

Transcript of Interview with Gabriella Karin By Kit Heintzman

Interviewee: Gabriella Karin

Interviewer: Kit Heintzman

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Location (Interviewee): Los Angeles, California

Location (Interviewer):

Transcriber: Angelica S Ramos

Some of the things we spoke about include:

Surviving the Holocaust in Slovakia; living in hiding; mother's work in the resistance. Regularly traveling across Europe and the Middle East teaching about the Holocaust and art; canceling such educational trips during the pandemic. The war in Ukraine impeding Holocaust educational travel. Last educational travel to Krakow in January 2020; transitioning Holocaust awareness online. As Holocaust educational travel opened up later in the pandemic for students, survivors are still not able to travel with them due to the risks of COVID among seniors. Americans comparing the current American government and the historic German Nazi Party. Occupying one's mind during isolation: during WWII reading while hiding; during COVID-19 pandemic writing a book and making sculpture art. Learning new technologies. Searching for loved ones; remembering loved lost ones; honoring the dead. Lessons from history, nothing lasts forever: wars end, pandemics end. Gratitude to scientists working to protect us; listening to scientists. Living alone and going without the touch of loved ones; touching clay. Going for walks with friends. Community members in LA bringing care packages of food and flowers during the pandemic; kindness happens when we have enough time; young people looking to help. Difficulty accessing vaccination, repeatedly trying to get the first shot, traveling 30 minutes and standing in line; vaccine sites being closed without notice. Minor vaccine reactions. Needing medical attention due to an injury in 2022; hospital COVID safety precaution. Traveling again for the first time in April 2022 to see family. Greatgrandchild catching COVID at a nursery. The importance of memory and testimony about global injustices. Universal respect for all persons; teaching respect in the home and in school. Maintaining optimism.

Kit Heintzman 00:02

Hello, would you please state your name, the date, the time and your location?

Gabriella Karin 00:09

My name is Gabriella carrion. I'm in Los Angeles. Today it's July 19, 2022.

Kit Heintzman 00:22

And the time

Gabriella Karin 00:25

Time is nine o'clock.

Kit Heintzman 00:27

And do you consent?

Gabriella Karin 00:28

It's morning

Kit Heintzman 00:29

Yes, morning. And do you consent to having this interview recorded, digitally uploaded and publicly released under a Creative Commons license attribution noncommercial sharealike?

Gabriella Karin 00:43

Yes.

Kit Heintzman 00:44

Thank you so much. You've prepared something. So let's just start with that. Okay.

Gabriella Karin 00:53

As an artist, I'm expressing my feelings in clay. And I documented the history of the Holocaust in my work. As a survivor from Slovakia, I focused my work on World War Two and the Holocaust. So the years I did 50 Holocaust related sculptures. I published an art book, The agony of the Holocaust that is available on my website GabrielleKarin.com When the pandemic started, I felt secluded in my home and aware of the fact that it will not go away quickly. I decided that I must have a goal that will keep me busy, busy. For the longest time. I was invited for Yom Hashoah by Ronald Lauder to Krakow. To celebrate the 75th liberation of Auschwitz. Ambassador Lauder invited 120 survivors with a companion for all around the world, we were three people from Los Angeles area. It was the year 2020. In January, I took my grandson, Ben does me. On the trip, we had a lot of time to converse. And Ben asked me 1000s of questions about my family that he never met. I was describing every person, their relation to my parents and cousins. At the end of the trip, Ben commented that since I'm the only one in the family that remembers all the members, I should write the book. I just brushed it away. As I am not a writer, sitting in my home, cooped up and insulated from the outside world. I felt that being by myself in my home, this will be a long time before the word will be normal again. I knew that I got my training during the Holocaust. When I was hiding it for nine months. I knew I must have something that will occupy my mind. I heard in my mind dense verbs. To write a book about my life. I had no idea of the start. I started to collect family pictures, put them in that order, and describing everybody working 12 hours a day, being completely immersed in writing the book. I finished in two months. On my 90th birthday, I was speaking at the Holocaust Museum and then happily holding the first copy of my book, Trama, Memory And The Art Of Survival. In the meantime, the pandemic was raging around me. I did not see anyone. Trying to be in my home by myself and working on sculptures. The pandemics needed to be documented. And I did a series of pandemic sculptures. As an artist, I feel I am documenting the happenings of our lives. Now I am at the stage of seeing the beauty of flowers, trees and nature and discovering plants that are not existing anymore. Flowers without making us feel good and showing the beauty of our planet. I already added one more sculpture about the Holocaust. In Memoriam and I'm working on a sculpture, about the pandemic. The everyday life is giving me inspiration to do art, and educate people about happenings in today's world. And how extremely important is to have education in schools, about the history and not only about the Holocaust history, but also about the injustice in the world history, before and after the Holocaust, the world must be taught about the effects that happen to human beings. Together, we must fight for the education that explains the injustice of the past, so it should not happen in a present or in the future. It doesn't matter what color our skin is, or what color your eyes are, what color your hair is, they are all the same people. We don't have to love everybody. But we must respect every person on this earth. They all have the right to be here. That's it.

Kit Heintzman 06:37

Thank you so much for sharing that. Um, I'm going to start with some broad questions. And then I'm going to have follow ups that go back to what you shared. Would you tell me another story about your life during the pandemic, what you were doing?

Gabriella Karin 07:01

I was writing to occupy my mind that mean designing a sculpture because everybody works differently. I have to know the whole practice out I will start and finish a sculpture. I have it all in my head. I know some people they just start something and work with their hands and see that will develop. I cannot work like that I have to have it all worked out in my mind. Step by step and then I just follow

Kit Heintzman 07:54

You you mentioned that your time and hiding in Slovakia trained you for isolation. Would you share what isolation looked like back then?

Gabriella Karin 08:08

Yes. So I was first three years hidden by Nance in the convent with false papers. I had papers that I was a Christian girl, they were covered that this meant false papers. I was about 11, 12, 13 three years. The first year I was in that boarding school. I cried myself to sleep every night. It was very hard on me not to know whats going on with my parents, my grandma who lived with us who goes with me all the time. And then later when my mother came and she saw my cried out eyes decide that for night she will take me wherever she will be and morning [inaudible]. So next two years, this is what I do. My mother was involved in resistance. My parents owned a small deli store that was located next to the police station. And because of the location they knew every policeman one of the policemen gave my mother the list of the people who will be taken away a certain night. My mother gave it to her contact. They divided the list between themselves. And [inaudible] be tonight, for sure. At this address, they will be taken away. My mother took me with her many, many times. Because we had a curfew in Slovakia against Jewish. You're not supposed to be on this street after 6pm. And she was hoping is a little girl. We won't be stuck. I will never forget when we went to my mother cousin. She was on the list so was her husband, her old mother, and their four year old little boy in my second cousin was on the list. And when we told them, they started to cry and we told them do something go somewhere. They said we went already from one place to another, we have nowhere to go. Hopefully, we will work and survive. We never saw them again. Next day, my mother went to the railroad station that was really very dangerous. This is where they were putting people in the wagons. My mother knew the commander a good friend of my parents. And she begged to give the little boy to her, why do you need him, hes four years old he cannot work I can take care of him, he looked down at her and said if you don't disappear this minute, I may put you in the wagons too. She left. [inaudible] these were the times. My mother knew that Slovakia will be occupied by Germany, because all the deportation that was going in 1942 was done by Slovaks. Actually the Germans ask for men for labor Slovakia, Slovak President made the agreement with them. If you take men you take the whole family and he paid actually 500 coin for every person that they took beside the men with a promise of Germany that they will never return. This is what happened.

Gabriella Karin 12:51

From 90,000 Jewish people who lived in Slovakia, Czechoslovakia was split into Czech Republic became protect protected by Germany and Slovakia became an independent country collaborated with German. So 90,000 Jewish people lived in for 1942 60,000 people were deported from 60,000 people 230 people returned. The numbers

statistically means from 1000 people four people returned. Now my mother was very well informed and she knew that Germany would come and occupy Slovakia and give an incomplete hiding just few days before it started, before they came. And the first single agenda was to look for the hidden Jewish people. And they went from house to house from apartment to apartment and we were hidden by a gentleman named Karol Blonar 25, a young lawyer who had it in his heart to risk his own life to hide eight people. In his small one bedroom apartment was about five minutes working from the convent that I was before, I saw lots of things happening there. It was across the street of the Slovak gestapo. I saw the two girls in the convent, who went in with me running on the street, being caught in front of my eyes and pulled into the headquarters never saw them again. I would have been with them, if I could have been in the convent, no question in my mind. So I was hidden. For nine months, people, eight people in his small one bedroom apartment. It was my mother, my father, and I was the only child to my parents. It was my aunt, two uncles, and two friends of my parents that eight or nine months all survived, thanks to Karol Blonar, was a young lawyer, wrote a couple of articles after the war against communism. And when the Communists took over, he had to leave the country, [inaudible], he made it over the border. Then we lost track, in the mean time I became an adult, and I wanted to thank him. He gave me a chance to live my own life. I could not find I contacted organizations and they looked everywhere. I looked every phone book I could put my hands on, he could be anywhere in the world. When I got my first computer, the first thing that I Googled, I googled him, he didn't come up. I remember the youngest brother. I put his name, Vincent Blonar and he came up. Vincent Blonar University professor wrote about 25 books. His name was there. His phone number. address, I got so excited. I didn't look if it's midnight there or what. I did before and I called him. And he picked up the phone. And I'm trying to introduce myself. And he said, I remember you. Oh, okay. I was a kid. I remember him also. Because we met a few times. And I remember the beautiful voice and that we were somewhere in the forest. And he was singing the French partisan hymn. I remember that as a kid, it was very impressive on me. Anyhow, so I asked him, where is Karol. Karol lived in United States, in Dublin, Ohio, he got married. No children but died in 98. Here I was years and years later. I asked him where is he buried, the only thing I can do for him to visit his grave. And he had no idea. This time, the communist occupied countries could not reach out to the free countries. So he didn't know, you didn't know. I called up every cemetery around Dublin, Ohio. I didn't find him. Years and years, later speaking in holocaust museum LA a gentleman approached me and said, I'm very good at finding people who are dead. Just give me a few points. I send him everything I know. You found him the next day in Columbus, Ohio. In unmarked grave. And then he told me [inaudible] I called the cemetery and I asked him thirty five years later, please look up. And they did. They told me nobody was there, and they got it. Only the priest. Nobody paid the tip. Sit. That's not it. I'm ordering a marker right now. And I want to have written on it, righteous person among in nations. This is the title he received from Yad Rashem, but the largest Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem, and give the people who save Jewish, non Jewish people who saved Jewish people deserve any money exchange. And I wrote about it. And he was nominated and received this award. So he has it written on his tombstone. Righteous person among the nation's I went there with my grandson. Different one that [inaudible] that I went to Dachau. And this is the oldest boy. And he had a video camera on and if somebody wants to see go on my website, GabriellaKarin.com. And you can hear my goodbye speech to Karol Blonar.

Kit Heintzman 21:53

It sounds like you learned a lot about the importance of protecting people. I'd like to hear a little bit more about that and what it's meant to you. Over the last couple of years.

Gabriella Karin 22:15

I think I didn't say enough about the hiding. So imagine, I was thirteen years old, Karol Blonar brought me book to read. He couldn't bring books for the young girl, it would be suspicious he brought me history books, heavy books to read for a thirteen year old, I was reading 14 hours a day. And I learned a lot about it I learn when the wars were started and finished. So this may be finished too. And gave me hope. Nothing lasts forever. This is how the pandemic will be, it will be over one day. And I always when I'm speaking to young people, I'm telling them, everything can be taken eventually. Even the clothes you wear that nobody can take a day from. That you have in your head. Put good stuff in it, it's yours. Until you so yeah, (pause, and Kit begins to talk as Gabriella continues) it's okay. It's a conversation.

Kit Heintzman 23:46

What are some of the things that you've been grateful for since the pandemic started and where we are now?

Gabriella Karin 23:57

I'm grateful to the scientists that sit down and developed something that we can live, visit just a little prick with a needle and you're getting protected. Hopefully more and more and they have a challenge working on it. Yeah.

Kit Heintzman 24:35

Do you remember when you first heard about COVID-19?

Gabriella Karin 24:42

Yes, yes, I did. And it was kind of shocking that something, I said well today we are so advanced, that um, [phone rings] spam. These phones [laughs]

Gabriella Karin 25:30

Yes, I remember when it started and we've been locked up this is when I decided I have to do something I just I never was a person who could just sit and do nothing I was a fashion designer all my life I had a quite a big job also here in Los Angeles and so I like to work like to be busy. So I made decision I wont just sit around and be upset doesn't do me any good.

Kit Heintzman 26:31

What are so

Gabriella Karin 26:32

It's okay, we have to cope with things like that

Kit Heintzman 26:37

What are some of the things that changed for you when you went into lockdown?

Gabriella Karin 26:47

First of all it's changed it we couldn't go out it all right no movies, no friends. No human touch [inaudible] my husband passed away after 56 years of marriage. I was alone already when the pandemic started, but I was not alone. I have friends that are very active. Speaking everywhere. I was going to schools and I travel a lot. I went every year for the March Of The Living I went already eight times and just the pandemic started. Actually, their last trip was when Ambassador Lauder invited me to Krakow. This was just before the pandemic 2020 January,

this year they couldn't go [inaudible] sees young delegation. It is only a high school seniors 220 from Los Angeles I'm one of the speakers and we march from Auschwitz gate to Birkenau gas chambers. They meet about 50 to 70,000 high school seniors from 70 countries and the march together in complete silence. It's awesome, I don't even have words to express it. So this year, because the Ukraine war we didn't go to Poland and it was a smaller group. And they didn't take the survivors because of the COVID. And they went only to Israel. And I was the speaker with them, virtually

Kit Heintzman 30:02

Did you travel to Israel, were you there in person?

Gabriella Karin 30:06

Not this year, but yes every year before that, yes

Kit Heintzman 30:14

What did it feel like...

Gabriella Karin 30:16

Like we are speaking now with children

Kit Heintzman 30:21

What did it feel like not to be able to travel to Israel this year?

Gabriella Karin 30:28

I missed it. I miss the contact with the young people. Also we had a meeting before they left but only virtually.

Kit Heintzman 30:49

In the beginning of the pandemic, how did you cope with the uncertainty?

Gabriella Karin 31:00

I'm kind of optimistic. I was hoping, I did everything that I should do, didn't see people, I got my shots, I washed my hands, I did sculptures about it. Also about the hand washing.

Kit Heintzman 31:28

Where did you learn about how to keep safe about COVID, where were you finding that information?

Gabriella Karin 31:36

Online, they showed how to wash our hands. I thought it was so funny. This is what made me [inaudible] faucet and showing the hands

Kit Heintzman 32:01

Were you able to keep in touch with friends even though you couldn't see them in person?

Gabriella Karin 32:07

Yes, especially one of shes my [inaudible] and um, she lives very close to me, she was the only person who here and there I saw. She came, let's go for a walk, lets go outside she kind of pulled me out a little bit then it was safer yeah, she was really the only person I saw.

Kit Heintzman 32:57

Would you tell me about what those walks were like, were you talking, enjoying nature what was happening?

Gabriella Karin 33:12

I live in that house and kind of big back yard and plants around it. So, actually kind of a miracle happened to me. I lived here over 55 years, the same place and when we came I got the small cactus. And it grew and grew. And it's about 10 feet tall now. And maybe two years ago, first time, I got flowers. But not one like 40 flowers and they bloomed overnight. In morning they open beautifully I took pictures and the next day everything was gone, I couldn't believe it. And now, actually I arrived now have some flowers on it. Now like two three times a year but for 50 years nothing, nothing now I learned about it that apparently this is what happens just to have enough time. Good I took pictures because I made a sculpture of it. I had to, I had to make it, it was like my kid as tall, it got so tall. I enjoy the outdoors.

Kit Heintzman 35:09

What does friendship mean to you?

Gabriella Karin 35:16

Quite a lot, I have a sculpture about it. I have two people hiding, a mother and child, and a and I have a [inaudible] six cups. Yes, friendship means a lot to me. I thin kits very important to have friends in your life, actually I just learned that one of a husband of a lady that I used to go every year up north it's by Syria and I used to go there to speak was invited, I met also her husband he passed away from covid. She was in shock, nice nice person. COVID has no choices. So I knew a couple of people who passed away. Leaving theyre family in Slovakia and the Vanu was with us like I mentioned in Krakow three people because one of the first people who got covid, we didn't even know yet, so he didn't even go he didn't get to the hospital didnt recognize how serious it was, his wife got too but she survived.

Kit Heintzman 37:34

Can you tell me more about some of the people you lost who were they, what were they like when they were alive?

Gabriella Karin 37:47

Vanu was lives lived in Slovakia was quite close. It was my husband's first cousin son. And he was very active, he wanted to, was working on to establish a museum in the town that my husband was born. And actually there is a library my husband name with my son and his wife [inaudible] and he was trying to make a new museum, he got COVID but I'm happy because his son is taking over the job I think he's doing. So, it's a hard thing to get the money for a museum to build, city gave them a house that belonged to a jewish family and no body came back and still to convert it it's not easy. Actually one of my sculptures is supposed to go there. I made this sculpture about kindertransport. It's big big one it's 15 feet. But it's from small pieces so it's easy to bend. But now it's here but I promised them they can have it.

Kit Heintzman 40:01

Why did you decide to do a piece about a kidney transplant?

Gabriella Karin 40:08

I went from museum to museum and I did not see in United States have heard about it. And it upset me, I thought it was such a big thing. And I started to look into it and I decided to do something about it. So I made these big sculptures and you know what I'm so proud every museum has something about it, some bigger some smaller but at least its mentioned. So, this is what made me, I never asked my parents, we never talked about it afterwards. But thinking back when I was eight year old this is when the war started it i i got lessons to learn English, why? The only thing that I can say that they wanted to send me away and my remember my mother went to Prague to do something and I was a kid they didn't share it with me just whatever I could is my, because was quite a curious kid. And think I can think to send me away and across the street when I was researching when I was working on the kindertransport I found the group nine kids from across the street we went the kindertransport and I saw sure and now that this is what is started to teach me English private teacher must be a reason my mother when she went to the Prauge she she was so upset so upset when she came back she couldn't do what she wanted she didn't find the connection.

Kit Heintzman 42:41

What's it like to notice that the world is changing?

Gabriella Karin 42:55

those feel in my neighborhood, people are changing, especially in United States, you hardly know your neighbors right? I think so. It's not the same today. People are kinder to each other. I'm hoping I see a difference lots of young people are trying to find way how to help. That's very comforting that the future will be better. And I'm an optimist. And I believe in people and I don't think that there is a mother that could think and hope for the child to have a more peaceful world I think we all think the same. We don't want wars. We don't want bad things, let's hope.

Kit Heintzman 44:29

What are some of the ways that you showed kindness to other people?

Gabriella Karin 44:36

What does it mean, or what does it?

Kit Heintzman 44:41

When, when you've been kind to others during a pandemic, what did that look like?

Gabriella Karin 45:01

Smile with each other. We ask they can help and they usually can, even if they cannot come in many times young people from our community ringing the bell and then go back to the end of the street and maybe dropped some cookies or something just flowers and just to be nice, and it makes me hope. People tried, its, I think it will be a better road if you make it.

Kit Heintzman 46:10

Other than the pandemic what are some of the social and political issues that you've been thinking about over the last two years?

Gabriella Karin 46:25

I think like was that people that pushing that you don't need the vaccine you don't need the mask you don't need it, instead of listening what's going on and trying to protect other people. I think the mask is not such a big deal to if you can help the mankind to stop it. Not to spread it more, so lets listen to people. Who know more about it. I didn't like them fact that people try to just be negative and not to care, care about other people.

Kit Heintzman 47:54

Did you feel like they didn't care about you?

Gabriella Karin 48:07

They don't care about me it was more general.

Kit Heintzman 48:21

When you decided to get vaccinated, how easy was it for you to get an appointment and get the vaccine?

Gabriella Karin 48:31

It wasn't easy actually, inspite my old age. I tried, I tried, I couldn't the first one I had a hard time. I finally went quite far, I drove a good half an hour standing there in line until I got my first vaccine. And then the other one, for some reason this place where I was supposed to get the other one also, they closed and I just didn't have time to find another place this was beginning, you know? But I got it, and I got boost. That was already easy, actually my pharmacy the boosters, that was easy.

Kit Heintzman 49:34

Did you have any reaction to the vaccine?

Gabriella Karin 49:38

Yes. Not the first one. The second one was sick like five days, not very sick but sick. Temperature and [inaudible] also the second booster, the first booster nothing the second one just one day twenty four hours. So, it was alright.

Kit Heintzman 50:20

Was it scary?

Gabriella Karin 50:19

Pardon?

Kit Heintzman 50:21

Was it scary?

Gabriella Karin 50:23

The reaction? Not really, I knew it was film from the vaccine, it's not the sickness. I wasn't scared, I don't scare easy.

Kit Heintzman 50:51

What does the word mean to you?

Gabriella Karin 50:55

What?

Kit Heintzman 50:56

What does the word health mean to you?

Gabriella Karin 51:01

[inaudible, she's unsure of the question]

Kit Heintzman 51:02

Health h e a l t h

Gabriella Karin 51:06

Oh, health!

Kit Heintzman 51:07

Health

Gabriella Karin 51:09

Means a lot. That's important, yeah, that's important. I had a little problem recently. I would say I'm in pretty good health. I was visiting my son who lives in up north and on the way back in the airport I fell down and I broke my and my neck bone, I couldn't move. My back hurts. I slipped on something, I was by myself holding the luggage and they took me to the hospital then I had to go because I went to visit also my grandson so I went back to Sacramento airport coming back home, this is when it happened so I was far from everybody. And so, after three days in the hospital they decided no surgery. It will heal it's cracked it's not broken it's cracked it will heal. Then they took me to a rehab for five weeks, working working working. I'm fine, no walker, I'm like I was before. I'm alright. That was a challenge, I have a strong, strong will. [inaudible]

Kit Heintzman 53:16

Where things still different in the hospital because of the pandemic and safety?

Gabriella Karin 53:26

I was in a single room, it was good. Many have not, two in a room. They tested me every, twice a week. Not just me, everyone was tested. Which it helped keep us safe.

Kit Heintzman 54:03

Were you able to have visitors?

Gabriella Karin 54:04

Yes. They had to show their vaccination, they were all vaccinated, they were all tested.

Kit Heintzman 54:28

You've mentioned not being able to touch people during lockdown. Do you remember one of the first times after a lockdown that you were able to have that touch with a friend, with a family member?

Gabriella Karin 54:48

Yes. I have some friends that I trust I trust them and I know they're watching and they wouldn't come if they're exposed. Yeah it's a nice it's it's good but I'm still quite careful I'm trying not to go to a market or else I order. I'm trying to avoid, if I can and I'm so good at home you know I have no problem I don't feel secluded you know my art helps me to get out of from the bed in the morning, I'm so curious about what's happening in the kill and I want to see I'm thinking on a morning it's ready sometime I go before grab breakfast I'm so curious so, I have to peek. But that's me, you know.

Kit Heintzman 56:25

What has motherhood meant to you during the pandemic?

Gabriella Karin 56:34

A lot. It's a hard time for people one of my grandchildren is married and has a little girl, she will be two in October so she is still very little, little girl. So it's important, it's important. She came home from nursery and she tested positive. You know little kids just little sniffles and she was ok, both parents got it. How can you be not close to a little kid?

Kit Heintzman 57:50

So what did it feel like to hear that they had tested positive?

Gabriella Karin 58:02

You know, so scared. We were very scared because we didn't know it was still the beginning. Didn't know how serious it can be like [phone ringing] did I close it? I just touched something [laughs] {inaudible} every few minutes.

Kit Heintzman 58:45

How did it feel when they got better?

Gabriella Karin 59:00

How the little girl got? You know, she rest. And she tested negative and was better and her parents could go to work. They work with [inaudible] so it's hard. She's pregnant again, well have another one. Actually in December and they wont tell us if it's a girl or boy. It's ok, the patience, I'm sure they know they just want to have a surprise.

Kit Heintzman 1:00:01

When was the last time you saw your son?

Gabriella Karin 1:00:07

On holidays when I fell down, it was in April

Kit Heintzman 1:00:17

What was that like?

Gabriella Karin 1:00:20

It was good, very good actually. Then I saw him almost daily, you know, because he found a place in the rehab that was 15 minutes walking to his home so it was good.

Kit Heintzman 1:00:49

How did you feel traveling?

Gabriella Karin 1:00:54

Oh, it was okay, you know, I wore mask I even put this whatever the shield over it. okay what ever I can do, I'm not scared, you know, it was ok. But it's the kind of if you think about it you have to be scared about the other people. You know, such a big [inaudible]

Kit Heintzman 1:01:42

Were other people on the plane masked?

Gabriella Karin 1:01:48

They were, outside yea, even outside. Its, outside its ok by now. You know

Kit Heintzman 1:02:04

What does the word safety mean to you?

Gabriella Karin 1:02:08

The vaccine?

Kit Heintzman 1:02:10

The word safety

Gabriella Karin 1:02:13

Oh, safety. Lots of things, it can mean another person. Maybe feeling the way I felt that not to give somebody a sickness. Everybody could feel cautious and maybe we can cut this and the sickness down, you have to worry about other people. Not only us.

Kit Heintzman 1:03:17

How do you feel when people compare the government's handling the pandemic to the Holocaust?

Gabriella Karin 1:03:42

I don't think you can compare these two things. It's, not something that people did, they knew what they were doing. You know, Germany was the most educated country in Europe. It was scientists, hard hard to believe. People did such a thing.

Kit Heintzman 1:04:44

How do you feel about the immediate future?

Gabriella Karin 1:04:52

Here, now? Good, many times they just write sensational things, you know, things that would cut the ice that are not even true. Yea, [inaudible] people will stop and read it. I don't watch television, I completely avoid it. I have newspaper and I have my computer. I get New York Times, I get LA Times. That's enough, I don't want to see everything.

Kit Heintzman 1:06:23

What did you, through the LA Times, what did you learn about what else was happening in Los Angeles with COVID?

Gabriella Karin 1:06:39

I'm learning that about vaccination about schools closing, opening. We have to be informed whats going just a little bit I don't have to see detail to know, its enough, its enough.

Kit Heintzman 1:07:14

What are some of the things you hope for for a long term future?

Gabriella Karin 1:07:22

Peace. No war, lets not hate each other. We ont have to love everyone, like I said respect. Respect every person in this world. If respect would have happened holocaust would not have happened. And today too, it goes for today. Respect. And love. We all have the right to be here.

Kit Heintzman 1:08:19

What are some of the things you think we could do to help us teach each other to respect everyone?

Gabriella Karin 1:08:36

Teach in school from the little ones to respect each other. One kid who's bullying more is to learn to respect, that's a person. That to start early, now they can do it. And they should. They used to say, during the Holocaust, that hatred is a mothers milk. Lets not do it. Mothers have more duty than that. You know what you give your child, give it to the world too, because this is where the kids will live.

Kit Heintzman 1:10:16

When your son was growing up what are some of the ways you taught him to respect other people?

Gabriella Karin 1:10:28

It will not happen to us, to my husband and me. I never kept it a secret, my husband did not want to talk about it but he did. Especially grandchildren they pulled it out of him. I remember when, since they live far we went there often. Maybe six week and a two months, we would stay for longer a week or so, but when I was working just the weekend. Yeah. And evening their parents always were reading books, so we brought books to read. And the kids, three kids, pushed it away. No, no, no, we don't want to read, we have questions. Ok. What did you do when you were twelve? They put a year to it and they wanted us to talk about it, so we did. And so they know everything,

even so, you don't lie to little kids. So that's what we did. So then my husband told them what happened to him but he didn't want to talk publicly.

Kit Heintzman 1:12:36

How young was he when you started teaching him

Gabriella Karin 1:12:44

My son? When he was old enough to ask questions and you know, we came from Europe. He wanted to know the life there so let's sit down in the evening and tell a story or something. He always liked to, instead of reading to him, just kind of talk. That was nice.

Kit Heintzman 1:13:39

You'd mentioned the museum and the talk you give and documentation. I'd love it if you told me a little about what it means to have documents, to have artifacts that show us what happened.

Gabriella Karin 1:14:09

Well, each of the survivors presents it in a different way. I almost from the beginning I started making a power point presentation. And I documented my things with my sculptures and talking about Slovakia I talk about, let's say I'm introducing the Holocaust. And I am showing a sculpture that not only 6 million Jewish were murdered, but also 5 million non Jewish people killed like homosexuals, Jehovah witnesses, gypsies, resisters, 5 million, and 6 million Jewish people. Is two thirds of the Jewish population world wide was killed. This is a big number, five million non jewish people is not such a big number, its still five million people, right? But you take it in perspective it's smaller number because we have millions and millions and millions, so I kind of show them this that I made a sculpture that shows both. People are people, every person counts. So other people show family members so everybody has a little bit different way of make audience understand. Some people just speak they don't show pictures. Or maybe they show one family picture so it's not too easy for all the people to make a PowerPoint presentation somehow I learned by watching somebody doing it it's not so hard, you know. So, I've been home and I did it, first I thought it's impossible. I never wanted a computers, this is how it started. I went around and asked, why do I need a computer? Tell me, what do you do with a computer? Oh I write emails. Okay, I can write by hand. Okay. It's not interesting. So finally, somebody said actually, I went to a store and he was asking me, What can you do with this thing? And he showed me the Photoshop and I got so interested and then I said now I want a computer I want to learn how to work in Photoshop and went take lessons with a computer and I'm using it a lot, with my art and everything using it constantly. So everybody has something different, but all my friends and I ask oh I can email I can do this and this I brushed away. It was not my thing, but I am sure, writing, everybody was. But this is easy. Yeah.

Kit Heintzman 1:18:57

Did you have to learn any new technologies to stay in contact with people during the pandemic?

Gabriella Karin 1:19:06

Sure, Zoom. Right?

Kit Heintzman 1:19:13

What was that like, how easy was it or hard was it to learn?

Gabriella Karin 1:19:19

It wasn't too hard. I didn't think it was. It was a little bit of a challenge to put the power point presentation in it. I had it already but I did it personally and then as always in the museum when you go there is somebody who can help you. When you're at home alone, you better know it. Otherwise you have problems. A lot of people don't want to do it, [inaudible] its hard. We'll learn.

Kit Heintzman 1:20:16

Do you think of COVID-19 as a historic moment?

Gabriella Karin 1:20:31

I think there are a lot of things similar like cholera, like polio, then they get over and disappear and I don't think it will be around too long. Another year or two maybe start to forget them and be like the flu you get the shot don't think about it anymore. The flu was a big thing for some time, right, polio was a big thing. Besides [inaudible] it comes with some vaccine but that's it come on lets get rid of it.

Kit Heintzman 1:21:41

What do you remember about polio? Were you affected by it?

Gabriella Karin 1:21:47

Which one?

Kit Heintzman 1:21:48

Polio

Kit Heintzman 1:21:55

Polio. P O

Gabriella Karin 1:21:58

Oh Polio. No, I was not affected but a lot of people were. I didn't have a child in this time and a lot of children got, it was very hard to get vaccine. I personally was not affected, I just knew a lot of people. My friends had kids, I didn't have, my child was born later. It was a big thing. Can you imagine, having a little kid and such a serious sickness. You know and years ago they had cholera in the whole Europe, people laying in streets and then its over. This will be over, in about twenty years from now. I wont be here but you will.

Kit Heintzman 1:23:32

When historians tell the story of a pandemic, what are some of the things that you hope they remember and teach others about?

Gabriella Karin 1:23:52

They need to remember that we need cooperation of people to fight back. In this case this covid, people have to cooperate not just get the shot. We have to protect other people from you in case you can spread it's out of education.

Kit Heintzman 1:24:39

I want to thank you so so much for the generosity of your time and answers. Those are all of the questions I have right now. But if there's anything you want to share that my questions haven't given you the chance to do that, I'd love it if you took some space to share that.

Gabriella Karin 1:25:07

I think you do a good job asking in summarizing that. I think, we know what's happening in the world with this covid, we all want rid of it and we will get over it. It will disappear with all the other sickness in the world. Just a matter of time.

Kit Heintzman 1:25:54

Thank you so much.

Gabriella Karin 1:25:56

You are very welcome. I'm glad I had the chance to talk to