


# The Anguish of Liberation as Reflected in Art

13 panels (size: 70x50cm each)  
Total weight in bag: 12kg



**The Anguish of Liberation  
as Reflected in Art**

This special display, 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 the liberation through art. For most of these survivors 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 Drew document the very moment of liberation, only several weeks thereafter, while others give expression to the renewed feelings of freedom (Miriam Moskowitz, Sarah Zink). 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 Wandering Jew. Considering the survivors' artworks are those of a witness, Zhenia Tokatich 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 Zink 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](http://WWW.YADVASHEM.ORG)

**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 designated 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-Othman  
Graphic Design: Eilat Moreh, Lior Gavrilovich



**Zhenia Tokatich (1909-1971)**  
Portrait and self-portrait on paper  
1943-1945  
Gift of Zhenia Tokatich and her family, 1971

This artwork depicts the moment of liberation from the point of view of the liberator, the Soviet soldier Zhenia Tokatich, and the Jewish people he saved.

Born in Ukraine, the artist was a high-ranking Soviet soldier who fought in the Eastern Front during the Holocaust. He was captured by the Germans and spent time in a concentration camp. After liberation, he spent time in a displaced persons camp in Poland. His artwork depicts the moment of liberation from the point of view of the liberator, the Soviet soldier Zhenia Tokatich, and the Jewish people he saved.



**Samuel Bak (b. 1923)**  
Children Near  
Liberation DP Camp, 1945  
Enamel on paper  
1945  
Gift of the artist

Bak, the Jewish painter, with his mother in a DP camp. This painting by the son of children who were an abandoned people. The painting depicts the moment of liberation from the point of view of the liberator, the Soviet soldier Zhenia Tokatich, and the Jewish people he saved.



**Thomas Drew (1920-2000)**  
Woman in Yellow  
Liberation DP Camp, 1945  
Enamel on paper  
1945  
Gift of the artist

The painting is part of the series "Women in Yellow" which was created in order to give the women who were the first to be liberated from the camps an expression of their joy and relief. The painting depicts the moment of liberation from the point of view of the liberator, the Soviet soldier Zhenia Tokatich, and the Jewish people he saved.



**Nelly Salk (b. 1925)**  
Woman in a Yellow  
Liberation DP Camp, 1945  
Enamel on paper  
1945  
Gift of the artist

This painting depicts the moment of liberation from the point of view of the liberator, the Soviet soldier Zhenia Tokatich, and the Jewish people he saved.



**Arieh Bialik (1909-1980)**  
Street in a Village  
Liberation DP Camp, 1945  
Enamel on paper  
1945  
Gift of Arieh Bialik

This painting depicts the moment of liberation from the point of view of the liberator, the Soviet soldier Zhenia Tokatich, and the Jewish people he saved.



**Sarah Zink (1920-2012)**  
Home of Burmistrz, a Few Days after Liberation  
Burmistrz, 1945  
Enamel on paper  
1945  
Gift of the artist

This painting depicts the moment of liberation from the point of view of the liberator, the Soviet soldier Zhenia Tokatich, and the Jewish people he saved.




**Me Guel (1921-1980)**  
Self-portrait  
Burmistrz, 1947  
Enamel on paper  
1947  
Gift of the artist's estate

Standing after the liberation, the artist spent his year and half in a displaced persons camp. The painting depicts the moment of liberation from the point of view of the liberator, the Soviet soldier Zhenia Tokatich, and the Jewish people he saved.



**Samuel Bak (b. 1923)**  
Self-portrait  
Liberation DP Camp, 1945  
Enamel on paper  
1945  
Gift of the artist

This painting depicts the moment of liberation from the point of view of the liberator, the Soviet soldier Zhenia Tokatich, and the Jewish people he saved.



**Alexander Rabin (1916-2010)**  
Self-portrait  
Burmistrz, 1945  
Enamel on paper  
1945  
Gift of the artist

This painting depicts the moment of liberation from the point of view of the liberator, the Soviet soldier Zhenia Tokatich, and the Jewish people he saved.



**Sarah Bialik (1914-1980)**  
Bergen-Belsen  
Burmistrz, 1945  
Enamel on paper  
1945  
Gift of the artist

This drawing depicts the moment of liberation from the point of view of the liberator, the Soviet soldier Zhenia Tokatich, and the Jewish people he saved.



**Elzbieta Nienkiewicz (1891-1972)**  
The Wandering Jew  
Burmistrz, 1947  
Enamel on paper  
1947  
Gift of the artist

This painting depicts the moment of liberation from the point of view of the liberator, the Soviet soldier Zhenia Tokatich, and the Jewish people he saved.