

Prague, 29 October, 2019

Press release

ROBERT GUTTMANN – THE PRAGUE WANDERER

Prague 29 October, 2019 – **A new temporary exhibition opens at the Jewish Museum in Prague's Robert Guttman Gallery on 7 November, 2019**

An exhibition of works by the popular early 20th century Prague naive painter Robert Guttman opens at the museum's eponymous gallery on November 7, 2019, featuring Guttman's paintings and drawings from the collection of the Jewish Museum in Prague, as well as period photographs and documents which the museum has managed to collect over the years. In the inter-war period Guttman was better known in Prague for his distinct appearance than for his pictures – a thin figure with a large head, handlebar moustache and rich mane of dark black hair, wearing a blue velvet jacket and an enormous green cravat.

Guttman sketched pictures in bars and cafés and even on the train, selling them without much ado for a few crowns to anyone who was interested. Hardly anyone at the time, however, thought that his work had any genuine artistic value. It attracted attention only for its eccentric and unusual qualities. The pictures provide an insight into a secluded, sensitive soul which was drawn to nature, to the integrity of childhood and to a profound faith. Guttman's eccentricity and defiance may have been a way of protecting his fragile, sensitive world from outside encroachment. As an artist, he refused to be a mere reproducer of reality and defended his right to his own creative self-expression.

The Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 put an end to the genial world Guttman had known. On 16 October 1941 Guttman was put on the first transport from Prague to the Lodz/ Litzmannstadt ghetto. Ghetto life must have been incomprehensible to Guttman, a person who had criss-crossed half of Europe on foot. Robert Guttman died of hunger and exhaustion in the ghetto on 14 March 1942.

Interviews with curator Arno Parik and photo op: 6 November, 2019, 4 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Exhibition opening: 6 November, 2019, at 5 p.m.

Photos and captions for download:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1rG8A1d81E5I5zpzeuT1nPXttWeLLRCYI>

Jewish Museum in Prague – Robert Guttman Gallery, U Staré školy 3, Prague 1

Open daily except Saturdays and other Jewish holidays, winter time 9 a.m. - 4.30 p.m., summer time 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Admission: regular CZK 50, reduced CZK 30, children under 6 free of charge

www.jewishmuseum.cz

