

BEAUTEOUS STRIVINGS
Fritz Ascher, Works on Paper

Curated by Karen Wilkin

Introduction by Rachel Stern

October 23–December 3, 2017

NEW YORK STUDIO SCHOOL
OF DRAWING, PAINTING & SCULPTURE

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Flower, undated. Watercolor on paper, 24 x 17 in. (61 x 43 cm)

Introduction by Rachel Stern

Berlin's expansive city forest, called the Grunewald, is beloved by its citizens and has time and again been portrayed by artists. Fritz Ascher took long walks there in the early morning, in the late evening and at night, at different hours of the day, during different seasons, and in varying light. Back home in the adjoining neighborhood of the same name, with villas on park-like grounds—the same neighborhood in which he survived, in hiding, between 1942 and 1945—he put his impressions on canvas or paper.

For the first time in the United States, more than thirty gouaches, selected by the exhibition curator, Karen Wilkin, are presented to the public. They give an intimate glimpse into Ascher's temperament and artistic personality and introduce his powerful and independent artistic voice.

Born in 1893 in Berlin to the dentist and successful businessman Hugo Ascher and Minna Luise Ascher (née Schneider), the artist showed his talent early. At the age of sixteen, he studied with Max Liebermann, who gave him the *Künstlereinjährige*, an art diploma, and recommended him to the art academy in Königsberg. Soon thereafter, back in Berlin, he studied with Lovis Corinth, Adolf Meier, and Kurt Agthe. Around artists like Ludwig Meidner, Jakob Steinhardt, Max Beckmann, and Emil Nolde, Ascher developed his Expressionist pictorial language and created powerful figural compositions, often dealing with existential questions. It seems that in 1914, shortly before the outbreak of World War I, Ascher and his friend and fellow painter Franz Domscheit set out for Norway and met Eduard Munch in Oslo. In 1918–19, the two friends stayed in Bavaria. Here, Ascher befriended the artists of *Die Brücke* and the weekly *Simplicissmus*,

and sent his paintings to various exhibitions and galleries, including the Glaspalast. In addition to drawings and paintings, Ascher started working on prints.

In 1933, after Hitler assumed power, the Jewish-born Ascher, described as a revolutionary and friend of the working class, was harrassed by the Gestapo. He hid among friends in Berlin and Potsdam, constantly changing his residence. He could no longer produce, exhibit, or sell his art.

During the November Pogroms of 1938, Ascher was arrested and interned in the concentration camp Sachsenhausen and in Potsdam prison. Released six months later, he now was under police supervision, and acutely aware of the danger of another arrest—and its consequences. In 1942, he was warned of his imminent deportation and went into hiding. Helped by Martha Graßmann, a family friend, he survived the Nazi regime by hiding in the basement of a bombed-out villa in the Grunewald neighborhood, surrounded by “Aryanized” villas in which high-ranking Nazis lived, and near the Grunewald train station, where the mass deportations of Berlin's Jews began. During these three years, he wrote poems. In lyric verses, Ascher dealt with the same themes that had previously appeared in his paintings. He wrote poems about love and the divine, and tributes to his artistic role models. In other poems, he turned to a new theme: they evoke nature as a place of refuge and a spiritual home. On April 25, 1945—only days before the war ended—bombs destroyed most of the artwork that Ascher had left with friends.

Ascher moved in with Martha Graßmann, who lived in the villa across the street from his hiding place. The artist lived the life of a recluse. Besides a girlfriend of

many years, Ascher's neighbors and few friends were his closest confidantes. He declined a teaching position. After successful exhibitions at the Buchholz Gallery, Berlin, in May 1946, and the Kunstamt Wilmersdorf, Berlin, in 1947, he declined every solo or group exhibition. Only the legendary Berlin gallerist Rudolf Springer, after years of persistence, managed to get Ascher to agree to a large solo exhibition, which took place in 1969, only months before Ascher's death.

Ascher turned away from the figural compositions of the Weimar era and focused mainly on the landscapes that he experienced in the nearby Grunewald. At the same time, he continued using the Expressionist visual language of vigorous brushstrokes and expressive colors. In 1952–53, the artist enjoyed a very intense working period.

Dr. Karl Ellwanger, who met the artist in 1955 or 1956, remembered, "As a matter of fact, I never saw him [Ascher] outside—only in his studio. This was an immense semicircular room on the ground floor—once probably the dining room—with an adjacent winter garden that was used as well. The paintings were piled up into the middle of the space." The studio was furnished with a sleeping couch and a desk. Ascher moved the easel with the daylight; next to it was a table with tubes of oil paint, brushes standing bristles up in a mason jar, and a rag reeking of turpentine. Weather permitting, he often worked in the winter garden. In the 1950s, that room had no heat or electrical light, so on cold and dark days the artist worked in an adjoining room, on gouaches.

Most gouaches are not signed or dated. Ascher used graphite for the works that he signed when he created them (see p. 5, opposite). When Martha Graßmann tried to convince the artist to sign and date all his work, he responded: "I do not need to sign it—people can see that I made them!" But Graßmann was persistent, and ulti-

mately convinced the artist to sign and/or date some of his work in retrospect. He did so with blue ballpoint pen (see pp. 9, 16, 19, 21).

Inspired by long walks, he created powerful images of trees, fields, and sunrises and sunsets, dominated by light and shadow. Intense colors express dramatic moods. Ascher created floral still lifes, among which sunflowers play a prominent role, often standing in the landscapes like glowing balls of sun. And then there are landscapes, very often with trees. Some have thick trunks that seem stoically to defy all manner of weather; other, thin-trunked trees seem exposed to the elements. The Grunewald is well known for its ancient tree population of pines and oaks. The strength and resilience of these trees, which have outwitted storms and seasons both alone and in pairs, become symbols of human hope.

Rachel Stern is director of The Fritz Ascher Society



Two Trees, undated. White gouache over black ink and watercolor on paper, 23¾ x 17¾ in. (60 x 45 cm)



Tree, undated. White gouache over black ink and watercolor on paper, 21 x 15½ in. (52.3 x 39 cm)



Sunflowers, undated. Grey gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper, 18¼ x 14½ in. (46 x 37.8 cm)

Discovering Fritz Ascher by Karen Wilkin

Any art historian or curator will tell you that it's extremely rare to be presented with compelling work by an unknown artist, especially by one from the period of that art historian's greatest concentration. Sad to say, there are often very obvious reasons why unrecognized painters and sculptors have remained unrecognized. (I'm excluding most of today's younger hopeful artists from this generalization, given the present day art world's distorted emphasis on financial worth at the expense of aesthetics; many current practitioners operate under the radar or show in alternative venues as much by choice as by necessity, pursuing self-imposed goals, driven by ambition for their work rather than by ambition for fame.) So it was an unexpected and wonderful surprise to be introduced to the potent paintings and works on paper of the Berlin artist Fritz Ascher (1893–1970) by my colleague Rachel Stern, director of the intriguingly titled "Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized, and Banned Art," when she was organizing a major retrospective of the artist's work. Both Ascher's name and the images I was shown were completely new to me, even though, as a specialist in 20th century modernism, I had rather presumptuously prided myself on knowing a respectable amount about progressive German and Austrian moderns, not only the obvious candidates but also some who were little known on this side of the Atlantic. I had organized a modest exhibition of George Grosz's works on paper, all made before he came to the United States, and written about Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Max Beckmann, and Egon Schiele. I had also prepared essays on their less familiar—at least, in America—predecessors, Max Liebermann and Lovis Corinth, and I knew something about the work of

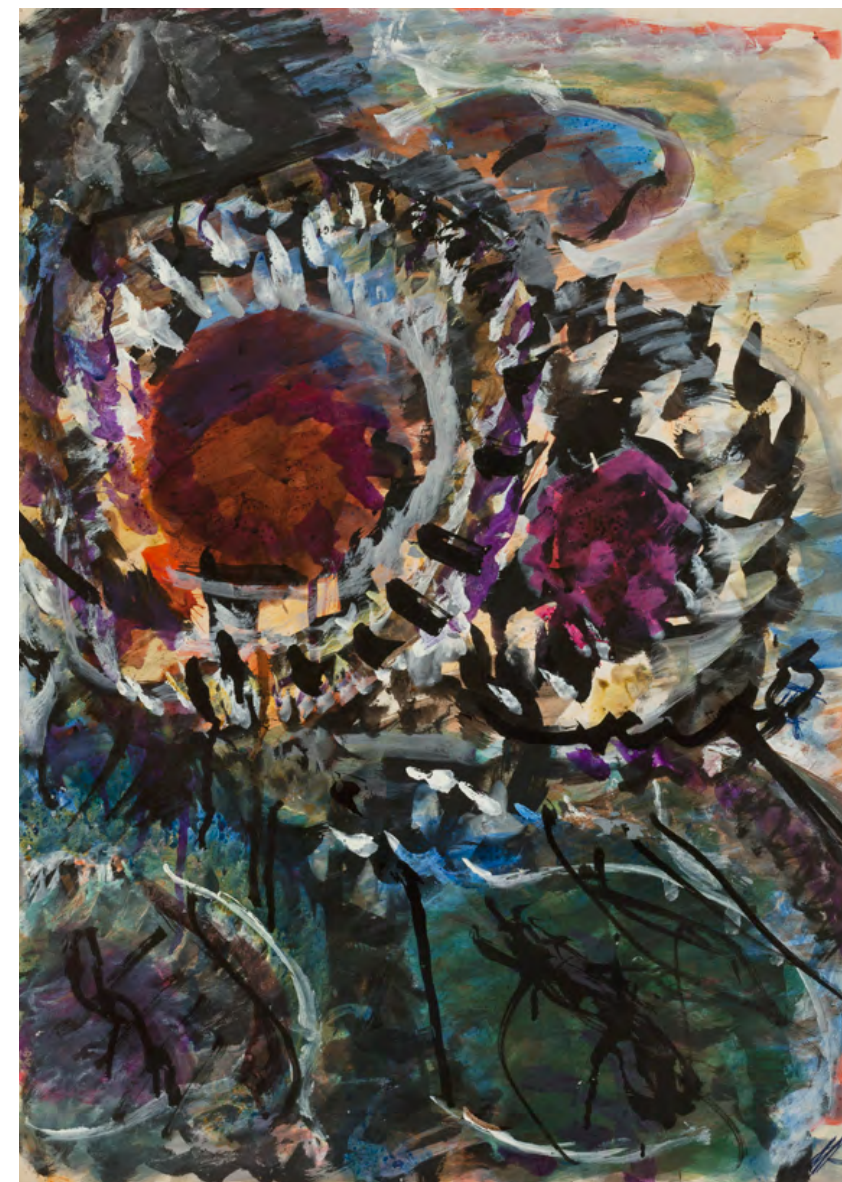
their more obscure compatriots, Max Slevogt and Richard Gerstl. Among more recent painters, I was a fan of Emil Schumacher, who was all but unknown in the U.S. But I was humbled by my complete ignorance of Ascher.

I tried to make sense of what I was seeing. Even in reproduction, Ascher's work seemed to share many of the qualities and characteristics I associated with his more celebrated compatriots, the rebellious artists of Die Brücke and Der Blaue Reiter. The mood of his works, like theirs, was one of intensity and simmering emotion; similarly, whatever the ostensible subject, it was presented in terms of high drama; even single figures appeared to have been conjured up at moments of tension and stress. Ascher's color, also like that of his Expressionist compatriots, was usually saturated and a little acidic, his touch urgent, his compositions compressed. Again, as in much of the work of the artists of Die Brücke and Der Blaue Reiter, Ascher's figures often had grotesque features and fierce expressions. They were disposed in exaggerated, frequently contorted positions, with their forms pressed close to the surface of the canvas or paper, whether shown singly or as participants in complex narrative scenes, some apparently symbolic, some dealing with religious subjects. Ascher seemed less eager than his Expressionist colleagues to appear to be what we might call a "primitive"—someone whose work embodied primal forces, unsullied by academic conventions. Yet even though his paintings seemed less deliberately crude or brutal than those of many of his colleagues, the powerful emotional undercurrents of his imagery, combined with the confrontational quality of his compositions and the vigor of his touch, made his works both hard to ignore and a little disturbing.

In addition to Ascher's narratives, there was another very different group of images among those I was being introduced to. They were apparently generated by equally deep feeling but were nonetheless quite unlike his symbolic and religious paintings. Even elusive, ambiguous story-telling seemed to have been banished; exaggerated figures and complicated groupings were absent, replaced by landscape elements. When I began to pay attention to the dates, I realized that these notable differences were neither just shifts in emphasis nor signs of an inventive artist's exploration of a range of subjects. Rather, they indicated both a chronological rupture and a distinct alteration in Ascher's very conception of what a painting could be. The works that suggested that he shared the fundamental aspirations of the Expressionists proved to be his earlier efforts, made in the 'teens and '20s. In them, there seemed to be echoes of Nolde's economy and tight focus, of Corinth's tightly-packed narratives, and, in a few examples, hints of Liebermann's broadly stroked, muscular German Impressionism. Sometimes, a flavor of Oskar Kokoschka's bold, emblematic treatment of the figure declared itself. Yet it was also clear that, despite the essential "Northernness" of these works, Ascher was also aware of Pablo Picasso's fractured space and, perhaps, of Georges Rouault's brooding religious scenes—among other things. It was obvious, too, that, at least in the earlier part of his working life, Ascher had looked hard at whatever adventurous work was available to him and had internalized a wide variety of possibilities of pictorial conceptions. (And, I later discovered, he had also accumulated and studied a broad range of books on the art of many different periods, as well as on art theory.) The landscapes were much later efforts, dating from the mid-1940s through the 1960s. They signaled a profound change not only in the choice of subject matter, but also

in fundamental approach. The conception and construction of the landscapes were markedly simpler and more direct than anything in Ascher's earlier pictures. While the later works were evidently, on some level, still informed by the same precedents as the work he had made at the beginning of his career, the landscapes seemed less visibly responsive to the example of other artists. Instead, they were conspicuously individual and personal.

While I was glad to have made the acquaintance of this interesting artist's entire extant body of work, it was unquestionably Ascher's late work that I found most fascinating. Most of these pictures were modest in size and on paper; all of them had been made, it seemed, in a great outburst of energy during the last decades of his life. I have described my initial impression of them as landscapes, to differentiate them from the dramatic narratives, figures, and figure groups, with explicit or implied religious or symbolic themes. But Ascher's "landscapes" were neither panoramic views of the countryside nor studies of how light falls on grasses and leaves. Instead, they were sharply focused evocations of small gatherings of a few monolithic trees. As I moved through Ascher's many iterations of the motif, I kept thinking that I was seeing the same trees at various times of day or in various seasons, but when I compared the works that I thought resembled each other, I always discovered that they were not only *not* the same, but also far less similar than I had thought. There were also flower paintings, mainly of sunflowers whose spiky circles filled the entire page, and hovering suns and moons. (Figures occurred infrequently, as the occasional head or self-portrait.) But if Ascher restricted himself to a very few apparently unprepossessing subjects, he also found in them room for endless, subtle variation. Yet this description implies a dispassionate, cerebral approach and, despite their nominally "neutral"



Two Sunflowers, undated. White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper, 24½ x 17⅞ in. (62.5 x 44.8 cm)

subject matter, Ascher's late works were no less passionate or emotionally charged than his earlier paintings. If anything, especially in the works on paper, his touch was far freer, more vigorous, and more urgent than anything in his earlier paintings, his color frequently more saturated and intense, albeit often dark and brooding. The pared-down images of trees and flowers sometimes appeared to have coalesced only momentarily out of skeins and scribbles, against broad sweeps and patches of color. It seemed that, in these works, Ascher had become less interested in subject matter than in the act of putting paint on a surface. At the same time, in contrast to the complicated compositions and literal fullness of the earlier works, the late landscapes were paradigms of economy and simplicity. It was as if Ascher had distilled everything with which he had loaded his complex earlier works into a restricted range of essential images, returning over and over again to a very few, deliberately limited themes and finding fresh emotional resonance each time he revisited them.

The more of the deceptively modest little late works I saw, the more engaged I found myself. Ascher's single-minded restatement of these motifs was part of their attraction. A sense of near-obsession, of ferocious concentration, of focus that excluded everything else, was palpable, made visible in the traces of his rapidly moving hand, driving across the paper, making loops and whorls, and then abruptly changing direction. At the same time, Ascher's repetitions seemed to bear witness not only to close observation, but also to an appreciation of nuance and difference. Just as in nature, no two trees, no two flowers, and no two sunsets are identical, each of Ascher's images of trees, sunflowers, or the sky seemed different, evoking changes in weather, time of day, and season in every work, no matter how loosely or energetically it was painted. Although he had evidently used and reused the

same subject countless times, each iteration seemed both freshly conceived and specific—a new consideration of an apparently inexhaustible motif, dictated not by random chance, but by particular experience.

Why had I never encountered Ascher before? Where did he fit in? His early years as an art student and practicing artist overlapped with those of the German Expressionists and it was evident that his work shared the mood, feeling tone, and many of the hallmarks of theirs. But Ascher was a generation or more younger than any of these distinguished compatriots, and even further removed from Liebermann and Corinth. He obviously saw exhibitions by all of these artists, and, as I later discovered, even had important moments of contact with some of the German Expressionists and their work, as well as with Liebermann and Corinth, the difference in their ages made the trajectory of his working life different from theirs. Unlike many of his older colleagues, Ascher not only lived through the carnage of World War I, but also through the horrors of World War II and well into the troubled decades of post-war divided Germany, as a resident of the outskirts of West Berlin. The more I learned about Ascher and his history, the more remarkable his work began to appear to me, particularly those late, striking images of landscapes and flowers. I also received confirmation of the origins of the overtones of possible influences visible in the earlier works I had been shown.

Born into an affluent Jewish family who had not only assimilated, but also actually converted (with the exception of Ascher's mother), the youthful aspiring artist's gifts were recognized early by Max Liebermann, the leading Berlin painter of the day. In 1909, at the age of 16, on Liebermann's recommendation, Ascher enrolled in the Königsberg Art Academy, the most progressive art school in Germany, at the time. In 1913, aged 20 and established

as an "independent artist" in Berlin, Ascher studied with Corinth. But his exposure to what we might call proto-expressionist art was not limited to German practitioners. In 1914, while traveling with an artist friend in Norway, Ascher most probably met Edvard Munch. Munch's emotionally loaded, physically robust paintings must have impressed the young man, and it's likely that meeting the distinguished Scandinavian artist may have confirmed Ascher's commitment to the emotion-laden direction he was already following. Yet it's probable that his befriending the artists of Die Brücke, on a trip to Bavaria, in 1918/1919, may have resonated even more with him, given the evidence of his extant work of the time. By the mid-1920s, Ascher was beginning to exhibit and receive some attention for his narrative and symbolist work, but the defining events of his career, as it turned out, were bound up with politics, not aesthetics.

At the end of January 1933, Adolf Hitler came to power. Ascher's life changed dramatically. As the son of a Jewish mother and as a committed modernist painter, he was doubly at risk, not only because of the rapidly escalating, increasingly restrictive racial laws enacted by National Socialism, but because of the regime's official suppression of what came to be called "degenerate" art. The details of Ascher's biography and the effect of events after 1933 on his work have been excellently recounted by Rachel Stern, Jörn Barfod, and Ingrid Mössinger in the informative bilingual catalogue of the retrospective, "The Expressionist Fritz Ascher: To Live is to Blaze with Passion." Briefly, the most salient facts are that he was arrested and interned twice, once at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and once at the Potsdam prison. Friends managed to secure his release, but he was obliged to wear the Yellow Star. Warned that his name appeared on a list of people scheduled for deportation, Ascher went into

hiding from 1942 to 1945, mainly concealed in the basement of the home of the friends who had succeeded in arranging for his release from prison, in Berlin's Grunewald district. Unable to paint for more than a decade, Ascher wrote poetry that, even in translation, conveys much of the fervid intensity of his paintings before 1933.

The year 1945, which, of course, saw the defeat of the Nazi regime and the end of World War II, was a crucial period in Ascher's life for other reasons, as well. In April, most of his art was destroyed in a bombing raid, four days before the allies liberated Berlin. Afterwards, emerging from his years of hiding, he continued to share a Grunewald residence with the friend who had protected him during the war. And, aged 52, Ascher began painting again in 1945. At first, he seems to have reworked some of his surviving works from before the war, all but eclipsing their images with aggressive slashes and spots of color, as if cancelling out his recollections of the past. He is said to have been reclusive and withdrawn during the post-war years, yet he soon began the series of landscapes and flower paintings that had so captivated me, inspired perhaps by the Grunewald forest, the vast Berlin woodland, a few blocks from where he was living, a project that occupied him for roughly the next twenty years of his life.

At first glance, these works seem at once immensely sophisticated, with their evident understanding and deployment of wholly modernist, uninhibited notions of how subject matter may be alluded to; the free gestures and unstable imagery of some works even suggest that Ascher was aware of American post-war abstraction. But these works can also seem deliberately "artless," with their uncomplicated compositions and schematic forms, evocative of children's renderings. Trees and flower heads are made into frontal, confrontational, forthright forms that all-but fill the entire page. Some are declarative, reduced

to almost emblematic “signs,” while others are constructed with richly inflected, unstable brushstrokes that can seem only tenuously related to the image. The energetic paint handling and the often provisional quality of these works notwithstanding, they suggest that Ascher chose such essentially banal, conventional subjects as trees and flowers in order to consciously divorce himself from emotionally loaded associations. At first acquaintance, there appear to be none of his earlier works’ overt suggestions of struggle or allusions to such loaded themes as *Passion of Christ* or tragic opera plots. We can read the tree and flower paintings as celebrations of the survival and continuity of nature even in the face of cataclysm. We can read the intense color of these paintings as evocations of changing light, times of day, weather, and seasons, while the vibrant brushwork can be read as a declaration of the power of growth, perhaps even as an equivalent for the restless, constant changes of the natural world.

We might not be wrong in attributing a desire to find comfort in the special characteristics of an urban forest to Ascher the survivor of the fraught war years; certainly there is a long tradition within German culture of aspiring to be “one with nature.” Yet, for all the seeming “neutrality” of his late works, powerful emotions seem to lurk just beneath the apparent directness and economy of the tree and flower paintings, just as in Ascher’s earlier symbolic and narrative paintings. Spend enough time with the late images and the trees, single or in rows, in groups of two or three, centered or pushed to the edge of the page, begin to take on the presence of particular persons. They become standing figures, confronting us, each as distinctive as any individual. Ascher’s way of rendering foliage as near-solid masses, poised above vertical trunks of differing thickness, enhances the ambiguity. Similarly, the sunflowers start to read as rather ferocious heads,

scrawled into being. The sunset landscapes resist being anthropomorphized, yet they share the underlying sense of animation that enlivens the trees and sunflowers.

Ascher himself perhaps said it most succinctly, in one of his undated wartime poems, written in hiding:

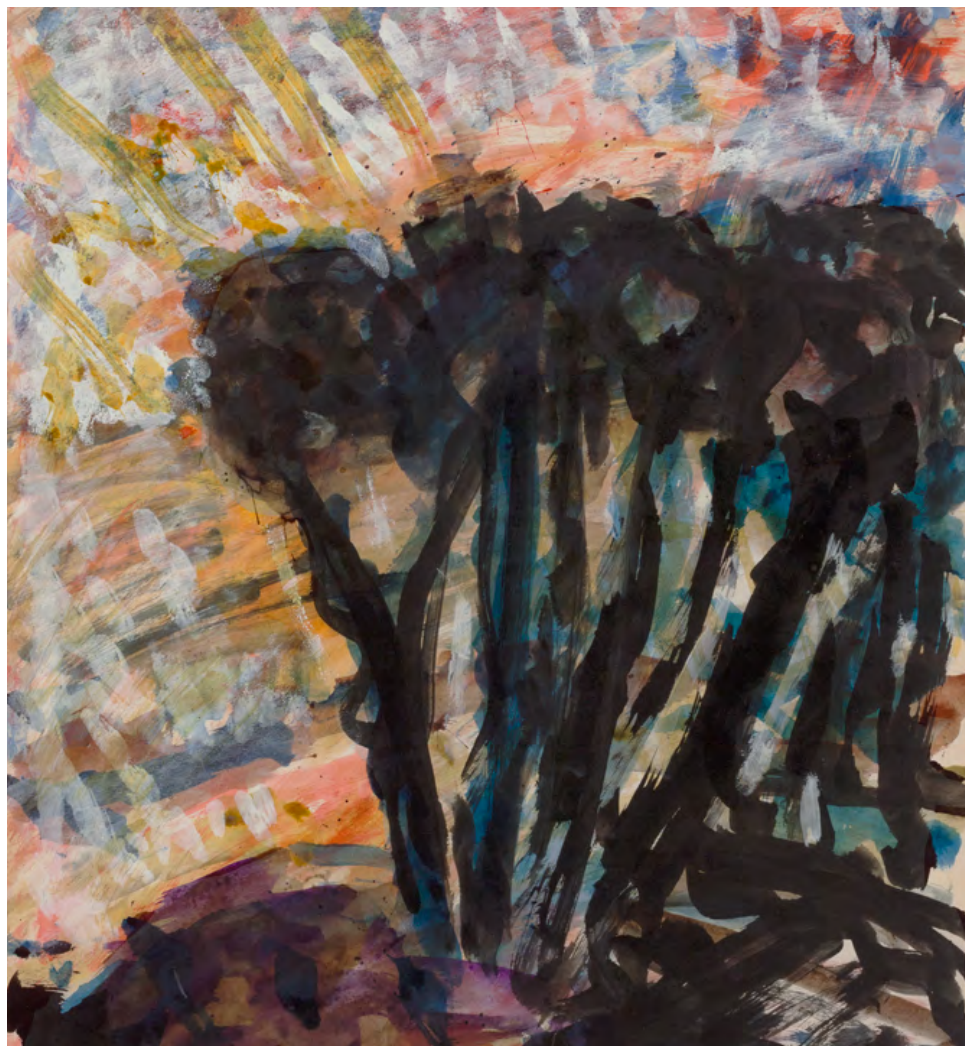
Love flowers,
extending and eternal.
Always I feel
myself excited
by all the changes
by all the paths,
always
I feel myself aglow with passion.



Three Trees, undated. Black ink on paper, 15½ x 11⅝ in. (39 x 29.5 cm)



Trees, undated. Black ink on paper, 15½ x 11⅝ in. (39 x 29.5 cm)



Trees, undated. White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper, 19¼ x 17¾ in. (48.5 x 44.7 cm)



Forest at Night, undated. White gouache, graphite and black ink over watercolor on paper, 17⅞ x 14⅞ in. (45 x 37.5 cm)



Three Crosses, 1959. White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper, 12½ x 13⅞ in. (32.5 x 34 cm)



Sunset, undated. Black ink and white gouache on paper, 15½ x 11⅞ in. (39.3 x 29.3 cm)



Moon Landscape, undated. Black ink and white gouache on paper, 15½ x 11⅞ in. (39 x 29.5 cm)



Flowers, undated. Black ink and watercolor on paper, 24 x 17 in. (61 x 43 cm)



Three Trees, undated. Watercolor on paper, 21½ x 17¼ in. (54.5 x 45 cm)



Four Trees, 1963. Black ink over watercolor on paper, 18¼ x 15¼ in. (46 x 38.8 cm)

Life by Life by Fritz Ascher

You howl,
In the midst of your beauteous strivings,
When fate's feet
Stomp them asunder.

You stride
Through the blossoms'
weaves –
And you murder
With every step,
those lives, –
Those fearing
Who shiver toward you.
: Destroyer
of careless fortune!

(Poems Vol. 1, undated, p. 41)

Leben um Leben

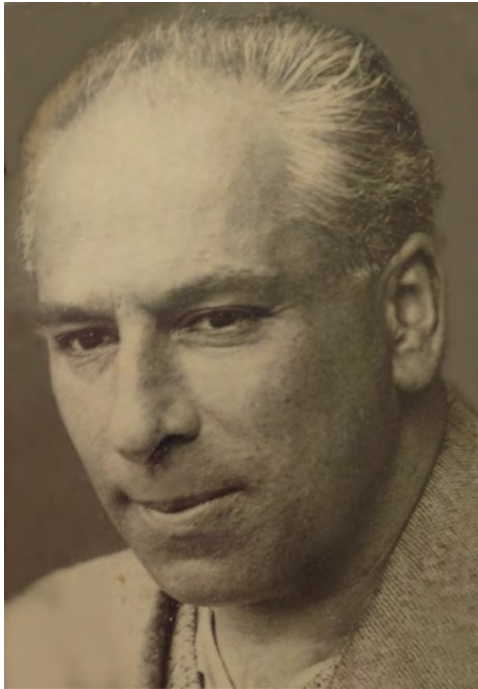
Du schreiest,
Um Dein schönes Streben,
wenn es ein Schicksal
Dir zertritt.

Du schreitest
Durch der Blüten
Weben: –
Und mordest
jeden Schritts,
die Leben, –
Die bangend Dir
entgegenbeben.
: Vernichter
Unbedachten Glücks.!

(Gedichtband 1, undatiert, S. 41)



Landscape, 1961. Black ink over watercolor on paper, 14¾ x 17¾ in. (37.5 x 45.1 cm)



Fritz Ascher, 1950. Bianca Stock, Munich

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

- 1 *Two Trees*, 1952
White gouache over black ink and watercolor on paper,
24½ x 17⅞ in. (62 x 45 cm)
- 2 *Sunflowers*, undated
White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper,
24⅞ x 17⅞ in. (62 x 45 cm)
- 3 *Sunflowers*, undated
White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper,
13⅞ x 13⅞ in. (34.5 x 34.5 cm)
- 4 *Two Sunflowers*, undated
White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper,
24½ x 17⅞ in. (62.5 x 44.8 cm)
- 5 *Two Trees*, undated
White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper,
18⅞ x 15¼ in. (47.5 x 40 cm)
- 6 *Trees*, undated
White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper,
22¼ x 17⅞ in. (56.3 x 44.8 cm)
- 7 *Trees*, undated
White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper,
19¼ x 17¾ in. (48.5 x 44.7 cm)
- 8 *Two Trees*, 1958
White gouache over black ink and watercolor on paper,
23¾ x 17¾ in. (60 x 45 cm)
- 9 *Tree*, undated
White gouache over black ink and watercolor on paper,
21 x 15½ in. (52.3 x 39 cm)
- 10 *Forest at Night*, undated
White gouache, graphite and black ink over watercolor on
paper, 17⅞ x 14⅞ in. (45 x 37.5 cm)
- 11 *Three Crosses*, 1959
White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper,
12½ x 13⅞ in. (32.5 x 34 cm)

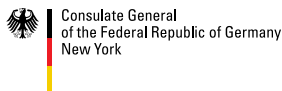
- 12 *Sunflower*, undated
White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper,
23 x 17 in. (58 x 43 cm)
- 13 *Sunflowers*, undated
Grey gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper,
18¼ x 14½ in. (46 x 37.8 cm)
- 14 *Flowers*, undated
Black ink and watercolor on paper, 24 x 17 in. (61 x 43 cm)
- 15 *Flower*, undated
Watercolor on paper, 24 x 17 in. (61 x 43 cm)
- 16 *Flowers*, undated
Watercolor on paper, 24 x 17 in. (61 x 43 cm)
- 17 *Three Trees*, undated
Watercolor on paper, 21½ x 17¼ in. (54.5 x 45 cm)
- 18 *Three Trees*, 1959
Black ink over watercolor on paper, 16 x 15¼ in. (40.5 x 38.5 cm)
- 19 *Two Trees*, undated
White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper,
24½ x 17¾ in. (62 x 45 cm)
- 20 *Three Trees*, undated
Gouache on paper, 18¾ x 13½ in. (47.5 x 34 cm)
- 21 *Trees*, undated
Black ink on paper, 15½ x 11⅞ in. (39 x 29.5 cm)
- 22 *Trees*, undated
Purple watercolor and black ink on paper, 15½ x 11⅞ in.
(39 x 29.5 cm)
- 23 *Tree*, undated
Black ink on paper, 15½ x 11⅞ in. (39 x 29.5 cm)
- 24 *Tree*, undated
Blue watercolor on paper, 15½ x 11⅞ in. (39 x 29.5 cm)

- 25 *Three Trees*, undated
Black ink on paper, 15½ x 11⅞ in. (39 x 29.5 cm)
- 26 *Trees*, undated
Black ink on paper, 15½ x 11⅞ in. (39 x 29.5 cm)
- 27 *Two Trees*, undated
Black ink on paper, 15½ x 11½ in. (39 x 29 cm)
- 28 *Two Trees*, undated
Black ink and watercolor on paper, 15½ x 11⅞ in.
(39 x 29.5 cm)
- 29 *Two Trees*, undated
White gouache over black ink and watercolor on paper,
26 x 17¼ in. (65.8 x 45 cm)
- 30 *Sunset*, undated
Black ink and white gouache on paper, 15½ x 11⅞ in.
(39.3 x 29.3 cm)
- 31 *Moon Landscape*, undated
Black ink and white gouache on paper, 15½ x 11⅞ in.
(39 x 29.5 cm)
- 32 *Forest at Night*, undated
White gouache, graphite and black ink over watercolor on
paper, 18 x 15⅞ in. (46 x 39 cm)
- 33 *"Three Trees"*, undated
White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper,
25¾ x 17¾ in. (65.7 x 44.7 cm)
- 34 *Four Trees*, 1963
Black ink over watercolor on paper, 18¼ x 15¼ in.
(46 x 38.8 cm)
- 35 *Landscape*, 1961
Black ink over watercolor on paper, 14¾ x 17¾ in.
(37.5 x 45.1 cm)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This catalogue is published on the occasion of the exhibition "*Beauteous Strivings*": Fritz Ascher, *Works on Paper* at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, October 23–December 3, 2017. Our special thanks to Karen Wilkin for initiating and curating the exhibition, and to Graham Nickson for supporting it. Further thanks to Rachel Rickert and Leeanne Maxey, as well as Jane Bobko. Sincere thanks to the lenders, and to the sponsors of the exhibition, especially Rivki and Lindsay Rosenwald and Steven Orlikoff. Additional support has been provided by the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany.

This exhibition is a collaboration of the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture and The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art, Inc., which researches, exhibits and publishes the work of artists that are not known, because they were suppressed by the Nazi regime.



Cover detail: *Two Sunflowers*, undated. White gouache and black ink over watercolor on paper, 24½ x 17⅞ in. (62.5 x 44.8 cm)

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