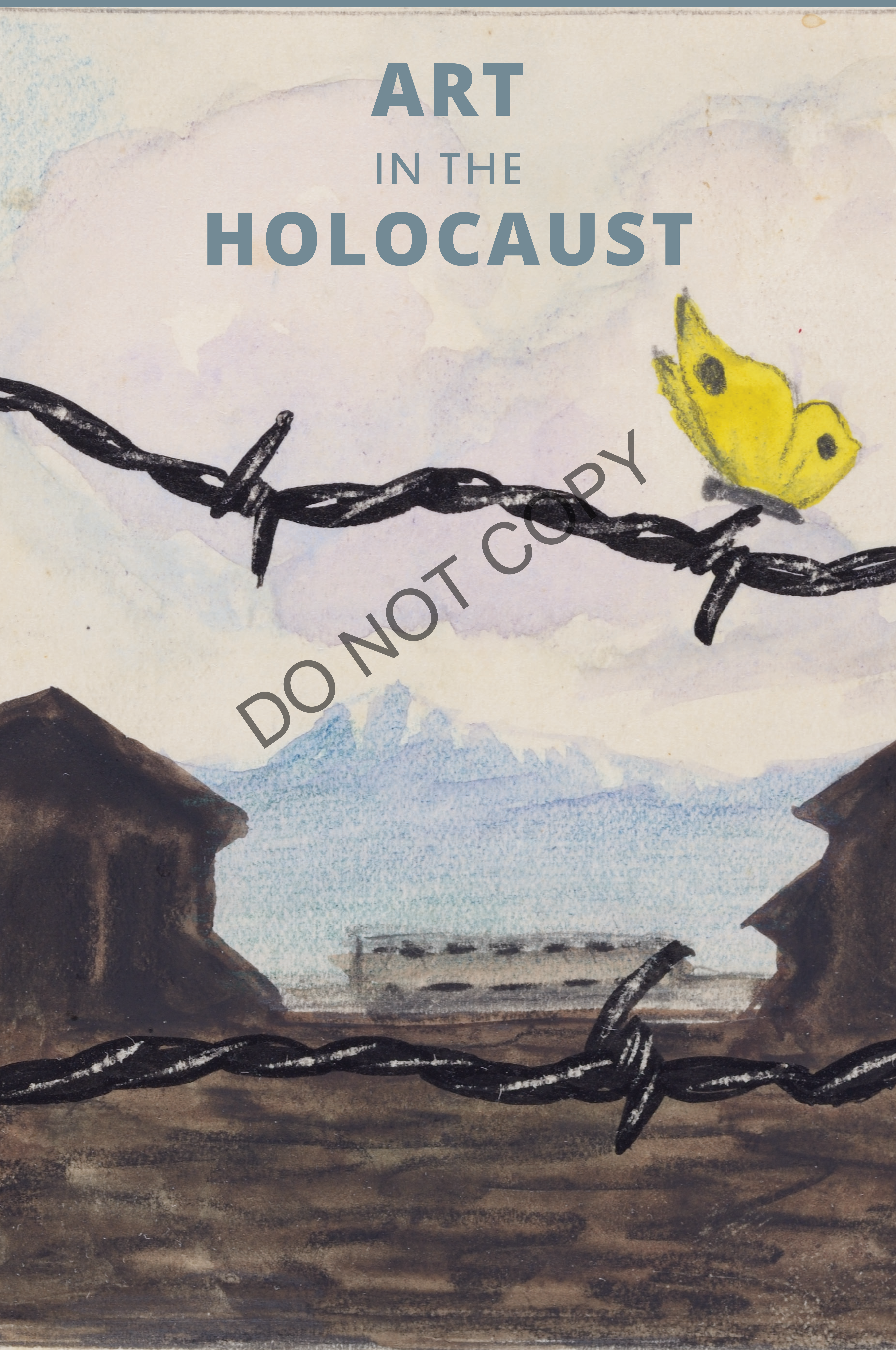




ART IN THE HOLOCAUST



DO NOT COPY

Art in the Holocaust

This exhibition aims to provide a glimpse into Holocaust art through a selection of artworks from the Yad Vashem Collection. The artworks were created by 20 artists during the period of the Holocaust (1939-1945), almost half of whom did not survive. The artworks reflect the tension between the inclination to document the terrible events endured and the desire to break free through art, transcending into the realms of beauty, imagination, and faith. While portraying their brethren, the Jewish artists tried to leave traces for future generations, thus fighting against the process of dehumanization and annihilation carried out by the German Nazis. Despite the appalling living conditions

and the daily struggle to survive, with their resourcefulness the artists overcame the scarcity of materials. Through the works that they created often at risk to their lives, they reasserted their individuality and their will to live. Every work of art from the time of the Holocaust tells at least three stories: that of the depicted, that of the artist, and that of the artwork's survival. Beyond their variety of styles and subjects, the works stand as testimony to the human spirit that stands firm and refuses to surrender. As the author Grete Schmahl-Wolf conveys in her last poem, written on her deathbed in the Theresienstadt Ghetto, "My body's weak and skeletal / but my soul is free."



KARL ROBERT BODEK

1905, Czernowitz (Cernăuți), Bukovina - 1942, Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp

KURT CONARD LÖW

1914, Vienna, Austria - 1980, Vienna, Austria

One Spring, Gurs Camp, 1941

Watercolor, India ink and pencil on paper

14.4x10.3 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Annelies Haymann, Kiryat Bialik

The painting is the fruit of a collaboration between two artists who worked together in the Gurs camp. The yellow butterfly on the barbed wire, free to fly anywhere it desires, heralds the spring and breeds hope; it represents the prisoners' longing for freedom, in contrast to the dark barracks.



The exhibition is a joint venture of the Art Department and the Traveling Exhibitions Department, Museums Division, Yad Vashem.

Research & Writing: Art Department, Museums Division

Production: Traveling Exhibitions Department, Museums Division

Graphic Design: Information Technology Division, Yad Vashem

SHOAH - The Holocaust

The Holocaust was an unprecedented genocide, total and systematic, perpetrated by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, with the aim of annihilating the Jewish people, culture and traditions from the face of the Earth. The primary motivation for the Holocaust was the Nazis' antisemitic racist ideology. Between 1933 and 1941, Nazi Germany pursued a policy of increasing persecution that dispossessed the Jews of their rights and property, and later branded and concentrated the Jewish populations under their rule into designated areas. By the end of 1941, the policy had developed into an overall comprehensive, systematic operation that the Nazis called "The Final Solution to the Jewish Question". These policies gained broad support in Germany and across much of the European continent.

Nazi Germany designated the Jews of Europe, and eventually the rest of the world, for total extermination. Alongside the mass extermination of millions by shooting, millions of Jews from all over Europe were rounded up and deported on freight trains to extermination camps - industrial facilities in which the Jews were gassed to death. During the entire process of registration, rounding-up and boarding the trains, the Germans deceived the victims as to the real purpose of their journey.

By the war's end in 1945, some six million Jews had been murdered.



MARCEL JANCO

1895, Bucharest, Romania - 1984, Ein Hod, Israel

Under the Boot of the Nazi Oppressor,
Bucharest, 1940

India ink on paper
32.3x24 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem

Yad Vashem was established in 1953, as the world center for Holocaust commemoration, documentation, research and education. As the Jewish people's living memorial to the Shoah, Yad Vashem safeguards the memory of the past and imparts its meanings for future generations.





FELIX NUSSBAUM

The Refugee, Brussels, 1939

Oil on canvas

59.7x74.7 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem

In this painting Nussbaum conveyed the existential experience of the German Jew, stripped of his citizenship, searching for refuge in an alienated and hostile world. The refugee holds his head in his hands, in a gesture of despair. Near him are his sack and staff, indicating his wanderings in a threatening world, which is represented by the large, darkened globe, casting a bleak shadow. The refugee's size in comparison to the elongated table emphasizes his helplessness. The exposed walls resemble a prison cell, yet the gate here is open. However, there is no chance of escape, for outside desolation prevails: leafless trees and black birds – recurrent symbols in Nussbaum's works – herald death and loss.

Nussbaum sent this painting to his father who hid it, along with other paintings, in Amsterdam.

After his father was murdered in Auschwitz in 1944, the painting was transferred to private hands and finally sold at auction in Amsterdam.

Felix Nussbaum | 1904, Osnabrück, Germany – 1944, Auschwitz-Birkenau camp

Following the Nazi rise to power, Nussbaum wandered through Europe and in 1935 sought refuge in Belgium for himself and his partner, the artist Felka Platek. Following the German occupation of Belgium in May 1940, Nussbaum was arrested and interned in the Saint Cyprien camp in southern France. Several months later, he escaped and returned to Brussels, where he went into hiding with his wife. In June 1944 the couple was denounced, arrested, and transferred to the Mechelen camp. In July they were deported on the last transport from Belgium to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where they were murdered.





BEN ZION (NOLIK) SCHMIDT

The Evacuation, Kovno Ghetto, 1942

Watercolor and ink on paper

9.1x14 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Pnina and Avraham Tory (Tory Collection), Israel

This watercolor depicts the evacuation of Jews from their homes in the Kovno ghetto in January 1942. The latter were forced to vacate their homes from Demokratu Square on very short notice, in order to house in their place Jews deported from Germany. The evacuees' faces express their panic and helplessness, and their clothes attest to the freezing cold weather that day, which, according to witnesses, dipped to minus thirty degrees Celsius. Painted by Ben Zion Schmidt at the age of seventeen, this is his only known surviving artwork.

Ben Zion (Nolik) Schmidt | 1925, Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania – 1944, Kovno Ghetto, Lithuania

In 1942, at the age of seventeen, Schmidt was interned in the Kovno ghetto, where he worked in the graphics workshop. At the request of Avraham Tory, Secretary of the Judenrat, Schmidt painted scenes of ghetto life. In July 1944, during the liquidation of the ghetto, he hid with about ten others in the bunker of the graphics workshop. When the ghetto was set on fire, he was burned to death there, aged only nineteen. Of all his works, only a single painting survived. This painting was hidden by Tory, along with other papers and artworks documenting ghetto life.





ARNOLD DAGHANI

Juden Lager, Mikhailowka Camp, 1942

Gouache and ink on paper

13.7X16.7 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem

While Daghani was expelled from the Czernowitz ghetto, he took all his art supplies with him, as advised by one of the policemen, who thought that they would be of use to him later. While in the Mikhailowka camp, Daghani painted the daily life in the camp as well as portraits of prisoners, officers, and guards, using his paints and pieces of paper supplied to him secretly by the village priest. The Mikhailowka labor camp, in which deportees from Ukraine and Bukovina were concentrated was located across the Bug River, in southwest Ukraine, and was supervised by the German Police. The sign on the camp gate reads "Juden Lager" (Jews' camp) with a gallows next to it.

Arnold Daghani | 1909, Suceava, Bukovina –1989, Hove, England

In the early 1930s, Daghani moved to Bucharest. After his marriage in June 1940 to Anișoara Rabinovici, Daghani and his wife moved to Czernowitz (Cernăuți). In October 1941, with the initiation of *Operation Barbarossa*, the two were deported to the Czernowitz ghetto, then sent to forced labor at Ladizhin in June 1942. Two months later, they were incarcerated in the Mikhailowka camp in Transnistria. In July 1943, the couple escaped to the Bershad ghetto. Through the intervention of the Red Cross, they were freed on December 31, 1943 making their way to Tiraspol. They arrived in Bucharest in March 1944, where they remained through the end of the war.





GERARD (GERSHON) POLAK

Peeling Potatoes in Hiding, Amsterdam, 1943-1945

Gouache on paper

38.8x48.8 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of the heirs of Gerard Polak

In the autumn of 1943, after the Nazis confiscated their apartment and after a desperate search for a hiding place in Amsterdam, the young couple Gerard and Johanna Polak found refuge with their former neighbors, who owned a boarding house. Gerard's mother was already hiding there, paying for her refuge. They were hidden in the cellar, where the belongings of the boarders were stored.

The painting depicts Gerard's mother assisting in the kitchen chores, next to a pail of potatoes to be peeled. In the corner, one can discern crates belonging to the boarders. On the wall hangs a chessboard, prepared by the artist in order to pass the time for his mother and his wife.

While in hiding, the artist signed his works with the pseudonym "Dibbes".

Gerard (Gershon) Polak | 1912, Amsterdam, Holland - 2004, Jerusalem, Israel

Following the occupation of Holland in May 1940 and the implementation of the racial laws, Polak was banned from continuing in his profession as a lawyer, and started painting.

In the spring of 1944, less than a year after Polak and his wife Johanna went into hiding, it became apparent that Johanna was pregnant. In June, after she bore their daughter, she registered both of them under false identities with the Ministry of the Interior. Thus, they were able to move about relatively freely and found a place to live. After some months, Gerard and his mother joined them.

In April 1945, following blackmail and the threat of being denounced, the family was forced to leave their apartment in panic, and hide in another apartment, provided by the underground. After liberation, Polak and his wife returned to their formerly confiscated apartment. In January 1970, the Polak family immigrated to Israel.





ALEXANDER BOGEN (KATZENBOGEN)

Partisan, Narocz Forests, 1943

India ink on paper

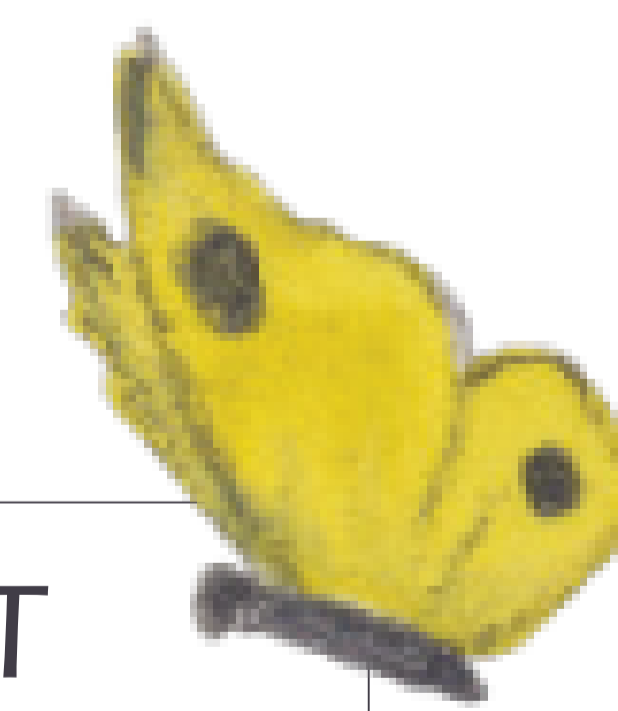
22.5x14.4 cm

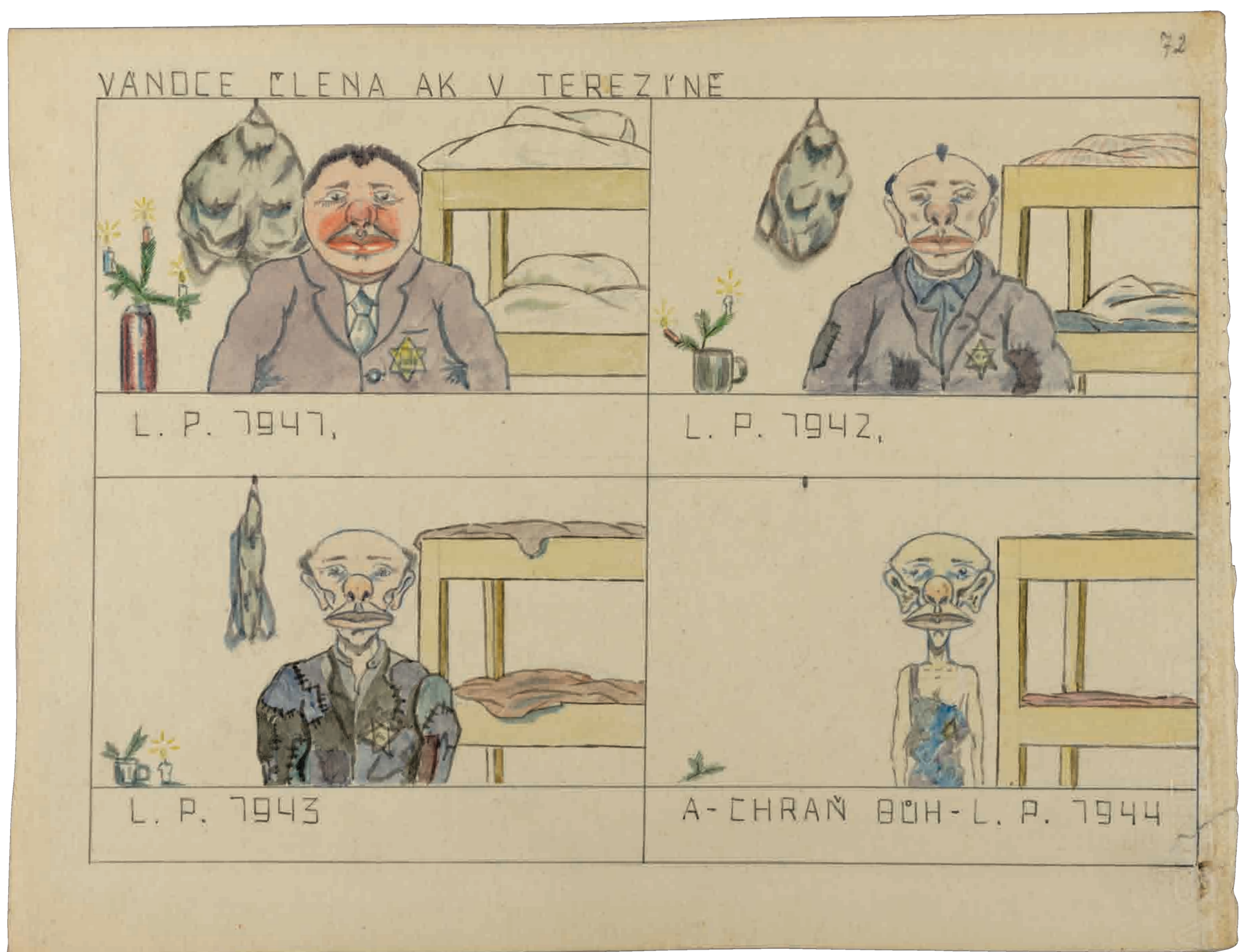
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of the artist

As part of his duties as a partisan in the Narocz Forests about 120 km to the east of Vilna, Alexander Bogen documented the fighters and their activities. He drew his comrades in scenes of battle, hunger, at rest, and fatigue. Lacking proper art materials, he used wrapping paper that he had found, and burned dry branches to create charcoal. He used his penknife and wooden boards for carving woodcut blocks. In addition to its important documentary value, the glorification of the partisans and the commemoration of their courage played an important role in maintaining the fighters' morale, and in psychological warfare.

Alexander Bogen (Katzenbogen) | 1916, Tartu, Estonia - 2010, Tel Aviv, Israel

When Alexander Bogen was two years old the family moved to Vilna. With the commencement of Operation Barbarossa, he and his wife, Rachel, attempted to escape, but they were caught and interned in the Święciany ghetto and later in the Vilna ghetto. In 1943 Bogen fled to the Narocz Forests, where he joined the partisans. He returned to the Vilna ghetto, charged with the mission of organizing groups of youths, smuggling them out, and bringing them to the partisans. His wife and mother-in-law also joined him. When the war ended, the couple returned to Vilna. He and his wife immigrated to Israel in 1951.





PAVEL FANTL

Metamorphosis, Theresienstadt Ghetto, 1944

Watercolor, pencil and India ink on paper
22.8x29.7 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Ida Fantlová, the artist's mother, courtesy of Ze'ev and Alisa Shek, Caesarea

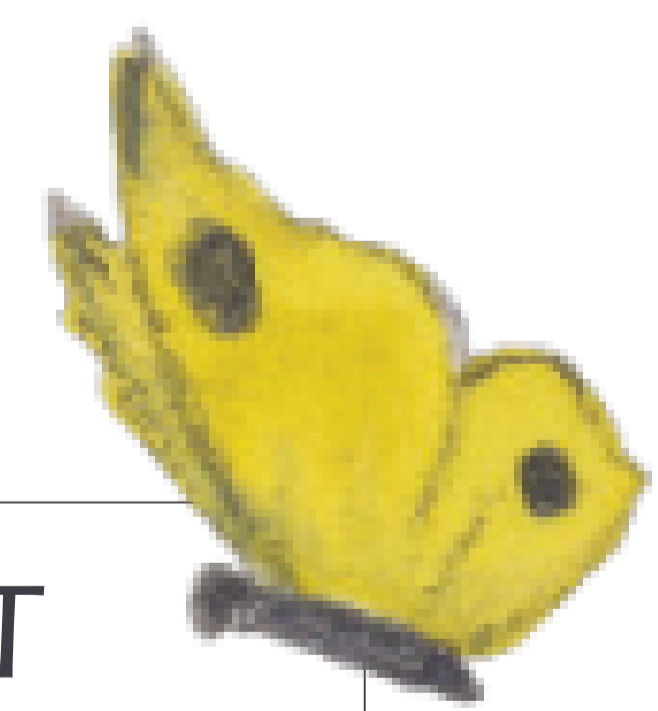
In this depiction, Fantl uses satire to describe the metamorphosis taking place over four years to a member of Transport "AK." This transport, that the artist was part of, was the first to arrive at the Theresienstadt ghetto in the end of November 1941. From a plump man equipped with a sack of basic goods, all that remains is a walking skeleton, dressed in rags, awaiting his death. Only the Yellow Star, marking him as a persecuted Jew, remains unaltered. The three Christmas candles have been extinguished, and with them any spark of hope.

Inscription:

Christmas in Terezin of a member of transport AK
1941 A.D.
1942 A.D.
1943 A.D.
1944 A.D. and God forbid

Pavel Fantl | 1903, Prague, Czechoslovakia - 1945, Hirschberg, Germany

In 1935 Fantl was married and was inducted into the Czechoslovak Army as a medical officer. In 1939 he was dismissed for being a Jew. In June 1942 Fantl was transported to the Theresienstadt ghetto with his mother, Ida, his wife, Marie, and their son, Tomas, where he directed the hospital for quarantined typhus patients. He used his position to relay information to the outside world, thus arousing the Germans' suspicions. He was imprisoned in the Small Fortress, where he was interrogated and tortured. After being released to his living quarters, he smuggled out about eighty of his sketches. In October 1944 Fantl was deported to Auschwitz with his wife and by then seven-year-old son, who were murdered upon arrival; Fantl was sent to the Schwarzheide camp in Germany. He was shot to death on a death march in January 1945.





LEO (LEV) HAAS

Ballad of the Terezin ghetto, Theresienstadt Ghetto, 1943

India ink and wash on paper

50.5x71.2 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of the Prague Committee for Documentation, courtesy of Ze'ev and Alisa Shek, Caesarea

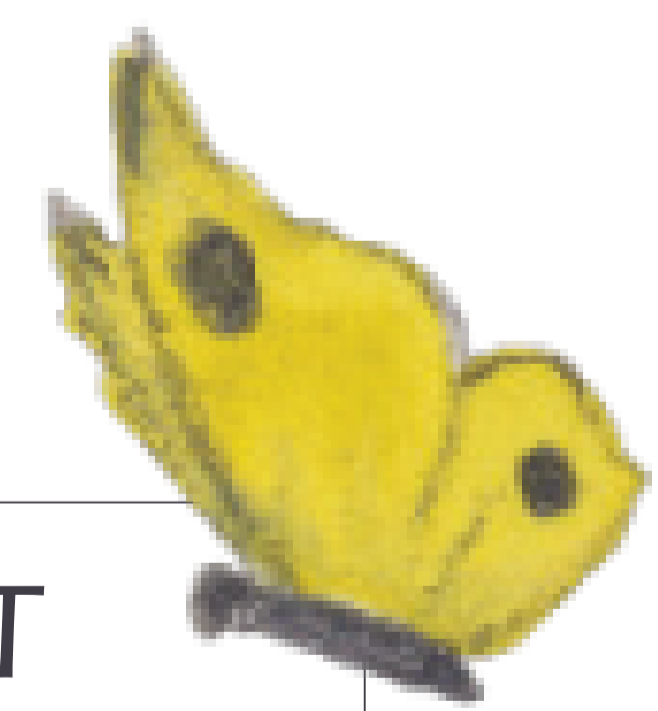
In this detailed drawing, with over 25 different scenes, Haas depicts the daily life of prisoners in the Theresienstadt ghetto. The cycle begins in the lower left, where new internees are brought into the ghetto on a wagon. Next to the new comers, is the endless line for food distribution mixing with swarms of people moving in and out of the ghetto. The crowded barracks and hard living conditions are visible throughout, and the inmates' forced labor is represented through the construction of train tracks in the ghetto.

Despite the chaos and disarray, the artist also shows heartening moments of everyday life, like caring for children, the sick, and the elderly, or maintaining religious life and observance. In the lower right corner, a nurse tenderly cares for a baby. In front of her, a man is wrapped in a prayer shawl and phylacteries. Above them, the artist gives a peek into an attic concert. Correspondingly, on the opposite side, another figure prays next to a pile of coffins, and over the coffins, the *Ballad of the Terezin ghetto* is performed in front of an audience in a rundown building. On the roof of that same building, sits a figure looking out at the horizon, past the barbed wire fences, hoping for a better future.

The artist's presence is hinted at in the bottom right, through the inclusion of hands in the process of drawing. Another reference to the subversive act of drawing is the hidden letter "V," appearing on the brick wall in the center of the artwork. This sign was used by the artists of the Theresienstadt ghetto as a symbol for their struggle to secretly document the horrors of the ghetto.

Leo (Lev) Haas | 1901, Opava, Moravia – 1983, Berlin, Germany

Due to his membership with the Communist Party, Haas was arrested in 1939 and was deported to the Nisko camp, then transferred to a forced labor unit in Ostrava. In September 1942, he was transported to the Theresienstadt ghetto. Together with other artists in Theresienstadt, he secretly painted scenes of ghetto life. In June 1944, artists were accused of smuggling their work out of the ghetto, resulting in Haas's imprisonment in the Small Fortress and his vicious torture. In October of that same year, Haas was deported to Auschwitz; one month later, he was transported to the Sachsenhausen camp. In February 1945, he was taken to the Mauthausen camp and then to Ebensee camp, where he was liberated. After the war, Haas returned to Theresienstadt and retrieved around four hundred of his paintings that he had hidden in the ghetto.





MALVA SCHALEK (MALVÍNA SCHALKOVÁ)

Rest, Theresienstadt Ghetto, 1942-1944

Pencil and watercolor on paper

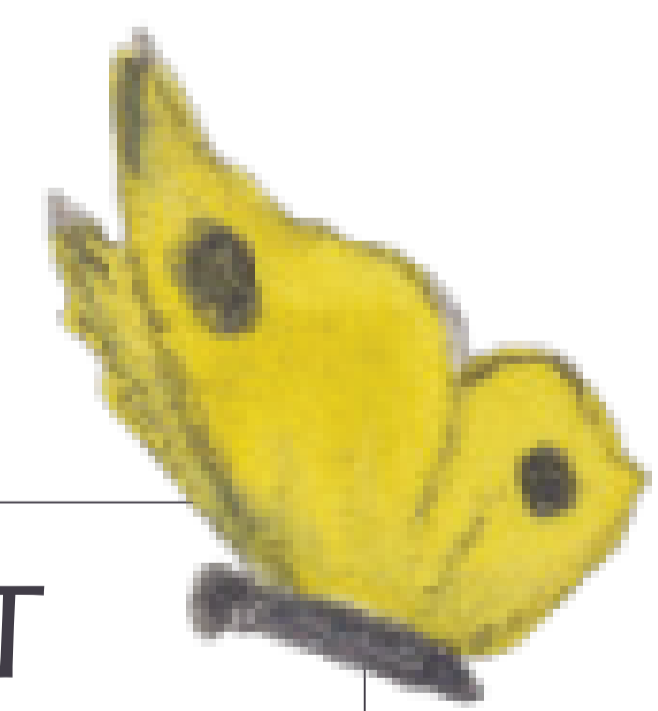
31.2x47.5 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Miriam Novitch

An elderly woman, in an open space with no privacy, tries to catch a moment of rest. Her tense body, the shoes at her feet and the suitcase perched on the bed, all emphasize the transient character of the scene.

Malva Schalek (Malvína Schalková) | 1882, Prague, Czechoslovakia – 1944, Auschwitz-Birkenau

In March 1938, after the Anschluss, Schalek fled to her brother in Litoměřice, Czechoslovakia. In 1940 she escaped to Prague. In February 1942, aged sixty, she was arrested and transported to the Theresienstadt ghetto on Transport "W". She painted numerous portraits in the ghetto as well as scenes of everyday life. In May 1944 Schalek refused to paint a portrait for a physician collaborating with the Nazis. Consequently, she was deported on Transport "Eb" to the "Family Camp" in Auschwitz-Birkenau, where she was murdered in September. After the war, about 140 of her paintings were located behind a double wall in one of the barracks in the ghetto and given to her brother, who had survived in hiding.





JAN BURKA

Deportees, Theresienstadt Ghetto, 1942-1944

crayon, pencil on paper

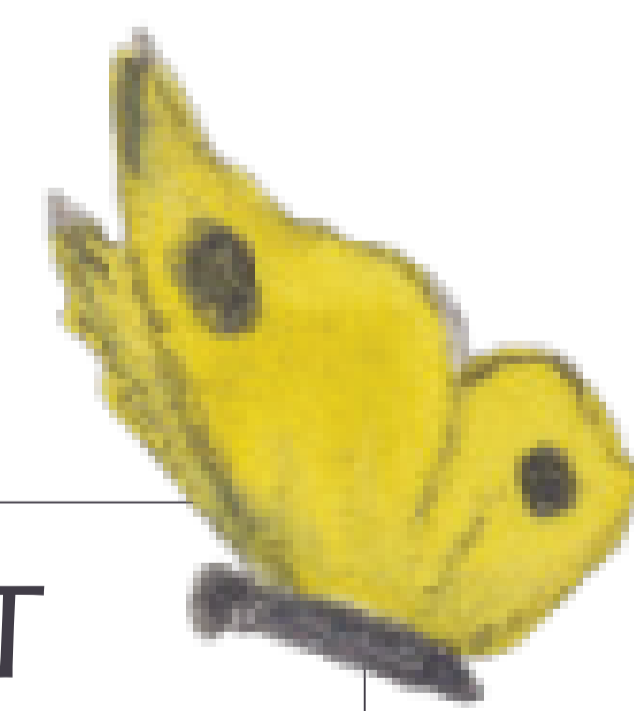
50x32.5 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Rose, Israel

Hordes of people march along a narrow street, led into to the unknown by soldiers in dark uniforms, holding bayonets in their hands. The people are crowded together, their faces hidden from the viewer, except for one male figure, located on the front plateau of the drawing, his belongings on his shoulder, and two children clutching him tightly. Burka's use of a convergent composition that appears to be closed to the people and does not allow room for escape hints at their bitter destiny that is about to be realized.

Jan Burka | 1924, Postoloprty, Bohemia – 2009, L'Isle sur la Sorgue, France

After Germany annexed the Sudetenland in 1938, Burka's family fled to Prague, leaving behind everything they owned. In August 1942 Burka and his brother Raymond were transported to the Theresienstadt ghetto, where Jan worked in the SS gardens and later in the ghetto's kitchen. Burka's brother, a carpenter, helped him build a small attic studio. In October 1944 Burka was reported for a transport "to the East," but at the last moment, he managed to avoid deportation. Upon liberation in 1945, Burka and his wife, Ellen Danby, whom he met in the ghetto, moved to Amsterdam.





JOSEF KOWNER

A Street in Lodz Ghetto, Lodz Ghetto, 1941

Watercolor on paper

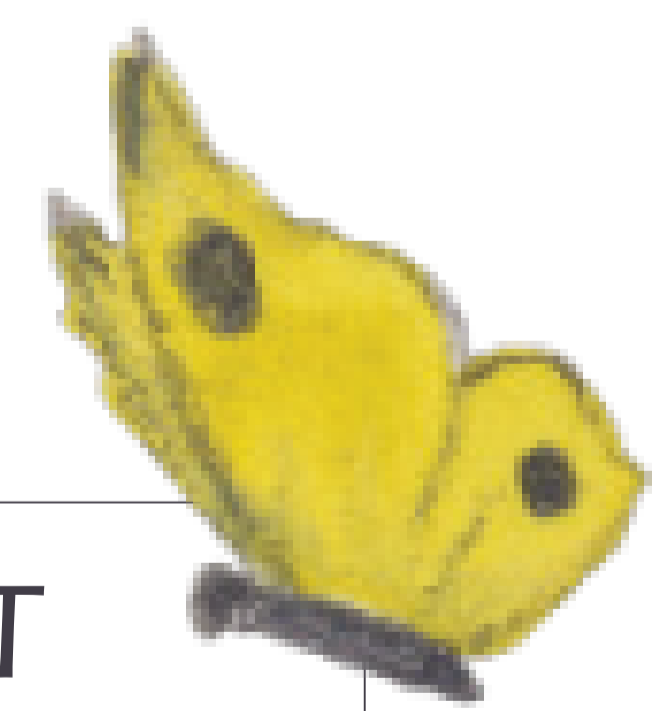
26.2x35.3 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Leon & Carmela Kowner, Haifa

Despite the artist's internment in the Lodz ghetto, Josef Kowner chose to depict his surroundings using dabs of paint, gentle brushstrokes, and unexpected color palette. So much so, that it is impossible to imagine the circumstances under which this watercolor was created. Art and music bolstered Kowner's spirits in the ghetto, providing a spiritual refuge from the depressing reality. He exhibited his paintings in the ghetto and secretly held concerts in his apartment.

Josef Kowner | 1895, Kiev, Ukraine – 1967, Kalmar, Sweden

Kowner moved to Lodz with his family as a child. After the German occupation, he was incarcerated in the Lodz ghetto, there he made designs for the ghetto carpet workshop. Kowner was one of the two painters who were sponsored by Chaim Rumkowski, chairman of the *Judenrat*. Deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944, he was transferred to the Wöbbelin camp near Ludwigslust, Germany. Liberated in May 1945, he immigrated to Sweden. His friend Nachman Zonabend retrieved the artworks which were hidden in the Lodz ghetto and returned them to Kowner.





CAROL DEUTSCH

"And He Rested on the Seventh Day" (Genesis 2:2), Antwerp, 1941-1942

Gouache, water color, ink and crayon on paper

70.2x52.2 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Bequest of the artist's daughter, Ingrid Hendrickx Abrams, Chicago

This gouache painting is part of a series of ninety-nine works depicting stories from the Pentateuch. In the midst of the war, Carol Deutsch embarked on a series of artworks that proudly declared his Jewish identity, gift for his infant daughter. The illustrations are replete with influences of Art Nouveau ornamentation, as well as the Bezalel School style with which Deutsch became familiar during his stay in the Holy Land in 1935.

In the illustration "And He Rested on the Seventh Day", which depicts the seventh day of creation, the artist shows one of the fundamental tenets of Judaism – maintaining the sanctity of the Sabbath, the day of rest. The decorative Kabbala symbols and names indicate his expertise in the Jewish mysticism while his use of three languages (Hebrew, English and French) in the illustrations' titles taken from Scriptural verse reveal his extensive and diverse education.

Carol Deutsch | 1894, Antwerp, Belgium - 1944, Buchenwald Camp

During the years 1930–1935, Deutsch served as president of the Ostend Jewish community. In 1934, he met Felicia (Fela) Bronsztajn, a Jewish refugee from Poland and the two fell in love. He traveled to the Land of Israel in 1935 for a year where he painted landscapes and upon his return, he married Fela. The couple hid in a rural area near Brussels between 1942 and 1943, but were informed upon, arrested, and deported to Auschwitz in September 1943. Fela was murdered there; Deutsch was deported to the Sachsenhausen camp and arrived on a death march to the Buchenwald camp, where he perished. Their daughter Ingrid was hidden with her grandmother in the home of a Catholic family in southern Belgium. They both survived.





PETR GINZ

Moon Landscape, Theresienstadt Ghetto, 1942-1944

Pencil on paper

21x14.6 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Otto Ginz, Haifa

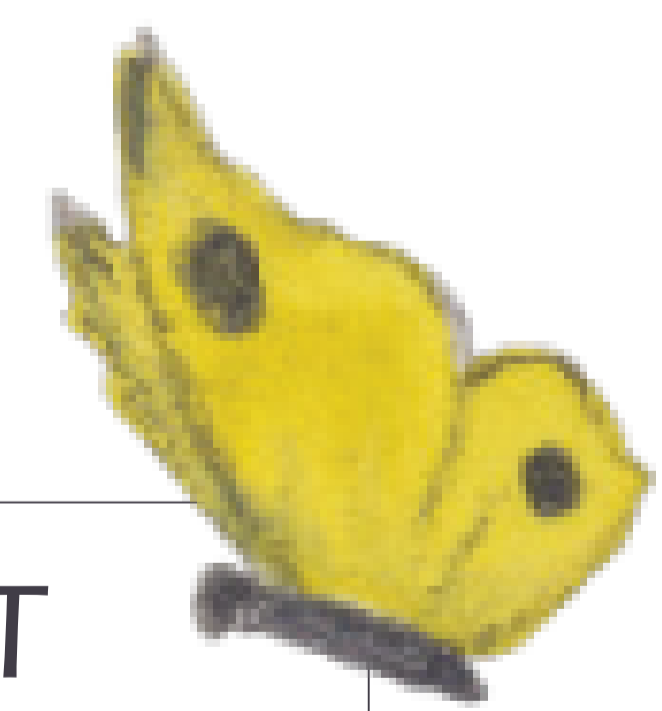
During Ginz's incarceration in the Theresienstadt ghetto, he found refuge in drawing and in his imagination. Therefore, he depicted the Moon's landscape with a view of Earth as seen from the Moon. In 2003, prior to the launch of the space shuttle Columbia, Israel's first astronaut, Ilan Ramon, asked to take items related to the Holocaust with him. He received a copy of the drawing "Moon Landscape" from Yad Vashem.

As a second-generation of Holocaust survivors, Ramon said, "I feel that my journey fulfills the dream of Petr Ginz fifty-eight years on. A dream that is ultimate proof of the greatness of the soul of a boy imprisoned within the ghetto walls, the walls of which could not conquer his spirit. Ginz's drawings, safeguarded in the Yad Vashem Art Collection, are a testimony to the triumph of the spirit."

On February 1, 2003, shortly after reentering the earth's atmosphere, the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated. All the crew members perished.

Petr Ginz | 1928, Prague, Czechoslovakia – 1944, Auschwitz-Birkenau

Following the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, and the implementation of Nazi antisemitic policy, Ginz was expelled from school in 1940. In October 1942, he was transported to the Theresienstadt ghetto. His sister Eva and father were transported there later. With his friends in the youth barracks, he edited and published the magazine *Vedem* (we are leading) combining drawings, stories, poems and articles. On September 28, 1944, Petr and his cousin Pavel Ginz were deported on Transport "Ek" to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where they were murdered. After liberation, his works were given to his father by one of the survivors of the youth barracks in the Theresienstadt ghetto.





CHARLOTTE SALOMON

Self-portrait, Villefranche-sur-Mer, 1939-1941

Crayon on paper

38.7x29 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Otilie Gobel Bourne, Washington State

“The war raged on and I sat there by the sea and looked deep into the heart of humanity.”

Charlotte Salomon was engaged extensively in issues of self-image and identity in her autobiographical work *Life? or Theater?*, which she produced between 1940 and 1942 while living as a refugee on the French Riviera. This portrait is one of the two examples known to us that relate strictly to the genre of self-portraiture. Its uniqueness lies in the face's greenish coloration and the flat, curving lines that lend the picture an expressionistic character and reveal existential anxiety.

Charlotte Salomon | 1917, Berlin, Germany – 1943, Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp

Following *Kristallnacht* in 1938, when Charlotte's father was arrested, her parents decided to send Charlotte to her grandparents who found refuge in the south of France. There, she created an autobiographical illustrated musical play, *Life? or Theatre?*, comprising more than 700 paintings. In June 1943, she married Alexander Nagler, also a Jewish refugee. Both were arrested in September and sent to the Drancy camp. In October 7, they were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Charlotte, who was pregnant, was murdered immediately.





HALINA OLOMUCKI

The Armband Peddler, Warsaw Ghetto, 1942

Pencil and crayon on paper

20.5x13.6 cm

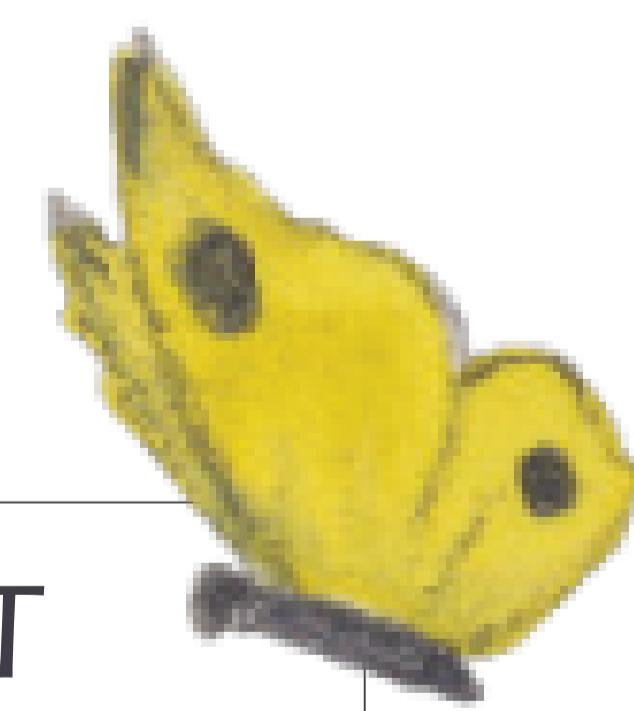
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem

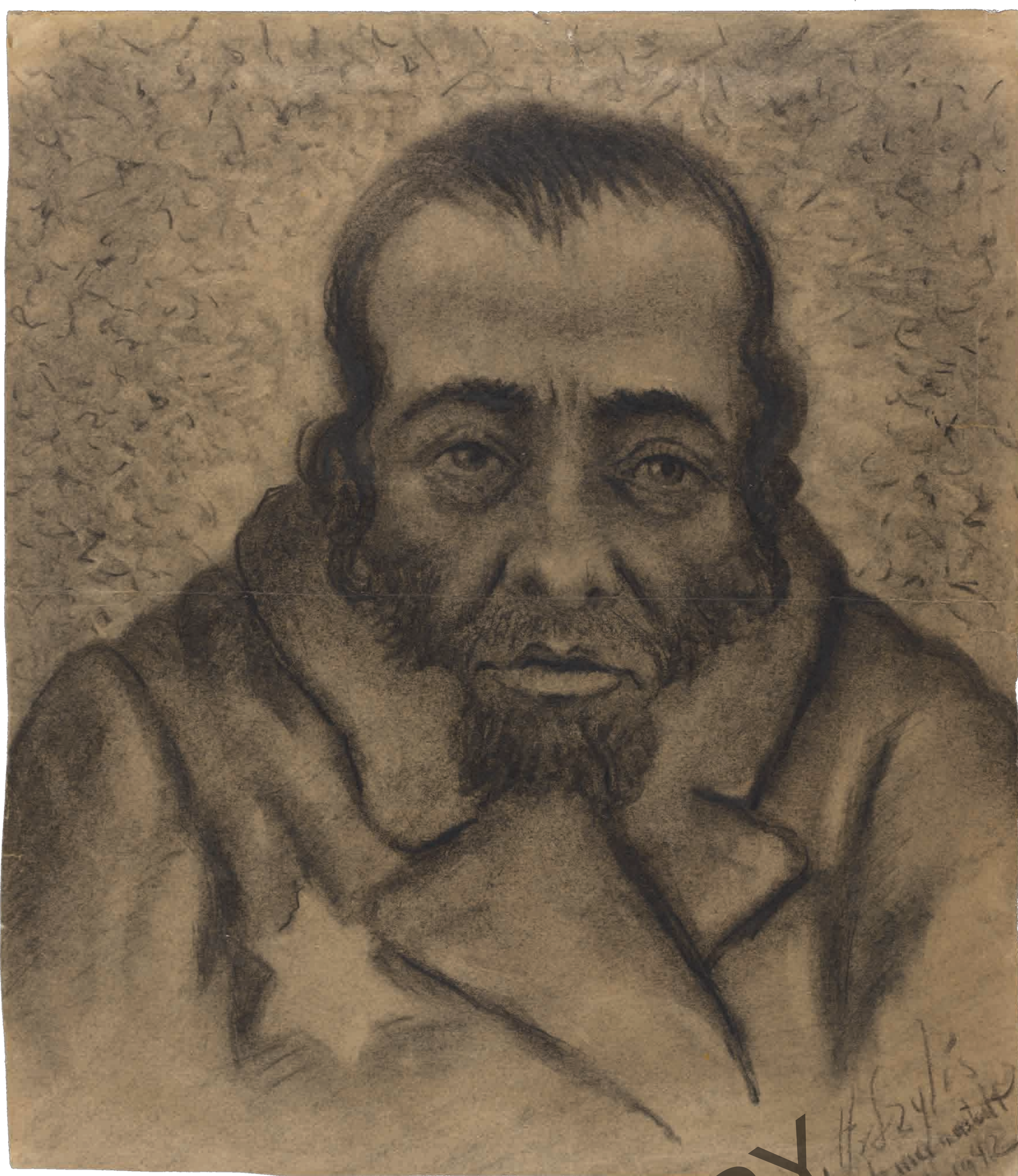
This drawing depicts a gaunt boy, dressed in worn out garments in the Warsaw ghetto. The boy sells white armbands with a blue Star of David.

Following the Nazi occupation of Poland in September 1939, Jews were ordered to wear these armbands. This humiliating decree was one of many anti-Jewish measures imposed by the Nazis, designed to segregate Jews from the rest of the population, and allowing their quick identification. Wearing that armband remained mandatory in the ghetto. Throughout the ghetto were signs warning residents not to forget to wear the armband, stating heavy penalties for those caught not wearing it.

Halina Olomucki | 1919, Warsaw, Poland – 2007, Ashkelon, Israel

In 1939, Olomucki and her family were interned in the Warsaw ghetto, where she drew scenes of daily life; she smuggled her works out of the ghetto to a Polish friend. In May 1943, she was deported with her mother Margarita to the Majdanek camp. In July 1943, Olomucki was transported to Auschwitz and assigned to forced labor in the Weichsel-Union-Metallwerke ammunition factory. In January 1945, she was sent on a death march to the Ravensbrück camp and from there to the Neustadt-Glewe camp, where she was liberated on May 2, 1945. Olomucki returned to Warsaw hoping to be reunited with her family – but no one had survived. In 1957, she moved to France and in 1972 immigrated to Israel.





ZVI HIRSCH SZYLIS

Ghetto Resident with Jewish Badge, Lodz Ghetto, 1942

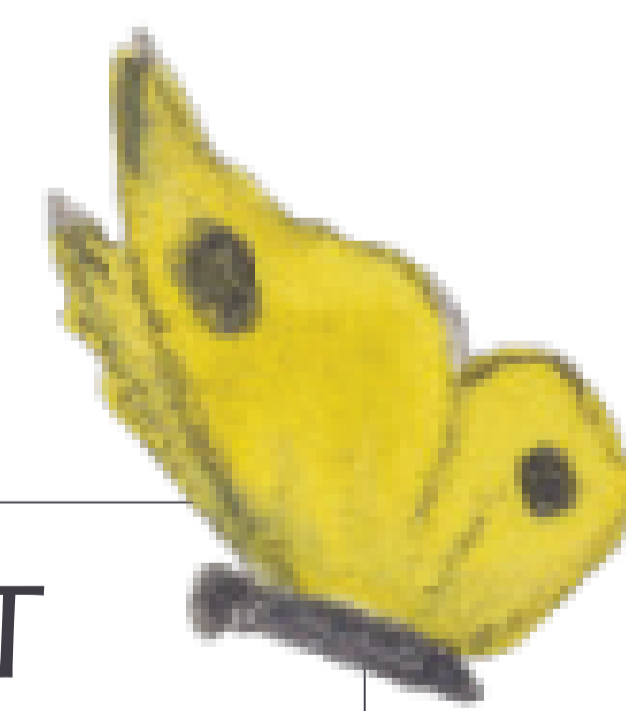
Charcoal on paper
31.5x27.5 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Borys Szacman, Copenhagen

In this poignant figure of a religious man with sidelocks and beard, the artist emphasizes the subject's dire physical and emotional state. In this frontal close-up, the viewer is confronted with the figure's direct gaze. On his large overcoat, which protects him from the elements, a Yellow Star stands out, marking him as a persecuted Jew.

Zvi Hirsch Szylis | 1909, Bełchatów, Poland – 1987, Safed, Israel

A well-known artist before World War II, Szylis exhibited his work throughout Poland. In the beginning of 1940 Szylis was interned in the Lodz ghetto. Hans Biebow, the head of the ghetto administration, was impressed by his artwork and instructed the *Judenrat* to grant him a stipend. In return, he was forced to paint portraits of the ghetto's SS officers. Using frayed sacks as canvas, he secretly depicted images of the ghetto. In 1944 he was deported to Auschwitz and from there to the Oranienburg camp in Germany. In March 1945 he was transported first to the Flossenbürg camp and then to the Dachau camp. After the war, Szylis continued to study and produce art in Munich before moving to Paris in 1950. He immigrated to Israel in 1957.





ILKA GEDŐ

Self-Portrait in the Ghetto, Budapest Ghetto, 1944

Pencil on paper

22.5x21.8 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Mr. Dávid Bíró, Budapest

This self-portrait, one of the artist's earliest, is characterized by the blurring of the figure, which cancels her identity. The artist, just twenty-three years old, depicted herself as an old woman. Her shaded face and eyes and her stooped shoulders express fatigue and depression.

In her post-war self-portraits, Ilka Gedő continued with this expressive approach to her painful introspection.

Ilka Gedő | 1921, Budapest, Hungary – 1985, Budapest, Hungary

With the German occupation in 1944, Gedő was confined to one of the Budapest “yellow-star houses”, and in November interned in the ghetto. Summoned for transport “Eastward,” an elderly Jew reported in her place and thus she managed to remain hidden in the ghetto. After Budapest was liberated in January 1945, she began studies at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts but had to leave six months later. She resumed painting in 1968 after a long break.





YEHUDA BACON

In Memory of the Czech Transport to the Gas Chambers, Israel, 1945-1946

Charcoal on paper

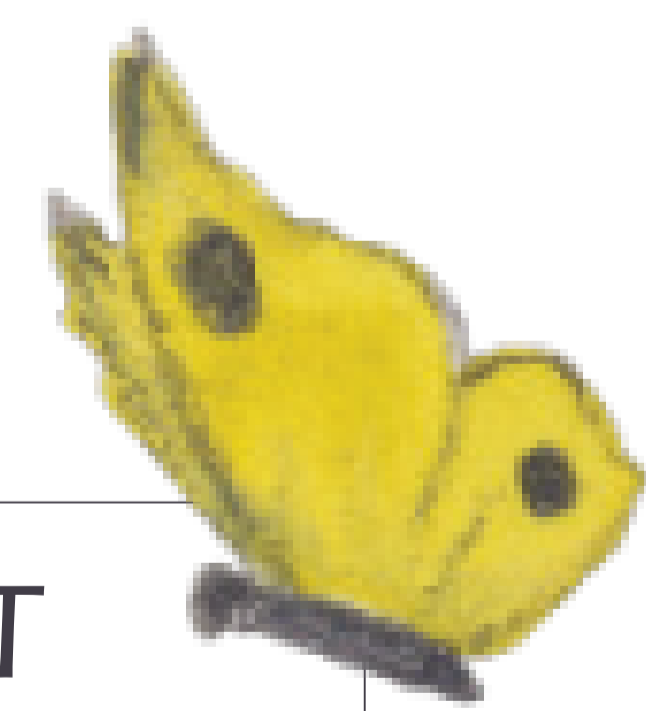
41x32.5 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem

On the second anniversary of his father's death in Auschwitz, the artist drew the portrait of his father, Israel Bacon, rising from the smoking chimney. The use of short and angled lines expresses the artist's deep turmoil when remembering the horrific moment his father was killed before his eyes. On the right, Bacon marked the exact time and date when his father, along with 7000 other Czech Jews, were murdered: 22:00 10.VII.44. On the left, a figure in anguish lunges towards the electric fence, illustrating the artist's feeling of a lack of escape; imprisoned in a camp who's only way out is through death.

Yehuda Bacon | 1929, Moravská Ostrava, Czechoslovakia

In 1942, Bacon was deported with his family to the Terezin ghetto. In 1943, they were deported to the "Family Camp" at Auschwitz. In 1944, Bacon was transferred to the men's camp and assigned to the *Rollwagenkommando*, which transported goods throughout the different sections of the camp. With the evacuation of Auschwitz imminent, Bacon was sent on a death march to the Blechhammer camp, then by an arduous route to Mauthausen, and finally to the Guns kirchen camp, where he was liberated. Immediately following his release, he drew small sketches of the crematoria and gas chambers in Auschwitz, which would later serve as testimony in Eichmann's trial.





ZINOVII TOLKATCHEV

Taleskoten, Majdanek Camp, 1944

Gouache, charcoal and crayon on paper
47.5x58.9 cm

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Sigmund A. Rolat of New York

When Tolkatshchev arrives at the gates of the Majdanek extermination camp, he is not only a soldier in the Red Army; unto the gates of hell arrives a Jewish artist. What he sees and experiences he internalizes as the son of the Jewish people, and instantaneously he creates a symbol, Jewish at its core. The *Taleskoten*, the four-fringed garment, fluttering in the wind, torn and void of the Jewish body, one which went up in the flames of the crematoria, flies like a flag at half-mast, mourning the lives lost at Majdanek. At the same time, Tolkatshchev uses this ritual Jewish garment to symbolize the eternity of the Jewish people.

Zinovii Tolkatshchev | 1903, Shchedrin, Belarus – 1977, Kiev, Ukraine

From 1941-1945, Tolkatshchev served as an official artist in the Red Army. In the summer of 1944, Tolkatshchev joined the Soviet forces at Majdanek, a short while after the liberation of the camp. Immediately afterwards, he joined the forces liberating Auschwitz.

In these camps, he painted and drew a series of artworks depicting the horrific scenes he witnessed. These series were exhibited throughout Poland at the close of the war.

