



## *Terribly Close: Polish Vernacular Artists Face the Holocaust* Erica Lehrer, Concordia University

Can inanimate objects store and communicate traumatic memory that cannot be directly expressed? This talk examines 'folk art' made by non-professional Polish artists – many of them village laborers – documenting the German Nazi occupation of Poland and the Holocaust. Made largely in the 1960s and 70s, these objects are uncanny: at times deeply moving, at others grotesque, they can also be disturbing for the ways they impose Catholic idioms on Jewish suffering, or upend accepted roles of victim, perpetrator, and bystander.



Slawomir Kosiniak, *Untitled*, ca. 1948, Ethnographic Museum in Krakow, photo by Wojciech Wilczyk



Erica Lehrer, Professor of History and Sociology-Anthropology at Concordia University (Montreal), is a sociocultural anthropologist and curator. She also founded and directs Concordia's Curating and Public Scholarship Lab. Dr. Lehrer is the author of *Jewish Poland Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places* (2013) and co-editor of three books, including *Curatorial Dreams: Critics Imagine Exhibitions* (2016). Her curatorial work includes a number of international exhibition projects, most recently *Terribly Close: Polish Vernacular Artists Face the Holocaust* at Kraków Ethnographic Museum in 2018-19.



Franciszek Skocz, *Camp*, (a fragment), 1978, Ethnographic Museum in Krakow, photo by Wojciech Wilczyk

This Museum Studies Program event is co-sponsored by the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, the Copernicus Center for Polish Studies, the Weiser Center for Europe and Eurasia, and the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies. For additional information please visit <http://ummsp.rackham.umich.edu/>