



Chaim Goldberg, *Purim Parade*, 1993, oil painting on canvas

Gazeta

Volume 23, No. 1
Winter 2016

A quarterly publication of
the American Association
for Polish-Jewish Studies
and Taube Foundation for
Jewish Life & Culture



Editorial & Design: Fay Bussgang, Julian Bussgang,
Shana Penn, Vera Hannush, Alice Lawrence,
Maayan Stanton, LaserCom Design.
Front Cover Photo: Chaim Goldberg;
Back Cover Photo: Esther Nisenthal Krinitz

J.D. Kirszenbaum,
Self-portrait, c.
1925, oil on canvas



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from Irene Pipes	1
Message from Tad Taube and Shana Penn	2
RESEARCH PROJECT	
The Holocaust in the Eyes of Polish Youth <i>By Dr. Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs</i>	3
ART AS FAMILY LEGACY	
A Daughter Returns with Memories in Art <i>By Bernice Steinhardt</i>	7
Resurrection of a Painter: “From Staszów to Paris, via Weimar, Berlin and Rio de Janeiro” <i>By Nathan Diament</i>	12
Creating a New Museum in Kazimierz <i>By Shalom Goldberg</i>	16
CONFERENCES, SPRING/SUMMER PROGRAMS, AND FESTIVALS	
Conference on Launch of Volume 28 of <i>Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry</i> <i>By Dr. Antony Polonsky</i>	20
2016 Opportunities in Poland Offered by the Auschwitz Jewish Center <i>By Dara Bramson</i>	22
Spring/Summer Programs and Festivals <i>By Maayan Stanton</i>	23

EXHIBITIONS

Frank Stella at the POLIN Museum <i>By Maayan Stanton</i>	26
--	-----------

FILM

MAMELE: National Center for Jewish Film <i>By Maayan Stanton</i>	28
---	-----------

BOOK REVIEW

<i>The Crime and the Silence. Confronting the Massacre of Jews in Wartime Jedwabne</i> <i>By Anna Bikont. Translated by Alissa Valles</i> <i>Reviewed by Dr. Joanna Beata Michlic</i>	29
---	-----------

Publications <i>By Maayan Stanton</i>	33
--	-----------

NEW RESEARCH

Graffiti in Poland <i>By Dara Bramson</i>	34
--	-----------

Message from Irene Pipes

President of the American Association
for Polish-Jewish Studies

Founder of *Gazeta*

Dear Members and Friends,

There were a number of events of our American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies. Since I was not able to attend I shall rely on Antony Polonsky's reports.

A launch of volume 28 of *POLIN* edited by Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska, Eugenia Prokop-Janiec, Antony Polonsky, and Sławomir Żurek took place at the Polish Embassy in London on January 21, 2016. The meetings were well attended and a success. Its theme is "Jewish Writing in Poland." For more details, see Dr. Polonsky's article on p. 20.

On December 9, 2015, Susan Starring of University College London gave a talk about her journey to Lithuania in search of her mother's *shtetl*, which helped many reach a better understanding between Litvaks and Lithuanians.

On March 16, 2016, The Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies will host Joanna Beata Michlic of Bristol University, who will introduce the award-winning documentary film *No. 4 Street of Our Lady*. It is the story of Franciszka Hallamajowa, a Polish Catholic woman who, in her little town of Sokal, saved sixteen of her Jewish neighbors while passing herself as a Nazi sympathizer entertaining the enemy in her home whilst hiding and feeding her Jewish neighbors.

Conferences took place at the Catholic University in Lublin and the Jewish Studies Institute of the Jagellonian University in Kraków, with discussions about Polish Jewish literature. A future session is scheduled at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, in Warsaw.

We in Cambridge, Massachusetts, have invited Dariusz Stola, the director of the POLIN Museum, to give a talk on June 18 at the Harvard Hillel.

With all good wishes,

Irene Pipes
President



Irene Pipes

Message from Tad Taube and Shana Penn

Chairman and Executive Director
of the Taube Foundation for
Jewish Life & Culture

Education is a central factor in shaping the beliefs of the next generation. That is one message we take from Dr. Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs's lead story in this issue of *Gazeta*, examining the attitudes of today's young Poles toward the Holocaust. But as the three succeeding *Gazeta* stories show, education is not solely a matter for the schools. Paintings and tapestries can also educate through their ability to bring the past to life and to offer glimpses of lost worlds that can move the heart and mind.

Their impact can be all the greater when they reveal connections of personal experience or heritage previously forgotten, overlooked, or lost. Bernice Steinhardt discovered her family's ancestral village in Poland when her mother, Esther Nisenthal Krinitz, a Holocaust survivor, decided to sew tapestries of her experiences as a girl before, during, and after the war. Nathan Diamant, an Israeli born in Belgium during the war, discovered his family's close connection with Poland through the art of his great-uncle, J.D. Kirszenbaum, which he has traced to museums around the world. Shalom Goldberg of the United States undertook the founding of a museum devoted to Polish *shtetl* art to honor the artistic career of his father, Chaim Goldberg, and in the process came into intimate contact with his Polish Jewish heritage. He also found paintings of *shtetls* done from memory by his father with such fidelity to reality that individuals depicted in them can be identified by name.

Whether the rediscovery is of works of art or the memories that inspired them, the stories convey a sense of satisfaction and enlightenment, a personal education that complements the formal learning of schools and universities. They also express an understanding of past events, lives, and experiences, not only for those of us who may have known them directly, but for those now coming of age who must experience them through the vivid testimony and images provided by their elders. We hope that you, whatever generation you belong to, will find this issue stimulating, evocative, and worth a careful read.

Tad Taube and Shana Penn
Chairman and Executive Director



Tad Taube



Shana Penn

The Holocaust in the Eyes of Polish Youth

Dr. Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs
Faculty of International and Political Studies, Centre for Holocaust Studies, Jagiellonian University

When walking through the streets of Polish towns and villages we pass by buildings that were once built and inhabited by Jews. These buildings – now shops, occasionally museums, and even more rarely open synagogues – used to be places where Jews, who had lived in Poland for almost a thousand years, used to pray. Are we aware of that?

When traveling along Polish roads we tend not to think about how many of them were built by Jews forced into slave labor by the Germans and their collaborators during World War II. Polish territories, both those annexed by the Third Reich and those by the Soviet Union, as well as those constituting the General Government, along with the territories of the Baltic States, Belarus, Romania, and Ukraine, became the epicenter of the Jewish genocide. Millions of Jews were killed in death camps on Polish land, while others died near home,

in many cases at the hands of neighbors who collaborated with the Nazis.

How can we tell the story of the Holocaust so that survivors can recognize their own history in the narration? How can we tell it to the descendants of victims, executioners, and witnesses of the Holocaust? In the foreword of *Auschwitz and After*, a collection of short stories by Charlotte Delbo, a member of the French Resistance movement who was deported to Auschwitz, Laurence Langer gives the example of a Polish policeman. This man was “hunting” for Jews and at the same time he was hiding a Jewish girl at his home. Langer is unable to explain the man’s behavior. Are we aware of the existence of such paradoxes?

Scarce Knowledge

My research has focused on examining the attitudes of Polish youth toward Jews, the Holocaust, and remembrance. Another objective was to

evaluate good educational practices. My project began in 2008 at the Centre for Holocaust Studies (CHS) at Jagiellonian University and was supported by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and the *Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah*. The members of my research team are Szymon Beźnic, Maja Brand, Adam Dąbrowski, Dagmara Mrozowska, Elisabeth Büttner, Katarzyna Kopff-Muszyńska, Joanna Stöcker-Sobelman, Katarzyna Suszkiewicz, and Agnieszka Zajączkowska-Drożdż.

The scope of research has encompassed a nationwide survey, with a control group of 1,000 people aged 17–18 and a focus-group interview with teacher-experts carried out by CEM Market & Public Opinion Research Institute in Kraków. It also included an evaluation of educational curricula about Jewish history and an assessment of projects

The Holocaust in the Eyes of Polish Youth, Continued

connected with Holocaust remembrance, using an experimental group of 1,110 students of secondary schools and universities or colleges. The analyses took account of participant observations of selected educational curricula in Tykocin and Treblinka, Kielce, Lublin, Bodzentyn, Starachowice, and Warsaw, and benefited from individual interviews with teachers and local leaders.

One crucial finding was that knowledge about the Holocaust among students was scarce. Only 14% of them were able to give the correct number of Jewish victims in World War II. It is worth noting that the memory of the Holocaust is important for 38% of Polish youth for personal reasons, while 47% of young Poles do not have an opinion about whether this memory is important to them. They lack the knowledge that nearly 90% of approximately 3.5 million Polish Jews died during World War II, and they

do not have the information or capability to include Jews in their own civil polity.

“Young people have open minds toward the memory of the Holocaust, although they often lack knowledge about basic facts.”

Emotions

It is crucial that the percentage of young people for whom knowledge about Nazi crimes is important has not decreased in the last 10 years, that is, since the first measurement in 1998, but has increased by 5%. In my own observations, for example, I noticed moments of reflection during a trip to memorial sites by a teacher and students of the 64th Secondary School in Warsaw. I could see emotional responses from the visits to Tykocin and Treblinka. “Tykocin. A ghost town, we saw no more than three people,” remarked one of the students. “I imagined what the

town looked like before the Holocaust, before World War II. It was devastating.”

Students of the 64th Secondary School told us it was an emotional experience they would remember. What they found important was the approach of the teacher, who did not leave them alone but still gave them time to think on their own. “The fact that there was no hurry ... no such thing as ‘Quick, quick, let’s move on, there’s no time to stop, let’s have it done and go on.’ There is a chance to feel. Not only to find out what happened to those people but to feel it,” concluded a student. These thoughts are consistent with the current discourse about how to teach about the Holocaust and the importance of the intellectual approach, that is, the transfer of knowledge, and the emotional, empathetic approach in talking about a difficult past.

Creating Memory

Most of the students who participated in the research

The Holocaust in the Eyes of Polish Youth, Continued



Jewish cemetery in Bodzentyn near Kielce. Photo: CHS archives

disagree with the statement, “The Holocaust is not important today because it took place more than 60 years ago,” although one third of the participants do not have a specific opinion (“agree” or “disagree”). While only 10% agree with the statement, it is worrying that youth show a large degree of indifference

toward antisemitic graffiti, in spite of so many initiatives to remove such inscriptions on Polish streets.

Young people have open minds toward the memory of the Holocaust, although they often lack knowledge about basic facts. Secondary school students are not ready to

create a common narrative and memory encompassing both Poles and Jews with regard to the Holocaust. They are still defensive about the attitude of Poles toward Jews during World War II.

The focus-group interview of teachers in Kraków by Szymon Beźnic from CEM

The Holocaust in the Eyes of Polish Youth, Continued

Market & Public Opinion Research Institute led to recommendations concerning the curricula for teaching Jewish history. However, the effectiveness of the previous curricula is unknown. Were they successful? How did young people react? What should be emphasized in particular? As a result, it is impossible to compare different versions of curricula in their effectiveness. Teachers may often be discouraged from addressing the Holocaust because they must devote their personal time and energy, and because there is no reward for doing so. Those who are involved in teaching about the Shoah and shaping the attitudes of young people accordingly deserve much recognition.

As the research progresses, we are gathering information about grassroots initiatives that are related to the heritage of Polish Jews. We would like to create an audiovisual workshop for students and

scientists and to develop our library here at the Center for Holocaust Studies. We would also like to deal with difficult, even controversial issues such as those connected with the lives of the rescuers, who often feared the reaction of neighbors to the fact that they were saving Jews. ■

Cooperation: Sociology Students Scientific Group, Social Research Section.
Consultants: Professor Antoni Sułek; Professor Ireneusz Krzemiński; Marek Kucia, PhD

www.projektor.uj.edu.pl/sp/inside-society/holocaust-polish-youth

ART AS FAMILY LEGACY

A Daughter Returns with Memories in Art

ESTHER NISENTHAL KRINITZ 1927-2001

My mother, Esther Nisenthal Krinitz, had an enormous story to tell. She was 12 years old in 1939 when the Nazis occupied her village, Mniszek, and the nearby town of Annopol, then known by its Jewish name of Rachów. After three years of brutal occupation, the Jews of the region were deported, ordered by the Germans to leave their homes and report to the train station in Kraśnik, about 15 miles away. My mother refused to go. Instead she created new identities for herself and her 13-year-old sister, Mania, as Polish Catholic farm girls separated from their families. Armed only with this story they eventually found work in the village of Grabówka, where people were willing to take them in. Near the end of the war, in 1944, she learned that none of their family had survived.

I grew up hearing these stories. In fact, I can't recall a time when I didn't know my mother's stories. Unlike many other Holocaust survivors, my mother couldn't keep from talking about her life, not only

during the war but also before the war.

“How much it would have meant to my mother to know that her memories had returned to Poland, and particularly to her home village.”

Years later, when Esther was about 50, she decided that simply telling her stories was not enough. She wanted my sister and me to see what her home and family looked like. She had never been trained in art, never thought of herself as an artist, but she could sew anything. Creating things from fabric was second nature to her. So she came to tell her story in a way that only she could do: she embroidered a series of stunningly beautiful tapestries with stitched narrative captions that depicted her life before and during the war, along with her postwar arrival in the United States.

In October 2015, exactly 73 years after my mother left for good, I returned to her home,

Bernice Steinhardt

*President and Chairperson,
Art & Remembrance*

bringing her art and story back with me. Thanks to a grant from the Koret Foundation, I traveled to a handful of cities and towns near my mother's childhood home, presenting the documentary film *Through the Eye of the Needle: The Art of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz*. I had known about these places from my mother's stories and had been touring the exhibit of her art in the United States since 2003. But now, in Poland, they came to life for me in a new and deeply moving way.

My journey began in Lublin at the Brama Grodzka (Grodzka Gate). Once the passage to the city's Jewish quarter, the gate now houses a namesake organization that is dedicated to preserving the memory of the many cultures that once lived side by side in Lublin, focusing on the thriving, centuries-old Jewish culture that was extinguished in just a few years in the 1940s. The Lublin audience was made up of local residents familiar with the history of the German occupation and the fate of the Jews. One woman in the

ANNOPOL/RACHOW DISTRICT, POLAND



audience had been imprisoned as a young child in Majdanek, the concentration camp on the outskirts of Lublin. For them the film and program introduced a first-hand view of what life had been like for the Jews in the villages outside of Lublin.

Near my mother's village of Mniszek we came to the town of Gościeradów. Earlier in the year an exhibit of photographic images of my mother's tapestries had been displayed in the library and community center, presented by the Galicia Jewish Museum of Kraków

as part of a touring exhibit. Many people returned to Gościeradów for the film screening, including the town officials. I wanted everyone to know how much it meant to me to be in their hometown, once my mother's hometown, too. How much it would have meant to my mother to know that her memories had returned to Poland, and particularly to her home village.

On our way to Kraśnik, the next stop on our tour, we decided to drive to all the places that my mother and

aunt traveled to once they left their family. Walking in Esther's footsteps, so to speak, we retraced her journey. Starting from Mniszek, we went to Dombrowa (Dąbrowa Tarnowska), the village where Esther's father's friend Stefan had lived and where Esther and Mania went in hope of finding work and shelter.

Next, we drove to Gościeradów and Książomierz. These were the villages where Esther and Mania went after being sent away by Stefan, for fear that the Germans would come

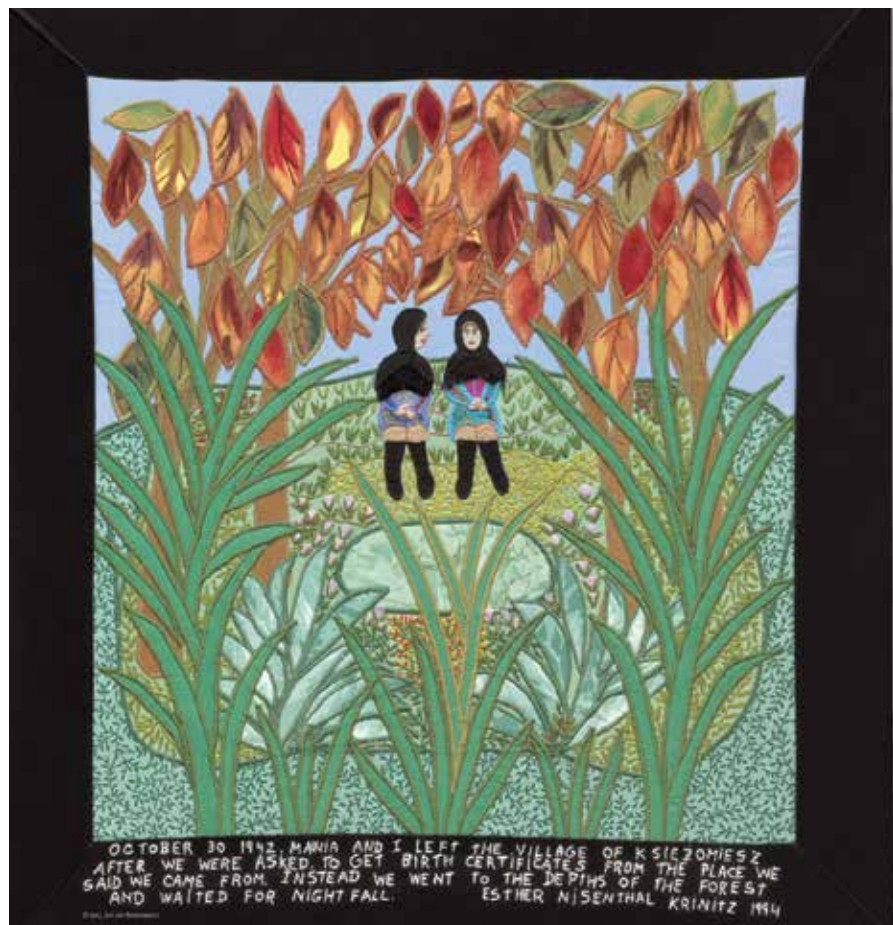
after him and them. No one in Gościeradów and Książomierz was willing to take them in without papers proving their identity. Finally, we drove to Grabówka, the village where they ultimately found refuge. Because I had been there before, I could recognize some landmarks, particularly the remnants of the village well and the house in which Esther had lived, with its large yard where her employer, the old farmer, once kept beehives.

All along our way, we drove by golden woods, sunlight radiating through the leaves. I kept thinking that this was how the woods appeared when Esther and Mania made their journey in the same month (October), 73 years earlier, when these woods, stately and calm, were their hiding place.

Being there, traveling these same roads, visiting these same places but without my mother, only her art and story – was an exhilarating, joyous, and at the same time sad experience. I felt deeply both her presence and absence.



Esther Nisenthal Krinitz, *The Bees Save Me*, 1994, embroidery on cloth



Esther Nisenthal Krinitz, *Depths of the Forest*, 1994, embroidery on cloth

A Daughter Returns with Memories in Art, Continued

I wished she had been there with us to see Mniszek looking full of life today. I wished she had been there to know that her memories there will endure.

We continued on to Kraśnik, the largest city close to Esther's home, where she and Mania were supposed to have gone with all the other Jews of their village. Our program was held in one of the public libraries that had earlier displayed the exhibit of photo images. As in Gościeradów, the people in Kraśnik greatly admired my mother's art and story and returned to see the film and to meet me.

In particular, a group of women had been inspired to create their own tapestry, a depiction of the *rynek*, or town square, in Kraśnik. Constructed of fabric and yarn, with pinecones and other decorations, the piece was an act of civic pride, an expression of love of their city. In its spirit the work echoed my mother's own love of home. But I noted with a sense of poignancy that the



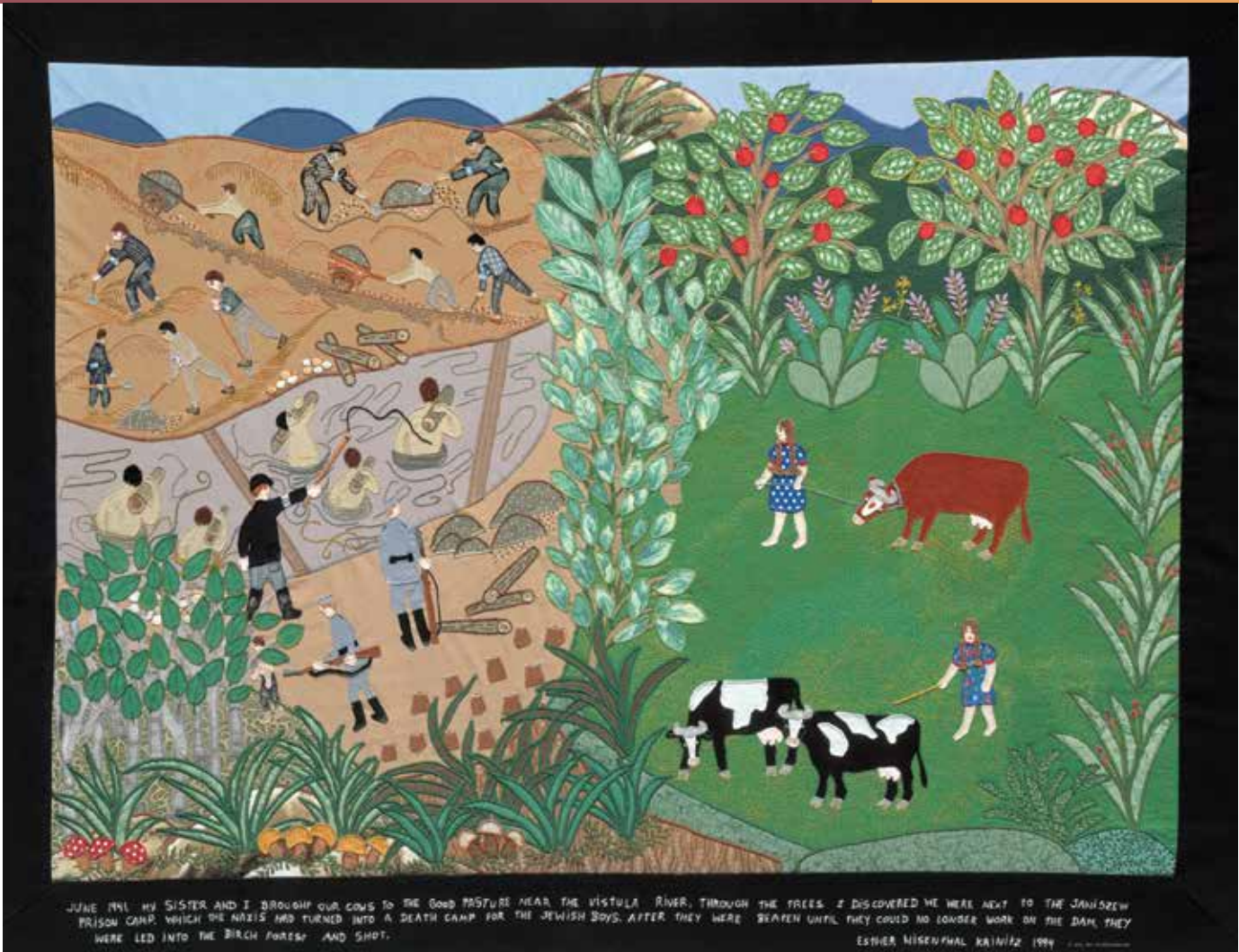
Bernice Steinhardt, third from right, with the women of Kraśnik

rynek of which they were so proud was where the Jews of Rachów were assembled before being loaded onto train cars to Bełżec, the death camp where they were slaughtered. Many of the Jews never made it to Bełżec and met their end in that town square.

The next day, we left for Zamość and the opening of the exhibit of photo images of my mother's work. The exhibit was in the Zamość synagogue, now a cultural and

community center beautifully restored by the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland. Zamość itself is a beautiful baroque city, and the synagogue has the ornate and light-filled style of that era. There, we also screened the film before an overflowing audience of local high school students, who toured the exhibit before viewing the film.

When we returned to Warsaw before heading home, we spent



Esther Nisenthal Krinitz, *Janiszew Prison Camp*, 1994, embroidery on cloth

our last days visiting POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews and the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute. From the intensely personal history of my mother’s family and home, we broadened our scope to the thousand-year history of Jews in this country, a history largely unknown to me before. How could this history have ended so starkly in just a few short years?

Perhaps it had not. The interest in Jewish life and culture in present-day Poland is very striking; the existence of the magnificent new

museum in Warsaw stands as evidence of that revival. In its own intimate way my mother’s art also fills in some of the history of Jewish life in Poland. Her stories of Jewish holidays celebrated before the war, of life during the occupation, of the search for family at the end of the war – my mother only wanted her daughters to know that history. She created her art just for us. But her art was clearly meant to be seen by the world, and nowhere more so than in Poland, where I was grateful and honored to be able to return it to its home. ■

Images of Esther Nisenthal Krinitz’s art work can be viewed on the website of Art and Remembrance, artandremembrance.org. *Through the Eye of the Needle* can be viewed online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCvIhYCKruQ; with Polish subtitles at www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOEv_NTZmDU&feature=youtu.be.

Resurrection of a Painter: “From Staszów to Paris, via Weimar, Berlin and Rio de Janeiro”

J.D. KIRSZENBAUM 1900-1954

In October 2015, while attending the first anniversary celebration of the Grand Opening of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, I was finally able to realize the true extent of my family’s connection with the Jewish history and culture of Poland. For the past 20

years I have worked to rescue from obscurity the works of my great uncle, the painter J.D. Kirszenbaum. His artistic creations remain an integral part of the legacy of the Jews of Poland, and the full story of their rescue is told in the book *J.D. Kirszenbaum 1900-1954: The Lost Generation*,

By Nathan Diament
*Great-nephew, J.D.
Kirszenbaum*

published in Paris in 2013.

J.D. Kirszenbaum was born in 1900 in Poland in the village of Staszów in the district of Sandomierz. The son of poor Hasidic parents, he emigrated to Germany and in 1923 joined the Weimar Bauhaus. His teachers were Wassily



Nathan Diament, great-nephew of J.D. Kirszenbaum. Photo: Dudu Bachar, *Haaretz*

Resurrection of a Painter: J.D. Kirszenbaum, Continued



J.D. Kirszenbaum, *The Jewish Villagers Greeting the Messiah*, 1937, oil on cardboard

Kandinsky, Paul Klee, and Lyonel Feininger. He then moved to Berlin and worked as an illustrator and cartoonist under the pseudonym Duvdivani.

In 1930 he fled to Paris with his wife, Helma, where the next period in his painting career began when he discovered French Impressionism. World War II

ended his dreams. He survived the war years in various work camps in France, but his wife perished at Auschwitz. His paintings, numbering over 600 and stored in a Paris studio, were looted and largely destroyed by the Nazis. At the end of the war, he was a broken man.

I belong to the generation of the Holocaust. My parents,

brothers, and I are survivors from Belgium (where my parents immigrated from Poland in the 1930s), saved by three Christian families, all recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations. Nearly all my mother's family originating from Staszów perished in the ovens of Majdanek. I grew up with portraits of my mother's family and paintings by my mother's uncle describing daily life in Staszów.

I met my great uncle in 1946, when he came to Brussels to reunite with my mother, his only surviving relative in Europe. I can still see this fragile, shattered man sleeping in my room, which we'd vacated in his honor. One day, we took a walk and he said to me, "The field of art would suit your personality." Maybe it was his will and legacy that I would be the one to restore his rightful place in the history of art, and Jewish art in particular. In 1949 we emigrated to Israel and I never saw him again.

Resurrection of a Painter, Continued



J.D. Kirszenbaum, *St. Jean Festival, Sao Paulo*, 1952, oil on canvas

He had returned to Paris and to painting with the help of the Baroness Alix de Rothschild, who commissioned three large paintings, *The Prophets Elias, Jeremiah and Moses* (1947). Today they are in the Tel Aviv Museum in Israel. In 1948 he traveled to Brazil and later to Morocco, where his art gained a new energy. There the landscapes and inhabitants provided him with the inspiration for a new, beautifully colored style as

depicted in his painting *St. Jean Festival, Sao Paulo* (1952), today part of the National French Collection.

My search for his oeuvre uncovered works that had survived in museums, galleries, and private collections. I started by visiting the office of the Art and Loss Registrar in London, which tracks stolen works of art. Then I went to the French National Archives in Paris to confer with staff responsible for looted or destroyed works of art. There I found documents signed in 1945 by



J.D. Kirszenbaum, *The Shtetl Violinist*, c. 1925, oil on canvas



J.D. Kirszenbaum, *Self-portrait*, c. 1925, oil on canvas

my great uncle that detailed the works in his prewar collection and studio.

The research has been both frustrating and tremendously exciting. Significant moments included discoveries of his works at the Ein Harod Museum, the Tel Aviv Museum, and the Jerusalem Museum in Israel; the Franz Halls Museum in Holland; the French National Collection (F.N.A.C.); the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Poland, and the Genève Petit Palais in Switzerland. I discovered about sixty caricatures in the Berlin press of the late



J.D. Kirszenbaum as Duvdivani, *The Sporting Housewife*



J.D. Kirszenbaum as Duvdivani, *Long Ago Times*

1920s and approximately one hundred negatives of photos of his works in the Kandinsky Library archives at the Pompidou Museum in Paris.

Many of his subjects are from his youth. In paintings, drawings, and sculptures he reconstructed houses, synagogues, images of bearded men, and other scenes of his childhood. In works such as *The Jewish Villagers Greeting the Messiah* (1937), now in the collection of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, he depicted cheerful scenes of

musicians and Hasidim and the majestic poetry of eastern Jewry. He also painted tragic scenes of refugees on the roads with their empty and desperate looks. He painted in the Jewish art renaissance avant-garde, a folkloric-based art that started in Russia and spread to Poland and appears in the works of Marc Chagall, J. Riback, El Lissitsky, and other Jewish artists.

Like many painters who belonged to the School of Paris in the 1930s, my great uncle lived and painted in

Montparnasse. In February 2016 an exhibition of his works opened at the Villa Vassilief, previously called the Musée du Montparnasse. A dream has come true. My great-uncle J.D. Kirszenbaum returned at last to Paris in the Montparnasse he loved. ■

www.kirszenbaum.com

Creating a New Museum in Kazimierz

CHAIM GOLDBERG 1917-2004

Establishing a museum of Jewish shtetl history as seen through fine art was not my goal in life until quite recently, although the family always talked about creating a museum for my father's work.

Chaim Goldberg had been a prolific painter, sculptor, and engraver, starting at age seven in his father's tiny shoe repair shop in the picturesque Jewish village of Kazimierz Dolny in southwestern Poland. When he was fourteen, his natural artistic abilities were discovered by a visitor, who helped find sponsors to send him to art school. With formal training his youthful style took on a more mature and expressive shape. His earliest shows, 1931-37, were mostly Polish landscapes.

After the Holocaust he viewed his survival as a sign that he was responsible for making

an eternal record of the life he had witnessed before the war. Through his *shtetl* paintings Chaim recreated the unique lifestyle of the inhabitants, enabling the village that once existed by the Vistula River to live through his art. Although his art had been exhibited in numerous shows in Poland, Israel, and the United States, the idea of a museum to permanently house his works did not come to the foreground until more than two decades after his death.

My parents, Chaim and Rachel Goldberg, passed away in 2003 and 2004. Then came the US financial meltdown. Art seemed like a thing of the past until, quite by chance, in 2011 I received an email from Poland that drove me into action. It was from a hotel owner in Kazimierz Dolny who encouraged me to look into mounting an exhibit of my father's work in his hometown, that magical village by the Vistula River.

By Shalom Goldberg
Son, Chaim Goldberg

I contacted Dr. Waldemar Odorowski, curator of the Muzeum Nadwiślańskie in Kazimierz Dolny, to get a sense of what needed to be done. A joint Kazimierz Dolny/Clearwater, Fla., effort began to unfold, resulting in the opening of an exceptional one-man show on December 9, 2013 that ran for nine months at the new museum building located at the entrance to the Kazimierz Dolny market. Many people contacted me with glowing comments after they visited, and I felt it was an overwhelming success. But still, I wanted permanence.

After the show closed I flew to Poland several times to explore museum opportunities. Kraków was my favored location, but it was not until an exhibit ran in Warsaw that Kraków suddenly became a real possibility. I received a call from a collector who needed authentication of two of my father's oil paintings, which he had bought a few

Creating a New Museum in Kazimierz, Continued

weeks prior. I gave him the authentication, and we began talking more about my father and my dream for establishing his legacy. At the end of my story the collector said, “I’ll find you a location.” A week passed and then he Skyped me with a live feed of a newly renovated space in a prominently located 18th-

century building in Kraków’s Kazimierz district. “It’s a perfect spot,” he beamed.

Since May 2015 we have been putting the details together and making the needed modifications to the 6,000-square-foot space that will soon be opened as a museum to house the

collection of my father’s *shtetl* paintings. The museum will be called Museum, I Remember.

Chaim Goldberg began creating his body of *shtetl* work after returning from Siberia to Warsaw aboard a cattle train in 1946. He was one of the many sons of Holocaust victims who had



Chaim Goldberg, *Purim Parade*, 1993, oil painting on canvas

survived by escaping to the USSR. When the train reached the outskirts of Warsaw, he burst into tears. The capital of Poland had been turned into piles of rubble; entire buildings lay pulverized.

Jewish life in his village of Kazimierz Dolny had not survived. Its prewar Jewish population, except those who escaped, was snuffed out, but the village never left my father's mind or heart. It called out to him, driving him to create a painted memorial to the *shtetl* life he had experienced and remembered. As a child, and then as a teenager, he had closely observed his family and other *shtetl* folk and painted them. As in so many of the 2,200 *shtetls*, water was carried by yoked buckets, and the regular marketplaces were held each Tuesday and Thursday. During market days the horse traders could be seen in a side street while the fruit sellers, shoe sellers, pots and pans merchants, bakers with



Chaim Goldberg, *Eternal Orchestra*, 1995, oil painting on canvas

their best creations, and dry goods merchants crowded the square and sold their wares at makeshift wooden stands covered by a canopy.

My earliest memories of my father are of him working long hours in his studio just north of Tel Aviv in 1960. Visitors were frequent. Some were

looking for a simple souvenir of his art, while others were survivors from Kazimierz Dolny who had made it to Israel. Although they all admired his paintings, those few who were from his village were in awe of his accurate memory. They were able to recognize the faces of some of the people they had known,

The Museum Challenge, Continued

and even called out their names. When this happened I could see the satisfied smile on my father's face and sense his happy approval.

Although this memorial to Jewish life in the *shtetl* was ever present in his life, my father felt compelled to "air-out" his mind of disturbing Holocaust scenes as well. My father's focus on art saved him; it became therapy. He felt guilty for having survived the genocide while his family was almost completely wiped out. He was tormented by dreams of evil shapes. In one, he saw himself running with me toward a light on a river of thin cracking ice. He painted this dream on a large canvas and later cut it up.

Through his lifetime output of nearly 4,500 works we see the pain and observations of a contemporary expressionist. He could capture the likeness of a person with a few strokes, and had an exceptional memory for faces. He devised



Museum, I Remember at 19 Miodowa Street, Kazimierz district, Kraków

a clever way to divide his time to be able to do different types of art during any day by having two work areas. He was able to move from the *shtetl* memorial theme at one workstation to abstract shapes at another with agility and determination. By the mid-1970s he was drawing the *shtetl* less often. At that point he found his other voice: as an observer and critic of the society around him. This voice continued until 1987, when he decided that a series of large oil paintings had to be done to complete his memorial to Kazimierz Dolny.

While painting this final group of canvases and watercolors, my father did not lose his other voice. He kept working in both worlds until 1998, his final productive year. After a long illness he passed away in 2004. This part of his creative journey will be highlighted at the end of the museum's core exhibit and will be presented along with his graphics in the temporary exhibit room.

Museum, I Remember will be open to the public in 2016. ■

www.museumiremember.org

CONFERENCES, SPRING/SUMMER PROGRAMS, AND FESTIVALS

Conference on Launch of Vol. 28 of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*

By Dr. Antony Polonsky
Chief Historian, POLIN
Museum of the History of
Polish Jews

On Thursday, January 21, 2016, more than a hundred scholars attended an all-day conference at the Polish embassy in London to launch volume 28 of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*. The theme of the volume is “Jewish Writing in Poland.” Since the Enlightenment the cultural creativity of Polish Jews has found expression not only in Hebrew and Yiddish but increasingly in Polish. A dynamic interaction has characterized the cultural systems, but until the end of Communism the trilingual Jewish culture of Poland was little studied. In this volume scholars from Argentina, Israel, Italy, Poland, and the United States investigate writers from across this spectrum and consider how they saw their Jewish (and sometimes Polish) identity and what they thought of the authors in the other linguistic or cultural camps. This scholarly enterprise constitutes the first examination of Jewish

literatures in Poland from the point of view of both linguistic and geographic diversity.

The conference was opened by the Hon. Deputy Ambassador Dariusz Łaska and Ben Helfgott, chairman of the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, which, with the American Association for Polish-Jewish Studies, is responsible for the publication of *Polin*.

The first session was a roundtable in which three of the editors explained what they had tried to do in the issue, what topics had been covered, and where there were still gaps in our knowledge. Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska of Marie Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin described the development of Polish-Jewish literary interactions during the interwar period. Eugenia Prokop-Janiec of Jagiellonian University in Kraków discussed the nature of Polish-Jewish writing.

Sławomir Żurek of John Paul II Catholic University in Lublin analyzed the development of Polish-Jewish writing in the State of Israel.

The second panel examined aspects of Polish-Jewish literature. Antony Polonsky examined “Bal w Operze” (“A Ball in the Opera”), an apocalyptic poem written by the Polish-Jewish poet Julian Tuwim in the 1930s. Karen Underhill of the University of Illinois at Chicago described a previously unknown set of essays by Bruno Schulz in reaction to the work of Ephraim Moses Lilien, the Galician Zionist painter, which greatly clarified Schulz’s attitude to Jewish issues. Marzena Zawanowska of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw gave a fascinating account of how an interwar Polish Jewish poet translated the works of Haim Nahman Bialik, and how, because of the war, the translation was lost for nearly seventy years.

Conferences, Spring/Summer Programs, and Festivals, Continued



François Guesnet, Antony Polonsky, Karen Underhill, and Marzena Zawadowska at the launch of *Polin*'s volume 28 in the Polish Embassy, London.

The last section was a roundtable devoted to reactions to the volume and also to Jewish dimensions in contemporary Polish writing. Eva Hoffman, author of the highly praised memoir *Lost in Translation*, discussed the volume in the context of theories of hybridity and of diasporic literature, and Katarzyna Zechenter of

University College London and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies examined three works – Andrzej Szczypiorski's *Początek* (*The Beginning*, translated into English as *The Beautiful Mrs. Seidenman*), Tadeusz Konwicki's *Bohin*, and Jarosław Rymkiewicz's *Umschlagplatz* – that transformed the

representation of Jews in postwar Polish Jewish literature. Presentations by Magdalena Marszałek of the University of Potsdam and by Ursula Phillips of University College London and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies analyzed the portrayal of Jews in more recent Polish fiction.

Conferences, Spring/Summer Programs, and Festivals, Continued

The conference concluded with a showing of the film “Raise the Roof” directed by Yari Wolinsky. It describes how Rick and Laura Brown, who are neither Jewish nor Polish, set out to rebuild the synagogue of Gwoździec (today Hvizdets in Ukraine), a magnificent 18th-century wooden building destroyed by the Nazis. Their vision inspired hundreds of people to join them to bring Gwoździec’s history, religion, culture, and art back to life. The film follows their adventure, culminating in the installation of the hand-painted synagogue roof in the new POLIN Museum of History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. A celebration of the triumph of preservation and creation over destruction, it made a fitting climax to a conference devoted to recovering the remarkable literary creativity of Polish Jews in Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew. ■

www.littman.co.uk/cat/polin-28.html

2016 Opportunities in Poland Offered by the Auschwitz Jewish Center

*Dara Bramson,
Manager of Programs
Abroad for the Auschwitz
Jewish Center*

The Auschwitz Jewish Center in Oświęcim, an affiliate of the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in New York, is a Polish cultural and educational institution, offering established international academic opportunities and local educational programming since 2000.

Program for Students Abroad

Applications are open for Spring 2016 sessions in April and May. The long-weekend programs are offered during Fall and Spring semesters in Kraków and Oświęcim for students in Europe, Israel, and the region. Students of

all backgrounds are eligible to apply; need-based financial aid is available.

Familiarization Tour for Abroad Directors

NEW Fall 2016: Long-weekend tour in Kraków and Oświęcim designed to introduce Abroad Directors to the experience and pedagogy of the AJC’s educational offerings and international programs. Open to Study Abroad Directors in Europe, Israel, and the region.

Customized Programs

Customized educational programs in Poland for groups of all backgrounds and sizes. Programs include logistical arrangements, accommodations, local transportation, meals, and guided tours.

For more information on these opportunities as well as programs for graduate students and military cadets, [click here](#). Please contact

Conferences, Spring/Summer Programs, and Festivals, Continued

Dara Bramson at DBramson@mjhny.org with questions and to learn about the pilot summer school in partnership with Jagiellonian University.

SPRING/SUMMER PROGRAMS AND FESTIVALS

Spring/Summer Programs

Limud Polska/ Limmud Poland

Warsaw

March 11-13, 2016

limmudpoland.org/en/

Now in its 9th year in Poland, *Limud Polska* is one of hundreds of Limmud International conferences held around the world. Since their establishment over 30 years ago in the UK, the Limmud conferences bring Jewish communities together through workshops, seminars, and lectures. Limmud's special draw in Poland is that it is

the largest annual gathering of Polish Jews in Poland, and that it provides Jewish culture and tradition through community for Polish Jews who do not have regular access to such practices.

Memory-Place-Presence

Brama Grodzka – Teatr NN / Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre Lublin

June 3-July 3, 2016

teatrnn.pl/activities/summerschool/program

This summer program aims to preserve, commemorate, and disseminate knowledge about the Jewish heritage and history of Lublin. First learning through artistic, educational, and technological means, the student and professional participants pass on their knowledge by collecting the oral testimonies of witnesses to history, organize Polish-Jewish youth meetings, and implement educational activities such as workshops and seminars.

2016 ASEEEES-MAG Summer Convention

Lviv

June 26-28, 2016

www.aseees.org/summer-convention

Focusing on the topic of “Images of the Other,” this conference is co-organized by the Association for Slavic, East European & Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) with the International Association for the Humanities (MAG). There will be 80-100 panels, including around 300 presentations, all focusing on the construction and definition of the “Other”; instrumental use and abuse of the “Other” in politics, cultural and social practices; the role of ethnic, cultural, social, and gender stereotypes; representations of the “Other” in memory politics, art, public discourse, and media; and scholarship regarding the “Other” as a social construct.

Conferences, Spring/Summer Programs, and Festivals, Continued

Uriel Weinreich Program in Yiddish Language, Literature & Culture

YIVO Institute for Jewish
Research and Bard College
New York

June 27-August 5, 2016

yivo.org/Summer-Program

Established in 1968, this program is the oldest intensive Yiddish summer program in the world. Classes from beginner to advanced levels are offered alongside Yiddish cultural activities from East European Jewry and its Diaspora communities. Uniquely, the program treats Yiddish as a living language and emphasizes spoken Yiddish.

Jewish History, Common Past and Heritage: Culture, Cities, Milieus

L'viv Center for Urban
History

Lviv

July 11-August 5, 2016

www.lvivcenter.org/en/summerschools/jewish-history-2016/

The summer school aims at providing high-quality learning about up-to-date research on Jewish history of East Central Europe, developing critical thinking skills in analyzing various narratives of the past and their usage in the present, and finally building up a network of young academics, practitioners, and faculty in Eastern Europe and beyond engaged in the research, preservation, and promotion of Jewish heritage as part of the multi-ethnic past of the region. The school gives space to researchers and practitioners from Eastern Europe (Belarus, Poland, and Ukraine), and Russia to engage in shaping more participatory historical culture and heritage practices and to challenge top-down modes in practicing both history and heritage. The program includes lectures in the Jewish history of Eastern Europe during the 19th to 20th centuries; an introductory course of Yiddish; and seminar courses on transnational

approaches and topics, cultural history, memory, and heritage studies. An important part of the program is practical work with resources and exploring different formats of implementing projects in the public space of the city. The program includes tours to historical sites and towns, meetings with experts, researchers, local community, and discussions.

Festivals

Międzynarodowy Festiwal Filmowy Żydowskie Motywy / Jewish Motifs International Film Festival

Warsaw

May 18-22, 2016

jewishmotifs.org.pl

Jewish Motifs is one of the largest European film festivals to focus on Jewish themes in contemporary cinematography. Through its international selection, the festival strives to promote tolerance and cultural diversity.

Conferences, Spring/Summer Programs, and Festivals, Continued

Life Festival Oswiecim

Oświęcim

June 16-19, 2016

lifefestival.pl/en

The Life Festival Oswiecim was established by a citizen of the town of Oświęcim to break the association of the town with the Auschwitz death camp. The Festival's mission is to send a message of peaceful relations beyond cultural and state borders where there is no place for anti-Semitism, racism, and other forms of xenophobia. Sir Elton John is headlining this year's edition.

Festiwal Kultury Żydowskiej / Jewish Culture Festival

Kraków

June 25-July 3, 2016

jewishfestival.pl

Now in its 26th year, the Kraków Jewish Culture Festival remains the largest celebration of Jewish culture in the world. Top artists of Jewish music from around



2015 Jewish Culture Festival grand finale concert. Photo: Michał Ramus

the world come to play at this festival in Kazimierz, Kraków's old Jewish quarter. Education programming on Jewish history, arts, culture and sport accompanies the concerts, and the Kraków JCC hosts the ever-growing 500+ person Shabbat dinner during the filled week of celebrations. ■

Compiled by Maayan Stanton, Program Associate, Taube Foundation for Jewish Life & Culture

EXHIBITIONS

Frank Stella at the POLIN Museum

By Maayan Stanton

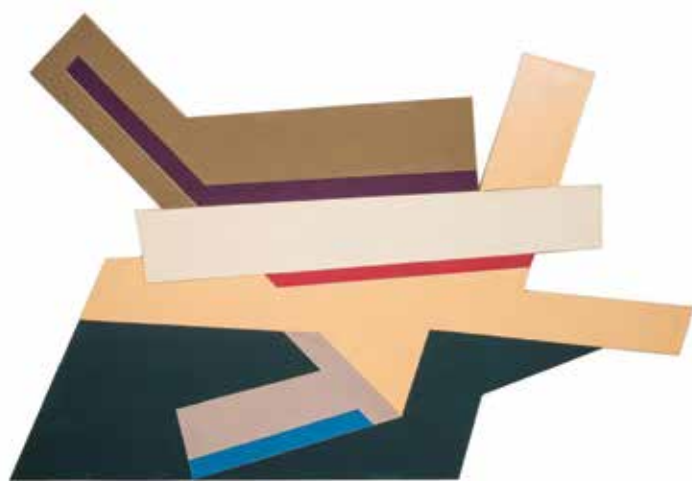
Between February 19 and June 20, 2016, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews is hosting an exhibition of works by Frank Stella, one of the leading minimalist artists of the 20th century. This is the European premiere of Stella's work. In addition to showcasing the New York-based artist's extraordinary works, the exhibition will explore the history of their creation and to find out how Jewish sacral architecture – destroyed by the Nazis and no longer extant – inspired this modern

American painter. Frank Stella was himself present at POLIN Museum for the Grand Opening of the exhibit; this was his first time in Poland. Close to 1,000 people attended the opening.

Frank Stella had come across a book devoted to wooden synagogues by Polish architects Kazimierz and Maria Piechotka that became a link between various eras and different cultures. In the early 1970s, fascinated by the beauty of Jewish synagogues, Stella began working on the

Polish Village series. Each of his works received the name of a town where a wooden synagogue once stood.

The exhibition curators, Artur Tanikowski and Clifford Chanin, in close cooperation with Frank Stella, decided to present selected reliefs from the series alongside examples of Stella's creative process. The exhibition will follow Stella's sources of inspiration, such as the pre-war photographs and architectural drawings of Polish synagogues created



Frank Stella, *Odeska I*, 1971, mixed media on board, courtesy of the artist, Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York and Dominique Lévy, New York and London, © 2015 Frank Stella / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Frank Stella, *Bogoria IV*, 1971, mixed media, collection of Ralph DeLuca, © 2015 Frank Stella / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Grand Opening of Frank Stella exhibit at POLIN Museum, February 19

as part of the inventory conducted by the Warsaw University of Technology's Polish Architecture Unit, with which the Piechotkas closely cooperated. Many of the photographs from the inventory were taken by Szymon Zajczyk, a Jewish cataloguer and art historian who perished in the Warsaw Ghetto. Visitors will be able to follow subsequent stages of Frank Stella's work on the Polish Villages: preparatory and dimensional drawings, wooden monochromatic relief models, painted cardboard models and finally the process's culmination – large-format painted reliefs.

The Frank Stella and Synagogues of Historic

Poland exhibition is a unique opportunity to meet the celebrated artist. His works are displayed in the largest contemporary art museums around the world and reach prices of more than \$10 million at auction. Frank Stella has become a living legend – he is still working and his oeuvre continues to fascinate subsequent generations of art lovers.

The new exhibition at the POLIN Museum goes beyond a standard monograph of an individual artist or a single series. By presenting the achievements of the researchers and students affiliated with the Warsaw University of Technology, without whom Stella's works would not have

been created, visitors have the opportunity to learn about the vitality of Polish Jewish culture, which continues to inspire despite the material destruction of Poland's pre-war Jewish world. ■

Exhibit Sponsors:

DESA Umicum
Taube Foundation for
Jewish Life & Culture
Teatr Wielki-Polish National
Opera

www.polin.pl/en/news/2015/12/03/frank-stella-and-synagogues-of-historic-poland

FILM

MAMELE: National Center for Jewish Film

By Maayan Stanton

The National Center for Jewish Film (NCJF) has released a digital restoration of the 1938 Yiddish classic *Mamele*, starring Molly Picon. The film was shot on site in Łódź, Poland, and through the eyes of today's viewers, offers a glimpse of a Jewish Poland beyond the image of a *shtetl*. Directed by Joseph Green and Konrad Tom, the film is in Yiddish, and now, after restoration, with English subtitles. The restored *Mamele* has been screened to sold-out shows at film festivals around the world.

Molly Picon (1898-1992, born Małka Opiekun) was a theater and film star of the 1920s, her career lasting well into the 1960s. She began her career in Yiddish performances (most famous for *East and West* in 1923 and *Yidl Mitn Fidl* in 1936) but eventually turned to those in the English language. The daughter of Polish-Jewish immigrants to New York, Picon's beginning productions that brought her to fame were focused on the clashes of "old" and "new" cultures.



"Mamele," Photo: National Center for Jewish Film

For 30 years, the National Center for Jewish Film has been rescuing, restoring, and screening films that show the vibrancy of Jewish life. They specialize in rare and endangered film materials and, to date, NCJF has restored more than 100 such films, 44 of which are Yiddish. ■

View the trailer and restoration demo at:
vimeo.com/84252252

BOOK REVIEW

The Crime and the Silence. Confronting the Massacre of Jews in Wartime Jedwabne

By Anna Bikont. Translated by Alissa Valles

New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015.

Original title, *My z Jedwabnego* (Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka SA, 2004)

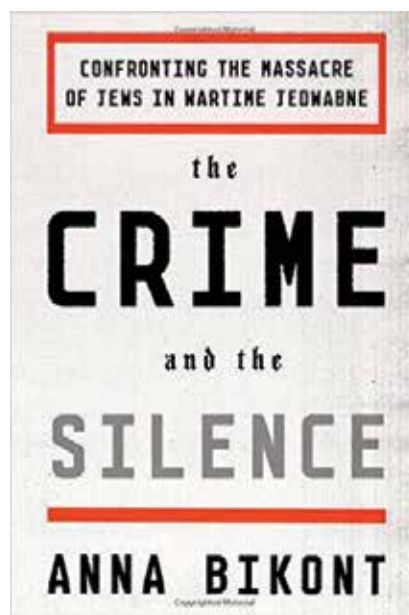
Anna Bikont's *The Crime and the Silence: Confronting the Massacre of Jews in Wartime Jedwabne* investigates the aftermath of the events of summer 1941, when townspeople killed the Jews of Jedwabne in the Łomża region of northeastern Poland. The Jedwabne massacre has come to symbolize the "heart of darkness" in Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust in contemporary debates and historical writings in Poland, yet it was a non-event in both Polish history and Holocaust studies until 2000. Then Jan Tomasz Gross uncovered it in his slender *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*, which challenged the Polish memory both of World War II and of the destruction of Polish Jews. *The Crime and the Silence* investigates the formation, scope, and dynamics of various strands of memory of the Jedwabne massacre among the local

community. Her account begins during the early stage of the Jedwabne debate in late August 2000 and ends in the post-Jedwabne era – the late spring of 2004.

The book is a masterpiece of historical journalism and received the prestigious European Book Prize for the French edition in 2011 and the National Jewish Book Award in 2015 in the Holocaust category. Bikont's work can be compared to the writings of the French journalist Jean Hatzfeld about the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide. Both Bikont and Hatzfeld are masters in revealing how genocide is a haunting reality for survivors, one they cannot erase from their memories even if they opt for silence. In contrast, for perpetrators, it is a reality to be met with silence, lies, and self-defensive rationalizations. *The Crime and the Silence* demonstrates the immense impact of lies

Reviewed by Dr. Joanna Beata Michlic

Department of Historical Studies, Bristol University



and defensiveness, not only among the perpetrators and their families but among cross-generational Jedwabne community members. Bikont's portrayal of the most aggressive local protagonists of the self-defensive approach, such as the late Father Edward Orłowski, is a disturbing record of the suppression of historical truth in the name of a falsely understood defense of the good name and honor of Poland and the local community.

The Crime and the Silence, Continued

Conversely, *The Crime and the Silence* paints a moving portrayal of the individuals who publicly espoused a critical approach. Krzysztof Godlewski was one of a few representatives of the Jedwabne elite who participated in the official commemoration of the massacre on July 10, 2001. Leszek Dziejic cherished the memory of his grandmother, the late Leokadia Dziejic (nee Dmoch), the rescuer of Jewish fugitives from the massacres. Bikont describes what a heavy price both Godlewski and Dziejic and their families paid for upholding their position during the debate about Jedwabne, including verbal abuse and physical threats, loss of jobs, social stigma, and finally forced removal from their communities.

The Crime and the Silence is a first-class journalistic attempt at the reconstruction of the main anti-Jewish massacres of the region in Jedwabne,

Radziłów, Wizna, and Wąsacz, and of the causes that led to those horrific crimes. Its findings point out multiple and interwoven factors such as intense ideological and

“[A] chilling voyage to a reality in which individuals and small communities manage to keep deeply troubling memories from disturbing everyday consciousness.”

political anti-Semitism; the persistence of earlier forms of anti-Jewish stereotypes during World War II, reinforced by the Soviet occupation of the region between September 17, 1939, and June 22, 1941; economic greed; “the interregnum moment” after the Soviets fled the region and Nazi Germany did not yet firmly establish power; the Nazi condoning of the massacres; and a seemingly primordial desire to kill.

Bikont’s investigation suggests that the Jews of Jedwabne in the summer of 1941 were, to use a term coined by the psychologist Robert Jay Lifton, “a designated victim.” The local ethnic Polish community denied them life in order to reassert its rule after the Łomża region had emerged from the harsh Soviet occupation. The gruesome descriptions of the violence also suggest that the perception of Jews as cultural outsiders played a salient role in the way the massacres were rationalized by the perpetrators. *The Crime and the Silence* also touches upon the under-researched subject of the role of women in the incitement of the massacres and in robberies of what remained of Jewish possessions.

Yet the book’s greatest strength lies in the investigation of contemporary memory among the Jewish survivors and their families, the Polish rescuers,

The Crime and the Silence, Continued

the perpetrators and their supporters, and eyewitnesses. Like Agnieszka Arnold's documentary films *Gdzie mój starszy brat Kain* (*Where Is My Elder Brother Cain*, 1999) and *Sąsiedzi* (*Neighbors*, 2001), and Sławomir Grünberg's documentary film *The Legacy of Jedwabne* (2005), *The Crime and the Silence* is a chilling voyage to a reality in which individuals and small communities manage to keep deeply troubling memories from disturbing everyday consciousness. It also depicts many instances of how these memories, triggered by a certain event, could instantly resurface and lead to vivid recollections – “flashbulb memories” – and to a “re-experiencing” of the past. That is a characteristic feature among the former Jewish survivors and also among those Christian Polish eyewitnesses who felt deep empathy for their Jewish neighbors and privately condemned the crimes.

In contrast, the moving portrayal of an aged married couple, the survivor Marianna Ramotowska (Rachela Finkelsztejn) and her rescuer Stanisław Ramotowski, sheds light on the causes of repression of the painful past. The Ramotowskis, who until the early 2000s lived in close proximity to the site of the massacre, repressed the memory of the killing of Rachela's family, her rushed conversion to Catholicism, a quick marriage to Stanisław, and their subsequent going into hiding together. Repression of painful events bonded them together and preserved their emotional equilibrium. It was interwoven with a fear for their lives and of being robbed, especially in the early postwar period when they were receiving death threats from the local perpetrators.

Selective memory, repression, and visceral fear were an intrinsic part of the life of the late Antonina Wyrzykowska, to whom Bikont, as in the

case of the Ramotowskis, dedicates an entire chapter. Wyrzykowska and her first husband, Aleksander, from Janczewka near Jedwabne, provided a refuge for seven Jewish survivors on their farm, between November 1942 and January 1945. In the aftermath of the German defeat in January 1945, the rescuers were harassed and physically abused by neighbors who suspected that they were hiding Jews. Wyrzykowska was severely beaten by local men and was forced to move from her home three times. Even recently, after the official recognition of Wyrzykowska's deeds by the state authorities during the commemorative ceremonies of July 2001, she remained silent about the fellow townspeople who had threatened her life on many occasions in the postwar period. This silence was not only a manifestation of fear, but can also be interpreted as Wyrzykowska's attempts at an effacement of painful memory traces.

The Crime and the Silence, Continued

Fear of a very different kind was an intrinsic part of the life of Szmuel Wasersztajn, another key character in Bikont's book. A survivor of the Jedwabne massacre and the author of key testimony to the Jewish Historical Commission in 1945, before his emigration from Poland, Wasersztajn feared that no one would ever learn what had happened to the Jedwabne Jews on July 10, 1941. He devoted his life to holding on to that traumatic history and to fighting oblivion with "unheard words" and with an increasingly fragile memory. Bikont's portrayal of Wasersztajn indicates that his strong imperative to make the massacre known was motivated by external considerations such as a perceived duty to record the events for posterity and to honor the fallen. The recording and retelling of past events also brought him personal healing.

In its 15 chapters, *The Crime and the Silence* presents a mosaic of interviews, reportage, and

commentary, interwoven with notes and citations from testimonies, newspapers, and other archival sources, all supported by secondary historical studies. Although the book contains light and warmhearted anecdotes about Bikont's friends and family, and parenthetical mentions of the author's discovery of her Jewishness and her daughters' assertive embrace of their lost Jewish heritage, it is not for the faint of heart. The vivid accounts of the massacre and the subsequent human dramas are deeply moving and disturbing. Nevertheless, *The Crime and the Silence* should be required reading for younger generations in contemporary Poland and other regions of today's Europe haunted by demons of exclusivist radical ethnonationalism, racism and anti-Semitism. It should also be recommended as an essential reading for any genocide course for undergraduate and graduate students, taught worldwide.

The Crime and the Silence demonstrates that in-depth journalistic investigations can significantly inform historical analyses of anti-Jewish violence during the Holocaust in Central and Eastern Europe, and that such works could interact in novel and mutually beneficial ways with conventional history books. Its findings expose the intellectual and moral pitfalls of the monumental, glorious national history writing that rejects and suppresses discomfiting and shameful past misdeeds committed by members of one's own collective. ■

[us.macmillan.com/
thecrimeandthesilence/
annabikont](https://us.macmillan.com/thecrimeandthesilence/annabikont)

Publications

By Maayan Stanton

EAST EUROPEAN JEWISH AFFAIRS

Volume 45, Numbers 2-3,
August-December 2015
Special Issue: “New Jewish
Museums in Post Communist
Europe”

*Guest Editors: Olga
Gershenson and Barbara
Kirshenblatt-Gimblett*

JIDISZE ZOO / YIDDISHER ZOO

Published by Czulent

Czulent, a Jewish young adult organization in Kraków, has published *Yiddisher Zoo*, a children’s book filled with poems by pre-war Yiddish authors. The poems are in their original Yiddish, with translations into Polish and English, and are accompanied by contemporary illustrations. This book is the most recent of Czulent’s Yiddish publications, preceded by *Majn Alef Bejs*, a children’s Yiddish alphabet book that was awarded the 2014 prize at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair. *Yiddisher Zoo* was

funded by individual donors, grants, and foundations.

jewish.pl/pl/2016/01/29/zapraszamy-do-jidisze-zoo/

YIDDISHLAND: COUNTRIES, CITIES, TOWNS, RIVERS

Published by YIVO
Institute for Jewish Research

This is the first attempt to collect and publish all Yiddish place names of Central and Eastern Europe in one book. The late Mordkhe Schaechter, leading Yiddish linguist, took it upon himself to collect and publish a definitive list of Yiddish place names. Although he did not live to complete the project himself, his extensive card files, with nearly 6,000 Yiddish place names culled both from oral interviews and printed sources, were donated to YIVO. The gazetteer, titled *Yiddishland: Countries, Cities, Towns, Rivers*, has been compiled in its present form by Paul Glasser

(Yeshiva University), who supplemented Schaechter’s files with more recent published data and with Internet sources, particularly with respect to official names. Although Schaechter collected Yiddish names from around the world, the present work is limited to approximately 3,000 locations in Central and Eastern Europe, specifically present-day Austria, Belarus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine, as well as the European regions of Russia.

The book, and more information on the research, is now available online at: yivo.org/Yiddishland

RECENT RESEARCH

Graffiti in Poland

By Dara Bramson

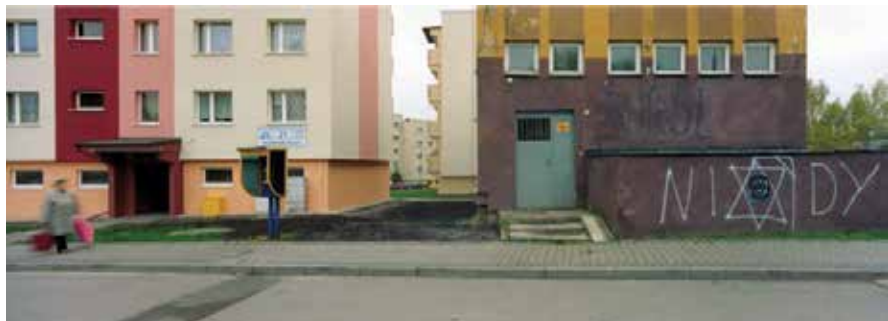
*Manager of Programs Abroad
for the Auschwitz Jewish Center*

AT the invitation of the Jewish Culture Festival in Kraków, I organized a panel, which took place at the JCC Kraków, titled *Deconstructing Symbols: Graffiti and its Broader*

Implications. The topic started as conflict-analysis research I conducted as a Rotary Peace Fellow in Thailand the previous year. When I returned to Kraków and was invited to explore the topic

during the Festival, I was eager to assemble a team of experts who could do justice to its complexities.

Graffiti always fascinated me as an accessible, subjective means of communication that has the potential to transcend cultural boundaries. In Poland especially, graffiti piqued my interest, inextricably and unambiguously intertwining the past and present. Since my first trip to Poland in 2008, I was jarred—as many others are—by the words *Anty Jude* (“Anti Jews”) and even more perplexed at scribbles reading *Jude Gang* (“Jewish Gang”). Even since 2011, when I began living and working in Kraków, I was drawn to the ambivalent reactions these words and the corresponding images provoke. The topic never fails to be the source of stimulating discussion during programs I lead through the Auschwitz Jewish Center. My research, which began as an exploration of foreigners’ perceptions of graffiti in



Photos: Wojtek Wilczyk

School fence -
Anty Jude graffiti
and the image of the
Pope. Photo: Bogna
Wilczyńska



Poland, was greatly enriched by my fellow panelists, Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, Bogna Wilczyńska, Stanislav Lukáč, Michał Strzyżowski, and Wojtek Wilczyk.

Nearly 50 people attended our panel, during which we each covered an aspect of the topic: historical background, documenting graffiti, sports context, other European cities, perceptions and implications, and local initiatives. Afterwards, thoughtful questions and discussion inspired us to create a Facebook page as a dedicated resource

for the topic and ongoing survey-based research. After presenting again in Kraków at Massolit Bookstore and the Galicia Jewish Museum later in the year, I wrote a piece for *The Economist* titled Writing on the Wall. My aim was to contextualize the topic for English-speaking visitors who often identify the graffiti as a sign of pervasive anti-Semitism. The immediate result—57 reader comments—underscored the complexity of the issue, which is becoming increasingly relevant amidst the refugee crisis and reigning government in Poland. Similar to my previous research on

Jewish figurines, graffiti in Poland is uniquely provocative as a topic that yields many interpretations and sparks dialogue. With the goal of a broader, collaborative project, I look forward to continuing this research in 2016. ■

[Link to Dara Bramson's article, "Writing on the Wall," *The Economist*, October 19, 2015](#)

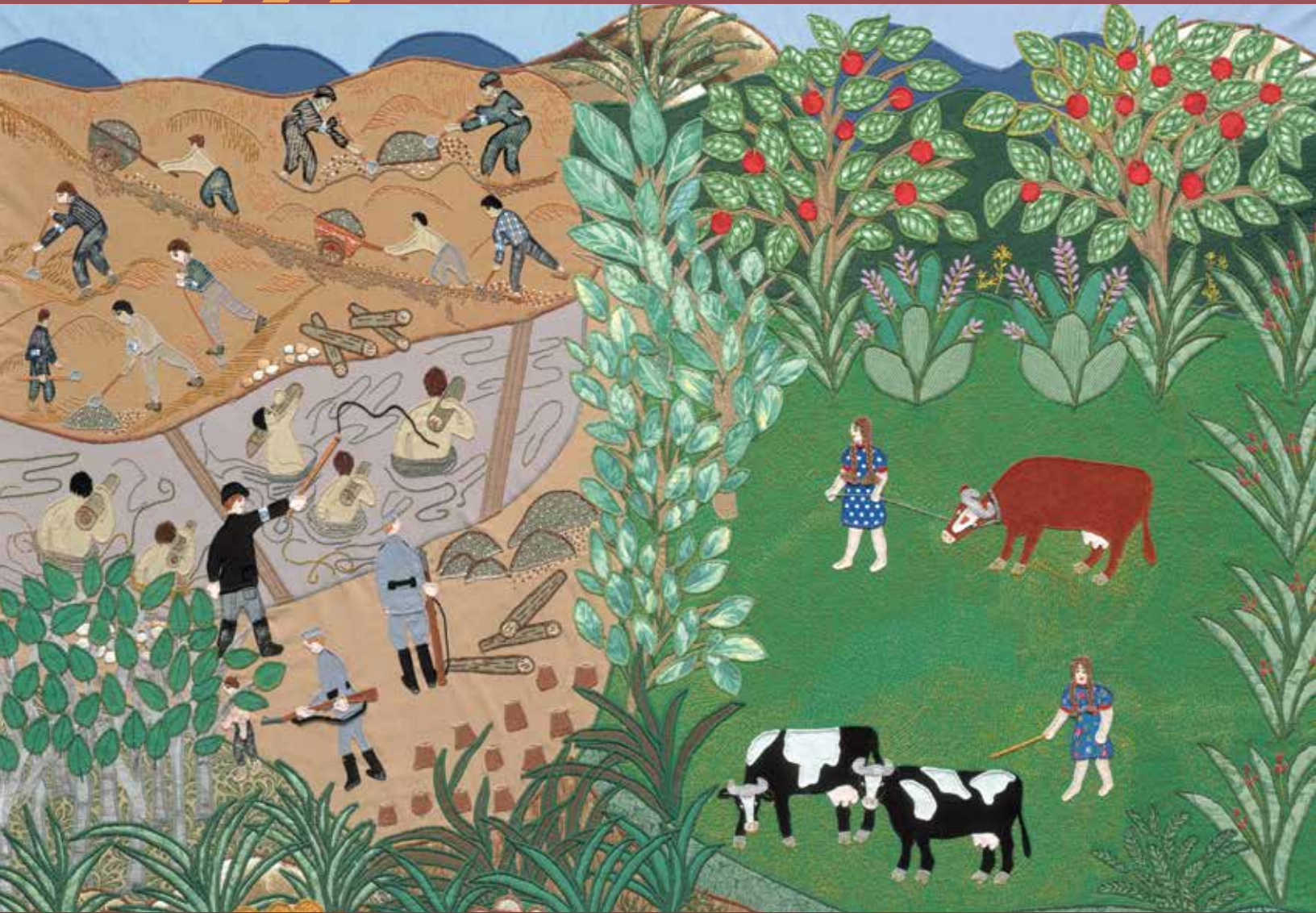
[Link to Facebook Page](#)



Crossed out Star of David on one of the main streets of the city. Photo: Bogna Wilczyńska



Jude Gang district. Photo: Bogna Wilczyńska



Esther Nisenthal Krinitz, *Janiszew Prison Camp*, 1994, embroidery on cloth



info@taubephilanthropies.org

www.taubephilanthropies.org