

**THE FRITZ ASCHER SOCIETY
FOR PERSECUTED, OSTRACIZED AND BANNED ART**



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Exhibitions

In 2019 we brought the Fritz Ascher retrospective, which traveled in Germany the past two years to six museums, to the United States. The exhibition “Fritz Ascher, Expressionist,” was on view at **New York University’s Grey Art Gallery in New York, NY** from January 9 until April 6, 2019.

3,772 visitors saw the exhibition, which was above normal attendance for an exhibition at the Grey Art Gallery. The critical and public responses for the show were very positive (and at times emotional) with strong attendance up to the last day of the exhibition. *Fritz Ascher* was reviewed positively in both the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Financial Times*. In addition to other online reviews, Channel 13’s popular program NYC-ARTS aired a short piece on the exhibition.



both photos: Grey Art Gallery, NYU, New York, NY, installation view.
Photos Rachel Stern (left) and Nicholas Papananias (right)

A 22 minute long **biographical film** was playing on loop in the exhibition, introducing the viewer to Fritz Ascher’s life and artwork, as well as the context of German and Jewish history.

28 events (receptions, gallery talks and tours, panel discussions, lectures, film screenings), of both scholarly and public interest, complimented the exhibition and involved many additional New York institutions and their constituency (Consulate General of the German Federal Republic New York, CUNY Graduate Center with it’s Center for Jewish Studies and the Art History Department, German Academy New York, Goethe-Institut New York, Leo Baeck Institute–New York/Berlin, New York Studio School, NYU’s Department of Art History, NYU’s Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies, NYU’s New York Institute for the Humanities, The Criterion Collection):

-Gallery Conversations

16 January and 6 February 2019: Rachel Stern, 3 April 2019: J. English Cook
Grey Art Gallery at New York University, New York

- Panel Discussion: European Modernism and Spirituality

Moderated by Rose-Carol Washton Long, Professor Emerita of 19th and 20th Century European Art, CUNY Graduate Center, with speakers Elizabeth Berkowitz, Mellon/ACLS Public Fellow, Rockefeller Archive Center; Matthew Drutt, editor, writer and independent curator; and Ori Z. Soltes, Teaching Professor of Jewish Civilization, Georgetown University. 30 January 2019, CUNY Graduate Center

- Conversation: Hiding: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany

Marion Kaplan, Skirball Professor of Modern Jewish History, NYU, and Rachel Stern, Director of the Fritz Ascher Society and Curator of Fritz Ascher: Expressionist
12 February 2019, King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center, New York

- Film Screening: People on Sunday, 1930

Silent film, introduced by Noah Isenberg, George Christian Centennial Professor and Chair of the Department of Radio-Television-Film, University of Texas at Austin
14 February 2019, Silver Center, New York

- Conversation: Methodology, Resources, Issues, and Challenges in Nazi-Era Provenance Research

Sharon Flescher, PhD, Executive Director, International Foundation for Art Research (IFAR), and Lynn Rother, PhD, Senior Provenance Specialist, Museum of Modern Art, discuss Nazi-era provenance research as it relates to museums, collectors, and the art market.
28 February 2019, Silver Center, New York

- Panel Discussion: Expressionism for Our Time

Expressionism for Our Time features a brief history of Western Expressionism by art critic and curator Karen Wilkin, followed by a conversation between contemporary artists Rochelle Feinstein, Judy Glantzman, and Adrienne Rubenstein with art historian Robert Slifkin
6 March 2019, New York Studio School, New York.



30 January 2019, CUNY Graduate Center, New York
Photos: Rachel Stern



28 February 2019, Silver Center, New York

In Germany, Fritz Ascher was highlighted in the exhibition “Im Reich der Nummern. Wo die Männer keine Namen haben. (“In the Country of Numbers. Where the Men have no Names”) at **Memorial and Museum Sachsenhausen, Oranienburg** from January 29 until July 31, 2019. The exhibition told the story of the detention and exile of the 6,300 November pogrom prisoners in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp on the basis of twelve individual destinies.



On October 19, the **Potsdam Museum – Forum für Kunst und Geschichte, Potsdam** exhibited and discussed Fritz Ascher’s art in it’s historical context during the day-long event “Zwischen Utopie und Exil. Musik und die Künste am Ende der Weimarer Republik. Der expressionistische Maler Fritz Ascher und die Kunst seiner Zeit.” (“Between Utopia and Exile. Music and Art at the end of the Weimar Republic. The Expressionist Painter Fritz Ascher and the Art of His Time.”)

Conference

On October 28, we held the one-day conference “Welcoming the Stranger: Abrahamic Hospitality and Its Contemporary Implications” at **Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.**

Welcoming the stranger is enjoined upon the ancient Israelites, for “you were strangers in the land of Egypt,” and oppressing the stranger is condemned by prophets throughout the Hebrew Bible—sentiments repeated in the New Testament and the Qur’an and elaborated in the interpretive literatures of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Both positive and negative responses toward such sensibilities have marked history within and beyond the Abrahamic traditions. In the wake of recent developments in America, this conference considered the theological underpinnings and the practical sweep of hospitality—and hostility—to outsiders, by those informed by these and other traditions, historically and from the Holocaust to the present day. The aim/intended impact of the conference was to provide as wide an audience as possible with a fuller and more concrete awareness of how the notion of

welcoming the stranger is understood within the Abrahamic traditions and has been activated across their respective histories--and to weigh that knowledge against present policies that they might therefore be inclined to address in a more active manner than heretofore. The very lively discussion at the end of the well attended conference proved the relevance of this topic.

Educational Programs

In addition to the Grey Art Gallery's active educational program, we developed a teaching handbook, and made it available for download on our website (<https://fritzaschersociety.org/learn/>). An educational program was developed by the Goethe-Institut New York in cooperation with the Fritz Ascher Society, with workshops about Fritz Ascher and Berlin, a booklet, an app, and the tour through the exhibition (<https://fritzaschersociety.org/learn/>; <https://de.actionbound.com/bound/FritzAscher>). This program used the Goethe-Institut's well-tested language program, and its nationwide network of German language teachers. The booklet was sent to all Goethe-Instituts in the US, and was made available online for download by the Goethe-Institut New York and the Fritz Ascher Society. More than 1000 German teachers in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, teaching at more than 300 schools and colleges, were invited to New York to participate in the program. Most students were High School age, and responded with much interest and curiosity and many questions about the art and the cultural and historical aspects of the program. The possibility to experience original art added an important aspect to their visit - an experience, which many of the students never had before.



National Competition for High School Students with Award Ceremony

High School students nationwide were invited to respond to the life or work of Fritz Ascher with an essay, a poem or an artwork. The invitation to the competition was communicated by the Goethe-Institut New York to their nationwide network of German language teachers, and by the Fritz Ascher Society to 43 private High Schools in the New York area, per mail and email, in newsletters and through social media channels. The Grey Art Gallery, the German Consulate General New York and Deutschlandjahr communicated the competition through their social media channels as well. Flyers with the invitation to the competition were distributed at the Grey Art Gallery, at the Goethe-Institut New York and the German Consulate New York, and were sent out to schools per mail.

We received more than 50 submissions per mail and email. Most of them came from schools in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Illinois. We were blown away by the deep and thoughtful responses, the creativity, and the high skill level of the work. The winners were awarded cash prizes (1st prize \$200, 2nd prize \$100, 3rd prize \$50), and invited to the award ceremony on May 1st, 2019 at 1014, New York. During the award ceremony, the winning entries (including honorable mention) were presented in an exhibition, which also included outstanding additional artwork.



Award Ceremony, May 1, 2019. 1014, New York. Photos Elias Wessel

Online Audience/Social Media

During the active run of the project (exhibition: January 9 – April 6, 2019, High School contest: 02/01-04/01, 2019) we had 33,359 impressions on Instagram and 5,077 likes, 32,600 post reach on Facebook and 2,145 post engagement, 54,031 impressions on Twitter. NYU's Grey Art Gallery had 50 to 100 likes on Ascher related Instagram posts, 40 to 70 responses for Ascher related public programs on Facebook. Goethe-Institut New York had 2,023 post reach on Facebook, 2,767 impressions on Twitter. We do not have information from "Deutschlandjahr". In March, we added Google Ad Grants to our social media portfolio, reaching out more aggressively to the general public.

Press (selected)

- Editors of ArtNews, "10 Art Events to Attend in New York City This Week", in ArtNews, 8 January 2019
- Tom L. Freudenheim, "Finally Home with the Greats. An exhibition places the under-the-radar Fritz Ascher squarely in the canon of 20th-century German artists." in Wall Street Journal, 9 January 2019, p. A13
- Ariella Budick, "Fritz Ascher in New York: sustained by art through the darkness", in Financial Times, 23 January 2019
- Hillary Ganton, "What If? The Life And Work of Fritz Ascher Part I", in <http://artwithhillary.blogspot.com>, 28 February 2019
- NYC-ARTS News: February 28 – March 7, Channel Thirteen, NYC-ARTS, 1 March 2019
- Hillary Ganton, "What If? The Life And Work of Fritz Ascher Part II", in <http://artwithhillary.blogspot.com>, 18 March 2019
- Irene Javors, "Special Museum Edge Review on Fritz Ascher", in State of the Arts NYC (<https://www.spreaker.com>), 31 March 2019

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