

## STRANDED IN SHANGHAI

### The Hongkew Ghetto through the Eyes of Refugees and the Lens of **Arthur Rothstein**

Prague 5 May 2016 -- **New exhibition of the Jewish Museum in Prague follows the fate of war refugees**

In April 1946, prominent American photojournalist Arthur Rothstein took twenty-two photos that captured the living conditions of Jewish refugees in the Chinese city of Shanghai. Commissioned by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), Rothstein's photos were taken seven months after the Pacific War had ended, yet they are a unique visual testimony to the sanctuary given to around twenty thousand Central European Jews during the period of World War II and the Shoah. This is the third exhibition at the Jewish Museum in Prague to look at the phenomenon of refugees and migration. Its aim is to acquaint a wider public with the still little known history of the so-called Shanghai Ghetto by presenting it not only through the eyes of a brilliant photojournalist but also through the experiences of the protagonists of the story, Czechoslovak Jews, who along with Jews from Austria, Germany, Poland, and Hungary found a haven in Shanghai at a time when, with rare exception, the entire world was refusing to accept refugees.

Rothstein's pictures give us extraordinary insight into the historical role of the photographer in the service of international organizations and into the importance of photojournalism in zones of conflict, humanitarian crisis, and catastrophe, where the style of objective visual reporting blends with the more emotionally engaged social and humanistic photography as well as with public relations strategies.

The exhibition was curated by Michaela Sidenberg, JMP Visual Arts Collection curator, and film documentarist Martin Šmok.

**Meeting with curators and photo op:** 11 May 2016 at 3 p.m.

**Exhibition opening:** 11 May 2016 at 5 p.m.

**Photographs for download incl. © information and captions:**

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B-XAXScL8rQfOERtc2F4bWZHakE&usp=sharing>

**Guided tours:** Wed 8 June 2016 at 5 p.m.

Wed 22 June 2016 at 5 p.m.

Wed 7 Sept. 2016 at 5 p.m.

Guided tour capacity: 20 persons. Available in both Czech and English.

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

**Open daily 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.** except Saturdays and Jewish holidays

**Admission:** regular CZK 40, reduced CZK 20, children under 6 free of charge

## Contacts for the media

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## Notes for editors on the Jewish Museum in Prague

1. The Jewish Museum in Prague is the largest museum of its kind in Europe and has one of the most extensive collections of Judaica in the world, with as many as 40,000 unique items and 100,000 books, photographs and archival documents. The museum oversees four historic synagogues, the Ceremonial Hall, the world-famous Old Jewish Cemetery, a gallery, several depositories, an archive, a library with multimedia centre, restoration workshops and an educational/cultural centre.
2. The Jewish Museum in Prague is consistently among the top three most visited museums in the Czech Republic. In 2015 it attracted nearly 630,000 visitors.
3. This year, the Jewish Museum in Prague is celebrating its 110<sup>th</sup> year. The original aim of the Association for the Founding and Maintaining of a Jewish Museum in Prague, in 1906, was to preserve valuable artefacts from Prague synagogues that were earmarked for demolition as part of the redevelopment of the area of Prague's Jewish Town at the turn of the nineteenth century. The museum remained open to the public even after the Nazi occupation of Bohemia and Moravia on 15 March 1939, although the museum association was disbanded after the outbreak of the Second World War. After lengthy negotiations in 1942, the Nazi authorities approved the founding of the Central Jewish Museum in Prague. Liturgical objects from all the defunct Jewish communities and synagogues throughout the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia were assembled here at the same time that transports were being dispatched to the ghettos, concentration camps and death camps. The museum's collections were placed under national administration after war and forcibly taken into state ownership in 1950. Its activities were officially restricted and certain items were sold off – including more than a thousand Torah scrolls, which were shipped to the United Kingdom in 1965. The conditions for a new stage in the museum's development came about only after the fall of the Communist regime in 1989. The museum regained its independence in 1994, since when it has continued to familiarize the general public with the past, present and culture of the Jewish community in the Czech Republic.
4. The museum's Robert Guttmann Gallery is a venue for the presentation of temporary exhibitions of a thematic nature. It is named after the well-known Prague naive painter Robert Guttmann (1880-1942), whose work was featured in the first exhibition. The gallery is located on the ground floor in the north-east section of the museum's headquarters at U Staré školy 3.
5. A substantial part of the museum's work involves developing educational and cultural activities. Its educational programmes are intended for a wide variety of target groups. The youngest children can become acquainted with Jewish culture, traditions and customs in a playful way at the museum. Interactive programmes and lectures are provided for elementary and secondary school pupils. There are also regular educational seminars for teachers and evening educational programmes for the general public. Travelling exhibitions are available for schools and cultural institutions.

[www.jewishmuseum.cz](http://www.jewishmuseum.cz)

