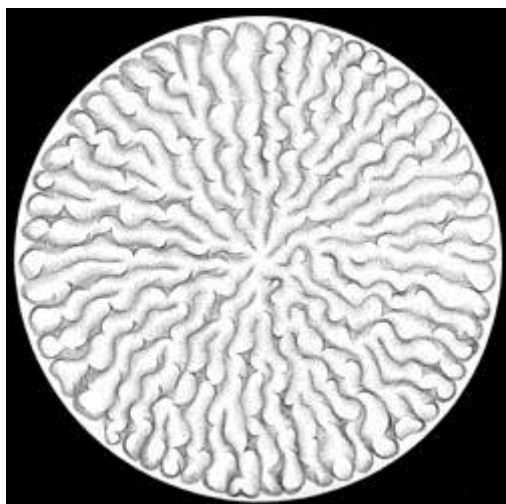


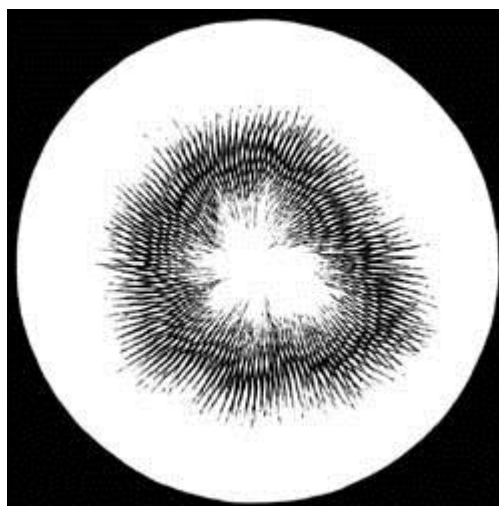
NEW EXHIBITION - ROBERT HORVITZ: THE ESSENCE



An exhibition of work by Robert Horvitz entitled *The Essence* opened in the Museum's Robert Guttmann Gallery in January 2002. This is the first display of contemporary art to be held at this venue. The curator Michaela Hájková aims to use this small gallery for the regular presentation of selected works by contemporary artists that share reflections on their Jewish identity.

Robert Horvitz graduated from Yale, where from 1970-71 he worked as an

assistant drawing instructor. He has exhibited in America and Europe at various intervals since 1970, as well as being involved with theoretical work, editing and teaching. He moved to Prague in 1992, where he still lives and devotes much of his time to drawing. Since 1999 he has taught art history and Internet courses at the University of New York in Prague.



Robert Horvitz is one of those artists for whom the creative process itself plays a primary role, with every-thing down to the smallest detail being subordinate:

a fixed means of expression, rapid, almost unconsciously executed pen strokes and constant use of the same paper type and format. The high degree of economy and gestural virtuosity in his drawing style allows him to utilize the act of drawing in a certain state of aesthetic unawareness, in a "state of grace", as the artist himself has put it. By exploring his "microcosm", he tries to find, and

redefine for himself, principles that are generally applicable. He does this via records that resemble the entries in a scientific journal, fossilized imprints of his state of mind; they are his reports from "grace space".

It is up to us how we perceive, read and interpret them.

The exhibition runs until 7 April 2002.



HELP IN THE SEARCH FOR LOST NEIGHBOURS

Following on from the Education and Culture Centre's project and exhibition Lost Neighbours (see Newsletter 4/2001), the Museum has addressed the general public via the Czech media with a request for assistance in gathering information and material relating to the lives of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia. We aim to bring together as many pieces of previously unknown information and documents as possible, in particular from the period of the second world war, a time that for many is still linked to memories of family and friends.



This project was launched in mid-December 2001 and has already produced significant results. By mid-February 2002 we received a number of personal and official documents, testimonies and family photos, as well as several historical objects, from about 150 respondents. All the material is being gathered by the Museum's Holocaust documentation department.

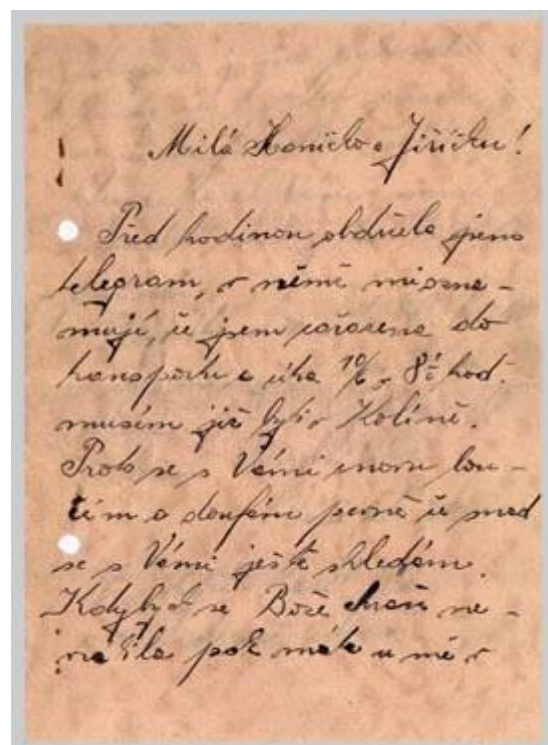
The Museum has recently filed hundreds of photographs and various written documents, including family correspondence, letters from the Terezín ghetto, concentration camps and transport assembly points, and personal documents (issued both illegally and officially). As only a small portion has actually been

donated to the Museum, the bulk of the material will be copied and subsequently returned to the owners. For the purposes of the Museum and donors, we are also searching for information on Bohemian and Moravian Jews to which the above documents and photographs relate.

On the basis of the tremendous response we have received so far, the project is expected to continue for a few more months. Afterwards, all the material will be inventoried, catalogued and included in the relevant collections of the Museum.

Aside from the sheer wealth of fascinating and often valuable material, what is significant is the highly positive response we have received from the public. Almost 60

years since the end of the war, people still remember their former Jewish neighbours and friends with love and affection and show interest in their fate. In view of the



fact that the number of people who directly witnessed the war is on the wane, this project is one of the last opportunities to preserve valuable records that otherwise may have been destroyed.

NEW ACQUISITIONS IN 2001

Last year the Museum's collections were enriched by a number of high-quality artworks, most of which were added to the collection of paintings, drawings and graphic art. This collection is focused primarily on the work of modern Jewish artists from Bohemia and Moravia, which constitutes an important chapter in modern Jewish culture.

There are still certain gaps in this area which need to be appropriately filled in.



One of the most interesting acquisitions is a portrait of the painter Jules Pascin by the Prague graphic artist Emil Orlik (1897). Of documentary significance is a sketch of the interior of the Old-New Synagogue by Oldřich Blažíček (1912). Noteworthy acquisitions also include a large group of drawings, water-colours, pastels and oil paintings by Jewish modern artists from 1920s and 30s Prague. These include a large water-colour by Alfred Justitz, a seascape by the famous exponent of the Paris School Georges Kars, and a large painting (*Church on the Lakeside*) by the Prague expressionist Bedřich Feigl. Work by the younger generation of Jewish artists in the Museum's collection include drawings by Ender Nemes and pastels by Géza Szóbel and Pavel Fleischmann.

Clearly the most valuable acquisitions are works by two prominent Prague-based Jewish artists of the post-war generation: two remarkable portraits by Pavla Mautnerová from around 1950 and a large painting (*Forest*) from 1954 by Robert Piesen, a leading exponent of 1960s abstract art. Another major boon for the art collection is a group of three expressionist drawings from 1970, '80 and '83 by the Prague sculptor Aleš Veselý. It is especially pleasing to note that, after a long time, the Museum has managed to enrich its collection with a number of major works of post-war and contemporary Czech art. In the future, attention will remain focused on this area in the Museum's acquisition programme.

The Museum also received two donations in 2001: a set of 5 pictures for the Jewish calendar 5762 (2002-3) by the U.S. artist Mark Podwal and a group of 34 paintings by the Slovak -born artist Dr. Vavro Oravec which were exhibited at the Museum in January 2001. Altogether, 70 works were added to the collection of paintings, drawings and graphic art.

The collection of Metal works was also enlarged, although to a lesser but still significant extent (donations included three medals from the Jewish sports club Hagibor and two spice boxes), as was the textile collection (with the purchase, for example, of a woman's veil dating from the second half of the 19th century and most likely stemming from the Middle East).

A LIFE FOR ART AND TEACHING TOURING EXHIBITION OF WORK BY FRIEDL DICKER-BRANDEIS

In association with the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, the Museum is currently involved as one of the main lenders of material to a major exhibition of the artist Friedl Dicker-Brandeis entitled A Life for Art and Teaching. This exhibition project is exceptionally broad in scope, for it is the first complete display of work by Friedl Dicker-Brandeis. This former Bauhaus disciple is presented here not only as a "teacher of Terezín children", but also, for the first time, as a unique artist whose work arguably ranks among the best produced by the European avant-garde in the inter-war years. A de luxe catalogue to accompany the exhibition has so far been published in German, Czech, French and English.



The show first opened in autumn 1999 in the Pallais Harrach in Vienna. After great success it subsequently toured to Graz (Austria), Český Krumlov (Czech Republic), Paris, Stockholm and Berlin. It was on display in Atlanta, Georgia, between November 2001 and March 2002 and has since moved to Japan where it can be seen at the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum until October 2002. The Museum has loaned 9 oil paintings (out of a total of 37 works) for the show in Japan. At the end of this year the final presentation is to take place in Los Angeles.

EMPTY SITES IN MĚLNÍK

An exhibition entitled Empty Sites was on display at the District Museum in Mělník between 17 October and 24 November 2001. This marked the culmination of a year-long educational and cultural project of the District Museum which was focused on Jewish culture and history. Its preparation and realization was a collaboration between Ms. Renata Špačková from the District Museum, the Jindřich Matiegka Elementary School and the Elementary Art School in Mělník. Support was provided by the Jewish Museum in Prague (a contributor to the exhibition) and its Education and Culture Centre, as well as by the Terezín Memorial, the Mělník local authority, the Terezín Initiative and the Open Society Fund Praha.

A number of events were held as part of this project in the course of 2001. School children took part in work -shops focusing on the celebration of the Sabbath and the main Jewish festivals and on recent Jewish history. In addition, there were a number of excursions to sites of former Jewish communities and monuments in the region (e.g., Rychnov nad Kněžnou and the Terezín ghetto), as well as tours of local Jewish cemeteries (e.g., Kralupy, Kostelec nad Labem, Byšice, Liběchov, Všetaty, Litice, Spomyšl, Bosyně, Vojkovice). Although the Mělník region had a relatively weak and scattered Jewish settlement, it was in fact the birthplace of a host of prominent figures, including the writer Vojtěch Rakous (1862-1935), the opera singer Emil Pollert (1877-1935) and the painters Georges Kars (1880-1945) and Max Horb (1882-1907). In Želízy to this day there still stands the boarding house where Franz Kafka used to stay.

The main part of the exhibition itself was devoted to Holocaust victims from the Mělník region. In certain cases, it was possible to piece together the fate of entire Jewish families from extant photos and documents. The opening of the exhibition was attended by some of the surviving members of these families. The second part of the exhibition featured synagogue and ritual objects from the Jewish Museum in Prague which originally stem from former Jewish communities in the region.

The exhibition was accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue with photographs of Jewish cemeteries, tombstones and synagogues (now mostly demolished) in the Mělník region. This catalogue is intended to fill in the "empty sites" and to commemorate their former inhabitants.

The timing of the exhibition was of symbolic significance. On the one hand, its opening and closing dates marked the 60th anniversary, respectively, of the first Jewish deportations and the first transport of Jews to Terezín. On the other, the exhibition coincided with the major Jewish festivals Rosh ha-shanah and Yom Kippur followed by Sukkot and Simhat Torah. These festivals were therefore highlighted in that part of the exhibition dealing with the Jewish religion.

NOW AVAILABLE THE SHADOW OF THE SHOAH OVER EUROPE

This is a collection of published lectures from a series that was presented in the Museum's Education and Culture Centre from January 2000 to December 2001. It has been compiled by Dr. Miloš Pojar and contains 24 papers by scholars from the Czech Republic, as well as from France and Slovakia. Providing a general overview of the Shoah (Holocaust) throughout Europe, individual papers are arranged chronologically to highlight the order in which European countries were occupied by Nazi Germany. The book ends with a group of papers dealing with European countries (with the exception of Vatican City and Ireland) that were neutral during the war. For understandable reasons, there is no section on Great Britain, the only European enemy of Nazi Germany not to be occupied.

The appendices to the book include a letter of 16 September 1919 written by Hitler on the request of the army officer Karl Mayer, in which he speaks of anti-

Semitism and the attitude of Germans towards the Jews. There is also a copy of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, the protocol of the Wannsee Conference and excerpts from a speech that Himmler made to Gauleiters on 6 October 1943 in Poznan. The book is in Czech with certain appendices in German. pp 315.

To order the above title, please [✉ contact](#) the Jewish Museum in Prague.

THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA

Part I: From the First Settlements until Emancipation

A guide to the historic exhibition housed in the Maisel Synagogue in Prague

Published in English, this brand new catalogue is centred around the individual topics of the Maisel exhibition and is accompanied by 105 reproductions of the rarest exhibits, some of which are being featured for the first time in print, including the actual signature of Rabbi Loew (the Maharal). The main body of text is written by Dr. Alexandr Putík and Olga Sixtová. This book follows on from previous exhibition guides published by the Museum, including Jewish Customs and Traditions (accompanying the exhibition in the Klausen Synagogue and Ceremonial Hall) and History of the Jews in Bohemia and Moravia, Part II - From Emancipation to the Present (accompanying the exhibition in the Spanish Synagogue).

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