

**Art from Within:  
An Encounter with Holocaust Art from the Terezin Ghetto**

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## Abstract

Terezin, located in what is now called Prague, Czechoslovakia, functioned as a Holocaust ghetto for the incarceration of Jews during the Second World War. Creating an image of a 'model camp' for its detained elite Europeans of economic and intellectual wealth, certain leeway was given to mask the reality of the situation. Being allowed to teach art to children, having a Drawing Office, and providing an Art Workshop, resulted in Terezin being one of the ghettos/camps in which thousands of art pieces were produced by children, youths, and adults. With a focus on the artwork made between the period of 1942 and 1944, a number of images were studied in the archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, USA, as well as artifacts accessed through the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, Canada. As a non-Jewish, Mediterranean art educator trained in Western institutions with no known ties to those deported to Terezin, personal responses to the experience of the encounter were recorded while asking the Deleuzian instructive question of "how does it work?" rather than "what does it mean?." The a/r/tographical practice was informed by and through, the journey that was taken to access the archives. In selecting seven works, notions of witnessing, intrusion, victimization, clash of religious values, and the unspoken aspects of the 'typical' are discussed. The process of understanding what the art became to the self through the encounter with original Terezin artwork, led to the production of an art piece that translates the connections found when sifting through the moments of being with camp art. Recommendations for further research include studies on art from and about the Holocaust camps and ghettos, on the education system that was designed and

practiced in Terezin, as well as a recommendation of studying the music, literary, and theatre arts that were also practiced in the spaces of the researched Holocaust ghetto. Through an exploration of the variety of art forms and silent curricula of Terezin, such studies could convey the type, appreciation, and significance of cultural presence that secretly thrived and, furthermore, support connections with the voices of Holocaust deportees.

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of Images .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of Artists .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Dedication .....</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Terezin Art during the Holocaust .....	2
1.2 Personal Connection or Lack Thereof .....	3
1.3 Circulation.....	5
<b>2 Literature Review .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 The Ghetto/Concentration Camp of Terezin .....	8
2.2 The Children and their Art Classes .....	11
2.3 The (known of) Art Educators .....	15
2.3.1 František Petr Kien (1919, Varnsdorf – 1944, Auschwitz).....	15
2.3.2 Friedl Dicker-Brandeis (1898, Vienna–1944, Auschwitz) .....	17
2.4 Adults’ Art and its Consequences .....	20
2.5 Secret (visual) Diaries of Beginner-Teenagers in the Ghetto.....	25

2.6 Art for Life’s Sake .....	28
<b>3 Methodology .....</b>	<b>32</b>
3.1 Primary Sources: In the Archives.....	32
3.1.1 Preparing for the Archive Visits .....	33
3.1.2 Accessing the Archived Art Collection.....	36
3.2 Secondary Sources: At the Permanent Exhibitions .....	39
3.3 Secondary Sources: In the Library.....	42
3.4 Theoretical Framework and A/r/tography.....	44
<b>4 Findings and Discussion .....</b>	<b>48</b>
4.1 The Collection of Art Accessed.....	48
4.1.1 Art from the Kinderheim: The Children’s Collection.....	49
4.1.2 Art from the Jugendheim: The Youths’ Collection .....	52
4.1.3 Art from the Adults’ Hiding Places: The Adults’ Collection .....	53
4.2 Criteria for Selecting Images.....	56
4.3 Images Chosen for Further Discussion.....	60
4.4 Discussion on Coming Face to Face with Terezin Art .....	68
4.4.1 Being Sarah: The Self in the Encounter .....	68
4.4.2 Faces to the Names, Names to the Numbers .....	70
<b>5 Post- Artwork Encounter .....</b>	<b>85</b>
5.1 Terezin’s Curriculum and Pedagogy.....	85

5.1.1 Learning Clusters .....	87
5.1.2 Organisational Strategies .....	89
5.2 Encountering Pedagogy of a Ghetto .....	91
5.3 Finding Community .....	95
5.4 Tying Loose Strings onto Canvas .....	99
<b>6 Conclusion.....</b>	<b>104</b>
6.1 Within and Without.....	104
6.2 Limitations and Contributions .....	105
6.3 Further Research.....	106
6.4 Closing Remarks .....	109
<b>References.....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>117</b>
Appendix A: Collection of the Moses Crowns .....	117
Appendix B: Details of Identification Card Booklets .....	118

## List of Images

Image 1: Theresienstadt currency .....	33
Image 2: Judenstern worn in Theresienstadt .....	34
Image 3: Identification Card for use in Exhibition .....	40
Image 4: Karel Fleischmann's Art .....	61
Image 5: Leo Haas' Art.....	62
Image 6: Leo Haas' Art.....	63
Image 7: Zdenka Eismannová's Art.....	64
Image 8: Zdenka Eismannová's Art.....	65
Image 9: Michal (Maud) Beer's Art.....	66
Image 10: Mariana & Vera Kornová's Art (Set of the above 3 images) .....	67
Image 11: Karel Fleischmann's Art .....	72
Image 12: Zdenka Eismannová's Art.....	74
Image 13: Zdenka Eismannová's Art.....	75
Image 14: Leo Haas' Art.....	77
Image 15: Leo Haas' Art.....	78
Image 16: Mariana & Vera Kornová's Art.....	82
Image 17: Michal (Maud) Beer's Art .....	82
Image 18: Sona Spitzová's Art .....	94
Image 19: Hana Lustigová's Art .....	94
Image 20: My Art.....	99
Image 21: Detail of My Art.....	100

Image 22: Detail of My Art.....	101
Image 23: Theresienstadt currency .....	117
Image 24: Identification Card, Section 1.....	118
Image 25: Identification Card, Section 2.....	119
Image 26: Identification Card, Section 3.....	120

## List of Artists

140,000 jews passed through Theresienstadt; 88,000 were sent to extermination camps. Most of these prisoners were sent to Auschwitz (Birkenau). 33,340 inmates died in Theresienstadt of hunger, disease and the catastrophic living conditions (Makarová, 2001, p. 29).

The 121,340 figure (total sum of fatality) consists of undiscovered potential, unexhausted creative enthusiasm, and unfulfilled artistic goals. The following is a list of artists' names that I have come across in my readings for this study. Believing that each name deserves to be noticed, recognised, and acknowledged, the following list is a tribute to the many artists of Terezin, for the ones who made it, and the ones who did not.

### From Volavková (1993)

Josef Bäuml (1931 – 1944)	Jiri Beutler (1932 – 1944)
Milan Biennenfeld (1930 – 1944)	Robert Bondy (1932 – 1944)
František Brozan (1932 – 1943)	Eva Brunnerová (1933 – 1944)
Eva Bulová (1930 – 1944)	Ruth Čechová (1931 – 1944)
Raja Engländerová (1929 – survived)	Edita Fischlová (1931 – survived)
Liana Franklová (1931 – 1944)	Gabriela Freiová (1933 – 1944)
Renata Glücklich (1931 – 1944)	Hana Grünerová (1935 – survived)
Hana Grünfeldová (1935 – 1944)	Ruth Heinová (1934 – 1944)
Elly Hellerová (1930 – 1944)	Jana Hellerová (1938 – 1944)
Eva Heská (1930 – 1944)	Petr Holzbauer (1932 – 1944)

Hana Kalichová (1931 – 1944)	Irena Karpelesová (1930 – 1944)
Hana Erika Karplusová (1930 – 1944)	Eva Kestlerová (1933 – 1944)
Ruth Klaubauf (1931 – 1944)	Hanuš Klauber (1932 – 1944)
Marianna Langová (1932 – 1944)	Nina Ledererová (1931 – 1944)
Hana Lissauová (1930 – 1944)	Helena Mändlová (1930 – 1943)
Eva Meitnerová (1931 – 1944)	Josef Novák (1931 – 1944)
Kitty Markéta Passerová (1929 – survived)	Dita Polachová (1929 – survived)
Josef Pollak (1933 – 1944)	Helga Pollaková (1928 – unknown)
Vera Samková (1931 – 1944)	Karel Sattler (1932 – 1944)
Ruth Schachterová (1930 – 1944)	Helena Schanzerová (1933 – 1944)
Eva Schurová (1935 – 1944)	Nely Silvínová (1931 – 1944)
Pavel Sonnenschein (1931 – 1944)	Soňa Spitzová (1931 – 1944)
Erika Taussigová (1934 – 1944)	Dita Valentíková (1933 – unknown)
Sonja Waldsteinová (1926 – survived)	Petr Weidmann (1930 – 1944)
Hanuš Weinberg (1931 – 1943)	Doris Weiserová (1932 – 1944)
Alfred Weisskopf (1932 – 1944)	Helga Weissová (1929 – survived)
Ilona Weissová (1932 – 1944)	Zuzana Winterová (1933 – 1944)
Eva Wollsteinerová (1931 – 1944)	

### **From Křížková, Kotouč, and Ornest (1994)**

Mílan Eisler (1932 – survived)	Soňa Fischerová (1931- survived)
Marika Friedmannová (1931 – 1944)	Petr Ginz (1928 – 1944)
Anna Grünwaldová (1930 – 1944)	Bedřich Hoffman (1932 – 1944)

Marta Kendeová (1930 – 1944)

Jiří Metzl (1929 – 1944)

Zdeněk Weiner (1929 – 1944)

Hana Kohnová (1931 – 1944)

Erika Stránská (1930 – 1944)

### **From Petrášová and Pařík (1983)**

Adolf Aussenberg (1914 – 1944)

Walter Behrendt (1889 – 1944)

Charlotta Buresová (1904 – survived)

Eveline Friderike Finke (1896 – 1944)

Bedřich Fritta (1906 – 1944)

A.G (unknown, signed drawings found)

Hartman (unknown, signed drawings found)

Lev Heilbrunn (1891 – 1944)

Otto Karas (1896 – 1944)

František Petr Kien (1919 – 1944)

Wilhelm Konrad (1892 – 1944)

Bedřich Lederer (1878 – survived)

Mořic Müller (1887 – 1944)

Edvard Neugebauer (1897 – 1944)

Pražák (unknown, signed paintings found)

Malvína Schalková (1882 – 1944)

Joseph Eduard Adolf Spier (1900 – survived)

Elsbeth Argutinká (1873 - survived)

Ferdinand Bloch (1898 – 1944)

Jan Burka (1924 – survived)

Karel Fleischmann (1897 – 1944)

A. Fuchs (unknown, signed drawings found)

Leo Haas (1901 – survived)

Edita Hartmannová (1902 – 1944)

E.K (unknown, signed drawings found)

Jiří Waldstein – Karlínský (1898 – 1944)

Arnošt Klein (1898 – 1944)

J.L (unknown, signed drawings found)

František Lukáš (1911 – survived)

František Mořic NágI (1889 – 1944)

Oswald Pöck (1893 – 1944)

Gisela Rottonara (1873 – 1943)

Hanuš Smetana (1899 – 1944)

Jan Tomáš Spitz (1927 – 1943)

Otto Ungar (1901 – 1945)

Marie Weinerová (1888 – 1943)

Weisskopf (unknown, signed paintings found)

Max M. Willenberg (unknown, signed drawings found)

Ludvík Wodak (1902 – 1944)

Georg Wolff (1876 – 1944)

Hilda Zadiková (1890 – survived)

František Zelenka (1904 – 1944)

### **From Osvaldová and Oswald (2002)**

Zdenka Eismannová (1897 – 1943)

Ernestina Kleinová (1885 – unknown)

Jaroslav Löbl (1896 – 1944)

Max Plaček (1902 – 1944)

Norbert Troller (1896 – survived)

Jan Ullmann (1913 – 1945)

Bedřich Wachtel (1892 – survived)

### **The Unknown Artists**

### **The Unnamed Artists**

### **The Anonymous Artists**

The words 'I am' written on a wall are the epitaph of someone about to die. Whoever wrote those words – we see them now. 'I am.' Those words are the 'you' we will remember (Czarnecki, 1989, p. xv).

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***To my parents,***

***& nanna Agnes***

# 1 Introduction

There has been a substantial amount of artwork produced, and research carried out about the art that was done after the Second World War by people who had fallen victims of its tragedies in one way or another. According to what was known in the field of psychology at the time, some Holocaust survivors were advised to work on forgetting the past and moving on rather than to deal with the haunting memories that troubled those who went through incarceration (Waisman, 1993, p. 129). Such advice, however, did not stop some from producing art, and from allowing art to contain the memories that could not simply flee one's thoughts. For instance, Elsa Pollack (as cited in Costanza, 1982, p. 16) tells her story through the sculptures she made several years after her liberation from the extermination camp of Auschwitz: "Over the years I kept silent, but I did not forget. [...] The memories urged me on without respite."

Indeed, even the second generation wanted to keep revealing the reality of the Holocaust memories, and its ripple effects, alive through art. For instance, Art Spiegelman, whose graphic novel *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* (Spiegelman, 1991), passed on his parents' memories through the eyes of survivors' offspring. Yet, such artwork is not the only kind of Holocaust-related art that has been produced. Art was created after *and* during the wartime experiences inside the numerous Holocaust camps and ghettos, hence the subject of this study is: the art from within.

## 1.1 Terezin Art during the Holocaust

Located in what was then a government-exiled Czechoslovakia ([www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org)), Terezin, or Theresienstadt as the Nazi Germans then called it, was one of a number of camps/ghettos of the Second World War in which children, youths, and adults produced artwork. Mary Costanza, author of *The Living Witness: Art in concentration camps and ghettos* (1982) has been praised (Potok as cited in Czarnecki, 1989, p. xiii) to be one of the pioneering artists, educators, and researchers to look into some of the art that was produced within the walls of Jewish Holocaust camps and ghettos, and by the people who were incarcerated in such dehumanising confinements. Costanza, challenges the reader's ideas on the kind of cultural presence in the ghettos, extermination, labour, transit, and concentration camps of wartime Europe. Her research explains that even in the most infamous camps such as Auschwitz and Drancy, art exhibitions, museum curation, and art contests for "best decorated barracks" were held in the initial stages of the running of the camps and ghettos. However, the mentioned kind of artistic activities took place under the instructive orders of Nazi authorities just to please high ranking SS officers and guests (Costanza, 1982, p. 14). Details on the artwork that resulted from such art-related orders are scarce. This is because, a relatively small number of authors followed Costanza in researching the art created by the incarcerated in these specific spaces. Czarnecki (1989) is one example who took Costanza's lead in Holocaust art research after stumbling upon a collection of art pieces from the extermination camp of Auschwitz while walking through the remains of the camp.

In light of the fact that Holocaust artwork is not limited to that which was done in Terezin, I intend to focus on it for the following four reasons:

- (a) Access to data in terms of the amount of research that has been written (as in Green, 1978; Volavková, 1993; Goldman Rubin, 2000; Weissová, 2008) and the images available in books, internet sources, and archives;
- (b) The art teaching to children and the learning that took place particularly by the well researched educator Friedl Dicker-Brandeis (as in Wix, 2010);
- (c) The existence and availability of a “Drawing Office” that was a main source of supplies for the adults’ artwork and which eventually led to the “Affair of the Painters” (Haas, 1991, p. 63);
- (d) And as explained in further detail later on, the reputation of Terezin as a so-called “model ghetto”, which was a reputation that belonged to Terezin alone (Light, 1990).

## **1.2 Personal Connection or Lack Thereof**

Like Mary Costanza, I too am a female in North America with Mediterranean roots. I too am in the teaching profession sharing a passion for painting ([www.marycostanza.com](http://www.marycostanza.com)). Additionally, neither one of us has any known ties to those deported to the numerous Holocaust camps or ghettos. Thus, the common factors between Costanza and myself, are the differences we have in relation to the research interest. However, my study differs from Costanza’s research in that I do not discuss Holocaust art across all camps and ghettos, but I focus on the one ghetto, that being Terezin.

My personal interest stemmed from a web of isolated moments that came together. Three particular instances stand out that tie my current research focus to past experiences. The first of which is a distant, sweet memory of story-time with my maternal grandmother who narrated memories of her adolescent years in the midst of an island's wartime rubble and ruins. Along with her stories, my grandfather would sometimes join in by sharing stories of his brother's incarceration as a seminary prisoner of war in Italy. Moreover, the second vague and indirect connection is an art exhibition I attended, some five years ago, at the St. James Cavalier Centre for Creativity in Valletta, Malta ([www.sjcav.org](http://www.sjcav.org)). The mentioned exhibition, a travelling exhibition from Austria, had introduced me to the children's artwork that came out of Terezin. Up until that point, I had no idea about the possibility of any form of artwork that was done by camp prisoners in such spaces and during such hardship. Before that latter experience, I had only heard stories of the past.

After visiting the aforementioned exhibition, I delivered a presentation on the topic of trauma in connection to art at a graduate summer seminar. While preparing for the presentation and reading Bennett's work (2005) on the translation of trauma into the visual form, memories of that moment of disbelief which was experienced as I looked at children's visual stories of their time in war, came back to mind. This time, though, I could not go to grandma and ask her about her stories – I wonder if she knew about the art that came out of the camps, I wonder if she had created any art when she was in the underground shelter. I will never find out. A quick search online awoke a dormant interest. A slow process of piecing stories together sustained that interest.

Through an a/r/tographical self-study informed by archival research, I focus on my personal responses to the journey and the moments of coming face to face with a selected number of Terezin art pieces that carry their own specific story. Thus, I consider the following two questions:

- How might I respond to the artwork and its processes as a non-Jewish, Mediterranean, female art educator trained in western institutions, and with no known ties to those deported to Terezin?
- How do I make sense of these responses as an artist and educator?

### **1.3 Circulation**

In order to tackle the above mentioned questions, I aimed to approach the art seeking an encounter. By the term 'encounter' I imply: the moment of being physically present with Terezin art; the moment when a common space was shared; the moment when I could hold the same paper that was once in the camp and handled by a Terezin artist thus connecting the past to the present; the moment when I could react to the visual with the entire self that I contain; the moment when I could stay with the art piece for longer than a single moment, and the moment when I viewed the art seeking to approach it and realise what it becomes to me, the self, rather than to find out what it could be in general. Naturally, in order to have an encounter with the Terezin art, I first needed to find ways to access it and come to an understanding of what, and how, it could be made accessible. Indeed, I am able to access the artwork, to experience an encounter, and to have the chance to react and respond, because some of the art pieces were not destroyed by the powers that destroyed some of their owners.

Therefore, a number of art pieces eventually fell into appreciative hands. Saving the art was, however, a challenge in itself. This is because, some of the images in the drawings or paintings captured by the prisoners of Terezin, were not meant for Nazis' eyes, rather, they were meant to reach us: 'these are their voices that have been persevered, voices of reminder, of truth, and of hope' (Weil as cited in Volavková, 1993, p. 103). In order to make the art that was produced, live to tell its tale, Costanza (1982, p. 135) and Branson (1991, p. 40) recorded that art pieces were hidden in found or constructed tin boxes, buried in soil, tucked inside clothes, kept in pockets that hung around the neck, deposited into secret openings built in walls, placed in suitcases that were passed on to other inmates prior to deportation, or snuck them out of the ghetto or camp via sparse outgoing mail and bribing of the guards

Some of the artist-prisoners left detailed instructions on the whereabouts of hiding places via notes that described what they wished others to do with their artwork (Costanza, 1982, p. 140). Indeed, such information was valuable particularly when people who survived the war could make their way back to retrieve their own, or other's art. A small fraction from the number of survivors with information, or recollection of where art was hidden had indeed returned to uncover hiding spots (Pařík as cited in Osvaldová & Oswald, 2002, p. 56). It is thanks to such retrieval efforts that we can now encounter the artworks. Nonetheless, countless of artists who did not survive the Holocaust had neither passed on any artwork, nor left any indication of the whereabouts of their art's hiding place. Consequently, some art was lost. Also, in some instances, SS officers owned art pieces or the art was destroyed (Costanza, 1982, p. 141).

The art that has been excavated has not all been made accessible to people other than the owners of the artwork. This is because some of the works are in the possession of family members, some were given to the allied military troops as a token of gratitude upon liberation, while some other pieces might be in hands of those who do not know of their worth and story (Costanza, 1982, p. 144). Even though thousands of art pieces made it out of Terezin, what the public can encounter is a limited number of art produced throughout the ghettoisation of Terezin. Museums, archives, and government or private organisations across Israel, the United States of America, and Eastern Europe, hold a variety of collections (p. 146). In fact, when in need of access to original documentation or artwork, the Vancouver Holocaust Education Center ([www.vhec.org](http://www.vhec.org)), and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum ([www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)), and The Jewish Prague Museum ([www.jewishmuseum.cz](http://www.jewishmuseum.cz)) have been my three main points of reference.

## **2 Literature Review**

What might initially come to mind when thinking about 20th Century art, are artists' works that have been made famous for one reason, or another, and classified into the late modern and post-modern eras. The main spotlight is shared among an array of artworks, and groups of artists whose works are sought after by collectors and galleries, found in classrooms and school text books, and extensively presented and discussed in varied forms of publications. Such selective exposure, however, neglects a niche of art pieces from the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This niche of art concerning this study is what Costanza (1982) refers to as, 'camp art' from World War II ghettos and concentration camps. Camp art fits into its own category and perhaps causes slight hesitation to casually bring up. It is also a genre which is presented in a rather limited number of publications. Thus, the literature discussed in this chapter presents some of the points made and raised around the works, shedding light on such a contribution to art history.

### **2.1 The Ghetto/Concentration Camp of Terezin**

The "model ghetto," "settlement for prominent persons," or "ghetto for the elderly" were the labels given to Terezin: the transit camp that was strategically selected by the Nazis as it lied between the Protectorate (Moravia, Bohemia, and parts of Silesia), and what came to be known by the inmates as the 'East.' The 'East' referred to Poland, where some of the extermination camps, including Auschwitz, were (Ornstein as cited in Singer & Tarsi, 2009, p. 6). It was prestigiously and deceptively labeled so because it mainly housed elderly, elite European professionals, and the wounded of WWI, "whose

disappearance could prove an embarrassment to the Nazis” (Chládková, 2005, p. 8).

Chládková further illustrates how the delusion of Terezin as being a safe and permanent home stretched as far as having hopeful Jews walk through the gates of the ghetto with documents in hand which recorded the purchase of a place to live (p. 8).

Furthermore, the notion of provision that sustained the falsity also resulted in having the incarcerated professionals bring baggage that lacked the essential needs.

According to Chládková (2005, p. 9), most deportees brought into Terezin the maximum baggage allowance of 50kilograms which they were dispossessed from at the main gates. Having been manipulated with the image of a model camp, much of the 50kilograms consisted of clothing that was unfit for the conditions in the ghetto, and mementos that were not as useful as basic supplies which were nowhere to be found or replenished once inside the walls of Terezin (p. 9). However, part of the total number of elite people sent to the ghetto was a group of established artists, cartoonists, fashion designers, art students, art teachers, and art enthusiasts who had thriving interests in the realm of creativity that provided the camp with a particular identity (Costanza, 1982, p. 14). Consequentially, some suitcases included art supplies and books that were used to eventually document life in the camp.

According to Light (1990, p. 9), victims from a range of nationalities found themselves deported to the Terezin camp: Czechoslovakian, German, Austrian, Dutch, Polish, Hungarian, and Danish natives had to live together. The mentioned variety of nationalities was present in the ghetto throughout the years of 1941 till 1945. Naturally,

along with the diversity of nationalities, came the diversity of languages, cultures, traditions, and connections. The one common denominator was Judaism, or the awareness of its tradition(s) and belief system(s). This diversity became somewhat of a hindrance as it created further chaos to the already suppressive situation of having to stick to the confinements of Terezin: a star-shaped, 200-year old, military base fortress which was originally built to house 7,000 people (Weil as cited in Volavková, 1993, p. 101) rather than the approximately 60,000 deportees (Terezín & Nakladatelství, 1988, p. 275). Yet, the biggest blow to the incoming Jews was not so much the variety that surrounded them in limited quarters, but the separation which split up families into different barracks depending on gender and age. The separation happened upon arrival and only a handful of families were the exception to this rule (Terezín & Nakladatelství, p. 274). Added to that, as Chládková (2005, p.15) points out, was the prohibition of contact and communication between males and females during set times of the day.

Nonetheless, Arnošt Lustig could draw comparisons between the camps from first hand experiences because he survived three Nazi camps, the first of which was Terezin ([www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk), 1991). In a memoir he stated that even though husbands were split up from their wives and children from their parents, “at least – they knew about each other, and were together in one place [...] it was crowded, but we were together” (1991, p.12). Comparing wartime camps has caused a certain sense of confusion as to whether or not Terezin was a ghetto or a concentration camp. Green (1978, p. 56), Terezín and Nakladatelství (1988, p. 273), and Pařík (1991, p. 49), for

instance, agree that the ghetto functioned like a concentration camp and could thus be called so. On the other hand, Singer and Tarsi (2009, p. 11) argue that there has been a “discrepancy of the definition of Theresienstadt” due to the living conditions and the segregation of males, females, and children. Thus, the mentioned authors highlight that the fortress tends to be referred to as a ghetto. As a result of a mix in associations, Terezin is frequently and interchangeably referred to as a ghetto and/or a concentration camp. Indeed, it will also be interchangeably referred to as a ghetto or a concentration camp in this study.

All that it was and all that it was not, ceased to be and never became, upon liberation in 1945 ([www.holocaustresearchproject.org](http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org)). With such an end also came an end to art-making that was done within such a specifically constructed environment, conditions, and atmosphere.

## **2.2 The Children and their Art Classes**

Not a lot is known about the children of Terezin. On the one hand this is because only birth, arrival, and deportation dates along with destination were asked to be kept by the officers (Volavková, 1993, p. ix). On the other hand, Costanza (1982, p.11) and Lustig (1991, p. 14) stated that children, along with anyone who wore glasses, the elderly, and those considered to be disabled, were first to be killed because they were regarded as “totally useless” (Costanza, 1982, p. 11) and thus, for better or for worse, they did not have the same amount of time, experiences, and conditions in the ghetto as some of the adults had.

Nonetheless, a number of the children were in Terezin long enough to produce art. Some of the works were left unsigned, and some of the works were signed (Volavková, 1993, p. ix). Signatures were made up of either full names or just the initials written “in that sweet abandon of the younger child who has just discovered that marks put together have meaning, the first name appears in the universal beginner’s scrawl” (Costanza, 1982, p. 77). A number of works also had dates and the ghetto name included. The recorded children’s artwork is mainly collected in Volavková’s (1993) / *Never Saw another Butterfly* which contains poetry, drawings, paintings, and collages from Terezin. Such a collection of artwork was made possible because the model ghetto had one positive advantage over other camps and ghettos. This advantage was that limited amount of art teaching, via some form of schooling, was actually allowed in Terezin (Chládková, 2005, p. 29). Authors Terezín and Nakladatelství (1988, p. 175) explain how the teaching of other school subjects had to be held in secret but art classes were permissible by the Nazi officers.

Chládková (2005) further mentions that the Nazis viewed art-making as nothing much but childish play (p.29). Such a demeaning of the value of artistic practice contradicts the sustenance that it brought to the imprisoned young and old victims in Terezin. However, the Nazis’ actual reason behind the eventual leeway made for art classes was that they thought that art could be used to “conceal harsh reality and the fate of the Jews” (Terezín & Nakladatelství, 1988, p. 275). Such reasoning was proven to be a misled, attempted alibi because the fate of the Jews speaks through the artwork and reveals how the deathly reality inhabited the children’s imagination (p. 275).

Moreover, Chládková (2005) explains the departments that were set up in the ghetto, and that were run by Jews for the Jews, but with constant constraint and surveillance from the SS guards. Two of the departments were the “Department for Free Time Activities” and the “Department for the Care of the Young” (p. 13). These two particular departments proved to be quite beneficial and pertinent for the total of 15,000 children who walked through the gates of Terezin (Potok as cited in Volavková, 1993, p. xxi). Part of the work of the latter department involved putting children under twelve years of age in one building called a “Kinderheime” (Chládková, 2005, p. 26) where caretakers and educators occupied their time with experiences that were aimed to enhance learning. Such a separation, which was also based on gender, indicated that to the Nazis, the prisoners under the age of twelve were to be considered ‘children’ while prisoners between the ages of thirteen to fifteen were to be considered ‘youths.’ Thus, the SS guards required the thirteen to fifteen year-olds to move from “Kinderheime” to “Jugendheime,” and eventually to the blocks where the captors held adult males and females. This was a distinction made via a clear-cut and physical divide as the young victims moved from one block to another as they grew older (Terezín & Nakladatelství, 1988, p. 274).

Art classes, which were given only to children, took place in the “Kinderheime” where they slept, ate, and produced a recorded total of 5,000 artworks – a figure that only includes the art that survived liberation in 1945 (Potok as cited in Volavková, 1993, p. xx). The artworks survived because the leading pedagogue of the art classes, Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, had put the art pieces into two suitcases. Prior to her deportation and

final destination to Auschwitz, she handed the luggage to a student of hers named Raja Engländerová who was one of the students to survive the liberation of Terezin (p. xxi). Engländerová passed on the suitcases to Willy Groag, the last coordinator of the Department for the Care of the Young. Groag eventually handed the suitcases to the Prague Jewish community and thus, the works made it into today's archives, galleries, exhibitions, and museums (p. xxi).

The uniqueness of the children's art is most noticeable when analysing the extent of the children's imagination embedded in their creations. In Volavková (1993, p. 102), Jiří Weil explains how the real and the imaginative are uniquely and exclusively present in the children's art via their way of experiencing childhood in Terezin. He stated that the children saw what the adults could see as well: "the endless lines of the canteens, they saw the funeral carts used to carry bread and the human beings harnessed to pull them" (p. 102). They also saw things only children could, but the adults "didn't want to see" such as, "the beauties beyond the village gates, the green meadows and the bluish hills, the ribbon of highway reaching off into the distance and the imagined road marker pointing towards Prague" (p. 102). Lastly, Weil explains the way in which the imagination of children rendered and 'saw' things that were not possible to be seen by the eyes of an adult, for instance: "princesses with coronets, evil wizards and witches, jesters and bugs with human faces" (p. 103). In sum, what the children produced became a recording of the historical events as they were witnessed and experienced whilst being braided with a child's particular imagination, and its unpredictability even when under the instruction of a pedagogue.

## **2.3 The (known of) Art Educators**

In a matter of a few months from when Jews started to be deported into Terezin, it became evident to the prisoners that “a socialised skill could save one’s life or postpone one’s death” (Potok as cited in Czarnecki, 1989, p. xi). Therefore, any individual who could contribute to any job that was vaguely, remotely, or directly related to art or craft was put to use by the captors – a “do or die” unspoken deal (Costanza, 1982, p. 49). However, a few of the adult inmates did not use their skills to serve the Nazis but instead they used their skills to invest in the teaching of the arts, including the visual arts. There are a couple of art educators, such as Irma Lauschner and Dr. Baumelová, who have been mentioned and recognised as two of those who contributed to the teaching of art in the camp, but nothing more beyond the names is documented (Hurwitz, 1991, p. 74).

### **2.3.1 František Petr Kien (1919, Varnsdorf – 1944, Auschwitz)**

Green (1978, p. 135) mentions a Czechoslovakian 22-year old, an art student of the Prague Academy of Art, by the name of František Petr Kien. Even though his life and time in the Terezin ghetto was cut short due to deportation to an extermination camp, he left behind a collection of art pieces thus making a contribution to the realm of art education because he was one of the pedagogues who gave art classes. In the Holocaust literature, much praise has been given to Petr for being an all-rounded artist. Costanza (1982) for instance, has referred to the young art student as “brilliant and versatile” (p. 71). While in the ghetto, Kien took the initiative to be under the instruction of fellow prisoner, Bedrich Fritta, and was thus able to continue to pursue his studies in

the visual art (p. 71). Further recognition and praise is directed towards Kien for producing one of the largest bodies of recorded and excavated artworks (p. 160). Following Costanza, Terezín and Nakladatelství (1988, p. 276), along with Pařík (1991, p. 52), highlight that the art educator wrote poems, short stories, stage plays, and opera librettos. His art is large in number of productions and variety of the techniques employed, thus regarding Kien as probably being the “most gifted artist in the ghetto” (Terezín & Nakladatelství, 1988, p. 276). However, the references made to František Petr Kien focus more on his personal artwork which creates an imbalance with the references to his teaching and pedagogy. The lack of emphasis regarding his participation in the giving of art classes is not intended to suggest an undermining of the contribution that his teaching must have had. Indeed, his willingness alone, to provide art lessons certainly deserves praise.

Similar to Kien, Friedl Dicker-Brandeis is mentioned to be one of the art educators in the ghetto, and an artist who produced artwork pieces in the confinements of a “tiny under-the-staircase closet” which she occupied in the ghetto of Terezin (Potok as cited in Volavková, 1993, p. xix). Yet, the balance of references made about Friedl’s art teaching and her own art-making, are imbalanced in a different way to Petr’s references. This is because the name ‘Friedl Dicker-Brandeis’ became synonymous with ‘hero’ by those who experienced or witnessed her teaching, and by those who research her teaching methodology such as Hurwitz (1988 & 1991), Leshnoff (2006), Pariser (2008), and Wix (2009).

### **2.3.2 Friedl Dicker-Brandeis (1898, Vienna–1944, Auschwitz)**

A Viennese born and Bauhaus trained artist, Dicker-Brandeis was a lecturer to the adults in the camp and she is recorded to cause a most positive impact on the Terezin children's art teachers ([www.sgiquarterly.org](http://www.sgiquarterly.org)). According to Hurwitz (1988, p. 256) she dealt with, and overcame relatively serious struggles such as teaching in forbidden nurseries and hospitals while also managing to deal with the relatively less serious struggles as for example, the lack of supplies and time. In addition, the German speaking "small, fragile, patient" art teacher (Potok as cited in Volavková, 1993, p. xix) taught, and structurally planned for classes that were made up of children from a variety of countries, consequently speaking a variety of languages. On top of that, the children were also separated from their parents, famished, ill, and exhausted children (Kraus as cited in Makarová, 2001, p. 215).

In his later work, Hurwitz (1991, p. 76) highlights how the pedagogue believed wholeheartedly in the importance of letting the children, be children. This is exemplified in her writing: "to direct the sparks of children's inspiration, those sudden illuminations, is criminal! Why are adults in such a hurry to make children like themselves? Are we really so happy with ourselves?" The holding of a belief in children's skillful capacities speaks in the artwork they left behind, and hints at the notion of the kind of instruction given or lack thereof. In addition, her political leaning towards the Communist party sifted through and into her pedagogical practices along with her philosophical views which are linked by Hurwitz (1991), to the "Rousseauian paradigm." Therefore, the specific political leanings and philosophical practices sum up her teaching methods and

suggest her aims and intentions to be those of equipping the children - her many Emiles - with nothing beyond skillful technique (p. 80).

Interestingly, Leshnoff (2006, p. 93) and Hurwitz (1988, p. 72) link Friedl's teaching methodology, which partly focused on freedom of self expression, with that of Franz Cizek who was one of the teachers she had when she attended the Vienna School of Applied Arts prior to enrolling at the Bauhaus. Her practice and writings demonstrate her deep set beliefs about teaching art to children. In fact, the short essay authored by the artist/teacher entitled "On Children's Art" presents an explanation of her beliefs, which were passed on to others via presentations and lectures that she delivered to other teachers, and interested adults, in Terezin (Wix, 2010).

Following training with Cizek, Friedl Dicker-Brandeis continued with her studies at the Bauhaus where she was under the instruction of Johannes Itten, and Paul Klee among other leading artists of the time (Leshnoff, 2006, p. 94). Indeed, the Bauhaus training is that which is seen to be reflected most in the teaching methods used in the ghetto as referenced by the cited authors so far. Extensive lists of what her Itten-influenced curriculum focused on (Volavková, 1993), include: "training in art fundamentals, studies of everyday objects, imaginative drawing, and complex still lifes," (p. vii) "exercises in breathing and rhythm; the study of reproductions, texture, colour values; the importance of observation, and patience" (p. xx). Friedl's art class was a time of telling stories and drawing "flowers, butterflies, animals, cities, storms, rainbow, streets, railway stations,

family portraits, holidays, merry-go-rounds. They drew their concealed inner-worlds, their tortured emotions” (p. xx).

Nonetheless, Leshnoff (2006, p. 96) takes the pedagogical style and the teaching methods aside of the influence from the great instructors that Dicker-Brandeis had been trained by, outside of the Holocaust camp context, and draws parallels with the art education movement of the time – that being the Progressive Education movement. A focus on child-centredness is pivotal to the movement which had reformers at the forefront such as Florence Cane from the United States, and Marion Richardson from the United Kingdom, whose advancements indirectly partner up with Friedl’s practices in war-torn Czechoslovakia.

Lastly, Pariser (2008) and Wix (2009) view the artist-educator as a primary link in the chain which led to the developments of art therapy. Wix (2009) sheds the limelight on the notion of “aesthetic empathy” (p. 154) that is associated with Dicker-Brandeis’ teaching where: the mundane is reflected upon; where art is used as a tool of care for the students and allowed to dwell in the in-between space of the teacher and the student, as well as treating the artwork as an outpour of the inner most self (p. 155). Thus, an understanding of the “essence” lies at the crux of Wix’s aesthetic empathy which was practiced by the educator, and in turn it lines up with the base of art therapy. However, Edith Kramer regards Friedl Dicker-Brandeis as an art educator rather than an art therapist but credits a level of therapeutic effect of Friedl’s teaching. Kramer was a student of the artist-educator prior to incarceration, and went on to become a

distinguished art therapist. She illustrates how the therapeutic element, in the Terezin art teaching, lied in the objective to strengthen spirits and bringing healing in the midst of chaos (Makarová as cited in Pariser, 2008, p. 8).

## **2.4 Adults' Art and its Consequences**

The art produced by the adults varies rather drastically from that of the children, not only in technique and style but also, and not limited to: in the conditions that it was created in as they lived in different barracks; the mindset they had/lacked as parents and being grown-up professionals, and because anyone and everyone considered to be 'healthy' between the ages of 14 and 65 was obliged to work. The conditions of the adults' lives led to the witnessing of specific aspects of life in the camp because they had the responsibility of themselves, the community, and the young ones in the camp (Singer & Tarsi, 2009, p. 11). The majority of the adults' artwork was done with drawing supplies, particularly pencil and charcoal, that was made, found, or stolen by those who worked in any of the camp's departments or offices, especially the "Drawing Office" (Chládková, 2005) which was also known as the "Drafting Room" (Osvaldová & Oswald, 2002). The "Drawing Office" was staffed by four highly regarded artists: Bedřich Fritta/Fritz Taussig (1906, Višňová–1944, Auschwitz), who was a well established commercial artist, teacher, and illustrator; Ferdinand (Felix) Bloch (1898, Kynžvart–1944, Terezin), who was a graphic artist and an instructor in advertising graphic art; Otto Ungar (1901, Brno–1945, Weimar), was an art professor of drawing and geometry; and Leo Haas (1901, Opava–1983, Berlin), was a prominent graphic artist, lithographer, and portrait painter

(Osvaldová & Oswald, 2002). Only the fourth one mentioned survived the war (Haas, 1991, p. 63).

Fritta, Bloch, Ungar, and Haas made up a group of male adult artists who had access to drawing supplies because they worked in a “Drawing Office” at Terezin where, under SS guards’ orders, they had to draft graphics that related to camp construction and propaganda (Haas, 1991, p. 63). Headed by Fritta, the group received specific attention in the camp, in research, and in literature, for the artwork that was created outside the assigned duties of the Drawing Office. This is because when such unassigned art made it into the hands of Nazi officials, the mentioned artists, along with their wives and children, were rounded up and taken to the “Small Fortress” which was Terezin’s version of a non-exit jail (Green, 1978, p. 99). The doomed happening went down in Terezin’s Holocaust history as “The Incident of the Artists” (Green, 1978) or “The Affair of the Painters of Terezin” (Haas, 1991).

The torturous experience that the adult artists had to endure when taken to the Small Fortress by the SS guards, speaks to how the artworks were perceived as a “threat” (Green, 1978, p. 95). The threat lied in the way Terezin was captured in images, which was a subject portrayed in a way that did not correspond to the hoax that the Nazi camp authorities had worked on to fool the Danish Red Cross upon inspection of the camp (Light, 1990, p. 7). The infamous hoax that was referred to as the “Embellishment” (p. 7), managed to deceive the Danish Red Cross Commission into believing that the conditions at the camp were up to their set standards without them knowing that the

inmates had to do all the renovating, building, cleaning up of streets, which “were cleaned by inmates with toothbrushes” (p. 7), and filming for the propaganda films. Children were also involved in the preparation for such a hoax, and in the mass transportation to Auschwitz of everyone who was on or behind the scenes of the film (*Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt/The Führer Gives a City to the Jews*), that followed the Red Cross’ visit (p. 7).

Yet, according to Branson (1991, p. 42), there were reports made by the Danish delegation which indicate that the Red Cross inspectors were not actually completely oblivious to the deceptive up-do of the ghetto. The reason why the realisation was hidden in the report that was given to the Nazis was to prevent harsh consequences – little did they know that the harsh consequences were in fact, part of the daily routine. Had Hvass, the Danish delegate, file a report contrary to that which is recorded, the artwork, and fate of the people behind them, would have taken a different route after the camp’s embellishment. This is evident because, the “Affair of the Painters” happened on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1944, less than two weeks after the visit by the International Red Cross on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1944 (Singer & Tarsi, 2009, p. 10).

The art pieces that got Bloch, Fritta, Ungar, Hass, and their families to meet their end, with the exception of one, included children’s books, portraiture, and scenes from life in the camp. The subject matters make the adults’ artwork distinct, noticeable, and pertinent for historical documentation. However, the function that the adults’ artwork served goes beyond historical documentation. It reflects, for instance: a need to draw; a

choice to draw even if it cost them their life or if they had to work “with a [purposefully] mutilated stump of a hand”, and a dependence on art to aid them in their surrounding situations with a hope that it would go on to live past their lifetime, and the camp’s existence (Costanza, 1982, p.121).

Nonetheless, Green (1978) importantly points out that there were several other artists in the ghetto whose work has been of great contribution and value. The mentioned so far, are four out of around the fifteen to twenty individuals that worked in the Drawing Office (Pařík, 1991, p. 50). Another artist from the same office was, for instance, Dr. Karel Fleischmann (1897, Klatovy–1944, Auschwitz). Dr. Fleischmann was a physician and art enthusiast who played a vital role in the administering of healthcare in Terezin (p. 54). Due to his occupation and responsibilities in the camp, he saw the place through a different angle as he encountered the reality of the medical experimentation, and the short-lived fate of the ill. Pařík goes on to explain, how the highly skilled artworks of the artist-physician, who was eventually transported East, were created in secret and are recognised today as “the largest and most multifaceted document of life in the Terezin camp” (p. 57).

Some female artists worked at the Drawing Office as well, which is evident from the drawings created by Haas (Haas, 1991, p. 62). When relying on what is documented in the mentioned artist’s drawings and records of labour assignment forms (Osvaldová & Oswald, 2002), it can be noted that not much has been recorded about the females in the Drawing Office. A relatively more detailed record of the female artists is kept in

relation to the Art Workshop “Lautscher Werkstätte”, which contained a ceramic studio that was only active between March 1942 and September 1943 (Branson, 1991, p. 40 & Pařík, 1991, p. 54). The workshop was another space to work in, but the art produced within its walls were not as accessible because the majority of the work was made for the SS’ possession. While the artists in the Drawing Office, among other duties, produced maps, graphs, signs, and posters, the artists in the workshop were required to do more decorative pieces. Branson (1991) and Pařík (1991) go on to highlight that; reproductions of famous art works; patterns for box decoration and lampshades; souvenirs and games; jewellery design; artificial flowers, and portraits of the Officials’ relatives were some of the tasks assigned to those at the workshop.

Hilda Zadiková (1890, Prague–1974, USA), for instance, was one of the female artists who worked in the Workshop. Trained in Germany, the Czech illustrator produced several paintings with a floral theme and was also put on the task of fabricating coats-of-arms “for SS officers who had decided to become noble in origin” (Branson, 1991, p. 40). The artwork that could have been restored after liberation was created in secret. Zadiková also produced a calendar for Terezin having a miniature image per month that captured scenes from within and around the barracks (Pařík, 1991, p.54).

Furthermore, portraitist Charlota Burešová (1904, Prague–1983, Prague), is another female artist whose name is recorded but not much information is further provided. Like her colleague Hilda Zadiková, she too would have worked in secret on producing miniature pictures, creating metal objects for decoration, wooden earrings and ceramics. Their artistic décor was snuck out of the workshop and into their barracks for

the purpose of decoration or for exchanging their items for food. Since the incarcerated were stripped of their possessions upon entrance into the ghetto, creating the mentioned arts and crafts restored a sense of owning something personal (Pařík, p. 54). Opposite to the literature on the Drawing Office, information on the male artists who worked in the Workshop is sparse but names have been recorded. For instance, Richard Sawdek and Arnold Zadikow, both sculptors, were working in the ceramic workshop among a number of others who managed to save their lives, or postponed death because they practiced a skill the Nazis could put to their own use (Potok as cited in Czarnecki, 1989, p. xi).

## **2.5 Secret (visual) Diaries of Beginner-Teenagers in the Ghetto**

As mentioned above, the youths' barracks known as the "Jugendheim", contained thirteen to fifteen year olds. In Terezin, the onset of teenage years meant moving to another barrack, and thus starting forced labour, working ten to twelve hours a day (Terezín & Nakladatelství, 1988, p. 274). In light of all the children's and adults' art that survived, the youths' art is not well represented in the literature. The one surviving artist that has extensively contributed to this gap is Helga Weissová (Weissová, 2008). The juvenile inmate (b.1929, Prague) spent a portion of her childhood and the beginning of her teenage years in Terezin. She was not in the art classes because she was older than the other children. Nonetheless, the young artist kept a visual journal of her daily life in the ghetto/camp after hearing the instructive parting words of her father: "draw what you see," which then became the title of her visual and literary memoir (Weissová, 2008, p. 13). Additionally, Arnošt Lustig (1991, p. 32) illustrated how during her

incarceration, she had also created a hand-made gift for her mother which was a book containing drawings of her encounters and the surroundings in Terezin. Another source with Helga's work, at the age of thirteen, is the illustration of her father's book which he wrote during their time in Terezin (Weiss, 2010).

Helga's visual diary includes rather consistent entries that depict the mundane and major moments through the eyes of a teenager. Transportation, the Embellishment, and life in the teen female barracks are some of the observations recorded in her diary – all of which contain meticulous detail, in colour. Her parents had packed some of her art supplies that supported her art practice when in the camp, and luckily she was not questioned or punished when drawing out in the open air for any SS to see (Branson, 1991, p. 44). Interestingly, drawing in Terezin became part of her art training as she went on to art school in Prague post liberation from Auschwitz where she was deported with her mother in 1944 (Potok as cited in Volavková, 1993, p. 89). Weissová continues to hold on to her works that were hidden by her uncle – the majority of her almost 100 pieces were found: "I was asked many times to sell them but they are of too great a value to me" (Weissová as cited in Costanza, 1982, p. 77).

Unlike Helga Weissová, the twelve teenage boys that lived in their own "Jugendheim" had a sense of fraternal community to keep them going until they were all deported to Auschwitz, where the majority of them were gassed (Costanza, 1982, p. 72). Petr Ginz (1928, Prague–1944, Auschwitz), is one of the juvenile inmates who had also produced one of the largest body of works in Terezin. Together, the male teenagers secretly

formed a group nicknamed “Skid”, and held meetings to work on a magazine, from 1942 till 1944, called “Vedem,” meaning “We’re Leading” (p. 72). To the mentioned magazine Petr contributed drawings, paintings, poems, articles, short stories, and was also the editor of each edition ([www.holocaust.cz](http://www.holocaust.cz)). Moreover, according to Marie Rút Křížková (cited in Křížková, Kotouč, & Ornest, 1994, p. 197), close to 800-some pages were made and saved. In order to save the works, it had to be hidden and thus the collection of magazines was passed on to another inmate by the name of Zdeněk Taussig, prior to deportation. Taussig was the only one out of the group of youth males that Ginz belonged to, to manage to stay at Terezin throughout his time as a detained Jew. Hiding the art work was crucial because it contained opinions and juvenile voices of resistance. Zdeněk managed to keep the art collection secretly placed in the blacksmith shop where his father worked (Zolan as cited in United Nations, 2012, p. 19). Nonetheless, a personal visual journal was also kept by Petr (Pressburger, 2007), which is now published as a book that reveals the reflective and descriptive writing, with own illustrations of a teenager who had so much potential, but so little time to develop it. We can access his diary entries because Ginz had left a second diary with his sister, Eva, who was also in Terezin, but made it through. The first diary made its way to public appreciation and recognition because it was found in a house that was bought from a family friend of Ginz – the how, why, and when it got into the specific house remains, so far, a mystery (Pressburger as cited in United Nations, 2012, p. 7).

Discovery, recognition, and understanding of any form of information surrounding Petr Ginz’s art seems to be on the increase particularly with “The Holocaust and the United

Nation's Outreach Programme" ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)), which developed a study guide on Petr's experience in the camps via a documentary and the publishing of "The Last Flight of Petr Ginz" (2012). The study guide is designed to include the young artist's diary entries, five written novels, and artwork. Interest in Petr Ginz's work has been on the rise after an astronaut of Israeli roots, Ilan Ramon, took up to space with him Petr's drawing, which interprets the view of Earth while on the moon. Sadly however, Ramon happened to be on the US Columbia spacecraft which exploded in 2003 thus the drawing was also destroyed (United Nations, 2012, p. 27). In spite of the tragedy that resulted in the loss of lives and Ginz's artwork, asteroid "50413 Petriginz" was so named in honour of the young artist-writer. Somehow, somehow, the young man's wish to travel to space was materialized, making his imagined, a reality (p. 27).

## **2.6 Art for Life's Sake**

"I live as long as I create and I am able to absorb culture" is the motto of the population imprisoned in Terezin as recorded by Terezín and Nakladatelství (1988, p. 275). Such a motto underlines the uniqueness of Terezin because groups keen on art went to great lengths to produce art. An even keener audience awaited to view the results, helped to hide and save it, and learnt about the discipline by attending lectures given on art history, art making, and art education (Makarová, Makarov & Kuperman, 2004). For the viewers of today, owning such a motto, on one level, reveals why and how the people of Terezin managed to enhance and maintain a culture via improvised, found, and stolen supplies. On another level, it reveals what life was like inside a Holocaust ghetto (Yablonka as cited in Singer & Tarsi, 2009, p. 4).

When considering the children, adult, and the youths' work, it grows evident that the variety of Terezin art that was produced, pieces together an image of a ghetto's lifestyle. For us the viewers, the artwork tells of something, and of someone. Yet, to the individuals behind the practice of the Terezin motto, art served to illustrate that they "were victims until they picked up their pencils and began to draw; they were doomed until they immortalised themselves in their work" (Blatter as cited in Light, 1990, p.13).

Interestingly, Sybil Milton (as cited in Costanza, 1982, p.21) manages to sum up into three categories the range of artwork that was produced by a variety of art enthusiasts within ghettos and camps of wartime Europe. The three categories are: "work assigned by the Nazis" which is referred to as "'legal' or official art"; "clandestine art" which is the art that was created without the knowledge of the Nazis, depicting the tragic situations that surrounded them, and art that "was seemingly unrelated to the experiences in the camps."

Under "work assigned by the Nazis," Costanza created a sub-category called "assigned art" (1982, p. 23). This included the art produced in the 'Zeichenstube' (the drawing office) and the 'Lautscher Werkstätte' (the art workshop). Another sub-category to Milton's "work assigned by the Nazis", according to Costanza is called, "individual assignment." This refers to art that was done when SS officials recognised skills of deportees who worked outside of the drawing office or the workshop, and had thus received SS orders for the re/production of an art piece for personal possession (p. 39).

The sub-categories for Milton's second category of "clandestine art" are, according to Costanza: "art for barter" (Costanza, 1982, p. 42), and "art for resistance groups" (p. 48). In Terezin, artists had agreements to barter artwork for food with prisoners who worked in the kitchens and as housekeepers within the camp's SS barracks (p. 42). The sub-category of "art for resistance groups" refers to type of art that was mainly produced, when artists from the drawing room would provide secret access to official information to underground resistance groups. Such access has indeed been recorded to play a role in saving lives (p. 48).

Each camp artwork can be placed into one or more of the above mentioned categories. However, when noticing the details, or lack thereof, that the drawings, paintings, and collages ex/include, the art would move from belonging to a general technical category, or sub-category, to displaying a key that leads the viewer to have a peak into the children's, youths', and adults' responses and reactions to their surroundings. Therefore, what the viewer encounters in camp art, can either be regarded as a documented piece of history or it could also be considered as insight into a ghettoised victim's (not limited to) identity, experience, memories, thinking, growing, learning process, dreaming, and witnessing, thus providing a face and an individuality to the victims (Yablonka as cited in Singer & Tarsi, 2009, p. 4).

What the act of art-making within the ghetto further highlights is creativity in how tools were found, improvised, and used. As a significant figure in the field, Costanza (1982) is again the researcher who explains what was used and how it was found in order to be

able to draw, paint, or collage (p. 120). The researcher states that every form of paper that could work as a surface to take on an image was indeed put to use:

For the drawings they used tissue paper, tissue for rolling cigarettes, matchbox covers, stamp sheet margins, backs of graph sheets, posters, medical report papers, wrapping paper, bags – any scrap became a possible surface for the artists. Sometimes shreds of paper were pieced together to make a surface large enough upon which to draw [...] old bed linen and burlap from potato sacks (Costanza, 1982, p. 120).

Upon such improvised surfaces, improvised media was used: “pencil (writing and grease), charcoal, ink, ruddle, chalk, and pastels, watercolours, gouaches, and a few oils” (Costanza, 1982, p. 126). In turn, with such improvised media upon the improvised surfaces, improvised methods were used to create the necessary tools. Wood chips were used for ink; milk, when available, was used as a fixative; penknife served as a chisel; pieces of cloth or cardboard were gathered together to use as a form of brush; fingers, also, never failed no matter if they were in part or whole (p. 128). The author goes on to highlight that when bearing in mind the restrictions and struggle to scrap supplies together, a piece of twenty inches by thirty inches in dimensions can be considered to be sizable. Terezin artists: Fritta, Haas, Ungar, and Fleischmann, produced works in the mentioned size. Yet, the average size of the artwork, according to Costanza, is that of eight inches by ten inches (p. 128).

In light of the remarkable content and processes that embed Terezin art, in the following chapter, I aim to journey with the reader, though the process of encountering such artwork from the ghetto.

### **3 Methodology**

As stated in the previous chapter, European Jews were incarcerated in Terezin from 1941 until liberation in May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945. However, the artwork from which the data is collected dates within the time range of 1942 and 1944. The reason behind the mentioned time frame is because the practice of art was not permitted as soon as the deportees stepped into the ghetto. Then, towards the end of the war, there was a stark decrease in population as well as a severe shortage of any sort of supplies, which meant that there were less people who would produce artwork and less supplies for the remaining few people to use (Singer & Tarsi, 2009, p. 10).

In the current chapter, the reader is invited to walk with me through the process of finding and accessing the archives at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre (VHEC), in Canada ([www.vhec.org](http://www.vhec.org)), and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), in Washington D.C ([www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)). It is in the mentioned institutions that I was able to encounter the original artifacts and artwork, respectively. Also, I had the opportunity to understand the context better through the VHEC's temporary exhibitions, the USHMM's permanent collections, and the secondary sources found within the libraries of both institutions.

#### **3.1 Primary Sources: In the Archives**

Ramsey, Sharer, L'Eplattenier, and Mastrangelo, (2010, p. 6) have described the method of archival research to be a nonlinear process. Highlighting that not much has

been written on how to go about conducting research in an archive, the authors and other contributors, have put together a set of practical “guides” for the novice archive researcher “in the hope of helping prevent archive fever [referring to becoming mentally exhausted due to feeling overwhelmed] while at the same time enabling them to more systematically ‘play’ in the archives” (p. 3). Taking on the suggestions and directions of the mentioned resource, I had a clear set of steps, outlined hereunder, that built up to the point of travelling to the United States of America for collecting data.

### 3.1.1 Preparing for the Archive Visits

Following Lynée Lewis Gaillet’s guidelines for carrying out the initial stages of archival research (cited in Ramsey et al., 2010, p. 32), my first step was visiting a local archive to familiarise myself with the processes involved in gaining access to archived data. Through an online search for nearby resources I had learned about the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre (www.vhec.org). The VHEC provided

access to a majority of the books

referenced in the previous chapter. Also, the archivist helped me to navigate through the documents and artifacts that came out of Terezin and have been donated to the center. The artifacts mainly included: identification and deportation documents; the



Image 1: Theresienstadt currency  
Courtesy of Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, Archival Collection

camp's currency known as the Moses Crown (see Image 1, complete set in Appendix A) which came in notes for 1, 5, 10, 20, 50, and a 100 Moses Crowns, and a Star of David (see Image 2) worn inside the camp of Terezin by a deportee. The labelling Star of David is made out of yellow fabric with a black outline of the two triangles shaping up the star, and with the words 'Jude' written on it. The documents I could access at the VHEC were photocopies of the originals kept in a particular order just in



**Image 2: Judenstern worn in Theresienstadt**  
**Courtesy of Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, Archival Collection**

case there would be a discovery for the purpose of the specific order. All in German or Czech, and a few lines in English here and there, I could hardly make out what the meanings behind them were. Additionally, the Moses Crown notes are originals that were used in the camp. Stains, fold marks, browning of age, and wear-and-tear discolouration speak of experiences inside the ghetto walls.

In search of original artwork, my second step was that of selecting and inquiring about the site where I could encounter the Terezin art. Researchers Costanza, 1982 (p. 146), Hurwitz, 1991 (p. 74), and Volavková, 1993 (p. vii), have outlined that paintings/ drawings/ collages that came out of the researched camp are kept in collections at Yad Vashem ([www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)) and Beit Theresienstadt ([www.bterezin.org.il](http://www.bterezin.org.il)) in Israel, the Prague State Jewish Museum ([www.jewishmuseum.cz/](http://www.jewishmuseum.cz/)) and The Terezin Memorial Museum ([www.pamatnik-terezin.cz](http://www.pamatnik-terezin.cz)) in Czech Republic, as well as the United States

Holocaust Memorial Museum in the United States ([www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)). Bearing in mind the relatively small project I am attempting, the time limits of the program, and financial constraints, travelling from Canada to the United States of America was clearly the most feasible option of the three mentioned locations. Thus, through an online navigation of the multi opportunities which the USHMM provides, and the various departments, I then looked into the Department of Art and Artifacts ([www.ushmm.org/research/collections/art/](http://www.ushmm.org/research/collections/art/)). After contacting the mentioned Department by phone, I finally had a name and a contact number of a curator. Following further email and phone conversations, the process of actually visiting the archives started to take more shape especially when permission to access the archives was granted as long as I was willing to visit the institution in person. Several emails were sent back and forth after having sent the first one in May, till the actual trip which took place in the week of October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

Nonetheless, the VHEC librarian had indeed been to the USHMM and was thus able to give me helpful advice on how to make the most of my time at the museum. The VHEC library collection also contained a book which was purchased from the USHMM entitled: *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (Berenbaum, 2006). The book provided me with a familiarisation of the place that the USHMM shapes up to be as it presents detailed information on the set up of the museum and the content information that can be learnt from the permanent exhibition.

A few further details prior to leaving for the USHMM included, as Gaillet points out (cited in Ramsey et al., 2010, p. 33), a set time and place to meet on the first day of the visit, with the curator, archivist, and librarian. Furthermore, through browsing the website and email communication, I went on my data collection trip with a list of books I wished to read on site, an idea of the variety of artwork I would encounter, and a familiarisation of the exhibitions on display. Yet, I was not quite good to go without my other list that included contacts and daily budget, names of people I would meet and places I would be in, numbers of phones and buses, and directions to the museum and the closest grocery store.

### **3.1.2 Accessing the Archived Art Collection**

Arriving to Washington on a Tuesday night, I headed to the museum for the first time on the very next morning. I had aimed to stay at the USHMM from opening until closing time, and indeed that is what I did, daily. Having no access to internet on my 'vintage' phone, on the first day and every day, I walked to the train station located close by to where I was staying carrying papers inked with directions and names of places that I hoped would become familiar soon enough. Two trains, ten stops, and forty-five minutes later I had made it to the Smithsonian train station. Almost forgetting to appreciate that I was in a new country, and its capital city, I rushed left and right and straight ahead following my doodled directions. The doodling worked well as it got me to the museum and for some reason I was surprised that it looked exactly as it had looked on my computer screen. Finally, it was happening. Feeling glad to be making my way closer to the front door, it must have seemed rather odd to be cheery as I

walked under the banner stating words such as “Never Again” and “Holocaust”. The serious and contemplative atmosphere, which the building embodies, is immediately met with upon entrance because every time, everyone and anyone who enters any door of the building, would have to go through metal detectors and bag scanners – every individual, every day, every time.

To get to the library and the curator’s office, I had to go up to the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. The curator I had been in touch with had informed me that she was unable to meet on my first visit, so instead I approached the reference desk to inquire about the library system. Having the letters U-B-C written on the sweater that I was wearing, I introduced myself to the librarian behind the desk by just saying my name. A look of familiarisation on the librarian’s face and a look at the letters on my sweater, I was then asked if I was the visiting student from Canada. From that point on, I was given a variety of boxes to look into, and was surrounded by books, audio files, and sizable scanners which I could get my hands on. Being given the option to go view the three-storey exhibition or to have a look into the documents left for me by the curator, I decided to go visit the exhibition because I was aware that the children’s artwork hangs on the walls in the second floor. I wanted to figure out what this ‘encounter’ was going to be like this time.

Returning to the museum on Thursday morning from a sleepless night due to images that haunted my thoughts, I walked right up to the curator’s office being glad that I was going to be able to put a face to the name. The curator introduced me to the archivist, and we went down together to the basement level where the collections were held.

With a trolley full of artwork in 2 flat folders, and 2 binder-sized boxes, we went back up to where the reference desk is which shares the same space as the reading room. I was instructed to keep the drawings flat on the table, to hold them with both hands, to look at them only one at a time, and to clear the desk from any pens or beverages (food was not allowed through the scanners at the main doors). The desk lamp was turned on and out of the folders came the artwork from Terezin.

At first, I was not allowed to touch the drawings and paintings so I had to call the archivist every time I was ready to view the next art piece. However, after a few rounds, I was allowed to handle the artwork on my own. At that point, it definitely felt like a 'Nancy Drew' moment, and as Gaillet puts it, "sometimes, archival research involves following a Nancy Drew-like trail of clues that culminates in the rare, intriguing, 'holy grail' find at the conclusion of the search – but not often" (cited in Ramsey et al., 2010, p. 29). I secretly wanted to wear white gloves, but I was not told to and I did not ask.

As Gaillet further advises (2010, p. 35), I took note of the words that came to mind, scribbled descriptions of images and the media used, and copied words in Czech or German as I hoped to figure out the translation. Furthermore, I noted the date, artist's name, donor, and coding number, which were all marked on the bottom part of an art piece and on the label that accompanied each image. I looked through them all on Thursday, then again on Friday, and scanned them on Monday. There were several moments when I stopped and looked at the images for quite a while. Other researchers sitting close by, became interested and shared their surprise on just learning that this art

had come from within the ghetto's walls. From the archives, I had the opportunity to access the original works of four adult artists: two males, and two female, out of whom only one of the male artists survived. Altogether there were twenty six art pieces, one of which belonged to a survivor who was a teen when in Terezin.

Coming face to face with the Terezin artwork provided data that is loaded with notions needing to be teased out. However, part of gathering archival data leaps beyond what is contained in the archives. Ramsey explains (in Ramsey et al., 2010, p. 171) that a "principle of cross-referencing" leads the researcher to search through sources for "contextual traces". Having this temporary and exclusive access to the varied material in the library, plus the information contained within the exhibitions, it became necessary to search across the archived artwork for a better understanding of where they came from, what was happening in the surroundings, and how.

### **3.2 Secondary Sources: At the Permanent Exhibitions**

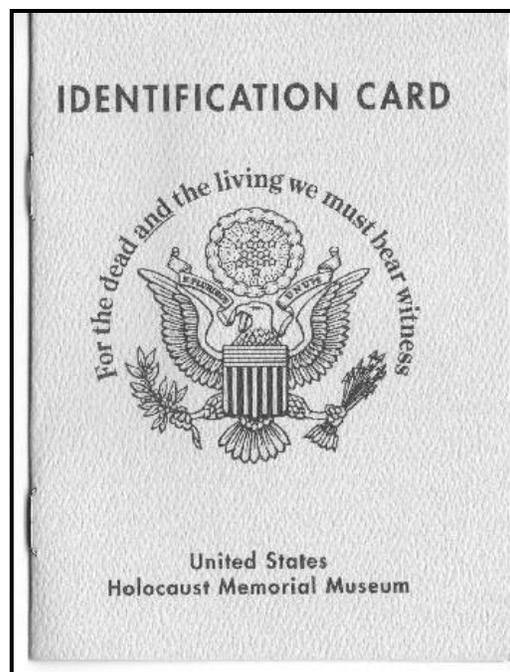
Being surrounded with a wealth of information at the museum, the archivist, curator, and librarian, had all highly suggested going through the three-storey self-guided permanent exhibition as well as the 'Remember the Children: Daniel's Story' exhibition. The latter, tells the Holocaust experience of a German child survivor in a manner that is geared to a younger audience targeting anyone over eight years of age.

As mentioned above, I had visited the permanent exhibition on my first day at the USHMM. The three-storey permanent exhibition is accessed through an elevator

located on the first floor which takes you up to the fourth floor where the self-guided tour starts. Before entering the elevators, visitors are encouraged to take a reproduction of an Identification Card (see Image 3, details in Appendix B). The Identification Cards are four-page booklets, the size of a passport. Female Identification Cards were stacked on one side, and the males' on the other. I picked one of each. The off-white-coloured paper booklets include a true story of an individual, who experienced some form of incarceration

during the Holocaust. The front page includes the capitalised words 'IDENTIFICATION CARD' on top with an emblem of a decorated eagle in the centre. A ribbon depicted to be held by the eagle's beak includes on it the words: 'E PLURIBUS UNUM'. Additionally, the statement 'For the dead and the living we must bear witness' (underline in original) surrounds the eagle, all of which is captioned with the museum's name. The idea behind these identification cards is to read one page after having gone through a level of the exhibition so that by the time the last level is reached, the fate of the individual could be remembered or/and learnt.

After familiarising myself with how the identification cards were intended to work, I got in line to enter the industrial-looking elevator. A group of us in the queue were instructed



**Image 3: Identification Card for use in Exhibition**

**Reprinted with Permission from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Art and Artifacts**

to enter the elevator, and a museum volunteer told us how the exhibition is structured to be starting on the fourth floor, and ending on the second. She then specifically advised us to think about what we were about to see. The elevator door shut. As it carried me up to the fourth floor, a video clip started on a screen located at the top. The short video clip served as an introduction to the first part of the exhibition which is that of the Jewish life pre-war, Hitler's rise to power, criteria for the Aryan race, and the propaganda. The third floor consisted of information on deportation to ghettos, labour, concentration, and extermination camps, the impact of the 'Final Solution', lifestyle in incarceration, patterns of selection, medical testing, and audio testimonies. Lastly, the second floor of the exhibition contained information on the end of the war, resistance groups, liberation of camps and ghettos, trials, art and artifacts including Terezin children's art, and a video loop of numerous testimonies. Several walked out in tears. I walked out quietly thinking back to what I had just heard and saw while trying to picture it all in my mind.

I decided to go through 'Remember the Children: Daniel's Story', on Saturday because the library and archives were closed. 'Remember the Children: Daniel's Story' is located opposite the elevators which took me up to the fourth floor. It is an exhibition situated all on the first floor, and it includes intricate details with artistically interactive bits and pieces. On walking in, a curtain gently separated the exhibition from the flow of visitors exiting and entering the museum. A video clip started on a big screen and 'Daniel' introduced himself. Following the video clip I walked through a singular, one-way path which guided the viewer through life-size rooms depicting the kitchen, bedroom, and

hallway space which was intended to provide an idea of what a house in Germany looked like prior to the war. When walking out of 'Daniel's house', I came upon the street where the family's store was depicted. The store had been destroyed on Kristallnacht/The Night of Broken Glass which was a violent and destructive pogrom against the Jews in Germany and parts of, then annexed, Austria ([www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org)). From that point on, a representation of deportation to a ghetto followed by incarceration in Auschwitz, illustrated the lifestyle of a child during the Holocaust. The final room contained another video clip sharing on the lives lost and asked the viewers, asked me, to never forget. Before exiting, colourful tables and markers aligned the side walls providing the opportunity to leave 'Daniel,' a message. I read them and took notes of the ones that stood out over the others.

### **3.3 Secondary Sources: In the Library**

Continuing to further practice the mentioned "principle of cross-referencing" (cited in Ramsey et al., 2010, p. 171), researching the material available in the library occupied the time when I was away from the archive and the exhibition spaces. The library spreads over three open large rooms on the fifth floor having the reference desk, and reading room located in the centre.

Before arriving to the USHMM, I was already aware that I could not take books out of the library so I had concerns as to how I was going to manage to go through all of the books that I had on my list - a list that was bound to lengthen. Approaching the librarian, I expressed my concern and the need to quickly figure out the library system.

Proceeding with the formalities, I was handed a document outlining the terms and conditions of using the building and material. I read through the document, signed it, and I was then asked to submit a government-issued identification card. The online search system was explained along with the distribution of material. Sources in a variety of languages were at an arm's distance: English, German, French, Polish, Yiddish, Hebrew, and Czech are the languages, in which an extensive amount of literature could be found. In addition, scanners were also provided and had no limits as to how much I could scan as long as the conditions and restrictions of usage, which were identified in the signed document, were respected. Being able to scan book chapters provided me with the chance to invest my time in researching for possible significant material while also being able to, as David Gold puts it, "sit on the floor amidst a pile of materials for a few days and simply read" remaining "open to accidental discoveries" (cited in Ramsey et al., 2010, p. 42).

Along with the formalities, on my first session spent at the library I re-confirmed call numbers of my already prepared list, and searched for further books. On another session at the library, I spent another lengthy time frame reading through books and writing down page numbers to be scanned. The twenty-six encountered Terezin artworks, and parts of nine books, were all scanned on my last day at the museum. Therefore, the data that I brought with me via the scans is all originally contained in books or archives. However, I had come across audiovisual resources that I had wanted to listen to, but I did not have enough time to do so.

Reaching the point at which I had to: finish the scanning; return the books; place the art back into the folders and boxes; express my gratitude; bid my farewells to the archivist, librarian, and curator; and walk through the permanent exhibition one last time, I felt that this was not the right time to end the visit. This point is explained by Katherine E. Tirabassi (cited in Ramsey et al., 2010, p. 171) to be a “principle of closure”. Such a principle refers to the exit stage of the archival research – and knowing when to exit. Tirabassi goes on to illustrate how exiting the archive, marked sharply and physically by travelling away from the museum, city, and country holding the archives, involves a stage of acceptance of the fact that “while the archive is complex and rich, it cannot be searched exhaustively” and thus leaving “inherent gaps” (p. 171).

My principle of closure was eventually made relatively easy with kind words of encouragement by the curator to pursue the research, a shared interest in the topic by the archivist, and a reassurance by the librarian that a lot of data was transferred to the memory stick which I used during my scanning. Having said that, contact with the curator was maintained throughout the writing process as I had to make sure that no copyright issues were being infringed, and to acquire permission to use the images referenced in this piece of research.

### **3.4 Theoretical Framework and A/r/tography**

Similar to camp art researcher, Mary Costanza, I am driven by a sense of fascination, admiration, and curiosity about this niche of art. Furthermore, I believe that her statement highlighting that “the study has not involved just the discovery and collection

of data (...) There were some rather poignant human encounters” (Costanza, 1982, p. xxii), is relevant for my study as well. Therefore, the core method will be a self-study that aims to look into my responses to the art pieces, and how I make sense of them.

When coming face to face with the artwork at the archives, when learning more about the role of art in Terezin through the books I could access, and when trying to visualise the context in which the art happened as I went through the museum exhibits, I aimed to be a viewer taking on a Deleuzian perspective. The Deleuzian positioning of an art viewer directs the encounterer/researcher to be someone who should not encounter an art piece and ask “What does it mean?” but “How does it work?” (Deleuze as cited in Bennet, 2005, p. 41). Such a perspective shapes the responses to the overarching question which inquires into how I respond to the artwork, and its processes as a non-Jewish, Mediterranean, female art educator trained in western institutions, and with no known ties to those deported to Terezin. Also further guided by the question which looks into how I make sense of these responses as an artist and educator. Thus, the research sets out to interpret the art produced in the specific situation of the Holocaust at the Terezin ghetto, at a particular point in time in the twentieth century, not for the artistic technical qualities in terms of skills portrayed, meanings contained, and techniques used. Rather, my positioning as a viewer focuses on the ways in which the art-making process was a tool for creating the memory that the artwork can stand to be.

In light of the study’s focus on visual artwork, an arts-based research methodology will be adopted via an a/r/tographic form of inquiry (Irwin, 2006), which will be informed by

the archival research method. Importantly, a/r/tography provides space for questioning without jumping to conclusions, and is “a way of re searching the world to enhance understanding” (Irwin, Beer, Springgay, Grauer, Xiong, & Bickel, 2006, p. 2). This methodology hence provides me with the opportunity to encounter the artwork, and allows me to react to it, respond to it, interpret and understand what is being communicated, and what such a communication says to me about the role of art. The practice of the investigation is made while embodying the identities of artist, teacher, researcher, hence a/r/t (Irwin, 2006).

Positioning myself in the in-between spaces of the inquiry, I found myself situated in the spaces between, but not limited to: the past and the present; between the experiences brought to the artwork and those embodied in the artwork; between the self prior to viewing the art and conducting the research and the self after gaining insight into the possible happenings around the art; between the spaces of challenged constructed views on art and its context. Being in in-between spaces with the over-arching and guiding questions presented above, along with the Deleuzian perspective, the research and the process of inquiry opens to the development of further questioning because being an a/r/tographer partly means: ‘theorizing through inquiry, a process that involves an evolution of questions’ (Irwin et al., 2006, p. 5).

Additionally, O’Donoghue (2009, p. 356) outlines that arts-based research is about a process and a product. Thus, the understanding of the responses to the questions

made will be personalised and materialized by keeping a written journal of the reactions, responses, and connections made through the encounter.

## 4 Findings and Discussion

The process of accessing the Terezin art at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), which is outlined in the previous chapter, left me emotionally moved and intellectually anxious. The anxiety stemmed from having to decide which art pieces to choose to include for the discussion, how to put into words my responses to the art, and most importantly, how to do justice to the experience in the archives, to the artist, and to the art itself. Ramsey, Sharer, L'Eplattenier, and Mastrangelo, (2010) explain the emotional aftermath of being in an archival space as a stage that makes “You think: these people have left me the lot. [...]; and then: I can never do these people justice; and finally: I shall never *get it done*” (p. 3, italics in original). I mention this because in this chapter I “get it done,” I share with the reader my responses on the encounter, but my responses in encountering the art from the Terezin ghetto was not only made up of ‘oohs,’ ‘aahs,’ and ‘uh-ha’ moments – though such moments will be shared too.

### 4.1 The Collection of Art Accessed

To further elaborate on the body of work that I was allowed to view at the USHMM, I will first provide the technical details on the drawings, paintings, collages, and the artists behind them. The findings from the archives include original adults’ artwork along with scanned and photocopied images of drawings made by the youth who at the time, as explained earlier, were living in a Jugendheim. The children’s work included original and facsimile drawings, paintings, and collages displayed on the second floor of the

permanent exhibition. Due to the fact that the children's art was part of the exhibition, I was not allowed to take photographs and thus I only have written notes as a record of what I viewed. In addition to that, the children's collection also included archived photocopies of three magazines that were produced in the Kinderheim. In order to keep a personal record of such works, I scanned all the artwork accessed, and photographed the archived photocopied images. Nonetheless, I handled and stayed longer with the children's art that was in the archives. Being able to be with the archived art for long stretches of time, holding a piece of paper rather than looking at a frame, and freely stare at an image without having to make way for viewers, I thus found myself going back and forth to the archived pieces more-so than the framed and exhibited ones.

#### **4.1.1 Art from the Kinderheim: The Children's Collection**

The exhibited works of the children who were incarcerated in Terezin are all framed and hung on the same wall at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Ten original, and thirteen facsimile images, on loan from the Jewish Prague Museum, are located on the viewer's left upon making an exit from the last floor of the exhibition. Part of the tail-end of the exhibition includes images of survivors uniting with family members, information on the immigration to Israel, and a film with testimonies in loop. Therefore, while hearing the voices from the testimonies film in the background, I stood in front of the children's visual responses to the horror that made up part of their childhood, and ended it.

Being all born between 1930 and 1935 indicated that the children were between seven, and twelve years of age when they produced the Terezin artwork that the USHMM displayed. Additionally, as explained in the Literature Review, the children under fifteen years of age had their own barracks, split by gender, called “Kinderheim” in which art classes were allowed to be carried out (Terezín & Nakladatelství, 1988, p. 275).

Therefore some of the drawings, paintings, and collages could have been produced under instruction. Some work was signed, some work had text written down, some were dated, and some had no information written on them. Out of the twenty-three art pieces: three were left anonymous; five were done by boys, thirteen by girls. Also, one of the boys, and one of the girls had more than one of their artwork on display. The fate of the three anonymous young artists remains a mystery. Fourteen of the children perished and two children survived.

From within the kinderheim, surfaced a compelling collection of three magazines created by siblings. Vera Kornová-Bondy (survivor) was the author and Mariana Kornová (1931–1944, Auschwitz), was the editor. Up until my visit to the USHMM archive, I had not come across the mentioning of such a magazine by children under twelve years of age. The archive holds photocopied images of the three hand-drawn and written magazines accompanied by a copy of a letter by the surviving sister, Vera (Kornová-Bondy, 2003), and a note with the story behind the production of the magazine. Therefore, the information I have is solely from the mentioned sources. Given the title “Hlas Půdy, Q306” translates to ‘The Voice of the Attic.’ The letter ‘Q’ in ‘Q306’ refers to the street as letters were designated to streets rather than names. A

'Q' street could have been a cross street or a reference to the width of the street. The number '306' refers to the building number (Weiss, 2010, p. 18).

Through the note that accompanies the photocopied images (USHMM archives, 2012), I have learned that Terezin was five streets long and eight streets wide, and that the children behind "Hlas Půdy, Q306" were in one of the cross streets living in a crowded attic. The magazine production was put to a halt because the idea of writing it came into being in 1944, which was the year when the majority of the children were sent East where their "sweet and intelligent voices were forever silenced" (Kornová-Bondy, 2003). Milena Kosinerová was a contributing writer to the third and last issue. A child at the time, Milena was the only contributing writer to survive along with one of the sibling, Mariana. Kosinerová had kept a hold on the magazines and saved them. Hlas Půdy was made up of children's writing, drawings, puzzles, word games, and a dictionary of foreign words. The young hands wrote and illustrated stories, and created puzzles and games to help each other keep learning. Their dictionary of foreign words, included terms such as "Arijec = A foreign passport holder, who has an empty space on the left side of his coat". The definition of the mentioned word refers to an Aryan as the left side of the coat was where the Star of David was sewed on (Notes from the USHMM archives, 2012).

Child artists whose art has been encountered include: Josef Brauml, (b.1931); Edita Fischlová, (b.1931); Sona Spitzová, (b.1931); Kitty Passerová, (b.1930); Eva Schurová, (b.1935); Robert Bondy, (b.1932); Hanůs Klauber, (b.1932); Vera Samková, (b.1931);

Ruth Klaubauf, (b.1931); Dorit Weiserová, (b.1931); Eva Meitner, (b.1931); Hana Grünerová, (b.1935); Hana Kalichová, (b.1931); Rith Heinová, (b.1934); Karel Sattler, (b.1932); Hana Karplus, (b.1930); Josef Novák, (b.1931); Renata Glücklich, (b.1931), Mariana Kornová (b.1931); Vera Kornová-Bondy; Milena Kosinerová, and the anonymous artists.

#### **4.1.2 Art from the Jugendheim: The Youths' Collection**

An interesting find at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum was a memoir and a diary that includes writing, poetry, and drawings, by a survivor who was a teenager during the Second World War. The curator passed on to me a book written by the survivor herself, Michal (Maud) Beer (b.1929, Prostejov). The author was incarcerated in Terezin and collected her memories in narrated detail of her life, from birth to old-age in Israel. Beer's writing and poetry reveals a form of a typical teenage life with regards to some aspects of the daily routine in the Jugendheim, such as sitting together with other peers and daydreaming of a picture-perfect future. In addition, Green's statement that "almost all children up to 15 years of age received some kind of schooling" (1978, p. 138), is slightly tweaked by Beer as she emphasises that even inmates over fifteen years of age underwent the constant strive to learn in one way, or another. Indeed, Maud's memoir highlights the determination of learning in spite of the obstacles they stumbled upon (2010, p. 114). When it came to art education, the teen-at-the-time stated that she did not study with Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, but she still put together a little notebook "out of a few precious pieces of paper" in order for her to have a surface to draw on (p. 116). Beer drew the ghetto nooks and views, in pencil, dated 1943. The

USHMM owns copies and scanned images of pages from her visual and written journal, and thus I got the opportunity to access one copy of her drawings.

Like the Kornová siblings' magazine, Micahl Beer's record of her diary is a source that I had not come across until accessing the archives. As discussed in the previous chapters, art from the Jugendheim which has been discussed in existing studies is limited to Helga Weissová's visual diary (Weissová, 2008), Petr Ginz's diary (Pressburger, 2007), and the teenage males' magazine "Vedem," along with the newsletter "Rim Rim" (Terezín & Nakladatelství, 1988). Therefore, this finding at the USHMM that tells of a life story of a pocket in time when art on scraps was produced, has been unique to research because as I approached the art as a viewer in a different pocket in time, it provided me with an image to respond to and a space to react in of which outcomes are explored in further sections.

#### **4.1.3 Art from the Adults' Hiding Places: The Adults' Collection**

The twenty-six unpublished art pieces, archived at the USHMM, that were produced by adults in the Terezin ghetto include the artistry of: Aloe Durra, Zdenka Eismannová, Karel Fleischmann, and Leo Hass. Prior to the visit to the museum, I had only come across the names and the works of Karl Fleischmann and Leo Haas, the latter of whom was the only one to survive out of the four mentioned artists.

No information is available or was known by the staff at USHMM, about the life and incarceration of Aloe Durra. Assuming from the name that the mentioned artist is

female, two of her figure paintings are archived. These A5-sized paintings are signed and dated to be from 1944. Interestingly, these two artworks were the only two to have been clearly used out of scraps of paper as the back side of the paintings reveal a form with numerical, hand-written information, and Czech typed writing.

The other female artist, Zdenka Eisminnová (1897, Prague–1943, Auschwitz), has five watercolour paintings at the USHMM archive. Moreover, it is recorded that she was a portrait artist and designer who also practiced her art in her short time in Terezin (Osvaldová & Oswald, 2002, p. 128). The archivist and curator at the museum told me that her artwork was originally contained in a diary with a wooden cover, but it has since been unbound. Zdenka's art made it to the USHMM's archive after being discovered in a house in the United States by a man who was clearing out his grandmother's attic after her passing. He had no knowledge of, or information about the artist or the art, and thus donated them to the USHMM as a set of five paintings with images of Terezin and the women's barracks. Two out of the five A4-size paintings are signed in blue paint at the bottom left, and dated to be from 1943.

In different studies on Terezin, the name Karel Fleischmann comes up on several occasions (as in: Costanza, 1982; Terezín & Nakladatelství, 1988; Pařík, 1991; Makarová, Makarov, & Kuperman, 2004). The reason for the spread in mentioning is due to his role in the ghetto as a physician, lecturer on art and science, writer, and visual artist (Osvaldová & Oswald, 2002, p. 104). Dr. Karel Fleischmann, (1897, Klatovy–1944, Auschwitz), has in fact contributed over six hundred pieces of art about

his experience in Terezin, such a collection is thus referred to as the “life cycle in the ghetto” (Petrášová & Pařík, 1983). One of these six hundred pieces, one in a panoramic paper orientation, can be found at the USHMM. The bottom right part of the pen and ink drawing is signed with the camp name, the date of 1943, and his last name in pencil.

Similar to Karel Fleischmann, the artist Leo Haas (1901, Opava–1983, Berlin) has also received a lot of mentioning in studies that relate to Holocaust art. It is, partly, because he survived the Holocaust, moved to Berlin, and taught at the Academy of Berlin. Haas was one of the very few artists to survive after being taken to several other camps post his time in Terezin. Eventually, he was liberated from the camp of Ebensee, in Austria (Osvaldová & Oswald, 2002, p. 70). Hence, he was willing to be interviewed and contribute his own writing (as in: Green, 1978; Costanza, 1982; Czarnecki, 1989; Haas, 1991; Singer & Tarsi, 2009). The portrait painter, graphic artists, caricaturist, and lithographer worked in the Drawing Office while in Terezin. As explained in the second chapter, he was therefore, one of the four artists from the Drawing Office to be arrested, along with his family, during Terezin’s “Affair of the Painters” that accused him for spreading “propaganda of horror” (Osvaldová & Oswald, 2002, p. 70). Nonetheless, Leo Haas has contributed over four hundred art pieces when incarcerated, for which he had returned to Terezin, after liberation, to retrieve them from their hiding place (Petrášová & Pařík, 1983).

Eighteen artworks by Haas are housed in the USHMM archive. One pencil portrait was personally purchased by the curator but kindly brought into the archive for me to view. Three of the eighteen pieces are roughly A3-sized, watercolour with pen and ink caricatures, of which two have a religiously political theme. The remaining fourteen are scenes from life in the ghetto/camps of Terezin. This last set, however, could not be coming out of the ghetto walls itself because they are lithographic prints. As the curator and I discussed the pieces, she told me that it is highly unlikely that there was lithography equipment in the camp and thus, they were most likely images from memory that were put on paper after the war. All of Haas' work is signed, but not all is dated. The lithographs have a date which reads "1942-66." My speculation is that a drawing of the image was done in 1942, but the lithograph was done in 1966. Due to this uncertainty about the fourteen lithographs, I decided not to opt to discuss one of them as an image for further discussion with regards to the encounter. In fact, the selection criteria for the images to be used for further discussion, is outlined in the following subsection.

#### **4.2 Criteria for Selecting Images**

In order to select artwork to discuss here in the study, I first had to make sure about what my options were. The main factors which I kept in mind while deciding on the criteria for making a selection were:

- (i) **Originals versus facsimile and image scans** – holding a piece of paper that was once actually in Terezin, flooded my mind with questions about the numerous

stories it carries relating to finding the paper, working on it, and saving the art that it came to be. Therefore I realised, that the worth of an original Terezin art piece does not just lie in the image created on the paper, but also in the paper itself, and the journey it has been on to be made accessible this present day. Was the paper smuggled, found, bartered for, borrowed and never returned, or owned by the person who used it to draw/paint on? Did the artist come to regret that the paper was used for artistic purposes rather than another sudden need, which might have come up after the paper was used to draw/paint on? Was there another image wished to be captured on this same piece of paper? How was the piece of paper saved, and did the artist consciously make an attempt to save it? Where was it before this paper found itself in the States? ...

When viewing facsimile images, the above mentioned questions about the paper itself, do not hold. With that said, the fact that a decision was made to reproduce an image to be as close to the original as possible, suggests a worth in putting an effort in having a copy of the original. The archived collection did not have facsimile art pieces. However, the children's works exhibited in the museum, and on loan from the Jewish Prague Museum (JPM: [www.jewishmuseum.cz](http://www.jewishmuseum.cz)), contains 10 facsimile out of 23 framed artworks.

The scanned or photocopied images, which make up a small part of the archived collection at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, lack the tactile experience but contain the memory, and lend an idea of the original. Whenever

possible, encountered original art pieces were thus preferred over encountered facsimile and scanned images, and the differences that copies bring to an encounter has indeed, weighed heavily when selecting the art for further discussion.

- (ii) **Age and gender balance** – the majority of the art I accessed was produced by incarcerated adult males, and female children. As mentioned in the second chapter, the females and males lived in age-specific, separate barracks and, at times, were assigned different jobs. Naturally, living and working in different quarters rendered different demands, struggles, routines, and exposure. Thus, I consider the variety in including both male and female artists of different ages to be an important factor to bear in mind whilst selecting the art images.
  
- (iii) **Variety in media** – similar to the questions discussed when holding an original artwork, the medium on paper also speaks of a string of stories and brings up a set of questions. Would the children have picked up a piece of charcoal and started to draw with it had they not have any instruction/s, and were unaware of ever needing permission to do that? Would they have used scraps of paper to cut it out for a collage had they not been taught how? Would the adult artists still continue to draw had they realised what it cost their families? Had they wished they had brought something else with them when first deported to the camp rather than art supplies? What colours surrounded an artist in the camp while using a piece of charcoal to draw? For safety's sake, why not write instead of draw/paint? Was the image produced in hiding, in darkness, or in candle light? Is this image produced even

meant for me to see? Was it seen by other prisoners? Was the artist pleased with it? ...

Tying this back to the first criteria, the rendering of a medium in a reproduction, whether facsimile or photocopy, could maintain the same stories and questions as the original art piece would. However, texture, actual colour intensity, brush strokes and such technical details would go amiss. Thus, selecting a variety of media was taken into consideration in order to address the different inquiries that could be brought up when encountering media used in Terezin.

- (iv) **Clandestine versus under instruction** – another point discussed in the second chapter highlights that the artwork done in hiding, hence ‘clandestine’, was punishable because it documented the surroundings. In fact, Yablonka refers to art as “the closest available thing to a camera” (cited in Singer & Tarsi, 2009, p. 4). Contrary to clandestine art, teaching art was permissible but only in the children’s barracks (Terezín & Nakladatelství, 1988, p. 275). Consequently, when looking at art that was produced under instruction and clandestine art, the viewer would be looking at what was permissible by the Nazis versus what was not permissible. This provides an interesting parallel of the struggle and secrecy of one condition of art, and the forms of struggle and secrecy in the other.
- (v) **Copyright ownership** – to use an image in this study I had to first ask permission from the owner of rights over the image. This immediately puts an important condition on what images I could choose. To use images that I accessed in the

USHMM archives, I understandably, first had to ask the curator's permission. The museum staff granted me with permission to use the adults' art pieces that I requested, but they could not grant me permission to use any of the children's artwork exhibited in the museum because they are on loan from the Jewish Prague Museum (JPM). Thus, authorization to use an image of a child's art had to be sought from the archivist from at the JPM. After contacting the JPM staff, I first learned that, even though interconnected, I cannot be provided with permission to use Friedl Dicker-Brandeis' images of art as they do not own the oeuvre. However, their extensive collection of four thousand and five hundred children's art pieces, provided the chance to request use of any artwork after giving basic information such as: name of artist; title of drawing/painting; date, or archival number. The limits on ownership rights and the required permission-of-use processes through USHMM and JPM, resulted in this issue being a criteria to keep in mind while opting for the images to use in this study.

### **4.3 Images Chosen for Further Discussion**

After considering the mentioned criteria, seeking permission from the respective institution, and outlining the physical encounter with the actual artwork, I will now move on to illustrating the a/r/tographical encounter with the following set of images:



**Image 4: Karel Fleischmann's Art**  
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Image 5: Leo Haas' Art

Reprinted with Permission from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Art and Artifacts



Image 6: Leo Haas' Art

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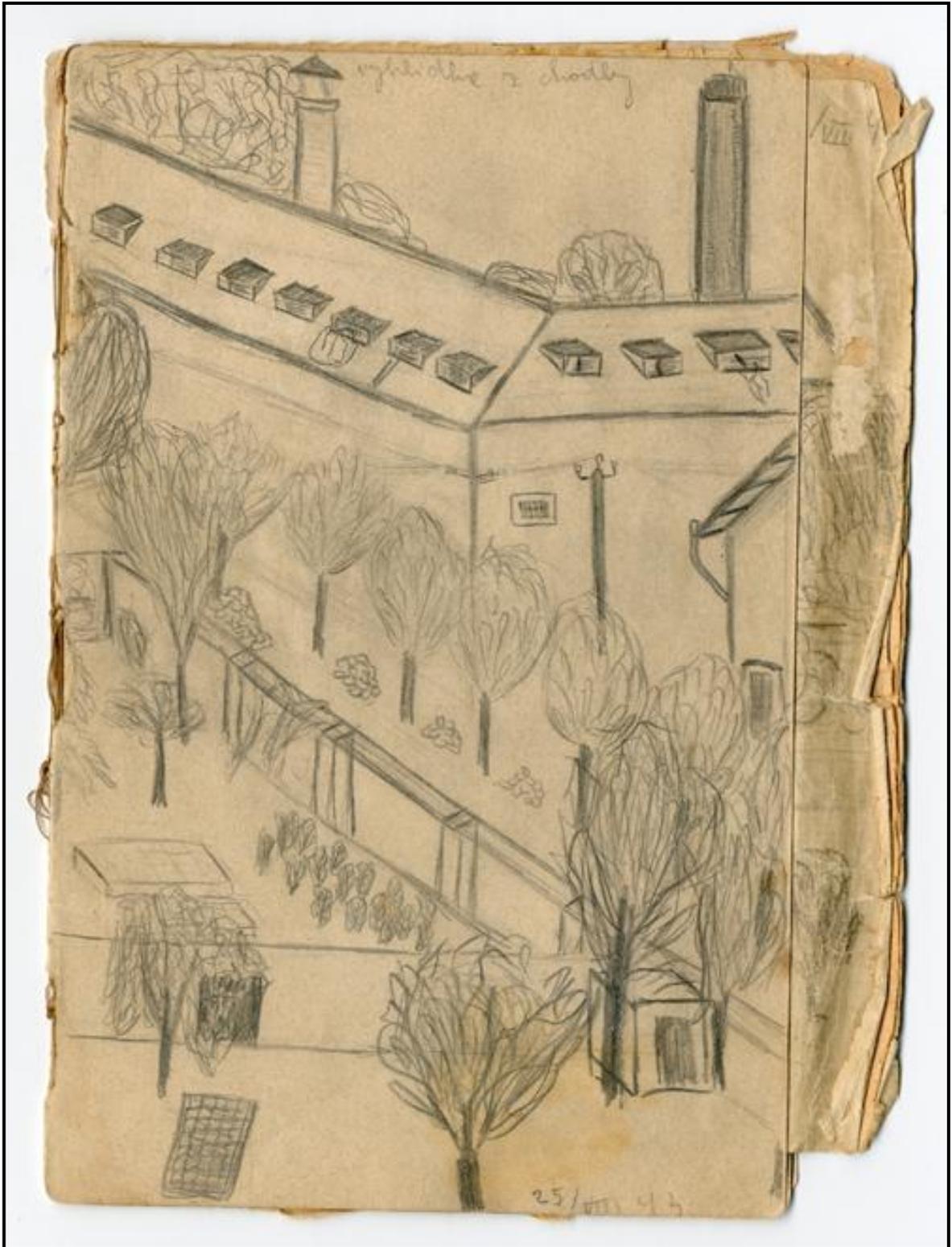
Image 7: Zdenka Eisminnová's Art

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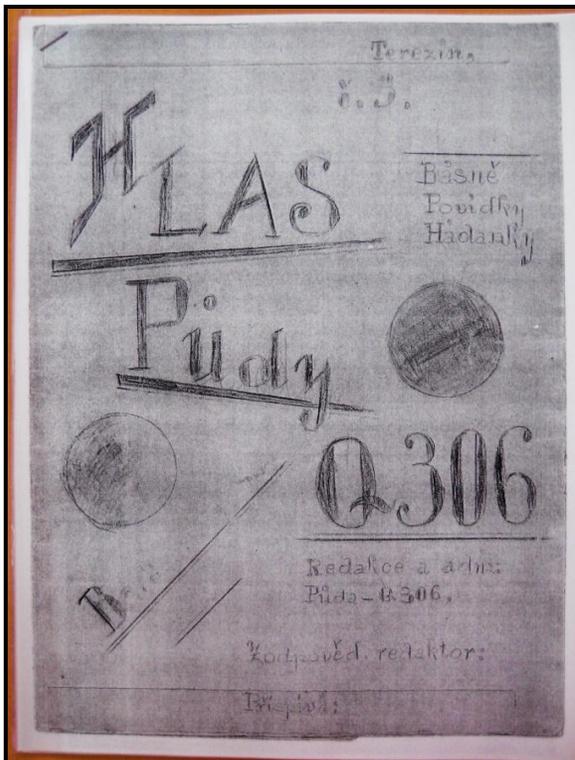
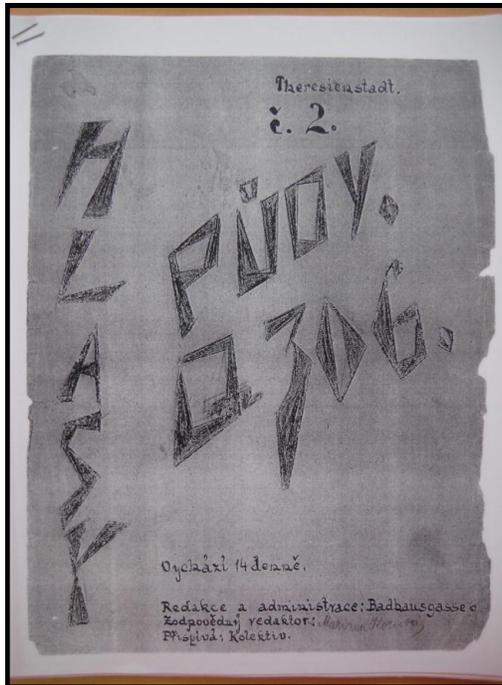


**Image 8: Zdenka Eisminnová's Art**

**Reprinted with Permission from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Art and Artifacts**



**Image 9: Michal (Maud) Beer's Art**  
Reprinted with Permission from the Artist Survivor



**Image 10: Mariana & Vera Kornová's Art (Set of the above 3 images)**

**Reprinted with Permission from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Art and Artifacts**

#### **4.4 Discussion on Coming Face to Face with Terezin Art**

Aside from the criteria designed for deciding on the images presented above, another factor that came into play while narrowing down my choices, was basically a recollection of the art pieces that I wanted to go back to time and again whilst in the archive. Through a reflection on the moments of the encounter, I place my thoughts on paper hereunder. “So, I invite you now to journey on, but with all due respect to you as a fellow traveler, you must be prepared to find your own way” (Saorsa, 2011, p. 12).

##### **4.4.1 Being Sarah: The Self in the Encounter**

I went to the museum, I entered the archives, and I approached the art from Terezin with a particular set of understandings and expectations. The newest aspect of experiencing the encounter was actually the place that it was happening in – a museum’s archive located in a country I had never visited before. Yet, as an individual, I was aware that art was actually being produced during the Holocaust within the ghettos and camps. I had an image in mind of the context and conditions in which the art was made. I was aware of the limitations and some struggles that had to be overcome by the deportees so for instance, I did not expect oils on canvas, but scraps of paper browning with age. I had also previously seen images and originals of the kind of art that was produced in Terezin so I was familiar with some of the artists’ names, their style of painting or drawing, and certain subjects, scenes and nooks that had become the composition of some pieces.

With what was already familiar, I found myself building up expectations and making assumptions which the encounter had challenged. One of the assumptions was that the archive would contain a bigger number of artwork. Needless to say that the data provided, and art encountered was indeed plenty, but after having read the statistical information about the large numbers of art pieces which several artists produced, I had made the assumption that they would be found in archives stacked in piles upon piles. Furthermore, an expectation I had, which I needed to rationalise, was that of having an instant reaction, an immediate response that would provide me with data to write volumes about. Obviously, this was not quite the case of how things unfolded. The encounter, my version of it, happened over more than one sitting. I experienced the encounter by being with the art, by reviewing some artwork in between readings that provided new understandings, and by appreciating that the encounter would not be over the second a drawing/painting was placed back into its appropriate folder.

The self in the encounter, guided my eyes to view the art through the lens of an educator trained in western institutions. Being the self meant that I would not make use of words such as 'my people' or 'we' when referring to the incarcerated because I do not practice Judaism. Additionally, the sentiment felt when in the presence of an artistic trace of Terezin life, and of a deportee's moment of expression, would not be that of pain in belonging as I do not know of any relational ties with the people sent to Terezin. With that said, as a survivor at the USHMM told me, encountering the art or any aspect of the Holocaust, is not about being "one of us [us, being anyone of Jewish faith]" but about "being human" (in conversation with survivor-volunteer staff, 2012).

Through being my-self, being a particular kind of human, I had to observe the responses that the encounter brought and make sense of them. Acknowledging an element of self-observation directs my reflection on the kind of observer that I am. Relating to Behar's (1996) theory of the "vulnerable observer," I plunge into writing exposing thoughts on a topic that brings much hesitation, and careful speech. The aim is to make the notion of the vulnerable observer of the self, a contagious act to the reader. In Behar's words, "vulnerability doesn't mean that anything personal goes. The exposure of the self who is also a spectator has to take us somewhere we couldn't otherwise get to" (p. 14).

#### **4.4.2 Faces to the Names, Names to the Numbers**

When viewing the artwork portrayed above (see Images 4–10), in a way, the encounter was not just with the image itself, but also with the artist. This is because, the Terezin art is one, or the last, trace of the artists' selves as incarcerated Terezin deportees. The term 'encounter' thus refers to a meeting and an understanding of my-self in relation to camp art, but not through an empathic kind of understanding. Interestingly, Brecht (cited in Bennett, 2005) calls the kind of empathic understanding that results from an encounter with an art piece produced in, or about hardship, to be "crude empathy" (p. 111). Crudeness lies in the attempt to fit in someone else's shoes, in this case, the imprisoned artists' shoes. Such a futile attempt of understanding what it would be like to be in someone else's situation, would only result in becoming "victims of our own good performance" (p. 111). Hence, Brecht explains that in thinking about what it would be like to be the person behind the encountered art, rather than

remaining the self as an encounterer, would result in failing “to respect another’s ownership of testimony” (p. 111). Agreeing on the point that trying to fathom what it would be like to be in Terezin would make “another’s experience – in this case, a profoundly alienating and fundamentally secret one” become “assimilated to the self in the most simplistic and sentimental way; anything beyond the audience’s immediate experience remains beyond comprehension” (p. 111). Therefore, Brecht deems such “crude empathy” to result in a failed encounter.

No matter how much I read about the context in which the Terezin art was made, I cannot ever understand what the population, who was deemed inferior and confined inside a ghetto, went through. Becoming accustomed to living among death, waking up in a place that is not my home with people who are not my family members, smelling the filth of a lack of basic hygiene, hearing the shouts of orders given by another human being, knowing hunger, and feeling hated for a religious affiliation – are all experiences that my senses cannot relate to or even visually imagine. Admittedly, I did want to find paintings, drawings, photographs, anything with visual information that could provide me with a familiarity of what life in Terezin looked like. The encountered art, to a certain extent, provides a hint of what the surroundings were like, giving me the chance to peep through what an artist’s eye could see. However, if I would have to close my eyes and bring to mind an image of Terezin, I would think of a much ‘cleaner’ version of it and would thus fail because my gut would not let me picture death, blood, and disease. I would also fail to feel what it would be like because I have not experienced such an extent of inhumanity. Trying to avoid falling into the traps of

“crude empathy”, I focus on the understanding I get when meeting the artist through their art and continue to ask the Deleuzian question of “how does it work?” (cited in Bennett, p. 41).

Nonetheless, the fact that there is tangible artwork that was made in Terezin, tells me something about what it was practically like within the camps.



**Image 11: Karel Fleischmann’s Art**  
Reprinted with Permission from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Art and Artifacts

The multitude of images done

indicates that art-making was regarded as being worth the risk, and the usage of materials. The act of gaining permission to teach art reflects a priority in seeking the permission, and hiding the art in order to save it suggests an attempt to communicate to others, like me, who would not know the surroundings and conditions of the art from within. Taking Karel Fleischmann’s drawing (see Image 11) as an example, I met with the artist through a familiarisation of his style, and I come to an understanding of a scene he once observed.

As mentioned earlier, Fleischmann’s art makes use of a particular practice of scribbled and rushed line-work to depict his interest in “man – or rather people – and life in its constant motion” (Osvaldová & Oswald, 2002, p. 54). When encountering Image 11, I found myself asking the ‘so what?’ question. Feeling somewhat ashamed for not seeing, or feeling anything while the much expected encounter was happening, I did

not bring up the question with the curator, or anyone else for that matter. However, after staying with it, and by that I mean looking at the art piece and going through it as if I would a text, I realised that there is some form of a narrative to it. The apparent storyline is the loading up of coffins on a hearse. The tree, which is off-centred to the right, splits the image into two with the left part being the exiting of coffins from a door in Terezin, while the right part shows the loading up on the vehicle. A symbolic reference to the tree of life, juxtaposes the telling of a moment of routine farewells to lives of fellow prisoners. Going beyond the descriptive, it shows me that such a captured scene, could have become the mundane for the artist. Bearing in mind that Karel was the physician Dr. Fleischmann, I inquired about the possibility about his presence at the drawn scene: perhaps because of a relative that was being loaded up onto the hearse, or a patient of his was one of the victims. Perhaps he was casually passing by and decided to capture such a moment which was the last moment for the twelve that are depicted to be in coffins, or perhaps he wanted to be in the crowd to pay his last respects.

According to Holocaust survivor, Dori Laub (cited in Bennett, 2005, p. 31) the act of art making becomes a necessary means by which the witness of the event(s) does not simply tell a story in visual terms, but directs the artist to internally process the event(s) being witnessed. Laub states the mentioned theory with reference to artists who produced Holocaust art after their time in the ghettos or camps. Still, her explanation on art-making as a way by which events are internally processed, made me question my role as a witness in encountering Terezin art. So to my understanding, while

viewing Karel's art piece (see Image 11), the encounter leads me to witness the artist be a witness of a specific point in time. I would thus extend Laub's theory to argue, that in similar ways to the Holocaust art produced after the war, the artists within the walls of the camp, used art as a way by which they could come to terms with the unfamiliar that had to become familiar.

Similar to the notion in encountering Karel Fleischmann's work of witnessing the artist being a witness to the surroundings so as to internally process the experience, Zdenka Eismannová's art (see Images 12 & 13) also portrays the process of witnessing. Her gentle watercolour paintings tell of observed detail of the every-day. In Image 12, the



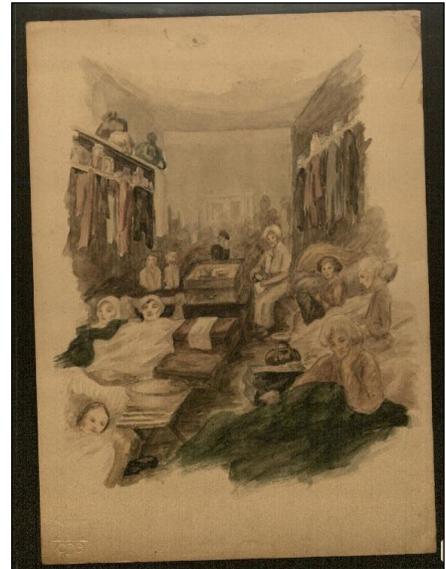
**Image 12: Zdenka Eismannová's Art**  
Reprinted with Permission from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Art and Artifacts

humble image of a space in Terezin inhabited by a number of males with trees in the midst of buildings, and clothes fluttering on a washing line, attracts my attention to the very subtle movement of a breeze that sways the clothes and the leaves. Unlike Fleischmann's hectic movement with line work, Eismannová's work seems to depict a pause in time that is being witnessed rather than, pausing in time to capture the moment that is to be witnessed. The attraction to the right hand side of the painting where the clothes, trees, and shade are depicted, distracts me from noticing, or postpones my noticing, of the corpse being carried by two men which makes up the

left hand side of the watercolour image. The green of the trees, the grey of the shade, and the movement of the clothes, outdo the stillness of death symbolised through the corpse, the unrecognisable expression of the faces closest to me as the viewer, and the red shades of blood and brick. Moreover, a boxed-in verse written at the bottom and off-centred to the right, fails to attract my attention as well because of my unfamiliarity with the language. Realising that the text is written in German, I eventually got the verse translated by a colleague of German nationality.

The writing says: 'Corpse Cellar/ Q709 L421/ Here lie your dead/ to shortly rest,/ so pray quietly/ passed in haste/ and hold the place/ the Holy pure/ ponder what will you once be'. If I knew the meaning of the verse upon my first encounter with the painting, I probably would have missed noticing the gentle right hand side of the painting, and instead, searched for the image of death to which the verse has been dedicated.

The grimness of the subject content which is subdued by Zdenka's technical skill in colour and composition, echo a slow tone. Such stillness hints at the possible desire to pause time so as to come to a realisation of the happenings, and be witness of the external and internal. Thus, this female artist's work makes me continue to quietly look at the image, discovering new details as if waiting for something to happen. Locking



**Image 13: Zdenka Eismannová's Art**  
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my sight onto the image seems to be typical of a reaction I have to Zdenka's work. This is because Image 13 succeeds in holding on to my attention in the same way as with Image 12. Yet in this art piece, it is a sense of further communication with the women looking at the viewer, that makes me stay in the encounter.

This watercolour painting provides access to viewing what the female barracks appeared to be like. Such access could be portrayed exclusively by female artists because, as outlined earlier, males lived in their own barracks and were not allowed to mix (Troller, 1991, p. 76). Therefore, Eismannová takes me into her personal space of the women's barrack that was shared by nine other women, and perhaps more. The image subject of the indoors of female barracks does not seem to me, to be as common a subject as the outdoors, the line-ups, the crowds, the rush of new deportees coming in, and the funeral scenes. With that said, I would go on to wonder about the sound she heard while working on her art: Were there any cries of pain, screams of fear, or the threat of punishment? Did the women, in the room which she painted, speak to her during her recording of the surrounding space? Did they mind being observed for details for artistic purposes? ... I realise, that the absence of sounds, smells, and temperature, leaves me to create my own version of them in my mind as I encounter the art. The version in my mind would be ... actually, there isn't any.

In this art piece (see Image 13), the painter, again, splits the image into two. On the left hand side, women are lying on the ground, while on the right hand side of the painting, women are sitting down. What brings the two together is how the majority of

the women are looking at the viewer. In some ways, the women's gaze makes the encounter feel intrusive. Their only private space, shared by other deportees who cram into the same room, is made public on paper. Still, the intrusion of space makes it all the more compelling because I am guided into the intrusion by what the artist opted to compose in paint. The intrusion of space points out to me, as I continue to fix my sight on the women's barrack's room, that since the Terezin artwork contains a memory, documents a time, and records an artist's effort, an encounter is thus bound to be intrusive. Intrusive to space, intrusive to memory, and intrusive to the witnessing of the artist's self processing the surroundings.

Moving from encountering Zdenka Eismannová's art, to Leo Haas' archived images (see Images 14 & 15), my momentum of immediate thoughts that came to mind, picked up a faster pace. This is because, Haas' work took me by surprise. His rebellion exhibited in depicting two religiously political images, in turn, sparked off my rebellion to stay with

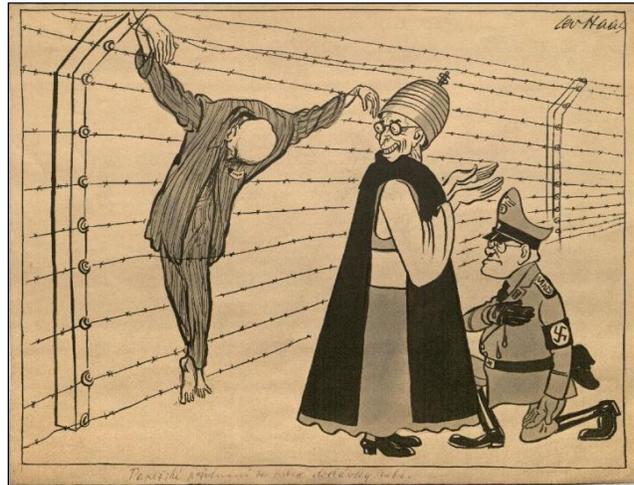


**Image 14: Leo Haas' Art**  
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the art pieces. Revealing my Achilles' heel of the encounter with this particular artist, I share how being of Christian faith made me want to skip on encountering Images 14 and 15, and move on to view an artwork by Haas in the style that I had been familiar

with through book research. With the thought in mind that an encounter is not all about positive responses, I decided to stay with these two illustrations. One of my initial inquiries that came to mind, as trivial as this might sound, was directed at the ‘attack’ on one faith practice (Christianity) when a faith practice (Judaism) being attacked was a reason behind the context of this art. I was baffled.

After confirming with the archivist that the religious authority portrayed is Catholic, I then realised that this encounter was going to be interestingly different than what I had already



**Image 15: Leo Haas' Art**  
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experienced. Needless to say, that such a reaction from my end highlighted another expectation and assumption that I had prior to accessing the archive. On the one hand, I had assumed that I was familiar with Leo Haas' work because I had come across it several times in the literature discussed in previous chapters. While on the other hand, I expected a small number of similar topics to make up the subject content of the archived artwork, and I did not expect to encounter an art piece that made me consider overlooking it. I was clearly incorrect to hold such assumptions and to have such expectations. Moments into the encounter, the feeling of being baffled changed to that of being curious.

Images 14 and 15 challenge statements which say, for instance, that camp art: “mostly depicted only the immediate surroundings of their barracks and yards, while recording everyday life in the Ghetto and its different faces” (Osvaldová & Oswald, 2002, p. 57). Another statement which the two artworks challenge stems from the memoir of Haas’ colleague who was the architect in the Drawing Office (Troller, 1991). Norbert Troller (1896, Brno–1981, New York) shares on how “without contact with others, with our Czech-Christian fellow prisoners, survival for us would be increasingly difficult” (Troller, 1991, p. 151). As much as the comments referenced above stuck out more-so when looking at Haas’ two particular drawings, I do not wish to dwell on the notion of, if and how, Christians helped the Jews.

A sense of discomfort, which may at times, surround the conflicting issues on Christianity and Judaism, was a sense of discomfort that I was familiar with. This is because, in the first level of the exhibition, a film about the relations between those practicing Christianity and Judaism was shown in loop. I walked into the room showing the film after passing the display on the mechanisms which the Nazis used for measuring how Aryan or non-Aryan an individual was (Berenbaum, 2006, p. 27). Having dark brown eyes, dark curly brown hair, and a wider brow made me think, that I would not have ‘passed’ the Aryan test. Even though I am aware that the notion of an Aryan race being superior is arguably not as present anymore, I felt oddly uncomfortable to realise that I would have not met the criteria. As I reflected on how I could not logically process the absurdity of the hair and eye colour chart along with the instruments to measure the width of brow and nose, I then walked into the room where

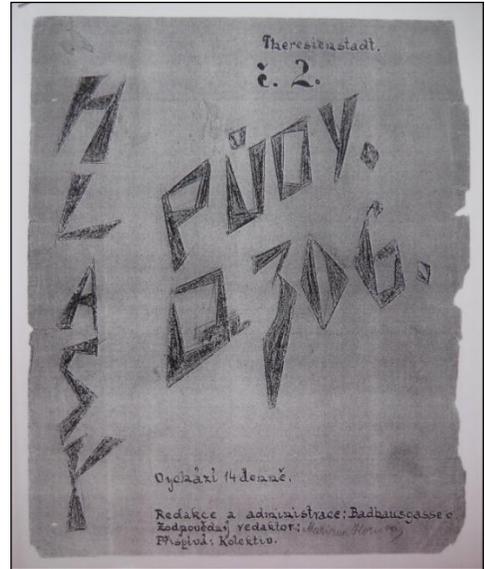
the mentioned film was being shown. Sitting on a seat and dwelling on my discomfort, I met with further moments of uneasiness as I listened to statements claiming how Jews were excluded from Christian societies, and had persecuted the Jews. Not quite knowing what to do with this uneasiness, I simply took note of it and moved on to the next part of the exhibit only for it to come up again when Leo Haas' Images 14 and 15, were taken out of their folder.

While encountering the images of a Catholic pope blessing a Nazi's dehumanisation of the population that they deemed inferior, I was particularly struck by the impact of illustrating: a camp prisoner in a striped uniform with a number on the left side of the chest, hanging over barbed wire in a crucified position; the dollar sign on the pope's attire, and the blood spills on the Nazi soldier and the pope. In addition, the use of perspective in both drawings greatly contributes to the notion of the diminutivisation of the camp prisoners (in Image 14), and a sense of a trail of 'crucified' prisoners before and after the one presented in the drawing of Image 15. Trying to prevent the encounter from turning into an experience of "crude empathy" (cited in Bennett, 2005, p. 111) by attempting to imagine myself in Leo Haas' shoes so as to understand the possible motives behind these two art pieces, I thus allow the focus to remain on my end – a Christian's point of view.

My response to Images 14 and 15 is that of realising that I am not entirely as disconnected to the this field of Holocaust art as I had initially thought I was. What directed this understanding was, as mentioned in the first chapter, a going back to my

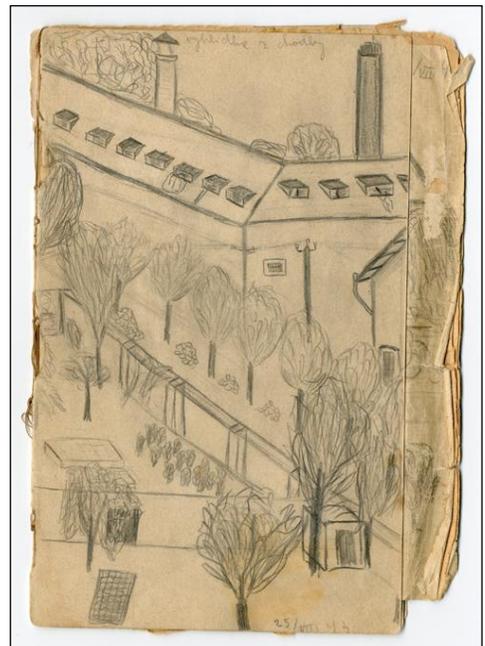
grandparents' stories on their time of war. One of the stories told to me was that of my great uncle, with whom I have vague recollections of personally discussing his incarceration experience. Fr. Salvino Darmanin (1919 – 2001), was studying to become a jesuit priest in Palermo, Sicily. At a time when he was in need to be hospitalised, he had to cross a border to go to Milan, Italy. German officers at the border noticed his British passport, which he had because his mother was British. Instantly, he was taken into a prisoner-of-war camp in Milan in 1943, then moved to a camp in Germany until liberation in 1945 (Darmanin, 2001). Revisiting this memory of the story being told to me by my grandparents was an unverballed response to seeing Haas' artwork. Additionally, I see a 'human' attribute to these artworks. The human-ness of it lies in the expression of opinion, irony of the situation, and perhaps anger that Haas, and other artists and deportees, felt. In interpreting the possible presence of emotions that carry with them negative connotations, such as anger, underlines yet another assumption I had. The assumption being that, in viewing the people in Terezin in a victimised way, I associated with the Terezin inmates, an image of rebellion expressed in art through which I first only recognised a sense of despair and helplessness. However, regarding the artists in Terezin as victims led me astray to disassociate the ghetto artists, and their art, from the human quality of making controversial bold statements, and having the guts to record them on paper.

Such an assumption made around the victimisation of the deportees, met greater challenges when encountering the art of children and youths as in Images 16 and 17. The then adolescent Michal (Maud) Beer, and the then children Vera and Mariana Kornová, produced pencil drawings that left me in awe for drawing in the context they were in, but it also left me unable to go much beyond the feeling of awe. In addition, I underestimated the value of encountering the images, because of the fact that I was looking at photocopies and scanned images. To help reach a deeper level of an encounter, I visited the library and researched sources that presented adult memories of childhood, and adolescent times in Terezin. Until that point, my image of a 'victim' was not, in any way, associated with a life that included moments of gossip, intimacy in relationships, or enjoyment. Having such an assumption challenged, I gained an understanding that the art of children and youths of Terezin spoke of more than what I had initially thought of the photocopies and scans. I went



**Image 16: Mariana & Vera Kornová's Art**

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**Image 17: Michal (Maud) Beer's Art**

**Reprinted with Permission from the Artist Survivor**

back to find the copies again, and like what happened with Haas' art, I decided to stay more with Beer and Kornová's art so as to go beyond my first impressions and the predictable, surface feeling of awe.

Through the sources by: Norbert Troller (1991); Marie Rút Křížková, Kurt Jiří Kotouč, and Zdeněk Ornest (1994); as well as Elena Makarová, Sergei Makarov, and Victor Kuperman (2004), I learned about the unspoken aspects of the everyday which had a ripple effect on the (second) encounter. Troller (1991), a survivor of the ghetto, shares that Terezin was a place where rumours spread fast, where people fell in love and made love. It was also a place in which some people got married, some had extra-marital affairs, some went on dates, gossiped on who was doing who, and some 'stayed' in marriage because of the children and social image (p. 89). Křížková et al., (1994) provide a clear image of the teens in the Jugendheim going through adolescence with all that which the specific phase in life brings along with it. The boys in the youth barrack did not realise the dangers of ghetto life and defied the ban on education. They made sure to stay on top with their studies by having classes in an attic and leaving one of the boys out on duty to watch out for the SS, and also went to the extent of creating their own anthem, and designing their house flag (p. 39). Additionally, author Jiří and Ornest, both Terezin survivors from the Jugendheim, tell how there was always the one boy who was "often the butt of our jokes" (p. 59), how there was the one adult living in the barrack who was the person they confided problems in (p. 138), how they acted out because they felt envious of another who received lots of mail (p. 62), and how there was that one beautiful girl they all went after

and “secretly worshipped” (p. 44). Additionally, Makarová et al., (2004), details the education system which the authors term the “forbidden faculty”. In explaining the education system that was put into place in Terezin, I learned that high expectations were put on some of the teens and children’s learning. At times, the parents’ thoughts and beliefs on what their children should be learning resulted in rough clashes between parents and tutors (p. 161).

When I came across the above mentioned aspects of life in Terezin, I came to understand that, in some sense, as victims in the camp, people still experienced ‘typical’ phases, and lived some parts of life how a life, minus the war, would be. Therefore, the war could only change so much of an individual’s lifestyle, and even though this particular war changed the bare necessities of the many, their art practice did not always change. The teens and children’s work (see Images 16 and 17), clarify such a point, because when looking at their artwork, I recognise the typical drawing manner of a child (see Image 16), and a teen’s urge to keep a diary (see Image 17).

## **5 Post- Artwork Encounter**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, when encountering the archived artwork at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum ([www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)), there was no sudden effect caused by every art piece that I viewed. Even though a much anticipated, abrupt revelation did not happen when coming face to face with the archived Terezin art, the encounter itself eventually led to a post-encounter. By the term 'post-encounter' I refer to the direction that my interests and research took after having viewed the art, the concepts that I aimed to portray in my own artwork, and the pedagogical understandings gained from learning about the teaching practices that were adopted in Terezin and that were reflected in some of the children's artwork. Thus, in this chapter, I outline the aspects of the ghetto's curriculum and pedagogy that left an impact on me as an artist/researcher/teacher.

### **5.1 Terezin's Curriculum and Pedagogy**

It has been mentioned in the Literature Review, that aside from the children's art classes, education was banned by the Nazis (Chládková, 2005, p. 29). By holding classes secretly in attics with students guarding the surroundings (Křížková, Kotouč, & Ornest, 1994, p. 39), and by lecturing in a whisper so as not to be heard (Makarová, Makarov, & Kuperman, 2004, p. 30), the incarcerated Jews made a way to ensure that the diverse knowledge of the many university professors and professionals, was shared. In order not to disclose the undercurrent running of the camp, any form of educational event was "referred to as 'leisure activity' or 'housework'" (Makarová et al.,

2004, p. 145). Practical and political challenges were constantly rising as the students, young and old, were from a range of nationalities who consequentially spoke different languages (Light, 1990, p. 9), and half of the children were not raised in Jewish homes hence lacked the basis of a “Jewish education” (Makarová et al., 2004, p. 161). Furthermore, the staunch Zionism versus the liberal views, the diverse cultural backgrounds, and the varied academic stages that the inmates were at prior to deportation, led to conflicts relating to language of instruction, religious education, and content levels. It was, however, regarded to be the tutor’s responsibility to strike middle ground and to avoid further political controversy to arise while dealing with it all, in hiding (p. 161).

The need for co-operation to share expertise, the blind trust in one another’s ability to keep the curricular strategies a communal secret, and the stamina to attempt to learn while experiencing hunger, risk, trauma, and pain, resulted in an education that focused on: competition; goals, and the collective (Makarová, Makarov & Kupermann, 2004, p. 166). The notion of competition was regarded to be important because competitive behaviour brought out the best of some deportees’ abilities (p. 166). Additionally, a goal-oriented curriculum was preferred over a result-oriented curriculum because there was constant unpredictability from one moment to the next, which made it rather difficult to assume the extent and potential outcome of a goal (p. 167). Nonetheless, a focus on the collective, “a forced collective,” was regarded to be unavoidable because they lived as a group, shared the limited facilities as a group, suffered punishment as a group, and owned very little when set apart from the group (p. 161). An added focus, in

relation to the children and the youths' education, was that of maintaining normalcy in lifestyle (p. 143). The receiving of, and participation in some form of schooling was thought to somewhat make the children and youths' life resemble their pre-war routine. Therefore, education was seen to offer a continuum of certain normality in the midst of abnormality (p. 143). Another drive for providing the children and youth with opportunities to advance academically was a sense of hope in a future. Under the false assumptions that children and teenagers were going to be spared from hardships, a group of Terezin individuals aimed to prepare the young deportees for "life in Palestine" (p. 148).

They trained the youth in agriculture, lectured about history and economics of their future homeland-a soulsearching undertaking when your tomorrow is insecure. They even studied Arabic, in the hope that they could befriend their neighbors." (Makarová et al., 2004, p. 148).

### **5.1.1 Learning Clusters**

Similar to the group who taught subjects that were deemed necessary for living in Palestine, there were a number of other groups who opted to have their own learning cluster independent of the lectures and art classes that were given to Terezin's public. Several individuals took the initiative to start up their own teaching programs. For instance, a testimony by Klaus Scheurenberg which is recorded in the study by Makarová, Makarov, and Kuperman (2004), tells that even a group as small as eight people, came together to share knowledge (p. 151). Klaus explains that the purpose of getting together was for the sake of socialising and to help one another stay awake. This particular group of eight people, that the mentioned deportee formed part of, used some of their time together to learn English: "We studied with a fiery zeal. When we

could, we spoke with each other only in English” (p. 151). In contrast to the small learning clusters, there were individuals whose initiative to teach led to shape sizable groups. The “Salus Group” was one such group (p. 67). Miloš Salus was a high school teacher and an engineer by profession. As a Czech native and patriot, Salus defied the odds by teaching about Czechoslovakian culture and history during a time when the Nazis had also banned the practice of speaking in Czech. Such a ban was eventually lifted and it gave Salus’ group the chance to flourish further among the incarcerated, but it still had to remain a secret from the Nazis due to the group’s educational purpose of gathering. The Salus Group was made up of 46 members who delivered lectures in Czech about all that was considered to be Czech (p. 67).

Other individuals, who took great responsibility and equally great risk in putting into practice a curriculum, were people like the leader of Prague’s Jewish youth movement, Egon (also known as Gonda) Redlich (Makarová, Makarov, & Kuperman, 2004, p. 146), and sociologist Brno Zwicker (Křížková, Kotouč, & Ornest, 1994, p. 49). The former started up kindergartens in hiding while the latter was put in charge of the education system for the youths. The bigger the group that was being led, the more strategies had to be put in place to cater for the diversity and the communal yearning for learning. Two of the main and largest strategies were the setting up of a “pedagogical council” (Křížková et al., 1994, p. 39) and the delivery of a lecture series by the “forbidden faculty” (Makarová et al., 2004) which are both discussed hereunder.

### **5.1.2 Organisational Strategies**

As mentioned above, the set up of the “pedagogical council” was one of the main strategies put into place for the children and youths’ educators (Křížková, Kotouč, & Ornest, 1994, p. 39). The adults who volunteered to work as teachers in the Kinderheim and Jugendheim, had decided to live in the same barrack as their students did. This is because, the teacher did more than teach academic subject content, s/he would have had to take care of hygienic issues and parent the children or youths (Haas, 1991, p. 63). Such roles were taken up by deportees as young as eighteen, with twenty five being the average age of Terezin teachers (Makarová, Makarov, & Kuperman, 2004, p. 145). Consequentially, many of the adults who were teaching were not actually trained in the mentioned profession. In order to aid the situation and to organise a system in which the risk to secretly educate was not a risk taken in vain, pedagogical councils were created so that the teachers would get the chance to meet, discuss, and make decisions together with other individuals who had training in the field (Křížková et al., 1994, p. 39).

The one other main organisational strategy for managing the education system relates to the lecture series. Makarová, Makarov, and Kupermann (2004) conducted an extensive study on the Terezin’s lectures and lecturers. Through the records that remain and that can be accessed, the authors note a total of 2,430 lectures delivered by 520 lecturers. Out of the sizable number of members in the “forbidden faculty,” 266 lecturers held doctorate degrees and 14 were rabbis, but only a 153 survived out of the group of 520 lecturers (p. 13). The people of Terezin could participate in the series by

signing up with the “Free Time Organisation” which published cultural reports that included the necessary information about the lectures being given (p. 12). Such reports have thus been the main source to provide an understanding into the running of the forbidden faculty.

Interestingly, the youngest lecturer was the psychology enthusiast, Erna Furman, who was 17 years of age at the time (Makarová, Makarov & Kupermann, 2004, p. 14). An example of one of her lecture titles is: “The Psychology of a Newborn Child” (p. 180). On the other hand, the oldest lecturer was the historian, Professor Samuel Steinherz, who was 85 at the time of incarceration (p. 14). Due to the fact that Prof. Steinherz did not last in Terezin for very long, he only managed to deliver one lecture which was entitled: “Brief Chapters from Jewish Life in Bohemia” (p. 14). The two mentioned lecture titles underline a significant aspect regarding the wide range of topics that were presented on via the Terezin lectures. Makarová et al., (2004) summed up a total of 58 main topics, which included Art, Education, Art History, Medicine and Art, and Art Education (p. 12).

No assessment followed the lectures and attendance was not taken note of as people were free to come and go. However, the one ‘must’ of each lecture was to start with a memorial because there was always someone who had been lecturing or attending the lectures, but could never attend again (Makarová, Makarov & Kupermann, 2004, p. 26). In addition, the lecturing events did not span over a long period of time because deportation and the conditions of Terezin, interrupted the routine of signing up for a

lecture and delivering it to a diverse audience (p. 71). Within this short timeframe of when lectures were delivered, Friedl Dicker-Brandeis, who was the children's art teacher and a practicing artist in Terezin, had given one talk on children's drawing in July of 1943 (p. 446). Much of her lecture has been recorded and saved (Wix, 2010). Through accessing Friedl's published lecture (cited in Wix, 2010), from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's library ([www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)), I got the chance to encounter the voice of instruction behind the children's artwork and the pedagogy that informed such instruction.

## **5.2 Encountering Pedagogy of a Ghetto**

"On Children's Art" is the title of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis' essay and lecture that she delivered in Terezin and which has been recently translated from German to English, by Lerke Foster in 2005 (cited in Wix, 2010). The following eight sections make up the essay: "What Should One Expect from Art Lessons?" (Dicker Brandeis as cited in Wix, 2010, p. 129); "The Teacher's Role in Children's Expression" (p. 130); "Development of Taste" (p. 131); "Differences in Age" (p. 131); "Examples/Exercises" (p. 132); "Group Work: Community Instead of Conflict" (p. 133); "Rhythmic Exercises" (p. 134), and "How We Adults Should Treat Children and their Creativity" (p. 134). Via the mentioned sections, she addresses questions that had been asked to her about her teaching, she provides examples from her experiences with the camp children, and she gives advice to the reader - to me. As I read through the essay, I became her audience listening to heart-to-heart thoughts and opinion from one art enthusiast, to another.

Initially, it baffled my mind as to why teaching art in a Holocaust ghetto/camp was such a priority when in the midst of a world war. I also wondered why someone would take risks in making art that needed to be hidden, and why invest energy and resources in art teaching and production when other aspects of survival required the same energy and resources. As an art educator, I did not want to admit out loud such a trend of inquiry. However, the increasing interest to further research Terezin's art classes and art practices, made me realise that a sense of awe was sparked off by learning how and why, art was made and taught in Terezin.

On the one hand, the literature discussed in previous chapters contributed to construct an understanding of the ways in which producing art was made possible: how the deportees improvised the use of materials; how they saved the work, and how it has been made accessible today. On the other hand, coming to an understanding of why art was produced and taught required more than reading and accessing an archive. It required an encounter. This time, it was an unplanned encounter with pedagogy, the "new pedagogy" of Terezin that was determined by conditions and limitations which surrounded a Bauhaus trained, artist-teacher and the multicultural, multilingual, and multi-ability students (Wix, 2010, p. 129).

Encountering the "new pedagogy" was unplanned because I did not intentionally go to the archive at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum ([www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)) to seek data on the essays written about the teaching methods that were put into practice within the ghetto. I did not seek it because I simply was not aware that such data was

recorded, accessed, collected, translated and published. Thus, upon reading the essay entitled “On Children’s Art,” it grew evident that I responded to it not just as a non-Jewish, Mediterranean, art educator trained in western institutions with no known ties to those deported to Terezin, but I responded to it as an art educator who was uncertain as to why the teaching of art even mattered. Admittedly, the mentioned uncertainty stemmed from not standing on solid beliefs about the significance of art education and what could happen when taking up the role of a pedagogue.

As I embraced the notion of being an audience to Friedl Dicker Brandeis’ lecture in the midst of my own uncertainties, the encounter with pedagogy, like the encounter with the Terezin artwork, became an experience of personal communication and interaction.

From within Terezin, she tells me:

The main thing is to provide opportunity for their [the children’s] own expression and to wait for what will come about (Dicker Brandeis as cited in Wix, 2010, p. 129).

She tells me:

Drawing in school locks the door after something has been finished, and almost all of us know from our school time it can no longer or only under difficulty be reopened (p. 130).

She tells me:

If we want to look at children’s drawings with enjoyment and see their usefulness, we must first silence our wishes and demands in regard to form as well as content and expectantly accept what they can offer (p. 134).

After reading the above mentioned lines of the essay, I went to re-view the original and facsimile images of the children’s art that was done under the instruction of the discussed pedagogue and which makes part of the USHMM’s exhibition (see Images 18 & 19).

In an attempt to look beyond what the naked eye could see, I responded to the encounter by coming to an understanding of the significance of art education inside, and outside Terezin. Some understandings that echoed in the encounter were, however, already familiar. For instance,

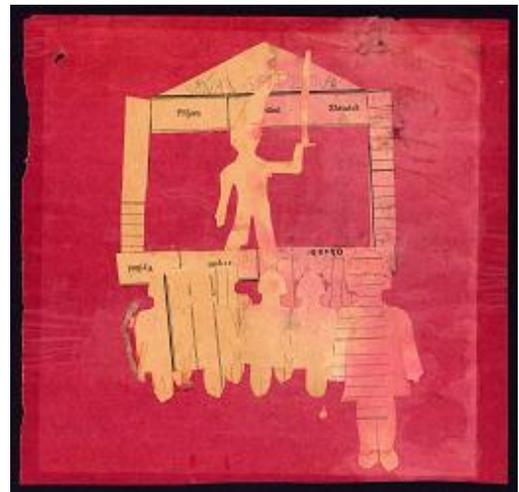
the manner in which Friedl Dicker Brandeis passed on her passion for art-making is evident in the example that is illustrated in her

essay where she recalled a student who “was suddenly in the mood to draw” (cited in Wix, 2010, p. 133).

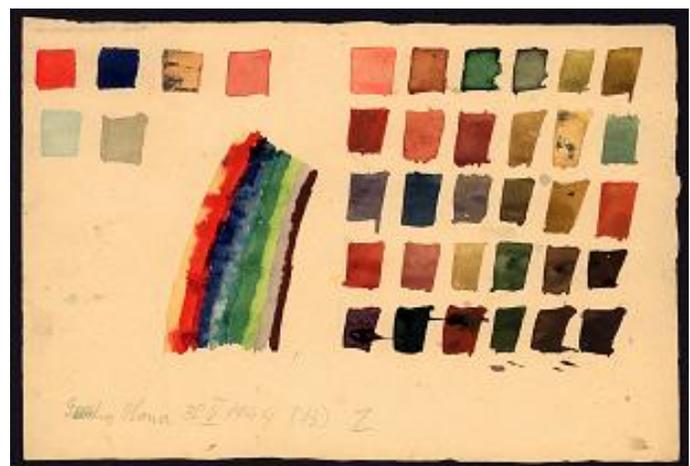
The fact that the art teacher’s enthusiasm became contagious was an understanding that I could easily gather from the encounter with

pedagogy. Being aware of, and having experienced how an art interest could

be transmittable I was thus familiar with such an outcome of the encounter.



**Image 18: Sona Spitzová’s Art**  
Reprinted with Permission from the Jewish Museum in Prague: Jewish Museum in Prague Photo Archive



**Image 19: Hana Lustigová’s Art**  
Reprinted with Permission from the Jewish Museum in Prague: Jewish Museum in Prague Photo Archive

Nonetheless, when I delve deeper into what the encounter meant to me as an educator, I realise that I came to an understanding that is basic, yet core to pedagogical practices. This is because, while reading through Friedl's essay and bearing in mind the context in which the "forced pedagogy" happened, I recognised how art-making and art teaching was not necessarily something Friedl or the incarcerated wanted to do, rather, it was something they needed to do. The difference between a 'need' and a 'want' for the practice of art was a difference which I was aware of only because books told me so, but I was not standing firm on such an understanding. Thus, it was through encountering Friedl's essays and camp art that I felt an eventual growth in believing in art's role of being a need.

### **5.3 Finding Community**

After having experienced an encounter with the Terezin artwork and the above mentioned, spontaneous encounter with Friedl Dicker Brandeis' pedagogy, I could not think of myself as a stranger to the field any longer.

At the start of the study, I outlined the differences that I could recognise and with which I approached the art and the research. Being summed up in a list of what I am and what I am not, I felt the need to somehow find a way via which I could fit into the community. Since "a/r/tography as an ethics of embodiment insists that inquiry is rooted in community" (Leitch, 2006, p. 549), I decided not to disregard the notion of wanting to feel part of this community of research bearing in mind how I come to it, and what I bring to it. My first moment of actively seeking belonging was prior to the

journey taken to experience the encounters. With a sense of comfort, I recall when I personally discussed the research interest with a Holocaust survivor, albeit from another concentration camp (Waisman, 1996-1996). Following a conversation about my research interest and plans for the encounter, the survivor's softly spoken kind words gently insisted on the need to keep the research in the field of Holocaust studies, alive and going. The conversation thus provided me with the go-ahead making me one step closer to finding community in territories which I had previously left uncharted.

Additionally, I stumbled upon further connections that linked me to a sense of community when going through the USHMM's permanent exhibition. There were indeed two moments that made me stop before the information that I was reading on the displays and captions – moments when I realised that I needed to re-think how distant I actually am, and how much, or what kind of a stranger I am to the field. The first 'oh!' that I uttered was when I approached a map depicting what Europe was like before the commencement of the Second World War. Since I come from a very small island in the Mediterranean, it is usually no surprise that the place I was born and raised in would not actually appear on a map.

Curious to see if Malta was on the map that I was approaching, I walked towards it feeling almost certain that it would not be there and I would have been fine with that. However, much to my surprise, Malta was clearly visible on the map that was drawn out on the glass display. I smiled and was about to walk away. Noticing a caption next to the map, I leaned forward to read it and then leaned back to put my glasses on.

Once again, Malta was the last place mentioned under the category that was entitled 'Southern Europe'. The caption, which was actually more of a list, provided the statistical information of the total number and percentage of Jews in Europe during the year 1933. Having never met a person of Jewish faith when living in Malta, never having heard a mentioning of the practice of Judaism when learning about the religious population, and never coming across a Synagogue in the small parameters of the island which I was very well acquainted to, the statistic of 35 (0.012%) Jews living in Malta back in 1933 was very new information. A further sense of surprise followed when coming across another map that depicted the intake of Jewish people during the start of the war. Glancing across the big numbers that were pencilled in next to countries such as Australia and England, I then noticed a single digit written next to the dot on the map indicating the location of Malta. 5 Jews went to Malta in 1941. A string of questions ran through my mind as I quickly scribbled down on my notebook, 'suddenly feeling part of it,' and 'what happened to them?!'

The second moment of connection was also experienced in the section of the USHMM's permanent exhibition that dealt with life before and at the start of the war. As explained above, Malta was mentioned in the exhibition and so was my first name. One sentence, sandwiched between several points on what the Jews had to do and not do, stated that all the women had to adopt the middle name 'Sara.' This was an official obligation and thus all documents that belonged to female Jews, whether it was a passport or a deportation card, contained the middle name which is my first name. A trivial coincidence I thought. Still though, the trivial information made its way onto my

notebook and enhanced the interest to re-question the whole notion of being connected, or not, and by how much.

As compelling as the moments of questioning connections were, when I was in the archive, I found myself not really knowing what to do with the information I had come across and wondered if it was relevant at all to the study. It was all loose strings.

However, the rhizomatic relationship that embeds a/r/tography appreciates the connections that can be made when loose strings are braided together with the possibility of being unbraided again so that they could be re-braided. Therefore, the occurrences that took place on the side of the archival experience and outside my reading on Terezin art, were in a rhizomatic relation to the study. “After all, one fails to pursue a tangent if a particular line of thought is subscribed. Rhizomes resist taxonomies and create interconnected networks with multiple entry points” (Beer, Bickel, Grauer, Irwin, Springgay & Xiong, 2006, p. 4). The entry points that I aimed to bring together are from the various moments of the encounters, those planned and those unplanned as well as the information I came across through library sources, exhibitions, personal conversations with survivors, and archived collections. When I extracted the experiences of the rhizomatic entry points, I found myself braiding the moments of: second guessing what I knew about my home country; learning that my first name served a purpose of classification; admitting to myself that I had to re-learn that art was (and is) a need; pausing with uneasiness when encountering a Terezin artwork featuring a blood-stained pope; smiling upon reading that deportees fell in love

and made love within a Holocaust ghetto, and responding to the encounters while rethinking the ways in which I see myself fitting into a community.

#### 5.4 Tying Loose Strings onto Canvas

In order to put into practice the 'a' in a/r/tography, I was set on literally tying the metaphorical braid by using string and unbraided rope on a canvas. The making-part of the study resulted in designing a product (see Image 20) of the encountering process (O'Donoghue, 2009, p. 356).

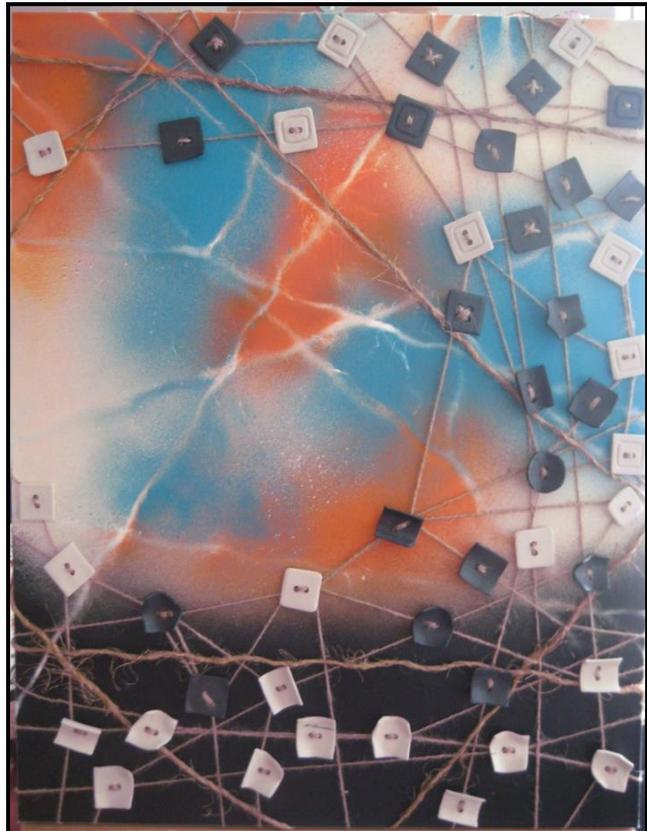


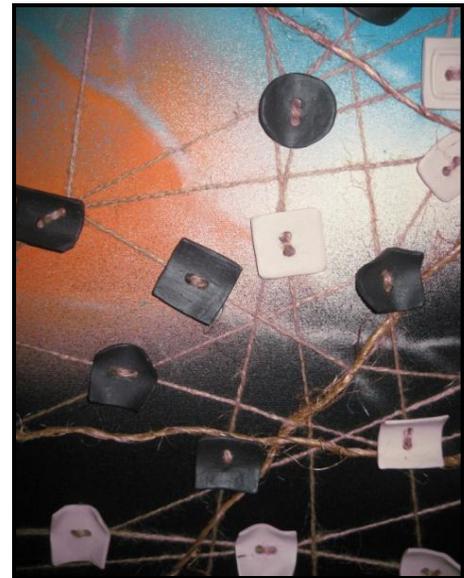
Image 20: My Art

The notion of tying and braiding was central to my artwork because I aimed to refer to the connections I

found while conducting the study, and the sense of community that the connections brought about. Therefore, the string and the unbraided rope tie onto the canvas, the moments that challenged the feeling of being a stranger to the field and the above mentioned moments, which took me on compelling tangents when on the path towards studying the Terezin art.

In addition, every piece of string is intertwined and in connection to one other piece of string, or many other pieces. Such a web suggests the links and a sense of community that I found myself being part of. The community of Jews in Malta, the community of artists of Terezin who wanted their artwork to speak for them, and the community of educators in the camp who shared a passion and persevered in finding ways to pass on knowledge and interests. Needless to say, that the great help I received from the staff at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre ([www.vhec.org](http://www.vhec.org)) and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum ([www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)), welcomed me into a community of individuals who are compelled by, and dedicated to the field of Holocaust studies.

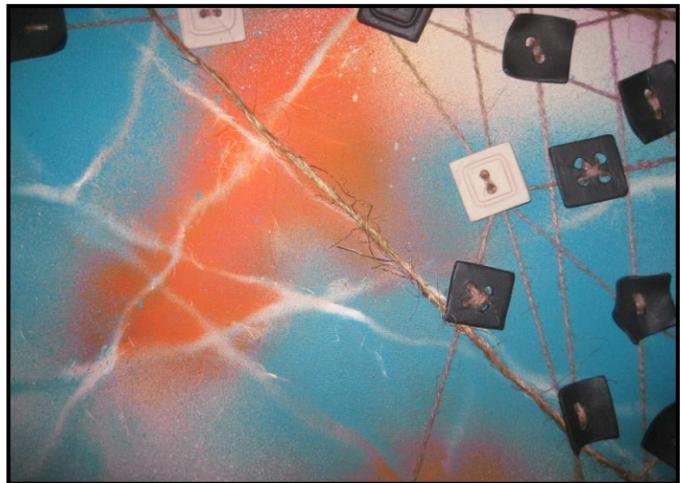
The string keeps ceramic bisque buttons tightly in place across the edges of the sprayed canvas (see Image 21). The number of square buttons on the canvas is meant to symbolise the number of Jews in Malta during the Second World War, plus one round button – a fellow Maltese. Interestingly, Malta was the only place in Europe that took in Jewish people without needing a visa, but only 5 seemed to know ([www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org)).



**Image 21: Detail of My Art**

Therefore, just like the island was a safe place for the deportees to go to, I wanted the canvas, my art, to be a safe place to express my experience and responses of encountering the Terezin artwork.

A button is useful, yet mundane, keeps two parts together, yet remains mundane, and it separates two joined parts, yet it is primarily, mundane. In fact, the mundane aspect of a button is what makes the object fit the artwork. This is because, with some drawings, it was the mundane task of doodling or scribbling that led to several artists needing to hide their designs as it was perceived to be a threat by the opponent. It was also the mundane activities of a daily routine like rushing late to school, sleeping in, spreading a thick layer of jam over toast, running around breathless in a playground, and arguing with a sibling whom one could easily share a room with, that made the regimental routine in Terezin lack the significant mundane. On the practical side of the significance of a button, buttons were the only part of a garment that remained intact when the fabric withered away with the traumatic events that the person wearing the garment had to go through (<http://theibtaurisblog.com>). Like the pile of shoes exhibited as part of the permanent exhibition at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum captioned with the poem "I Saw a Mountain" by the Yiddish poet, Moses Schulstein ([www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)), buttons remained intact because they were not made out of flesh and Jewish blood.



**Image 22: Detail of My Art**

Furthermore, the shape of the buttons tied to the canvas, also plays a role in the symbolism. Some of the buttons, as can be noted in Image 21, have curled up edges. The way in which the shape disallow some of the buttons to lie flat on the sprayed surface, suggests a sense of movement. Movement echoes the journey to Malta for the 5 Jews who moved to the island, it echoes the movement of my journey to experience the encounters, and it also echoes the deportee's unsettlement to the rules banning education and the production of unassigned images. In addition to the notion of movement, the buttons are also tied in a way that they start from the top left and then busy down towards the bottom of the canvas leaving the top centre-right side of the canvas, to be almost bare from buttons and string (see Image 22). Such a direction in the placement of the buttons is meant to portray a movement between lighter and darker sides of the canvas. The lighter buttons against the darker spray paint hint at the cultural presence and the form of resistance via art production in a place of darkness. The moving towards and away from the black lower part reflects the metaphorical push into darkness, that is being imbalanced with a pull towards the lighter and brighter upper part of the painting. The orange, blue and creamy coloured areas have been designed to create a drastically stark contrast to the black. Such a contrast highlights the passion for art, and the dependence on art that provided momentary independence from the Nazis' attempt to strip all aspects that made the incarcerated feel human.

Ideas on the presented art piece came to mind during my time at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Sketches were scribbled on the back of the note were I

recorded the moment and information of when I started to re-think the notion of community and connections. The mundane aspect of the button has indeed served a meaningful purpose for my work and it is a painting that fits into a community of other Holocaust-related art projects which also have used buttons as the main subject. Other artists and artwork using buttons includes: Israel-based artist, Rachel Rogel ([ntdtv.org](http://ntdtv.org)); the Peoria Holocaust Memorial Button Project, in Illinois, United States of America ([www.peoriaholocaustmemorial.org](http://www.peoriaholocaustmemorial.org)); the Aseh Chayil elementary school project, in Efrat, Israel ([www.isrealnationalnews.com](http://www.isrealnationalnews.com)); the “6 Million+” installation by Antonia Stowe, in Kirklees, England ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)), and the Moriah Holocaust Button Collection, school project, in Wellington, New Zealand ([www.moriahbuttons.blogspot.ca](http://www.moriahbuttons.blogspot.ca)).

## 6 Conclusion

Are you a relation of his? ... Then you must be a Jewess ... No? ... Why are you doing it then?" I was silent then and I shall remain silent now. I could invent some noble and persuasive motives, but the truth is simple: I don't know. [...] Let others judge the meaning of this encounter, and the worth of my response (Křížková, Kotouč, & Ornest, 1994, p. 163).

### 6.1 Within and Without

Believing that all responses were responses worth noting and reflecting upon, I approached the art, and the analysis of the encounter, while adopting Rogoff's notion of "without" (2001). Rogoff explains that being "without" does not mean "being at a loss, of inhabiting a lack, of not having anything" (p. 34). Rather it is a state in which the researcher welcomes shifts and the building of the unfamiliar on the familiar, thus "all we can ever get to is a more reflexive consciousness of the experience" (p. 37).

Following the discussion on the encounter and the responses to the artwork, I realise that the study has resulted in a hodgepodge of moments where I met with the unfamiliar and the familiar. On the one hand, the unfamiliar was experienced at the point when I approached the archived art for the first time and not knowing with certainty, how and if I would respond to the art. On the other hand, the familiar was the background information that I had gathered from the reading done prior to the journey to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum ([www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)). The two ends, one being the familiar and the other being the unfamiliar, intersected when handling the camp artwork and thus resulted in a mesh of the two ends. Realising that being 'without' created a

space for this mesh to be created. I opt to remain in the zone of being 'without' so that shifts and connections between the unfamiliar and the familiar, continue to happen.

## **6.2 Limitations and Contributions**

As rewarding as the experience in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) was, one of the main limitations was not having visited Terezin in person. Prague, today, includes a well conserved space of Terezin with art and artifacts, exhibited in the inmates' art-making space. However, financial and time constraints made the trip to Eastern Europe, substantially more difficult to plan than a trip to the United States of America.

A further limitation included the pre-set assumptions, and expectations that were based on my first encounter with Terezin art. As mentioned in the introduction, I had seen a small collection of the Terezin's children's artwork at an exhibition a few years back, in Malta. Having already experienced an encounter, which instilled in me a sense of inquiry about camp art, rid this study from the actual initial responses and replaced it with expectations and assumptions.

On the other side of the coin, the main contribution of this study is that, according to the curator at the USHMM, the art that has been included in this document is, as yet, unpublished data. It has thus been a privilege to be granted permission to access, encounter, and use unpublished images for my thesis research and writing.

Additionally, another contributive aspect of this study is the level of interaction it hopes to reach. In sharing my personal responses recorded when encountering Terezin art, the reader is invited to inquire into what his/her responses would be, and the perspective(s) on this specific art from the specific context of a model camp under Nazi leadership. Lastly, in discussing camp art, a varied perspective on 20<sup>th</sup> century art is provided. As Potok states: “The art of Auschwitz [and Terezin] is encased in a membrane of an experience so unique, that it forces a reevaluation of all notions of good and bad art. [...] Art born in Auschwitz [and Terezin] makes its own criteria.” (cited in Czarnecki, 1989, p. xiv).

### **6.3 Further Research**

The litany of staggeringly high numbers of the many years during which the darkness lasted, the many people who suffered because of it, and the many memories that were told or contained in different forms, can at times, easily remain just an unfathomable litany. Through accessing artwork and artifacts from, or about the time of the Holocaust, the focus becomes a group of individuals not an image of the millions. With the amount of artwork that is left behind, and the stories told, there is potential for much further study.

The first topic for further research that comes to mind would be to carry out the same, or a similar study, but with the art from other Holocaust camps/ghettos. The work of author, Czarnecki (1989), presents a collection of art produced in the concentration camp of Auschwitz which holds equal potential, as the art in Terezin, for an encounter

that rekindles responses worth recording, and analysing. Terezin is only one ghetto out of an estimated, four hundred plus, ghettos across war-time Europe (Berenbaum, 2006). Therefore, there must be so much more art. It would also be interesting to carry out the study with someone who is of Jewish faith, or is related to a camp/ghetto inmate, with whom encounters could be compared.

A topic of curiosity would be to trace the art of a deportee-artist who produced art throughout his/her time in different camps. For instance, Leo Haas was incarcerated in the Terezin ghetto, followed by Sachsenhausen, Auschwitz, Mauthausen, and Ebensee from where he was liberated (Osvaldová & Oswald, 2002, p. 56). Encountering the artwork from his experiences in the different camps, and possibly also post-liberation, would provide a deeper understanding of an individual artist.

Also, artists who have a keen appreciation of photography could work on a self-study as they piece together the story line of Terezin as told through photographs. The photographs could then be compared to the scenes from Terezin as portrayed in paintings and drawings. In comparing the storyline as it was told through photographs with the story told through painted or drawn images, the researcher can gauge how the physical structures of a place became a personal experience for the people who experienced their time of the Holocaust, in Terezin.

Another suggestion would be to research an encounter with the art that was done in a different wartime. In doing so, it could bring the research to the current times because

there has indeed been art that came out of recent war-stricken places. For instance, drawings produced by the children of Gaza have been exhibited in North America (Vancouver, 2012). If the focus remains on Terezin, a similar study on having an encounter could be done for the different genres of art, such as music, literature, and theatre. It has been recorded that music compositions have been produced and played in Terezin, in fact, a jazz group called “The Ghetto Swingers” (Light, 1990, p. 7), and the children’s opera “Brundibar” (Petnisová & Pařík, 1983) performed on numerous occasions, left behind some of its traces that await an encounter. Poetry, plays, novels, and educational text books have also been recovered from the wartime in Terezin. One example would be the work of the artists, Bedrich Fritta who wrote and illustrated a book for his son’s third birthday. The book, entitled “Für Tommy Zum dritten, Gebur tstag” (Pařík, 1991, p. 56) was designed to teach the artist’s son vocabulary, and this is one of many examples that could be made available for research.

Lastly, artists who were established in the field of photography, such as American Vogue photographer, Lee Miller ([www.leemiller.co.uk](http://www.leemiller.co.uk)), had to remain in Europe after being unable to travel back home to the USA because of the war’s outbreak. The traumatic experience of witnessing the horror, and capturing it on camera, left a mark on the artist and the art she produced. Known for a controversial shot, Miller took a picture of herself in Hitler’s bathtub after his death, and she also took several pictures of ‘portraits’ of war victims and ruins (Penrose, 2005). It would be of compelling

interest to study the artwork of such an artist/photographer, and to analyse how an artist would portray the war scenes when behind the photographic lens.

#### **6.4 Closing Remarks**

This study came “as much as from the soul as from the ink” (Saorsa, 2011, p. 9). Thus, my hope is for this to serve you, the reader, as a map that directs you to find your own way through inquiring about your responses to Holocaust artwork. Inquire and re-inquire, encounter and re-encounter, search and re-search while bearing in mind what you bring to the field. Through such a process, I realised, that I’m not a stranger to the field as I had initially thought I was. Lastly, through the product of my art, I conceptualised the connections and explored the communities that I have come to feel connected to.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Collection of the Moses Crowns



Image 23: Theresienstadt currency

Courtesy of Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, Archival Collection

## Appendix B: Details of Identification Card Booklets

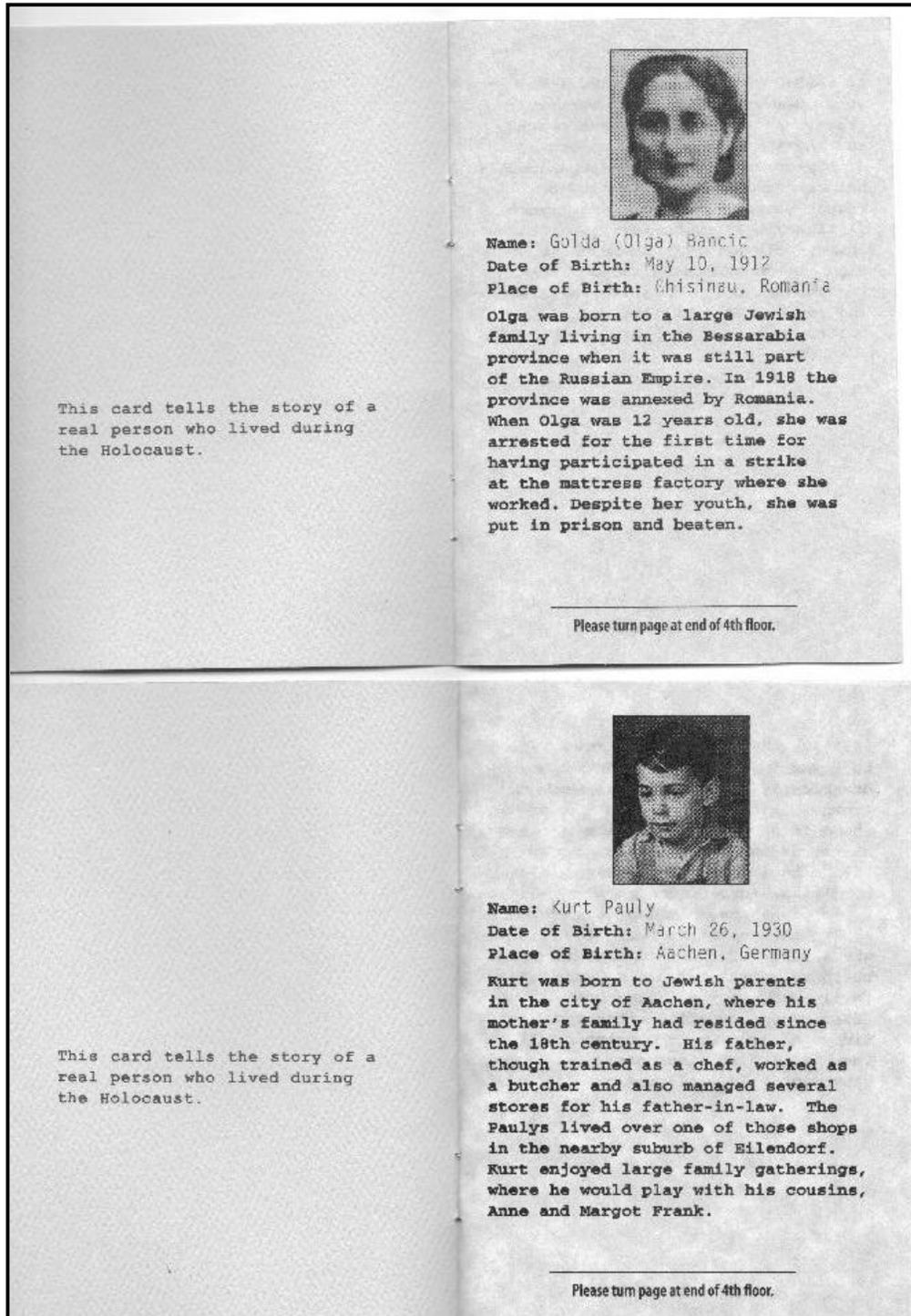


Image 24: Identification Card, Section 1

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1933-39: Olga was an active and vocal member of the local workers' organization. She had been arrested and imprisoned so often that she simply considered it an occupational hazard. In 1938 she travelled to France where she worked with French leftists, helping to ferry arms to the Spanish Republicans in their fight against fascism. Just before the Germans invaded Poland in 1939, she gave birth to a little girl, Dolores.

Please turn page at end of 3rd floor.

1940-44: France fell to the German army in 1940. Olga found a French family to keep her daughter safe, and joined the armed resistance group, Franc-Tireurs et Partisans, to fight the Germans. She assembled bombs and helped transport explosives used to derail German troop and supply trains. On November 6, 1943, she was arrested during a Gestapo roundup. She was tortured but revealed no information. Even after she was condemned to death, they continued to interrogate and torture her.

Please turn page at end of 2nd floor.

1933-39: When the Nazis came to power in 1933, the situation drastically changed for the Paulys. Brown-shirted storm troopers stood in front of the family's stores urging customers to boycott Jewish businesses. Worsening conditions forced the family to close its shops. In 1936 the Paulys immigrated to Palestine, where Kurt's father had a trucking business. Two years later, the family came to the United States, after receiving affidavits of financial support from friends. They settled in Cincinnati, Ohio, a city with a large German population.

Please turn page at end of 3rd floor.

1940-45: In Cincinnati, Kurt attended school and his father found work in a cafeteria peeling potatoes and onions. Later, Kurt's father became a chef at a local restaurant. As the war in Europe escalated, Kurt's parents grew ever more concerned about the family that they had to leave behind in Germany. His father had hoped to bring more of his relatives to the United States. In fall 1941, the Nazis prohibited Jews from leaving Germany and soon began deporting them to ghettos and killing centers in occupied eastern Europe.

Please turn page at end of 2nd floor.

Image 25: Identification Card, Section 2

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Olga was transferred to a prison in Stuttgart where she was retried and again condemned to death. On May 10, 1944, her 32nd birthday, Olga was beheaded.

This is card #1143.

To learn more about the places and events described in this card or to find other personal stories from the Holocaust, visit the Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center (Wexner Center, Second Floor) or the Museum's Web site [ushmm.org](http://ushmm.org).

After the war, Kurt learned that some of his closest relatives in Germany had perished in the Holocaust. In 1948 the Paulys moved to Vineland, New Jersey, where they bought a chicken farm. After serving in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, Kurt went on to graduate with honors from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business.

This is card #8112.

To learn more about the places and events described in this card or to find other personal stories from the Holocaust, visit the Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center (Wexner Center, Second Floor) or the Museum's Web site [ushmm.org](http://ushmm.org).

Image 26: Identification Card, Section 3

Reprinted with Permission from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Art and Artifacts