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ŽIDOVSKÉ MUZEUM V PRAZE המוזיאון היהודי בפראג

Newsletter

1 2018

TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

“My Cup of Kafka...” Drawings, Prints and Paintings by Jiří Slíva

An exhibition of works by the graphic artist and illustrator Jiří Slíva opened at the Jewish Museum's Robert Guttman Gallery on 21 February, 2018. It features a number of drawings, colour lithographs, etchings, pastels and oil paintings on the artist's favourite themes – Franz Kafka, Sigmund Freud, the Golem, Jewish customs/symbols, and biblical motifs – as well as other material inspired by the works of Jewish writers. Jiří Slíva has been preoccupied with Jewish humour and illustrating the works of Franz Kafka for many years. In December 2017, the Franz Kafka Publishing House published *My Cup of Kafka*, a book featuring Slíva's main artworks inspired by the great writer. A selection of these works is on display at the exhibition. Also on view is a range of Slíva's illustrations from books by the Czech-Israeli writer Ruth Bondy, which are dedicated to the language, names and special idioms of Czech Jews. Slíva's exhibited work also includes depictions of café society and scenes from everyday life, which are marked by absurd humour and a love of jazz, wine and dancing. The exhibition runs throughout 2018.



Talent is Desire: Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and the Art Teaching Experiment

Held in association with the Jewish Museum in Prague, the exhibition *Talent is Desire: Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and the Art Teaching Experiment* was on view at the Austrian Cultural Forum in Prague until 13 April 2018. Its focus was on the exceptional artistic and pedagogical legacy of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis (1899-1944), an influential member of the Central European inter-war avant-garde. It highlighted the fruits of her tireless work as a teacher in the extreme conditions of the Nazi concentration camp known as the Terezín ghetto. Despite the tragic circumstances, Friedl Dicker's teaching experiment in Terezín has continued to captivate with its scope and applicability for contemporary educational systems.



Photo © Petr Buček – OnePage.cz

I have not seen a butterfly around here: Children's Drawings from the Terezín Ghetto

January saw the launch, in Rome, of the Jewish Museum's new touring exhibition – titled *I have not seen a butterfly around here: Children's Drawings from the Terezín Ghetto*. It features a selection of artworks from the preserved collection of almost 4,500 children's drawings, which were made during art lessons in the Terezín ghetto given by Friedl Dicker-Brandeis. The aim of this exhibition is to draw public attention to the world of these children who were incarcerated in the Terezín ghetto during the Second World War. The exhibition was launched in the Rome Opera House with His Excellency Pavel Vošalík, the Czech Ambassador to the Holy See in attendance. On the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January, a number of prominent personages – including the President of the Jewish Community of Rome, Ruth Dureghello – saw the exhibition, as well as a production of the children's opera *Brundibár* at Teatro Palladium.



Abstract colour composition, unknown author, Terezín 1943-44. (c) JMP

A SELECTION OF CULTURAL EVENTS AND LECTURES

Remembering Zuzana Růžicková

The Jewish Museum in Prague held two events to commemorate the birthday of the late Zuzana Růžicková, one of the world's most celebrated harpsichordists and an outstanding music teacher at the Prague Academy of Performing Arts. During the war she was incarcerated in the "Terezín Family Camp" at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where she became a courageous tutor of children. In the late afternoon of 14 January 2018, she was commemorated by her pupils and close friends: the recently deceased Dagmar Lieblová, who served as the chairperson of the Terezín Initiative for many years, the cellist Bohuslav Pavlas, the organist Václav Peter, the Secretary of the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic Tomáš Kraus, and the harpsichordist Giedrė Lukšaitė-Mrázková, who performed works by J. S. Bach. In the evening, a concert was given by one of Zuzana Růžicková's last pupils, the acclaimed Iranian-American harpsichordist Mahan Esfahani, who

guest performer was the cellist Tomáš Jamník.



I Know What Happened: A Tribute to Dagmar Lieblová

From 19 January to 15 March, the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture hosted a project entitled *I Know What Happened*, which was devoted to the memory of the victims of the Second World War. It was held in connection with International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

During the project, students had the opportunity to meet a survivor-witness in a moderated discussion and to visit the Pinkas Synagogue, where they paid tribute to the memory of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. They also learned about the extensive cultural life that existed in Terezín. The purpose of the final workshop itself was to provide pupils with inspiration and motivation to produce artworks for an art competition, the best of which will receive an award and will be subsequently exhibited on the premises of the Department for Education and Culture.

Our greatest thanks go to the Terezín Initiative and, above all, to Dagmar Lieblová, who initiated this project together with the Department for Education and Culture. We would also like to thank Asaf Auerbach, Bohunka Havranková, Doris Grozdanovičová, Evelina Merová, Helga Hošková-Weissová, Jana Dubová, Růžena Blechová, and Toman Brod. Over the course of two months, Toman Brod talked about his life and the Holocaust with about 650 students



Mrs. Dagmar Lieblová with students

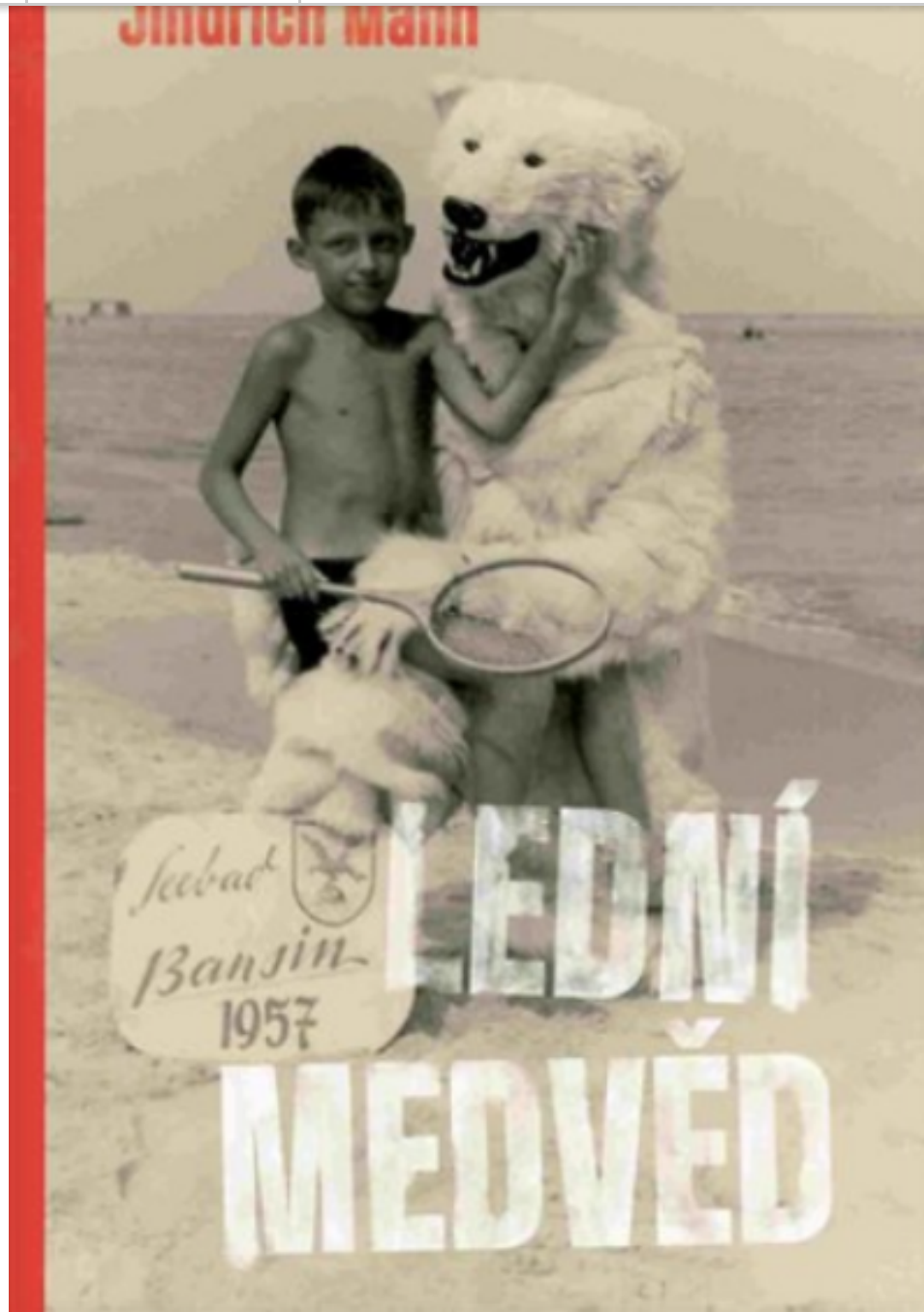
Gala concert in the Spanish Synagogue

On 25 January 2018, the Jewish Museum held its annual concert for International Holocaust Remembrance Day in association with the Prague Jewish Community and the Foundation for Holocaust Victims. The opening words were given by Jan Munk (chairman of the Prague Jewish Community) and Leo Pavlát (director of the Jewish Museum in Prague). Works by Henry Purcell, Joaquin Rodrigo, Maurice Ravel, Manuel de Falla and George Gershwin were performed by the Prague Guitar Quartet.



Book presentation

On 21 February, the Czech writer Jindřich Mann presented his new book *Lední medvěd* [Polar Bear] in the Maisel Synagogue. Jindřich Mann comes from a famous literary family, as his father was the Czech writer and journalist Ludvík Aškenazy, and his maternal grandfather was the famous German novelist Heinrich Mann. The book presentation was organized in association with the Prague Literary House of German-Language Authors.



The Lost Sounds of Yiddish Tango / A Tribute to the Polish Righteous among the Nations

On 20 March, a unique evening of music at the Spanish Synagogue was held by the Polish Institute in Prague in association with the Jewish Museum. Entitled “The Lost Sounds of Yiddish Tango / A Tribute to the Polish Righteous among the Nations”, the event featured the Polish-Israeli singer Olga Avigail Mieleszczuk. The concert was a celebration of the inspirational culture of Polish Jews that disappeared in the vortex of the Second World War. It was also a tribute to the Poles who demonstrated considerable personal courage at a time of crisis by helping to save the lives of those in need.



Awards ceremony for the Daniel competition

On 21 March 2018, the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture hosted an award ceremony for the Czech Ministry of Culture's 15th annual competition for works of literature, history and photography, titled "Daniel". This year's event was launched by Irena Hošková (on behalf of the National Institute for Further Education) and Zuzana Pavlovská (on behalf of the Jewish Museum in Prague). It was held under the auspices of Bishop Václav Malý and the former Minister of Culture Daniel Herman. The entire event was held in a dignified spirit reflecting a tragedy that can never be passed over in silence. In a moving speech, Daniel Herman appealed for humanity and for the need to maintain one's inner integrity even in the most difficult moments of life. After a brief reading of excerpts from three competition entries, awards were given for seven literary works, two works of history, and three photographs. In addition, there were five honourable mentions for other works of literature.

The awards ceremony was followed by a meeting with the Shoah survivor Růžena Blechová. A tour of the Jewish Town was also provided for those who were interested.



INVITATION TO THE MAISEL SYNAGOGUE

WED 2 May at 7 p.m.: The Frizzante Ensemble / Poetry in vocal music

A concert by the Frizzante Ensemble (vocal quintet) with performances of works by composers from the Renaissance through to the present. Featuring songs by John Dowland (1562–1626), Alexander Zemlinsky (1871–1942), Viktor Merz (1839–1904), Gideon Klein (1919–1945), Paul Hindemith (1895–1963) and Hanns Eisler (1898–1962). Tickets may be purchased in advance at the Maisel Synagogue, the Jewish Museum's Information and Reservation Centre (Maiselova 15, Prague 1), www.ticketart.cz and www.viamusica.cz. *Admission CZK 230 / discounted CZK 150.*

TUE 5 June at 7 p.m.: Bennewitz Quartet

A concert by one of the leading Czech string quartets. Featuring three string quartets by Joseph Haydn (1732–1809), Theme and Variations for String Quartet by Hans Krása (1899–1944) and the String Quartet No. 3 by Viktor Ullmann (1898–1944). Tickets may be purchased in advance at the Maisel Synagogue, the Jewish Museum's Information and Reservation Centre (Maiselova 15, Prague 1), www.ticketart.cz and www.viamusica.cz. *Admission CZK 230 / discounted CZK 150.*



Music composer Gideon Klein (1919–1945). Photo © JMP

OTHER NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

Missing rare book returned to the Jewish Museum in Prague

In January 2018, the joint efforts of the Jewish Museum in Prague and the New York Auction House Kestenbaum & Company led to the successful restitution of a rare 16th-century book, which had previously disappeared from the museum's book collection. The almost 500-year-old book returned to the Czech Republic on 16 January, when it was handed over to the museum director Leo Pavlát by Daniel E. Kestenbaum, the director of the American Auction House Kestenbaum & Company, which specializes in the sale of western and oriental books, manuscripts and fine Judaica. The restitution of the book was supported by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (the Claims Conference) and the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO). Wesley A. Fisher, research director for the Claims Conference, was present during the handover of the book.



(Left to right) Leo Pavlát, Wesley A. Fisher and Daniel E. Kestenbaum

The Abandoned Jewish Town...

On 27 January 2018, the John Amos Comenius Museum in Uherský Brod hosted a lecture by Jana Šplíchalová, the curator of the Jewish Museum's Shoah History Archive and an expert on anti-Jewish politics in the German Reich and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The title of the lecture was "The Abandoned Jewish Town: The Deportation and Fate of the Jewish Population from the Uherský Brod Assembly Point". The lecture included a projection of archival photographs to mark the anniversary of the Jewish transport from Uherský Brod (27 January 1943). It was attended by an audience of more than eighty people, who were given the opportunity to find out about the history of the Uherský Brod assembly point from 1941 in the context of other assembly points and transports in the territory of what is now the Czech Republic.

A total of 2,838 people were deported from Uherský Brod to Auschwitz via Terezin. Among the deportees were local Jews, as well as Jews from the political districts of Uherské Hradiště, Kyjov, Hodonín, Vsetín, Zlín, Veselí nad Moravou, and Hodonín. For a number of the deportees, the date of their arrival at the Auschwitz extermination camp (1 February 1943) is given as their date of death, as they were immediately killed in the gas chambers. Only some of the Jews from mixed marriages were not put on the transport train. In total, just 35 of the 2,838 deportees survived Auschwitz. They managed to return home after



Dr. Jana Šplíchalová during her lecture in Uherský Brod

The Jewish Museum in Prague and the Terezín Initiative pay tribute to the memory of Czech and Moravian Jews from the Terezín Family Camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, who were murdered in March 1944

In total, 3,792 Jews from Bohemia and Moravia perished in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau on the night of 8-9 March 1944 – the largest single murder of Czechoslovak citizens during the Second World War. This tragic event was commemorated on the morning of 8 March in a memorial ceremony that was organized by the Terezín Initiative and held at the Pinkas Synagogue Memorial for the Victims of the Shoah from Bohemia and Moravia.



The Crossroads Of Destinies: The Jewish Community in Czechoslovakia from 1918 to 1968

At the start of 2018, the Brno office of the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture launched a new lecture series for the general public, titled *The Crossroads Of Destinies: The Jewish Community in Czechoslovakia from 1918 to 1968*, which is supported by the Statutory City of Brno. As part of the series, Ines Koeltzsch gave a lecture titled "T. G. Masaryk and the Jews: The History of an Ambivalent Relationship", and Kateřina Čapková gave a lecture titled "Searching for an Identity: Jewish Intellectuals in Kafka's Day".

At the end of March, a public meeting was held with the popular writer Alena Mornštajová, the author of the books *Hana, Slepá mapa* [Hana, the Blind Map] and *Hotýlek* [The Little Hotel]. Copies of her books were signed and sold at the event.

The Department for Education and Culture in Brno entered into co-operation with the Museum of the Boskovice Region to organize evening events for the general public and to teach local students. In March, lectures were held on the basics of Judaism. In April, there will be lectures on the topic of the Hebrew alphabet. In May, the focus will be on the fate of Boskovice Jews in the Nazi

PROMINENT VISITS

February

On 1 February, the museum was visited by a group of wives of diplomats on foreign missions. The visit was initiated by Jill Brody Meron, wife of the Israeli Ambassador to the Czech Republic.

On 22 February, the museum was visited by Annette Wieviorka, the acclaimed French historian of the Holocaust. She was accompanied by Luc Lévy, the director of the French Institute in Prague and cultural attaché of the French Embassy.



Annette Wieviorka and Luc Lévy visiting the Pinkas Synagogue

March

On 26 March, the museum was visited by the family of Paul Ryan, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.



Family of Paul Ryan



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