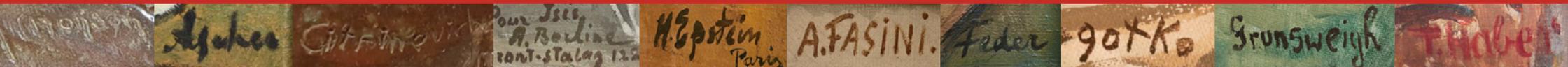


# THE GHEZ COLLECTION



Memorial in Honor of Jewish Artists, Victims of Nazism



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Weiss-Livnat International MA in Holocaust Studies Program  
Strochliz Institute for Holocaust Research  
Hecht Museum  
University of Haifa, Israel



# THE GHEZ COLLECTION

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Memorial in Honor of Jewish Artists, Victims of Nazism

2<sup>nd</sup> edition, October 2017 © University of Haifa.

All the works are from the Ghez Collection, University of Haifa, unless mentioned otherwise.

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Measurements are given in centimeters, height x width.

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## C O N T E N T S

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# Foreword

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The Weiss-Livnat International MA Program in Holocaust Studies was inaugurated at the University of Haifa in 2012 as part of the university's commitment to fostering a young generation of Holocaust researchers and educators. As the first and only program of its kind in Israel, its mission is to nurture and cultivate excellence in research and teaching about the Holocaust in an international, multicultural, and stimulating environment.

The program's uniqueness lies in its broad multidisciplinary approach and the exceptional mixture of academic training and practical experience it offers the students. Drawing on a wide range of academic disciplines, students are exposed to courses in history, psychology, anthropology, museology, education, international law, visual arts, and literature; training in the European languages essential for the study of the Holocaust; excursions and visits to relevant historical sites, museums, and research institutions; and intense training in archival research. It also addresses the full range of ethical, legal, moral, and intellectual issues involved in the study of the Holocaust and genocide.

Through cooperation with leading museums and institutions in Israel, the U.S., and Europe, we strive to actively engage our students in the international academic discourse on the Holocaust, open the door for them to join the international community of scholars, and help them expand

their global worldview. Our international collaborations enable us to expose them to leading researchers and guest lecturers and involve them in academic exchange programs and international seminars. The program offers practical internship opportunities in a rich variety of Holocaust-related positions and institutions such as Yad Vashem and The Ghetto Fighters House Museum, USHMM, Jewish museums, and archives in Berlin, Warsaw, London, and Budapest.

Our program offers a unique meeting place for students from diverse nationalities, ethnic groups, and academic backgrounds. With students from more than 20 countries, we have created opportunities for joint learning experiences, intellectual enrichment, and the expansion of our students' perspectives through discourse.

The catalogue presented to you here is an illustration of the wide-ranging and multidisciplinary nature of the program. In a course designed to combine Holocaust history, analysis of artwork, and the writing of a catalogue, students were engaged in historical research as well as commemoration of Jewish artists who perished in the Holocaust, demonstrating the unique fusion of the theoretical and practical dimensions offered by the program.

Prof. Arie J. Kochavi  
Academic Head

Dr. Yael Granot-Bein  
Administrative Director

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The Hecht Museum at the University of Haifa maintains strong ties with the University's academic departments. In October 2016, the Museum began a joint project with the Weiss-Livnat International MA Program in Holocaust Studies to conduct an in-depth study of the art collection donated to the University in 1978 by the celebrated Swiss art collector, the late Dr. Oscar Ghez de Castelnuovo.

Like Dr. Oscar Ghez, Dr. Reuben Hecht, the founder of the Hecht Museum, acted out of a sense of mission to perpetuate the material and spiritual culture of the Jewish people. Over the years, he collected paintings by Jewish artists from the School of Paris, among them works by Mané-Katz, Chaim Soutine and Amedeo Modigliani. Dr. Ghez likewise dedicated himself to collecting the work of Jewish artists from the School of Paris who were persecuted and/or murdered by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Collaboration between the Hecht and Ghez collections is not new. For the past twenty years, selected works from the Ghez Collection have been presented on a permanent basis in the Museum's Art Wing and, once a year, a wider selection of the collection is placed on temporary display. This year the graduate students in Dr. Rachel Perry's seminar "Researching and Restaging the Ghez Collection" conducted extensive research on the collection. Under Dr. Perry's guidance, they discovered fascinating new data on the artists and their work which are printed here in this catalogue. The project will conclude with an exhibition that will open at the Hecht Museum in the following academic year.

I wish to thank Dr. Rachel Perry for being the project's driving force. She inspired her students to pursue their research, guiding them with a high degree of professionalism in their search for the personal stories behind the works of art. I also wish to thank Prof. Arie J. Kochavi and Dr. Yael Granot-Bein of the Weiss-Livnat International MA Program in Holocaust Studies at the University of Haifa. Without their dedication and support, this project would never have become a reality.

Shunit Netter-Marmelstein  
Director and Curator, Hecht Museum, University of Haifa

# Dr. Oscar Ghez

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In 1978, Dr. Oscar Ghez de Castelnuovo (1905-1988) donated 137 works of art to the Hecht Museum at the University of Haifa in order to establish a “Memorial to Jewish Artists, Victims of Nazism.”

Dr. Ghez was born in Tunisia in 1905 to a distinguished Jewish family. As a child, he moved to Marseilles and then completed his university studies in Rome. With his older brother Henry, he founded a rubber plant in Rome in 1924, which they operated until approximately 1939 when the racial laws became too stringent. They sold their Italian plant to their main competitor Pirelli in exchange for a similar plant in France. When the Nazis occupied France, Dr. Ghez and his family fled to the United States. During World War II, he and his brother served in the Italian war department at the United States Army Industrial College. In 1945, they were able to retake possession of their French factories in Lyon. In 1960, Ghez sold his factories to the Firestone Group and began collecting art. In 1968, Dr. Ghez founded the Petit Palais Modern Art Museum in Geneva in order to open his personal collection to the public under his motto “Art in the Service of Peace.” Dr. Ghez died in Geneva in 1998 at the age of 93.

We have chosen to reprint Dr. Ghez’s preface to the first catalogue of the Ghez Collection at Haifa University in 1978. We believe his remarks clarify his drive to collect artworks by Jewish artists murdered by the Nazis, and the enthusiasm of his donation in the early years of the State of Israel.

*On this 30th birthday of the State of Israel, “The Memorial in Honour of Artist Victims of Nazism” is to be founded at the University of Haifa. A whole generation has passed since the end of history’s most monstrous genocide, cunningly and methodically perpetrated against millions of human beings, defenseless adults and children. How many wonderful human beings and geniuses could have contributed to civilization such as we perceive it.*

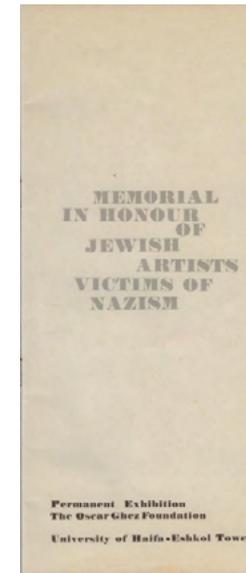
*On the thirtieth floor of the Eshkol Tower of the University of Haifa, surrounded by beauty and splendor, with a view of the sea and towards the endless horizon, one will be able to appreciate the realization of a quite simple idea: to gather in Israel works by artists who fell victim to Nazism, works representing today, for the Jewish people, precious relics to be preserved from dispersion or destruction.*

*Following a conversation held in April 1977 between my friend Maître Ben Peretz, Mr. Eliezer Rafaelim then President of Haifa University, and myself, the idea was formed for this Memorial on the highest floor of the Tower overlooking the magnificent Haifa Bay. Such a Memorial could only be erected in a thriving place, animated by youth, spirit and intellect, and inhabited by people coming from the four corners of the world.*

*In this corner of unutterable and eternal beauty, this Memorial will be a further symbol of the toll taken by the barbarians of the 20th century, whose aim was the extermination of the Jewish people and of its fertile genius. I know that it is this “Jewish Genius,” demonstrating itself in every field, that the President Eliezer Rafaeli wished to honour.*

*A few words now, explaining how this collection of works that I have the honour to give to the University of Haifa came about. I patiently gathered them, to build what I called the “sentimental part” of my painting collection, the one which touched my Jewish heart most deeply. Fate, which led me to paintings of Jewish artists killed in deportation, brought me to conceive the idea of searching for other works. These works, mostly in the possession of Jewish families, were not for sale. They were dear to their hearts. As a private collector, it took me nearly thirty years to gather the works that form this donation. But the University, helped by the existence of this Memorial, will be able to find many other works by artists who are no more, but whose names are known to us. I am convinced that there will not be a lack of donations for this University endeavor.*

*The artists represented in this collection came from many European countries. But it was in France that most of them were arrested by the Gestapo*



and its collaborators, and later transferred from there to the death camps. Thus, it was in Paris that I was able to find and acquire all these works. Paris has always been the center of artistic attraction, above all for painters who came from all over the world. Since the Impressionists, many artists have come to Paris for inspiration. All those who returned to their native countries, such as Italy, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, the Baltic countries and, of course, Germany, had the same misfortune as those who remained in France during the occupation. Only a few succeeded in taking shelter under more hospitable climes.

From the 19th century onwards, the Jews

made a noticeable contribution to art in all countries. This contribution grew from year to year. Starting with the 20th century, with the birth of the "Ecole de Paris," this contribution became more important and very personal. Among those "giants" of the "Ecole de Paris," we note the names of Modigliani, Chagall, Kisling, Pascin, Mané-Katz, Kremègne, Soutine, Zadkine, Lipschitz, Kikoine, Bela Czobel, Hayden, Kars, Epstein, Ottman, Peské, Marcoussis, Sonia Delaunay, Mela Muter and many others. Every nation contributed with its own genius, its feelings and the inspiration of its masters to the artistic creation, from painting to music, from sculpture to poetry, from dance to architecture. How many movements were born and developed

in art since the dawn of the 20th century! The contribution of the Jewish artists – painters as well as poets, sculptors, composers or interpreters like Heifetz, Rubinstein, Menuhin and many others who came from Vienna, Prague, Budapest, London, Paris, New York, Berlin, Rome and Milan – was always present. Weighty encyclopedias covering this short but rich period already fill the shelves of the libraries.

Visitors to the Memorial will in fact agree with this, once they have seen in these works some incontestable "proofs" and "documents" directly coming from the hands of the martyrs who disappeared in the infernal destruction. After having visited Israel – Jerusalem, its

capital, Yad Vashem and the Memorial at the University of Haifa, visitors will confirm that Israel has earned and deserves the right to exist; a right which is denied by several countries. Moreover, this is not only the land of their ancestors, but also the refuge that millions of Jews dispersed around the world aspire to reach. [...]

I end by expressing my satisfaction for the achievements made here at the University of Haifa, and my gratitude to the President, Mr. Gershon Avner, to Mr. Eliezer Rafaeli, and to all their colleagues who have helped to realize this Memorial, to ensure its existence and not allow us to forget.

- 1978 -

# Jewish Artists of the School of Paris



Nadine Nieszawer, Expert of the École de Paris



Artists of Mahmadim posing at la Ruche, second from the left standing is Henri Epstein. © Musee d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, Paris

Who were these artists? These artists had in common the belief in the old German proverb "Living like God in France", which the Yiddish oral tradition popularized in "Happy as a Jew in Paris": Azoy gliklich wi a yid in Paris.

Paris was then the center of the world. Artists came from Eastern Europe between 1905 and 1939, fleeing from the anti-Semitism present in their countries, looking for a place that would welcome them and enable them to freely express their artistic desire.

These artists settled in Montparnasse and mixed with the avant-garde which was then abounding. They recreated a shtetl and met in the neighborhood cafés. They formed what is known as the School of Paris. Over five hundred of them lived in Paris between World

War I and World War II. Many of them were in close contact with Jewish writers and poets who published their work in Yiddish journals and magazines.

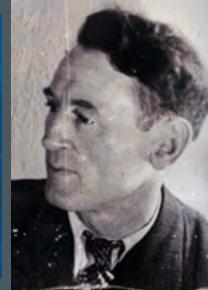
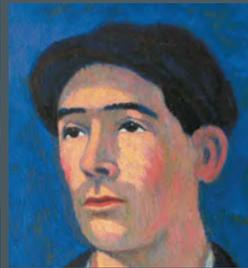
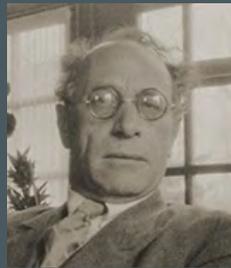
The books dedicated to the School of Paris rarely mention the artists' Judaism. These artists are often associated with their country of origin, from which they had fled, where access to the Fine Arts was limited or even prohibited due to the "numerus clauses."

These men and women, driven by the same hope of life, were suddenly stopped by the Final Solution. Many perished in the gas chambers, their work was destroyed, and those who survived never found again the common dream that united the artists.





THE GHEZ  
COLLECTION



# Introduction

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“To write history means to give dates their physiognomy.”

Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*

## Dr. Rachel Perry

On June 23, 1940 at 5:30 in the morning, one day after France signed the armistice, Adolf Hitler celebrated his victory over France with a triumphant tour of Paris. This was the first and the only time he visited Paris, and it is not a coincidence he chose the Eiffel Tower as the backdrop for his photo op.<sup>1</sup> Carefully staged, this iconic photograph was shot on the elevated esplanade at Trocadero so that the tower wouldn't tower over Hitler or overshadow him (Fig. 1). Moreover, flanked on either side by his chief architect, Albert Speer, and favorite sculptor, Arno Breker, Hitler turns his back on the French monument, deliberately, dismissively walking away from it. This is an image of dominance and disrespect, not of admiration and awe.

Only several years earlier, in the late 1930s, the Russian born Jewish artist Alexandre Fasini took his own, very different, photograph of the Eiffel Tower, as part of a series he called *Celestial Signs* (Fig. 2). Shot on a cloudy day, the Eiffel Tower is in sight but far away – almost unattainable – across the great gulf of the city. It stands defiantly, silhouetted against the overcast sky which threatens to engulf it, as something to aspire to: a star to wish upon,

a light at the end of the tunnel. In a letter, he wrote, “*Looking out my window, there is still Monsieur Eiffel Tower, thoroughly chilled [...] winking at me in the evening*”; In another writing he exclaimed “*Ah, France, Paris, Montmartre – beautiful dreams...*”<sup>3</sup>

The Eiffel Tower was the symbol of the new century, and avant-garde artists promoted it as a crucible of modernism.<sup>2</sup> Guillaume Apollinaire made a calligram of it in 1916: “Hello world, of which I am the eloquent tongue which your mouth, O Paris, will forever stick out at the Germans.” Le Corbusier reproduced photos of it in his 1923 book *Towards a New Architecture* claiming “*Ça c’est Paris.*” In 1955, he called it: “the beloved sign of Paris, the sign of beloved Paris.” And many young Jewish émigrés, like Mané-Katz and Chagall, painted it in homage to the city and country which had welcomed them with open arms, creating an *Hommage à Paris* (Fig. 3).

The first country to emancipate its Jews, France was a haven for an entire generation of aspiring young Jewish artists. They made their way to Paris in the early decades of the 20th

century, overcoming incredible obstacles to do so – leaving friends and family, their language and culture – in the pursuit of religious, political and artistic freedom. Inspired by the motto of the French Revolution – “liberty, equality, fraternity” – they migrated from Germany and Austria, Romania, Ukraine, and Russia, fleeing pogroms, poverty and persecution. Some arrived with no more than an address and a name in their pockets. Together they formed the *École de Paris*, a term coined by André Warnod in 1925 in the journal *Comoedia* to designate foreign (predominantly Jewish) artists working in Paris as opposed to the French born artists of the *École Française*. As Romy Golan and Kenneth Silver explicate, the mass influx of these Jewish artists was already cast in xenophobic, anti-Semitic terms in the 1920s, with critics describing them as a contaminating, swarming “barbarian horde” threatening the purity of the French tradition.

Settling in Montparnasse, these foreign-born artists frequented the cafés Le Dome, La Rotonde, La Coupole, or the Closerie des Lilacs where they discussed their work and met with critics and collectors. They were supported by the dealers René Gimpel, Berthe Weill, Yadwiga



Zak, Katia Granoff and Léopold Zborowski and by Léon Zamaron, an Inspector General of the Police from 1906 to 1932, who protected them and helped them both financially and with administrative procedures (applications for visas, residence permits, naturalization papers). They set up studios in La Ruche on the passage Dantzig: a group of cheap studios constructed from pavilions from the 1900 Universal Exposition by the sculptor Alfred Boucher. And they attended classes and joined academies where they could practice and paint from the model: in addition to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the Academie Colarossi, Académie Julian and the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. They joined organizations of inter-aid and support. They exhibited their work in the Salons and in private galleries: they adopted Paris as their own.



Fig. 1. Hitler In Paris, June 24, 1940. Credit: Harwood/ Stringer, Collection: Hulton Archive. Photo: Harwood/Keystone/Getty Images

Fig. 2. Alexandre Fasini, *Celestial Signs*, c. 1934. Private Collection

Fig. 3. Emmanuel Mané-Katz, *Hommage à Paris*, 1930. Mané-Katz Museum, Haifa. © ADAGP

Fig. 4. Adolphe Feder, *Au Bon Vin de France*, oil on canvas, 73.5x60 cm. Image in the public domain

Perhaps no painting better captures this unbridled optimism than Adolphe Feder's *Au bon vin de France* (Fig. 4). Arriving in the French capital in 1910 at age 23, Feder portrays himself as a dapper young man with a cigarette dangling from his mouth and a smile playing on his lips. Brimming with confidence and joie de vivre, he asserts his place at the very center of this sidewalk culture with its stylish young girls, cafés and good French wine. Under blue skies, French flags flap in the wind and the sun bathes his face evoking Marc Chagall's oft cited remark that "The sun has only ever shone for me in France."<sup>4</sup> This giddy excitement and unlimited promise is on display in a photograph Feder sent back to his friend in Odessa, the artist Amshey Nurenberg, in 1919, on which he wrote: "Amshey! Look and admire!"<sup>5</sup> The artist Henri (Chaim) Epstein, who had received his French citizenship in 1930 was

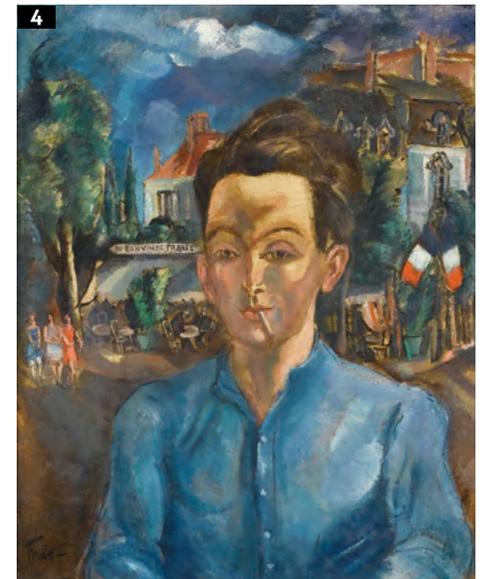
also "deeply in love with France"; He often repeated "I know of no other country, where one can breathe so freely as in France and where one can find such exquisite works of art as Chartres Cathedral."<sup>6</sup>

The capital of luxury and pleasure, sophistication and culture, opulence and glamour, Paris was the epicenter of the art world, the City of Light (la Ville-Lumière).<sup>7</sup> Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism, Symbolism, Fauvism, Cubism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Dada: Paris was the stage on which the avant-garde experimented, with a flurry of movements and styles and techniques. For so many, "Paris represented the International of culture... the Modern"; it was, the art critic Harold Rosenberg wrote, "the laboratory of the 20th century" and "the Holy Place of our time."<sup>8</sup> The Jewish German refugee Walter Benjamin



declared "At the centre of this world of things stands the most dreamed-of of their objects, the city of Paris itself."<sup>9</sup> And one of the very few things he took with him as he fled from Nazi occupied France, desperately trying to cross the border into Spain, was his paean to his adopted city, a massive manuscript about Paris, *Das Passagen-Werk* or *The Arcades Project* (1927-1940).

Almost overnight, the City of Light was engulfed in "les années noires" [the dark years].<sup>10</sup> As soon as the armistice was signed on June 22, 1940, the cosmopolitan and libertarian Third Republic was replaced by an authoritarian, homogenous, corporatist state which promoted the slogan "France for the French." The Romanian born Jewish émigré poet Benjamin Fondane noted, with alarm,



“the immense noise of empires and boots/ MARCHING.”<sup>11</sup> Vichy’s “National Revolution” was fueled by xenophobic and anti-Semitic rhetoric. Under the direction of the decorated World War I hero Marshal Philippe Pétain, officials in the Vichy government set to work immediately implementing anti-Jewish policies. They instituted a General Commission for Jewish Affairs and drafted legislation which barred Jews from holding civil and military posts and from working in professions related to the media or banking.<sup>12</sup> The law annulled the naturalizations of foreign nationals, and it required all Jews to present themselves to the Prefecture of Police and have their names and addresses registered. The first Statut des Juifs, passed on October 3, 1940, specified in its preamble that:

*In its work of national reconstruction the government from the very beginning was bound to study the problem of Jews as well as that of certain aliens, who, after abusing our hospitality, contributed to our defeat in no small measure. In all fields and especially in the public service... the influence of Jews has made itself felt, insinuating and finally decomposing.*

Identity papers would henceforth be stamped with “JEW,” prompting many to seek documents from the Commission for Jewish Affairs declaring that they did not belong to the Jewish race (“Certificats de non-appartenance à la race juive”).

Under Vichy, Jewish artists were forbidden to exhibit or to sell their work. Already in 1940, in order to exhibit at the Salon d’Automne, artists were required to sign an official register testifying that they were French and not Jewish.<sup>13</sup> Lucien Rebattet, the art critic of Vichy’s most anti-Semitic journal *Je suis partout*, declared that French culture would become



*judenrein*: “The public presentation in any form whatsoever, concert, theater, cinema, books, radio, exhibition, of a Jewish or half-Jewish work of art must be forbidden, and this without nuance or reservation.”<sup>14</sup> With measures even harsher than the Nuremberg Laws, Vichy’s Statut des Juifs initiated a large scale process of Aryanization in the occupied zone in June 1940; in July 22, 1941 it was extended to the southern zone. All “businesses, goods, and valuables belonging to Jews” were subject to Aryanization (or confiscation and expropriation of all their property). Georges Wildenstein’s Galerie des Beaux Arts was “sold” and the gallery Bernheim-Jeune (where many of our artists exhibited) was “Aryanized.”<sup>15</sup>

In 1941, *The Jew and France*, an anti-Semitic exhibition, organized by the Institute for the Study of the Jewish Problem, displayed all of the perceived ways that Jews impacted and



perverted French culture, government and economy (Fig. 5). It was a wild success: over 500,000 visitors came to see it in Paris.

Following the Wannsee conference in January 1942, the Nazis began to systematically deport Jews to concentration camps in the east. In France, they were aided and abetted by the collaborationist Vichy regime. Louis Darquier de Pellepoix, Vichy’s second Commissioner General for Jewish affairs (1942-44), declared that deportations were a matter of “public hygiene” which would bring “France back to her true ideals,” allowing the country to be finally “freed of this Jewish scum.”<sup>16</sup> The first large scale roundup occurred in May 1941 when thousands of Jews were “invited to present themselves” to the authorities for an examination of their papers. Little did they know that they would be summarily rounded up and deported in this Billet Vert aktion. The first convoy of deportees left the Compiègne internment camp for Auschwitz on March 27, 1942. On June 7, 1942, all Jews in the Occupied Zone were required to wear a yellow Jewish star by German decree (Fig. 6). By June, all illusions that men were being

Fig. 5. Antisemitic propaganda poster for the exhibition *Le Juif et la France*, 1941. © Ghetto Fighters’ House Museum, no. 44288

Fig. 6. Young women wearing a Jewish badge on a street in Paris. Photographed in January 1942. © Ghetto Fighters’ House Museum

sent to forced labor were shattered when women and then children began to be included in the deportations. In July, 13,000 Jewish foreign nationals were arrested, detained and deported in the Vel d’Hiv roundup.<sup>17</sup> By the end of 1944, between 76,000 and 78,000 Jews had been deported from France and sent to killing centers in Eastern Europe. Of these, two-thirds were foreign refugees. Only 2,500 survived.<sup>18</sup>

\*

Despite such profound betrayal, many of these artists remained indebted to France. The Polish artist Roman Kramsztyk is a case in point. A prominent figure in Montparnasse, he lived on the rue Denfert-Rochereau and frequented the café La Rotonde (Fig. 7). He had his portrait painted by Léon Weissberg and painted his in turn (*Weissberg as Accordionist*). His sundrenched landscapes of Provence so indebted to Cézanne exude French *joie de vivre*. In the summer of 1939, he returned to Warsaw to care for his dying mother, and as he was settling her estate and inheritance matters, the Nazis invaded Poland, and he found himself trapped behind ghetto walls with over 400,000 other Jews. Although he

had been baptized at birth, Nazism turned Kramsztyk into a Jew. As an eyewitness to the suffering and death in the ghetto, he drew begging children and homeless families, recording the poverty, hunger and despair around him, smuggling works out to the Aryan side. Among the drawings that survived is *A Family in the Ghetto* which depicts a haggard bearded man flanked by two emaciated children, carrying another on his shoulders and cradling a baby in his arms (Fig. 8).

Kramsztyk was shot and killed during the Grossaktion liquidation of the ghetto in the summer of 1942, when between 254,000-265,000 Jews were deported from Warsaw to Treblinka in what was code-named Operation Reinhardt.<sup>19</sup> The famous musician Władysław Szpilman, whose life was covered by Roman Polanski in the film *The Pianist*, described Kramsztyk as “a man of incredible culture and high culture in general, a modest one with a lot of warmth.”<sup>20</sup> In his memoirs, Szpilman reports that Kramsztyk died on one of the first days of the aktion, on the sixth of August.

When the house where he lived had been surrounded, he refused to go down into the yard, preferring to stay among his paintings.<sup>21</sup> Samuel Puterman, a painter and Judenrat Ghetto Police officer, described his death in his diaries, *The Warsaw Ghetto*. Covered in blood and barely conscious, Kramsztyk begged Puterman to promise to paint the scenes of the ghetto. Sacrifice everything, let the world know about the bestiality of the Germans.<sup>22</sup> Before he died, he handed Puterman colored sanguine pencils from his pocket directing him to “Give them a souvenir from Kramsztyk, they are good crayons, original Lefranc [a good quality French brand].”<sup>23</sup> He then handed him a gold watch awarded to him from an exhibition in France, inscribed with the French national motto “Liberté-Egalité-Fraternité.”

That very same sense of affection and loyalty is evidenced in an inscription left behind on a concrete pillar in Drancy by Henri Hague, one of the “martyred artists” Hersh Fenster commemorated in 1951 and of whom nothing else is known. Before he was deported, he



Fig. 7. Kramsztyk seated first on the right with cane, hat and crossed legs at the Dome cafe, with the dealer Léopold Zborowski, c. 1924. Image in the Public Domain

Fig. 8. Roman Kramsztyk, *A Family in the Ghetto*, 1942, sanguine on paper, 54x37.8 cm. © Emmanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw

wrote a farewell, which reads: “For all the artist friends who will pass through Drancy. Goodbye! After the war... [let’s meet] at the café le Dôme!” (Fig. 9). Another unsigned inscription reads, “In spite of everything, thank you France”. This same expression was used by Jacques Gotko for his painted invitation for a group art exhibition held in the Compiègne internment camp (Page 18).

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This catalogue traces the lives and careers of eighteen Jewish artists who belonged to the École de Paris. Although the Nazis saw them all as the same – as inferior Others or Untermenschen – the artists assembled in our collection came from diverse backgrounds and countries: Belarus, Poland, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Romania and France. Some converted (Jacob); others had been baptized at birth (Kramsztyk). Several of them intermarried (Gotko, Epstein), while others were born in deeply religious homes (Aronson was one of ten children who went to Heder) and remained committed to Yiddish culture (Epstein) and

Jewish custom (Grunswiegh). They studied together (Kars, Kogan, Epstein and Weissberg all attended the Munich academy of art). More than a few of them knew each other. Hecht, Haber and Epstein hailed from Łódź; Fasini and Feder, from Odessa. Some were close friends (Weingart and Weissberg belonged to the “Groupe des Quatre”) or relatives (Kramsztyk and Ascher). Although they gravitated towards more conventional genres (portraiture, nudes, still lifes and landscapes), there is remarkable diversity between them: from Kraemer’s dry, restrained minimalism to Kars’ erotic nudes; from Grunswiegh’s modest provincial townscapes to Weingart’s exotic odalisques and circus performers; from Haber’s morose monochromes to Epstein’s exuberant warm pastels; from Weissberg’s impasto relief to Fasini’s surrealist fantasies; from Jacob’s sentimental watercolors to Ascher’s bold, saturated color blocks.

Too few of them survived like Naum Aronson, who escaped to safety in the United States, and Kars, who went into hiding in Switzerland. Most, being stateless and without visas, stayed in France, trying to elude the authorities by moving to the Free Zone (as Kraemer and Cytrynovitch did) or living in the countryside (Epstein, Hecht, Weissberg). Two of our artists, Haber and Kramsztyk, returned home to Poland in the 1930s on family matters and were tragically trapped there in the Bialystok and Warsaw ghettos when the Nazis invaded on September 1, 1939. Gotko, Fasini, and Berline were detained and incarcerated during the first roundups of the Billet Vert and Vel d’Hiv. Kraemer, Ascher and Weissberg were captured during the large roundups conducted in the South of France in 1943.<sup>24</sup> Interned in Pithiviers, Gurs, and Compiègne, the majority of our artists were then sent on to Drancy before



being gassed in Auschwitz (Fig. 10 and 11). Two were killed in Majdanek.

In the summer of 1943, as the Nazis stepped up their extermination of European Jewry, the Jewish French writer and art critic Léon Werth worried, "All will be forgotten, tossed into the trashcans of history."<sup>25</sup> As Primo Levi has argued, the Nazi project was, in its essence, "a war against memory."<sup>26</sup> It is worth noting that only three days before Ascher's wife and daughter were deported from Drancy to Auschwitz (in the same convoy as the German Jewish artist Charlotte Salomon) on October 7, 1943, Heinrich Himmler delivered a secret speech to senior SS officers in Poznan in which he stressed that [they were to] "never speak of the extermination of the Jews in public": the history of the Final Solution would be "a glorious page that will never be written."<sup>27</sup> Indeed, precious little remains of these artists. There are few if any diaries or letters which have come down to us (with the exception of Léon Weissberg, whose work has been extensively researched thanks to his daughter, Lydie Lachenal, who survived). We don't even have a photograph of some of our artists. Until we began research on these artists, there were no known photographs of Kraemer or Grunsweigh. Such small remnants tie us to the past and those who died during the Holocaust. Not only were most of the artists in the Ghez collection murdered, but their studios were pillaged and plundered, and their personal papers, archives, memorabilia, and photo albums dispersed and destroyed. The art collections they amassed (both Fasini and Feder had assembled large collections of "primitive," tribal arts) were ruthlessly looted, perhaps by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR), a special Nazi looting agency created in the summer of 1940 to confiscate western Europe's cultural heritage, particularly



Fig. 9. Henri Hague, "Confiance, courage - - - 15.5.44." 18X24 cm. Fonds Fenster. © Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme, Paris

Fig. 10. Jewish Women in Drancy, doing laundry. © Ghetto Fighters' House Museum no. 11052

Jewish libraries, archives, and private art collections.<sup>28</sup> Most of their work disappeared without a trace. Claude Lanzmann reminds us that:

*each stage of the process of human destruction was accompanied by a parallel destruction of property and goods. In other words, there was a relentless succession of theft that continued, even after death... The biography of each artist is impossible, insufficient and often tragically short (three lines). A photograph of the artist or only one of his paintings is all that remains of a lifetime of creation, of a work in progress.*<sup>29</sup>

The systematic dispossession and murder of the victims has made us painfully aware of how much is missing, as Jean François Lyotard has noted, how many of "the facts, the testimonies which bore the traces of here's and now's, the documents which indicated the sense or senses of the facts, and the names... [have] been destroyed as much as possible."<sup>30</sup> We are left with what Henry Raczymov calls a "mémoire trouée" - a memory full of holes and blank spots. For us, this was palpably felt in the case of Karl Haber, of whom so little is known. Despite all of our efforts, much of the life stories of our artists remain shrouded in

mystery: an aching reminder of all that is lost to history.

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In Hebrew, the number eighteen stands for life, "chai." Whether by chance or by intent, Oscar Ghez reunited eighteen Jewish artists and donated their work to the University of Haifa as a "memorial." These artists were brought together by Oscar Ghez because they perished during the Holocaust, but more unites them than where, when and why they died. Their deaths should not define their legacies in what Eunice Lipton calls an "interpretive injustice" whereby "the Holocaust's retrospective hold on our past" obscures the lives they lead.<sup>31</sup>

We have approached our project as an act of restoration—a search and rescue mission—to collect as many traces of their lives as possible (a photograph, an identity card, a poem, a deportation list) in order to flesh out their biographies. In some cases, it was a question of merely correcting a date and place of death, or finding a spouse or a full name. In other instances, the faint outlines of a biography materialized, such as when Nathalie Kraemer suddenly became more than a list of dates

or string of facts, but a daughter, a wife, an accomplished poet, and a French-born woman to a Yekke from Alsace-Lorraine and a non-Jewish woman from the Champagne region (and not to Polish immigrants, as previously believed). The old catalogue offered a scant five lines on each artist and few if any personal documents or photographs. It stated simply that Berline was “deported to a death camp in 1942.” We can now say with precision when he was arrested and where he was interned; when he was deported and with whom; and the exact date he was murdered. We now know that, miraculously, Grunsweigh was not deported to Germany to die in a concentration camp in 1943, as the literature would have it; not only did he survive, but so did his entire family. We resolved the controversy regarding Joseph Hecht: he survived. In the process, we have not only corrected the historical record regarding these eighteen artists. In many cases, we found out things about their personal lives which have never been documented: where they lived, their children, the names of their spouses and their professions. Ascher had a wife and daughter. Kraemer was married. The family so lovingly depicted in Grunsweigh’s many paintings is no doubt his own: his wife

Fanny and their two sons and daughter sitting peacefully in the bucolic backyard of their family home in the suburbs. Fasini’s wife, Rosa, was also an artist. Throughout, we were driven by an ethical commitment not to leave these artists, or their work, on the margins of history.

Buoyed by desires for a *tabula rasa*, 1945 was declared “l’année zéro” [the year zero]: a slate wiped clean of the experience of four, defiling years of occupation. Charles de Gaulle himself inaugurated this “regime of forgetting” when he announced in the spring of 1945: “The time for tears is over. The time of glory has returned.”<sup>32</sup> A myth of “Résistancialisme” took hold, which, as French historian Henry Rousso has argued, exaggerated French resistance during the Occupation and minimized French collaboration.<sup>33</sup> The French practiced a sort of mnemonic lapse when it came to their support for and complicity with the policies and ideology of Vichy. The judicial dismissal or erasure (“l’oubli juridique”) of crimes of collaboration in the amnesty laws granted in 1951 and 1953 corresponded to a profound and unilateral social need to put behind the divisions of the immediate past, inaugurating



Fig. 11. French Jews on their way to the Pithiviers transit camp carrying bundles and suitcases. © Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, no. 11896

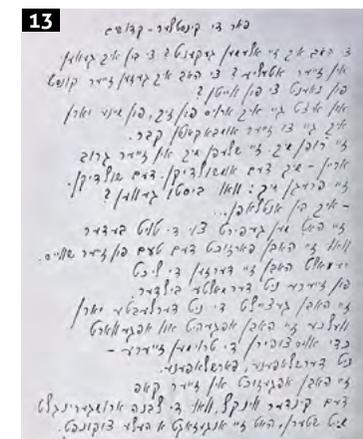


Fig. 12. Frontispiece for Hersh Fenster, *Our Martyred Artists*, (Paris, 1951)

Fig. 13. Marc Chagall, “Our Martyred Artists” poem

a long period of national amnesty—if not collective amnesia—lasting well into the 1960s. Safely absolved, the Reconstruction could proceed. Throughout the Fourth Republic, the memory of the Occupation was evaded and pushed aside in the interests of reconstruction and reconciliation. Even Picasso, who had weathered the war in Paris and emerged as a figure of the Resistance, abruptly turned away from paintings representing the war, such as *The Charnel House* of 1945, and took up *Joy of Life* in 1946 (which drew on Giorgione’s bacchanals and Matisse’s vision of an idyllic, atemporal Acadia).

But, as scholars such as David Cesarani and Laura Jockusch have stressed, the immediate postwar period in France also witnessed a concerted call to memory. Monuments and memorials were planned and built. The Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine (CDJC) was established in Paris, drawing on the extensive documentation collected during the war by Isaac Schneersohn in Grenoble to preserve evidence of Nazi war crimes for future generations.<sup>34</sup> In the visual arts, a number of commemorative projects were launched. Retrospective memorial exhibitions were

held: for Epstein at the Galérie Berri-Raspail in December 1946; for Kars in November 1945; for Kogan at the Galérie Zak in 1947 as well as the important group exhibition of *Oeuvres d’artistes juifs morts en déportation* held at the Galérie Zak from February 28 to March 12, 1955. Articles and books on the perished artists were published. Hersh Fenster returned to Paris from his exile in New York and began feverishly collecting photographs, reproductions, letters, testimonies, and reminiscences of the artists who had perished. His absolutely seminal book was published in Yiddish in 1951, in a thick volume, under the title *Our Martyred Artists (Undzere farpaynikte Kinstler)* that remains the most authoritative source of information on the lives and careers of these artists (Fig. 12). Fenster’s tome opens with a chilling, guilt ridden, handwritten poem by Marc Chagall, who had narrowly escaped Nazi-occupied France and found refuge in the United States. (Fig. 13). A decade later, Chil Aronson, the director of the Galérie Bonaparte which had featured so many of the Jewish artists of the École de Paris, revisited the lives and loves of these artists from Montparnasse, resulting in an even larger tome, again in Yiddish, *Scènes et visages de Montparnasse*. Similarly,



Fig. 14. Liberated deportees check the boards of the missing at the Hotel Lutetia, Paris, May 1945. ©AFP

Rachel Auerbach and Miriam Novitch began the arduous process of collecting documents and works of art from the Holocaust in the postwar period. Much of the Ghetto Fighters' House (GFH) Museum's collection is due to Novitch's efforts towards building an archive.<sup>35</sup> It was during this period that Oscar Ghez began buying and collecting works of art by Jewish artists who had suffered or perished during the Holocaust.

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The first catalogue, *Memorial in Honor of Jewish Artists Victims of Nazism*, dates back to 1978, when the donation was made and the permanent exhibition was installed at the University of Haifa in the Eshkol tower. Twenty years later, in 1996, Sanford Shaman published a catalogue of the collection erroneously entitled *Eighteen Artists who Perished in the Holocaust* (four of them survived). Today, at another interval of twenty years, we are

revisiting these artists and their work. Much has changed in the fields of both Holocaust Studies and Art History in the intervening years: new methodological approaches and disciplinary perspectives. Nadine Nieszawer's indispensable *Jewish Artists of the School of Paris* first published in French in 2000, opened up the field of research and was followed by exhibitions such as *Montparnasse déporté* shown in Paris and at Yad Vashem. The passage of time has also put more research tools at our disposition. The fall of the Iron Curtain, the rapid pace of globalization and the internet have profoundly transformed access to new materials and documents. Digitalization has made the databases of archives and collections across Europe and Israel available.

For too long, this remarkable collection has been overlooked. Only a small handful of works have ever been reproduced in color; fewer still are displayed permanently in the

Hecht museum. For the first time, Oscar Ghez's entire collection has been professionally photographed in color, with the hope that these works will be more widely seen and appreciated.

In his poem to "Our Martyred Artists," Marc Chagall writes of all of "the unachieved years which they had saved up and looked forward to for fulfilling their dreams" (Fig. 13). Inasmuch as we mourn, with him, all "their unpainted pictures," we celebrate each work left behind as a survivor and, in the words of the poet and Holocaust survivor Paul Celan, a "message in a bottle sent out in the – not always greatly hopeful – belief that somewhere and sometime it could wash up on land, on heartland perhaps."<sup>36</sup>

## Notes

1. This visit is recounted in Albert Speer's memoirs, *Inside the Third Reich* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970). Hitler mused to Speer "Wasn't Paris beautiful? But Berlin must be made far more beautiful. In the past I often considered whether we would not have to destroy Paris," he continued with great calm, as if he were talking about the most natural thing in the world. 'But when we are finished in Berlin, Paris will only be a shadow. So why should we destroy it?' With that, I was dismissed."
2. All quotes about the Eiffel Tower are cited in Barry Bergdoll, Introduction, *The Eiffel Tower* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2003), p. 12.
3. Alena Yavorskaya, <http://magazines.russ.ru/october/2005/7/as36-pr.html>.
4. In a letter to Sergei K. Markovskiy, 1915, quoted in *Marc Chagall - the Russian years 1906 - 1922*, ed. Christoph Vitali (Schnirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, 1991), p. 149.
5. Feder to Amshey Nurenberg, 19/5 [1928]. Nurenberg archive, Kirovograd Regional Art Museum.
6. René Barotte, Introduction to the catalogue of Epstein's exhibition at the Galerie Berri-Raspail in 1946.
7. In 1828, Paris began lighting the Champs-Élysées with gas lamps. It was the first city in Europe to do so, and so earned the nickname "La Ville-Lumière" or The City of Light.
8. These are all descriptions given by Harold Rosenberg in his 1940 essay "The Fall of Paris," republished in *The Tradition of the New* (New York: Perseus Books Group, 1994). See also "Paris qui est la capital de la Grande République internationale des lettres et des arts." Serge Romanoff, 1921, quoted in *L'École de Paris, la part de l'Autre, 1904-1929* (Paris: MAMVP, 2000).

9. Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia," (1929) *Selected Writings, 1927-1930* Volume 2: Part 1, eds. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).
10. On June 18, 1940, Paul Valéry wrote "In the space of several days, we have lost all certainty. We are on a terrifying and irresistible slope. Nothing that we could fear is impossible..." quoted in Robert O. Paxton, Olivier Corpet and Claire Paulhan, *Collaboration and Resistance: French Literary Life under the French Occupation*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (IMEC and New York: Five Ties Publishing, 2010), p.3.
11. Benjamin Fondane, *Le Mal des fantômes* (Paris: Verdier, 2006). Fondane was arrested on March 7, 1944 and deported to Auschwitz on the 30th of May, 1944. *Le Mal des fantômes* consists of five books of poems written while he was interned in Drancy and sent to his wife.
12. On the Vichy Anti-Jewish Statutes, see Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York, 1981), pp. 3-5, 12-13, 99-100; Susan Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French and the Jews* (New York, 1993), pp. 56-61. For two contemporary documents see "Vichy to Penalize Jews for Defeat," (*New York Times*, October 18, 1940), p. 5. For the French text of the statute, see "Le Statut des juifs français," *Le Temps* (October 19, 1940), p. 3. Vichy's two Jewish statutes defined Jews in racial terms as anyone having three or more grandparents "of the Jewish race" (irrespective of whether that person had converted) or two Jewish grandparents if married to a Jew.
13. Michèle Cone, *Artists under Vichy: A Case of Prejudice and Persecution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 13.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p. 15. René Gimpel, a Jewish art dealer joined a Resistance network, was caught, deported and died in 1945.
16. Robert Paxton, Olivier Corpet, and Claire Paulhan, *Collaboration and Resistance: French Literary Life under the French Occupation*, p. 299.
17. The roundup was originally set to take place from July 13-15, which included Bastille Day, the French national holiday. It was moved to July 16 to 17. Although German authorities had originally agreed to exempt children under the age of 16, French Prime Minister Pierre Laval suggested for "humanitarian" reasons that children be arrested with their parents, unless a family member remained behind to care for them. Four thousand children were among those arrested in Paris. For more information, see also the book of Claude Lévy and Paul Tillard, *La Grande Rafle du Vel d'Hiv (16 juillet 1942)* (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1992).
18. For a list of all the transports and their itineraries, consult [http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/he/about/institute/deportations\\_catalog\\_details.asp?country=France](http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/he/about/institute/deportations_catalog_details.asp?country=France)
19. "Operation Reinhard (Einsatz Reinhard)," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., n.d., <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005195>.
20. Quoted in Olga Szymaska's important article "Tell Them To Paint Scenes From the Ghetto," August 18, 2016, The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw. <http://www.jhi.pl/en/blog/2013-08-18-tell-them-to-paint-scenes-from-the-ghetto>
21. Ibid.
22. [https://portal.ehri-project.eu/units/il-002798-o\\_62-545](https://portal.ehri-project.eu/units/il-002798-o_62-545). Zydzowska Komisja Historyczna. Borwicz Michal. Jews' Diaries, sygn. 302/27; Jewish Historical Institute Archives. *Memoirs of Samuel Puterman from the Warsaw Ghetto*. Ed. Michal Grynberg (Warsaw, 1988).
23. Ibid.
24. He was arrested in a tiny mountain village, Saint Martin de Fénoillet, and deported in 1943 to Drancy, from which he was immediately sent to the Lublin-Majdanek extermination camp in Poland. He died on his arrival there, barely surviving the dreadful trip. He was 65. Ascher also died in Majdanek.
25. Léon Werth, *Déposition, Journal 1940-1944* (Paris: Grasset, 1946) cit. in *Collaboration and Resistance: French Literary Life under the French Occupation*, p. 22. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* is dedicated to Werth, "his best friend in the world" who "lives in France where he is hungry and cold."
26. Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Random House, 1989), p. 31.
27. "Evacuation of the Jews," From a Speech by Himmler Before Senior SS Officers in Poznan, October 4, 1943, *Documents on the Holocaust, Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union*, (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1981), Document no. 161, pp. 344-345.
28. Nathalie Kraemer's extended family was completely looted during the war. Raymond, Nathalie's first cousin, had gone into hiding in Cannes, in the South of France. His home and business near the parc Monceau was taken over by the Nazis for use as the headquarters of the anti-Semitic newspaper, *Le Pilon* and his extensive collection of fine antiques were pillaged. After the war, thousands of pieces of looted art were recovered, in salt mines and in the palaces of Nazi officials, but so much was never reclaimed. These were paintings whose owners could not be found, many of whom perished in the Holocaust. The fate of this art varied. Most pieces were auctioned off in 1954, while others, those deemed important to France's artistic heritage — canvases and drawings by the likes of Daumier, Degas and Dürer — were reincorporated into the country's national collections. These works can be distinguished by three letters on the accompanying wall text: MNR, for Musées Nationaux Récupération, France's anonymous painting collection.
29. Claude Lanzmann, preface to *Montparnasse départé*, ed. Sylvie Buisson (Paris: Musée du Montparnasse, 2005), p. 11.
30. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 57.
31. See Eunice Upton's important article on Felix Nussbaum. "Felix Nussbaum in Paris," *Zeek* (April 28, 2014). Online at <http://zeek.forward.com/articles/117108/>
32. As quoted by Marguerite Duras, *La Douleur* (Paris: Éditions P.O.L., 1985), p. 41.
33. Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991). Hasia Diner, "Origins and meanings of the myth of silence" and Laura Jockusch "Breaking the silence: the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine in Paris and the writing of Holocaust history in liberated France" both in David Cesarani and Eric J. Sundquist, (eds.), *After the Holocaust: Challenging the Myth of Silence* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).
34. On the CDJC, see Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe* (London: Oxford University Press, 2012).
35. Novitch's mission began in the French internment camp in Vittel where she met a Polish Jewish writer from Warsaw named Yitzchak Katznelson whose wife and child had been murdered in Treblinka. Katznelson instructed Novitch to "collect the tears of the Jewish people," which was the impetus for her mission to collect art and artifacts from the Holocaust.
36. Paul Celan, letter to his editor Hans Bender, May 1960, quoted in John Felstiner, *Paul Celan, Poet, Survivor, Jew* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 155.



*Quand même [Despite Everything], May 21, 1942, ink and watercolor on paper, 14x19 cm. Signed and dated lower right: "Gotko, 1496" [Gotko's camp number]. © Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, donated by Isis Kischka.*

## Acknowledgments

This was collaborative project, with all of the challenges and pleasures such work entails. Our research took us to public archives and museums (such as the CDJC and GFH) and to private, personal archives (of the descendants or extended family). From Paris, to Geneva, to Moscow and back to Israel, we relied on a long list of museum curators, scholars and collectors for their guidance and encouragement. Claude Ghez del Castelnuovo, Oscar's son, needs to be singled out for his assistance in offering important information on his father, the collection and its provenance. This publication is indebted to his generosity. At Haifa University, we are immensely grateful for the tireless support of Arieh Kochavi and Yael Granot-Bein in the Weiss Livnat International MA Program in Holocaust Studies which is offered in collaboration with the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem and the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum. Shunit Marmelstein, director of the Hecht museum, assisted with all aspects of the preparation, including last minute editing. Perri Harel, Shay Levy, Relly Yurist and Rona Perkis all provided assistance and access to the storage room and university archives. For their time and expertise, we would like to thank Eliad Moreh-Rosenberg and Michal Feiner-Rosenthal at Yad Vashem, Anat Bratman-Elhalel at the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, Rachel Koskas, Pascal Concordia and Nicholas Feuille at the Musée

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# Naum Aronson



The Russian Jewish sculptor Naum Lvovich Aronson was born in the village of Kreslavka, near Vitebsk in Belarus (formally under the Russian empire and currently a part of

Latvia), to a large, traditional Hassidic family engaged in commerce. One of ten children, Aronson demonstrated artistic talent from an early age. In 1889, at age 17, he left home to enroll in the Vilna drawing school run by Ivan Trutnev, but returned home after only ten months due to anti-Semitic sentiments expressed by the school's program director and the other students. He applied to the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, but was denied access due to the law of the Pale of Settlement, which prevented Jews from living outside the Pale's geographical borders.

In 1891, Aronson moved to Paris to attend the *École des Arts Décoratifs*. He also studied with Professor H. Lemaire and at the *Académie Colarossi*, a private art school. He wrote in his diaries, "I arrived in Paris without any knowledge of the language...but with great

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energy and hopes that I would not die of hunger."<sup>1</sup> After returning to Russia for his military service (1894-6), Aronson began exhibiting at various salons in Paris to critical acclaim. In 1900, he received a gold medal at the Paris Exposition Universelle, and in 1905 he won a gold medal at the International Exhibition in Liège. Over the next 50 years, he made Paris his home, with a studio on

the rue Vaugirard in Montparnasse, which became a meeting place for Jewish artists like Marc Chagall, Chaim Soutine, and Mané-Katz. He participated in charity events and public meetings benefiting Jewish artists and became a father figure and mentor for the young Russian and Polish émigrés and refugees who moved to Paris in the early 20th century (among them Jacques Cytrynovitch),

helping them assimilate to their new home and encouraging their work. Aronson's Jewish identity was frequently expressed in his work, with sculptures that depict biblical subjects and Jewish themes, such as the *Kiddush Hashem* monument, which commemorated the Kishinev Pogrom of 1903, and *Bar Mitzvah* and *The Prophet*. His bronze sculpture of the biblical figure Salome belongs to this category as well (Fig. 1).

Salome is referred to in the New Testament as having been exploited by her mother Herodias to dance in front of her stepfather, King Herod, in order to request and receive the head of Saint John the Baptist on a platter. Palpably influenced by Auguste Rodin, Aronson's *Salome* breaks with convention. Traditionally, in the history of art, Salome is portrayed as a femme fatale as in Henri Regnault's Orientalist painting of 1870, in Gustave Moreau's symbolist painting *The Apparition* (1874-6), and in Lovis Corinth's or Franz von Stuck's gruesome 1900 and 1906 versions, respectively: a sexy, dangerous temptress, holding the severed head of Saint John the Baptist, still dripping with blood.<sup>2</sup> Aronson offers a different interpretation: Salome appears not as a seductive dancer exhibiting her body, but as a woman closed

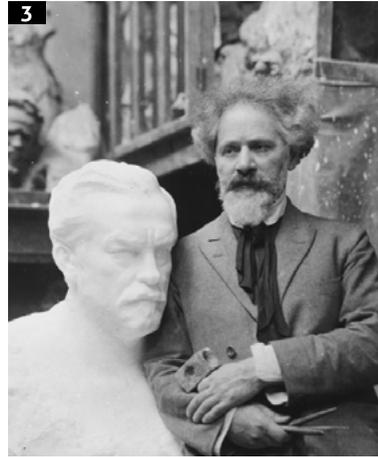


Fig. 1. *Salome*, bronze, 26x21x30 cm

Fig. 2. Basalt model of *Salomé* in Aronson's studio in Paris, undated archival photo.

© United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Genya Markon

Fig. 3. Sculptor Naum Aronson poses next to his sculpture of Louis Pasteur, c. 1920.

© United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Genya Markon

in on herself, in pain and mourning. The implacable, decadent executioner has been recast as more sympathetic, more conflicted. Aronson focuses on her psychological pain and her vulnerability if not remorse. (The Jewish Polish painter Maurycy Gottlieb had also portrayed her as penitent, locked in loving embrace in his *Salome with the Head of Saint John* of 1877–8.) *Salome* was displayed centrally in his studio (Fig. 2). Aronson created two other versions of *Salome*: *Douleur de Salome* (The Sorrow of *Salome*), the basalt version (47x65x44 cm), was created and exhibited in 1924 and then acquired by the French state, as part of the permanent collection of the Musée de Luxembourg; in the other version, owned by Oscar Ghez's Petit Palais, the face of John the Baptist emerges out of the stone, at the base of her foot.

Aronson is best known for his monumental stone busts and bronze casts of prominent political, literary, and scientific figures such as Lenin, Tolstoy, Rasputin, Beethoven, George

Washington, Chopin, and Berlioz. He traveled to Russia in 1901 to make a bust of Leo Tolstoy and was commissioned by the state to create a tribute to the French chemist and microbiologist Louis Pasteur on the centennial of his birth in 1922 (Fig. 3). Aronson had a unique ability to capture the particular physical characteristics and idiosyncrasies of the personalities he sculpted. In 1937, he received France's greatest distinction for a sculpture that he exhibited in the Paris World's Fair (Exposition Universelle): the Legion of Honor for his contributions to French culture and society. Only three years later, the French state would strip him of his rights and persecute him for being Jewish.

When the Nazis invaded France, Aronson and his wife, Helen, volunteered at a public refugee cafeteria called The Friendly Center, from the start of the war until their evacuation.<sup>3</sup> When the situation became dire, they fled to Portugal with Chagall and then to the United States with the help of aid from HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant

Aid Society) and JDC (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee). One American magazine even greeted his arrival in America with an article entitled 'Hitler's Latest Gift to America.'<sup>4</sup> They settled in New York City, where Aronson died a few years later in 1943.

Before fleeing, Aronson hid much of his work in the basement of the Louvre for safekeeping. Once Paris was occupied, the Nazis confiscated a large portion of the Louvre's artworks with the intention of transferring them to Germany. Aronson's sculptures were among many works loaded on trains headed to Berlin; however, French railroad engineers working with the French Resistance rerouted the train, and its contents were transferred to a children's home in Les Andelys, a village 80 kilometers from Paris, where Jewish Holocaust orphans were placed after the war. The rest of Aronson's work was auctioned off; little of it survives today.

Alexa Asher

## Notes

1. Musya Glants, "Naum Aronson: About My Childhood. Portraits of My Family. My Home, in *Experiment Centrifuge: Memoirs, Letters and other Documents from the Era of Russian Modernism 1* (1995): p. 13. On Aronson, see also Naum Aronson: *Early Jewish Sculpture* (Petach Tikva: Yad Labanim Museum of Art, 2001) and "Naum Aronson Collection." Petach Tikva Museum. <http://www.petachtikvamuseum.com/en/Collection.aspx?eid=1092>.
2. See Rosina Neginsky, *Salome: The Image of a Woman Who Never Was; Salome: Nymph, Seducer, Destroyer* (Newcastle Cambridge Scholars, 2013). In addition to Gustave Klimt, the story of *Salome* was taken up by Oscar Wilde who wrote a play on the story of *Salome*; Richard Strauss turned it into an opera (1905). A year later, the dancer and choreographer Maud Allan produced a show called *Vision of Salome* in Vienna, which featured a notorious version of the *Dance of the Seven Veils*, Wilde's title for the dance of *Salome* before Herod, included in Strauss's opera. The name quickly became a euphemism for a striptease, and the growing popularity of *Salome* as an erotic figurehead was named *Salomania*.
3. Glants, "Naum Aronson," p. 9.
4. Ibid., p. 7. M. Dluzoovski, "Hitler's Latest Gift to America," *The Jewish Pictorial Voice* (January-February 1943): 7.



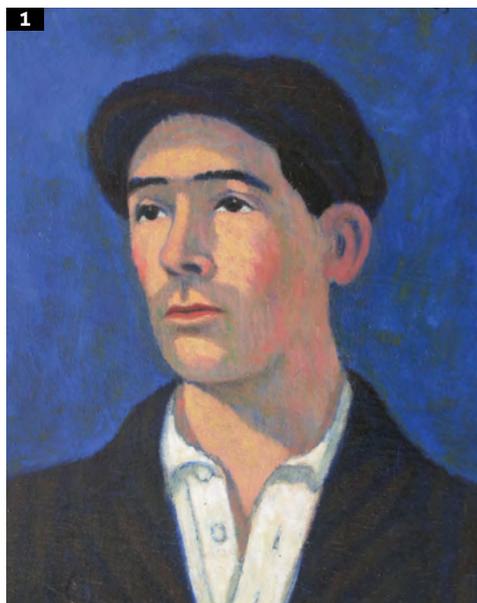
1884-1943

# Georges Ascher



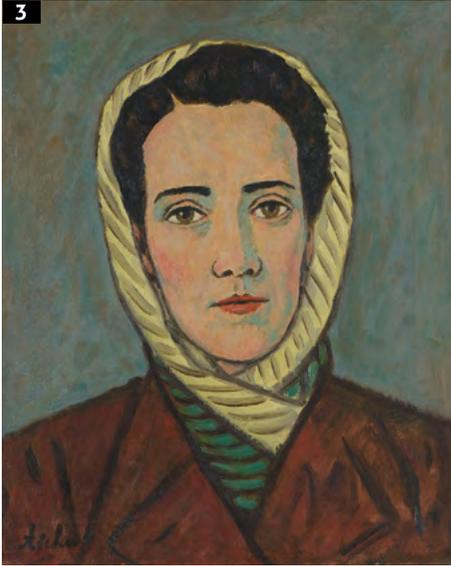
Georges Ascher (Jerzy Aszer) was the cousin of artist Roman Kramsztyk (see page 64). The only photograph we have of Georges Ascher, which was reproduced in Hersh Fenster's yizkor book

*Our Martyred Artists* (1951), shows a handsome man formally dressed in a bowtie and suit jacket. In his *Self Portrait* he appears confident and debonair (Fig. 1). Born in Warsaw, Ascher began his formal education at the Warsaw School of Fine Arts in 1904. After completing his degree, he traveled to Germany to study architecture at the Technische Hochschule of Berlin from 1905 to 1909. He participated in the work on the reconstruction of the Wawel Castle. Between 1914 and 1918 he worked at an architectural firm in Warsaw and Lvov. During the Polish Soviet War (1919-1921), he served in the Polish army on the coast of Pilsudski. He was wounded in 1920 during the fighting in Lvov, and following his discharge and military decoration, Ascher returned to Warsaw where he began his career as an architect and married Rayzle Broive. Could *Woman with a Scarf* be a portrait of Rayzle (Fig. 3)?

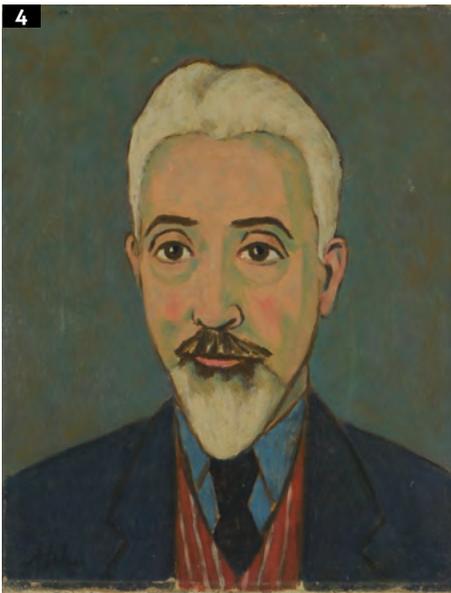


In 1925, Ascher and his wife moved to Paris where he dedicated himself to painting. As a member of the École de Paris, he exhibited his work in the Salon d'Automne (1928, 1932, and 1937), the Salon des Tuileries (1936), and in private commercial venues such as the Galerie Zak in 1934.<sup>1</sup> In 1937, the renowned Polish artist and teacher Jozef Pankiewicz (1886-1940) encouraged many of his Polish friends and students to move with him to the





small seaside town of La Ciotat in the south of France. Accompanied by his wife and daughter Suzanne, Ascher relocated and began focusing on his painting (Fig. 3). Both traditional and modern, his still lifes look at once to Cézanne's simple objects and shapes and to Matisse's love of pure color and decorative patterns (Fig. 2). The six landscapes in the Ghez Collection portray sun-drenched landscapes in rich, saturated colors depicting the rural life of the area: country lanes, swimming pools, a town square, bridge, olive trees (Figs. 6-11).



*Birdcage*, one of the three still lifes in the Ghez collection, can be viewed as a reaction to Jewish life under Nazi occupation (Fig. 5). Forced to view the world from behind gates and unable to communicate with the outside world, this small caged bird embodies the helpless plight of the Jews. Isolated and unable to escape its captivity, the bird is likely a metaphor for Jews trapped in hiding, in the ghettos, and concentration camps. A round photograph of a young child hanging above the cage may have symbolized his own daughter. Hanging above it, we see another partial photograph, which appears to be a family of three: mother, father, and child, a family not unlike Ascher's own. Metal gates separating the bird from the people in the photographs



Fig. 1. *Self Portrait*, c. 1920, oil on canvas, 47x38.5 cm.

Archives Christophe Zagrodzki

Fig. 2. *Still Life with Tomatoes*, oil on canvas, 38.5x47 cm

Fig. 3. *Woman with a Scarf*, oil on canvas, 41x33 cm

Fig. 4. *Portrait of a Man*, oil on canvas, 41.5x33 cm

Fig. 5. *The Birdcage*, oil on canvas, 81x65 cm

seem to portray the forced separation of Jewish families during the Holocaust, a remarkable illustration of how Ascher must have felt during this time.

In November 1942, the Nazi military occupied the Vichy government's Free Zone of Southern France. Beginning in January 1943, the SS launched Operation Sultán, sweeping through Marseille and conducting brutal roundups of Jews who had sought refuge in the former Free Zone. Ascher, along with over 1,000 foreign Jewish men aged 16 to 65, was arrested and sent to the Gurs internment camp, roughly 600 kilometers from La Ciotat. During his arrest, the works in his studio were destroyed.



Fig. 6. *Forest Landscape*,  
oil on canvas, 27x35 cm

Fig. 7. *Landscape with Bridge*,  
oil on canvas, 27x35 cm

Fig. 8. *Landscape with Houses*,  
oil on canvas, 26.5x35 cm

Fig. 9. *Café Balcony*,  
oil on canvas, 46x62 cm

Fig. 10. *The Pool*,  
oil on canvas, 46x53 cm

Fig. 11. *Landscape*,  
oil on canvas, 61.5x50 cm

On March 2, 1943, at age 59, Ascher was deported from Gurs on convoy no. 50. There were 770 men on this transport, including other well-known foreign-born artists and writers, such as German painter and sculptor Otto Freundlich. En route, the convoy picked up an additional 100 or so deportees from Drancy, among them 66 women. Convoy no. 50 left

Drancy on March 4 to its final destination, Majdanek. Ascher's wife Rayzle, age 51, and daughter Suzanne, age 15, were interned at the Les Milles camp near Marseille. On October 7, 1943, they were deported from Drancy to Auschwitz-Birkenau on convoy no. 60. Another woman who had taken refuge in the south of France was present on the same transport: the

artist Charlotte Salomon, who was five months pregnant with her own child. Few of Ascher's works survived the war. Two paintings belong to Yad Vashem. With six of Ascher's paintings, the Oscar Ghez Collection at the University of Haifa is the largest-known collection of his works.

Alexa Asher

#### Note

1. Galerie Zak was opened in 1928 and run by Jadwiga Zak, who had been married to Eugeniusz (Eugène) Zak, a prominent Polish painter of Belarusian and Jewish origins who died prematurely in 1926. Jadwiga and her son were gassed in Auschwitz.



# Abraham Berline



Abraham Joseph Berline was born on October 5, 1894 in Nizhyn, Ukraine, and murdered by the Nazis 46 years later in Auschwitz, Poland. Very few biographical details are known about him.<sup>1</sup>

The son of Leib Berline and Hana Kaganoff, he left home in 1912, at the age of 18, to study art at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. There, he supported himself as a cabdriver while exhibiting in the Salon d'Automne and the Salon des Indépendants, as well as in private galleries (Fig. 1). Dates, places, and profession cannot paint a picture of one's biography; the essence of Berline's personality remains a mystery. What was his family like? Who was his first love or best friend? What made him laugh or cry? What were his fears, beliefs, and interests? What made a young Jewish teenager leave the world he knew behind and seek a new life, as an artist, in a new world?

The decision to start his artistic education in one of the most conservative places in Paris, the École des Beaux-Arts, hints that Berline sought a traditional background before entering



the world of modernism. Unfortunately, the loss of his pre-Shoah works makes it impossible to track his development and progress from Nizhyn, the city of the "Middle Chabad Rabbi," to the École des Beaux-Arts

and then to the modernist salons. One boldly colored landscape survives from this period in the collection of the Yad Vashem art museum (Fig. 2).

In May 1941, 29 years after arriving in Paris, Berline was arrested in the Billet Vert operation and interned as a Russian national in the Royallieu-Compiègne camp (more commonly known as Frontstalag 122), 50 miles north of Paris. During his time in Compiègne, he continued to produce work, some of which was exhibited in a group show he organized with Jacques Gotko (see page 39).

The pastels and paintings he created during his internment offer a glimpse of his inner world. In this chaotic, cruel, and unjust place, he drew lively, colorful, pastoral landscapes as well as touching portraits. This ability to rise above reality corroborates Berline's comrades' description of him as optimistic, joyful, and kind. His large oil painting *The Exit* depicts the exit of the camp in Compiègne (Fig. 3). The sunny, rural scene invites the viewer to enter. The quaint, white gate seems like a harmless décor rather than a very real and threatening barrier. The juxtaposition between the dark nature of the place and the impressionistic-like atmosphere and technique forces the onlooker to take part in the scene and wonder, together with Berline, about the beauty of nature and the ugliness of the human soul.

*The Exit* is dedicated in the lower right corner of the painting to Isis Kischka, an artist of Jewish-Ukrainian origin who was interned in Compiègne with Berline and miraculously survived the camps.<sup>3</sup> In December 1941, Berline was transferred to Drancy, where he was interned for over nine months. On July 16, 1942, the day of the massive Vel d'Hiv roundup, Kischka drew a portrait of Berline in Drancy, which he donated to the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, along with many other works

Berline made while imprisoned (Fig. 4 and 5).<sup>2</sup>

Berline was deported to Auschwitz, along with his wife Doucia, on convoy no. 32, which left Drancy on Rosh Hashanah, the second of Tishrei, 5703 (September 14, 1942).

Herut (Tutti) Eliashiv





Fig. 1. Photo of artist, Hersh Fenster Archives. © Musee d'art et d'histoire du Judaisme Paris

Fig. 2. Suburban Landscape, n.d., oil on canvas, 73x60 cm © Yad Vashem Art Museum

Fig. 3. Isis Kischka, Portrait of Abraham Berlin, 1941-2. © Ghetto Fighters' House Museum donated by Isis Kischka

Fig. 4. The Exit, 1942, oil on canvas, 50x61 cm

Fig. 5. Compiègne, 1941-2, mixed media. © Ghetto Fighters' House Museum donated by Isis Kischka

## Notes

1. Hersh Fenster, *Undzere Farpaynikte Kinstler* (Paris 1951), pp. 39-40.
2. Five of Berlin's landscapes and one portrait are in the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum. Additional work is in the Mémorial de l'Internement et de la déportation, Camp de Royallieu, Compiègne, France.
3. Pnina Rosenberg, "Isis Kischka (1908-1973)," *Learning About the Holocaust Through Art*, n.d., <http://art.holocaust-education.net/explore.asp?langid=1&submenu=200&id=29>.



1893-1942

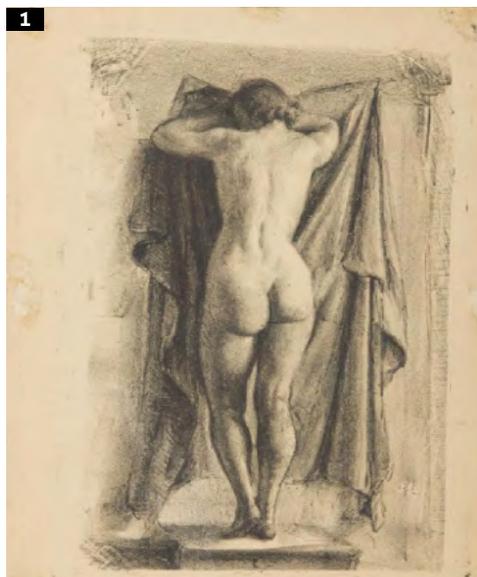
# Jacques Cytrynovitch



Jacques Cytrynovitch or Citrinovitch (Jakub Cytrynowicz) was a sculptor, painter, and draftsman. He born in Odrzywol, a small village near Łódź, Poland and received a traditional Jewish education in a Heder.

From 1914 to 1916, he

studied at the private School of Fine Arts (SSP) in Łódź led by painter Piotr Szumański. During World War I, he worked in a coal mine in Germany. As a member of the Spartakusbund organization, he participated in the November 1918 revolution in Berlin. Following the war, he moved to Paris in 1920 in response to a long-standing invitation by Naum Aronson, whom he had met before the war. In addition to working for Aronson, he studied with the sculptor Émile Antoine Bourdelle, whose studio was turned into the Académie de la Grande Chaumière during this period. Favored by many émigrés and refugees (among them artist Henri Epstein), the Académie de la Grande Chaumière had very low fees, which did not have to be paid in advance, and it avoided the strict academic rules of the École des Beaux-Arts in



favor of avant-garde experimentation. At the time of his deportation, Cytrynovitch listed his place of residence as 18 rue Antoine Bourdelle, which had been Bourdelle's studio before his death in 1929 and today home to the Bourdelle Museum.

Cytrynovitch regularly exhibited his work in the Salon d'Automne and the Salon des Tuileries, as well as in various galleries, including the

Salon Henri Brendée in Zurich in 1929 as part of the *Jewish Artists of Our Time* exhibition. Throughout his career, he kept to conventional subjects, focusing primarily on portraits, female nudes, and animals. Stylistically, his work is traditional, idealizing, and heavily indebted to classicism (Fig. 1). He favored clean lines, smooth surfaces, traditional themes, and motifs (Fig. 2). *Young Girl Combing her Hair* in the Ghez Collection is a small bronze sculpture that depicts an intimate scene of a seated nude woman at her toilette and absorbed in her thoughts (Fig. 3).

In May 1941, Cytrynovitch was arrested at the demarcation border as he was trying to cross into the Free Zone. The old Hecht Museum records state only when he died. We now know that he was on convoy no. 5, which left the Beaune-la-Rolande transit camp on June 28, 1942. It was a reprisal convoy made up of 1,083 persons and the second transport to leave the camp heading for Auschwitz.<sup>2</sup> Adolf Eichmann had specified criteria for the transport: the first Jews to be deported were males under 55 years old who were able-bodied and fit for physical work. Jews of mixed marriages were not to be included. Upon their arrival on June 30, all the deportees were selected for slave



labor. Men received tattoos ranging from 42777 to 43780. Cytrynovitch lasted in the camp for less than a month. His Auschwitz death certificate was issued on July 27, 1942.<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Rachel Perry



Fig. 1. *Nude*, 1936, lithograph on paper, 37.6x26 cm

Fig. 2. *Nude*, pencil drawing.

© Ghetto Fighters' House Museum

Fig. 3. *Young Girl Combing her Hair*, bronze, 34.5x24.5x13 cm



### Notes

1. Renata Piatkowska. [http://www.jhi.pl/psj/Cytrynowicz\\_\(Cytrinovitch\)\\_Jakub\\_\(Jacques\)](http://www.jhi.pl/psj/Cytrynowicz_(Cytrinovitch)_Jakub_(Jacques))
2. <http://db.yadvashem.org/deportation/transportDetails.html?language=en&itemId=5092622>  
Accompanying him on the transport were three other men with the same last name: Raphael

Cytrynowicz and his sons Guy born 29/7/1924 (Tischler leirling) and Maurice 23/2/1927 (Schuler) who were also deported from Beaune-la-Rolande on Convoy no. 5, June 28, 1942 headed for Auschwitz. Their address is listed as 29 Buffon, Paris. Also residing at this address were Sarah Cytrynowicz (27/3/02) from Warsaw, a "mechanicienne fourreuse" and a schoolgirl named Annita (9/10/29). They were deported

nine months later on transport 53 to Sobibor, departing on 25/3/1943. It is not clear whether our artist was related to them.

3. This information is based on the *Death Books* (Sterbebücher) of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp. The 46 volumes record the deaths of almost 69,000 prisoners who were registered in the camp and who died between July 29, 1941 and December 31, 1943.

# Henri Epstein



Henri (Chaim) Epstein was born in Łódź, Poland, to a bookkeeper who died when Epstein was only five. He studied first in Jakub Kacembogen's drawing school, and then at the School

of Fine Arts in Munich (Fig. 1). He moved to Paris in 1912, although he had to return to Poland for mandatory military service. Back in the capital in 1913, he took up residence in the artist enclave of La Ruche, remaining until 1938 (Fig. 2). During these years, he also took classes at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. He was friendly with Chaim Soutine, Marc Chagall, Amedeo Modigliani, and Maurice Utrillo. Jacob Bilite's *Meeting of the Painters* of 1919 shows Epstein in the company of Chaim Soutine, Pinchus Kremegne and the Japanese painter Ayashi (Fig. 3). Léon Zamaron, the art collector and police commissioner, called Epstein "the most gifted painter of his time."<sup>1</sup>

Soon after he arrived in the capital, Epstein participated in the inaugural issue of the

Jewish art review *Makhmadim*, published at La Ruche in 1912. *Makhmadim* was the first journal devoted exclusively to Jewish art and written in Yiddish. Other contributors were Isaac Lichtenstein, Leo Koenig, and Marek Szwarc. Those who contributed believed in a certain "Jewish style" of art, but did not wish to



label themselves "Jewish artists." Epstein also did a fair amount of work as an illustrator for other publications, such as Gustave Coquiou's *Vagabondages* in 1921 and Pierre Bonardi's *Les Rois du Maquis* in 1926. He was known for incorporating humor and irony into his drawings.

The Ghez Collection has six portraits, two nudes, and one landscape by Epstein. *Clamart* was painted in 1912, a year after he arrived in Paris (Fig. 4). In it, we see Epstein experimenting with some of the new avant-garde styles popular in the capital: fauvist color and cubist deconstruction. *Clamart* is heavily indebted to Paul Cézanne's earthy palette and use of "passages," a technique he pioneered characterized by small, intersecting planes of patch-like brushwork. The small village of Clamart, in the southwestern suburbs of Paris, is framed on both sides by fall poplars, which lead our eye diagonally into the painting toward the angular, volumetric forms and geometric facets of the houses. Epstein's portraits consist of women in interior spaces, either posing or engaged in domestic activities, as in the cozy *Interior Scene*, in which a small girl sits on her mother's lap holding a doll, or the intimate concentration of the two girls sewing in *The Seamstress* (Figs. 11-12). These are quite different in tone and genre from the two nudes in the collection, which were painted in 1915 and 1918.

As a young aspiring immigrant artist, Epstein abandoned parochial Jewish themes and representations of the shtetl and tackled one



of the most revered genres in the history of art: the nude. Although Jewish artists had shied away from nudes in the 19th century, it became a staple of the avant-garde in the first two decades of the 20th century, adopted by many



Fig. 1. Munich Art Academy, c. 1905. Epstein is first figure standing on left. Damboise Family archives

Fig. 2. Artists at La Ruche around a copy of Makhmadim, Epstein stands second from left. 1912 or 1913. © Hersh Fenster Archives, Musée d'art et d'histoire du Judaïsme Paris

Fig. 3. Jacob Bilite, Portraits of Four Painters, 1917, oil on canvas, 97x130 cm. From left to right: Henry Epstein, Chaim Soutine, Pinchus Kremegne and Aysashi. © gift of Tel Aviv Museum of Art

Fig. 4. Clamart, 1912, oil on canvas, 65x81 cm

Fig. 5. Painting en plein air in Épernon, c. 1940. Damboise Family Archives

as they strove to break into the mainstream art world and its bohemian lifestyle.<sup>2</sup> As Paula Birnbaum has argued:

*Those who portrayed the nude recognized it as a means to establish themselves as professionals who had mastered one of art history's most ambitious genres. It was a subject deeply rooted in the sexual politics that drove the contemporary art market...*<sup>3</sup>

Epstein's nudes lack the libidinous eroticism of Georges Kars' nudes. They do not resemble the promiscuous prostitutes favored by the Bulgarian Jewish painter Jules Pascin (né Julius Mordechai Pincas), who was referred to as "the Prince of Montparnasse." Rather, they draw from precedents such as Matisse's fauvism (as seen in the *Blue Nude* of 1907), Van Dongen's

expressionism, and Modigliani's many sexually charged reclining nudes. (Modigliani's brother-in-law, André Hebuterne, would become Epstein's, too.) In *Nude*, the young model turns her naked body away from the male gaze in a protective gesture of false modesty or prudish reluctance, only exposing her profile and the curve of a covered breast (Fig. 9). In *Reclining Nude*, different in brushwork and pose, the heavysset model appears no-nonsense: casually, but provocatively facing the viewer with her legs splayed open, exposing her pubic hair (Fig. 10). She stares off dispassionately. Epstein was careful to paint shadows by her collarbone and use light to highlight her curved breasts, her stomach, and her legs.



On June 18, 1930, Epstein became a naturalized In 1927, Epstein married Suzanne Andree Lecellier, the stepdaughter of his close friend from La Ruche, the painter Georges Dorignac. He became a naturalized French citizen three years later, on June 18, 1930. With his new wife, he moved to Hanches, at the suggestion

of his patron, Dr. André Gilles.<sup>4</sup> In 1938 they moved to Épernon, in the Champagne region, where Epstein painted the local landscape, river banks, and peasants working in the fields en plein air (Fig. 5). During the summers, they vacationed on the shore in Brittany (Fig. 8). The Polish Jewish émigré Waldemar George published a monograph on him in 1932 which featured, on its cover, a portrait of Epstein by Modigliani dedicated to him (1918) (Fig. 7). In 1937, Epstein was instrumental in setting up the first Jewish artists' union.

Throughout the Occupation, Epstein hid on his farm near Épernon, eluding the authorities until February 23, 1944, only six months before Paris would be liberated, he was arrested by Gestapo agents. He was deported to Drancy the next day, despite the efforts made by his wife and friends to free him. The family believes he was denounced. Barely a week later, on March 7, 1944, Epstein was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau on convoy no. 69. He was murdered upon arrival, less than two months before D-Day and the Allied landings on the coast in Normandy.

Elana (Lani) Berman

Fig. 6. Naturalization certificate, June 18, 1930

Fig. 7. Waldemar George, Epstein (Paris: Éditions "Le Triangle," 1932), with drawing by Modigliani (1918) dedicated to Epstein

Fig. 8. Suzanne Dorignac, Georges Dorignac, Epstein in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques before 1925. Damboise Family Archives

Fig. 9. Nude, 1915, oil on canvas, 50x65 cm

Fig. 10. Reclining Nude, oil on canvas, 1915, 50x65 cm

Notes

1. Dan Frank and Cynthia Liebow, *Bohemian Paris: Picasso, Modigliani, Matisse and the Birth of Modern Art* (New York: Grove Press, 2003), p. 194. See also the important publication by Artur Winiarski, *Henri Epstein* (Warsaw: Villa la Fleur, 2015).
2. See Carol Duncan, "Virility and Domination in Early 20th Century Vangarde Painting," in *Artforum* (December 1973): 30-39.
3. Paula Birnbaum, *Women Artists in Interwar France: Framing Femininities* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2011), p. 163.
4. Epstein's relatives, Jean Paul Duc and Jacqueline Muller (the daughter of Geneviève Dideron) from Éperon contacted the Hecht museum. They believe the painting *Young Woman* (Fig. 14) in the Ghez Collection is of Geneviève Dideron, the daughter of Georges Dorignac and the step sister of Epstein's wife Suzanne. Dorignac married Céline Lacoste, a young widow, adopting her daughter Suzanne (1896). They had three daughters: Georgette (1902), Geneviève (1904), et Yvette (1905), all of whom married artists: Georgette to André Hebuterne (the brother of Modigliani's wife Jeanne) and Geneviève et Yvette to the sculptors Louis Dideron and Marcel Damboise (both members of the Academy of the Arts).

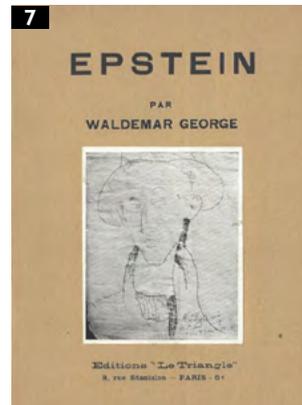




Fig. 11. Interior Scene, 1922, oil on canvas, 50x81 cm

Fig. 12. The Seamstress, oil on canvas, 73x60 cm

Fig. 13. Portrait of Woman in a Red Dress, oil on canvas, 50x38 cm

Fig. 14. Young Woman, oil on canvas, 46x33 cm

Fig. 15. The Red Dress, oil on canvas, 65x46 cm

Fig. 16. Young Seated Peasant Girl, oil on canvas, 75x50 cm

# Alexandre Fasini



Alexandre Fasini was born in Kiev, the eldest of four sons (Alexander, Michael, Ilya, Benjamin), who all went on to become artists and writers (Fig. 1). His mother died when he was young, and he was raised by his father, a bank clerk, in Odessa. Thin and elegant, he went by a number of pseudonyms: Al Fas, Alexander (Srul) Fainzilberg, Saul Feinsilberg, and Sandro Fazini. He studied at the Art School of Odessa, identifying as a futurist. Beginning in 1911, he regularly contributed drawings, vignettes, caricatures, and prints to the popular local journals *Crocodile* (1912-3) and *Theatre and Cinema*, and the newspaper *South Week* (1916-7). He also designed the covers for a number of futurist almanacs: *Silk Lights* (1914), *Silver Trumpets* (1915), *Auto in the Clouds* (1915), *The Seventh Veil* (1916), and *Miracle in the Desert* (1917) (Fig. 2a-b). In 1917, he created a series of cartoons for the satirical magazine *The Bomb*. In Odessa, he was friends with the painter Philippe Hosiasson (who moved to Paris in 1924) and the writer Isaac Babel.



Artists (which became the Association of Independent Artists in 1918), showing cubist paintings of Odessa landscapes and portraits (Fig. 3).<sup>1</sup>

Desperate to leave Russia, Fasini travelled to Constantinople in 1922, hoping to immigrate to the United States, where his uncles and grandmother lived. In a letter to his uncle Nathan, he asked for help in obtaining a visa, writing, "To choose Russia as a field of activity means to choose death" and adding, "Human intelligence is incapable of grasping what Russia is today. You have to see it for yourself and only then will you be able to understand."<sup>2</sup> Instead, he moved to Paris taking up residence in Montparnasse, 37 rue Daru, in the 14th arrondissement, and then the rue du Départ in the 15th.



Fig. 1. Family photograph, 1906. Fasini is standing in the center. Archives Ilya Krichevsky

Figs. 2a-b and 3. Examples of early work. c. 1909. Archives Ilya Krichevsky

Fig. 4. Still Life with Lemons, 1930, oil on canvas, 65.5x81 cm

Fig. 5. Composition, 1928, oil on canvas, 54x73 cm

Fig. 6. Still Life with Pears, 1928, oil on canvas, 50x65 cm

Fig. 7. Still Life with Lemons, 1930, oil on canvas, 65.5x81 cm

Over the next decade, Fasini exhibited his work in the Galerie d'Art Vavin, alongside Jean Lurçat and Picasso, as well as in the Salon d'Automne, the Salon des Tuileries, and the Salon des Indépendants.

Of all the artists in the Ghez Collection, Fasini is perhaps the least conventional. He did not belong to a particular school and worked in a range of styles and media. Even when he tackled a traditional still life (Figs. 4-7), he subjected it to a cubist deconstruction, playing with different paint textures and unusual colors. Most of his paintings in the Ghez Collection share a washed out, neutral grey palette, with a scraped-dry, almost brittle, surface. Like Giorgio de Chirico's *Pittura Metafisica*, Fasini's compositions are peopled by mannequin-like figures, elongated shadows, and deserted cityscapes (Figs. 12-17). It is perhaps not inconsequential that Fasini was in Paris in 1925 when de Chirico returned to the capital with his first wife, the Russian ballerina Raissa Gurievich, and began exhibiting his work to great acclaim. Although fragmentary and deliberately sketchy, Fasini's paintings



Fig. 8. *Composition with an African statuette*, photograph c. 1937. Archives Ilya Krichevsky

Fig. 9. *Ilf visiting Fasini, with wife Asa and their American cousin Blanche*, 1930s. Archives Ilya Krichevsky



Fig. 10. *Celestial Signs*, photographic series, 1930s. Archives Ilya Krichevsky

Fig. 11. *Celestial Signs*, photographic series, 1930s. Archives Ilya Krichevsky



are drawn with the precision of a draftsman, incorporating orthogonal grids and architectural features. Eerily ambiguous, Fasini's paintings evoke the dreamlike states favored by Surrealism.

Fasini surely would have known Adolphe Feder, who, like him, hailed from Odessa and also collected "primitive" art and naïve/outsider art, which he bought at flea markets on the outskirts of Paris (Fig. 8).<sup>3</sup> They had friends in common; Feder threw a reception for the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, whom Fasini knew through his brother, the journalist and writer Ilya Ilf (Iehiel-Leyb Arnoldovich Faynzilberg), when he visited Paris in 1923.<sup>4</sup> When Ilf visited Paris (in 1932 and again in 1936), the brothers were reunited (Fig. 9). The famous writer Ilya Ehrenburg references the brothers' meeting

and Fasini's attempt to explain modern art to his brother.<sup>5</sup> On this occasion, Ilf gave Fasini a Rolleiflex camera, which launched him in a new direction.

In the 1930s, Fasini turned to photography, taking on advertising projects to supplement his income. His commercial photography appeared regularly in the Paris weekly *Vu* under the alias Al Fas (alongside the work of Germaine Krull). But Fasini also created and exhibited more artistic photographs, most notably in the Paris International Exhibition of 1937. He was one of a growing number of émigré photographers who abandoned pictorialism for formal and technical experimentation, among them Man Ray (Emanuel Radnitsky), Brassai, Eli Lotar, Florence Henri, André Kertész, and Wols. His series

*Celestial Signs*, which was taken in and around Paris, uses dramatic angles to defamiliarize the familiar (Figs. 10-11).

In the fall of 1939, one month after the outbreak of World War II, Fasini married an artist named Rosa Silbermann (nicknamed Aza), like him a Jewish Russian émigré, in the century-old seaside resort of La Baule in southern Brittany. Their wedding was announced in the local newspaper *La Mouette* on October 8, 1939.<sup>6</sup> They were arrested together in Paris during the massive Vel d'Hiv roundup of foreign and stateless Jews in the metropolitan area on July 16, 1942. His work and collection of tribal art were requisitioned from his studio. After being incarcerated in the crowded stadium with 13,000 others for six days in the most deplorable conditions,

with no food, water, or sanitary facilities, the couple was sent to Drancy and from there immediately to Auschwitz on the same transport, convoy no. 9 on July 22, 1942. Both of them listed their profession as "artiste peintre" (artist painter).<sup>7</sup> The Auschwitz death registers at the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau list Fasini's wife as Rosa Finezilber (23.04.1889), née Silbermann in Jekaterinoslaw, Ukraine to parents Abraham and Berthe (Benissovitch), and married to Saul. Her date of death is listed as August 26, 1942, which means that she was not gassed in Birkenau, but survived in the camp for a month.<sup>8</sup> All of the deportees on this transport were selected for slave labor.<sup>9</sup> Fasini is not listed in the records; he may have died in the cattle car during transit.

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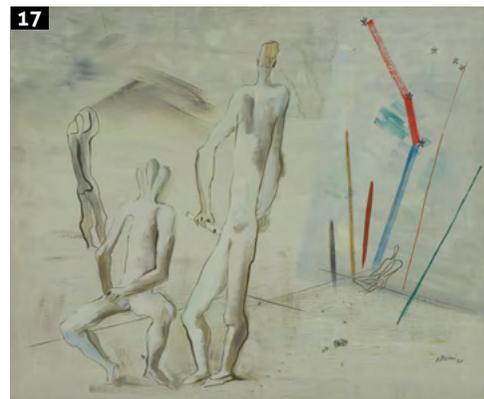
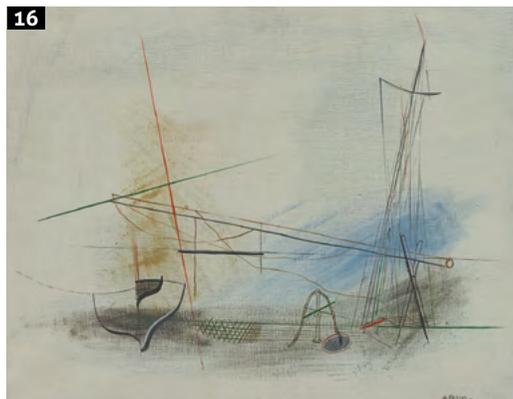


Fig. 12. Surrealist, 1930, oil on canvas, 46x65 cm

Fig. 13. Group of Men, 119x166 cm

Fig. 14. Composition with Figure, 1930, oil on canvas, 116x81 cm

Fig. 15. Apocalypse, 65x81 cm

Fig. 16. Marine Composition, 1930, 50x65 cm

Fig. 17. Destiny, 1930, 65x81 cm

## Notes

On Fasini's life and work, see in particular the recent book in Russian by his niece, Alexandra Ilf, *Fasini 1893-1944* [incorrectly dated as we now know he died in 1942] (Moscow, 2008) and the studies of A. Yavorskaya, *Sandro Fasini. 1893-1944*, Odessa Literary Museum (March 29 – January 1, 2003) and *Independent Fasini no. 1* (Moria: Almanac Odessa, 2004): 134-152.

1. In 1917 a Jewish paramilitary force was created in Odessa; it protected the city's Jews during the calamities following the Russian Revolution. Under Soviet rule in the 1920s, most Odessa Jews still engaged in trade and crafts. At the same time, many Jews were employed as industrial workers or state officials. In the 1920s and 1930s, all the large city synagogues were either closed or turned into clubs. Zionist activities were strictly prohibited.
2. Cit. in Michael Handelzalts, "America Beginners," *Haaretz*, (July 17, 2007). In the family archive of Alexandra Ilf, there are two letters by Fasini to his uncle Nathan Fainzilberg in the United States and Maria Nikolaevna Ilf (courtesy of AI Ilf).
3. Also from Odessa were Sonia DelaunayTerk, born Sonia Stein, Philippe Hosiasson, Jacques Gotko, Amshey Nurenberg, Sigismund Olesevich.
4. There is a photograph of Fasini's brothers, Ilya and Michael, at Mayakovsky's funeral.
5. Ilf died in 1937 from tuberculosis contracted during a 1935 trip with Petrov to "discover" America. They had been sent by the newspaper Pravda to work on a photographic travelogue of their impressions of the United States. It was accompanied by 166 photographs and published in an 11 part series in the Moscow monthly Ogonyok and later in a book, *One-Storyed America*. See Ilf and Petrov's *American Road Trip: The 1935 Travelogue of Two Soviet Writers*, trans. Anne O. Fischer and ed. Erica Wolf (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006).
6. <http://galilee.paysdelaloire.e-lyco.fr/histoire-et-memoire-la-shoah/finezilber-saul-nr--51996.htm>.
7. Fasini appears in the archives of the CDJC as Monsieur Saeil FINEZILBER dit FERSIM né le 24/12/1892 à KIEW. Déporté à Auschwitz par le convoi n° 09 au départ de Drancy le 22/07/1942. De profession Artiste peintre.
8. Auschwitz Death Registers, The State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau – Item ID 5390770.
9. The men were tattooed numbers ranging from 51504-52118; the women, 10664-11949.



1887-1943

# Adolphe Feder



Adolphe Aizik Feder was born and raised in Odessa, Ukraine, to a family of merchants. As a teenager, he joined the Bund, a socialist Jewish worker's organization, which supported the failed 1905 Russian Revolution, and was forced to flee the country as a result. In 1907, at age twenty, Feder moved to Berlin and then to Geneva to pursue a formal education in painting. He arrived in Paris in 1910, and

his self-portrait *Au bon vin de France*, with the French flags flying in the background, is from his first years in the country, when he was jubilant with the ideals of equality, liberty, and brotherhood that France offered (see Introduction). Between 1908 and 1911, he studied at the Académie Julien for two years and then the Matisse Studio for a year, along with many other foreign artists (Fig. 1). Already in 1912, he exhibited his work in the Salon d'Automne and thereafter became a member. In 1914, he served on the director's committee for the Académie Russe (Russian Academy). He frequented the cafes on the boulevards of Montparnasse and counted Mané-Katz, Modigliani, and Jacques Lipchitz among his friends.

His 1915 painting *Kiki with a Fan* depicts the famous icon Alice Prin, known as Kiki de Montparnasse, who was the face of Paris during the Roaring Twenties and its muse and queen (Fig. 3). A nightclub singer and actress, she slept with and modeled for many artists and photographers who belonged to the École de Paris, including the Polish-born artist Maurice Mendjizky as well as Man Ray, Fernand Léger, Moise Kisling, and Foujita. Feder depicts her on a balcony, framed by curtains,



which echo the fan she holds in her hand, with regular patterns of folded fabric. Kiki appears demure and respectable, with downcast eyes, so unlike the persona she projected of sexual abandon, avant-garde excess, and disregard for class or convention.

During these years, Feder amassed an impressive collection of art from Africa, Ethiopia, and the Middle East which he displayed in his studio at 6, rue Vercingétorix in the 14th arrondissement. He traveled extensively, including to Palestine in 1926-7, a trip that would be formative for him as an artist, generating new themes on Jewish subjects as well as landscapes of Jerusalem



and local Arab and Oriental types. *Mother and Child* and *Portrait of a Young Girl* may have been inspired by this visit (Figs. 4-5). In the former, the young mother wears a headscarf as she cradles her child. In the latter, the young woman wears a vest of bright colors and tassels, with exotic colors and patterns. The watercolor *Portrait of a Young Boy* captures a religious boy with a kippah on his head and long payot on both sides of his head (Fig. 11). But Feder also took on subjects with art historical importance, such as *The Bull Fighter*, which tackles a subject dear to the impressionist Édouard Manet (Fig. 7). Feder's bull fighter stands in the middle of the room, centered over a colorful rug, wrapped in a

Fig. 1. Matisse Academy, 1909

Fig. 2. Gustave Kahn, Adolphe Feder (Paris: Éditions le Triangle, 1929)

Fig. 3. Kiki with a Fan, oil on canvas, 129.5x80.5 cm

Fig. 4. Mother and Child, oil on canvas, 81x59 cm

Fig. 5. Portrait of Young Girl, oil on canvas, 61x46 cm

Fig. 6. Still-life with Rabbit, oil on canvas, 60x73 cm

Fig. 7. The Bullfighter, oil on canvas, 81x45 cm

Fig. 8. Child with a Doll, oil on canvas, 39x11 cm





lushly painted cloak of rich reds, blues, and gold. So, too, Feder establishes his worth as a painter by following in the footsteps of Chardin in his painting *Soap Bubbles*. Most of the works in the Ghez Collection are of figures, although there is the gorgeous *Still Life with Rabbit* in Feder's signature palette combination of French blues, muddy greens and browns (Fig. 6). The Jewish French critic Gustave Kahn wrote an important monograph on Feder (Fig. 2). In 1931, Feder helped design and execute the mural decorations of the pavilions of the Paris Exposition Coloniale. In the late 1930s, Feder married Sima Zagorodski, who had been born

in Russia and immigrated to Palestine with her family in 1923. Sima had moved to Paris in 1936 to pursue her studies in graphic design and book binding (Fig. 9).

When the Nazis invaded France, Feder joined a resistance group, but he was arrested by Pétain's militia on June 10, 1942 and then sent to the Cherche-Midi prison. On September 18, 1942, he was sent to Drancy. During his internment, he painted many portraits in watercolor of his fellow inmates, including his own *Self-Portrait with a Jewish Star*, so different in tone from his early exuberant self-portrait

(Fig. 10). Originally registered for convoy no. 36, set to depart on September 23, 1942, Feder was ultimately deported to Auschwitz five months later on convoy no. 48 on February 13, 1943. In his last letter to his wife, Feder wrote: "I am leaving tomorrow. I am in good spirits. I promise you not to get bogged down. We will see each other soon. Take all of my possessions. Everything that belongs to me belongs to you. Courage. Courage. Courage." Sima was apprehended a year later and interned in Drancy on January 22, 1944 under the matriculation number 12282. She was later transferred to Vittel and survived largely

because of her status as a British citizen from Palestine, then under the British Mandate. After the war, she returned to Paris and in 1957, Sima made important donations of Feder's work from Drancy to the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, Ein Harod and Yad Vashem.

Meredith Scott

### References

- Maximilian Gauthier, "Adolphe Féder," *L'art vivant* (October 1934).
- Gustave Kahn, *Adolphe Féder* (Paris, 1929).

# Jacques Gotko



Jacques Gotko (Yankeli or Yakov Gotkovski) was born in Odessa, Ukraine. Like many Jews from the region, he emigrated with his family in 1905, fleeing a wave of anti-

Semitic pogroms during which over 400 Jews were killed and many more raped, looted, and wounded.<sup>1</sup> Arriving in Paris, his father found employment as a steel worker in the Fiat factory, but died eight years later, leaving a widow and two small children. Gotko attended Marcel Gromaire's classes in painting at the École des Beaux-Arts and studied architecture and stage design for theatre and film. Upon completing his studies, he worked as an art director and set designer in the film industry while still exhibiting his paintings in prestigious Parisian galleries as well as in the Salon d'Automne (1927, 1937) and the Salon des Indépendants (1921–1923, 1927). In 1937, he settled in the region of Charente-Maritime on the southwest coast of France with his wife, a non-Jewish Frenchwoman, where he devoted



Fig. 1. Portrait of Gotko (artist unknown), charcoal drawing. © Ghetto Fighters' House Museum

himself full-time to his painting, creating landscapes and portraits, which were exhibited in a solo show at the Galerie Jeanne Castel in Paris in April 1939.

In May 1941, Gotko was rounded up in the Billet Vert operation, arrested as a Jew and foreign national, and sent to the Royallieu-

Compiègne camp, where he was interned first in the "Soviet" section of the camp and then transferred to the "Jewish" camp.<sup>2</sup> All of the works in his studio were destroyed. While in Compiègne, Gotko continued his artistic activities, taking portrait commissions in order to send funds to his wife, as well as drawing, printing, and painting scenes of daily life in the camp. The works he created there are among the most poignant visual documents of the transit camps, and they survived largely thanks to his close friends, the artist Isis Kischka and the historian and scientist Georges Wellers, who were interned in Compiègne with him. The dedication of Wellers' book *From Drancy to Auschwitz* reads, "In memory of my friends who perished or disappeared in deportation," among them "Jacques Gotkovsky, his mother, and sister."<sup>3</sup> Kischka donated many of Gotko's works, including his self-portrait, to the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, and the Yad Vashem Art Museum, where they are preserved today.<sup>4</sup>

*Fence of the Camp at Compiègne* is an unusually large oil painting, which represents Gotko's first (and only) winter in the camp as dreary, cold, and foreboding. Rendered in a palette of muted browns and greys and cool whites, a pair of faceless figures in long coats,

scarves, and hats stand at the gated entrance facing the viewer, as a group of prisoners files back into the camp toward the barracks, trekking through the muddy snow under the surveillance of the watch tower in the distance (Fig. 2). The focal point of the painting is the thick wooden gate and wire fence surrounding the camp, which dwarfs the men. Gotko also created watercolors of the camp (Fig. 3), as well as a series of linocuts using an old rubber tire he found in the camp (Fig. 4).<sup>5</sup> In the camp, he made a series of portraits of his fellow artist friends. As Georges Wellers recounts, "Gotko worked slowly and meticulously. If the 'model' captured his interest, he asked him to sit for him many times, each sitting lasting about two hours."<sup>6</sup> Together with Abraham Berline, Isis Kischka, and David Goychman, he organized an art exhibition in the camp in May 1942.<sup>7</sup> Held on the first anniversary of their internment in the camp and shortly before their departure to Drancy, the exhibition was advertised with hand-painted watercolor invitations entitled "*Quand même*" (*In Spite of Everything*), which depicted two tall glasses raised in a toast, within the barbed wire enclosure of the camp (Fig. 5). It was signed by each of the artist-participants, with the number given to them in the camp: Isis Kischka 787 122; A. Leon 2203;

Fig. 2. *Fence of the Camp at Compiègne*, 1942, oil on canvas, 51x62 cm

Fig. 3. *A View of the Compiègne Camp*, 1942, watercolor. © Ghetto Fighters' House Museum

Fig. 4. *Compiègne*, 1942, linocut on paper, 12.3x15.3 cm. Inscribed lower middle "Front Stalag 122, Compiègne." © Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, donated by Isis Kischka

Fig. 5. *Quand même [Despite Everything]*, May 21, 1942, ink and watercolor on paper, 14x19 cm. Signed and dated lower right: "Gotko, 1496" [Gotko's camp number]. © Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, donated by Isis Kischka

Fig. 6. *Flowers*, 1931, oil on canvas, 33x41 cm

Zladin 1381; Goychman 356; Curfist 1379; Rivinof 797; S. Max 388; Berliner 369; S. Schleifer 163; A. Berline 944; K. Kirschenstein 1152; Herzberg 1061.<sup>8</sup>

In September, Gotko was transferred to Drancy where he was reunited with his mother and sister who had been arrested near his home in Bordeaux.<sup>9</sup> Shortly thereafter, he witnessed their deportation to Auschwitz on November 11, 1942. Despondent, he followed them six months later, on July 18, 1943 on convoy no. 57.<sup>10</sup> Upon his arrival in Auschwitz, he was one of 369 men on the transport selected for labor. Registered and tattooed with prisoner number 130612, he was sent to one of the work squads, dying of typhus on January 2, 1944.<sup>11</sup> He was 44. He appears on the deportation list with no next of kin, as Jacques Gotkovski, "Maler" (painter).

Dr. Rachel Perry



### Notes

1. There were pogroms in Odessa in 1821, 1859, 1871, 1881, and 1905 and in Kishinev in 1903-5.
2. "Le parcours historique," Mémorial de l'internement et de la déportation, Camp de Royallieu, n.d., <http://www.memorial-compiegne.fr/parcours-historique.aspx>.
3. Georges Wellers, *Un juif sous Vichy* (Paris: Éditions Thirésias, Michel Reunaud, 1991) based

on *De Drancy à Auschwitz* (Paris: Centre de Documentation Juive contemporaine, 1946.). Wellers also gave testimony at the Eichmann trial in 1961. The only information we were able to find about his sister is a listing in the *Journal officiel de la République française*. Lois et décrets, vol. 60, no. 161 (July 8, 1928), in which she is referred to as "GOTKOVSKI, Renée, femme LATIF, née le 31 octobre 1895 à Odessa (Russie), demeurant à Paris".

4. See <http://art.holocaust-education.net/explore.asp?langid=1&submenu=205&searchtype=simple&searctopic=4&id=28>.
5. See Eliad Moreh-Rosenberg, *Art from the Holocaust*, Yad Vashem (Wienand Verlag, 2016), p. 112.
6. Wellers, *De Drancy à Auschwitz*, p. 182.
7. A variety of cultural events were held in the camp: courses, conferences, and concerts were



given in the barracks. The artist David Brainin drew a *Programme de concert pour le camp de Compiègne*, Frontstalag 122, 1942 (drawing in purple ink and crayons on graph paper), signed and dated, © CDJC. And another artist, Savely Schleifer (1881-1943), painted a poster for an exhibition in Compiègne in 1941-2, watercolor and ink on paper, 15.3x20.2 cm. Inscribed (in French) on the sign, upper middle: *Exposition, Front Stalag 122* [Exhibition, Front Stalag 122]. Inscribed (in Russian), lower right: To Kischka, my dear

friend. © Ghetto Fighters' House Museum, no. 1705. Donated by Isis Kischka, Paris, 1970.

8. On the back of the work, in the lower part, is an inscription in French: "Pour remettre à Mme. Salomon Kraczman, parvenir par un mot Mme Kraczman, 7 av. de l'Entent à Sartrouville, que tu viens la voir un Dimanche que to lui indiquera (vas-y avec Gaby), elle sera content et son mari aussi [to hand over to Mrs. Salomon Kraczman, 7 av. de L'Entenete in Satrouville. Please visit

her on a Sunday at her convenience (go there with Gaby). She and her husband will be very pleased." Another copy exists in the USHMM.

9. According to the page of testimony submitted to Yad Vashem, he was transferred to Drancy in November 1942.

10. Serge Klarsfeld's *Le Mémorial de la deportation* lists his date of deportation as July 18, 1943. In his autobiography, Georges Wellers suggests that he survived longer in Drancy because he

was married to a gentile. This may be one of the reasons why Gotko, who arrived in Compiègne at the same time as Abraham Berline, survived for over a year after him in Drancy.

11. "Transport 57 from Drancy, Camp, France to Auschwitz Birkenau, Extermination Camp, Poland on 18/07/1943," The International Institute for Holocaust Research, n.d., <http://db.yadvashem.org/deportation/transportDetails.html?language=en&itemId=5092628>.

# Nathan Grunsweygh



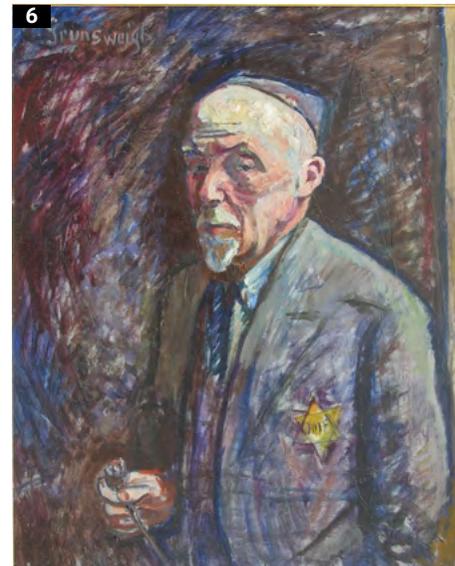
Until very recently, little was known of Nathan Grunsweygh. His fate, and that of his family, remained a mystery.<sup>1</sup> He was born in Krakow in 1880 and sometime between 1901 and 1915, he immigrated to Antwerp, Belgium. Before World War I,

he moved to Paris, settling in the western suburb of Le Vésinet with his wife, Fanny née Edinger, a French woman from Alsace. They had three children: David, Adéline (Rebecca), and Daniel.

Compared to the expressionist experimentation of his peers, Grunsweygh's style remained relatively conservative, insistently figurative, and focused on the traditional genres of landscape, genre painting, and still life, as evidenced in his beautiful painting *Still Life with Coffee Pot* with its jewel tones (Fig. 1). Unlike many of his fellow École de Paris painters, he shied away from depictions of erotic nudes or exotic locales. Instead, his work revolved around the landscapes of his neighborhood and

hometown, of Le Vésinet: the villas by the park, the lake, the Croissy bridge, and the Le Select cinema near the train station. Even after the war, and the terrible betrayal of his people, he continued to paint quaint and charming scenes of his adopted country.

In 1926, he had an exhibition at the Gallery Pierre of around twenty landscapes of the suburbs and still lifes to very favorable reviews. Gustave Kahn wrote of him in the *Mercure de France* on June 15, 1926, "Grunsweygh 'paints the suburbs of Paris with love.'" Critics noted his nuanced emotion, modesty, and honesty, calling him a sincere, conscientious, and knowledgeable artist.<sup>2</sup> *Corner in the Suburb* and *Village* typify these picturesque landscapes, one in the spring and the other in the fall with the trees denuded of leaves (Figs. 2-3). *Church with Red Roof* depicts a church in Le Vésinet located near the lake of Croissy, a short distance from his home on the allée Ste Marie (Fig. 4). An autumn-colored painting, the artist uses shades of orange, green, and brown. Even though he was an observant Jew, Grunsweygh, like Chaim Soutine, who depicted French churches, choirboys, and cathedrals, emphasizes the central role of the church in French culture and the provincial towns.



Many of Grunsweygh's paintings depict his family. There is a beautiful painting of his wife, Fanny, nursing one of their children and another portrait of her proudly showing off their baby. The Otto Schneid archives at the University of Toronto contain a postcard of a painting Grunsweygh made sometime in the 1920s of his family sitting around the beautifully set Sabbath table with a challah, candlesticks, wine, and a Kiddush cup. On the wall behind them hangs a sign reading

"Mizrach" (east) on one side (indicating the direction towards Jerusalem) and a framed portrait of an ancestor on the other. The boys and father have their heads covered with *kippot*; the father gives a *dvar torah* as the older son and mother follow along in their Hebrew books, and the youngest plays with Hebrew alphabet blocks.<sup>3</sup> This is a deeply affiliated, observant family. In the painting *Picnic in the Country* in the Ghez Collection, the same family sits outdoors on a beautiful day; the mother sits on a stool reading her newspaper or book (Fig. 5). The children sit and lie down on the grass around her in a secluded spot, surrounded by trees with a brook in the distance.

After the law requiring Jews in the occupied zone to wear a Star of David was enacted on May 29, 1942, Nathan Grunsweygh painted a self-portrait dressed formally in jacket and tie, with a yellow star prominently affixed to his lapel, the only bright color in an otherwise very monochromatic painting (Fig. 6). In his early 60s by this time, Grunsweygh's hair has whitened with age. His forehead is furrowed with worry, but he has not lost his faith; his head is still covered with a *kippah*. He gazes out directly at the viewer, holding



Fig. 1. Still Life with Coffee Pot, oil on canvas, 46x27 cm

Fig. 2. Village, oil on canvas, 46x61 cm

Fig. 3. Corner in the Suburb, oil on canvas, 50x61 cm

Fig. 4. Church with Red Roof, oil on canvas, 73x92 cm

Fig. 5. Picnic in the Country, oil on canvas, 54x73 cm

Fig. 6. Self Portrait, oil on canvas, c. 1942-44, Christophe Zagrodzki Archives



his paintbrush in his hand. Despite the circumstances, despite the persecution and danger, he is still painting. Nathan Grunswiegh, and his entire family, escaped deportation during the war. He died of old age in 1956 and was buried in the Montparnasse cemetery. He was survived by his wife and children and grandchildren who still live in the suburbs of Paris. His grandson lives in Israel.

Esther Halperin, Dr. Rachel Perry

## Notes

1. The literature has consistently held that he perished in 1943. Yet, over the past decade, a number of his paintings dating from after the war (1945-1948) have surfaced at auction. Our curiosity was piqued further when we could not locate his name on any of the deportation lists from France. We searched through the databases of Yad Vashem and the CDJC with no results. According to municipal records, he left Le Vésinet in 1936, but the trail ended there. We wondered: Did he die during a roundup or in an

internment camp? What became of his family? Perhaps they all went into hiding and survived, but never returned to claim their property? Did he immigrate to another country? By complete serendipity, our collection was photographed by a relative of Grunswiegh's who put us in touch with his son's wife and grandson who live just outside of Paris. During the war, his daughter Adéline worked at the Union Générale des Israelites de France (UGIF), the French Jewish Council established by the Germans on November 29, 1941. His son Daniel was a prisoner of war in Germany.

2. *Revue de la quinzaine, Mercure de France*, December 1931 and *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (July 1, 1926).
3. See Otto Schneid Papers--Photographs and Cards of Art Before 1939, University of Toronto. Grunswiegh. 16:3. [https://archive.org/details/ottoschneid16\\_3](https://archive.org/details/ottoschneid16_3).



1885-1943

# Karl Haber

Karl (also known as Tobias, Tévié, and Tuvia) Haber was born in Lutomiersk, Poland, a town just outside of Łódź. He belonged to a large family in poor circumstances.

He started his artistic career in Łódź as a model for artists but moved to Paris in 1927 to pursue a painting career. There he met the famous Jewish Polish art dealer Léopold Zborowski. Zborowski could make or break an artist's career; he was Modigliani's primary dealer, and also represented Soutine and Chagall. Although Haber did not impress Zborowski, the drawings he showed him by his younger brother, Aron (Haber) Beron, did, and the dealer invited him to come to Paris and sign a contract with him. During this period, Léon Weissberg (who was also represented by Zborowski) painted a portrait of Beron, which is in the Ghez Collection (Fig. 1). In his second year in Paris, Beron suffered an acute mental breakdown. Zborowski sent him to La Ciotat (where Georges Ascher lived and painted) to recover, and for a time he did manage to recover. However, after an incident in the Louvre, he was interned in the Sainte Anne psychiatric hospital in Paris.

The Zborowskis then had him transferred to a private hospital where he could continue to paint and send his work to his art dealer. Shortly thereafter, Beron returned to his parents' home in Łódź, but never recovered from his acute mental illness, dying of a self-



imposed hunger strike in 1930, at the age of 25. Haber followed him there, never to return to the French capital.

Haber's *Paris* is so completely unlike any other painting of the city by the

École de Paris painters: gloomy and dim, with strange ghostlike figures (Fig. 2). The canvas appears threadbare, with the rough texture of the loosely woven hemp showing through. In his painting *Woman in a Red Blouse*, the figure avoids eye contact (Fig. 3). She sits stone-faced against a nondescript background, looking off into the distance. Her expression is serene and calm, with a tone of sadness. Although the surface is more thickly encrusted than in *Paris*,





Fig. 1. Leon Weissberg, *Portrait of a Man Sitting*, c. 1923, oil on canvas, 92x73 cm

Fig. 2. *Paris*, oil on canvas, 47x61 cm

Fig. 3. *Woman with Dark Hair*, oil on canvas, 61x46 cm

Fig. 4. *The Laundress*, oil on canvas, 37x45 cm. © Yad Vashem Art Museum

Fig. 5. *Working Women*, oil on canvas, 33x41 cm. © Yad Vashem Art Museum

the palette and the mood are equally dark. Two works in the Yad Vashem collection are genre scenes of women doing household chores (Figs. 4-5).

After the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939, Haber moved to Bialystok, a safe haven and enclave for artists escaping from Łódź and Warsaw. There he joined the Union of Russo-Belarusian Socialist Republic of Painters. When the Germans took Bialystok in the summer of 1941, Haber was forced to work in a painting forgery workshop set up by the German industrialist Oskar Steffen a month after the ghetto was created.<sup>1</sup> Haber was one of roughly twenty artists, including most notably Izaak Celnikier, who were required to copy Old Master paintings; these counterfeit “masterpieces” were exported from the ghetto by the truckload.<sup>2</sup> In February 1943, the first wave of deportations to Treblinka took place, organized under Aktion Reinhard. The total number of Jews from Bialystok who were deported and murdered in Treblinka exceeds 118,000.<sup>3</sup> By all accounts, Haber died in the ghetto during the final liquidation on August 18 and 19, 1943.

Meredith Scott



### Notes

1. It was run by Joshua Rozansky. See Sarah Bender, *The Jews of Bialystok During World War II and the Holocaust* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2008), p. 129. See also Mikołaj Gliński, “The Twin Brothers Who Painted and Perished Together,” *Culture* (April 30, 2015). <http://culture.pl/en/article/the-twin-brothers-who-painted-and-perished-as-one>.
2. Other artists involved were Abraham Adolf Behrman, Salomon Bialogorski, Oskar Rozanecki, Chaim Tyber, Natalia Landav, Chaim Urison, and the brothers Efraim and Menashe Seidenbeutel.
3. Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka. The Operation Reinhard Death Camps* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987).

Joseph Hecht

1891-1951

# Joseph Hecht



Born in Łódź, Poland in 1891, Joseph (Jozef) Hecht demonstrated a passion for art from an early age. In 1909, he began his studies at the Fine Art Academy of Krakow, receiving his degree in 1914. At the outbreak of World War I, Hecht moved to Norway where he worked and exhibited. The recurring themes of landscapes and animals he used in sketches during this period remained central to his work throughout his life.

In 1920, Hecht moved to Paris where he met the sculptor Moise Kogan, who introduced Hecht to many of the renowned artists of the École de Paris and arranged access to La Cité

Falguière, an artist studio in Montparnasse, where Modigliani, Jacques Lipchitz, and Léon Indenbaum resided. For the next four years, Hecht continued to master the art of the burin, the traditional copper-engraving tool, which would become synonymous with his name. He became a member of the Salon d'Automne, and his city scenes, landscapes, and nature etchings were exhibited throughout Paris. In 1926, Hecht published a suite of six prints of animals entitled *L'Arche de Noë (Noah's Ark)*, which was exhibited at the Le Nouvel Essor gallery to great acclaim.

In 1926, Hecht met the British artist Stanley William Hayter and introduced Hayter to his printing techniques in the Falguière studio. The following year, Hayter and Hecht created Atelier 17, the legendary printmaking studio that attracted the interest of some of the most famous artists of the time, including Picasso, Giacometti, Miró, and Chagall. In 1929, Hecht became a founding member of La Jeune Gravure Contemporaine, a group of artists committed to keeping the art of printmaking alive, and he began associating with members of Les Peintres-Graveurs Indépendants, a group founded by Jean Émile Labourer and Raoul Dufy. Unlike his peers, Hecht was not





Fig. 1. *Noisy Street*, oil on canvas, 80x100 cm

Fig. 2. Stanley William Hayter and Joseph Hecht, *La Noyée (The Deluge)*, 1946, engraving (*Black 1992*, no. 173, State x/x). © National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

influenced by the surrealist and expressionist movements around him. Even in his paintings, the same rigid structural organization exists. In his cityscape *Noisy Street*, the focus on clean, straight lines resembles his etchings (Fig. 1). The amount of detail dedicated to the buildings demonstrates that even outside his preferred medium, his artistic expression remained the same.

Over the next decade, Hecht's status as a master burin artist soared, and his work continued to gain critical acclaim. He was widely exhibited in salons and galleries all over

Paris, receiving two gold medals for works he displayed in the 1937 Paris World's Fair. In 1939, Hecht contributed an etching to the book *Fraternity* by the poet Stephen Spender. The book was an artistic protest to the rise of fascism in Europe and included etchings by some of the most prominent artists working at Atelier 17, including Hayter, Miró, and Kandinsky.

With the onset of World War II, Hecht fled Paris and took refuge in the village of Belley in the Savoy region of France, where he worked as a farm hand. Hayter moved Atelier 17, which

was on Hitler's black-list, to the New School of Social Research in New York. At the end of the war, Hecht returned to his Cité Falguière studio and found that his press and copper plates had been confiscated by the Vichy government for default of payment for the rent on the Paris studio occupied in absentia. Demoralized by the trauma of the war years and physically unwell, Hecht was uninspired to work. In 1946, Hecht reunited with Hayter, who had spent the war years in New York, and together they collaborated on the inspiring work, *La Noyée (The Deluge)*, a large copper engraving representing the postwar sentiment of artists who had been enchanted by the magical, creative influence of prewar Paris and who later watched as that magic was plundered and destroyed (Fig. 2).

Revitalized by his collaboration on *La Noyée*, Hecht began creating works in his studio, developing new methods of relief printing, which played a definitive role in the printing processes of the 1950s. In 1950, Hayter reopened the Paris Atelier. Hecht died of a heart attack shortly thereafter in June 1951, at the age of 60. His mastery of the burin continues to inspire artists today. Leo Katz, who co-directed Atelier 17 in New York with Hayter,

described Hecht's pivotal role in resurrecting printmaking techniques: "Engraving as an art was buried and etching, without contact with vital modern art problems, was ready for the funeral. Suddenly, a strange man appears, opens the coffins and says: "Rise, I see in you much life that never lived" and behold the dead [...] open slowly their eyes and walk away to lead the living. The man was Joseph Hecht (1891-1951)."

Alexa Asher

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max jacob.

1876-1944

# Max Jacob



Max Jacob was born a Jew and died a Jew at the hands of the Nazis, although his life was anything but traditionally Jewish. He was raised in Quimper (Brittany) to the only Jewish family in town. His

father was a tailor and his mother an operetta singer. Although he considered himself a true Breton, he felt the pull of the bohemian art scene in Paris and moved there in 1897 (Fig. 1).

In Paris, Jacob attended courses at the Académie Julien and fell in with a circle of avant-garde writers and artists living in Montmartre. He was well known for his generosity (even when poor), humor, fortunetelling, imitations, drinking, and his long string of male lovers. In 1901, he befriended Pablo Picasso, often offering him money for food or art supplies. For Jacob, Picasso "was the most important person in his entire existence."<sup>1</sup> Picasso painted numerous portraits of Jacob, as did Amadeo Modigliani, Louis Marcoussis, and Juan Gris. Jacob returned the favor (Fig. 2).



In 1909, Jacob had a vision of Jesus and said, "It seemed as though everything was revealed to me."<sup>2</sup> Six years later, he converted to Catholicism, with Picasso serving as his godfather. He frequently retreated to the church in Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire for respite and prayer, attempting to distance himself from the lures of the capital.

Jacob published several volumes of poetry including *Le Siège de Jerusalem* (1914), which was illustrated with etchings by Picasso. Although Jacob was primarily renowned for his



poetic virtuosity, he achieved some recognition for his painting, with solo exhibitions in Paris in 1920 at the Jewish-owned Bernheim-Jeune Gallery, the Percier and Georges Petit Galleries, and in New York in 1930 and 1938. Describing his artwork, Jacob said, "I'm afraid, there is neither genius, nor naked girls, nor compliments, that kind of a thing is absolutely lacking. What there is, is a great timidity, a vast love for earth and sky."<sup>3</sup> Oscar Ghez described him as "a prolific and original poet, Max Jacob was also a talented artist who left important works."<sup>4</sup>

Both paintings in the Ghez Collection capture Jacob's love of Brittany. They reflect the scenery near his hometown and are quite sentimental. *View of Pont-Aven* is a gouache landscape that depicts a typical waterside mill, with the French village in the background (Fig. 3). The scene is captured in muted blues and grays. In addition to being only 30 kilometers east of his hometown Quimper, Pont-Aven was a draw and inspiration in the late 19th century for many famous artists, including Paul Gauguin and Émile Bernard. The second work, *Landscape with a Bridge*, is a quick watercolor sketch of a bridge (Fig. 4).

In 1921, Jacob moved to Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire. There he lived a mostly monastic life in prayer, writing poetry, and visiting with friends (Fig. 5). Although a Breton and a Catholic, once France surrendered to the German Reich, Jacob was forced to publicly identify as a Jew. On June 7, 1942, the Nazis ordered all Jews in France to wear a yellow Star of David inscribed with the word Juif (Jew). Jacob penned a poem entitled "Love of the Neighbor," which reflected his feelings about wearing the yellow star:

*Who has seen the toad cross a street? He is quite a little fellow.... He comes from the sewer, poor clown. Nobody noticed this*



Fig. 1. *Saint Germain des Prés*, 1931, gouache, 43x55 cm. Association des Amis du Petit Palais, Genève. Photograph: Studio Monique Bernaz, Genève  
 Fig. 2. *Picasso at the place Pigalle*, 1900, ink drawing, 34x26 cm. Association des Amis du Petit Palais, Genève. Photograph: Studio Monique Bernaz, Genève  
 Fig. 3. *View of Pont-Aven*, gouache, 28x36 cm  
 Fig. 4. *Landscape with a Bridge*, watercolor and ink, 19x27 cm

toad in the street. There was a time when nobody noticed me in the street; now the children jeer at my yellow star. Happy toad! You have no yellow star.<sup>5</sup>

He confided his feelings in a letter to Clotilde Banguion, written on August 28, 1942: "The yellow star annoys me: If I wear it, I could become the prey of the first policeman that comes upon me. And even more important: I scandalize the children. If I don't wear it, I am considered at fault. At Saint-Benoît, I am well protected - it's been proven several times now. On the road, however, I am the humble wandering Jew (Fig. 5)."

Unfortunately, Jacob was not well protected in

his hometown. He was arrested by the Gestapo on February 24, 1944 and incarcerated in the Orléans prison in Paris. Four days later, he was transported to Drancy, an internment and transit camp in the Paris suburbs. His friends tried desperately to save him. Jean Cocteau drafted a letter to the authorities pleading for his release, which was signed by many of his artist friends, not including Picasso. Jacob died in Drancy of bronchial pneumonia on March 5, 1944, just two days before he would have been deported to Auschwitz and several days before his friends ultimately secured his freedom. He was 68 years old. Jacob's brother, sister, and brother-in-law were all murdered by the Nazis.

Tovit Schulz-Granoff



## Notes

1. Dan Franck, *Bohemian Paris: Picasso, Modigliani, Matisse, and the Birth of Modern Art* (New York: Grove Press, 1998), p. 33.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
3. Max Jacob, "The Artist Introduces Himself," The Bernheim-Jeune Gallery (1920), quoted in Moishe Black and Mearia Green, *Hesitant Fire: Selected Prose of Max Jacob* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), p. 40.
4. Oscar Ghez, "Montmartre Vivant - de Toulouse Lautrec à Utrillo." *Shalom - Le Magazine Juif Europeen*, vol. 25 (Spring 1996).
5. "Love of One's Neighbor" in *The Selected Poems of Max Jacob*, ed. William T. Kulik (Oberlin College Press, 1999).

# Georges Kars



Georges Kars (Georg or Jiří Karpeles) is one of the few artists in the Ghez Collection who did not perish during the Holocaust. He was born in Kralupy, a town near Prague, to parents of German origin. His father, William, built an industrial mill in 1875, which still represents one of the landmarks of the city. According to the register of the Jewish community in Velvary, he came into the world as Georg Karpeles on May 2, 1880. The family changed their surname to Kars in 1906.

Trained in Prague, in 1899 Kars left home to attend the Munich Academy of Art and study art history at the University of Munich, where he remained until 1905, studying under the symbolist Franz von Stuck and exhibiting with the Munich Secession, the first of the avant-garde secession movements to break away from the conservative conventions of academic salon painting and challenge the establishment with an independent exhibition society. In Munich, he met Wassily Kandinsky and became friends with Jules Pascin, Paul Klee, and Rudolf Lévy. His work from this period was impressionistic in style, characterized by loose brushwork, a light palette, and pure, intense colors.

Between 1905 and 1907, Kars travelled to Madrid, where he met Juan Gris, who remained an important influence and mentor, and then visited Portugal and Hamburg. In 1908, after a short stay in Prague, Kars moved to Paris and settled in Montmartre, in an apartment on the 89 rue Coulaincourt, frequently socializing with Georges Braque, Pablo Picasso, André Derain, Maurice Vlaminck, Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger, and Jules Pascin. He was close friends with the poets Guillaume Apollinaire, Max Jacob, and André Salmon and vacationed

with Suzanne Valadon and her son Maurice Utrillo (who painted a portrait of Kars in 1928) in the Ségalas region of the Bas-Pyrénées in 1923. In his monograph on Kars, the art critic Florent Fels described him as "singularly well balanced," "so witty," "like a magician".<sup>1</sup>

Kars' early work covers the entire gamut of modernist movements, betraying influences of Art Nouveau and Symbolism, Impressionism, and then Fauvism and Cubism, although he remained deeply committed to realism. Matisse's *Blue Nude* of 1909 was an obvious influence (Kars made a blue nude the same year), as were the many exotic odalisques Matisse painted in the south of France (Kars made languorous odalisques throughout his career). His landscapes are indebted to Paul Cézanne. For subject matter, he turned to circus performers (Fig. 7) and flamenco dancers, landmarks around Paris, and cityscapes and street scenes. He favored the traditional genres of still life and portraiture, but focused above all on the nude. Almost all of the Kars in the Ghez Collection are nudes and works on paper (drawings, pastels, and watercolors), with the exception of a self-portrait (Fig. 1), a landscape (Fig. 5), and a gold bas-relief sculpture of two dancers (Fig. 6).



Fig. 1. Self-portrait, drawing, 47x42 cm

Fig. 2. View of the exhibition Georges Kars at the Galerie B.Weill, 1928. Nadine Nieszawer Archives

Fig. 3. Exhibition 1937 in Prague. Nadine Nieszawer Archives

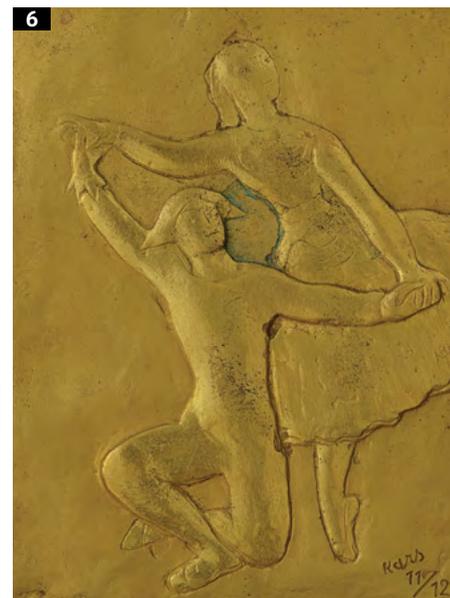
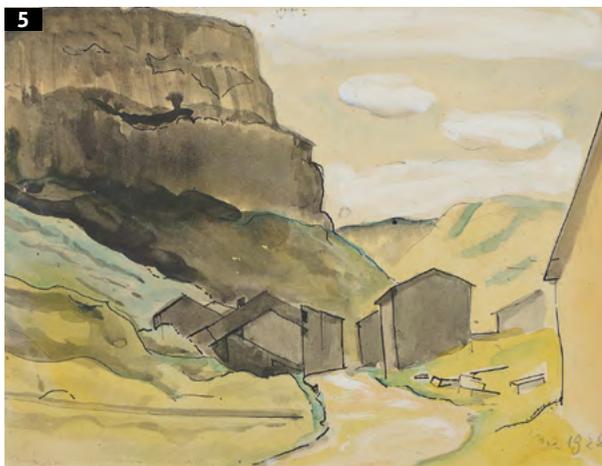
Fig. 4. Chagall and Kars at the Tossa beach, Spain, October 1934

Fig. 5. Vaison la Romaine (Vaucluse), 1928, watercolor, 23x31 cm

Fig. 6. The Dancer, relief covered in bronze, 12x11 cm

Fig. 7. The Trapezist, sanguine on paper, 30 x 20 cm

Fig. 8. Reclining Nude, charcoal drawing, 43x30 cm



With the declaration of World War I, Kars returned home and spent almost the whole war on the Galician Ukrainian front and in Russian captivity, filling sketchbooks with drawings of local villagers and soldiers. As soon as the war ended, he returned to Paris in 1919, renewing his many friendships (with Pascin, Chagall, Apollinaire, and Max Jacob, for example). Stylistically, his work from this period betrays the influence of Neoclassicism, with simplified shapes, sharp outlines, and vivid colors. His large, biblically inspired canvas *Finding Moses* from 1922 exemplifies this period.

Throughout the 1920s and '30s, Kars exhibited widely and regularly in the Salon des Indépendants (1910, 1913–26), the Salon d'Automne (1909–27), and the Salon des Tuileries (1923–29), and as part of the *Artistes juifs* exhibition at Galerie Fermé la nuit in 1930. He held solo exhibitions in Paris (at the Berthe Weill gallery in 1928) and abroad (Fig. 2).<sup>2</sup> In 1933, Kars purchased a home in the seaside town of Tossa de Mar, near Barcelona, where he lived for three years. He was a co-founder of the city's modern art museum, inaugurating the Museu Municipal de Tossa de Mar in September 1935, with a group of artists

including Rafael Benet, Enric Casanovas, and Alberto del Castillo. At the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War on July 18, 1936, George Kars and his wife Nora Karsová embarked on one of the ships that came to pick up foreigners who were in Tossa to repatriate them to their countries. He returned to Paris.

In the late 1930s, Kars was given an important retrospective at the Mánes Gallery in Prague (January–February 1937) (Fig. 3). Even the president of Czechoslovakia, Edvard Beneš, attended the opening. That same year, Kars was also awarded the French Legion of Honor.



Fig. 9. *The Soldier's Family*, 1943, pencil on paper.  
© Ghetto Fighters' House Museum

Fig. 10. *Mother with Children*, 1943, pencil on paper.  
35x50 cm. © Yad Vashem Art Museum

Afterward, Kars moved back to France, settling first in the town of Anse and then, after the defeat and occupation, Kars took refuge in Lyon, a major center of the Resistance in the Free Zone, where he continued to exhibit his work, holding two exhibitions in 1941 and 1942. Many of the paintings he made there, are now in the Lyon Art Museum. When Germany violated the 1940 armistice and invaded Vichy France on November 10, 1942 (in the operation code-named Case Anton), Kars fled to the safety of his sister, Else Werflové, in Zurich,

Switzerland, where he remained for the rest of the war. Haunted by the reports of persecution and extermination, he depicted refugees seeking shelter (Figs. 9-10).

Like many Jewish exiles, including his close friend Marc Chagall, he returned to France after the Holocaust (Fig. 4). Although he survived, most of his friends and family were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators. Unable to bear the tragedy that had befallen his people, Kars committed suicide on February 5, 1945,

by throwing himself out of a fifth-floor hotel room window in Geneva. He was 65 years old. A retrospective exhibition was held in his memory in Paris (November-December 1945). In 1949, Kars' wife brought his body back to be buried in the family tomb at the New Jewish Cemetery in Prague. After his wife died, the contents of his studio were auctioned at the Palais Galliera in Paris in 1966. This is where Oscar Ghez purchased his works.

Dr. Rachel Perry

## Notes

1. "Although I lived in the strangest environment of Montmartre, next to artists with the most twisted mind, Kars stands there, singularly well balanced. He is so witty that he could be a cousin of Hoffmann's. We always expect him, just like the magician from Königsberg to create a burlesque miracle like turning the Sacré-Coeur church into an illuminated pool for the One Thousand and One Nights or to create some tales worthy of *The Serapion Brethren*." Florent Fels, *Georges Kars* (Paris: Éditions Le Triangle, 1930).
2. <http://www.bertheweill.fr/artistes>.

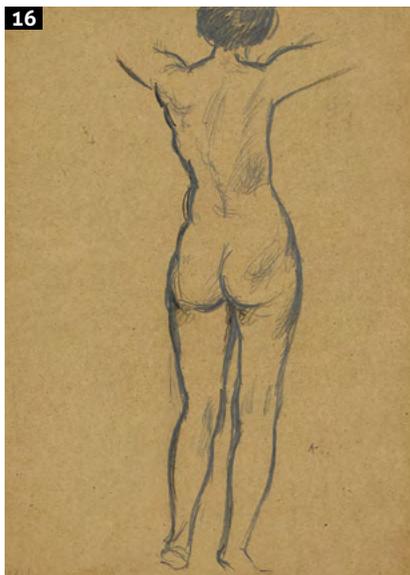
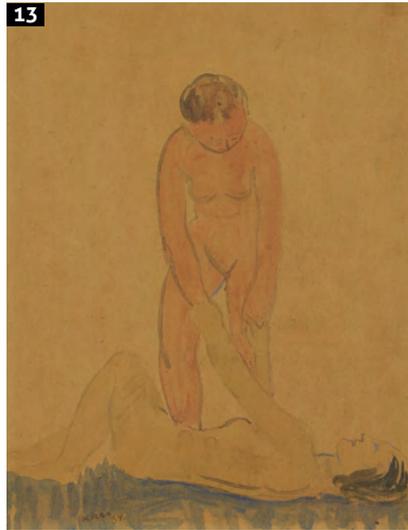


Fig. 11. *Woman with Striped Yellow Robe*, pastel on paper, 62x48 cm

Fig. 12. *Standing Nude, Hands on Waist*, watercolor on paper, 30x21 cm

Fig. 13. *The Friends*, watercolor on paper, 1934, 33x26 cm

Fig. 14. *Yellow Turban*, 1924, charcoal and pastel on paper, 65x44 cm

Fig. 15. *Sitting Nude with Yellow Turban*, 1922, charcoal on paper, 62.5x46 cm

Fig. 16. *Standing Nude from the Back*, 1912, drawing on paper, 32x23 cm

Fig. 17. *Nude on Blue Background*, 1920, watercolor on paper, 31x23 cm

Fig. 18. *The Green Armchair*, 1912, drawing on paper, 30x23 cm

Fig. 19. *Nude on Knees*, 1924, red sanguine on paper, 52x42 cm

Fig. 20. *Nude Back*, drawing, 28x19 cm

Fig. 21. *Nude Sitting on a Red Stool*, 1914, watercolor on paper, 42x29 cm

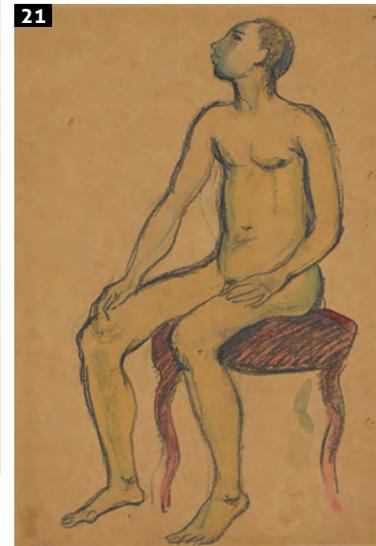
Fig. 22. *Standing Nude*, 1919, charcoal on paper, 43x30 cm

Fig. 23. *Nude on Knees*, 1919, charcoal on paper, 43x30 cm

Fig. 24. *Standing Nude*, 1922, sanguine on paper, 56x37 cm

Fig. 25. *Reclining Nude*, 1919, charcoal on paper, 30x43 cm

Fig. 26. *Nude with Orange Balloon*, 1919, charcoal on paper, 43x25 cm



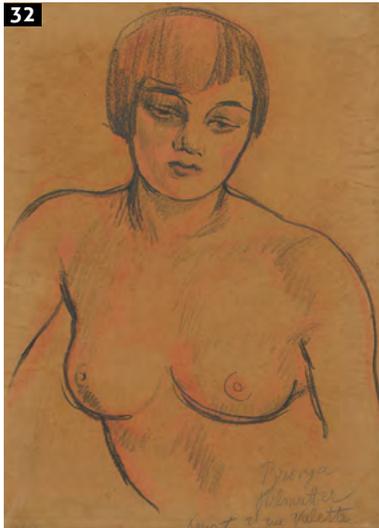
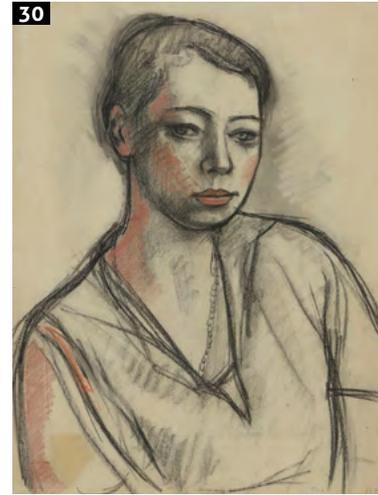


Fig. 27. *The Red Hair*, 1924, charcoal on paper, 56x42 cm

Fig. 28. *Sitting Nude*, 1928, charcoal on paper, 63x47 cm

Fig. 29. *The Dressmaker*, pencil on paper, 22.5x28 cm

Fig. 30. *Portrait of a Young Woman*, 1928, charcoal on paper, 62x48 cm

Fig. 31. *Standing Nude*, 1920, pencil on paper, 28x22 cm

Fig. 32. *Bronja*, charcoal on paper, 62x45 cm

Fig. 33. *Sitting Nude*, 1920, graphite on paper, 25x20 cm

Fig. 34. *Portrait of a Young Woman*, 1923, red sanguine on paper, 59x46 cm



1879-1943

# Moise Kogan



Moise Kogan was a mostly self-trained artist who was born on March 12, 1879<sup>1</sup> in Orgiew, Bessarabia.<sup>2</sup> He was educated in traditional Jewish studies (Heder), and his family was thought to descend from Rabbi Yisroel

Salantar from Lithuania.<sup>3</sup> Kogan's family moved to Kishinev, where he completed high school, and then to Odessa, where he studied chemistry. But he was more interested in art than chemistry and moved to Munich in 1903 to study sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts under Wilhelm von Rumann.<sup>4</sup> Kogan was only able to tolerate being a student at the academy for one semester, and following that period, he took a more autodidactic approach to his studies.

In 1905, Kogan traveled to Paris where he met and was heavily influenced by Aristide Maillol and Auguste Rodin, two of the fathers of modern French sculpture (Fig. 1). Between 1905 and 1913, he moved between Germany and Paris, learning his craft and participating



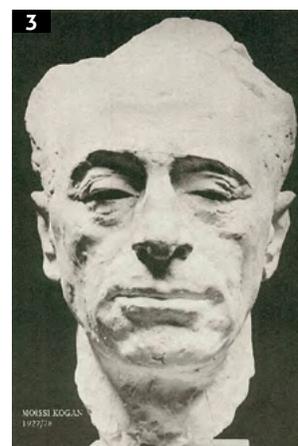
© Moissey Kogan Research Center

in various exhibitions. In 1910, when Kogan settled in Paris, he secured a studio at La Ruche and worked side by side with other artists, including friends Marc Chagall, Constantin Brancusi, and Wassily Kandinsky. His work is influenced by Modigliani's stylized caryatid sculptures. In 1913, he married Nini Bickel with whom he had two children: Leano, in 1916, and Jean, in 1920.

As early as 1910, Karl Osthaus, a German art patron, began supporting Kogan financially.<sup>5</sup> In 1914, Kogan created the sculpture for Walter Gropius' modernist machine factory exhibit at the 1914 Cologne Werkbund Exhibition.<sup>6</sup> During World War I, Kogan primarily lived in Ascona, Switzerland.<sup>7</sup> Over the next twenty years, he lived an itinerant life, moving between Paris,

Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. He exhibited several times in the Salon d'Automne, and in 1925 was elected vice president of the salon, "an extraordinary distinction for a non-French artist."<sup>8</sup>

Kogan worked with a wide variety of materials, media, and techniques. He created tapestries and works in precious stones; he sculpted in bronze, wood, and terracotta; and he was a master printmaker, specializing in woodcuts



and lithographs. Picasso's art dealer, Daniel Kahnweiler, said that Kogan worked very slowly, which made it difficult for Kahnweiler to represent him, as his works were never ready for buyers.<sup>9</sup> Kogan wished to create large sculptures like Rodin, but he did not have the money or the clients to finance his dreams. Instead, he made large drawings

of his visions of nude female sculptures in coal and chalk on rolls of paper two meters in length.<sup>10</sup>

The small bronze sculpture in the Ghez Collection represents a young nude woman (Fig. 2). It is characteristic of Kogan's sculptures in both content and size, as he focused almost exclusively on the female nude and was generally too short on funds to create larger pieces. Karl Schwartz, described Kogan's work as "the outlet of a delicate lyricism and of a quiet, dignified, almost shy reserve."<sup>11</sup> *Standing Nude* possesses graceful lines and an almost shy demeanor. The truncated arms recall his teacher Rodin's emphasis on the female torso.<sup>12</sup>





In 1927, the German artist Arno Breker sculpted a bust of Kogan (Fig. 3). Although they had been friendly in the interwar period (socializing and working together as evidenced in a group photograph at the Domgalerie in Cologne in the winter of 1928), their lives and careers would diverge radically over the next decade, as Breker became an increasingly important figure in the Nazi party (Fig. 4). Officially named Adolf Hitler's favorite artist on his birthday in 1937, Breker was responsible for some of the Third Reich's largest and most ideologically charged commissions, monumental sculptures that propagated the National Socialist agenda of "Ein Reich, Ein Volk, Ein Führer" ("One People, One Empire, One Leader"). Their early shared commitment to the idealizing potential of classicism took them in diametrically opposed paths.

Beginning in the 1930s, Kogan lived on and off in the Netherlands, where he was close with Hendrik Wieggersma, whose house was a salon and meeting place for artists. According to some sources, he was an activist and member of the leftist organization BKVK (Union of Artists for the Defense of Cultural Rights) while he was in Amsterdam. He was the only foreign artist included in the postwar exhibition *Art Up in Arms* at the Stedelijk Museum in July 1945 to honor Dutch artists active in the Resistance. The Nazis confiscated many of Kogan's artworks and sculptures as degenerate art. Some of

Fig. 1. Photograph with Maillol in 1937/8.  
Moissey Kogan Research Center

Fig. 2. *Standing Nude*, bronze, 47.5x10x10 cm

Fig. 3. Arno Breker, *Portrait of Kogan* 1927,  
Paris. © Marco-VG, Bonn

Fig. 4. Kogan and Arno Breker at the  
Domgalerie in Cologne, winter 1928.  
© Kogan-Archiv Berlin, Marco-RV

these were exhibited in the infamous *Entartete Kunst* exhibition held in Berlin in 1938.<sup>13</sup>

Kogan was deported from Drancy to Auschwitz on convoy no. 47 on February 11, 1943 (and not on February 22, 1943 as was formerly believed). Most of the deportees on this transport had been arrested the night before, on February 10, when 1,549 foreign-born Jews were rounded up in a massive raid in which over 1,000 French policemen participated. Kogan listed his last place of residence as 14 cité Falguière, a well-known Parisian artists' residence where he had lived on and off since 1927. La Cité Falguière was also home to Ghez Collection artist Joseph Hecht and featured in paintings by another famous Jewish resident, Chaim Soutine. Only 141 men from this transport were selected for hard labor; at 63 years old, Kogan was likely one of the 802 persons from this transport to be immediately sent to the gas chambers.<sup>14</sup>

Tovit Schulz-Granoff

## Notes

1. There is conflicting information on Kogan's date of birth. It is either May 12 or May 24, 1879. This may be the difference between the Gregorian and Julian calendars (Helen Shiner, *Artistic Radicalism and Radical Conservatism, Moissey Kogan and his German Patrons 1903-1928*, MA

thesis, University of Central England, Birmingham, 1997, p. 22, fn. 2.

2. The artist is referred to as Moise, Moshe, Moissy, Moissey, Moissej, and Micha, and his last name is spelled either Kogan or Cogan. These variant spellings likely reflect the time periods Kogan spent living in Bessarabia (now Romania), Germany, France, and the Netherlands. For consistency, we use Moise Kogan in this article, as it is the most common reference.
3. Fenster, *Unzere Farpaynikte Kinstler*, pp. 208-212.
4. He studied in Munich together with his brother, Sneer (also spelled Shneir), a painter.
5. Shiner, "Artistic Radicalism and Radical Conservatism," p. 225.
6. Penelope Curtis, *Sculpture 1900-1945 After Rodin*, (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1999), p. 11.
7. Karl Schwarz, *Jewish Artists of the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: The Philosophical Library, Inc., 1949), p. 135.
8. Ibid.
9. John Zavrel, "The Portrait of Moissey Kogan Memories of a Jewish Sculptor in Paris," *Prometheus, Internet Bulletin for Art, Politics and Science* 83 (Summer 2002).
10. Ibid.
11. Schwarz, *Jewish Artists of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, p. 132.
12. Shiner, "Artistic Radicalism and Radical Conservatism," p. 26.
13. Shiner, "Artistic Radicalism and Radical Conservatism," p. 49.
14. Klarsfeld, *Le Mémorial de la Déportation des Juifs de France*, pp. 360-376.

# Nathalie Kraemer



Nathalie Camille Fanny Kraemer was born in Paris on April 28, 1891 to Isidore Kraemer and Nathalie Armance Frissonnet, both French-born, she from the Champagne region and he originally from

Strasbourg in Alsace Lorraine, an "Israelite" (to be distinguished from the foreign-born Jewish immigrants, who were referred to as "Juifs"). Her mother was not Jewish and did not convert, and no one from her father's family was present at the wedding. They resided at 7 rue Magenta in the 10ème arrondissement.<sup>1</sup> Her father was an antique dealer like his brother Lucien who would build an impressive and lucrative antique business in Paris in 1875 selling "Tapisserie, Meubles anciens, Curiosités et Tableaux," (tapestries, antique furniture, curiosities, and paintings) to wealthy families like the Rothschilds. Tragically, Kraemer's father died when he was only 31 years old, leaving her mother widowed and her, at the age of three, an only child.<sup>2</sup>

Kraemer grew up in Paris, the center of the art world in the interwar period. Her work was exhibited in the traditional venues of the day, the Salon des Tuileries and Salon des Indépendents.<sup>3</sup> In addition to painting, Kramer wrote poetry, even winning a literary prize in 1927 for a collection of poems entitled *Des Voix Montent* (*Rising Voices*) (Fig. 1).<sup>4</sup>



Kraemer's work in the Ghez Collection consists almost exclusively of portraits, which can nonetheless be divided into two artistic periods: an earlier period, in which they are more traditionally modeled and three dimensional (Figs. 19-21) and a later period, in which she developed her own particular style and idiom, and they become more abstracted

and flat, with bold outlines. As Sanford Shaman has written, many of Kramer's early portraits are indebted to art historical precedents from the Renaissance (and in particular to Piero della Francesca and Titian), but they are also heavily influenced by the more modern portraits being made in Paris at the time by Modigliani and Picasso (most notably his 1906 *Portrait of Gertrude Stein*).<sup>5</sup> In short, Kraemer was highly educated in the literary and visual arts and well versed in older art traditions as well as newer trends.



In Kraemer's portraits, the women never convey sensuality or eroticism. *Woman with Folded Arms* poses with her arms crossed over her chest, in a restrained or protective manner, as if she is hiding or trying to conceal something (Fig. 4). She does not smile, and her eyes reveal little emotion or personality. She looks restrained, reserved, and somber. Typically, the composition is pared down to basic geometric forms, and the figure is set in a dark, nondescript background, either a bare room or an austere setting offering little anecdotal detail. The paint is applied thinly and evenly. Her sitters are almost all bourgeois: well dressed and carefully groomed. There are few, if any, Jewish signs or symbols (aside from the painting *The Rabbi*) (Fig. 16). In fact, more than a few allude to or represent Christian symbols, such as *Death* (Fig. 7), which features a nun holding a dead man in a modern, latter-day Pietà, and two paintings of older women holding a rosary and a small cross and bible (Figs. 30 and 34). Although most of her portraits are of a single sitter, there are a few of a mother and child (modeled on the Madonna and Child) (Fig. 29). Several are more allegorical or generic types, such as *The Card Player* and *The Refugee* (Fig. 10). The Ghez Collection also has four remarkable landscapes



Fig. 3. Portrait of a Young Woman in a White Dress, oil on canvas, 92x75 cm



Fig. 4. The Trees, oil on canvas, 46x27 cm



Fig. 5. Women in a Blue Dress, oil on canvas, 55x46 cm



Fig. 6. Still Life with Books, oil on canvas, 33x41 cm

by Kraemer (Fig. 4) and one still life (Fig. 6), and the Petit Palais in Geneva has an unusual print by Kraemer of a man holding a Parisian newspaper (Fig. 13).

In 1913, Kraemer married a Jewish man by the name of Nathan Marcel Levy, whom she captured in paint as an expressionless blue-

eyed, blond-haired, large-nosed man with a moustache. This is the only portrait in the collection that specifies its sitter by name (Fig. 2). She moved to the city of Vichy in central France to live with the extended Lévy family at 2 bis rue Couturier. In 1905, Marcel's father Paul had opened a furniture store in Vichy at Place de la Poste with his two sons,

Roger and Marcel. Both sons served their country in World War I: Marcel left for the front in 1914 shortly after they married; Roger was wounded and discharged as a disabled veteran, receiving the Croix de Guerre avec Palmes and the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur.

In May 1940, Kraemer exhibited her work

for the last time, in the Société des Artistes Indépendants exhibition at the Palais de Chaillot on the Trocadero esplanade. Only a month later, when France was occupied (June 1940), Kraemer was forbidden to exhibit and sell her works. Racial laws were introduced that forbade Jews to practice in various professions. When the city of Vichy became the



Fig. 7. *Death*, oil on canvas, 55x46 cm

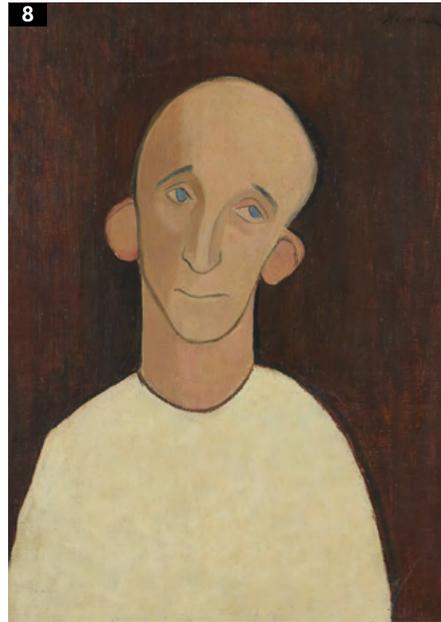


Fig. 8. *The Refugee*, oil on canvas, 61x50 cm



Fig. 9. *The Hunted One (Le traqué)*, oil on canvas, 73x54 cm. © Association des Amis du Petit Palais, Genève. Photograph: Studio Monique Bernaz, Genève



Fig. 10. *The Card Player*, oil on canvas, 61x46 cm



Fig. 11. *The Blind Man*, oil on canvas, 61x50 cm

administrative head of Pétain's government in 1940, life became precarious for the city's Jews. In April 1942, the Lévy family was given 48 hours to leave the Allier region and their store was requisitioned by the police. Tragically, Nathalie Kraemer was not with them when they left the city. Paul, his widowed sister Julie (Rosensvald), sons Marcel and Roger, and Roger's daughters Viviane (Dimermanas) and Arlette (Jérôme), went to the small town of Le Coteau (near Roanne in the Loire region) owned by Jean-Pierre Toquant, whose grandparents, Blaise et Jeanne, had known the Lévy's during World War I. Toquant owned a hotel, the Hôtel du Centre; he offered to accommodate them in his private apartment and brought them food. Through their cousin Liliane Klein, and with the assistance of a resistance network in Grenoble, the family was able to obtain false identity papers under the name Lemery. During these anxious months in hiding, Paul Lévy and his sister Julie passed away and Toquant arranged for them to be buried in Côteau. After the war, their remains were transferred to the Jewish cemetery in Paris and the Lévy family returned to their lives in Vichy. On February 11, 2009, Yad Vashem officially recognized Jean-Pierre Toquant as a Righteous Among the Nations (# 11538).

Among the last works Kraemer made are *L'inquiétude (Worry)*, *The Refugee* (Fig. 8) and *Le Traqué (The Hunted One)* (Fig. 9). It is no doubt during this time that Kraemer moved to Nice, where, according to a report of the Commissariat de Police du Central de Nice dated May 14, 1945, she lived first in the Hôtel Noailles, 70 avenue de la Victoire, then at 10

avenue Gloria, and finally at avenue Julien (Saint-Sylvestre), Villa Les Oliviers, until she was arrested by the Gestapo.<sup>6</sup> Two weeks later, on December 1, 1943, she was sent from Nice to Drancy where she was assigned the number 9632. On December 17, 1943, she was deported from Drancy to Auschwitz on convoy no. 63 with 850 other Jews (Fig. 12). Her voyage lasted over a week, arriving on December 22, 1943, where she was gassed upon arrival.<sup>7</sup> A memorial plaque with her name was erected at the entrance to the synagogue in Vichy by the Levy family.<sup>8</sup> Oscar Ghez purchased all of the Kraemer paintings in his collections through an anonymous dealer in 1973, 30 years after she was murdered.



Fig. 12. *La carte de Déporté Politique*. © Direction Interdépartementale des Anciens Combattants de Clermont-Ferrand

Fig. 13. "Paris-Midi," Color Lithograph, 76x48.5 cm. Association des Amis du Musée Petit Palais, Geneva. Photo: Studio Monique Bernaz

Fig. 14. *The Teacher*, oil on canvas, 92x60 cm

Fig. 15. *The Student*, oil on Canvas, 55x46 cm

Fig. 16. *The Rabbi*, oil on canvas, 100x81 cm

Fig. 17. *The Expectation*, oil on canvas, 94x60 cm

Fig. 18. *The Peasant*, oil on canvas, 46x38 cm

Until we began research, there were no known photographs of Kraemer. It is possible that one of her paintings is a self-portrait. This remarkable artist, who left us with so many unique paintings, disappeared, leaving behind only a few clues, a fate shared by so many victims of the Holocaust, and especially women and children who perished without a record.



Fig. 19. Woman in Blue, oil on canvas, 55x46 cm

Fig. 20. Portrait of a Woman in a Black Dress, oil on canvas, 46x33 cm

Fig. 21. The Model, oil on canvas, 46x33 cm

Fig. 22. Woman Sitting, oil on canvas, 92x60 cm

Fig. 23. Portrait in White Vest, oil on Canvas, 41x27 cm

Fig. 24. Young Maid with Brown Vest, oil on canvas, 46x38 cm

Fig. 25. Woman in the Blue Apron, oil on canvas, 73x54 cm

Fig. 26. Woman Sitting Near a Table, oil on canvas, 65x50 cm

Fig. 27. Woman with Gray Hair, oil on Canvas, 73x54 cm

Fig. 28. *Woman in Green*,  
oil on canvas, 73x54 cm

Fig. 29. *Motherhood*,  
oil on canvas, 92x65 cm

Fig. 30. *The Pious Woman*,  
oil on canvas, 81x54 cm

Fig. 31. *Woman in a Red Dress*,  
oil on canvas, 100x81 cm

Fig. 32. *Woman with Plaited Hair*,  
oil on Canvas, 61x46 cm

Fig. 33. *Woman with Folded Arms*,  
oil on canvas, 65x50 cm

Fig. 34. *Woman Praying*,  
oil on canvas, 73x54 cm



## Notes

1. Nathalie Kraemer: <http://www.afmd-allier.com/PBCPPlayer.asp?ID=1228464>.
2. Isidore Kraemer: <http://gw.geneanet.org/jfmberu78?lang=sv&pz=jean+francois&nz=malthete&ocz=0&p=isidore&n=kraemer>.
3. Nieszawer & Princ Bureau d'expertise, Nathalie Kraemer [http://www.ecoledeparis.org/artiste/nathalie\\_kraemer](http://www.ecoledeparis.org/artiste/nathalie_kraemer).
4. *L'écho de Paris* (September 20, 1927), p. 5. <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k812655w/f5.item>.
5. Sanford S. Shaman, *The Paintings of Nathalie Kraemer*, (University of Haifa, 1999).
6. Kraemer's first cousin, Raymond-Lucien Kraemer (who received the Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur in 1937 from the French state) was also in hiding in the south of France during the war, in Cannes. He survived and returned to Paris after the war to find his mansion on the parc Monceau and business completely spoliated by the Nazis. He published a book on the Holocaust entitled *Quand Vichy régnait sur la France* (Paris: Éditions Lacoste, 1945).
7. Nathalie Kraemer: <http://www.afmd-allier.com/PBCPPlayer.asp?ID=1228464>.
8. *Ibid.*

# Roman Kramsztyk



Roman Kramsztyk was born in Warsaw on August 18, 1885 and died there in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942. He was the descendant of two of the most prominent Jewish families in Warsaw, the Kramsztyk and Fajan families. His grandfather, Izaak Kramsztyk, was a Reform rabbi, a graduate of and professor in the Rabbinical School in Warsaw, and his father, Julian Kramsztyk, was the chief of staff of the department of internal medicine of the Bersohn and Bauman Families' Children's Hospital. Assimilated and acculturated (and even baptized at birth), Kramsztyk considered himself a Pole and a Polish artist. It was only during the Holocaust that he began to "reconsider, or rather reinterpret, his [Jewish]

identity. Nazi racial laws forced Kramsztyk to share a common fate with people to whom he had previously felt no connection."<sup>1</sup>

Kramsztyk studied drawing and painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow from 1903 to 1904 under direction of Józef Mehoffer. From 1904 to 1908, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. Between 1910 and 1914, he settled in Paris, returning to Warsaw during the war, but moving back to Paris in 1922. He visited Poland annually and remained active in Polish artistic life.<sup>2</sup> His work was exhibited in the Salon d'Automne (from 1908), the Salon des Indépendants (1911, 1912, 1913, 1925, 1926), and the Salon de Tuileries (1928-30, 1939),

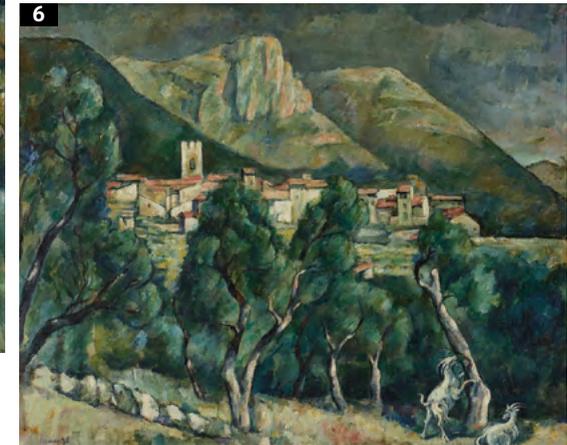


and shown at the Galerie Druet (1925, 1928), the Galerie Żak (1930, 1937), the Galerie des Beaux-Arts (1935), and the Salon de l'Art Français Indépendant (1929) (Figs. 1-2). In Paris, Kramsztyk frequented the cafes and was a member of the Polish Artists Society. He continued to exhibit in Poland (Fig. 3).

Renowned for his detailed, expressive portraits, modeled on academic traditions, Kramsztyk painted figural scenes (concerts), fleshy rubenesque nudes, and exotic figures (such as our *Black Musician*) (Fig. 4). Chil Aronson referred to him as a "passionate draughtsman."<sup>3</sup> He was also an accomplished landscape painter who traveled extensively through the south of



France and Spain, painting the local villages and countryside.<sup>4</sup> Many of these landscapes are deeply indebted to Paul Cézanne's own paeans to Provence. Both *Gypsies at the Foot of the Village* and *Olive Trees in Provence* are painted in lush greens, vibrant blues, and earthy pinks (Figs. 5-6). In the bottom corner of the first painting, there are three gypsies who have stopped under the shade of a tree to build a fire outside the walled village. When Hitler started his propaganda against the Jews, he spoke about the Sinti and Roma as well. Although Kramsztyk never identified as Jewish, early on he painted the Roma.<sup>5</sup> Even before



Figs. 1-2. Galerie Zak, Paris 1930

Fig. 3. Kramsztyk (on left) at a cafe in Paris, mid. 1930

Fig. 4. Black Musician, oil on canvas, 100x80 cm

Fig. 5. Gypsies at Foot of the Village, oil on canvas, 80.5x99.5 cm

Fig. 6. Olive Trees in Provence, oil on canvas, 80x98 cm

making a decision regarding the Final Solution of the Jewish people, the Nazis decided to annihilate the Roma populations in Europe. Judged to be racially inferior, the Roma were among the groups the Nazis singled out for persecution on so-called racial grounds. They were subjected to race laws, arrest, arbitrary internment, forced labor, and mass murder.<sup>6</sup>

Kramsztyk returned to Warsaw in the summer of 1939 to settle inheritance matters after the death of his mother. He was trapped there when the Germans entered Warsaw on September 29. Two weeks later, on October 12, the Germans decreed the establishment of a ghetto, requiring all Jewish residents to move into designated areas, which were sealed off

from the rest of the city. Over 400,000 Jews, including Kramsztyk, found themselves behind ghetto walls. Despite miserable conditions, he drew and painted feverishly, determined to record the atrocities around him, documenting the poverty, hunger, and death experienced by the inhabitants of the ghetto: the beggars, the smugglers, the homeless. Friends recalled that he “drew a lot and very quickly, doing his best to keep record of what he saw. He stored his drawings in cardboard folders tied up with ribbons. The folders were bulging...and when there were more drawings he tried sending them to the ‘Aryan side’ as often as possible.”<sup>7</sup> Some of his drawings were smuggled out after the war, such as *A Family in the Ghetto*

(Fig. 7). As a well-connected, important figure, Kramsztyk was offered numerous opportunities to go into hiding or escape to the Aryan side, but he refused, choosing not to abandon his people.<sup>8</sup>

The last days of Kramsztyk’s life are known thanks to Wladyslaw Szpilman’s memoirs, *Death of a City* and *The Pianist*, published in 1946 and 1998. Szpilman described Kramsztyk as “a man of incredible culture and high culture in general, a modest one with a lot of warmth.”<sup>9</sup> He relates Kramsztyk coming to visit him in the Stucka-Café, where Szpilman played piano, and announcing to him, “Don’t you see? We are all condemned to die?” Szpilman describes the events surrounding

Kramsztyk’s death on August 6, 1942, during the first liquidation action: “Kramsztyk died on one of the first days of deportations. When the house where he lived had been surrounded, he refused to go down to the yard. He preferred to be shot dead at home, among his paintings.”<sup>10</sup> The Ghetto Fighters’ House Museum has a handwritten, four-page list addressed to his relative Marja Aszer (related to Georges Ascher) made on the day of his death, of all of the 143 paintings in his studio (Fig. 8).<sup>11</sup> Among the works left behind, was a portrait of Adam Czerniakow, the head of the Judenrat who had committed suicide only two weeks earlier, on July 23, 1942 (Fig. 9).

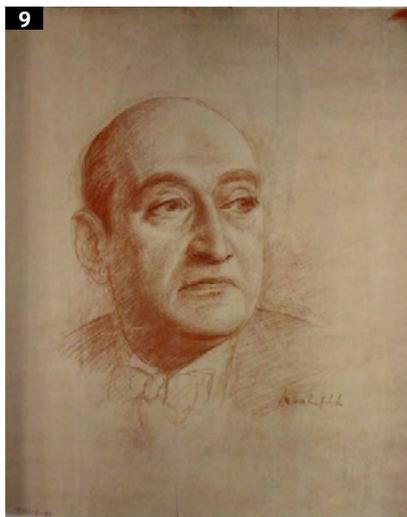
Esther Halperin



Fig. 7. A Family in the Ghetto, 1942, sanguine on paper, 54x37.8 cm. © Emmanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw

Fig. 8. A list of 143 paintings left in the Warsaw ghetto by the deceased artist Roman Kramsztyk. The list was made on the day of his death, August 6, 1942. © Ghetto Fighters' House Museum

Fig. 9. Portrait of Adam Czerniakow, drawing. © Israel Museum.



### Notes

1. [http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Kramsztyk\\_Roman#suggestedreading](http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Kramsztyk_Roman#suggestedreading).
2. On Kramsztyk see Irena Kossowska, "Roman Kramsztyk," Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Science, December 2001, <http://culture.pl/en/artist/roman-kramsztyk>. The most authoritative research on the artist is by Renata Piątkowska, *Roman Kramsztyk, 1885-1942* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 1997).
3. Aronson, *Scènes et visages*, pp. 413-9.
4. His wife Bronisława was tragically killed in a sea tragedy near Collioure in 1925. He had a stepson, Jan Heyman.
5. Regarding the persecution of Roma and Sinti, see <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005482>.
6. In France, Vichy French authorities intensified restrictive measures against and harassment of Roma after the establishment of the collaborationist regime in 1940. In 1941 and 1942, French police interned at least 3,000 and possibly as many as 6,000 Roma, residents of both occupied France and unoccupied France.
7. Joanna Simon and her niece Halina Rothaub recalled that "Roman had always liked sitting in cafes and so he did in the ghetto. He would sit by the window in a cafe in Rymarska or Elektoralna Streets just next to the border wall. With his artistic eyes he observed smugglers gathering there and the fruit of these observations was a series of drawings presenting smugglers.... He was also interested in the types of Jewish paupers. He would draw whole groups of paupers hugging to warm themselves up and dead bodies that were a common sight in the ghetto. He believed that preserving this was his mission.... He drew a lot and very quickly, doing his best to keep record of what he saw. He stored his drawings in cardboard folders tied up with ribbons. The folders were bulging.... and when there were more drawings he tried sending them to the "Aryan side" as often as possible. To do that he would arrange on the phone a meeting with Maria Konowa and he would meet her in Leszno in courts." Cited by Olga Szymańska, "Tell Them To Paint Scenes From the Ghetto," August 18, 2016, The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw. Online at <http://www.jhi.pl/en/blog/2013-08-18-tell-them-to-paint-scenes-from-the-ghetto>.
8. Ibid. Olga Szymańska relates that Jan Żabiński (organiser and the first director of the Warsaw Zoological Garden who hid Jews), Maria Konowa as well as Jarosław and Anna Iwaszkiewicz, whose daughter, Maria, reports the situation: "They had a flat, and documents and a way out prepared for him. It was possible to make phone calls to the ghetto and they did so."
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. In the Adol - Abraham Berman collection. Marya Aszer's parents were Maurycy and Natalia (nee Kramsztyk) at 19, Kleczewska Street.

# Joachim Weingart



Born in Drohobycz, Poland in 1895, Joachim Weingart (Weingarten) had early dreams of widening his artistic horizons. In 1912, he left home at the young age of 17 to attend drawing classes at the

Weimar Art Academy. A photograph shows him participating in the annual carnival that year (Fig. 1). From there, he applied and was accepted to the Berlin Art Academy where he worked with Archipenko, supported by a scholarship from the industrialist patron Carol Kratz. In 1914, Weingart was accepted to the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts (which notoriously rejected another aspiring artist named Adolf Hitler twice), where he no doubt met Léon Weissberg. The two began a lifelong friendship, which continued in Paris.

In 1922, Weingart moved to Berlin and met the Polish artists Zygmunt Menkés and Alfred Aberdam. The trio moved to Paris in 1923, and during these first years in Paris,

Weingart shared a room with Menkés at the Hôtel Médical, which had also been home to Eugeniusz Zak and Marc Chagall. With Alfred Aberdam, Zygmunt Menkés, and Léon Weissberg, Weingart formed the Groupe des Quatre (Group of Four). They were all close in age, Jewish, and from the same mix of



Fig. 1. Weimar School of Fine Arts, the Carnival: Joachim Weingart, 1912.  
© Fenster Archives

cosmopolitan German, Viennese, and Polish cultures. The group exhibited in Jan Sliwinski's Au Sacré du Printemps gallery. In Paris, Weingart's work attracted the eye of the well-known Jewish art dealer René Gimpel. A rare self-portrait survives from this period (Fig. 2).

There are ten works by Weingart in the Ghez Collection. Known for his still lifes and nudes, Weingart used a variety of styles and media. His *Standing Nude* is a rubenesque celebration of sensuality (Fig. 3). In the pink flesh tones of a late Renoir, he presents a nude woman in the odalisque pose, raising (or lowering) her thin

covering to expose a bare breast. *Pink Nude with Small Mirror* is fully unclothed, as she coquettishly examines her face in the mirror she holds while gazing at the viewer (Fig. 4). In all of his work, Weingart pays great attention to paint texture and the materiality of the medium. He shows himself at his most experimental in his three still lifes: *Still Life with Fruit*, *Still Life with Apples*, and *Still Life with Vases and Fruits* (Figs. 5-7).

Attuned to the latest avant-garde trends, they integrate French writing from newspapers or letters into the composition; one can decipher "comme je l'ai dit déjà plusieurs manières de peindre" ("as I already said many ways to paint") and "ça c'est un film" ("this is a



Fig. 2. Self portrait, 1925, drawing

film"). Weingart was not only looking at Picasso and Braque's early cubist collage and papier collé, but also at the more retardataire neoclassical style of painting Picasso adopted in the aftermath of World War I, a period commonly referred to as *Retour à l'ordre* (return to order). In the painting *Motherhood*, Weingart swaps modernist experimentation, spatial deconstruction, and fragmentation for a more figurative approach to the modeling

of objects in space (Fig. 10). The references to modern life give way to a traditional subject of a mother holding her child on her lap in the triangular composition and pose of a Renaissance Madonna and Child (albeit with disproportionately large hands). In *Woman with Fruit Bowl*, the figure exemplifies strength (Fig. 11). Her shoulders are broad, and her strong arms lead the eye diagonally to the bottom-right corner of the composition, where the fruit bowl is positioned. The abstracted figure wears a Matisse-inspired vivid blue, floral-patterned dress. In the study *Children's Heads*, he uses watercolor to tenderly depict two young children (Fig. 12). The older figure on the left gazes down protectively at her younger sibling.

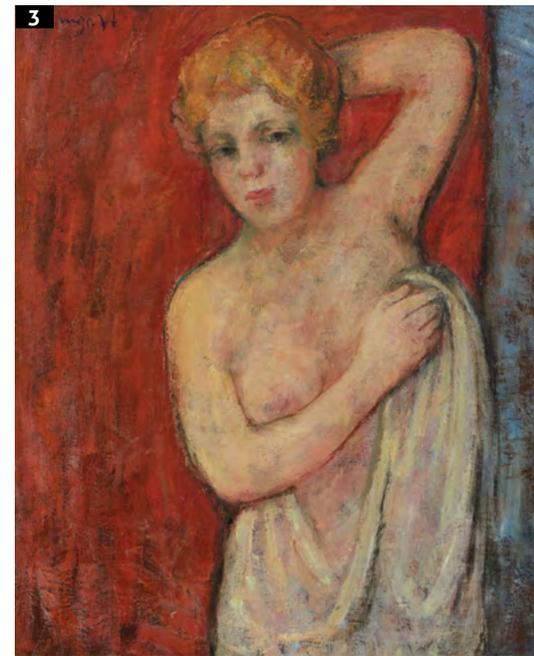
While in Paris, Weingart's art techniques and experiences widened along with his family. In 1925, he married the non-Jewish daughter of a French doctor, Muriel Marquet, despite her parents' opposition. The following year, they had a son, Romain Weingarten, who became accomplished in his own right as a French playwright. The end of the marriage devastated Weingart, and he fell into a deep depression, eventually being hospitalized in a psychiatric institution. Afterward, he isolated himself within the world of his art.

According to several sources, Weingart was arrested by the Nazis while working in his studio in Paris on March 30, 1942, but Chil Aronson claimed in *Scènes et visages de Montparnasse* (1963) that Weingart had turned himself in to the Nazis and that his depression stemmed from having witnessed his father being murdered during a pogrom as a small child in Poland. He was deported to Pithiviers, where he was interned until he was transported to Auschwitz on July 17, 1942 on convoy no. 6 which left France at 6:15 in the morning with 809 men and 119 women aboard. After a two-day journey under horrendous conditions, the train arrived in Auschwitz on July 19, 1942. Weingart is assumed to have died upon arrival or shortly thereafter. Only 45 people from the convoy survived.

Annika Friedman

### Reference

Chil Aronson, Jean-Marie Dunoyer, Jerzy Malinowski, Jose Aberdam, Kenneth Mesdag Ritter, Teriade, Vladimir Mitz, Edouard Roditi. *Ecole de Paris, Le groupe des Quatre* (Paris, Gallimard, 2000).



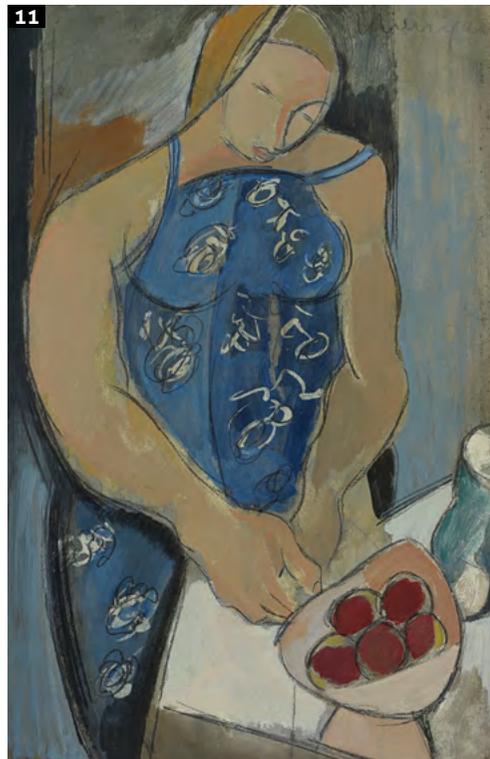
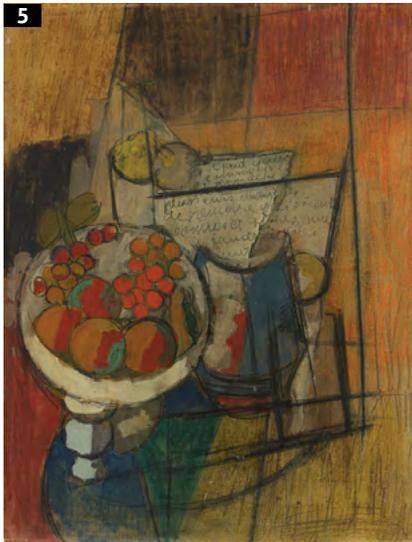


Fig. 3. Standing Nude,  
oil on canvas, 72x59 cm

Fig. 4. Pink Nude with a Small Mirror,  
oil on canvas, 73.5x60 cm

Fig. 5. Still-life with Fruit,  
oil on cardboard, 65x50 cm

Fig. 6. Still-life with Vase and Fruit,  
oil on cardboard, 58x44 cm

Fig. 7. Still Life with Apples,  
oil on canvas, 65x50 cm

Fig. 8. The Knife Sharpener,  
oil on canvas, 50x61 cm

Fig. 9. The Meal, gouache,  
59x48 cm

Fig. 10. Motherhood,  
oil on cardboard, 65x52 cm

Fig. 11. Woman with Fruit Bowl,  
oil on cardboard, 66x43 cm

Fig. 12. Children's Heads,  
aquarelle, 58x45 cm

# Léon Weissberg

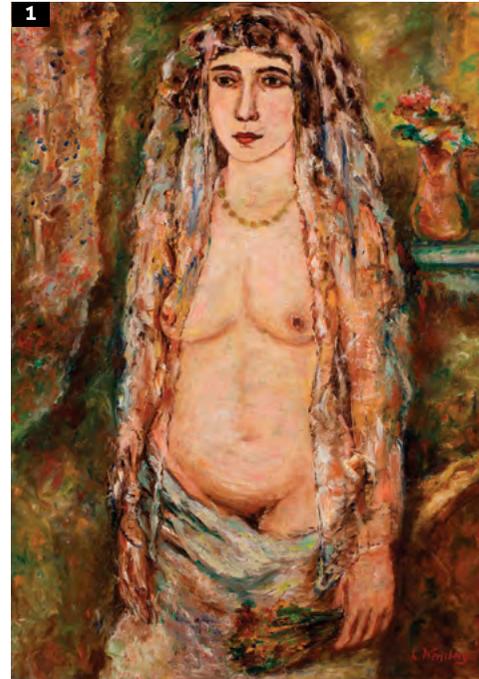


Born into a cultured traditional Jewish family, Léon (Leibuch) Weissberg epitomized the lifestyle of a European artist at the beginning of the 20th century. Although he was born in Przeworsk, a small town in southern Poland, the borders of Europe neither restricted

nor limited his artistic career. It has been said of him that he took his fate into his own hands beginning in childhood. Weissberg's father, a jurist of the local city hall, intended for his son to follow in his footsteps and enter the magistracy. From an early age, he was sent to a boarding school, Gymnasium in Vienna, to attain a proper classical German education. Upon graduation, he rebelled against his father and joined the Viennese School of Arts and Crafts, studying with Oskar Kokoschka. At only 17 years old, he was accepted to the Academy of Fine Arts of Vienna, one of the most highly regarded art institutions of his time. Without the financial aid of his disapproving father, Weissberg supported himself as an artist, through various odd jobs, including playing the

violin in cabarets, giving German lessons to foreigners, and working in manual labor on the reconstruction of the Viennese opera house. During World War I, he served in the Austrian army and after he attended the Munich Academy of Fine Arts in 1919.

In 1923 at the age of 29, Weissberg moved to Paris and became associated with the circle of artists residing in Montparnasse. He frequented the illustrious gathering points of Café de la Rotonde, Café du Dôme, and La Coupole. Within this unique circle of émigrés he was able to grow exponentially as an artist. During his first months in Paris, he met his fellow Galician national, Sigmund Menkès, and together with Alfred Aberdam and Joachim Weingart, they formed the Group des Quatre, who exhibited together at the Au Sacré de Printemps gallery in the fall of 1925. He rented a studio on the rue de Perrel, which had formerly been Le Douanier Rousseau's (and would later become Victor Brauner's). Like many of his peers, he was drawn to orientalist subjects, as evidenced in *The Jewish Bride* of 1926 (Fig. 1). He painted portraits of his fellow artists such as *Portrait of a Man Sitting* (Fig. 2). In 1933, Weissberg moved to Saint Paul de Vence, where Roman Kramsztyk visited him and painted his portrait.



*The Seine and Bridge at Suresnes* is a warm landscape of provincial France, marked by the deep aquamarine of the river leading into the composition and framed by the lush green foliage of the trees on one side and a row of olive trees on the other (Fig. 3). Two fishermen load their boats on the sandy banks of the

river, beneath a small village on the hilltop in the distance.

Weissberg was supported by the dealers Léopold Zborowski and Wladimir Raykis of the gallery Zak. He married Marie Pragier Ber in 1927 and separated six years later. Together they had a daughter Lydie. While closely affected by the political atmosphere in France, Weissberg and his peers were deeply connected to events across Europe. In solidarity as well as resistance against anti-Semitic events in Nazi Germany, Weissberg was the pioneering force behind the 1937 creation of the Association des Artistes Juifs de Paris et de France. The initiative was discussed within the framework of the World Jewish Congress, whose headquarters were located in Paris until the outbreak of the war when they moved to Geneva.

The fall of France in May 1940 sent shockwaves through the country, directly impacting Weissberg and his peers. In June, he sought refuge near his young daughter in Rodez which was under Vichy rule. He took refuge in the village of Aveyron but became ill and was hospitalized. In 1942, he relocated to another residence in the town of Entraygues-



Fig. 1. *The Jewish Bride (La Mariée Juive)*, 1926. oil on canvas, 92x64.5 cm.  
© Tel Aviv Museum of Art

Fig. 2. *Portrait of a Man Sitting*, c. 1923, oil on canvas, 92x73 cm. (Sometimes mistakenly titled *Portrait of Franz Kafka*, we believe it is in fact a portrait of the painter Haber Beron of whom Weissberg made another painting.)

Fig. 3. *The Seine and Bridge at Suresnes*, c. 1936, oil on canvas, 54x73 cm



sur-Truyère, in the south of France. Although he continued painting, his work underwent a drastic change in style and subject matter in response to his status as a beleaguered foreign Jew. Many of the paintings he made during the war, such as his *Self Portrait*, are small in scale and depict clowns and circus scenes that call to mind the Italian *commedia dell'arte* and suggest similarities to Charlotte Salomon's work of the same period, *Life? or Theater?*, as well as the German émigré Wols' *Circus* series (Fig. 4). Their palette is lighter, more pastel; the images veer close to abstraction, and the

paint is applied thickly, with a heavy hand, leaving behind a textured impasto of visible brush strokes suggesting urgency and emotion (Fig. 5).

Despite being incredibly cultured and successful, Weissberg could not escape the grips of the Nazis. On February 18, 1943, Weissberg was arrested in his Entraygues hotel at five o'clock in the morning by two French policemen with whom he had been on friendly terms. His studio was pillaged. He was deported to the Gurs internment

camp and then to Drancy. Weissberg was forced onto the second of two special reprisal convoys, in retaliation for the murder of two German officers less than a month earlier (February 13, 1943). Convoy no. 51 left Drancy on March 6, 1943 with 959 men, 39 women, and two children on board, destined for the Lublin-Majdanek concentration camp. Before he left, Weissberg sent several postcards to Lydie, writing in the margins of the last one, "*Je pars pour destination inconnue*" ("I leave for an unknown destination") (Figs. 6a-b). The horrifying train ride covered 1,500 kilometers,

arriving at its destination five days later on March 11, 1943 whereby all prisoners aboard were immediately murdered.

When the Salon d'Automne reopened in 1946, four landscapes Weissberg painted in 1942 were exhibited in remembrance of the assassinated artist. He was also included in the important exhibition *École de Paris, Oeuvres d'artistes juifs morts en déportation* held at the Galerie Zak in 1955.

Annika Friedman

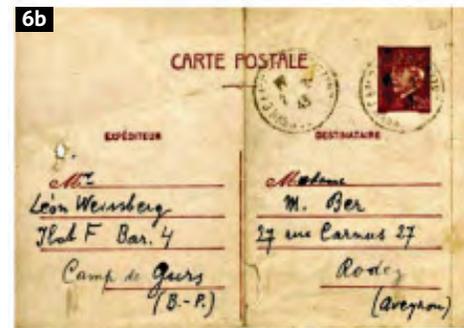
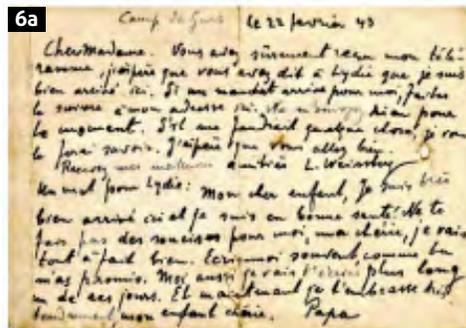


Fig. 4. Self Portrait as a Clown, 1942, oil on canvas, 44.8x30.3 cm. MAHJ © Lydie Lachenal

Fig. 5. House in the Sun, Entraygues-sur-Truyère, 1942, oil on fiber cement, 26x19 cm. © Yad Vashem Art Museum



Figs. 6a-b: Letter to Lydie, February 22, 1943. © Lydie Lachenal



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430	ANTONIE	Juliette	3060
431	ABRAHAM	Abraham	1378
432	ADRIEN	Adrien	784
433	ADYAL	Esthan	784
434	ADRIEN	Salomon	57
435	ADRIEN	Chaklis	769
436	ADRIEN	Wladimir	70
437	ADRIEN	Leib	1377
438	ADRIEN	Octave	8
439	ADRIEN	Abraham	946
440	ADRIEN	Abraham	439
441	ADRIEN	Blanc	947
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452	GOLDBERG	Albert	6.1.1891	Paris	Kaufmann	Frans.	Berchers s.Vaugr.
453	GOLDBERG	Choussman	28.1.1902	Salonika/Polen	Pole	Courtauld, 19 Place Arist.Mr.	
454	GOLDBERG	Stormann	1.1.1894	Theodosie	Hollan-	Russe	Cloyes, 2 rue de Vanlaas
455	GOLDBERG	Hilleg	28.12.1900	Paris	Impenhnd-	Frans.	Cloyes, Rue Ge- traine
456	GOLDBERG	Hilleg	6.9.1905	Paris XI	"	"	"
457	GOLDBERG	Stevocky	21.11.1898	Swabach/Schweis	Kaufmann	"	Bethonvilliers b. Authon
458	GOLDBERG	Bergmann	6.9.1907	Polen	Arbeiter	Pole	St. Louis les Goussiers
459	GOLDBERG	Dasher	29.9.1901	Altkatholik	Frans.	La Ferté Vidame, 9, rue de la Fila	
460	GOLDBERG	Alansham	29.6.1898	Wendler	Chm.	Beaulieu, Rue Adalat	
461	GOLDBERG	Kodensheimer	19.1.1904	Arbeiter	K.A.	Boulay-Maissy	
462	GOLDBERG	Segre	10.9.1905	Pole	La Petite Mac-	collis	
463	GOLDBERG	Kayser	7.2.1905	Arbeiter	Chm.	Borville, Gde. Goryswever	
464	GOLDBERG	Garbus	10.10.1905	Kaufmann	Pole	La Petite Mac-	collis
465	GOLDBERG	Ullmann	30.7.1901	Frans.	Chartres, 50 rue des Chang.	"	"
466	GOLDBERG	Cytrynowicz	25.1.1907	Schiller	"	Paris, Buffon 29	"
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868	WILBER	Arthur	1.8.80	Wasserwerker	Wassbauin
869	WILBER	Fritz	10.7.04	Frankfurt a/Altenau	143 Av.V.Dugo - Paris Mécanicien
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874	WILBER	Arna	23.4.90	Ward	S.F.
875	WILBER	Maurice	17.6.91	Frankfurt	St-maur s/Ande Comptable
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877	WILBER	Léon	18.1.98	Lezovack	Stie rue Farnel-Paris Artiste Peintre
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323	SCHWARZ	Alfred	22-11-1898	Buarest	Paris
324	SCHWARZ	Alfred	22-11-1898	Buarest	Paris
325	SCHWARZ	Alfred	22-11-1898	Buarest	Paris
326	SCHWARZ	Alfred	22-11-1898	Buarest	Paris
327	SCHWARZ	Alfred	22-11-1898	Buarest	Paris
328	SCHWARZ	Alfred	22-11-1898	Buarest	Paris
329	SCHWARZ	Alfred	22-11-1898</		