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Appreciation


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Audrey Flack's Jewish Identity

I realize that I have always been concerned with and intermittently included religious subject matter in my work.

—Audrey Flack, 1986

Unlike photorealist artists such as Richard Estes, who coolly paint neutral subjects derived from photographs, Audrey Flack's intensely illusionistic canvases plumb personal and feminist issues replete with complex symbolism. Scholars especially note the feminist content of Flack's art, in both her paintings, which often consider stereotypes of womanhood, and her sculptures, which frequently depict goddesses and other female figures. Largely ignored is the impact Flack's Jewish background has had on her art. Informed viewers are aware of her controversial canvas *World War II (Vanitas)* (1976–77), but other work influenced by her Jewish identity is overshadowed and perhaps obscured by Flack's foray into Christian imagery, specifically her Macarena Esperanza Series (Our Lady of Hope). To be sure, after Flack painted her Macarenas, she recalls, "[E]verybody thought I was Catholic."¹ As a corrective to the preponderance of scholarship concentrating on Flack's feminist tendencies to the exclusion of her religiocultural inheritance, this essay will consider some of Flack's art in a Jewish context, relying in part on the artist's own comments about her Jewish background and identity. By demonstrating that her art is composed of more varied subjects and sources than has been previously understood, I hope to expand the current, sometimes one-dimensional perspective of the artist. Indeed, along with her attraction to beautiful objects and her experiences as a woman, Flack has at times explored her Jewish heritage from both a religious and a historical viewpoint.

Born in New York City in 1931 to Eastern European immigrant parents, Flack knew as a child that she wanted to be an artist. Of note among her early works, completed when she was about fourteen years old, is a watercolor with a distinctly Jewish theme: two rabbits studying and another blowing a shofar in a synagogue (fig. 1). This interest in Jewish subjects stems from her upbringing, Flack could read and speak Hebrew as a child, having been taught the language by a neighbor. During summers at Jewish camp she also studied Hebrew and learned about Jewish traditions. At home, members of her middle-class family, although not orthodox in their religiosity, observed Passover and the High Holy Days (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) by attending synagogue, praying, and fasting—traditions Flack still practices. On Friday nights, the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath, Flack's mother lit candles and, with her head covered, said a prayer.²
Flack received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1952 from Yale University, where she worked with Bauhaus artist Josef Albers. After graduating from Yale, she studied anatomy at the Art Students League in New York with Robert Beverly Hale. This experience confirmed her desire to paint in a representational fashion, even though at the time many viewed the mode as \textit{retardataire}, and even though during the early fifties she painted abstract expressionist canvases, which were exhibited in a solo show at the Roko Gallery in New York in 1959. As Flack returned to figuration in 1953 under Hale’s tutelage, she continued to explore her Jewishness; \textit{Matzo Meal Still Life} (fig. 2) shows the ingredients needed to make foods typically eaten on Jewish holidays. Carefully arranged on the delightful, pop-influenced canvas are products by Manischewitz, the best-known kosher food provider, in addition to other kosher ingredients commonly found in a Jewish home. During the 1960s Flack began to use photographs as the inspiration for her figurative imagery. (Later she carefully arranged objects when creating her own photographs.) Initially she favored black-and-white news photographs as source material, most notably painting public figures such as John D. Rockefeller (1963) and Adolf Hitler (fig. 3) in subdued colors. A picture of John F. Kennedy (1964) was her first painting in this vein from a media-generated color photograph. When asked why she had painted Hitler, Flack described a strange turn of events that led to her interest in aspects of World War II:

\begin{quote}
My brother was drafted out of the Reserve Officers Training Corps and within two months with almost no basic training was sent to fight in the Battle of the Bulge. It was a massacre. He was one of only two soldiers to survive in his battalion. He was one of the first foot soldiers to liberate Hitler’s summer home. While other soldiers were ransacking the place my brother found a hidden wall in one of Hitler’s windowsills which contained his personal copy of Mein Kampf: his personal photograph album with pictures of Hitler, Eva Braun, Albert Speer, and
\end{quote}
other friends; a gold necklace with rubies that was probably Eva Braun's; and a book of Hitler's original watercolors. When my brother came home he dropped them on my bed along with German helmets, swastikas, hand grenades, and a Luger pistol and left them there. I grew up studying Hitler's watercolors, which I'm reluctant to admit that I liked. That led to my need to deal with the subject of Hitler and the Holocaust in order to understand the depravity human beings can sink to. I continue to read everything about Hitler, Speer, Himmler, etc.  

At first, Flack's image of Hitler being greeted enthusiastically in Poland after his victory there seems matter-of-fact. Closer examination, however, indicates that Flack infused the canvas (which she refers to as "a ghoulish portrait") with some commentary. As Ziva Amishai-Maisels observes in her magisterial book on the Holocaust in art, Flack distorted Hitler's features: "His eyes seem crossed, his mouth is open in a bellow rather than a toothy grin, and his expression is not quite sane... Although trying for a realistic depiction, the changes she made expressively interpret her own feelings about her subject." Without a doubt, Flack's portrait of Hitler is subjective; the ambivalent feelings generated by the war memorabilia that her brother brought home weighed on her mind and made their way into her painting, which examines Hitler's psychology as reflected in his physiognomy:

When I was young, I would take out the photograph album with Hitler and Eva Braun and look at the pictures every day after school. Hitler was always smiling in the pictures. I wondered how this smiling man could be so cruel and evil. My family never discussed Hitler or the paraphernalia my brother brought home. It was a shanda (shame, scandal). Hitler had a degree of talent. He wasn't a terrible artist. It's sad. Art can save you. It should have been different—he should have made art not war, but his madness took over.

Flack's portrait of Hitler preceded another commentary-infused painting related to her early exposure to the war: World War II (Vanitas) (fig. 4).

In the mid-seventies Flack started the large-scale still lifes for which she is recognized. Composed of three canvases all eight feet square, her Vanitas Series (1976–78) drew inspiration from baroque allegorical still lifes that comment on the transience of life. Based on configurations of objects Flack arranged in her studio and then photographed, the pictures in the Vanitas Series were executed with both underpainting


and airbrush from slides projected onto the canvas. The best known of the group is *Marilyn (Vanitas)* (fig. 5), a painting that employs lush, intense colors and a high-gloss surface to examine stereotypes of womanhood. Amid a clutter of decidedly feminine objects, such as perfume bottles, makeup, and jewelry, Flack depicts a fresh-faced young Marilyn Monroe in a black-and-white photograph before she became the harsh, brittle blond of Hollywood. Flack aimed to comment on the sex symbol’s ephemerality by presenting these objects and the woman along with a burning candle, an hourglass whose sand is running through, and shriveling fruit, much in the manner of seventeenth-century memento mori still lifes. Moreover, the image also evokes the artist’s own vulnerability: Flack included a photograph of herself as a young girl with her brother.

Less well known is the artist’s exceptionally powerful and personal first Vanitas painting, *World War II (Vanitas)*, which also incorporates an old photograph in a magnified, sharply delineated trompe l’oeil still life in vivid colors. This painting presents an array of pretty objects in front of a reproduction of the iconic, devastating picture by *Life* photographer Margaret Bourke-White of the liberation of the Buchenwald concentration camp in 1945. Captured in black and white, the exhausted, stunned prisoners behind the barbed-wire fence in Flack’s canvas contrast with the rich, glowing colors of the pastries displayed on a shiny, embossed silver platter. Among the array of objects in front
of Bourke-White’s duplicated photograph are a candle dripping red wax like blood (a motif found in many of Flack’s still lifes, including the Vanitas Series); a red rose, a blue goblet, and a strand of shiny pearls (all of which also appear in Marilyn (Vanitas)); a butterfly lighting on a delicate china cup; a timepiece; and a Star of David from Flack’s keychain. Some of these objects are placed on an open page of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel’s introduction to Roman Vishniac’s volume of thirty-one prewar photographs chronicling the life of Polish Jews. Visible is a passage about faith by Hasidic leader Nahman of Bratslav (1772–1810):

Outwardly they may have looked plagued by [the misery] and humiliation in which they lived, but inwardly they bore the rich sorrow of the [world] and the noble vision of redemption for all men and all beings. For man is not alone in this world. “Despair does not exist at all,” said Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav, a hasidic leader. “Do not fear, dear child, God is with you, in you, around you. Even in the Nethermost Pit one can try to come closer to God.” The word “bad” never came to their lips. Disasters did not frighten them. “You can take everything from me—the pillow from under my head, my house—but you cannot take God from my heart.”

Flack explained why she amalgamated such diverse elements in her painting:

My idea was to tell a story, an allegory of war . . . of life . . . the ultimate breakdown of humanity . . . the Nazis . . .

I wanted to create a work of violent contrasts, of good and evil. Could there be a more violent contrast than that?5

Certainly the contrast drawn between the emaciated prisoners and the luxury goods is strong in hue as well as subject, as is the juxtaposition of a yahrzeit candle (Jewish memorial candle) standing in front of Bourke-White’s survivors, described by Flack as “a memorial candle to bridge time between 1945 and the present, to burn always in the painting.” But much of the symbolism in the canvas can also be read as conveying a central theme that unites its parts. World War II (Vanitas) focuses on life—on the pleasures of human existence and on the survivors of the camps instead of on the dead: “I chose specifically not to show blood or injury. Too much blood has been shed already,” Flack explains. While the human skull appears in several other still lifes by Flack, she did not place a skull—a traditional still-life object—in World War II (Vanitas) even though that painting would be the most appropriate of her images to include one. Nor did Flack admit rotting fruit, another conventional still-life object, into her Holocaust memorial, although it is
also a frequent motif in her other still lifes. Flack even emphasized the survival of humanity amid evil by painting a rainbow border around the picture. The first rainbow was an assertion of God's presence after the Flood, a sign for Noah that life would continue and that God would never again destroy the earth with a flood (Gen. 9:11–15). When asked how she defines Jewish art, Flack specifically equated Jewish art with life and contrasted it with a style of art that opposes exuberant, individual expression and social commentary:

*I guess Jewish art is specifically religious art like Christian art and like Muslim art. It's a catchy thing because Jews aren't supposed to make images. Jewish art is probably humanist. . . . I think World War II is art that has a universal subject—war, death, evil, goodness, morality, and mortality. Jews represent humanism—to life, to life, Ichaim. With Jews there's a celebration of life. I think minimalism is the opposite of Jewish art. One green pea on a piece of roast beef.*

Similarly, a group of Holocaust survivors affiliated with the Zionist women's volunteer organization Hadassah chose World War II (Vanitas) as their favorite painting hanging in the 1986 Jewish Museum show Jewish Themes: Contemporary American Artists II because it highlighted life. At a luncheon sponsored by Hadassah and held at the Jewish Museum, where Flack received a plaque noting her accomplishment, the artist remembered that one survivor underscored the positive elements of the canvas: "I know why you put sweets there—because I would imagine the little bread that I ate before I was in the camp was sweet like that." Another survivor also explained how important her memories were: "My shabbos candle and silver kept me alive. How did you know?" These comments indicate that some people in the camps retained their faith in life, although not by turning to God as per Rabbi Nahman's discourse, which epitomizes a faith in God and humankind that was surely lost by some prisoners at Buchenwald during their time in the death camps. Nahman's idealistic words remind readers to trust that God remains with us despite a disaster as atrocious as the Holocaust. Rather, this special group of viewers held on to hope and the possibility of life after the camps in part by recalling the niceties of the outside world. Reviews of World War II (Vanitas) were not always favorable, and so affirmation from survivors meant a lot to Flack, who "felt redeemed." Indeed, critic Vivien Raynor misunderstood the painting, calling it "horrendous" and declaring, "[T]his reviewer can only recoil from the vulgarity of [Flack's] literal mindedness." Other reviewers were more empathetic. John Perreault described the picture as "breathtaking" and observed that it is "more about survival than about horror. It is a painting that is difficult to forget."

The history of World War II (Vanitas) did not end with contradictory reviews or with the artist eventually finding redemption in Holocaust survivors' acceptance of the painting. The saga of the canvas continued when *Time* magazine filed a lawsuit against Flack for incorporating Bourke-White's photograph in her painting. As Flack recalled, "Ironically the name of the lawyer for *Time* was Eichmann. The case was settled out of court for $1.00 but it was important as to the use of images in the public domain."

Flack's surge of interest in her Jewish identity emerged—perhaps coincidentally or perhaps as an unconscious reaction—after she received an unfavorable review by Hilton Kramer in May 1976 in the *New York Times*. Writing before World War II (Vanitas) or any other works with Jewish content were readily available to the viewing public (the watercolor of the rabbis was not shown publicly until 1986), Kramer described Flack's photorealist still lifes as "kitschy . . . based on blow-ups of gaudy color photographs and executed with an airbrush. It is distinguishable from advertising art only to the extent that the product being advertised is the artist herself. . . . [She is] one of the brassiest of the new
breed—Audrey Flack, the Barbra Streisand of photorealism." Years later, Flack recalled how much Kramer's review stung, and not simply because he admonished her painting technique: "At that time, the press was criticizing Streisand for being too aggressive and then Kramer basically says the same thing about me. The art historian and former curator at the Whitney, Patricia Hills, called me the morning the review came out and said the review was anti-female and anti-Semitic; she said, 'Kramer didn't call you the Grace Kelly or the Audrey Hepburn of the art world.' I never saw Kramer compare a male artist to a movie star. He never calls Ellsworth Kelly the Cary Grant of the art world."9

Although Kramer's review recalled for Flack memories of acts of anti-Semitism that she experienced as a child, she went ahead and painted World War II (Vanitas). As Flack put the final touches on the painting, her concern about her Jewishness as a child converged with the present time:

I grew up during World War II and was quite aware of being Jewish. I knew what happened to European Jews. Besides, I was raised in Washington Heights, where the Irish Dukes, who lived two avenues over, periodically beat up the Jewish kids. When I painted the Jewish star in World War II (Vanitas) I felt like I was doing something wrong. It was almost like it was on fire, but I was excited about the painting. I called an artist friend and asked him to come over and look at it. He said "are you going to leave that in there?" even though he was Jewish too.

My painting was shocking, crucifixes are common in art but you never see a Jewish star in a painting.

Flack's desire to explore her feelings about the Holocaust overrode any hesitation about the imagery, although emotionally the painting took a lot out of her. In a short essay, she recollects: "I had a premonition that I would die after I completed World War II. . . . I became seriously ill later that year. No one ever discovered what was wrong with me. . . . The mind has the power to make the body sick; it can also heal it. To a large extent, we control our own destiny. It is no accident when we become ill. I was burnt out."10

Soon after Flack completed World War II (Vanitas) and recuperated, she received a commission to paint a portrait of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat for the cover of Time magazine's January 2, 1978, issue depicting the leader as Man of the Year (fig. 6). Her composition presents Sadat, who earlier that year had been the first Arab leader to visit Israel in a peacemaking capacity, in three-quarter view against a brightly colored background. Seemingly abstract, the background nonetheless incorporates symbolism. Flack explained: "I guess it's too subtle but it had to be to get it through. It's the sky. The blue and white sky represents Israel—the Israeli flag—and below it are the colors of the Egyptian flag. It was the best I could do under the circumstances."11 Flack's inserting an element of her Jewishness into what is not, ostensibly, a "Jewish" composition would resurface in the future.
Flack's paintings, of both a Jewish and a nonreligious nature, frequently were criticized for their perceived artificial and decadent qualities, in part because she rejected the masculine forms often linked to photorealism in favor of pretty, emotive objects of personal importance. Critic Cindy Nemser defended Flack's choices, saying, "If this artist sees splendor rather than degradation in the things of this world, if she perceives its artifacts enveloped in a transcendental light, a light which has always been synonymous with divinity, why should the artist's vision be denied or distorted?" A divine element does appear in Flack's work, accentuated by her insistence on beauty, but how do the qualities described by Nemser lend themselves to a Jewish reading of her art, especially in light of her focus on images of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in the early 1970s?

In 1960, devastated when her daughter was diagnosed with autism, Flack sought imagery that could effectively communicate her heartache. Self-Portrait: Dark Face (1960) attempts to convey her feelings. Flack cloaked almost the entire right half of her face in shadow, and her empty stare suggests sadness and hopelessness. A decade later, Flack traveled to Spain, where she encountered the work of Spanish baroque sculptor Luis Roldán. Especially moved by the deep despair displayed by Roldán's Macarena Esperanza (Basilica de la Macarena, Seville), she was drawn to the polychrome Macarena as an image that embodied the grieving mother. Flack painted several sumptuous representations of Roldán's sculpture soon after her return to the United States. With detailed attention to optical effect, she painted the Macarena of Miracles (fig. 7) at half-length, highlighting the elaborateness of Mary's gown and star-pointed headpiece. In setting the figure against a dark, contrasting background, the artist emphasized the gleam of the Macarena's large gold crown and the sparkle of her bejeweled dress. The Macarena of Miracles reaches for her heart, rosary in hand. Her brow is furrowed and large tears stream down her rosy pink cheeks; she finds no relief from her relentless anguish. In another painting of Roldán's sculpture, Macarena Esperanza (1971), Flack concentrated on Mary's head, which takes up much of the large canvas, thus giving the artist more room in which to explore the Macarena's despondency.

Although the Jewish viewer may initially be taken aback by these paintings, I would argue that Flack devoted nearly two years of her career to creating blatantly Catholic subjects not in spite of but because of her religiocultural heritage. As Flack explains: "Mary had also experienced a lot of sorrow and grief with her child; I identified with her. Now, I don't feel that I am Mary, but she was probably a very suitable role model for me. . . . She intercedes, she understands. . . . A woman of sorrow for my sorrow." Thus, Flack transcended the non-Jewish associations of Mary as well as the Macarena works' reiteration of common stereotypes, such as a woman's emotionalism, viewing Mary instead as a source of strength. In fact, updating the Bible's stories and figures and making them relevant for the present is very much a Jewish trait. In the Marian
imagery, Flack employs what Michael Fishbane has termed the new voice of the biblical scholar: “This new voice is also engaged in prolonging the words of the ancient text . . . . Scholarly discourse may therefore rightly be seen as a kind of supercommentary, analyzing texts with the ideas and methods of one’s own historical situation, and integrating them into new orders of significance.”

For Flack, Mary’s devastation over the death of her son served as the perfect prototype to illustrate the artist’s distress over her child’s disability.

While some Jewish American artists transform an explicitly Jewish biblical past to comment on the present time—for example, Jack Levine painted a scene from the life of King Solomon in Planning Solomon’s Temple (1940), an homage to his father soon after he died—other Jewish artists render New Testament figures. This interest in the New Testament surfaces partly because of the book’s long heritage in the history of art and also because the figures resonate with qualities that best conveyed the thoughts of different artists. For instance, Abraham Rattner responded to the horrors of World War II with a series of Crucifixion paintings. In Descent from the Cross (fig. 8), Rattner depicted a cubist-inspired Jesus being taken down from a bright red cross by two geometrically delineated figures. The segmented figures, painted with exaggerated limbs and oversized features, form a colorful contrast to the thick black lines separating the rich hues. One critic recognized that Rattner’s “Christ was a suffering Jew who personified the entirety of modern humanity being tortured and extirpated by the war.” David Aronson also painted Jesus. Rendered in three-quarter view, the young Jesus in Young Christ with Phylacteries (fig. 9) wears the traditional accoutrements of Jewish prayer. Importantly, Aronson described his New Testament images in terms parallel to those I am arguing Flack used when she approached her Marian imagery: “These were Jewish paintings. My own religious background was deeply woven into the fabric of the work.”

Of late, Flack has been engaged in other projects with Jewish content. She recently completed a thirty-six-inch-tall statue of Eve, a figure appealing to the artist for some
of the same reasons that Mary attracted her—including Eve's role as a mother—although Eve’s Jewish connections are much more obvious and, therefore, hold special appeal. "I'm making a statue of Eve because she's the first mother," Flack said in 2007.

And then she was labeled evil! All she did was ask questions that we all want to ask. See, she’s going to have a baby and there’s no Ob/Gyn in the Garden of Eden. She’s only got Adam, and Eve has to get information. Because she asks and because she investigates she is called evil. I think that women are great questioners. I think art is redemptive. I'm trying to restore Eve’s image like I'm trying to restore women's image. My Eve is sexual and beautiful. I want Eve to be accepted as intelligent. She can have a baby and she can pick from the Tree of Knowledge and still stand tall. She wants answers. That's a good thing.

Flack also hopes to gain a commission for a sculpture of Queen Esther, another figure from the Hebrew scriptures whom she describes as "a great heroine. She saves our people. She's strong, noble, and beautiful. She's a great lady and a survivor." Thinking about these images of biblical females, Flack reflects on her Macarena Esperanza Series from more than three decades earlier: "Mary is a Jewess. She was a Jewish woman. I'll have to do another Macarena with a Jewish face to emphasize this. She doesn't look Semitic in the images that we see of her over the ages."15

One of Flack’s most recently completed public commissions is the fourteen-foot-tall bronze Recording Angel sculpted for the Schermerhorn Symphony Center in Nashville (fig. 10). Classically dressed in a clinging drape that accentuates her feminine yet muscular curves, the winged angel holds a feathered quill in her left hand and a compact disc in her right, as if inscribing musical notes. As in her portrait of Sadat, Flack imbued this overtly secular sculpture with both a non-Jewish and a Jewish message. As Flack explains,

It has of course a double meaning. The original recording angel is from the Old Testament and is Jewish. The angel records the deeds of every human being whether they are good or bad—to be written in the book of life. On Yom Kippur you ask to be written in the Book of Life for

another year. I also think that the angel Gabriel in the New Testament is a recording Angel. The other meaning is more obvious for Nashville: recording. My angel is inscribing her musical notations on a CD but she’s also making note of every deed you’ve done in the book of life, which is also a CD.16

Here Flack refers to a recording angel who surfaces on several occasions in both the Talmud and Hebrew Bible (e.g., Ezek. 9:2–4).

For decades, Flack has been touted as a feminist artist, and certainly her work frequently champions women and strives to discover a female archetype, especially in her more recent sculpture projects. However, our identities are multiple and Flack is no exception to this. She has integrated the four main components of her identity—mother, artist, woman, and Jew—to create a rich and varied body of work. Greater attention must be given to these individual components as well as to the ways in which Flack has synthesized the different aspects of her personality in her oeuvre as a whole. Let the artist share one final thought on her Jewishness, a description of her emotions when attending religious services at a local Jewish center in East Hampton: “I feel my roots there. I sing and pray in Hebrew and English. I am deeply moved when the Torah is marched up and down the aisles and I along with others in the congregation put my fingers to my lips and then to the Torah—as a token of love and worship.”17

Notes

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1 On the feminist content of Flack’s art, see, for example, Katherine Hauser, “Audrey Flack’s Still Lifes: Between Femininity and Feminism.” Woman’s Art Journal 22, no. 2 (Fall 2001–Winter 2002): 26–30; and Thalia Gouma-Peterson, ed., Breaking the Rules: Audrey Flack, a Retrospective, 1950–1990 (New
2 Flack's father emigrated from a town on the Austrian-Polish border at age fifteen, and her mother came to the United States from the same area at age nine. Her father arrived with fifteen cents in his pocket and stayed with an aunt on the heavily Jewish Lower East Side of New York City, sleeping on a board atop the aunt's bathtub. As an adult, he was a successful dress manufacturer. Flack, telephone conversation with the author. November 27, 2007.

3 Audrey Flack, telephone conversation with the author. May 10, 2005. Many years later, according to Flack, her brother sold his war loot to pay off gambling debts. Albert Speer served as Hitler's chief architect and later minister of armaments and war. Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, chief of the German police, and also minister of the interior, oversaw the extermination camps, among other duties.


5 For the Nahman of Bratslav passage in its original context, see Roman Vishniac, Polish Jews: A Pictorial Record, intro. Abraham Joshua Heschel (New York: Schocken Books, 1947), 15. For Flack's quote, which is an exact transcription from the original, see Audrey Flack, Audrey Flack on Painting, intro. Lawrence Alloway (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1981), 78. The third Vanitas canvas is Wheel of Fortune (Vanitas) (1977-78), another very personal work, as it addresses Flacks daughter's autism.

6 For Flack's first two quotes, see Flack, Audrey Flack on Painting, 81, 78. Her comments on Jewish art are from Flack, telephone conversation with the author. May 10, 2005.


8 Audrey Flack, e-mail correspondence with the author. May 11, 2005. One of the most powerful and notorious Nazis, Adolph Eichmann was responsible for the deportation and extermination of millions of Jews.


11 Audrey Flack, e-mail correspondence with the author. September 14, 2005. Flack noted, "Sadat loved the painting. He sent me a personal letter about it, that made me feel good."


15 All quotes in this paragraph are from Flack, telephone conversation with the author. March 28, 2007.

16 Audrey Flack, e-mail correspondence with the author. September 14, 2005, and November 28, 2006.

17 Flack quoted in Sims, Saints and Other Angels, unpaginated.