



The Anguish of Liberation as Reflected in Art

The Anguish of Liberation as Reflected in Art

This special exhibit, based on the collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, features works created between 1943 and 1947 and attempts to investigate how survivors reached to liberation through art. For most of these survivor artists, the ability to paint again signified freedom and renewed independence. The choice of their art's subject and the grip on the pencil or brush symbolically restored a feeling of control after years of helplessness. The act of painting represented a process of psychological rehabilitation through which they could synthesize the trauma.

Some artists, like Thomas Gheu, document the very moment of liberation, only several weeks thereafter, while others give expression to the renewed feelings of freedom (Miriam Moskowitz, Sarah Zelik). In contrast, Samuel Bak expresses anguish, solitude and distress via the self-portrait. Esther Bialik, on the other hand, develops a personal symbolic language in order to express the trauma, while Elzbieta Nienkiewicz re-experiences the night of the Warsaw Ghetto. Regarding the survivors' artworks are those of a witness, Zhenia Tokalatcheva who as a soldier in the Soviet Army provides the viewpoint of the liberator.

When liberation finally arrived, the survivors found themselves torn between feelings of joy and suffering between their desire to return to life and their need to face the devastation and mourn. The creative process enabled them to confront their conflicting feelings, as Sarah Zelik declared: "I live with the children and create with the light." His psychological needs especially that for the survivors, their choice to paint epitomized their renewed embrace of life.

WWW.YADVASHEM.ORG

1

SHOAH

The Holocaust was an unprecedented, total and systematic, perpetrated by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, with the aim of annihilating the Jewish people. The primary motivation was the racist, antisemitic ideology.

Between 1933 and 1941, Nazi Germany pursued a policy that dispossessed the Jews of their rights and their property, followed by the branding and concentration of the Jewish population. This policy gained broad support in Germany and much of occupied and annexed Europe.

An overall comprehensive, systematic operation that the Nazis called "The Final Solution to the Jewish Question in Europe" began to be implemented from the latter part of 1941. Nazi Germany deported the Jews of Europe for total extermination. Atrocious mass extermination by shooting, which killed more than two million Jews, millions of Jews from all over Europe were rounded up and deported on freight trains to extermination camps - industrial murder facilities in which the Jews were gassed to death. During the entire process, the Germans deceived the victims as to the real purpose of their journey.

By the end of the war in May, 1945, nearly six million Jews had been murdered.



Yad Vashem

The World Holocaust Remembrance Center

Yad Vashem was established in 1953, as the world center for documentation, research, education and commemoration of the Holocaust. As the Jewish people's living memorial to the Holocaust, Yad Vashem safeguards the memory of the past and imparts its meanings for future generations.

The exhibition was produced by the Traveling Exhibitions Department, Museums Division, Yad Vashem. Curator: Eilat Moreh-Rosenberg | Associate Curator: Orly Nachmani-Olshan. Graphic Design: Elzbieta Nienkiewicz, Leon Grawdon.

2



Zhenia Tokalatcheva (1909-1971)

Warrior

1943
Pencil and watercolor on paper
100 x 120 cm
Gift of Anat Tokalatcheva and Ilya Tokalatcheva, Paris

This artwork depicts the moment of liberation from the point of view of the liberator, the Soviet soldier Zhenia Tokalatcheva, and the Jewish people as victims.

Born in the town of Zhukovka, Russia (today the village of Zhukovka) in 1909, Zhenia Tokalatcheva studied at the Moscow State University. She was a member of the group of artists known as the "Group of Five" and was active in the Soviet Union and abroad. Her work is characterized by a strong sense of social and political commitment. She was a member of the Communist Party and was active in the cultural and educational work of the party. Her work is characterized by a strong sense of social and political commitment. She was a member of the Communist Party and was active in the cultural and educational work of the party.

3



Samuel Bak (b. 1923)

Children from Lublinka DP Camp, 1945

1945
Pencil and watercolor on paper
100 x 120 cm
Gift of the artist

Samuel Bak, following the German occupation of Poland, fled with his mother to a displacement camp. The children from Lublinka DP Camp, 1945, depicts the artist's own experience of displacement and the search for a new home. The drawing shows two children standing on a path, looking towards a landscape with mountains. The drawing is a pencil and watercolor on paper, measuring 100 x 120 cm. It is a gift of the artist.

4




Thomas Gheu (1920-2000)

Warrior, the 1945

1945
Pencil and watercolor on paper
100 x 120 cm
Gift of the artist

Thomas Gheu, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, depicts the moment of liberation in his drawing "Warrior, the 1945". The drawing shows a woman in a yellow dress with wings, standing in a landscape. The drawing is a pencil and watercolor on paper, measuring 100 x 120 cm. It is a gift of the artist.

5



Nelly Salkin (b. 1925)

Warrior and a Soldier

1945
Pencil and watercolor on paper
100 x 120 cm
Gift of the artist

Nelly Salkin, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, depicts the moment of liberation in her drawing "Warrior and a Soldier". The drawing shows a woman in a yellow dress with wings, standing in a landscape. The drawing is a pencil and watercolor on paper, measuring 100 x 120 cm. It is a gift of the artist.

6



Alicja Rosenthal (1909-1980)

Warrior and a Soldier

1945
Pencil and watercolor on paper
100 x 120 cm
Gift of the artist

Alicja Rosenthal, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, depicts the moment of liberation in her drawing "Warrior and a Soldier". The drawing shows a street scene with buildings and people. The drawing is a pencil and watercolor on paper, measuring 100 x 120 cm. It is a gift of the artist.

7



Sarah Zelik (1920-2012)

Warrior, a Few Days after Liberation

1945
Pencil and watercolor on paper
100 x 120 cm
Gift of the artist

Sarah Zelik, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, depicts the moment of liberation in her drawing "Warrior, a Few Days after Liberation". The drawing shows a landscape with a large building and a field. The drawing is a pencil and watercolor on paper, measuring 100 x 120 cm. It is a gift of the artist.

8




Me Guel (1921-1980)

Warrior

1945
Pencil and watercolor on paper
100 x 120 cm
Gift of the artist's estate

Me Guel, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, depicts the moment of liberation in her drawing "Warrior". The drawing shows a woman's face, looking upwards. The drawing is a pencil and watercolor on paper, measuring 100 x 120 cm. It is a gift of the artist's estate.

9




Samuel Bak (b. 1923)

Warrior

1945
Pencil and watercolor on paper
100 x 120 cm
Gift of the artist

Samuel Bak, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, depicts the moment of liberation in his drawing "Warrior". The drawing shows a woman's face, looking upwards. The drawing is a pencil and watercolor on paper, measuring 100 x 120 cm. It is a gift of the artist.

10




Alexander Rogan Walsztajn (1916-2010)

Warrior

1945
Pencil and watercolor on paper
100 x 120 cm
Gift of the artist

Alexander Rogan Walsztajn, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, depicts the moment of liberation in his drawing "Warrior". The drawing shows a woman's face, looking upwards. The drawing is a pencil and watercolor on paper, measuring 100 x 120 cm. It is a gift of the artist.

11



Sandra Bialik (1914-1980)

Warrior

1945
Pencil and watercolor on paper
100 x 120 cm
Gift of the artist

Sandra Bialik, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, depicts the moment of liberation in her drawing "Warrior". The drawing shows a woman's face, looking upwards. The drawing is a pencil and watercolor on paper, measuring 100 x 120 cm. It is a gift of the artist.

12



Elzbieta Nienkiewicz (1899-1972)

Warrior

1945
Pencil and watercolor on paper
100 x 120 cm
Gift of the artist

Elzbieta Nienkiewicz, a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto, depicts the moment of liberation in her drawing "Warrior". The drawing shows a woman's face, looking upwards. The drawing is a pencil and watercolor on paper, measuring 100 x 120 cm. It is a gift of the artist.

13