

# Newsletter

2019

## TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

### Jaroslav Róna – "Drawings from Elsewhere..."

Until 6 October 2019, the Robert Guttmann Gallery hosts a new exhibition of work by the artist Jaroslav Róna (b. 1957), a founding member of the famous Czech art group *Tvrdohlaví* (The Stubborn). The subject of this exhibition is a set of Róna's *Drawings from Elsewhere* from 2012–2018, which gives us an opportunity to delve more deeply into the artist's world and ideas.

Róna works in the fields of painting, sculpture, graphic art, drawing, mosaics, set design and stained glass. His drawings are an inseparable component of his work. They are the indispensable means of recording, seeking, shaping, and formulating new ideas and myths. All of Róna's artworks convey a story, whether from the distant past or some future world, or whether about an entire civilization or an individual life. In this way, they differ from the purely visual or aesthetic visions of modern art concepts. Unlike the latter, they introduce into the work a certain motif that attracts us with its unusual shapes and dark striking colour. The motif pulls us into the action and provokes thought, but without providing any clear answers. We have to look for the meaning ourselves, to contribute to its understanding. The themes of Róna's paintings and drawings cover a vast expanse, from the origin of the world to distant cosmic civilisations. Other works remind us of scenes from prehistoric Earth and from our own history – but they are all the fruit of the artist's tireless imagination, fascinated by some object or idea for which he seeks an answer. They all seem to convey some urgent message, the content of which has been forgotten. Attracted by their enigma, we try to puzzle them out and discover the missing connection.

Robert Guttmann Gallery, U Staré školy 3, Prague 1  
Open daily except Saturdays and other Jewish holidays  
9 a.m. - 6 p.m.



*Franz Kafka wrote that he was followed by a tin angel throughout his stay in Trieste. No one else noticed the angel. Kafka interpreted this phenomenon as a warning, but he could not tell what it related to. Pen, brush and ink drawing on paper, 2018.*

(c) Jaroslav Róna

## **A SELECTION OF PRAGUE CULTURAL EVENTS AND LECTURES**

### **A Visit from Prehistory**

On Wednesday 10 April, the Maisel Synagogue hosted a theatre show based on motifs from the novel *Návštěva z pravěku* [A Visit from Prehistory] and from the life of its author, Petr Ginz – the young artist and writer who edited and secretly published the magazine *Vedem* in the Terezín/Theresienstadt ghetto during the war. The show was performed by students of the Nature School (Gymnázium Přírodní škola) under the guidance of their teachers. The plot of the play unfolds on two levels. On the first level, there is Petr's fantasy and suspense-filled story, which was inspired by his favourite author Jules Verne. The second level incorporates important episodes from Petr's life during the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and depicts the chilling reality of the adolescent boy's experiences right up to the tragic end. The director of the play is František Tichý, the principal of the Nature School and the author of the book *Transport za věčnost* [Transport Beyond Eternity].



### Exhibition Jerusalem: The City and The Legend

On Thursday 2 May, the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture hosted the opening reception for an exhibition of photographs by Leona Kalvodová, titled *Jerusalem: Everyday Uniqueness*. The children's choir of the Lauder Schools of Prague performed during the evening. The photographs on view depict Jerusalem as a place of coexistence for many nations and religions, where the past and present are connected within the confined space of the city walls. The exhibition ran until 28 June.



### Yale Strom in concert



On 5 June, the American klezmer violinist and singer Yale Strom gave an extraordinary concert (“From Kocek to Košice”) at the Maisel Synagogue. Accompanied by excellent musicians – double-bassist Peter Dvorský and accordionist Aliaksandr Yasinski – he performed both wistful and ecstatic klezmer, Hassidic and Roma melodies. Yale Strom is a professor and artist-in-residence in the Jewish Studies Program at San Diego State University. He will be returning to Prague in November 2019. The Jewish Museum’s Department for Education and Culture will be hosting an exhibition of his photography (titled “Fragments”), which depicts the lives of Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe between 1981 and 2007. The opening reception for the exhibition will on Wednesday 13 November 2019.



### **Extraordinary Possibilities of Non-Formal Education: Conference of the Czech Association of Museums and Galleries**

On 3–4 June, the Museum of West Bohemia in Pilsen hosted a conference organized by the Czech Association of Museums and Galleries’ Commission for Public Relations and Museum Pedagogy, titled “Current Trends in Museum Presentation and Education: Extraordinary Possibilities of Non-Formal Education”. On behalf of the Jewish Museum’s Department for Education and Culture in Prague, Denisa Glacová and Martina Kutková gave a presentation titled “I Know What Happened: Interdisciplinary Teaching Through Student Instruction” in the section “Difficult Topics and a ‘New’ Audience in Museum Education”. In their presentation, they presented the “I Know What Happened” project, which the Department of Education and Culture has been organizing for primary and secondary school students since 2018 in commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. In 2019, the Jewish Museum entered into cooperation with the Nature School (Gymnázium Přírodní škola) within the framework of the project and made use of an innovative method of

non-formal education that also places students in the role of museum educators. The cooperation between these two institutions has made it easier to convey Holocaust-related issues to young students and has increased the latter's interest in this topic.

## **INVITATION TO THE MAISEL SYNAGOGUE**

### **Concert season 2019/2020**

Tickets may be purchased in advance at the Maisel Synagogue and at the Jewish Museum's Information and Reservation Centre (Maiselova 15, Prague 1), or through the Ticket Art network, Prague Ticket Office (online or at its shop in the Old Town Square) and the Jewish Museum's website, where you can also view the full concert programme. The Jewish Museum's website [www.jewishmuseum.cz](http://www.jewishmuseum.cz) also offers subscription tickets for the whole concert season at a discounted price.

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|--------------------|---|
| <b>12. 9. 2019</b> | <b>Viktorie Dugranpere, Jiří Sycha &amp; Ondřej Bernovský</b>                 |
| <b>19:00</b>       | Oratoria s náměty z Hebrejské bible<br>Oratorios with Hebrew Bible Themes     |
| <b>10.10. 2019</b> | <b>Silvie Hessová &amp; Kateřina Englichová</b>                               |
| <b>19:00</b>       | Fantazie pro housle a harfu<br>Fantasias for Violin and Harp                  |
| <b>21.11. 2019</b> | <b>Ensemble Postillon</b>   |
| <b>19:00</b>       | Na pruském dvoře<br>At the Prussian Court                                     |
| <b>5.12. 2019</b>  | <b>Fama Quartet &amp; Irena Troupová</b>                                      |
| <b>18:00</b>       | Gido se vrací domů<br>Gido's Coming Home                                      |
| <b>8.1. 2020</b>   | <b>Karel Dohnal a smyčcové trio</b><br><b>/ Karel Dohnal with String Trio</b> |
| <b>19:00</b>       | Umění klarinetu<br>The Art of the Clarinet                                    |
| <b>6. 2. 2020</b>  | <b>Duo Conspiro</b>   |
| <b>19:00</b>       | Hudba pro kytaru a flétnu<br>Music for Guitar and Flute                       |
| <b>12. 3. 2020</b> | <b>Prague Philharmonia Wind Quintet</b>                                       |
| <b>19:00</b>       | Dechové kvintety<br>Wind Quintets   |
| <b>21. 4. 2020</b> | <b>Doležalovo kvarteto / The Doležal Quartet</b>                              |
| <b>19:00</b>       | Slavnostní koncert u příležitosti Jom ha-šoa<br>Yom HaShoah Concert           |
| <b>14. 5. 2020</b> | <b>Motus Harmonicus</b>   |
| <b>19:00</b>       | Festa del Sabato  |
| <b>2. 6. 2020</b>  | <b>Magdalena Mašlaňová, Pavel Ciprys &amp; Matěj Polášek</b>                  |
| <b>19:00</b>       | Simchat muzika  |

## OTHER NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

### Restoration of rare printed books from the holdings of the Jewish Museum's library

The Museum's care of its library holdings also involves the restoration of rare printed books. An optimal microclimate is maintained in the library depository, but the collection still requires constant and costly care. The Museum's Paper and Parchment Conservation/Restoration Studio is continuously working on the overall repair of items in the Museum's collections, not just in the library holdings.

It is, therefore, also necessary to involve external conservators-restorers who have the required expertise and have collaborated with the Museum for many years. With the help of grants from the Jewish Community of Prague Foundation, it has been possible to speed up the process of book restoration. Sixty early printed books from the library's holdings have been repaired since 2014.

Comprising 419 volumes, the collection of rare printed books is the most valuable part of the Museum's library holdings and is of worldwide importance. It contains the earliest items of Bohemian Hebraica and Judaica, as well as old books produced by Hebrew printing houses in Europe. This collection also includes the former library of the Jewish Religious Community of Prague.

The aim of the project is to help expedite the process of conserving these collection items, which were neglected during the Communist era, and to make them available for study, research and exhibition purposes.

Examples of the restoration of rare printed books:



Schor, Abraham Hayim ben Zevi Hirsch: Sefer Torat Hayim.  
Prague: associates in the printing house of Moses Katz, 1692.  
Sg. 4.413, př. č. 2007/1150; 2°, 30 x 19,5 cm



[Talmud Bavli, Vol. 1], Hilkhot Berakhot: Im perush Rashi ve-Tosafot  
Prague: Judah Bak's grandchildren, 1728  
Sg. 5.867 (T), Acc. No. 78/0263; 2°, 38.5 x 27.5 cm





Mendelssohn, Moses: Phaedon: Hu Sefer Hash'arat ha-Nefesh; Sefer ha-Nefesh  
 Brno: Josef Rossmann, 1798.  
 Sg. 4.128, př. č. 75/0145; 8°, 17,5 x 11 cm

### Prague Museum Night 2019

Once again, the Jewish Museum participated in Prague Museum Night, now in its 16th year. This cultural event helps to promote the activities of museums and galleries, and since 2004 it has offered the public an opportunity to explore the city's cultural heritage in a somewhat different light. The Maisel and Klausen synagogues opened their doors to this year's throng of visitors at 10:30 p.m. on 8 June. Visitors to the Maisel Synagogue looked round the Museum's exhibition on the history of Jews in the Bohemian lands from the 10th to the 18th centuries. Those visiting the Klausen Synagogue viewed the Museum's exhibition on Jewish customs and traditions, which focuses on the synagogue and its meaning, the Jewish calendar, Jewish holidays and ceremonies, and the home in everyday Jewish life

For the fourth time on Prague Museum Night, the Museum's Department for Education and Culture prepared a guided tour for hard-of-hearing visitors, this time in the Klausen Synagogue. The nearly hour-long tour of the synagogue dealt with the history of the Jewish Museum in Prague during the Second World War and also focused on topics relating to the course of life while highlighting specific exhibits on display in the women's gallery. As the tour was interpreted in sign language, it was possible to devote considerable attention to the various questions posed by individual visitors.

The Museum handed out information flyers for the event and several volunteers were on hand to help out. In total, 1,937 visitors came to see the two exhibitions between 10:30 p.m. and 1:00 a.m.





On Saturday 18 May, the Brno office of the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture became involved for the second time in the Brno Museum Night. The youngest visitors were treated to a fairy-tale puppet show titled *The Golem*, which was engagingly directed by Tomáš Podrazil from the Damúza Theatre Studio. The story was exciting and funny at the same time, but the main enjoyment came at the end, when the audience members were given an opportunity to play with the show puppets. In contrast, the other half of the night's programme was of a more serious nature. An exhibition titled "Bringing Together Divided Memory" was on view in the building's two ground-floor halls. On loan from the Antikomplex Association, this show creates a mosaic of Czech, Slovak and Austrian stories from the period before, during and immediately after the Second World War. In the form of video interviews, it presents the narratives of those who had to leave their homes and start a new life elsewhere as a result of the war. Special attention is given to the coexistence of Jews, ethnic Czechs, Germans and Slovaks, bilingual Moravians and Bohemians before 1938 and, above all, to the different experiences after the post-war expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia. The two parts of the Museum Night programme at the Brno office attracted about two hundred visitors. We would like to thank, above all, the receptionist Vladka Malá for her willing help throughout the event, and also the leadership of Brno's Jewish Community for enabling us to organize the event. The Brno Museum Night, now in its 15th year, took place on International Museum Day. It involved the participation of 28 institutions and was attended by about 68,000 visitors. According to Pavla Obrovská from the Moravian Gallery, which is the main coordinator of the event, the aim of the Museum Night, however, is definitely not to obtain the highest possible number of visitors, but instead, and above all, to raise public awareness and to encourage visitors to discover interesting places where they can meet people and spend their free time.



### **Culture Against Antisemitism 2019**

Once again, the Jewish Museum in Prague was involved as a partner in the annual public gathering against antisemitism, which is held each year on Holocaust Remembrance Day. A goodwill march through the centre of Prague, which was staged by the Czech branch of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) on Sunday 14 April, went from the Old Town Square through the streets of Josefov (the former Jewish Town) and stopped at Náměstí Jana Palacha (Jan Palach Square) in front of the Rudolfinum building, where there was a dance performance by students. The march ended in Wallenstein Garden, where the participants joined the follow-up gathering. For more details (in Czech), see [www.vsichnijsmelidi.cz](http://www.vsichnijsmelidi.cz).



**Jewish Prostějov**

On Sunday 14 April 2019, the Jewish Museum in Prague became involved as a partner in the project “The Gates of Monuments Wide Open” in Prostějov (German: Prostitz). As part of this project, visitors went on a guided tour of the Hus Congregational House – the former New Synagogue – and then walked down Demelova Street to a block of houses that form part of what used to be the extensive south section of the Prostějov Jewish Ghetto. The guided tour continued to the neighbouring building, which is now owned by the Prostějov Museum and Gallery, where the visitors saw an exhibition on the philosopher Edmund Husserl – a famous native of Prostějov – and on life in the Jewish ghetto. At the old Jewish cemetery, which was devastated during the Second World War, Daniel Polakovič from the Jewish Museum in Prague highlighted the story of the famous rabbi of Bratislava Hatam Sofer (also known as Moshe Sofer) and his work in Prostějov. The tour ended at the new Jewish cemetery behind Brněnská ulice (Brno Street), which contains the remains of about five hundred local citizens of Jewish origin.

# BRÁNY PAMÁTEK DOKOŘÁN V PROSTĚJOVĚ

STATUTÁRNÍ  
MĚSTO PROSTĚJOV



Hanácký  
Jeruzalém

MG  
MUZEUM A GALERIE  
V PROSTĚJOVĚ

ŽIDOVSKÉ  
MUZEUM  
V PRAZE



FEDERACE  
ŽIDOVSKÝCH OBCÍ  
V ČESKÉ REPUBLICE

## Remembering the Synagogue

On Friday 26 April 2019, the small town of Davle near Prague held a commemorative event titled “Remembering the Synagogue” in memory of Holocaust victims from Davle and the surrounding area. During the ceremony, a memorial plaque and information panel were unveiled on the site of the former synagogue. This event also included lectures and the opening of an exhibition titled “Mankind Is My Law”, which deals with the history of Jewish settlement in Davle and its environs, the Second World War II, and the stories of Holocaust survivors. A lecture titled “On the Development of the Jewish Community in Davle” was given by Tomáš Krákora, an archivist at the Jewish Museum in



Prague who oversees its early Jewish history collections.



### **The Spanish Synagogue is temporarily closed for planned revitalization**

Visitors to the Jewish Museum in Prague had until the end of May 2019 to view the Spanish Synagogue and its exhibition on the history of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia in the 19th–20th centuries. The synagogue is now undergoing partial repair and restoration work. It will reopen to the public in the last quarter of 2020 with a new permanent exhibition, including interactive elements and modern visitor facilities.

The Spanish Synagogue is the most recent synagogue in the Prague Jewish Town. It was built in 1868 for the local Reform congregation on the site of the 12th-century Altschul (Old Shul), which was the oldest synagogue in the Prague ghetto. It is called “Spanish” for its impressive Moorish interior design, influenced by the famous Alhambra. The building was designed by Josef Niklas and Jan Bělský, the remarkable interior (from 1882–83) by Antonín Baum and Bedřich Münzberger. František Škroup, the composer of the Czech national anthem, served as organist in the previous synagogue on this site in 1836-45.

The Spanish Synagogue previously housed the Jewish Museum’s exhibition The History of the Jews in Bohemia and Moravia in the 19th–20th Centuries, which had been installed during the first major reconstruction of the building in 1994-1998. The exhibition dealt with the history of the Jews in the Bohemian lands from the reforms of Joseph II in the 1780s to the period after the Second World War. It highlighted the gradual advancement toward greater equality and emancipation for Jews in AustriaHungary, described the foundation of the



Czech-Jewish and Zionist movements, and profiled the most important Jewish entrepreneurs, scientists, writers, musicians and artists. It also dealt with the redevelopment of the Prague Jewish Town, Jewish sites of Bohemia and Moravia, and the history of the Jewish Museum in Prague. Special focus was put on the Shoah of Jews from Bohemia and Moravia in 1939-1945, and the Terezín /Theresienstadt ghetto.

The new exhibition, which has the working title *Jewish Emancipation, Shoah and Postwar Czechoslovakia from 1780 to the Present*, will be thematically linked to the previous exhibition. Above all, it will change the means and style of the presentation, as well as its technical and design aspects, which will be sensitively incorporated into the architecture of the building, and will include multimedia and interactive elements. In addition to a thematic selection of rare items from the Jewish Museum's collections, which will be placed in new arrangements and contexts, there will be touch screens for browsing through historical documents, photographs and artworks. Visitors will also be able to look up information in a database of prominent Jewish figures.

The new exhibition will require building alterations, including the construction of new technological and visitor facilities and barrier-free access. The planned revitalization of the synagogue and its exhibition was preceded by curatorial and technical preparations in 2017-2018. The framework concept for the new permanent exhibition was devised by Arno Pařík, and the individual topics have been further 2 elaborated by the Jewish Museum's research staff, partly with the help of external experts. The architectural design for the project has been prepared by the architectural firm Petr Franta architekti s.r.o., which is also the general planner for the project. The main contractor will be KONSIT a.s., a company with experience of delivering comprehensive construction services for particularly complex buildings, such as heritage sites. Implementation work will begin in July 2019 and will continue until the last quarter of 2020.

The Jewish Museum's other exhibitions and venues remain open.

After the renovation of the Pinkas Synagogue (2018) and Maisel Synagogue (2015) and the opening of the Information and Reservation Centre (2014), this is the fourth of the Jewish Museum's revitalization projects. The Jewish Museum is overhauling its permanent exhibitions so as to better reflect current trends in museum displays, to make full use of technical possibilities, and to meet visitor expectations, all while fully respecting the architectural integrity of the historical synagogues that house the exhibitions.



### **Notice of Library Closure**

The Library of the Jewish Museum in Prague will be closed to the public in August 2019. The Multimedia Centre, however, will remain open, continuing to provide access to its thematic reference library and offering the following services:

- multimedia – space for studying audio and video recordings from the Museum’s library holdings;
- bibliographic and information resources – basic research, searching in the Shoah Victims Database and the Collections Department Database, access to specialized databases;
- consultation – referrals to the Museum’s specialist staff and affiliated organizations;
- sale of Museum publications.

Opening times of the Multimedia Centre: MON and WED: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. / FRI: 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

### **Notice of Archives Closure**

The Archives and Reading Room will be closed to the public in August. Thank you for understanding.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### **Judaica Bohemiae 54 (2019), 1**

A new issue of the journal *Judaica Bohemiae* (Vol. 54/2019, 1) came out at the end of June 2019. It starts with a study by Marie Buňatová that examines trade contacts between Prague Jews and Northern Italy and their engagement in the Italian commodity trade in the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The next study, by Daniel Soukup (*Holy Curiosity: Circumcision as a Rhetorical Concept in a Bohemian Catholic Sermon from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*) explores the topic of Jewish circumcision through an analysis of three intertextually connected Christian Hebraic treatises from the early modern period. It shows what role these texts may have played in the formulation of Baroque piety and in the depiction of the contemporary Jewish community in the Bohemian lands. The Documents section contains a pioneering study on Jewish sigillography by Pavel Kocman, Tereza Dlesková and Milan Žonca, which examines stamps and seals relating to the Jewish community in the small town of Dambořice (Ger. Dambořitz) in southern Moravia.

In the Reports section, Petr Pálka provides an overview of the 25 years of the “Jews and Moravia” conference. The final section of the journal contains three book reviews: Rudolf Klein’s 2017 book *Metropolitan Jewish Cemeteries of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative Study* (reviewed by Arno Pařík), Janusz Spyra’s 2018 book *Rabbiner in der Provinz. Die Rolle des Rabbiners im Leben der jüdischen Gemeinschaft in Teschener und Troppauer Schlesien* (reviewed by Pavel Kocman), and Luděk Vacín’s 2018 book *The Unknown Benno Landsberger: A Biographical Sketch of an Assyriological Altmeister’s Development, Exile, and Personal Life* (reviewed by Daniel Baránek).

Published since 1965 by the Jewish Museum in Prague, *Judaica Bohemiae* focuses on Jewish history and culture in Bohemia, Moravia and the wider Central European area (the territory of the former Habsburg Monarchy). The texts are in English and German.

# JUDAICA BOHEMIAE LIV-1



JEWISH MUSEUM IN PRAGUE 2019

## **VIP VISITS**

On 1 April 2019, the Jewish Museum was visited by Wolfgang Sobotka, the President of the Austrian National Council.





On 8 May 2019, the Jewish Museum was visited by Donald Tusk, the President of the European Council, with a delegation.





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

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For payment in CZK: 10426398/6200

For payment in EUR: 1042639, IBAN: CZ60 6200 0000 0000 1042 6398

For payment in USD: 1042639, IBAN: CZ22 6200 0001 0700 1042 6398 SWIFT CODE: COBACZPXXXX

Editor: Kateřina Honskusová

Photographs: JMP unless otherwise stated