

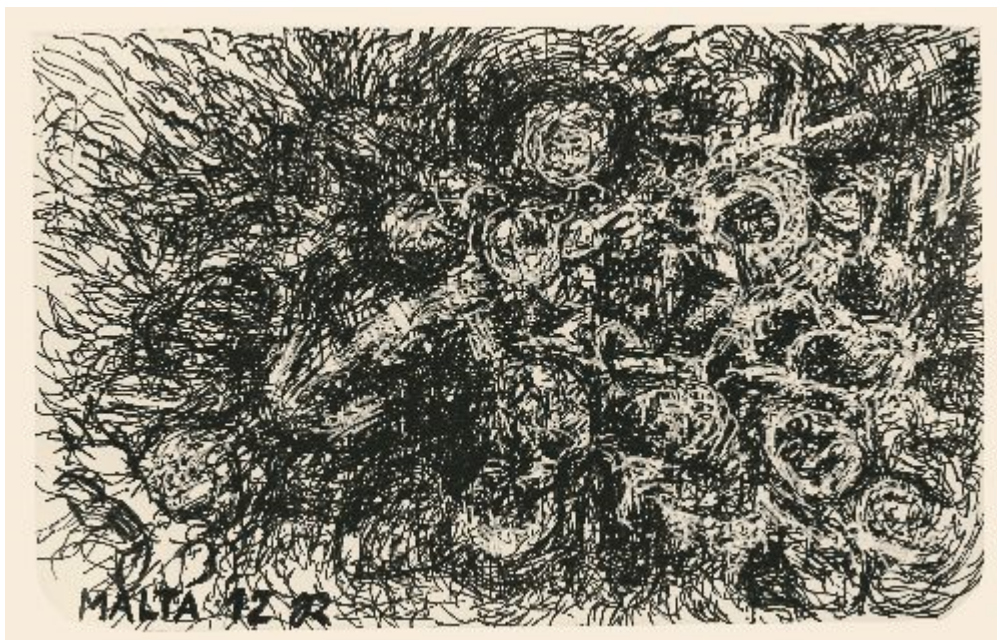
Newsletter

3 2019

TEMPORARY EXHIBITONS

Jaroslav Róna – "Drawings from Elsewhere..."

Between 7 March and 6 October 2019, the Robert Guttman Gallery hosted a new exhibition of works by Jaroslav Róna (b. 1957), a founding member of the famous Czech art group *Tvrdohlaví* (The Stubborn). The subject of this exhibition was a set of Róna's *Drawings from Elsewhere* from 2012–2018, an opportunity to delve more deeply into the artist's world and ideas. The exhibition was visited by a total of 31.006 art buffs.



From chaos. Ink and paper, Malta, 2012 (c) Jaroslav Róna

In the Pipeline: Robert Guttman – The Prague Wanderer

From 7 November 2019, the Jewish Museum in Prague will be presenting a public exhibition by Robert Guttman, the popular naïve artist who worked in Prague during the period of the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1938). In addition to

Guttman's paintings and drawings, the exhibition will feature period photographs and documents from the Jewish Museum in Prague collections.



Robert Guttman painting in his flat, photograph, ca 1925

Fragments: Jewish Life in Central and Eastern Europe 1981–2007

From 13 November to 31 December 2019, the Jewish Museum in Prague's Department for Education and Culture presents 'Fragments: Jewish Life in Central and Eastern Europe 1981–2007'. The exhibition features photographs by American musician and ethnographer Yale Strom and are the result of several visits to Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe between 1981 and 2007. The images capture moments of everyday life in small Jewish communities as well as events in urban areas, documenting cultural changes in Jewish society throughout the period.



A SELECTION OF PRAGUE CULTURAL EVENTS AND LECTURES

I wish to be a Poet, with all my Heart

Marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of prominent Czech poet Jiří Orten (1919–1941), various commemorative events took place at the Maisel Synagogue on the evening of 10 September 2019. Among the guests celebrating the poet's life were Marie Rút Křížková, who shared many personal memories of the Orten family. Jan Šulc, editor of Torst publishing house, and Marie Havánková, editor of the recently published Orten Correspondence, placed his work in context with the period in which he lived. Throughout the evening, readings from Orten's poetry and correspondence were performed by actors Michaela Bendová and Marek Adamczyk, with the event hosted by the presenter Ester Janečková.



2019/2020 Concert Season Opening

On Thursday 12 September, the opening concert of the new season was held at the Maisel Synagogue, featuring soprano Viktoria Dugranpere accompanied by leading Czech baroque violinist Jiří Sycha, and harpsichordist and organist Ondřej Bernovský.

Classical music concerts take place monthly at the Maisel Synagogue. This season, visitors can look forward to a performance from leading harpist Kateřina Englichová; an evening with the preeminent Czech quartet fama Q accompanied by soprano Irena Troupová; or the prominent clarinetist Karel Dohnal, and many others. More information can be found on the Museum's website in the Concerts section. Tickets can be purchased in advance at the Maisel Synagogue, in the JMP's Information and Reservation Centre (Maiselova 15, Prague 1), the Ticket

Art network at the Prague Ticket Office, and on the Jewish Museum in Prague website.



Supplementary Seminar ‘Jews, History and Culture’

On 30 August 2019, the Prague branch of the JMP’s Department for Education and Culture organised an additional seminar for Czech schoolteachers (Ministry of Education accredited), entitled ‘The Jewish Story of the Velvet Revolution’, part of the long-term lecture series ‘Jews, History and Culture’. The event was intended for educators who had already attended some of the previous seminars. It consisted of lectures and debates about the life of the Jewish community during the normalisation period and after the Velvet Revolution. During the historical introduction, participants learned about the situation regarding the Jewish population in post-war Czechoslovakia and the period after the communist coup of 1948. Following lectures presented the audience with two aspects of the Jewish cultural environment at that time. The first focused on the care of Jewish monuments in the then-Czechoslovakia, and the ongoing efforts to restore them. The second part dealt with the tradition of Jewish involvement in samizdat (the copying and distribution of state-banned literature), explaining to participants the conditions under which samizdat were created, what influenced their content and which authors were published in the format. The culmination of this one-day seminar was a discussion with JMP director Leo Pavlát and chief provincial rabbi Karol Efraim Sidon. The debate, moderated by Petr Brod, in which both speakers talked about other aspects of life in the Jewish community during normalisation and after the Velvet Revolution, was met with great interest and enthusiasm from the audience.



Left to right: Karol Efraim Sidon, Petr Brod, Leo Pavlát

The Brno branch of the JMP's Department for Education and Culture organised the same seminar during the first week of the new academic year. One of the guests, Blanka Soukupová, gave a talk on the normalisation period. Her topic was supported by a visit to the Museum of Czech and Moravian Exile and Emigration. The discussion with Petr Weber, former chairman of the Brno Jewish Community, and a presentation from Jaroslav Klenovský about the thirty-year-long effort to restore Jewish monuments in Moravia, also attracted great attention. Both seminars were attended by fifty teachers.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

European Day of Jewish Culture

The 20th anniversary of the European Day of Jewish Culture, celebrated on the first Sunday in September in more than four hundred cities across the continent, aimed at combating collective oblivion, commemorating and protecting Jewish heritage with dignity, and bringing Jewish and non-Jewish societies closer together. The European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (AEPJ), in cooperation with the National Library of Israel and indebted to initiatives and ongoing work by municipalities, museums and cultural centres across Europe, seeks to highlight the vibrancy and diversity of Judaism. Through conferences, concerts, performances, guided tours and other activities, it promotes dialogue between Jewish communities and their neighbours. The promotion of Jewish cultural heritage and making it accessible as an integral component of European history, is a key factor in the prevention of anti-Semitic prejudice and intolerance. The Brno branch of the JMP's Department for Education and Culture celebrated the day together with Brno's Jewish Community. A cultural program for children and adults was presented at the Löw-Beer Villa. The event included a guided tour of the villa and a Who's Who Lecture. The visitors were guided by Chaim Kočí, Kashrut coordinator of the Prague Rabbinate who spoke on a variety of social

and political themes within Jewish communities. Meanwhile, a creative workshop for children called King Solomon's Cipher took place in the villa's garden.



Acquisition of an old print for the JMP Library

The Jewish Museum in Prague Library succeeded in acquiring by auction a rare print, Amudesh Shesh, by prominent Jewish author Shlomo Ephraim Luntschitz (1550-1619), (Winner's Auctions Ltd, lot no. 115, 07/2019). The document was published in Prague in 1618 by Moshe ben Josef Becalel Kac during Luntschitz's lifetime.

Shlomo Ephraim Luntschitz, born in Lenczyk, Poland, is also called Kli Jakar according to his pivotal work. He studied under the famous Solomon Luria in Lublin and was to become a leading Jewish Renaissance philosopher. He served as rector of the Prague Yeshiva, succeeding Rabbi Loew as Chief Rabbi of Prague from 1604 to 1619. He is buried at the city's Old Jewish Cemetery. One of the most esteemed Torah preachers, his frequently published sermons highlight the need for social justice, solidarity and earnest piety. Amudesh Shesh (Marble Columns, according to Esther 1:6) is a book of ethical sermons divided into six pillars: Torah, Avoda, Gemilut Hasadim, Din, Emet and Shalom. The book is a significant addition to the museum collection of rare library prints.



JudaFest 2019

The 8th JudaFest Festival of Jewish Organisations and Communities took place on 22nd September 2019, held this year at the Hybernská Street Campus in Prague. The event was organised by the Czech Union of Jewish Youth with the support of the Holocaust Victims Foundation, the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic, and the Jewish Museum in Prague. The festival aims to introduce Jewish communities to the general public through music, dance, food and entertainment.



Renovated wrought iron gate at the Old Jewish Cemetery exit

From April to June 2019, the wrought iron gate between the Klausen Synagogue and the new Ceremonial Hall, which forms the exit of the Old Jewish Cemetery, underwent renovation. The gate was originally forged and installed, probably in 1911, during the construction of the new Ceremonial Hall. Above the gate is a steel lintel with forged spikes, which was added to the original gate sometime around 1950. The evidence that this was a later addition can be seen in contemporary photography. The gate with its ornamental columns had become severely corroded and unstable and risked permanent damage due to climatic conditions and constant use. The Jewish Museum in Prague arranged for the renovation under the expertise of master craftsmen, with assistance from the Ministry of Culture for the restoration of metallic works of art.



Before

The metal parts of the gate were completely corroded. This had damaged the decorative wrought iron poppies in the outer sections as well as several forged leaves in the main gate area. Other details were deformed and cracked, and the gate's brass plaques had been attacked by wild patina which had become entwined with the structure. The gate was professionally dismantled, packed and transported to the restoration workshop, where a detailed restoration survey was carried out. The horizontal bars, brass plaques and lock were carefully removed. The survey showed that the surface finish corresponded with previously taken samples which had undergone stratigraphy analysis. Traces of bronze varnish from previous amateur repairs were discovered on the brass plaques. This was followed by the removal of residual old varnish and corrosion by blasting with quartz sand. All rusted metal parts and structural elements were replaced with new ones of the same strength. Rusty leaves, acanthus, and other elements were repaired and soldered with brass. Replicas were produced for any missing parts. Previous substandard attempts at repairs were removed. After the gate was reassembled and put back in its original place, the final retouches were made.



After

Securing the Multimedia Centre windows with bars

In July this year the Multimedia Centre in the Library of the Jewish Museum in Prague had mesh grilles installed in the windows. This was done to increase ventilation with the intention to create more comfortable temperatures within the Centre whilst simultaneously ensuring the safety of visitors and employees against unauthorised entry, or unwanted objects entering the building from the street. The grilles were designed and produced – as required by the conservation authorities – as copies of the original grilles, which are installed in the western wall of the Spanish Synagogue.



Improvement of working conditions in the workplace during hot months

In April 2019, in order to ensure comfortable temperatures in the workplace, air-conditioning units were installed in the Paper Restoration Workshop, the Finance Office, the Operations Department and the Managing Director's office. These areas are located under the roof of the building, and on hot summer days are exposed to high temperatures. In the Paper Restoration Workshop a special textile diffuser was installed along with the cooling unit, ensuring an even distribution of air without a cold draft. The premises of the Paper Restoration Workshop were also painted. This will hopefully provide suitable conditions for the restoration of rare collection items and files.



Paper restoration workshop

Modernisation of measurement and control systems in Smíchov Synagogue

It is several years since the reconstruction of Smíchov Synagogue, with its museum archive and visual arts depository. During this time, the building's heating, water and air conditioning systems had become old and increasingly costly to maintain. The Jewish Museum in Prague took steps to replace the original SIEMENS control systems with AMIT systems, currently amongst the most widely used and functional in the country. The company provides additional parts and technical support for the new systems, ensuring the smooth regulation of technologies to maintain requisite microclimatic conditions for storing collections and archive files in the archive and depository.

Installation of security turnstile at the Old Jewish Cemetery exit

The Old Jewish Cemetery is visited by four to five thousand visitors a day during its busiest periods. The Security Department of the Jewish Museum in Prague often struggles with unauthorised access to the cemetery. People enter via the exit between the buildings of the Klausen Synagogue and the new Ceremonial Hall, where a queue often forms in front of the ticket office. Coordinating the exit of tourists from the Old Jewish Cemetery has long proved challenging for members of staff. In addition, the Museum's Security Department has recorded a number of cases of vandalism in the Old Jewish Cemetery, often with an apparently anti-Semitic influence. The Jewish Museum in Prague decided, with the approval of the Jewish Community of Prague, to redevelop the exit from the Old Jewish Cemetery by installing a turnstile and railing behind the newly renovated wrought-iron street gate, as mentioned above. The turnstile prevents unauthorised persons from entering the cemetery, whilst at the same time allowing visitors to leave the cemetery at their convenience. We believe that it will contribute to a higher level of safety within the Old Jewish Cemetery.



IMPORTANT VISITS

On Monday, 15 July 2019, a group of Japanese teachers led by Mrs. Seiko Numata from Tokyo visited the museum. From March until June, Mrs Numata and a group of her students had been studying the story of Hana's Suitcase by Karen Levine. Mrs Numata collaborated with Fumiko Ishioka, director of the Tokyo Holocaust Education Resource Centre. The group, accompanied by Michaela Sidenberg, curator of the visual arts collection, visited the permanent exhibitions.



On 27 August 2019 Rabbi Mordechai Raichinsein, the Chief Rabbi of Belarus, visited the High, Old-New and Pinkas Synagogues and the Old Jewish Cemetery.





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