

# Do We Need to Decolonize Holocaust Museums?



Roma (Gypsy) Wagon, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, DC

A central issue animating and transforming the museum sector today is the call to decolonize. This appeal began with Indigenous activists, whose communities have been overwhelmingly hurt by the museum sector's history and status quo. Museums of mass violence – Holocaust museums, paradigmatic among them – have been largely exempt from decolonial critiques. As products of 20th and 21st-century social justice mandates and often created at the behest of survivor communities, they seem at first glance not to be obvious targets for such scrutiny. Yet, Holocaust museums are not free from entanglements with state power nor from inherited traditions and infrastructures of museum practice with their attendant biases, exclusions, and silences. This talk explores the potential value of decolonial museum theories and practices for Holocaust museums to renew and expand their social justice mandates.

Erica Lehrer (MSP04) is a sociocultural anthropologist, historian, and curator.

Erica Lehrer, PhD  
MSP04

WN26 Institute Fellow  
U-M Frankel Institute for  
Advanced Judaic Studies

Professor, History  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Canada



United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, DC

12 –1 pm  
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Hatcher Library  
Gallery Lab (Room 100H)

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