* (writer/producer); and the Emmy-nominated 2008 film *Blessed Is the Match: The Life and Death of Hannah Senesh* (writer/co-producer). Additionally, she has contributed as a writer and story consultant on *Who Will Write Our History* (2018), *Ishi's Return* (2016), *Rock in the Red Zone* (2015), *Hotel Everest* (2017), and *Feminists: What Were They Thinking* (2018). Sartain has been a film envoy with the American Film Showcase, a diplomacy program run by State Department in partnership with the USC School of Cinematic Arts. She has served as a panelist for the NEH's America's Media Maker grants, and is the recipient of grants from ITVS Open Call and the Fledgling Fund.

Director of Photography: Harris Done

Harris Done has worked in many genres over the past 25 years. Most notable has been his long documentary collaboration with director James Moll. Their work includes the 1999 Academy Award-winning feature documentary *The Last Days* for executive producer Steven Spielberg, and the Emmy Award-winning *Inheritance*. Done lensed the epic *Running the Sahara*, produced and narrated by Matt Damon, the Grammy winning *Foo Fighters: Back and Forth*, *Price for Peace*, *Farmland* and the upcoming *Obey Giant*, a biography of American artist and muralist Shepard Fairey. Done's other D.P. credits include the HBO original documentary *If you're not in the obit, eat breakfast*, *Boston*, *Above and Beyond*, *Vows of Silence*, *From a Whisper to a Roar*, and the cult classic *Trekkies*. In addition to his extensive cinematography work, Harris has also written, produced and directed several dramatic feature films including *Purgatory Flats*, *Storm* starring Martin Sheen and the award-winning *Sand Trap*. He also directed the award-winning documentaries *War Dogs of the Pacific* and *Always Faithful*.

Progress:

In April 2019, *Vishniac* received a development grant from the NEH in the amount of \$75,000. The main project activity during the grant period was the research, development and writing of the script for the film, *Vishniac* (formerly called *All This Life: The Many Worlds of Roman Vishniac*).

During the grant period, we conducted interviews with four of our scholar-advisers: David Shneer, Norman Barker, Hasia Diner and John Edwin Mason. We also initiated conversations with scholar Laura Wexler and are planning to interview her for the film in the coming months. There are two new scholars we have recently reached out to: Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, who has agreed to come on board for both an interview and as an official advisor, and Kerry Wallach, an expert in German-Jewish culture in Weimar Berlin, whom we hope to interview for the film.

Sophie Sartain wrote the script throughout the grant period. The scholar interviews helped tremendously with developing the script's humanities themes and formulating the film's overall thematic and narrative arc. The shooting script is now complete. We will continue to revise the script and obtain scholar feedback as needed during the production phase.

While we worked on the script, our production team continued research and development. We conducted extensive research and cataloging with the digital division of the Roman Vishniac Archive that includes prints, negatives, letters and documents. There are approximately 23,000 digital files so this has been an enormous task.

Director Laura Bialis started working with Joint Distribution Committee Archivist Linda Levi about the JDC's Vishniac holdings. Levi generously transferred the JDC's Vishniac Photographic Collection to our production team so that we could begin working with the material.

We began work with three archival researchers: Joy Conley, at the US National Archives (NARA), did a general search for archival footage. Marianna Yarovskaya, an expert in Russian archives, searched for documentation about Vishniac in Moscow and photographs and film footage from 1897-1920. This included finding images of Jewish photographic studios in Russia between 1905-1910, and images to convey the Vishniacs' life in Tsarist Russia – generic street scenes along with images of brutal pogroms and footage of the Revolution. Anka Bobchuk, our researcher in Berlin, searched for archival footage of Berlin during the Weimar Republic, along with documentation of Jewish life in Berlin.

Our team conducted a search of film archives at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for footage of Jewish life in Berlin in the interwar period, along with images of Kristallnacht, and other events for Jews in Germany such as the boycott of Jewish businesses. We undertook additional research with Vishniac family members, with a focus on finding letters and family photographs, and confirming dates and pieces of their personal story. We also had letters and postcards between Roman Vishniac and his family members translated from German to English.

Vishniac will incorporate some dramatizations to evoke Vishniac's early years and the experiences of his daughter, who is the primary voice in the film. As a step toward developing the film's visual style, our team shot some reenactment scenes. We have incorporated these scenes into the film's sample reel.

We have continued to fundraise for the film. In early 2019, we raised \$72,548 from more than 200 donors in an Indiegogo campaign. This attests to audience interest and support. Some film festivals and institutions have already requested permission to screen the film once it is completed.

With funds raised to date, work on the film, including rough-cut editing, pre-production for interviews and reenactment shoots, translation of Vishniac family letters from German to English and international archival research will continue between August 2019 and May 2020. This will allow an accelerated production and post-production schedule from May 2020 to January 2021.

Distribution plan and audiences:

Based on our experience releasing five feature documentaries, including four on Jewish historical subjects, we anticipate *Vishniac* will have a long life across distribution platforms in the U.S. and internationally. To make sure the film reaches the largest possible audience, we will pursue a hybrid of self-distribution and strategic partnerships for all stages of release.

Who Will Write Our History, funded by NEH, had a robust and successful festival run including winning awards and screening at some of the most prestigious international film festivals including the Berlin Film Festival. The film was released theatrically in early 2019. Also in 2019, *Who Will Write Our History* had an unprecedented global screening event on January 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day. On that day, we had nearly 400 screenings in 55 countries and 12 languages, including an anchor screening at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, with a Facebook Live simulcast of the post-screening discussion. The film will be broadcast in 2020 followed by educational release including work with Facing History and Ourselves in North America and Forum for Dialogue in Poland.

Our NEH-funded film *Dorothea Lange: Grab a Hunk of Lightning* (2014) aired on PBS on the *American Masters* series and continues to screen in semi-theatrical venues including museums and universities

around the world. Our 2008 film *Blessed Is the Match: The Life and Death of Hannah Senesh* was released theatrically and short-listed for an Academy Award. The film was nationally broadcast on PBS/*Independent Lens* in 2010, followed by broadcast in Israel and Europe. Our education and outreach partner on *Blessed Is the Match*, Facing History and Ourselves, created a full-length study guide for general education and a supplement for Jewish day schools and religious schools. Facing History conducted extensive teacher trainings with the film around the U.S. and Canada. Nine years after its broadcast, the film is still being used in educational settings. Our 2012 film *Hava Nagila (The Movie)* was the opening or closing night film at dozens of film festivals and had a successful theatrical release that we were able to parlay into a distribution deal. The film is available to educational institutions in addition to streaming on Netflix, iTunes and Amazon, and still screens in semi-theatrical venues. *Above and Beyond* (2014) has played at hundreds of festivals and semi-theatrical venues worldwide and is available on iTunes and Amazon. In 2018, Katahdin released *Seeing Allred*, about famed women's right attorney Gloria Allred on Netflix, which is available in 190 countries around the world.

As with these films, we anticipate that *Vishniac* will:

- Premiere at an international film festival
- Screen at many of the more-than 100 Jewish film festivals around the world
- Enjoy a limited theatrical release (LA/NY for reviews, Oscar qualification, followed by cities such as Palm Beach, Miami, Chicago, Boston, Washington, D.C.)
- Be screened in semi-theatrical venues including museums, historical societies and Jewish organizations
- Be made available to educational institutions through streaming and DVD
- Reach a national audience through television broadcast, most likely on PBS
- Reach international audiences through television broadcast, particularly in Europe and Israel
- Be released on DVD and streaming through Netflix, iTunes, Amazon and other outlets

All distribution platforms will be supported through advertising, public relations campaigns, and extensive and intensive grassroots outreach with partnering organizations in the U.S. and beyond. The work of establishing relationships and building partnerships with organizations begins now. We have already formed a partnership with The American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), which played a central role in Vishniac's career. We will also partner with the United States Memorial Holocaust Museum and the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, where the Roman Vishniac Archive is housed. As opportunities arise, director Laura Bialis will travel to speak with the film. We will also coordinate opportunities for our scholars to speak with the film whenever possible.

Facing History and Ourselves will hopefully be our educational partner, creating a study guide making the film available to teachers through their regional offices. Katahdin Productions will handle educational sales to colleges, universities and libraries through reaching out to previous customers of *Hava Nagila (The Movie)*, *Blessed Is the Match* and *Above and Beyond* and having the film screened at conferences. We believe the film will have broad appeal in academia to faculty and students of documentary photography, American Jewish History, and the Holocaust.

Project evaluation:

We will evaluate the success of our film through both qualitative and quantitative methods. Prior to our release, we anticipate productive feedback on script revisions and cuts of the film via

telephone/email and also through video conferencing with our scholar advisers. After we have a rough cut, we will use qualitative surveys with test audiences to determine the effectiveness and impact of the film. Once we release the film, we will use audience numbers from the film's broadcast, along with social media response and the reception at film festivals in terms of attendance and awards to determine impact and audience engagement.

We anticipate that *Vishniac* will have a long life not only on public television but in museums, classrooms, libraries, community organizations and other educational settings. We expect that there will be crossover audiences between *Vishniac* and our previous film, *Who Will Write Our History*. Katahdin Foundation will reach out to the thousands of followers and fans that have seen our previous films and will also work with community partners with whom we have developed strong collaborative relationships to evaluate the film's effectiveness as an educational tool.

Fundraising plan and project costs:

Vishniac is a 90-100 minute documentary filmed mostly in the U.S. with some filming in Germany and Eastern Europe. There will be some high-quality, cinematic reenactments. The film requires extensive archival research, restoration and scanning of photographs. The total budget for the film is just over \$1.2 million. We have raised \$594,675 to date. Our total estimated completion budget for the NEH production grant period is \$630,940, of which we're requesting \$396,940 from the NEH.

We've received funds and pledges from the following foundations and individual donors:

- (b) (4)
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

We have pending requests at the Claims Conference and several family foundations. We also continue to reach out to individual donors who have expressed interest in the project.

Work plan:

- **May 2020 - NEH Production Grant Period Begins**
- Shoot interviews and pick-ups with scholars (four days)
- Transcribe all interviews
- Second draft script
- Archival research in international archives ramps up

- **June –August 2020**
- Shoot final reenactments (four days)
- Editing Second rough cut (incorporate new scholar interviews, pickups and recreations)
- Second draft of script

- Record VO of letters with actors
- Archival research continues

- **September 2020**
- Send second draft script and second rough cut to scholars
- Eastern Europe b-roll shoot (three days)
- Hire composer
- Hire sound editor/mixer
- Conversations with Facing History and other potential partner organizations for outreach and distribution
- Discussions with distributors, plans for releasing the film
- Hire titles and graphics company
- Begin applying to film festivals

- **October 2020**
- Early October - Convene scholars conference for comments on script and second rough cut
- Final draft script incorporating scholar notes
- Edit fine cut incorporating scholar notes

- **November 2020**
- Lock picture
- Composer starts
- Begin archival footage clearance and licensing source music
- Archival clearance continues
- Share fine cut with partners for outreach and distribution and plans for film's release

- **December 2020**
- Sound editing
- Order master archival footage and photos
- Archival clearance continues

- **January 2021**
- Record score
- Sound mix and color correction

Organization profile:

Founded in 2003 by Lisa Thomas, the former CEO and co-founder of Clif Bar, Inc., Katahdin's mission is to tell compelling stories – stories that inform, enlighten, entertain and inspire. Dedicated to creating high-quality documentary films, educational materials and media projects, Katahdin productions tackle issues of social, political and historical interest. Since its inception, Katahdin has produced the award-winning documentary, *Homeland: Four Portraits of Native Action*, which was distributed nationally to PBS stations in 2006, *Blessed Is the Match: The Life and Death of Hannah Senesh* (funded by NEH), which was broadcast on PBS in April 2010 on Independent Lens, and *Hava Nagila, The Movie* (released theatrically in 2013). Katahdin co-produced *Dorothea Lange: Grab A Hunk of Lightning* (also funded by NEH), directed by Dyanna Taylor, which was broadcast nationally on PBS's American Masters in August 2014. Katahdin co-produced *Above and Beyond* with producer Nancy's Spielberg's Playmount Productions. In 2018, Katahdin released *Seeing Allred*, a Netflix Original and *Who Will Write Our History* (funded by NEH).

VISHNIAC
Feature Documentary Script
August 2019

FADE IN:

INT. DARKROOM DAY

REENACTMENT: A 1930s-era darkroom with beakers, tubs of liquid and a red glow. A nine-year-old girl (MARA) peers down at a tub as a submerged image comes to life before her eyes. With wooden tongs, her father (ROMAN) lifts the image out of the liquid. He hangs it to dry with a clothes pin.

We glimpse a few of the photos on the wall. Religious Jews in Eastern Europe. The images are familiar.

Mara takes the tongs and agitates the tray as another image begins to appear.

INT. LIVING ROOM/SANTA BARBARA PRESENT DAY

Through a doorway, we exit onto a patio where MARA VISHNIAC KOHN, age 92, sits with her back to us. She takes in a panoramic view of the Pacific Ocean.

EXT. PATIO/SANTA BARBARA DAY

We see Mara from the side, the ocean reflected in her sunglasses.

MARA VISHNIAC KOHN (VO)

When I was growing up, I would constantly be told what a beautiful mother I had, which ... well, it's a mixed blessing because it does make you suspect that you're the ugly duckling.

Family photos Mara as a child with her mother Luta; Mara with her older brother Wolf.

MARA VISHNIAC KOHN (VO)

My brother was the smart person of the two of us. And my father was doing his own strange things.

Footage of Roman Vishniac photographing, with microscopes, in the field collecting insects.

CUT BACK TO: Darkroom reenactment. Young Mara looks at her dad.

MARA VISHNIAC KOHN (VO)

There were these roles in the family that I think happen in every family.

B-roll around Mara's Santa Barbara home shelves of antique books, a collection of Japanese netsukes on the mantle, a photo of Mara as a mature woman with Roman. Who is she? Does she have a role?

CUT TO: Archival footage of Antarctica in the 1970s. We see a lone figure among the ice walls.

MARA VISHNIAC KOHN (VO)

My brother wanted to do research in Antarctica. And on the second trip, he fell off a 500-foot cliff and was killed. I was crazy, very upset for a long time.

Archival footage NYC, Upper West Side from the 1970s. An extremely messy desk, piled high with microscopic equipment, photo paper boxes, slides and film spools.

MARA VISHNIAC KOHN (VO)

I remember a moment when I realized that, my God, I'm going to be responsible for my father's books, the collections, the photographs.

Vishniac images of smiling children in Eastern Europe in the late 1930s.

MARA VISHNIAC KOHN (VO)

People who had been murdered. They deserved to be remembered.

CUT BACK TO: Mara at her house. She peers at her father's photographs through a magnifying glass.

MARA VISHNIAC KOHN (VO)

That was the beginning of my understanding that I had a responsibility. I guess I didn't think I had a choice.

TITLE TREATMENT OVER A COLLECTION OF IMAGES: VISHNIAC

INT. MARA'S LIVING ROOM SANTA BARBARA PRESENT DAY

Mara climbs the stairs in her home and passes some of father's famous photographs on the wall.

MARA

These are some of my favorite photographs.

We settle on the photo of a young boy with a heart-shaped face. Mara stops and looks at him.

CUT TO: INT. US HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM/WASHINGTON, DC DAY

We pan down on a gallery to the same photograph of the boy.

JUDITH COHEN

(Lower Third: Judith Cohen, Chief Curator
of Acquisitions, US Holocaust Memorial
Museum)

When we envision the Holocaust and we think of the victims, we picture somebody with a Jewish star or in a prisoner-striped uniform. But Vishniac's photographs are different. These are photographs before the atrocities took place.

Shtetl images, the most iconic. No music. We look at the faces, their humanity. They stare back at us.

JUDITH COHEN

Without photography, it's hard to get empathy. How do you empathize with people that you can't visualize? Vishniac was able to capture the emotion of the people that he photographed. You see pathos or joy. People connect to that on an emotional level.

CUT TO: '50s-era footage of science films featuring Roman Vishniac.

NORMAN BARKER

(Lower Third: Norman Barker, Johns Hopkins University)

If you grew up in the United States and you were in school between 1962 and probably the mid '70s, you saw some of Roman Vishniac's biology series in your science classes. He spent his entire life in science. Yet most people only recognize the name Roman Vishniac, and they associate it with these pictures that he took over a three-year period. These were people and a way of life that was wiped out by the Nazis during the Second World War.

More luminous images of yeshiva boys, bearded rabbis, little girls on a cobblestone street.

HASIA DINER

(Lower Third: Hasia Diner, NYU)

In the aftermath of the war, these photographs stood for something of enormous proportion. It was a way to take a number. Six million? And embody it in real faces of real people who kind of look like us.

BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT

(Lower Third: Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Director, POLIN Museum of History of Polish Jews)

Visniac's work is greater in scope than his best-known and most iconic images, those of Eastern European Jews. And they, in turn, represent more than a history of Jewish persecution and the trope of a 'vanished world.' Only in the last decade have we taken a step back to get beyond those images and examine the larger story of Vishniac's life and work.

DISSOLVE TO: Grainy, archival footage of Moscow in pre-1917 Tsarist Russia.

MARA (VO)

My father Roman Vishniac was born near St. Petersburg in August 1897. Roman's parents made their home in Moscow.

Vishniac family photographs illustrate their high status.

DAVID SHNEER

(Lower Third: David Shneer, University of Colorado)

In Tsarist Russia, Jews were only allowed to live in a prescribed area called the Pale of Settlement. Only certain classes of Jews could live beyond the Pale. His family was one of those wealthy families.

REENACTMENT: A young Roman opens a present. It's a microscope.

MARA (VO)

When my father was seven, somebody gave him a microscope and a camera, because he was already interested in natural things.

ETHAN VISHNIAC

(Lower Third: Ethan Vishniac,
Grandson)

When I think of his childhood in this small, constricted Russian Jewish community in Moscow, I get the impression maybe it was a little claustrophobic. Roman grew up in a household where business success was valued. His father, Solomon, married into a family that had money from the jewelry business. Although scholarship of a traditional kind was associated with prestige, being a scientist was bizarre and exotic.

Photographs of pogroms around the turn of the century.

DAVID SHNEER

His family is inured to what's going on around them. Pogroms are breaking out in Odessa, but they do not happen in Moscow because there are very few Jews living there.

Footage from World War I and the Russian Revolution chaotic scenes.

DAVID SHNEER

The year 1917 when the Bolsheviks take power, things start to change, especially for wealthy Jews. They start seeing the rhetoric coming out of the Bolsheviks, which is basically: proletariats of the world unite and kill off the bourgeoisie. At that point, the Vishniacs make plans to flee the country. Roman decides to stay and finish his scientific studies. Then he meets Luta Bagg.

Photographs of Luta

MARA

My mother Luta was the oldest of five children. Their family home was in Riga but in 1918 they were living in a wartime home in Moscow.

Verite footage at home, Mara holds up a picture of Luta

MARA

My father met my mother I think, shortly before he took this picture. Here she is, I believe, at about 19. He liked beautiful things. He

collected beautiful things, including women.

Photo of Roman and Luta together on horseback

MARA

I could imagine that my mother's family was interested in him as a possible match.

NAOMI SCHIFF

(Lower Third: Naomi Schiff,
Granddaughter)

In 1920, my grandmother Luta's family left Moscow to return to Latvia. My grandfather Roman followed them. On the border crossing from Russia to Latvia, the train master said to Roman, "You have a Russian passport. We can't allow you into Latvia unless you get married here." Luta and Roman decided to marry immediately. He then had Latvian citizenship and could make his way from Latvia to Germany.

Archival footage a train snakes its way west, through Poland, to a sign for Berlin.

MARA

Years later when I asked my father, "Why did you go to Berlin of all places. He said, "Of course, Berlin!"

CUT TO: Footage of Weimar Berlin Cafes, nightlife, culture. Excitement, possibility. Lively music.

DAVID SHNEER

Berlin had been known as the wild capital of Europe, more or less since the late 19th century. They had cabarets, writer's workshops. It actually was the center of photography in all of Europe. The Weimar Republic gave rights to everybody. Women, Jews, ethnic minorities and even sexual minorities actually finally came out of their hiding places and could actually perform on stages, for example.

Footage of Albert Einstein; cosmopolitan scenes; newspapers in many languages, including Russian

MARA

Berlin was the center of learning and science. It was the place where Einstein was.

DAVID SHNEER

Berlin has this mystique and it's also got hyperinflation going on. After the war, it's actually very cheap for Russians to live in Berlin. Culture organizations end up setting up shop in Berlin specifically because it's cheap and because it's this cultural crossroads. More importantly, Berlin is a train ride away from Russia. These people who emigrated did not believe that the Bolsheviks were going to hold power. They saw Berlin as a staging ground for their return.

MARA

My grandparents owned some property, which was the income for the family, including the apartment where my parents lived. My brother Wolf was born there in 1922. I came along four years later.

Baby pictures and, remarkably, home movie footage of Mara as an infant.

MARA

Both grandparents supported my family. And the attempts to get my father into business were dramatically unsuccessful.

Family photographs Roman with his father Solomon

ETHAN VISHNIAC

Solomon proceeded to try to set Roman up in business as a young man. They bought an apartment building, they had various business ventures. Roman should make a living. Roman had no interest in any of that. Roman wanted to be a scientist. But his education had collapsed and chaos during the Russian civil war. So he did this passive aggressive reaction, which was sure you can set me up in business but you can't make me actually make a success out of it.

Photos of the Vishniac's spacious apartment, and Mara with family members and other guests there

MARA

We lived in a large apartment, high ceilings, many rooms. My father would read me stories at night. I remember that he would present them very dramatically, and not always read them, but often make them up too.

REENACTMENT: The aquaria and terraria inside the Vishniac's apartment

MARA

One of the rooms was what we called the aquarium room, full of exotic and non-exotic animals of various kinds and all kinds of wonderful things. It was a whole ocean in there.

Photographs of Mara and Wolf on the beach at the Baltic Sea

MARA

In the summer, we went to our grandparents' villa outside Riga. There was a postcard from my father one time, "We are expecting your return." We didn't know what that meant until we got home, and there was Jackie.

Photo reveals that Jackie is a monkey. CUT TO: a photo of Luta, who is not amused.

MARA

My mother would have nothing to do with that and just simply avoided that. That was my father's world and ours.

REENACTMENT: In Berlin, in a woodland park, Roman walks with Mara, age 8, and Wolf, age 12. They come to a giant sandbox.

MARA

I adored Wolf. We could be fighting and having a terrible time with each other until somebody made fun of his stutter or something like that. I would fly at them and beat them up...or try.

REENACTMENT: Wolf enacts battles with toy soldiers in the sandbox; meanwhile Mara digs

MARA

Wolf and I had a gigantic sandbox. We like to pour water into it. There was a well, and the surface was covered with mosquito larvae. My father was photographing them and would gather some of them in a jar, take it home, and work with them under the microscope.

REENACTMENT Mara goes to the microscope

MARA

He was always calling me to come see the beautiful things under the microscope. It was a great gift to me because when I'm on the beach or walking in the woods, I'm very aware of all the beauty under my feet. He used to say, "the closer you come, the more beautiful it is."

CUT TO: RV's photos around Berlin modern, sophisticated, striking sunlight beaming in at a train station, a well-dressed couple with their child

MARA (VO)

In Berlin, Roman became very interested in photography and now photographed street scenes.

DAVID SHNEER

Some of his early photographs, say, of his family or of Luta bathing in the river, echo Russian pictorialism, which imagined the world as soft and artistic and painterly. Once he moves to Berlin though, he starts to learn about new experimental techniques and adopting these more cutting-edge, modernist photographic techniques.

Henri Cartier-Bresson and Andre Kertesz photos

JOHN EDWIN MASON

(Lower Third: John Edwin Mason,
University of Virginia)

When we think of modernist photographers, we're thinking of

photographers who wanted sharp focus, lots of contrast. Modernism often had really strong geometry within the frame. You think of somebody like Andre Kertesz, or Henri Cartier-Bresson, who lived in Berlin in the '30s.

More Vishniac Berlin photos modern, arresting, whimsical

JOHN EDWIN MASON

You can see that in Vishniac's work. It's light, it's mobile. Trying to catch life on the fly, the quirkiness, the surrealism and poetry of life. He was fully embedded in the modernist visual culture of his time.

Playful photos of animals at the zoo, including "People Behind Bars," a shot from the point of view of polar bears staring at people outside their cage.

DAVID SHNEER

Jews were sitting on the boards of many famous Berlin-based organizations like the Berlin Zoo which his family was very involved with, which is why he takes these photographs of the polar bear. The human beings are in the zoo rather than the polar bear.

Music shifts to more a somber track. Photographs of Luta and Roman

MARA

My parents lived parallel lives, not usually together. It had not been a good relationship for a very long time. Roman was intensively doing his own thing, microscopy, photographing all his animal friends and Far Eastern art. Meanwhile my mother managed the normal life, what has to go on day-to-day. I'm sure there must've been large areas of unhappiness for my mother.

Vishniac photographs of a young blonde woman gazing at the camera

MARA

Edith was a young non-Jewish woman who my father met, I've been told, in 1932, and stayed romantically involved with for years.

More photographs and home movie footage good times with Edith

MARA

Growing up with parents who were not happy with each other, coming home from school, I would go up to the third floor, listen at the door. I would go in if I thought my mother was there, and I would go in if my father was there. I would not go in if they were both there. Then, of course, going out of the house, there was a pervasively hostile environment, and a constant feeling of threat and danger.

Close-up photo of young Mara with her back to us. She is looking through a window at a photo of Hitler.

MARA

He had this annoying habit of taking my picture. There was a question whether he would be stopped from taking images of Nazi propaganda. And so he could say, "Well, I'm taking a picture of my little girl."

Photo of Mara standing in front of a phrenology storefront.

JUDITH COHEN

Phrenology was Nazi pseudoscience, of a way of measuring the skull and hence determining who was Aryan and who was Jewish. And he saw the absurdity in this.

Archival footage of Berlin under Nazi rule.

DAVID SHNEER

Hitler sees Berlin as a polluted place that needs to be purified and he cleans up Berlin. By cleaning up, I mean closing down cabarets, kicking Jews out of their jobs.

MARA

I was in first and second grade before we were all shoved out.

Photos of signs forbidding Jews from entry; children outside a bakery stare through a window at pastries

MARA

Shops had big signs saying Jews not welcome, or no Jews or dogs. We would go to these bakeries where they had wonderful bread. Then came the discussion about should we go in? Would we be attacked? Would our parents get in trouble? Nobody knew that I was Jewish. But I knew that I was Jewish.

MARA

I had started enjoying movies. And very soon after, Jews couldn't go to movies anymore. You couldn't play tennis, or skate, or go to swimming pools. You were the unwanted.

Anti-Semitic illustrations from *Der Sturmpfer* on every street corner, and in the pages of a brightly colored children's book

MARA

There was an official anti-Semitic newspaper, which had the most terrible caricatures of Jews. I remember thinking: Did I know anybody that looked like that? The answer was no. Then I thought, well, maybe I look like that.

Vishniac photos documenting Jewish life in Berlin

JUDITH COHEN

There was a huge outpouring of Jewish culture during Nazi years, which surprises people but makes sense. German Jews, who had been heavily assimilated before, were now excluded from other social networks, so they created their own.

DAVID SHNEER

They had no choice but to work for these Jewish organizations so suddenly the quality of these Jewish cultural products goes way up. Vishniac is part of that trend. The Nazi rise to power forces him to start studying his own people. He joins a Jewish camera club and works for Jewish agencies. Ironically, it's Hitler that makes Vishniac into a Jewish photographer.

Photo of Rabbi Joachim Prinz

MARA

We went to the synagogue maybe 75 percent of the time. The Friedenstemple in Berlin was my father's favorite because of its young and fiery Zionist Rabbi, Joachim Prinz. So when the JDC asked Rabbi Prinz for advice, who to choose to do documentary photographs for them, Rabbi Prinz suggested that, well, there was this guy who was always taking pictures.

REENACTMENT In the Berlin apartment, Roman packs his camera and gear into a suitcase

HASIA DINER

The JDC was the Joint Distribution Committee, a Jewish American relief organization that was founded after World War I. The purpose of the Joint was to respond to crises faced by Jews in particular places, kind of like SWAT teams. There were hundreds of thousands of Jews. They'd come from the Polish countryside into Warsaw. Who's going to feed them? Who's going to provide them with places to live? The Joint is eager to get big donors to understand that they have an obligation. It's a sense of responsibility. Either Jews do it for themselves or it's not going to get done. Only the Jews of the United States had the wherewithal. It's the largest, freest, wealthiest, most politically connected Jewish population in the world.

REENACTMENT: RV POV shots boarding a train to travel to Eastern Europe; it leaves Berlin

MARA

I remember his leaving. I remember my questioning his leaving. He said, "They're our family and we have to help."

LAURA WEXLER

(Lower Third: Laura Wexler,
Yale University)

He traveled over 5000 miles (insert map) for the good part of four years. He made compelling photographs of a vibrant population of Eastern European Jews before the Holocaust, of verdant farms, sunny villages and modern cities. Like the documentary images produced in America by the photographers of the Farm Security Administration, they clearly denote the deserving poor.

CUT TO: FSA photographs The American West and South poor farmers and workers, Migrant Mother

JOHN EDWIN MASON

The very category of documentary photography was in the process of being invented. You were not documenting the world in any kind of neutral way. You were documenting the world to change it. The Farm Security Administration's task was to go to the poor and the countryside and lift them up to fund programs to address their need.

LAURA WEXLER

In the 1930s, the meaning of the photographic document was not yet set in the way it is now understood, as an unmanipulated imprint. For one thing, people other than the photographers often wrote captions. Social services organizations, like those Vishniac worked for, created scenes for photographers to shoot in appeals for charitable support. Vishniac himself wrote captions, some of which were clearly inaccurate. At the time, however, people accepted the documentary photograph as a *correlative* of the real, not its literal copy.

ROMAN VISHNIAC VO - POSTCARD #1

My darling, I am in a very small city and it's quiet here. I arrived early, and was already in the synagogue by 7:30. It's all painted fantastically with beautiful pictures and scenes from sacred places.

REENACTMENT: Mara in the darkroom with her father in the scene from the film's opening

MARA

My big honor was to spend hours in the darkroom with him. And I would watch the images that we know emerge, dark areas first. So there was this suspense about what it would be. I didn't know exactly who these slightly exotic people were because my parents were quite assimilated.

Eastern Europe photos poor, pious, traditional Jews

MARA

He felt a close relationship to the people he was photographing. He was enormously attached to his parents. This was a world that they or their parents had come from. His subjects were scholars. They were pious. They were learned.

DAVID SHNEER

The small rural townships with religious Jews, those end up disappearing as a result of the Holocaust. But not just as a result of the Holocaust. All of those places that Vishniac romanticized were already vanishing, because of modernization, because of industrialization, because of the railroads. This was the birth of the nostalgia for Eastern Europe and it happens before World War II. Before the Holocaust.

ROMAN VISHNIAC VO - POSTCARD #2

My honey bun, I've just come back from an area where very many Jews are having a very bad time. There are many unfortunate Jews and even girls of your age. My darling, you must thank God for the help that He has provided us, and always be sweet and nice and appreciate good fortune. Be happy!

REENACTMENT: RV leaves again to go on assignment

MARA

He was also in cities. He wasn't always in poor places. There were pictures of Warsaw and emancipated Jews and modern lifestyles.

Warsaw/urban photos; JDC brochures with him images

DAVID SHNEER

When he sent his material back to the JDC, I suspect that they chose the images that would best illustrate the need to support their efforts. And those are probably not the women with the modern haircuts, but poor orphan children.

Map graphic Zsbasn, between Poland and Germany

JUDITH COHEN

In the summer of 1938, Jews in Germany of Polish citizenship were expelled to Poland. They were living in no man's land on the border, without a place to go. The Berlin Central Jewish Community asked Vishniac to go and document these horrific conditions, in the town of Zsbasyn. When the son of one of these expatriates heard about what happened to his parents in Zsbasyn, in fury, he shot a minor German diplomat. And this is what led to Kristallnacht.

Archival footage structures burning in Kristallnacht

MARA

I was home with a really heavy cold. And nobody else was home.

REENACTMENT: Inside the Vishniac's Berlin apartment. The lights are out. A knock on the door.

MARA

I went to answer the door, and there was a policeman who said, "Is your father home?" And I said, "No." And he said, "Good. Keep it that way." He didn't come home and neither did my brother.

JUDITH COHEN

It's called the Night of the Broken Glass. But that almost trivializes what happened. Every synagogue that wasn't adjacent to a non-Jewish property was burned to the ground. Almost every Jewish male was arrested and sent to Dachau Buchenwald. Vishniac was not arrested. He had his Latvian passport, and that probably saved him.

DAVID SHNEER

91 Jews are killed. Businesses are destroyed and 30,000 Jews are arrested and sent to concentration camps. That's really the moment when German Jews know that this place is no longer safe.

Maps illustrate the Vishniac family on divergent paths out of Germany

MARA

My brother and I were sent to Riga to my grandparents for safekeeping. My father went to France to join his parents. I had been wanting to go to Holland to a Zionist camp where my friends had gone, but then my mother sent me to Southern Sweden to a place for Jewish refugee children. I went by myself. I was 12.

Photo: Roman in France

MARA

I didn't know where my father was, but I didn't suffer because of it. I suddenly didn't have to worry about how my parents were getting along. It was really nice. My mother was first in Berlin and then in Stockholm, where she had a sister. I moved up to Stockholm, too, and my brother made it after many months in Riga.

ROMAN VISHNIAC VO - POSTCARD #3

August 20, 1939. Sending fondest regards to all of you. It's marvelously beautiful here and you just don't want to believe in all the bad things.

Footage shows German troops and tanks invading Poland.

MARA

September 1st, '39. Somebody said the Germans had marched into Poland and everyone understood, of course, that meant war. I looked at my mother who absolutely blanched, went white, and sort of sank down into a chair.

NAOMI SCHIFF

On September 3, France declared war on Germany. Suddenly Roman was a foreigner, a suspect. He went to Angers, where he was supposed to register with authorities, but then he left for Paris. The Joint was not happy with this, and they alerted the authorities. When Roman went back to Angers, he was jailed.

Photographs of Camp du Ruchard

ROMAN VISHNIAC VO

October 2. Dear Luta, I haven't received any news from the parents or from the Joint. There has been no change in my situation. All of the inmates of the camp are nice and share their packages with me.

MARA

The JDC wrote letters on my father's behalf and helped get him out of jail. They fronted the money for our passage to America.

HASIA DINER

The fact that Vishniac had worked for the Joint meant that they had a particular stake in and relationship with him. He was a known commodity. They essentially said, "Look, he's not going to become a public charge. He's been on our payroll lately."

Photos of Luta, Mara and Wolf.

MARA

It was my mother's job to find ways to get us out of the country.

EPHRAIM VISHNIAC

(Lower Third: Ephraim Vishniac,
Grandson)

You couldn't get a passport without a visa and you couldn't get a visa without a passport. Somehow they strong-armed somebody into giving them a visa to take to the passport office.

Map of Europe denoting Axis vs. Allied nations in late 1940.

MARA

Most of the European ports were closed, except for those of neutral countries like Portugal. My mother decided that we would travel to Berlin and then France, Spain and Portugal.

REENACTMENT: The Berlin apartment in eerie darkness

MARA

We went to our apartment, and it was weird. The furniture was different. There were people in there that I didn't know. They seemed to be living there.

REENACTMENT: Mara and Wolf on a dark street in Berlin with occasional blue lights flashing

MARA

At night, my brother and I decided that we would see who of our friends was around. And it was, of course, blackout. People were using these skinny little flashlights with blue bulbs in them.

REENACTMENT: Mara's POV as she bumps against shadowy people on the street

MARA

I got confused about which way to go. My brother told me to close my eyes. I said, "Are you crazy?" He said, "No, close your eyes, and you'll find your way." And it helped because there was a kinetic memory of the paths of the street.

MARA

We went to the houses where two of my friends had lived. We said where is this family, naming them, and the Concierge said things like, "I don't know," or "They must be on vacation." Total denial.

REENACTMENT Apartment Mara sees a "Not for Jews" sign on the door to the air raid shelter.

MARA

All the air raid shelters had signs saying, "Not for Jews." The one in our house, which my family owned, had the same sign.

We hear audio of airplanes overhead, bombing

MARA

I heard people scoffing at the planes. The Germans felt invulnerable. They had been assured of that for years. I had become experienced at not being afraid. It's like a certain kind of vanity. It becomes a habit. You have to show that you're not afraid. There we were until my mother got passage for us on the last trip of an American line.

Shots of Lisbon, the port and a passenger ship, the SS Siboney

MARA

My father joined us in Lisbon, where we got into a ship overcrowded with refugees. I have a very physical memory in my stomach of looking out and saying to myself, "I am leaving Europe," and feeling a tremendous sadness.

Archival footage the open sea, passengers on a ship

MARA

There were frequent shouts of U-boats and people being absolutely

terrified. My father got seasick. It was very stormy, and most people were sick. There was a daughter of some Russian Jewish friends of my parents on the same boat. And between us, we organized a day care for all the children with seasick parents.

MARA

Let's see, what else. I fell in love with a sailor with beautiful blue eyes. There were some German Americans who were returning because it was war time. And they told me that in America you could buy bread that was already sliced. And, of course, being a wise 14-year-old, I realized they must be kidding. I was, "Ho, ho, ho. You can't fool me."

A photograph captures Wolf and Luta on the ship with Statue of Liberty in the background

MARA

My brother and my mother were standing at the railing, and I was a few feet away. My brother was wearing a hat because my mother insisted that in America, you have to wear a hat.

EPHRAIM VISHNIAC

(Lower Third: Ephraim Vishniac,
Grandson)

The photo is one that I especially like not simply because it's such a keepsake of my father arriving in the United States. It's the moment when the Vishniacs became Americans. It's right there in that photo. December 31st, 1940. If you sent people back then, they'd be dead. You can't come, you can't survive.

Archival footage Ellis Island, processing new arrivals

MARA

My mother's other sister had lived in New York for a while. She had rented an apartment for us on 76th Street, and we were off. My aunt and parents went to Times Square for New Year's Eve.

Archival footage - happy faces on New Year's Eve in Times Square. By contrast, the film's music conveys tension and uncertainty.

MARA

I was scared coming to this place. This joyful, "hurray, I'm free." I know that only from books and television.

Archival footage - Jews in New York 1941

HASIA DINER

At the moment when Vishniac arrives, Jews were maybe four or five percent of the population in the US. The difference between them and other Americans was tremendous. They were experiencing some

integration and economic mobility despite the Depression. Yet they were definitely not squarely in the American mainstream.

Photographs of the family in their new apartment

MARA

We were in this small apartment in Manhattan. Part of it instantly became a dark room, where my father and brother slept.

Archival footage Brooklyn College

ETHAN VISHNIAC

(Ethan Vishniac, Son of Wolf Vishniac)

The first item on the agenda was finding where my father would go to school. The only place that was still taking applications was Brooklyn College. Margaret Mead, who was a friend of the family's, got him enrolled there as a provisional student.

Teenage photos of Mara.

MARA

My first years here as a teenager were awful. Everybody was learning English, but I couldn't and wouldn't. I handled it by refusing to speak English and hiding from people. Going to all kinds of extremes so I wouldn't have to sound stupid. My brother got me through high school. It was heroic on his part.

Vishniac's portrait photos - Marc Chagall, etc. and scenes from nightclubs

MARA

My father contacted Jewish organizations, relief organizations, hospitals, social institutions to offer his services. He did anything he could to make a living.

Vishniac's wartime photographs in NYC for JDC and other organizations; assimilated Jewish children engaged in rigorous outdoor activities

HASIA DINER

Vishniac couldn't speak English, but he had his camera. He got assignments with the JDC and other Jewish organizations. It differed from the work in Europe. Instead of photographing poverty to raise funds, these photos needed to show successful learning experiences to garner support for programs in the US. They needed to convey promise rather than despair, accomplishment rather than failure. Girls engaged in study side by side with boys, assimilated and in secular settings. These American children could be Jewish or not. He also photographed refugees and focused on children.

Footage of refugee children and RV's photographs saluting the flag, looking sweet

HASIA DINER

The public thinks, oh my God, those adults are going to take my job away from me. They're going to compete for scarce housing. They're going to perhaps be somewhat dissident politically. They're never going to fit in. These kids, they're not going to take jobs. They will be much more easily enculturated into American life.

NORMAN BARKER

He was sitting around his New York apartment one day and looking for some work. He decides to go to Princeton University.

REENACTMENT: Mara's POV: at a door with a small business card on the front saying "A. Einstein"

MARA

I was 16. I remember standing in front of the door. I felt, wow. Einstein was like a deity to my father.

NORMAN BARKER

He's never met Albert Einstein before. He walks up to his office, introduces himself, has his camera with him, says, "Oh, we know similar people from the old country." They're speaking in German and everything. Einstein has no idea who he is but nonetheless he starts talking and schmoozes his way in. He asked Einstein, "Do you mind, since I'm here, I start taking some photographs?" And Einstein says, "Sure, go ahead."

Close on the photograph: Einstein with pipe in his mouth

NORMAN BARKER

Einstein said it was one of his favorite photographs.

Photo of Einstein at the blackboard

ETHAN VISHNIAC

Later on, when Roman had physicists in his family, he told us that he had a picture of the moment when Einstein invented the atom bomb.

Closer on the numbers on the blackboard

ETHAN VISHNIAC

Anyone who has ever studied physics knows what's on that blackboard. It's Einstein thinking about the unity of forces in the universe. It's got nothing to do with nuclear physics or bombs or blowing things up. The vast majority of stories Roman told, I assumed had some element of truth and I would never know how

much. I just gave him a very generous Walter Mitty allowance.

Music shift tension. A print brochure from YIVO announces an exhibition of Vishniac photos

JUDITH COHEN

During the war, the real peak of the Final Solution started in 1942. We're talking 1942, 1943, 1944. Vishniac had three exhibits of his pre-war photographs. These are the photographs that later became iconic. He deliberately blurred the lines between what was wartime and what was pre-war, in order to call attention, to try to raise people's consciousness, and hopefully do something on behalf of European Jews.

HASIA DINER

The exhibition at YIVO would have heightened panic over what was happening. You're not getting mail from your relatives. You don't know where they are. Then you go to an exhibit and you see these faces.
(the boy with the heart-shaped face,
a girl with haunting eyes)
My God, those are my relatives, literally or figuratively.

We pan down Roman's letter to President Roosevelt

ROMAN VISHNIAC VO - LETTER

My dear Mr. President: I was born a Jew in czarist Russia the lowest caste, unprotected, exposed to defamation and persecution. And then came Hitler. I saw infinite disaster and injustice, and I took sadness and disappointment in Providence. I take the liberty to present you, Mr. President, with photographs which I took in Europe, in the countries of misery, horror and suffering.

Archival footage of the outside of the White House.

JUDITH COHEN

As far as I know, he never received an answer back.

Over silence, we shift to newsreel footage of celebrations in Times Square. Kissing, hats thrown in the air. A man waves a newspaper with a screaming headline: 'GERMANY SURRENDERS!'

Lower Third: May 8, 1945 Victory in Europe Day

CUT TO: REENACTMENT footage of Eastern Europe. Roman's POV. Empty towns, abandoned fields and dirt roads a world wiped out. It slowly fades to black.

FADE IN: A Vishniac photograph from 1947 shows a dust-covered boy standing atop a pile of rubble. We see more photos of Berlin in ruins

MARA

After the war, he went back to Berlin.

JUDITH COHEN

Roman was hired by JDC and United Jewish Appeal to fundraise for the Joint, which was taking on the task of supporting tens of thousands of Jews in displaced persons camps.

Vishniac images of survivors in a DP camp outside Berlin

HASIA DINER

The Jews in the DP camps cannot go back home. There's no place to go. The American military is stretched thin, so the Joint comes in and takes over. They launch what one scholar said was the largest humanitarian effort in human history in terms of the amount of money collected in the United States. PR was absolutely crucial to getting that money raised and getting the US government to finally respond and to go beyond the immigration quota for Jews.

Photo of Luta and Roman

MARA

My parents were divorced by that time. My mother considered herself a joyful, free spirit, and blamed my father for kind of taking that away from her.

EPHRAIM VISHNIAC

The only time I heard Luta refer to the divorce, she described it as when I saved my life.

More shots of Berlin in ruins, including photos of Roman's former mistress Edith amid the rubble

ETHAN VISHNIAC

Roman was deeply devoted to Edith, who as a non-Jew had stayed in Germany during the war. They located each other as soon as it was physically possible and married in Berlin.

CUT TO: Archival footage NYC in the late 1940s; modern life, people with heads down going to work

Shots of the books *Polish Jews* and *A Vanished World*.

BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT

In 1947, two books with Vishniac photographs were published. They contained a select number of photos featuring the pious Jews in rural villages. These were not photographs of the genocide. Nor were they photographs that could have anticipated the Holocaust. Rather, they became photographs 'in light of the Holocaust.' And, so they would remain for years to come.

HASIA DINER

They became memorials. They served that purpose for American Jews. Remember a third of the world Jewry is wiped out. The Jewish world has collapsed around them. They are what's left.

LAURA WEXLER

Vishniac was originally commissioned by the JDC to show that these people were strong and able to adapt and people should send money. It wasn't that they were doomed. It's exactly the opposite. After World War II, the story changed. These people were viewed as excluded by modernity and thus fated to be trapped in the murderous vortex of European Jewish history.

Shift to FSA photographs

JOHN EDWIN MASON

Once an image is out in the world, it's out of everybody's hands. Meaning can be applied to it by just about anybody. You start going images in the Farm Security Administration archive, and you'll find lots of people who are doing fine: middle class people, wealthy people, musicians, baseball players. Every aspect of American life. But since the Depression, there's been a tendency for historians and curators to see the Depression only in terms of suffering. You select images that confirm your idea about what the Depression was about.

Shtetl photographs of families

LAURA WEXLER

Many images in the Vishniac canon repeat the trope of solidarity among men of the spirit and the pious women who accept the duty to support them. The group's cohesion is assumed.

HASIA DINER

After the war, there were many evocations of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. Sanitized, exoticized, made more traditional than it really was, more set in the past. Those people were authentic Jews, and we're kind of fakes.

DAVID SHNEER

Vishniac contributed to the photographs' mystique when he changed the story of their origins. He omitted the JDC's role in commissioning the work and said he predicted the destruction and rushed to photograph his fellow Jews.

Letter from Roman

ROMAN VISHNIAC VO

My friends assured me that Hitler's talk was sheer bombast. I replied

that he would not hesitate to exterminate those people when he got around to it... It was my duty to my ancestors to preserve in pictures, at least a world that might soon cease to exist.

DAVID SHNEER

Jews wanted to believe these stories about Vishniac because it imbued the photographs with a greater memorial value.

Photo of Mara, age 20, and Wolf, age 24

MARA

I found it very difficult to be with my father. Wolf and I never knew which of his stories were true. Sometimes he spoke 14 languages and had seven degrees, and sometimes he spoke seven languages and had 14 degrees. The trouble was that the exaggerations became too large. He was carried away with his own romance. He gave an interview to somebody, and we saw the transcript before the article came out. In it, he said he once saved himself by crawling out under a pile of corpses. Wolf and I told him that if he let that be published, we would never talk to him again. So it wasn't published.

MARA

By that time, we were in our second apartment on 72nd Street where my mother lived. My father and Edith lived on 81st Street, and I went from one to the other. She would look after me, and he would look after my brother. Roman was very concerned with having a scientist.

Photos of Wolf as a young man

ETHAN VISHNIAC

My father did post-graduate work at George Washington University and Stanford. After being an assistant professor at Yale, got a faculty appointment at as a microbiologist at the University of Rochester.

Photos of Mara with her father and then with her first husband.

MARA

I got married, let's see, I was not quite twenty. I had to escape.

Photos reveal Mara as a young woman with two young children.

CUT TO: NBC News Special: The Big Little World of Roman Vishniac

NBC NEWS REPORTER

Scientist, artist, philosopher, humanist, rarely are all these qualities gathered in one man. Such a man is Roman Vishniac.

ROMAN VISHNIAC INTERVIEW

All this life it is important to look closer, and the world will be bigger.

NORMAN BARKER

In the early 1950s, Vishniac began to focus on photo-microscopy. At the time, when people were studying things under the microscope, they were dead, on a microscope slide, under a cover slip. Roman's insistence was that things had to be living.

Life Magazine spread from 1951 "New Ways to See Living Things" featuring Roman Vishniac's microscopic images abstract, with brilliant colors, geometric shapes and mysterious spirals.

NORMAN BARKER

In 1951, he came up with an article called "New Ways to See Living Things," and it was about a process that he claimed that he invented and he called it colorization. He got a grant from the National Science Foundation, something like \$94,000 for the first series of the Living Biology series. And he was supported and actually got more money the second go 'round, the equivalent to almost \$2 million in today's dollars. His anthropomorphic approach led him to becoming the pre-eminent photographer of the life sciences from the 1950s through the 1970s.

CUT TO: 1950s newsreel footage showing microorganisms squirming in a petri dish.

ROMAN VISHNIAC NARRATION

Here comes an animal who is full of curiosity. He wants to learn and see more, and is forever peering around his tiny landscape. Near him is another who is interested only in searching for food. And now comes a third who is more social. He hates to be alone and is constantly running from one friend to another.

MARA

My brother did not feel that Roman was a serious scientist. That was very difficult for my father who was proud of Wolf but wasn't respected as much as he himself thought he should be.

ETHAN VISHNIAC

(Lower Third: Ethan Vishniac,
astrophysicist)

To be a grandiose storyteller is not greatly respected in science. In the case of my father and grandfather, both were very enthusiastic about science. But my father was enthusiastic about doing it. For Roman, it was that passion coupled with an enthusiasm for telling great stories.

NORMAN BARKER

He was sort of an evangelist, if you will, to get across the whole idea of science.

ROMAN VISHNIAC INTERVIEW

Most common animals, they are beautiful! The barnacles. The limpets. The snails. Nature worked on them hundreds of millions of years, until their final perfection.

Photo of Wolf and Roman in the 1960s

ETHAN VISHNIAC

My father and grandfather were never estranged, but they were never at ease either. For my father, there was the awkward bit of explaining Roman to other people.

DISSOLVE TO: A clip from NOVA. Carl Sagan walks on a sand dune.

CARL SAGAN

A remarkable microbiologist named Wolf Vishniac decided to study the most Mars-like environment on the planet: The dry valleys of Antarctica, which were long thought to be lifeless.

Footage of Antarctica in the 1970s; we see Wolf Vishniac in a photo on the rocky ice

ETHAN VISHNIAC

My father, having been interested in microorganisms and extreme environments, got interested in how you would look for organisms on Mars. There had been a claim that the dry valleys of Antarctica are so dry that no organisms survive in it. If there were no organisms growing in the soils of the dry valleys, it meant that you could pretty much guarantee that Mars would be sterile.

CARL SAGAN

On December 10, he left camp to retrieve some samples and never returned.

ETHAN VISHNIAC

I was 18 and attending University of Rochester, where my father worked. The chair of the biology department called me late night and told me there had been some sort of accident.

MARA

He fell 500 feet off a cliff. It took the Navy helicopter three days before they could get to him. I was crazy for a while. Furious. I said, "You're supposed to be smart people. What kind of nonsense."

Photo of Mara and Wolf as children in Berlin

MARA

I felt that I'd lost my right arm.

We shift to visuals from the 1983 publication of *A Vanished World*

JUDITH COHEN

The publication in 1983 of a new version of *A Vanished World* introduced Vishniac's photos to new generations of American Jews. It cemented the images in our collective memory, becoming almost a collective family photo album for Jews who had no other record of their ancestors in Eastern Europe. For some, it acted as a lens to look back and anchor yourself. To visualize where you came from.

DAVID SHNEER

Elie Wiesel wrote in the forward that Vishniac "defied all dangers" and "surmounted all obstacles" to make sure that the victims would not vanish into the abyss. So it continued this myth of Vishniac as a prophetic voice of his peoples' demise.

Footage from another TV special: The Concerns of Roman Vishniac

ROMAN VISHNIAC INTERVIEW

According to the scripture, the Jews didn't want to be photographed. I had to use a hidden camera.

MARA

When I started having to deal with his legacy, I had to massage his stories because he had done so much public speaking. His exaggerations were enormous.

ROMAN VISHNIAC INTERVIEW

I was arrested 11 times. I was immediately thrown into the prison, and this means you stay there as long as they forget you, and they usually do.

Photographs of Roman giving lectures.

NBC REPORTER

Escaping from Europe in 1940, he arrived in New York with \$400, with doctoral degrees in biology, medicine and oriental art, and with a reading knowledge of 23 languages.

MARA

I remember one time he was giving a talk, and I was cringing. Cornell Capa, the photographer, came around and kind of put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Mara, it's not important. The work is what counts."

Photographs and video of Roman and Edith in their old age; Roman takes a camera crew to a pond and scoops up water into a net

NORMAN BARKER

He was prolific all the way into his later years. Edith worked very

closely with him. She was his assistant, his wrangler for animals, his projectionist. She helped him photograph specimens at Woods Hole. She took care of a lot of the correspondence. Roman, it strikes me, was probably not the most organized person.

REENACTMENT: Vishniac's New York apartment on 81^s Street a cramped labyrinth of books piled high, Far Eastern art and collectible figures, microscopes, slides, insect specimens

NORMAN BARKER

I don't think he could find anything without Edith.

MARA

There was a moment when Roman was very close to death. He was in his hospital bed. He hadn't spoken for a week and was just kind of lying there. My husband Walter brought him an image of single atoms that were possible to see with a new special tunneling microscope. Roman opened his eyes, lifted his head and said, "What magnification?" Walter told him. He let his head fall back and said, in German, "They beat me."

REENACTMENT: Vishniac's New York apartment on 81^s Street more scenes of the clutter: laboratory implements, camera equipment and boxes of negatives

CARD OVER FOOTAGE: Roman Vishniac died of cancer in 1990 at the age of 92. Months later, Edith committed suicide by jumping from the window of their apartment.

CUT TO: INT. MARA'S SANTA BARBARA HOME PRESENT DAY

Mara shuffles around her home, stopping at photographs here and there. In a hallway, she points to a wall of certificates and proclamations.

CARD OVER FOOTAGE: Mara's second husband was Walter Kohn, a Holocaust survivor and scientist. He founded the physics department at the University of California at Santa Barbara.

MARA

This is a letter from the Dalai Lama congratulating him on the Nobel Prize. This is Reagan awarding him the Presidential Medal of Science.

CUT TO: Another room, where Mara flips through a book of photographs.

MARA

This is a book that I did, published by the University of California, where there are pictures of children.

CARD OVER FOOTAGE: After Roman's death, Mara oversaw the creation of the Roman Vishniac Archive and the publication of numerous books about her father.

CUT TO: Mara standing at the photo of the boy with the heart-shaped face.

MARA

Many of the pictures that are around here, I saw being born in the darkroom. With this mysterious red light and this feeling of closeness to my father. We were very close when I was young.

CUT TO: Mara next to a photograph of her as a girl in a sandbox.

MARA

Here in the sandbox, you see some of the mud on my knees, and that was wonderful, you know squishy mud. If you put yourself into that and feel it, it's gorgeous.

CARD OVER FOOTAGE: In 2013, Mara worked with curator Maya Benton on a comprehensive exhibition about her father. The Roman Vishniac Rediscovered exhibition corrected some of the inaccuracies in his life story and repositioned his iconic photographs within the body of his work as a whole.

CUT TO: Mara peering at the framed photo of Einstein.

MARA

He was very nice to me. We had a chat about Berlin. I wrote it up for my high school paper, or rather my brother helped me write it. My English wasn't so great yet.

CUT TO: Mara, outside her home, in a garden overlooking the ocean; she is smiling and at peace.

MARA

My children want me to move up north, so they don't have this long trip down here. But I can't quite imagine moving.

CARD: She died in 2018 at the age of 92.

CARD: The Roman Vishniac Collection is now at the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at the University of California, Berkeley, where Mara's children live.

FADE OUT.

THE END