ARIBALIVES

Recovering the Lost Stories of Looted Art

The vast and systemic pillaging of artworks during World War II, and the eventual rescue and return of many, is one of the most dramatic stories of twentieth-century art, and one that continues to have repercussions today. Artworks that withstood the immense tragedy of the war survived against extraordinary odds, escaping through both planned efforts and unforeseen opportunity. Many exist today as a result of great personal risk and ingenuity.

These objects — works of art, Judaica, books, and other material stolen by the Nazis — have often traveled great distances, passing through many hands. The exhibition is organized around this process of looting and recovery, with particular emphasis on way stations such as depots, storage rooms, and collecting points. These sites were used both by the Nazis to gather up plundered property and, following the war, by the Allies to organize its restitution. The Jewish Museum played a role in that work, serving as a depot for ceremonial objects coming from communities that had been destroyed.

It is often difficult to understand the "biography" of an artwork simply by looking at it, and even more difficult to uncover the lives and experiences of the people behind it.

Many of the artists, collectors, and descendants who owned these items are gone, and as the war recedes in time it can become even harder to grasp the traumatic events they endured. Yet through these works, and the histories that attend them, new connections to the past can be forged.

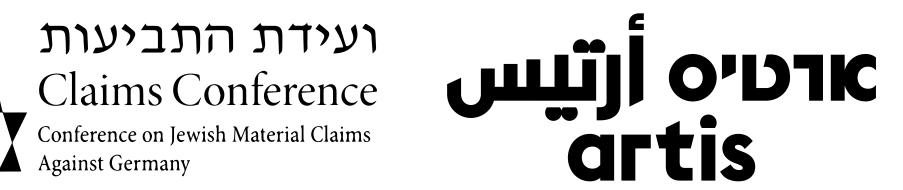
Four contemporary artists, Maria Eichhorn, Hadar Gad, Dor Guez, and Lisa Oppenheim, bring diverse perspectives to this theme as they connect it to their lives, practices, and research. It is through such efforts that this important period in history, and the stories of the people who experienced it, are reconsidered and renewed, given an afterlife that persists to the present day.

Darsie Alexander
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Sam Sackeroff Lerman-Neubauer Assistant Curator Afterlives: Recovering the Lost Stories of Looted Art is made possible by The Marilyn and Barry Rubenstein Family Foundation, The Wilf Family Foundations, the David Berg Foundation, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, The Joan Toepfer Charitable Trust, Ulrika and Joel Citron, Linda and Ilan Kaufthal, Liz Lange and David Shapiro, Vivian and Daniel Bernstein, Blavatnik Family Foundation, Nancy and Larry Pantirer Family Foundation, Betty Pantirer Schwartz, Artis, and other generous donors.

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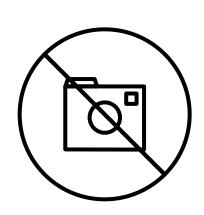
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The Danzig Collection and Jewish Cultural Reconstruction at the Jewish Museum

The Jewish Museum played a key role in the effort to save works of Jewish patrimony before the war, and to recover and return looted objects afterward. Two of its collections derive from this history.

In 1939, as war loomed, the Jewish Community of Danzig sent its remarkable collection of antique ceremonial objects to New York for safekeeping. The independent city of Danzig (now Gdańsk, in Poland) had a large and vibrant Jewish population. In the months before the Nazis invaded Poland, members of the Jewish Community were forced to sell their synagogue, and used the funds to flee persecution. They also sent their most precious belongings to New York for safekeeping. Working with the **American Jewish Joint Distribution** Committee, they shipped ten crates of treasures to the Jewish Theological Seminary in Manhattan. While hope remained that the Community would be reestablished in Danzig after the war, that proved impossible. The material was formally accessioned into the Jewish Museum collection in 1954.

In the aftermath of the war, from 1949 to 1952, the museum served as a temporary storage depot for the restitution organization Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR). Founded by the historian Salo Baron and administered by the philosopher Hannah Arendt, the JCR was authorized by the United States government to take custody of recovered Jewish cultural property. Since the Nazi destruction of Jewish communities in Europe had been thorough, a great deal of the material could not be returned to its original owners and was deemed "heirless" or "orphaned." Most was redistributed by the JCR to existing Jewish communities, but a selection was entrusted to the museum.

FREE MOBILE TOUR



Sign on to Jewish Museum Visitor WiFi and visit Tours. The JM.org on your own device.

Headphones must be used in the galleries.

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Franz Marc German, 1880-1916 *The Large Blue Horses*, 1911

Oil on canvas Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, gift of the T. B. Walker Foundation, Gilbert M. Walker Fund, 1942

The Large Blue Horses is typical of Franz Marc's bold and experimental approach: three horses clustered against a hillside are rendered in vivid blue, red, and green. Marc was a celebrated member of the experimental Blaue Reiter (Blue Rider) group, which emphasized the mystical power and symbolism of color. He was killed in World War I at the age of thirty-six, fighting in the German army. Twenty years later, his stylized art was called "degenerate" by the Nazis; many of his works were removed from public view and some were destroyed.

The Large Blue Horses survived World War II by chance: it was in private hands by the time the Nazis targeted Marc's work for seizure. It was shown at a gallery in London in 1938 in one of the first of several "anti-Hitler" shows and then was sent to the United States, where it was featured in the exhibition Twentieth Century Banned German Art. It thus escaped the tumult of the war. More than a century after the painting's creation, the vibrancy it embodies continues to resonate, suggesting a time of openness and creative freedom, which the artist so fervently embraced.





Max Pechstein German, 1881–1955 *Landscape*, 1912

Oil on canvas Estate of Hugo Simon

Max Pechstein was a prominent member of the German Expressionist group Die Brücke (The Bridge), which formed in Dresden in 1905. Bathers and nudes in landscapes were a central motif for these bohemian artists, for whom erotic scenes represented independence from the constraints of bourgeois German society. *Landscape* features four naked figures in an idyllic setting rendered in dynamic, simplified forms associated with German woodcut prints and a bright palette inspired by the works of Henri Matisse.

Landscape belonged to the German Jewish banker Hugo Simon, an avid art collector and associate of Bertolt Brecht, Thomas Mann, and Albert Einstein. Simon fled to Paris when the Nazis came to power in 1933. In 1938 this painting was shown in the same anti-Nazi art exhibition in London as Franz Marc's Large Blue Horses, nearby. As the German army entered France in 1940, Simon escaped to Brazil, leaving his belongings behind. The Nazis looted his Paris home, seizing Landscape. After the war, the painting was presumed lost until it was discovered in the basement of a French museum in 1966. It entered the temporary custodianship of the Musées Nationaux Récupération, an inventory established by the French government to catalogue works that were stolen or had uncertain provenance. In 2021, eight decades after it was stolen, the painting was restituted to Hugo Simon's heirs.

Pierre Bonnard French, 1867–1947 Still Life with Guelder Roses, 1892, reworked in 1929

Oil on canvas Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herman R. Sutherland

This still life, defined by a palette of creams, whites, and greens, was made by Pierre Bonnard during two stages of his career. Begun when he was twenty-five, the painting was not completed until nearly four decades later. As a young artist, Bonnard experimented with bold, simplified interior scenes composed of flat, expressive colors and intricate textures. By the time he returned to *Still Life with Guelder Roses* later in life, his style had become much looser and more painterly, adding to the softness and subtlety of this work.

This painting is one of more than a dozen works by Bonnard that were stolen by the Nazis from a single collector, David David-Weill. They seized more than two thousand pieces from this influential French American philanthropist, head of the banking house Lazard Frères. Still Life with Guelder Roses was first held at a temporary Nazi storage depot in Paris. It was later given inventory number 772 and transferred to a salt mine in Austria used by the Nazis to store looted art. It was discovered there by Allied forces in 1945 and returned to David-Weill the following year.

The Room of the Martyrs in the Jeu de Paume Gallery, Paris

In war, property becomes power, and stolen art becomes an instrument of policy. During World War II, looting from Jewish collections was widespread and included both systematic plunder and opportunistic thefts. One of the largest Nazi art-looting task forces, operating throughout occupied Europe, was the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, or ERR. The ERR was charged with stealing valuables — jewelry, furniture, and especially works of art. Some were absorbed into Nazi collections as marks of prestige; others were sold on the international market to raise funds for the Nazi war machine; and many, labeled "degenerate," were destroyed.

Most of the paintings on view in this gallery were pillaged by the ERR from Jewish collections, passing through a sprawling network of Nazi storage depots. One of the most important was in the Jeu de Paume, a museum in the heart of Paris. There, stolen masterpieces were displayed for senior German officials to choose from, or were tagged for later destruction.

Many of the works at the Jeu de Paume were eventually returned to their owners through the stealth and bravery of a woman named Rose Valland.

Valland had been a curator at the gallery before the war. When the Nazis occupied Paris, she remained there and spent the Occupation working with the French Resistance to document the Nazi thefts. At great personal risk, she recorded incoming and outgoing shipments and made detailed maps of the extensive network of Nazi transportation and storage facilities. One room at the Jeu de Paume was dedicated to "degenerate" works. Valland was unable to prevent the destruction of many of the items that hung there, and referred to the space as the "Room of the Martyrs."

In the photograph of the Jeu de Paume on this wall, probably taken in 1942, are paintings by André Derain, Claude Monet, and others believed to have been destroyed. Works by Paul Cézanne, Pablo Picasso, and Fédor Löwenstein, on view in the exhibition, are among those that survived.



After the war Rose Valland (left) worked with the Allies to return looted works to their owners. Here, she and her American colleague Edith Standen (right) prepare works of art for restitution at the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point, Occupied Germany, 1945 or 1946.

August Sander German, 1876–1964 Persecuted Jews, c. 1938, printed 1990

Gelatin silver prints
Jewish Museum, New York, purchase: Fine Arts Acquisitions
Committee Fund, Lillian Gordon Bequest, by exchange, and
anonymous gift

RIGHT TO LEFT

Persecuted Jew, Mr. Leubsdorf
Persecuted Jewess
Persecuted Jew, Dr. Kahn
Persecuted Jewess, Mrs. Michel
Persecuted Jew
Persecuted Jewess
Persecuted Jewess
Persecuted Jewess
Persecuted Jewess
Persecuted Jewess
Persecuted Jewess, Mrs. Oppenheim
Persecuted Jewess, Mrs. Oppenheim

The German photographer August Sander is best known for his lifelong project to document what he called "people of the twentieth century," portraits of an immense range of commonplace, average people. The sitters in the *Persecuted Jews* series were probably friends and neighbors and the images may have been meant to accompany travel documents, such as passports and exit visas. Although Sander was not Jewish, his celebration of ethnic variety made him a target of Nazi hostility. Many of his photographic plates were impounded. His son Erich was arrested by the Nazis for antifascist activities in 1934 and died in prison.

These ten photographs show Jewish men and women who were forced to flee their homes in and around Cologne, Germany, in 1938. That year, antisemitism reached a terrifying climax in Germany with the pogrom known as Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass. On November 9 and 10, shops across the country were ransacked and hundreds of synagogues were burned.

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Henri Matisse French, 1869–1954 Girl in Yellow and Blue with Guitar, 1939

Oil on canvas Art Institute of Chicago, Brooks McCormick Estate



Daisies, 1939

Oil on canvas

Art Institute of Chicago, gift of Helen Pauling Donnelley in memory of her parents, Mary Fredericka and Edward George Pauling

These two works by Henri Matisse, made shortly before the Nazi occupation of Paris in 1940, show an artist in full command of his creative powers. The canvases are boldly constructed in flat blocks of color harnessed by strong black lines. Matisse fills the space of each scene while also layering it with nuance, using delicate, cagelike lines to define the background of *Girl in Yellow and Blue with Guitar* and a compositional structure in *Daisies* that seems to contain three distinct paintings within its frame. In the 1930s Matisse revisited a technique that he had honed two decades earlier, abstracting objects and figures through a process of continual scraping and working of the canvas surface.

The Nazis, rejecting most modern and experimental art, banned Matisse's work from German museums. The artist himself remained in the south of France during World War II. Both of these paintings belonged to Paul Rosenberg, a renowned French Jewish gallerist who represented many of the most influential artists of the twentieth century, including Matisse. In 1940 they were confiscated by the Nazis from a bank vault in Bordeaux where Rosenberg had stored much of his inventory before fleeing to the United States. The plundered paintings were displayed by the Nazis in Paris and stored together at the Jeu de Paume. Girl in Yellow and Blue with Guitar was selected by the Nazi military leader Hermann Goering for his personal collection; Daisies seems to have remained in storage. Following the war, both were returned to Rosenberg and later sold. The two were reunited when they entered the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago, Daisies in 1983 and Girl in Yellow and Blue with Guitar in 2007.

Marc Chagall French, born in Vitebsk, Russian Empire (now Belarus), 1887–1985 *Purim*, 1916 or 1917

Oil on canvas
Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Louis E. Stern Collection,
1963

This delicate rendering of figures exchanging food and sweets celebrates Purim, a joyous Jewish holiday commemorating the survival of Jews from persecution in ancient Persia. The painting is a study for an unrealized mural commissioned from Chagall by the Jewish Society for the Promotion of the Arts in St. Petersburg, Russia. The work's folkloric imagery and vivid colors draw from Chagall's memories of his childhood in a Jewish enclave in the Russian Empire — a theme that informs much of his work.

Purim was acquired by the Museum Folkwang in Germany in 1928. In 1937 it was confiscated by the Nazis as part of a purge of German public museums to remove so-called "degenerate" art — modern or experimental art or art made by Jews. It was then sold by a Nazi dealer authorized to trade in "degenerate" art on the international market, a stratagem of the Germans to raise funds for their war effort. It entered the collection of Kurt Feldhäusser, a Berlin collector and Nazi Party member. After Feldhäusser was killed in an Allied bombing raid in 1945, the work traveled with his mother to Brooklyn and was later sold.

Paul Cézanne French, 1839-1906 Bather and Rocks, between 1860 and 1866

Oil on canvas, transferred from plaster Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia, gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.

This massive nude figure, executed with brooding intensity, originates from a large-scale mural, Landscape with Bather, that Paul Cézanne painted directly on the wall of his family's eighteenth-century mansion in the south of France. Severed from its original site and transferred to canvas, the painting is characterized by the expressive brushwork, somber palette, and heightened emotion that are characteristic of the artist's early works and pastoral scenes.

The Nazis confiscated *Bather and Rocks* from the French Jewish art collector Alphonse Kann. Like Pablo Picasso's *Group of Characters* and Fédor Löwenstein's *Composition,* also on view, it was taken to the Room of the Martyrs at the Jeu de Paume in Paris. There, the painting hung alongside canvases by Fernand Léger, Georges Braque, and Henri Matisse, among others. The work was slated for transport by train to a second Nazi storage facility in Czechoslovakia in 1944, but the train was found outside Paris by Free French soldiers, who removed the art. Cézanne's work was returned to its owner after the war.

Pablo Picasso Spanish, 1881–1973 *Group of Characters,* 1929

Oil on canvas Association des Amis du Petit Palais, Geneva

This enigmatic image, a combination of mysterious characters against a red background, is among a series of works completed by Picasso in the spring of 1929, when his interest in Surrealism was on full display. Three figures, blending human features with forms borrowed from animals or machines, seem to walk along the uneven terrain of a fantasy landscape, suggesting a surreal world of dreams.

Group of Characters, owned by the French collector Alphonse Kann, was on the same German transport train as Paul Cézanne's Bather and Rocks (on view at left), to be sent from Paris to storage in Czechoslovakia. The train was intercepted by French fighters on August 1, 1944, and many works from Kann's collection were recovered. The painting was restituted to the Kann family in 1947 and later sold.

Fédor Löwenstein German, 1901–1946 *Composition,* 1939

Oil on canvas

Musées Nationaux Récupération, France: recovered in Germany at the end of World War II, incorrectly entered on the inventory of the Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1973; deregistered and reentered on the provisional special inventory of works subject to restitution, 2011; on deposit at the Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne — Centre de Création Industrielle, Paris, return to its legitimate owners in process

Throughout the 1930s, the Jewish artist Fédor Löwenstein was associated with the progressive Salon des Surindépendants in Paris, known for its annual exhibitions of recent abstract art, particularly Constructivism. Influenced by his avant-garde milieu, Löwenstein painted the Cubist landscape *Composition* in 1939.

By the time Löwenstein completed Composition, France was on the precipice of war. As a Jew and an artist considered "degenerate" by the Nazis, he needed to flee Paris and go into hiding in the south of France. Before departing in 1940, he tried to send more than twenty paintings, including this one, to a gallery in the United States. But the works were seized by the Germans at a port in Bordeaux before they could be shipped to safety. Instead they were sent to the Jeu de Paume in Paris, where many of them, including Composition, were slated for destruction. Remarkably, the work survived the war, forgotten in storage in the Louvre. Recently, Löwenstein's heirs were found, and the canvas is now in the process of being restituted to them by the French state.

Claude Lorrain French, 1600-1682 Battle on a Bridge, 1655

Oil on canvas
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Adolph D.
and Wilkins C. Williams Fund

The French Baroque painter Claude Lorrain is celebrated for his lush, atmospheric landscapes. This historical tableau may portray the battle between the Roman emperor Constantine and his rival, Maxentius, near Rome in 312 CE. A popular subject marking the transition from paganism to Christianity, this scene is interpreted by Claude as an evocative illustration of human vanity: set against the idyllic splendor of immense trees and placid skies, with serene shepherds and their flock in the foreground, minute, unidentifiable figures erupt into brutal violence.

This painting hung in Irish and British estates for centuries before entering the collection of the Paris art dealer Georges Wildenstein, who was Jewish. In 1940 a large part of the collection was confiscated by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, the Nazi art-looting task force. Fearing for his life, Wildenstein was forced to "Aryanize" his firm in 1941, surrendering control of it to non-Jews and selling his inventory for well below market value. One of the works expropriated in this way was *Battle on a Bridge*, which was then earmarked by the Nazis for the Führermuseum, Hitler's planned — but never built — personal museum in Linz, Austria.

Creativity under Duress

Displacement was a constant condition during World War II: Nazi aggression led to the forced movement of tens of millions of people. Yet artists continued to work, often in circumstances of great duress. Some were in exile; others remained living under German occupation. Perhaps most extraordinary were works made by Jewish artists in hiding or imprisoned in concentration camps. These works, depictions of the camps and their prisoners, are both historical records and witnesses to the hardship and peril inmates faced on a daily basis.

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Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart German, 1899–1962 Composition No. 126, 1941

Oil on canvas Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, gift of William S. Huff, B.A. 1949, M.Arch. 1952

Friedrich Vordemberge-Gildewart was associated with many avant-garde art movements over his career, all centered on the belief in the revolutionary power of nonrepresentational composition, which he dubbed "absolute art." Composition No. 126 was painted four years after Vordemberge-Gildewart, who had been named as a "degenerate" artist by the Nazis, fled Germany for Amsterdam with his Jewish wife. When Nazi forces occupied the Netherlands in 1940, the couple was forced to live in close confinement. Nevertheless, Vordemberge-Gildewart continued to make art dedicated to advanced aesthetics and nonconformity. Abstract canvases such as Composition No. 126 were constructed with the aid of pencil sketches and paper cutouts to create harmonious arrangements that emphasize the relationship between varied colors, shapes, and textures, seen here in the dynamic interplay of pinks and yellows. With its graceful geometric forms and melodious sense of movement, this painting expresses a feeling of artistic liberation, made during a period of intense political oppression.

Paul Klee German, born in Switzerland, 1879–1940 *Two Trees*, 1940

Gouache on cardboard University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry L. Winston

In the 1930s Paul Klee dramatically simplified his forms, relying on graphic elements, earth tones, and heavy, tactile marks. In this late piece, made against the backdrop of tremendous political turmoil, Klee represents two trees rendered in abstracted shapes and thick black lines against a field of subdued colors, which together capture the melancholy of the artist's final years. Although sober, the painting retains the power and magnetism that defined Klee's work throughout his career. Labeled "degenerate" by the Nazis, Klee was forced to give up his professorship at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf in 1933. After fleeing Germany for his native Switzerland at the end of that year, he developed serious health issues, compounded by the stress of living in exile. Klee completed *Two Trees* in 1940, the year he died.

Kurt Schwitters German, 1887–1948 Opened by Customs, 1937 or 1938

Paper, printed paper, oil, and graphite collaged on paper Tate, London, purchased 1958

A dense accumulation of torn paper, discarded trash, and oil paint, *Opened by Customs* belongs to a style of collage that the artist Kurt Schwitters called "Merz." He coined the word in 1919 while he was a member of the Hannover branch of the avant-garde Dada art movement. Cutting the German word *Kommerz* (commerce) in half, he used the nonsensical term to capture the chaotic and at times absurd energy of contemporary society.

Schwitters made *Opened by Customs* while he was living in exile in Norway, having been deemed "degenerate" by the Nazis in 1937. The work derives its title from three black-and-white Nazi customs stamps pasted across the top of the composition that give the phrase in German: *Zollamtlich geöffnet*. There are other references to Schwitters's refugee status as well. Among the tattered pieces of paper are scraps printed with the phrases "baggage insurance," "airline boarding pass," and "sleeping car," reminders of the dislocation and forced movement that Schwitters, like so many others, experienced during the war.

George Grosz American, born in Germany, 1893–1959 *Approaching Storm*, 1940

Oil on canvas board Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, purchase

George Grosz is known for his satirical drawings and paintings of life in Germany between the wars. Although he was not Jewish, he was a fierce critic of the Third Reich and was among the first artists to be persecuted by the Nazis. Knowing that his life was in danger, he fled Germany for the United States shortly after Hitler's rise to power in 1933. There, he continued to to warn others of the growing Nazi threat through his art. He described many of the paintings he made during this period as "images of hell" that captured the atrocities of the Second World War engulfing Europe. But despite this, Grosz also confessed to being a romantic. Inspired by time spent on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, he produced relatively traditional dune landscapes. Here, the barren, windy terrain and swirling brushwork lend a foreboding tone to the scene. *Approaching Storm* is among the most moving of those works, reflecting the sense of tragic inevitability that Grosz felt as the catastrophe in Europe unfolded.

Otto Freundlich German, 1878–1943 The Unity of Life and Death, 1938

Oil on canvas Museum of Modern Art, New York, Lydia Winston Malbin Bequest in memory of Alfred H. Barr Jr., 1990

The German Jewish artist Otto Freundlich saw radical potential in abstraction. In this work, as in many of the paintings that he made throughout the 1930s, mosaiclike compositions of shapes and colors, arranged in dynamic, multipart bars, articulate the deep structural forces that mold world history. For Freundlich, who was a socialist, these pure forms offered a glimpse of the utopian, collectivist society that he hoped to see one day.

Freundlich painted this work between 1936 and 1938, finishing it one year after another artwork of his, a massive sculpture entitled *Large Head* or *The New Man* (1912), appeared on the cover of a gallery guide for the Nazis' 1937 *Degenerate Art* exhibition in Munich. Fearing deportation, Freundlich hid in a small mountain town in the Pyrenees from 1940 to 1943, when he was arrested and sent to the Lublin-Majdanek concentration camp in Poland, where he died.

Jacob Barosin

American, born in Riga, Russian Empire (now Latvia), 1906–2001

Untitled portrait, between June 1940 and September 1943

Charcoal on paper Made while imprisoned in Langlade labor camp, Nîmes, France United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC,

gift of Peter Garik and Katherine Greenblatt

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Jacob Barosin *Woman and Four Children*, 1943

Pencil on paper
Made in hiding in Lunel, France
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC,
gift of Peter Garik and Katherine Greenblatt

Jacob Barosin *In Front of the Hospital,* between 1941 and 1943

Watercolor on paper
Made in hiding in Lunel, France
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC,
gift of Peter Garik and Katherine Greenblatt

Ava Hegedish

American, born in Novy Sad, Yugoslavia (now Serbia), 1926

The Artist's Grandmother, between 1941 and 1944

Pencil on paper

Made in hiding near Belgrade, Yugoslavia (now Serbia) United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC, gift of Ava Kadishson Schieber

Jacob Barosin *Roma Girls,* 1942

Watercolor on paper
Probably made in hiding in Lunel, France
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC,
gift of Peter Garik and Katherine Greenblatt

Otto Karas

Czech, born in Prague, Austria-Hungary (now Czechia), 1896–1944

Terezín, Yard, 1942

Watercolor and ink on paper Made while imprisoned in Terezín concentration camp, Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) Leo Baeck Institute, New York

Jacob Barosin *Roma Children,* 1942

Watercolor on paper Probably made in hiding in Lunel, France United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC, gift of Peter Garik and Katherine Greenblatt

Jacob Barosin *Three People Walking,* between 1940 and 1943

Pencil on paper
Possibly made in hiding in Lunel, France
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC, gift of Peter Garik and Katherine Greenblatt

Jacob Barosin *Roma Boy,* 1941

Watercolor on paper
Made in hiding in Lunel, France
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC, gift of Peter Garik and Katherine Greenblatt

Norbert Troller

American, born in Brünn, Austria-Hungary (now Brno, Czechia), 1896–1981

Hannover, Terezín, 1942

Pencil and watercolor on paper Made while imprisoned in Terezín concentration camp, Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) Leo Baeck Institute, New York

Norbert Troller *Terezín, Still Life,* 1942

Crayon and watercolor on paper Made while imprisoned in Terezín concentration camp, Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) Leo Baeck Institute, New York

Otto Karas *Terezín, Fortification Wall,* 1942

Watercolor and ink on paper
Made while imprisoned in Terezín concentration camp,
Czechoslovakia (now Czechia)
Leo Baeck Institute, New York

Jacob Barosin Untitled portrait, 1940

Charcoal on paper
Made while imprisoned in Langlade labor camp,
Nîmes, France
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC,
gift of Peter Garik and Katherine Greenblatt

Otto Karas *Terezín, Outdoor View,* 1942

Ink and watercolor on paper
Made while imprisoned in Terezín concentration camp,
Czechoslovakia (now Czechia)
Leo Baeck Institute, New York

These drawings were made by Jewish artists under conditions of extreme duress, while they were either imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps or hiding from Nazi forces in Occupied Europe. In addition to being documents that give a firsthand account of their harrowing ordeals, the drawings are moving works of art that testify to the persistence of the creative spirit in even the most dire circumstances. Some are representations of the camps themselves. Others are intimate portraits of fellow inmates that express the care and empathy that Jewish prisoners were denied by their captors. Perhaps some were intended to preserve the memory of people who did not survive. Made at great risk, the drawings preserve the emotional experiences of their authors, carrying them into the present.

Dachau concentration camp records maintained by Dr. Joseph Weiss, July 1, 1944–April 16, 1945

Jewish Museum, New York, gift of Joy Ungerleider

While the works on view in the galleries around you survived the war, they must be seen in the context of the irreparable loss of life that was sustained. A powerful record of that loss is this small volume. Recorded by Dr. Joseph Weiss, a political prisoner assigned to be a clerk in the Dachau concentration camp, it is a ledger bearing the names of 3,478 men, women, and children who arrived at Dachau's Work Camp No. 3 between July 1944 and April 1945, when the camp was liberated. Of the prisoners listed, only eleven survived. Each entry gives the prisoner's identification number, name, date of birth, profession, prisoner category, and, in many cases, eventual fate.



Charm bracelet of Greta Perlman, 1941–44

Cutout brass, porcelain, and cord Made in Terezín concentration camp, Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) Jewish Museum, New York, gift of the Estate of Greta Perlman

This charm bracelet was assembled by Greta Perlman, a prisoner in the Terezín concentration camp during World War II. A Czech Jew, she was interned in Terezín (also called, in German, Theresienstadt) from late 1941 to late 1944. On October 4, 1944, she was deported to the Auschwitz death camp and later to Bergen-Belsen. She survived and immigrated to the United States after the war. Terezín was a transit camp for Jews and other inmates on their way to extermination sites. The Germans designed it to appear to the world as a model settlement. In reality it was a brutal place where more than thirty thousand prisoners died of mistreatment. Still, internees were sometimes able to make artworks clandestinely in the camp workshops.

These charms, probably made by various people, were either given to Perlman as personal mementos or collected by her in exchange for food when she worked in the camp kitchen. They were apparently hidden inside Terezín — bricked up in a wall or buried and recovered after the war's end. Made in secret and in peril, they bear hidden meanings: the number of the transport train on which she was deported from Prague; a lice comb; a ladle; a bullet; the name Theo, with a date; a lucky horseshoe. To decode them sheds light on her life and her struggle to survive.

Arthur (Asher) Berlinger German, 1899–1944 Jewish calendar for the year 5704, 1943/1944

Made in Terezín, Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) Ink on paper with leather binding Book printed and bound by Wilhelm Toch Jewish Museum, New York

Despite horrific conditions at Terezín, many prisoners tried to practice their faith in secret. This calendar of Jewish holidays was created in the camp to assist that effort. It was illustrated by Arthur Berlinger, one of many Jewish artists the Nazis deported there. This sketch of a man praying in a synagogue whose ceiling is painted with stars is a depiction of the hidden prayer room at Terezín, which Berlinger decorated.

Hans Vogel American, born in Cologne, Germany, 1929–1943 Diary, 1940–41

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, Gift of Eva Vogel

This diary, kept by Hans Vogel when he was eleven years old, records the harrowing period between July 24, 1940, and August 9, 1941, when he and his family sought to evade the Nazis.

The Vogels fled Germany in 1936, settling in Paris. At the outbreak of World War II Hans's father, Simon, was interned by the French government as an enemy alien, first in Lisieux Prison and then in the Gurs internment camp near Oloron-Sainte-Marie in the south of France. In June 1940 the Germans reached Paris and the family fled to the unoccupied zone in the south, where Simon reached them upon his release. This page includes a hand-drawn map of their travels through France, Spain, and then Portugal, where they boarded a ship in Lisbon and sailed to New York.

Norbert Troller

American, born in Brünn, Austria-Hungary (now Brno, Czechia), 1896–1981

All made while imprisoned in Terezín concentration camp, Czechoslovakia (now Czechia) Leo Baeck Institute, New York

TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

Terezín, Junk Furniture, 1943 Brown pencil on paper mounted on paper

Inscribed by the artist, "1943, came trainloads of the oldest junk furniture of former Jewish apartments, nobody was interested in it in Praha [Prague]. Chests without doors or drawers, chairs with 2 or 3 feet, tables without legs etc. We used and repaired all."

Terezín, Elderly Prisoners, 1942 Pencil on paper

Terezín, Hearse, 1943 Ink on paper

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

Terezín, Plundered Jewish Apartments, 1942 Brown ink on paper

The artist later described this scene as "truckloads of broken furniture and off-alls [rubbish] of the former Nazi-devastated and plundered Jewish apartments, dumped in the barracks courtyards."

Terezín, People Awaiting Transport, 1943
Pencil and ink on paper

*Terezín, Sudeten Barrack*s, 1943 Crayon on paper

Terezín, Transport, 1943 Pencil on paper

Born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Norbert Troller was a successful architect until he was deported to Terezín concentration camp in March 1942. He made nearly three hundred drawings as surreptitious records of the daily horrors he saw there. Although he hid them, some were discovered by guards. As punishment, Troller was sent to the Auschwitz death camp in September 1944. He was liberated in January 1945 and immigrated to New York. After the war he returned to Terezín and was able to retrieve the surviving drawings.

August Sander German, 1876–1964 Persecuted Jews, c. 1938, printed 1990

Gelatin silver prints
Jewish Museum, New York, Fine Arts Acquisitions Committee
Fund, Lillian Gordon Bequest, by exchange, and Anonymous
Gift

LEFT TO RIGHT

Persecuted Jewess, Mrs. Oppenheim
Persecuted Jew, Mr. Oppenheim
Persecuted Jewess
Persecuted Jewess
Persecuted Jewess
Persecuted Jewess
Persecuted Jewess, Mrs. Michel
Persecuted Jew, Dr. Kahn
Persecuted Jewess
Persecuted Jewess
Persecuted Jew, Mr. Leubsdorf

The German photographer August Sander is best known for his lifelong project to document what he called "people of the twentieth century," portraits of an immense range of commonplace, average people. The sitters in the *Persecuted Jews* series were probably friends and neighbors and the images may have been meant to accompany travel documents, such as passports and exit visas. Although Sander was not Jewish, his celebration of ethnic variety made him a target of Nazi hostility. Many of his photographic plates were impounded. His son Erich was arrested by the Nazis for antifascist activities in 1934 and died in prison.

These ten photographs show Jewish men and women who were forced to flee their homes in and around Cologne, Germany, in 1939. That year, antisemitism reached a terrifying climax in Germany with the pogrom known as Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass. On November 9 and 10, shops across the country were ransacked and hundreds of synagogues were burned.

The Munich Central Collecting Point

At the end of the war the Allies found enormous caches of artworks, books, and ceremonial objects stolen by the Nazis. They immediately began the overwhelming task of identifying works and, where possible, returning them to their owners. They established several sites for this undertaking, of which the Munich Central Collecting Point in Occupied Germany was the largest. With deliberate symbolism, it was housed in the former Nazi administrative headquarters, which included Hitler's personal office — a mark of the importance the Allies gave to art and cultural material in their effort to redress the damage done by the Nazi regime.

The Munich Central Collecting Point received and processed more than one million objects during its six years of operation, from 1945 to 1951, including innumerable masterpieces from both private and museum collections.

Johannes Felbermeyer Operations at the Munich Central Collecting Point, c. 1946

Facsimiles of original photographs
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Gustave Courbet French, 1819–1877 *Nude Reclining by the Sea*, 1868

Oil on canvas Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Louis E. Stern Collection, 1963

Gustave Courbet's transformative compositions introduced a new and heightened realism to nineteenth-century painting. Dismissing the romanticism of earlier generations, he shocked audiences with naturalistic representations that defied conventional standards of beauty. This was particularly evident in his nudes. Here a woman reclines against a seascape, a pose that recalls the idealized motif of the odalisque. However, her uneven complexion and studio model posture, as well as the inclusion of a contemporary sailboat in the background, frustrate the apparent timelessness and interrupt the placid scene.

Nude Reclining by the Sea belonged to the Paris art dealer Paul Rosenberg, who stored his collection in a Bordeaux bank vault that the Nazis raided. His gallery at 21 rue La Boétie in Paris was also seized by the Nazis and converted into the offices of the Institute for the Study of the Jewish Question, which used the space to organize the antisemitic exhibition The Jew in France. Nude Reclining by the Sea was stored at the Jeu de Paume until it was picked out by Hermann Goering for his personal collection and sent to his estate in Bavaria. The painting was recovered after the war and sent to the Munich Central Collecting Point for processing. It was repatriated to France on April 18, 1946, and returned to Rosenberg, who later sold it.

Camille Pissarro French, 1830–1903 *Minette*, 1872

Oil on canvas

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut, the Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund

The painter's beloved young daughter Minette looks out at the viewer, hands gently folded. This intimate portrait has a complex and tragic history. Pissarro gave it to a friend with whom he and his family stayed during the birth of another daughter, who died in infancy, as a token of gratitude and grief. A mere two years after the painting's completion, Minette also died, at the age of nine. After her death, the painting was returned to Pissarro, for whom it served as a symbol of mourning for a second time.

By the outbreak of World War II, this painting was in the collection of Bruno Stahl, whose father was president of the Jewish Community of Berlin, assisting Jews who were attempting to leave the city during the Nazi regime. Stahl stored his paintings in a Paris bank vault before fleeing France for Cuba, eventually settling in the United States. After the fall of France, the vault was looted and the painting was sent to the Jeu de Paume. Like Paul Cézanne's Bather and Rocks and Pablo Picasso's Group of Characters, also on view in this exhibition, the work was loaded onto a train in 1944, bound for a Nazi warehouse. The train was found by Free French soldiers, who took possession of the artworks on board. After the painting was recovered by Allied authorities, it was returned to Stahl.

Henri Fantin-Latour French, 1836–1904 *Self-Portrait,* 1861

Oil on canvas National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Henri Fantin-Latour painted this dramatic self-portrait in 1861. Although known for his delicate still lifes of flowers, he considered himself a portraitist and channeled his creative energy into making emotionally charged paintings of his fellow writers and artists, including Charles Baudelaire and Edouard Manet. Here, Fantin-Latour represents himself as a brooding bohemian, his brow tilted forward, his thick brown hair a mass of frenzied strokes.

Like Pierre Bonnard's *Still Life with Guelder Roses*, also in this exhibition, *Self-Portrait* belonged to the French American banker and collector David David-Weill. After it was stolen by the Nazis, the painting was kept in a salt mine at Altaussee in Austria, one of the largest Nazi storage depots. The mine's underground tunnels housed more than six thousand artworks, including masterpieces by Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Jan van Eyck, and Vermeer. After *Self-Portrait* was recovered, the painting was sent to the Munich Central Collecting Point on June 20, 1945. It was repatriated to France on July 11, 1946, and returned to David-Weill later that year.

Bernardo Strozzi Italian, c. 1581-1644 *Act of Mercy: Giving Drink to the Thirsty*, 1620s

Oil on canvas

John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, the State Art

Museum of Florida, Florida State University, Sarasota

The subject of this Baroque painting is drawn from the Christian practice of the seven works of mercy, charitable deeds outlined in the Bible that address the needs of the poor and suffering. Illustrating one of these, *Act of Mercy* portrays a scene of humble kindness rendered in vibrant colors, sensuous brushstrokes, and dramatic lighting.

In the 1930s Act of Mercy was owned by the Viennese Jewish industrialist Oscar Bondy, whose sizable art collection was seized by the Nazis after the annexation of Austria in 1938. The collection spent the war moving in and out of Nazi storage depots throughout Austria and Germany, including secret warehouses in monasteries and salt mines. Like Claude Lorrain's Battle on a Bridge, also on view in this exhibition, Act of Mercy was tagged by the Germans for inclusion in the Führermuseum, Hitler's personal museum planned for Linz, Austria. After the painting was recovered by the Allies, it was brought to the Munich Central Collecting Point. Bondy had died in 1944, but much of his collection was returned to his widow, who sold it at auction in 1949.

LEFT TO RIGHT

WS Passover plate, 1807 Vienna

Cast, cutwork, and pressed silver

Martin Carl Hanias Probably German, 1697-after 1765 Torah crown, between 1719 and 1733 Nuremberg

Repoussé, cast, pierced, and parcel-gilt silver

J. C. Hassenberg J L O Sabbath candlesticks, c. 1800 Germany

Pressed and cast silver

Sy and Wagner Presentation medallions and chain, 1896 Berlin

Gilt, pierced, cast, chased, engraved, and enameled silver and gold

All works Jewish Museum, New York, Jewish Cultural Reconstruction

Johann Valentin Schüler Probably German, 1650–1720 Sabbath or festival lamp, between 1680 and 1720 Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Cast, repoussé, and engraved silver
Jewish Museum, New York, Jewish Cultural Reconstruction

ON THE PLINTH

Strongbox, 1769 Probably Germany

Iron with gold leaf (later overpainted with gold paint), brass, bronze, and silver
Jewish Museum, New York, gift of Catherine E.
Dreyfuss-Kovacs

This splendid strongbox originally belonged to the Mayer-Dreyfuss family of Mannheim, Germany. It was probably made for a family member who was court jeweler to Karl Theodor, Elector Palatine, and was a symbol of the family's status and prosperity. The initials of a Dreyfuss family member, JAD, are inscribed on the lower left of the inner lid, next to the date 1769, indicating when the box was either made or purchased. After Hitler's rise to power, the family was forced to flee Germany. Although the box was a prized possession, its size and weight made it cumbersome and the family had to leave it behind in their home. During the war the box was used by a Nazi military official, who added his own stamped initials, ROV, and the date 1939 on the filigree inner lid at lower right. A friend of the family retrieved the box after the war and returned it to its owners, who had settled in the United States.

ABOVE

Materials recovered by Jewish Cultural Reconstruction in storage at the Jewish Museum, c. 1949

Gelatin silver print Jewish Museum, New York

The Jewish Museum and Jewish Cultural Reconstruction

All works Jewish Museum, New York, Jewish Cultural Reconstruction

In August 1949 the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction organization (JCR) delivered eighty-three crates, containing more than three thousand pieces of ritual silver, to the Jewish Museum. They came from the large body of material the JCR had collected from destroyed sites in Europe. The museum stored these precious objects while the JCR found new homes for them, redistributing them to surviving Jewish communities around the world. More than three hundred thousand books from Jewish libraries and collections had also been "orphaned" by the war and many were sent to a second JCR storage facility in Brooklyn. The redistribution process required extensive research and thought.

Approximately 220 of the objects that arrived at the Jewish Museum entered its collection. A selection is shown here in a presentation modeled on the museum storeroom where they were first housed more than seven decades ago. Several still have a small aluminum identification tag inscribed with a Star of David and the letters JCR. While some have been cleaned and restored, others carry the visible marks of damage from the war. A Hanukkah lamp converter at far right on the bottom shelf still bears remnants of sawdust and oil from when it was shipped.

LEFT TO RIGHT NEAR RIGHT CASE

TOP LEFT SHELF

Spice container, probably 1725

Frankfurt am Main, Germany Pierced, cast, and engraved silver

Spice container, eighteenth century

Central or Eastern Europe Pierced and cast silver

Marx Weinold Successors

Probably German, active 1700–1747 Spice container, 1730s

Augsburg, Germany
Cast, chased, and pierced silver

Spice container base, nineteenth century

Austria-Hungary
Filigree and engraved silver

Spice container, c. 1550, repairs and additions, 1650–51

Probably Frankfurt am Main, Germany Traced, pierced, cast, and parcel-gilt silver

Spice container, late nineteenth century

Austria-Hungary (now Czechia) Filigree silver

Rötger Herfurth

Probably German, 1722-1776

Havdalah candleholder with spice container,
1770-76

Frankfurt am Main, Germany Hand-worked and cast silver

Laufs

Spice container, 1860-70

Hanau, Germany
Cast and engraved silver

Spice container, 1851

Brünn, Austria-Hungary (now Brno, Czechia) Filigree silver

Spice container base, nineteenth century

Eastern Europe Pierced silver

ΕF

Spice container, 1869–72

Brünn, Austria-Hungary (now Brno, Czechia) Filigree silver

MIDDLE LEFT SHELF

Torah shield, nineteenth century

Probably Hirschberg, Germany Repoussé and engraved silver

Johann Adam Boller Probably German, 1679–1732 Torah shield, 1709–25

Frankfurt am Main, Germany Chased, pierced, engraved, and parcel-gilt silver

Johann Jakob Runnecke German, 1731–1806 Torah shield, 1797/1798

Fürth, Germany Repoussé, cast, and engraved silver

Torah shield, late seventeenth century

Probably Augsburg, Germany Repoussé, engraved, and parcel-gilt silver and glass

Georg Wilhelm Schedel Probably German, 1698–1762 Torah shield, 1740s

Frankfurt am Main, Germany Repoussé, engraved, and parcel-gilt silver

Probably N. Lobanovi Torah shield, between 1840 and 1849

Russia or Poland Gilt and repoussé silver

BOTTOM LEFT SHELF

Fridericus Becker Sr.

Probably Hungarian, active c. 1800-1827

Torah pointer, probably 1816

Pressburg, Austria-Hungary (now Bratislava, Slovakia) Cast and engraved silver

Torah pointer, eighteenth or early nineteenth century

Germany Cast and engraved silver

Franciscus (Ferenc) Schmidt

Probably Hungarian, active 1820-c. 1865

Torah pointer, probably 1834

Budapest, Austria-Hungary (now Hungary)
Cast and chased silver

Torah pointer, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century

Probably Germany
Cast and engraved silver

Ludwig Yehuda Wolpert

American, born in Germany, 1900–1981 Torah pointer, c. 1930

Germany
Probably cast and chased silver

Probably Johann Wichmann

Probably German, c. 1712-1758

Torah pointer, mid-eighteenth century

Probably Lübeck, Germany Cast and chased silver

Attributed to Johann II Pepfenhauser

Probably German, active 1697-1754

Torah pointer, 1735–36

Augsburg, Germany
Cast silver

The Jewish Museum and Jewish Cultural Reconstruction

All works Jewish Museum, New York, Jewish Cultural Reconstruction

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LEFT TO RIGHT NEAR LEFT CASE

TOP RIGHT SHELF

AP

Presentation cup, c. 1925

Czechoslovakia (now Czechia)

Engraved silver with gilt

Johann Jakob Runnecke

German, 1731-1806

Passover cup, late eighteenth century

Fürth, Germany

Repoussé, engraved, and chased silver

Kiddush cup, c. 1725

Frankfurt am Main, Germany Cast, engraved, and repoussé silver

Alms container, late nineteenth century

Komárom, Austria-Hungary (now Hungary) Engraved silver

Alms container, 1868

Esztergom, Austria-Hungary (now Hungary) Engraved silver

A R

Alms container, 1808

Vienna

Engraved silver

Possibly Friedrick Dusterbehn

Probably German, born in 1810, active until 1874 Alms container, 1867–72

Vienna

Stamped and engraved silver and tin-plated iron

Basin, nineteenth century

Probably Hungary
Traced, cast, and pewter-plated metal

Johann Jacob Pfalzen Burial society cup, c. 1700

Augsburg, Germany Incised and engraved gilt silver

Alms container, c. 1880

Hungary Engraved silver

Probably Hungary

Pitcher, nineteenth century

Traced, cast, and probably pewter-plated metal

MIDDLE RIGHT SHELF

Eduard Schürmann & Co. Torah finials, between 1863 and 1900

Germany Chased, die-stamped, cast, and parcel-gilt silver

Torah finials, nineteenth century

Hungary Repoussé silver

ΗB

Torah finials, eighteenth century

Germany Repoussé, pierced, cast, and engraved silver

Johann Jakob Runnecke

German, 1731–1806

Torah finials, late eighteenth century

Fürth, Germany Chased, pierced, cast, and gilt silver

Georg Wilhelm Schedel

Probably German, 1698-1762

Torah finials, 1736

Frankfurt am Main, Germany Chased, cast, engraved, pierced, and parcel-gilt silver

BOTTOM RIGHT SHELF

Matzah tool, eighteenth century

Probably Schnaittach, Germany Iron and wood

Round matzah cutter, seventeenth or eighteenth century

Probably Schnaittach, Germany Iron

Johann Christoph Drentwett I Probably German, 1686–1763 Hanukkah lamp, 1735 or 1736

Augsburg, Germany Repoussé, traced, punched, and cast silver

Jewish Cultural Reconstruction tag, between 1947 and 1952

Germany or United States
Stamped aluminum

Hanukkah lamp converter, late nineteenth or early twentieth century

Central or Eastern Europe Cast silver

Miniature Hanukkah lamp, late nineteenth century

Germany Cast silver

Hanukkah lamp, late nineteenth or early twentieth century

Probably Eastern Europe Silver

Sabbath/festival candelabrum, early twentieth century

Poland Cast silver

Hermann Südfeld

Probably Austrian, born c. 1835, active 1883-1909 Hanukkah lamp converter, between 1883 and 1907

Vienna Cast silver

Isidor Kaufmann Austrian, born in Hungary, 1853–1921 *Head of a Rabbi,* early twentieth century

Oil on panel Jewish Museum, New York, bequest of Edith B. Weisz

The Danzig Collection

On February 8, 1939, the Jewish Community of Danzig sent ten crates of ceremonial objects to the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York for safekeeping. The crates arrived on July 26, 1939, scarcely a month before Nazi tanks entered Poland. Many of the works belonged to the Great Synagogue of Danzig, which possessed an illustrious collection of Judaica, given to it by Lesser Gieldzinski, an early and enthusiastic collector.

All works Jewish Museum, New York, gift of the Danzig Jewish Community

Two death plaques, c. 1882, c. 1878 Włocławek, Poland

Brass, wood, and ink on paper

RIGHT

Prayer book, 1858 Prague, Czechia

Published by Moses Israel Leather cover with gold tooling and ink on paper

Lesser Gieldzinski included his parents' prayer book and two plaques commemorating their deaths in his gift to the Great Synagogue of Danzig. An inscription on the first page of the book notes that it includes prayers for rail travelers and those crossing the sea. It is poignant that these personal possessions were among the objects preserved when the community was dispersed and its members were themselves forced to make such journeys.

Kiddush cup, 1927 Probably Eastern Europe

Repoussé and engraved silver

Torah pointer, 1814 Probably Danzig (now Gdańsk, Poland)

Cast and engraved silver

Inscriptions from 1927 on this Torah pointer and cup commemorate the opening of an office in Danzig of the Jewish emigration organization Emigdirect. Based in Germany, Emigdirect was affiliated with the Joint Distribution Committee, the relief agency in New York that later facilitated the departure of members of the Jewish Community from Danzig at the beginning of World War II.

Prayer stand, nineteenth century Europe

Silver-plated repoussé and engraved copper, ink on parchment, and wood

Belt clip with amulets Clip, c. 1860-72 Italy

Cast silver

Hamsa amulet, late nineteenth or early twentieth century Tunisia

Cast, chased, and punched silver

Amulet case, between 1810 and 1872 Italy

Engraved silver

This belt clip arrived from Danzig with two disparate amulets attached. How or when they were put together is not known. In Jewish tradition amulets were often worn for good fortune, protection in childbirth, and — poignantly here — during travel.

AT REAR

Alms container of a women's society, before 1883 Danzig (now Gdańsk, Poland)

Repoussé and engraved silver

Gottlieb Ephraim Wulstein Alms container for the maintenance of books in the Mattenbuden Synagogue, 1842 Danzig (now Gdańsk, Poland)

Hammered and engraved silver

Friedrich Wilhelm Sponholtz Alms container, 1764 Danzig (now Gdańsk, Poland)

Engraved silver

M P
Amulet for healing, probably eighteenth century

Amulet, c. 1742

Amulet, probably eighteenth century Venice

All works cast and engraved silver

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These objects belonged to the affluent Polish Jewish grain merchant Lesser Gieldzinski, a noted connoisseur and art advisor to the German emperor Wilhelm II. He filled his grand home in Danzig (now Gdańsk, Poland) with an immense collection of Judaica, gathered in his extensive travels. In 1904 he gave much of that collection to the Great Synagogue of Danzig, where it was displayed in a separate room, which became one of the first formal Jewish museums in the world.

All works Jewish Museum, New York, gift of the Danzig Jewish Community

Jan Pogorzelski Probably Polish, active before 1851–c. 1910 Mezuzah case, 1878 Warsaw

Traced, engraved, and repoussé silver and glass

G H Presentation Kiddush cup with cover, 1855 Probably Danzig (now Gdańsk, Poland)

Repoussé and engraved silver

An inscription tells us that this Kiddush cup was presented to Itzig Goldstein in recognition of his charitable works for the Synagogue of Mattenbuden (a district in Danzig). An engraving depicts the interior of the synagogue, erected in 1838 largely through Goldstein's efforts.

Torah crown, 1698/1699 Bolzano, Italy

Repoussé, pierced, traced, and engraved copper

A Torah crown decorates the Torah scrolls in a synagogue, representing the majesty of the law. This one was made in the town of Bolzano, in the Alps between Italy and Austria. It bears a partially effaced Hebrew inscription in the small cartouches that surround its base: "Donation of the heirs of the late Zalmon son of S., my sons are blessed to God [the fair of ?] . . . Bolzano, year 5459." It is unclear when the crown left Bolzano, but its travels were extensive. When Lesser Gieldzinski gave it to the Danzig Synagogue, it came with a handwritten note, now lost, that offered a glimpse of its nomadic history: "Looted during a pogrom in Russia and gotten back again."

Hirsch Jaretzki Book cover with prayer book, 1837 Breslau (now Wrocław, Poland)

Openwork silver cover and ink on paper

Marriage belt and pouch, eighteenth or nineteenth century Germany

Silk, gold-toned metal appliqués and buckle

Tiered seder plate, eighteenth or nineteenth century Eastern Galicia or western Ukraine

Cast and engraved brass, painted and stained wood, ink on paper, silk brocade, linen, and cotton

The seder is a ritual meal held on Passover to commemorate the Exodus. Traditionally, a plate holds the symbolic foods eaten during the evening. On this elaborate example from the collection of Lesser Gieldzinski, heraldic lions hold cartouches bearing the blessings said over the foods, which are placed in the plate's trays and holders.

Mezuzah in case, nineteenth century Europe

Carved fruitwood, ink on parchment, and glass

Reversing the Flow The Offenbach Archival Depot

The Offenbach Archival Depot in Occupied Germany was another pivotal site in the postwar effort to restitute stolen art and objects. The depot dealt exclusively with Jewish material, predominantly books. German looting task forces such as the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg had plundered immense quantities of Jewish books, destroying many and using others to stock dozens of antisemitic Nazi "research" libraries.

The depot operated from July 1945 through June 1949. Thousands of ceremonial objects and 2.5 million books were collected, sorted, and prepared for return or redistribution — more than thirty thousand volumes a day. Teams of scholars and librarians used bookplates and stamps to identify owners.

For a brief period the depot became one of the largest collections of Jewish literature ever assembled, and a center of Jewish learning. It employed some of the most prominent Jewish intellectuals of the twentieth century. The staff understood the process of redistributing the material as an explicit rejoinder to Nazi plunder. The Nazis had tried to draw all great art into their own hands and to control access to it, deciding for the world what works should or should not exist. The Allied redistribution project aimed to reverse that impulse.

The photographs seen here illustrate this idea of reversal. Those in the case were taken by the Nazis to document their own vandalism and looting. They were collected by staff at the Offenbach depot as a record of Nazi crimes. The photographs on the wall were made by the staff at the depot to document their own restorative work. A map produced by the Germans between 1942 and 1944 shows a network of storage depots for the collection of cultural material, all eventually to be gathered in Berlin, the capital of the Third Reich. A second map, prepared at the Offenbach depot in response, shows the distribution of cultural material back outward to Europe, "reversing the flow."

ON THE WALL

Pages from a *Photographic History Album*, Offenbach Archival Depot, Occupied Germany, c. 1946

Silver gelatin prints, paper, and ink New York Public Library, Dorot Jewish Division, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

IN THE CASE

Pages from a *Photographic History Album*, Offenbach Archival Depot, Occupied Germany c. 1946

Facsimiles

Yad Vashem, The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, Jerusalem



Nuremberg Trials, excerpt from a session on plundered art, December 18, 1945

National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland 13 min., 30 sec.

This footage is from the trials of high-ranking Nazis held in Nuremberg, Germany, in 1945-46. A military tribunal composed of prosecutors from the four Allied powers — France, Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union — indicted Nazi officials for crimes on four counts: crimes against peace; crimes against humanity; war crimes; and conspiracy to commit further crimes on the preceding three counts. The Third Reich's extensive pillage and destruction of art from both private and public collections was understood by the Allies as a serious attack on the world's shared culture. As such, it was no trivial offense, but a major war crime. Here, the prosecutor Robert G. Storey discusses Nazi looting in the context of broader crimes.

Contemporary Works

Four artists — Maria Eichhorn, Hadar Gad, Dor Guez, and Lisa Oppenheim — bring a wide range of perspectives to the "afterlives" theme in contemporary works made expressly for this exhibition. Each was captivated by different aspects of the looting-and-recovery narrative, and their work reflects practices rooted in personal as well as conceptual interests, resulting in remarkably varied approaches. Not surprisingly, all share a fascination with documents and archival materials, which have the effect of both recording and transferring history to future generations. Whether sourcing from online images, city libraries, or inherited artifacts, the artists engage in an active process of investigation and reimagination, shedding light on lost or little-known stories that have emerged over time. Rather than focus on the lasting void left by war, they reveal their artistic practices to be inherently generative, fueled by a sense of hope and discovery.

Maria Eichhorn

Born in 1962, lives and works in Berlin

Hannah Arendt: Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Field Reports, Memoranda, Etc., 2021

Volumes recovered and redistributed by Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc.; archival documents; booklet of facsimile reproductions of JCR documents; audio recording of Hannah Arendt's field reports

Produced with assistance from Darsie Alexander, Susan and Elihu Rose Chief Curator, and Sam Sackeroff, Lerman-Neubauer Assistant Curator

Narrator: Ruth Rosenfeld Sound: Jochen Jezussek

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Maria Eichhorn, whose activities as an artist have touched on themes of unlawful ownership and restitution, founded the Rose Valland Institute in 2017, devoted to researching and documenting "the expropriation of property formerly owned by Europe's Jewish population." A dedicated researcher, Eichhorn often explores the roles of museums, libraries, and cultural organizations in shaping history.

Here, the primary material of her work is a selection of volumes and documents, borrowed from institutions across New York, relating to the restitution organization Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR). Books and sacred texts were among the items most often looted, subjected to widespread confiscation and burnings by the Nazis. Eichhorn gives close attention to this aspect of the pillaging and recovery and in particular to the role of Hannah Arendt, who served as the JCR's research director and executive secretary. Arendt, one of the most insightful and original political theorists of the twentieth century, was also an activist who drafted the series of field reports shown here while searching for Nazi-looted objects on behalf of the JCR.

Eichhorn presents these documents in three forms: as a spoken recording, a booklet of facsimile reproductions, and a selection of the original documents from the Jewish Museum's archives, with their torn edges, creases, and occasional handwritten notes. In so doing she underscores the various channels through which information is passed and disseminated, each bit with its own voice and the signs of its history, from the concrete to the ephemeral.

Maria Eichhorn

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Documents Relating to Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (JCR)

LEFT TO RIGHT

Research album of bookplates found in looted books, compiled by staff at the Offenbach Archival Depot, Occupied Germany, c. 1946

Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Bookplates were a crucial resource for the JCR staff in the quest to trace owners of looted books.

Letter from Hannah Arendt to libraries receiving books from Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, urging the use of the JCR bookplate, September 1949

Yeshiva University Archives, New York

Jewish Cultural Reconstruction bookplate, c. 1950

Yeshiva University Archives, New York

Ballot postcard sent by Hannah Arendt at Jewish Cultural Reconstruction to members of its board to determine how to redistribute recovered material, c. 1950

Yeshiva University Archives, New York

Liberty Moving and Storage Corp. shipping receipt for transport of books from the JCR to Yeshiva University, July 3, 1951

Yeshiva University Archives, New York

Statement of shipping fees for JCR material, signed by Hannah Arendt, August 16, 1951

Yeshiva University Archives, New York

Ledger recording volumes received by Yeshiva University from Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, 1950

Yeshiva University Archives, New York

Field report no. 16, filed by Hannah Arendt for the JCR, February 18, 1950

Jewish Museum Archives, New York

Letter from Hannah Arendt to Dr. Stephen S. Kayser, Director of the Jewish Museum, August 22, 1949

Jewish Museum Archives, New York

The letterhead of the JCR lists the member organizations.



Maria Eichhorn

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Books and Periodicals Redistributed by Jewish Cultural Reconstruction

TOP SHELF

Rossiĭskiĭ leninskiĭ kommunisticheskiĭ soiuz molodezhi: Der ķomyug un di iberyoln in di raṭn, 1930

Jewish Theological Seminary, New York

Menahem Ziyyoni, Sefer Tsiyoni: Perush 'al ha-Torah, 1785

Yeshiva University, New York, Mendel Gottesman Library

Peter Relav, Jesus Christus und Benedictus Spinoza im Zwiegespräch, 1893

New York Public Library, Dorot Jewish Division, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

Joseph ben Ephraim Karo, *Sefer Magid:* mesharim: U-vo be'ure me'ore sodot, 1708

Yeshiva University, New York, Mendel Gottesman Library

Yitsḥaķ ben 'Adam Bondi, Sefer Shaʻar hashamayim: Seder ve-tikun ha-Mishnayot, 1762

Yeshiva University, New York, Mendel Gottesman Library

Naḥmanides, *Torat ha-Adam*, 1595

Yeshiva University, New York, Mendel Gottesman Library

Moritz Steckelmacher, *Das Princip der Ethik:*Vom philosophischen und jüdisch theologischen
Standpunkte aus betrachtet, 1904

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Manuel Schnitzer, *Rabbi Lach: Ein Kulturdokument in Anekdoten*, 1935

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Saul Kaatz, *Alter Vogel: Eine jüdische Novelle*, 1919

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Mivḥar ha-peninim: Bimelitsat ha-ḥakḥamim ha-ḥadmonim u-mishle filosofim ha-rishonim . . . im perush maspiķ, 1739

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Gideon Brecher, *Das Transcendentale: Magie und magische Heilarten im Talmud*, 1850

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, *Das Buch in der Wüste*, vol. 4 of *Die Schrift*, 1934

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Sholem Asch, Die Mutter: Roman, 1929

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Moritz Lazarus, *Die Erneuerung des Judentums: Ein Aufruf*, 1909

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Salomon Kohn, *Alte und neue Erzählungen aus dem böhmischen Ghetto*, 1896

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Salomon Luss, *Um 20 Gulden: Roman aus dem jüdischen Gemeindeleben*, 1910

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Hugo Bettauer, *Die Stadt ohne Juden: Ein Roman von übermorgen*, 1922

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Flora Wolff, Koch- und Wirthschaftsbuch für jüdische Hausfrauen, 1888

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Martin Buber, *Das Buch der Preisungen*, vol. 14 of *Die Schrift*, 1930

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

Moshe Yaacov Ben-Gavriël, Die Pforte des Ostens: *Das arabisch-jüdische Palaestina vom panasiatischen Standpunkt aus*, 1923

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York

BOTTOM SHELF

Eugen Grosser, *Die Juden: Von einem Christen*, 1877

New York Public Library, Dorot Jewish Division, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

The Voice of the People, 1910

Jewish Theological Seminary, New York

Bezalel ben Abraham Ashkenazi, Sefer Asefat zeķenim: Ye-hu ḥidushe Bava metsi'a, 1766

Yeshiva University, New York, Mendel Gottesman Library

Aryeh Leib ben Asher Gunzberg, *Shut Sha'agat Aryeh*, 1745

Yeshiva University, New York, Mendel Gottesman Library

Jacob Michael August, Sefer Simhat Yisra'el, 1738

New York Public Library, Dorot Jewish Division, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

Abraham ben Jacob Saba, *Tseror ha-mor*, 1567

Yeshiva University, New York, Mendel Gottesman Library

Otto Berdrow, *Rahel Varnhagen: Ein Lebens- und Zeitbild*, 1900

Library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York



Hadar Gad Born in 1960, lives and works in Pardes Hanna-Karkur

Hadar Gad's quiet, labor-intensive paintings are executed in subtle hues of brown, amber, and gray, with passages that appear in places to be scraped down to the canvas. The images are drawn from historical photographs that document the plunder of Jewish communities and property. Gad's grandparents on both sides came to Israel in the 1920s. They escaped the war but lost their relatives, who remained in Poland, during the Holocaust. Those losses, she has said, have become part of her generational DNA and inspire the dreamlike quality of her paintings.

As a teenager curious about her past, Gad explored old albums and archives, establishing an early appreciation for original source material. Here, the artist responds to period photographs that record the inflow and outflow of books, artworks, and Judaica, first as they were discovered and seized by Nazi looting task forces and later as they were recovered at various Allied collecting points. Her creative process is painstaking and time-consuming; these paintings were produced over the two-year period of the Coronavirus pandemic and involve a complex combination of adding and subtracting pigment. This "scratching," as the artist calls it, applies to both her act of painting and her interest in peeling back layers of memory. In its depth and nuance, Gad's work suggests the emotional weight of loss and dispossession while also seeming to take viewers to another time and place. The large vertical painting of a destroyed building featured on this wall depicts the disassembly of the Great Synagogue of Danzig, where objects displayed in the previous gallery were once housed.

Hadar Gad Born in 1960, lives and works in Pardes Hanna-Karkur Polish Landscape, 2020

Oil on linen
Artwork courtesy of the artist

Hadar Gad Born in 1960, lives and works in Pardes Hanna-Karkur But the Books, 2020

Oil on linen
Artwork courtesy of the artist



Hadar Gad Born in 1960, lives and works in Pardes Hanna-Karkur Nineteen Marks (DM) per Ton, 2020

Oil on canvas Artwork courtesy of the artist

Hadar Gad Born in 1960, lives and works in Pardes Hanna-Karkur Untitled drawings, 2021

Oil and graphite on paper Artworks courtesy of the artist

Drawing is an important part of Gad's practice and continued unabated as she worked to produce the large-scale paintings for this exhibition. Many of these works on paper were inspired by her looking at the old prints and paintings of Joseph Budko, the artist's great-uncle, who was a well-known artist in prewar Poland. With these drawings, she writes, "I am looking over my shoulder into Eastern Europe before the Second World War. I try to envision the Jewish town in Poland . . . the places, streets, synagogues, seminaries, and train stations."

Lisa Oppenheim

Born in 1975, lives and works in Brooklyn

Stilleben von Rosen und anderen Blumen und Weintrauben, Birnen, Pflaumen, und Pfirsichen, 1942/2021

Ten collages with chromogenic color prints and unique gelatin silver prints Artworks courtesy of the artist and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York and Los Angeles

Lisa Oppenheim's work encompasses an interest in historical research and, in particular, the role of photographs in helping to visualize, decode, and at times reimagine, the past. This series began with a single discovery: a vintage black-and-white photograph of a work by Jean-Baptiste Monnoyer, a Franco-Flemish still-life painter, which was most likely destroyed after it was confiscated by the Nazis during the looting of Jewish households in Paris.

Embracing the painting's mysterious disappearance and seizing upon the only record of its existence — a poorly lit archival photograph made by the Nazis — she transforms and fragments the painting into its reproduced elements, creating a new work in the same scale as the original canvas. Oppenheim plays with the tension between the physical loss of the painting, its representation as an image, and the new composition, which she has assembled in her studio. Blending analogue and digital methods, she entered the Parisian address of the Jewish family that had once owned the work into an online map tool, zooming in until "there is no trace of anything in particular revealed, only a clear sky with a few clouds." Here clouds hold a dual meaning, referring both to an environmental phenomenon and a virtual storage repository. Always attuned to how photographs are captioned and categorized, Oppenheim decided against translating the title — a simple description assigned by the Nazis — into English. The title of the photograph, she reminds us, is not the title of the painting, which remains unknown.

Dor Guez

Born in 1982, lives and works in Jaffa

The multimedia practice of Dor Guez explores how family history intersects with major world events. Guez was born in Jerusalem to a Palestinian family on his mother's side and Jewish immigrants from North Africa on his father's. Through his work, the artist investigates the hidden chapters, subversive undercurrents, and present-day contexts of his own family's unique story.

This installation uses objects associated with his paternal grandparents, who escaped from concentration camps in Nazi-occupied Tunisia and immigrated to Israel in 1951, to evoke their journeys and experiences. Key to Guez's research is the role language plays in both shaping new identities and holding onto the past. A manuscript written by his grandfather in his Tunisian Judeo-Arabic dialect is the basis of several wall works in the suite of prints titled *Letters from the Greater Maghreb*. The papers were damaged in transit, so that, as Guez writes, "the words are engulfed in abstract spots, and these become a metaphor for the harmonious conjunction between two Semitic languages, between one mother tongue and another, and between homeland and a new country."

Other images in the same suite are flat, skinlike sheets of parchment made from old costume patterns fashioned by Guez's grandmother, who was an actress and seamstress in a theater company. The gentle folds and lines reveal the traces of her touch. "The patterns were her language," the artist states, "just as my grandfather used words."

Belly of the Boat assembles objects originally from Tunisia that relate to the personal history of the artist's grandparents through different stations of time — his grandmother's buttons and costume-pattern sketches; an inkwell and a contract in Judeo-Arabic belonging to his grandfather; a vase and a spice container that were in their living room. Guez creates a museum-style presentation, placing these items in standing glass cases that he designed. The display does not conform to established museum and archival ordering systems, but rather to a logic of individual contributions and preferences, illuminating fragments of a family story and a little-known, nearly vanished culture.

ON THE WALLS

Dor Guez Born in 1982, lives and works in Jaffa Letters from the Greater Maghreb, 2020

Scanograms, archival inkjet prints

605 AD)))

ON THE PEDESTALS

Dor Guez Born in 1982, lives and works in Jaffa Belly of the Boat, 2021

Mixed media installation of seven vitrines and objects Artwork courtesy of the artist and Dvir Gallery, Tel Aviv, and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town