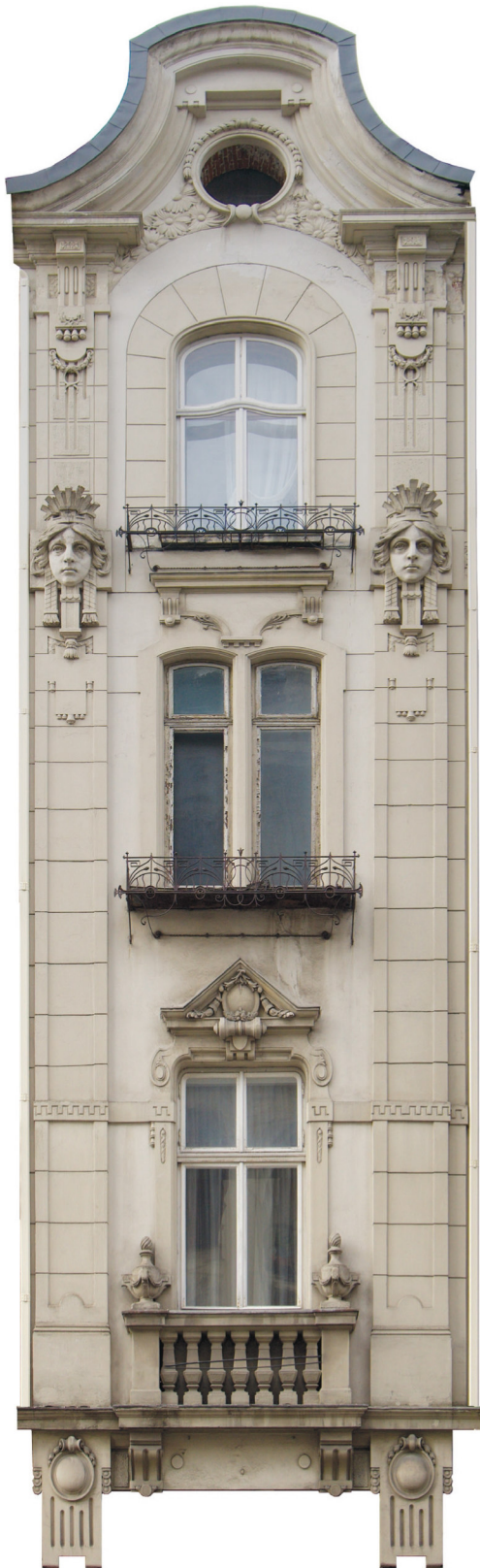


Kravtsov Rodov Stolarska-Fronia
From Ausgleich to the Holocaust



From Ausgleich to the Holocaust

Ukrainian and Jewish Artists
of Lemberg/Lwów/Lviv

Edited by
Sergey R. Kravtsov
Ilia Rodov and
Małgorzata Stolarska-Fronia

GRÜNBERG

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From Ausgleich to the Holocaust

Ukrainian and Jewish Artists of Lemberg/Lwów/Lviv

With an Introduction by Sergey R. Kravsov and Ilia Rodov

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Introduction

This volume presents a collection of essays shedding light on the cultural life and artistic creativity of Ukrainian and Jewish communities in the city of Lviv (formerly also called Lwów and Lemberg).¹ The authors focus on the period of political liberalization and national emancipation that arose following the so-called *Ausgleich*, establishment of the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1867, terminated by the homicide of Jews by the Nazis during the Holocaust, from 1941 to 1944. The chronological and geographical scope is extended in several essays, which discuss their subject in a broader historical context, following personal biographies and migrations, or discussing the legacy of the past in the present day.

Late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Lviv was one of the locations in Austro-Hungary where the competing interests of multiple religious and ethnic groups reached a relative balance. Pursuing its own goals, each group was aware of the cultural codes of the others and often adopted their artistic rhetoric and ideological strategies. Collisions following the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and the collapse of the Habsburg mon-

archy in 1918 shattered the sophisticated equilibrium of co-existence. The outrages of the Second World War, especially the Holocaust, resulted in a deep existential rift between the groups.

Emerging from traditional societies, the communities of Lviv persistently strived for their respective national recognition, though within diverse geographical boundaries. In the atmosphere of vivid national consciousness, many creative individuals pronouncedly identified themselves – or were identified by others – with ethnic and religious groups. The Ukrainians and Jews formed the two largest minority populations in Lviv before the Second World War. Both communities shaped their identities in the context of the Polish dominance of the city, either in accord with or in opposition to this dominance, and – from the last third of the nineteenth century on – in the context of Polish national resurgence.

Ukrainian and Jewish artists were haunted by racial prejudices. At times, the art of both groups was ascribed by Polish art historians to provincial folk “traditions” rather than to mainstream European “civilization.” They colored both Ukrainians and Jews as conservative, perceived their arts as inert islands of obsolescence and alienation in the stream of dynamically progressing Polish and European “grand” cultures. The Ukrainians and Jews each faced discourses describing their arts in the context of evolutionist theories of culture, a “National

¹ The published papers were presented at the international conference “The Ukrainian and Jewish Artistic and Architectural Milieus of Lwów/Lemberg/Lviv: From *Ausgleich* to the Holocaust,” held at the Center for Urban History of East Central Europe in Lviv (November 2012).

Renaissance,” hearkening to a magnificent past, calls for revolutionary revisions of tradition, and the dichotomy of the European West versus the nebulous East. Ukrainian and Jewish cultures were each similarly accused of absence of any “national art,” but the Ukrainians were credited as indigenous folk artisans and builders, while the Jews were the reputed “artless people.”

Each Ukrainian and Jewish artist traced his or her own path through the conceptions of “national” cultures, alternately adopting and following, challenging and rejecting, or establishing new conventions. Our publication investigates how these artists constructed and perceived themselves, their artwork, social activities and group affiliations in relation to their communal, ethnic and religious identities. In doing so, we do not purport to provide a deterministic theory precluding the role of free-will in human lives, culture and art; rather, we highlight shared paths of construction, retention, reconstruction or deconstruction of cohesion within overlapping ethnic, national and religious communities sharing the same multicultural milieu.

Discussion of the Jewish and Ukrainian art in the multicultural atmosphere of historical Lviv is currently relevant in a time when both the Ukrainian and Jewish peoples are fostering respective cultures in their independent national states and considerable diasporas. The articles of authors from Ukraine, Israel, Poland, the USA, and Australia create a polyphonic voice reflecting the multicultural character of the subjects of their essays. The project brings together historians of art,

architecture and culture, and descendants of the Lviv artistic elites. We consciously juxtapose academic investigations and private memoirs or reflections to impart scholarly insight with a sense of personal involvement and an unbroken chain of generations.

The first chapter, *Native versus Alien*, contains Magdalena Kunińska’s post-modernist and postcolonial reflections on meta-history in Polish thought on art in post-Ausgleich Austro-Hungary. She analyzes the dichotomic theory by Marian Sokołowski (1839–1911), the founder of Polish art history as an academic discipline, who contrasted Polish and European art with Byzantine, Ruthenian, and Russian arts. Kunińska states that Sokołowski’s paradigm rooted in Eurocentric *allgemeine Kunstgeschichte* alienates Ruthenian art as allegedly petrified, irrational and immoral. Her persuading deconstruction of this concept suggests eradicating its relics from fossilized academic curricula.

The second chapter, *Human Dimensions of Nations’ Art*, discusses prominent persons who contributed significantly to art in Lviv and far beyond. Malgorzata Stolarska-Fronia reveals manifestations of self-identification as a provincial Jew in the artwork of Ephraim Moses Lilien (1874–1925), a graphic artist born in Drohobych and nurtured in Lviv, yet renowned among western-European Jewish elites. Stolarska-Fronia proposes that Lilien’s strong adherence to the “Jewish Renaissance” – a cultural trend seeking to construct a Jewish “national art” as a part of the ideology of Zionism – has its roots

in the atmosphere of Zionism and Jewish Nationalism in late-nineteenth-century Lviv.

Jerzy Malinowski and Monika Czekanowska-Gutman explore the art of another representative of cultural Zionism, Wilhelm Wachtel (1875–1952). Malinowski relates to the Christological subjects and allusions in Wachtel's iconography as the artist's quest for Jewish-Christian reconciliation. Wachtel's endeavor to re-join the Jewish fold resulted in his development of symbolic imagery propagating the establishment of the Jewish state in the Land of Israel. Czekanowska-Gutman focuses on Wachtel's illustrations to the Song of Songs in the Polish translation by Jerzy Żuławski, published in 1904 in Lviv. She interprets them as the artist's expression of a Zionist romantic vision of a pleasant and happy life, equality between men and women and their erotic emancipation in the Land of Israel.

The subject of Katarzyna Kulpińska's essay is a complex Polish-Ukrainian-Jewish self-consciousness implied by the avant-garde graphic works created by Leopold Lewicki (1906–1973) in interwar Lviv and Cracow and in the postwar Soviet Ukraine.

Three articles deal with the works and thought of the Jewish architect and theoretician Józef Awin (1883–1942). Sergey Kravtsov traces the evolution in Awin's theoretical views and architectural oeuvre from his all-embracing advocacy of a "Jewish Renaissance" to confining his interest in the monuments of Jewish art to his work as a curator and conservator, while

developing an international modernist style in his own architectural works. Żanna Komar discusses one of Awin's modernist architectural projects, the tuberculosis sanatorium in the Carpathian resort of Vorochta (1924–38), in the contexts of advanced medical technologies and nostalgia for the *Belle Époque* that imbues Thomas Mann's novel *Der Zauberberg* (1924). A glimpse into the personal life of Józef Awin is provided by a daughter of his only surviving child Hanka, Sylvia Yoma Tarquine. The author, a Holocaust researcher, adds considerably to our appreciation of her grandfather's human qualities, educational activities, artistic legacy and family values.

The third chapter, *Shaping Identities, Sharing Art*, ponders artistic partnerships, collaborations, and public displays of art. Weronika Drohobycka-Grzesiak analyzes the turning of Jewish architects Zygmunt Sperber (1886–?) and Ryszard Hermelin (1903–?) from national-romantic Jewish symbolism to modernism and an international style comparable to "Streamline Moderne" evident from their works in Lviv and Truskavets in 1930s. The scope of Małgorzata Geron's study embraces the Lviv members of the "Formists" group active in Poland in 1919–23: Ludwik Lille (1897–1957), Stanisław Matusiak (1895–1948?), Zygmunt Radnicki (1894–1969), and Zofia Vorzimmerówna (1902–1943). Beginning with a departure from the realism and impressionism dominating the Polish art of that time, they embraced the avant-garde, developing versions of expressionism, cubism, and futurism. Yurii Biryulov surveys the works of the Jewish sculptors of Lviv. A

novel artistic field for Jewish artists in fin-de-siècle Austro-Hungary, it became a conventional medium for transmitting Jewish national and religious subjects as well as universal messages in interwar Poland and for the Socialist-realism productions of 1939–41.

Olena Yakymova examines the monumental figurative sculptures decorating Lviv buildings of the early twentieth century as signs conveying to the passerby allegoric notions celebrating the building's founders or owners, or indicating its function.

In the fourth chapter, *Staging Art, History, and Community*, Iryna Horban and Vita Susak discuss the role of Lviv museums in the expressing and formation of ideology and national cohesion. Horban tells the stories of Ukrainian and Jewish museums and their curators until the collections were nationalized by the Soviet regime and dissolved in 1939–41. Susak focuses on the collections, venues, and curators of the National Gallery of Lviv City (nowadays Borys Voznytsky Lviv National Art Gallery), which staged artistic manifestations of national narratives and identities.

The fifth chapter, *Art for Life*, contains an article by Halyna Hlembotska, who for many years diligently researches the art and destiny of artists, victims of the Holocaust and those, who vigorously continued their creative work in the shadow of the violent death. Hlembotska devotes her current article to the Jewish artists and architects who were imprisoned by the Nazis in the Janowska Road concentration camp in Lviv in 1941–43.

The sixth chapter, *Metropolis and Diasporas*, dwell on the migration of Ukrainian and Jewish cultural patterns of Lviv, Galicia and Ukraine far beyond the region. Nadia Watson brings to our knowledge the Ukrainian folk art techniques and motifs maintained in the artwork of an Ukrainian émigré in Australia, artist and art educator Osyp Petriwskyj (1908–1980). He extended his creative activities to music and drama on nationalistic themes, and together with his wife Maria was teaching Ukrainian *pysanky* art (painting on eggs) and embroidery. The preservation of cultural identity by promoting the folk crafts and arts cohered the displaced Ukrainian community, reinforced its support of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Eugeny Kotlyar traces the wall and ceiling paintings in the synagogues established by Jewish immigrants from Ukraine in New York from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s. The author finds affinity between the murals of the Tsori Gilad Synagogue in Lviv (1936) and those of the American synagogues.

The seventh, final chapter *Constructing the Heritage* showcases the contemporary construct of the pre-Holocaust Jewish legacy in Lviv by Ronald Grun, a scion of prominent Jewish families of Lviv: the Miseses, Nierensteins, and Liliens. Grun, a musician educated in the USA and performing in Europe, considers his performance of klezmer-style music to be his return to the Galician roots. He mythologizes his personal and professional experience by constructing the narration of his chosen musical genre: the klezmer music stemming from the traditional Jew-