

THE FRITZ ASCHER SOCIETY FOR PERSECUTED, OSTRACIZED AND BANNED ART



**PROGRAM
REPORT
2025**

MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

I invite you to read about our activities in 2025 - a year in which we stepped up our work teaching the past in meaningful dialogue.

For centuries, we have built our Western civilization, and refined ourselves to become better and better parts of the societies we live in. Civilization has made culture possible, and with it art. It is shocking to realize how little it takes to lose it all.

Art has the power to enlighten, uplift, and help people recognize our common humanity even when confronted by inhumanity. How did artists react to the loss of civilization during the German Nazi regime? Our programs help guide our reflections and actions today.

We came together for 23 online events and 2 in-person events in our lecture series “Flight or Fight. Stories of Artists under Repression.” Thanks to collaborations with our international network of scholars and artist families, institutions and organizations we were able to bring brand new research and a wide range of programs to our audience to discover and discuss. With these events, our @fritzaschersociety YouTube channel has officially crossed 10,000 watch hours! Questions, thoughts and comments were also shared on our social media platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and X.

While the exhibition “Liebe und Verrat. Der Expressionist Fritz Ascher aus New Yorker Privatsammlungen” (Love and Betrayal. The Expressionist Fritz Ascher from New York Private Collections) was still on view in Freiburg, we opened the exhibition “Survival and Intimations of Immortality: The Art of Alice Lok Cahana, Rabbi Ronnie Cahana, and Kitra Cahana” at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education in Portland, Oregon.

Thank you to both museums for fabulous collaborations.

To better serve our growing global community, our website can now be read in English, French, German and Spanish - try it out (<https://fritzaschersociety.org/>)!

We could not have done any of this work without our supportive Board members, and our private and institutional donors, partners and friends.

Thank you all from the bottom of our hearts!

With gratitude and warmest greetings,

Rachel Stern



MISSION

The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art tells untold stories of artists marginalized and persecuted by the German Nazi regime between 1933 and 1945. By discussing, exhibiting and publishing their work, we commemorate their lives and artistic achievements and teach about the Holocaust. The Fritz Ascher Society furthers the understanding of the history of the 20th century and initiates an active dialogue about individuality and integrity in response to conditions of extreme duress and to political tyranny.

VISION

The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art enriches the understanding of the history of the 20th century by introducing untold stories of artists persecuted for their personal or communal identity by the German Nazi regime. Our projects aim to create a safe space that allows diverse audiences to discuss highly relevant topics in an environment that surpasses ethnic, cultural and religious differences. We encourage the embrace of otherness and openness towards the stranger, and ultimately help create a more empathic society.

Feedback from our audience

Susan: "I just wanted to let you know that I have been enjoying your presentations since Covid until now. This presentation today was fabulous. I just wanted to thank you so much for all that you do ... And, meeting you and thanking you personally for enriching my life as you have, would certainly be a highlight for me."

Nima: "This has been truly exceptional. A multidimensional eye-opener"

Veronica from Montreal: I much enjoy, and especially appreciate, the programming and the mission of the society in general. Wishing you continued success

Debra: Bravo, and brava. For your acumen, your care, your bravery, and the ability to field inquiries of great difficulty.



EXHIBITION

Survival and Intimations of Immortality:

The Art of Alice Lok Cahana, Rabbi Ronnie Cahana, and Kitra Cahana

at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education in Portland, Oregon, January 26 - May 25, 2025

This unique and powerful exhibition explores the role of art and creativity, bringing the past into the present by focusing on three generations of artists from the same family. Alice Lok Cahana (1929-2017) was a Holocaust survivor who pledged she would become an artist if she survived the war.

Rabbi Ronnie Cahana, Alice's oldest son, is a poet and survivor of a major stroke. Kitra Cahana, Ronnie's oldest daughter, is a filmmaker and photographer.

This exhibition reveals how the tragedy of the Holocaust impacted multiple generations of a family and how each member transformed the destructive trauma of the Shoah into acts of intense creative accomplishment, taking their own path to provide a through-line to preserving the memories, culture, and identity of their shared family and the Jewish people.

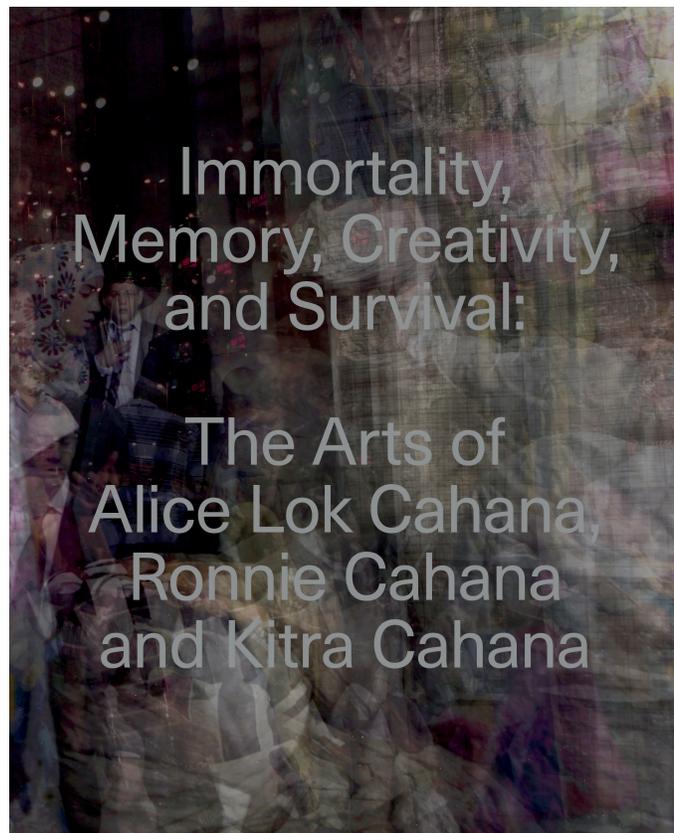
The exhibition was curated by Ori Z Soltes and organized by Rachel Stern in collaboration with OJMCHÉ.

More than 1,500 visitors saw the exhibition - a record attendance for the museum.

More than 400 people participated in exhibition tours and programs, and volunteers judged the exhibition "one of the best shows."

The exhibition was accompanied by a substantial book.

A PDF of the book and additional information about the exhibition including links to press coverage can be found on our website: <https://fritzaschersociety.org/trauma-memory-art/>.





EXHIBITION

Love and Betrayal – The Expressionist Fritz Ascher from New York Private Collections

Haus der Graphischen Sammlung, Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany),
November 8, 2024 – March 2, 2025

The late Expressionist artist Fritz Ascher (1893-1970) survived two world wars and persecution by the National Socialist regime.

Thanks to a cooperation between the Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art, New York, the Augustinermuseum and the Museum für Neue Kunst, the Haus der Graphischen Sammlung in Freiburg presented his early work for the first time in a concentrated selection of graphic works from November 8, 2024 to March 2, 2025.

These included charcoal, graphite and ink drawings, as well as brightly colored gouache.

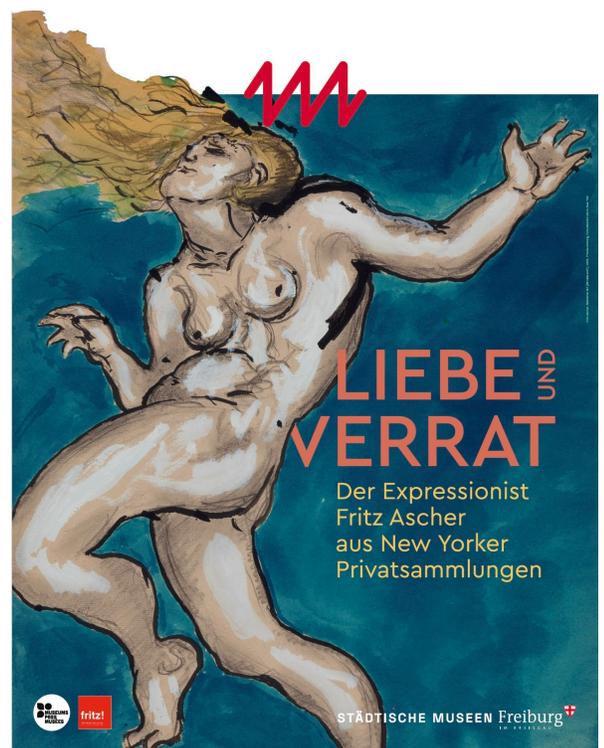
Mythological and literary, historical, and biblical themes demonstrate the breadth of Ascher's interests. He was always a keen observer of his time. Since 1916, he has explored the themes of love and betrayal in intimate drawings. The primal catastrophe of the First World War and the revolutionary unrest in Berlin led him to Christian-spiritual themes, which he radically reinterpreted. With his unique artistic voice, Ascher created expressive works on the Passion of Christ, the Last Judgment, and the figure of Bajazzo, the clown, whom he ultimately developed into his own life metaphor.

These works were complemented by Ascher's intense poems, which can be described as "unpainted pictures" and were created when the artist, persecuted by the National Socialists, had to hide in the basement of a Grunewald villa to escape deportation. Works by Lovis Corinth, Max Slevogt, Wilhelm Schnarrenberger, Ludwig Meidner and Jakob Steinhardt from the museum collection provided context.

The exhibition was curated by Jutta Götzmann, Managing Director of the Freiburg Municipal Museums, and Rachel Stern, Director of the Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art, New York.

More than 11,000 visitors saw the exhibition or attended one of the many tours and programs - a record attendance for the museum.

And we published a substantial exhibition catalogue.



FRITZ ASCHER ON JEWISH PLACES

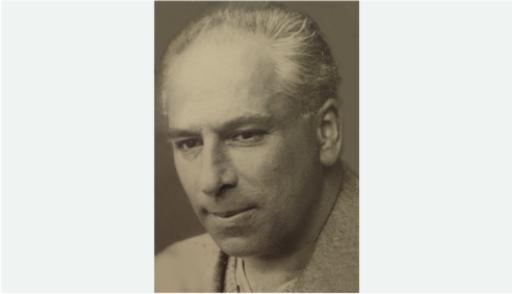
You can now virtually walk on Fritz Ascher's trail, on **Jewish Places**, a cooperative community project of the Jewish Museum Berlin. Take the (English language) **Fritz Ascher Tour** on the [interactive map](https://www.jewish-places.de/en/) on <https://www.jewish-places.de/en/>.

Thank you, Christina Jacob, for creating the tour!

On the trail of Fritz Ascher

Born on 17.10.1893 in Berlin
Died on 26.03.1970 in Berlin

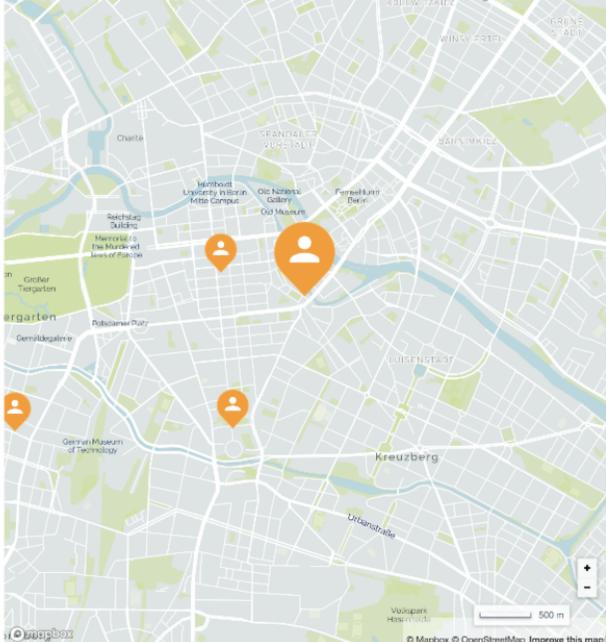
[Start tour >](#)



Portrait Fritz Ascher, 1939; Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art, New York., Photo: o.A., Rechte vorbehalten 

Job
Artist, Painter, Expressionist

11 Stops

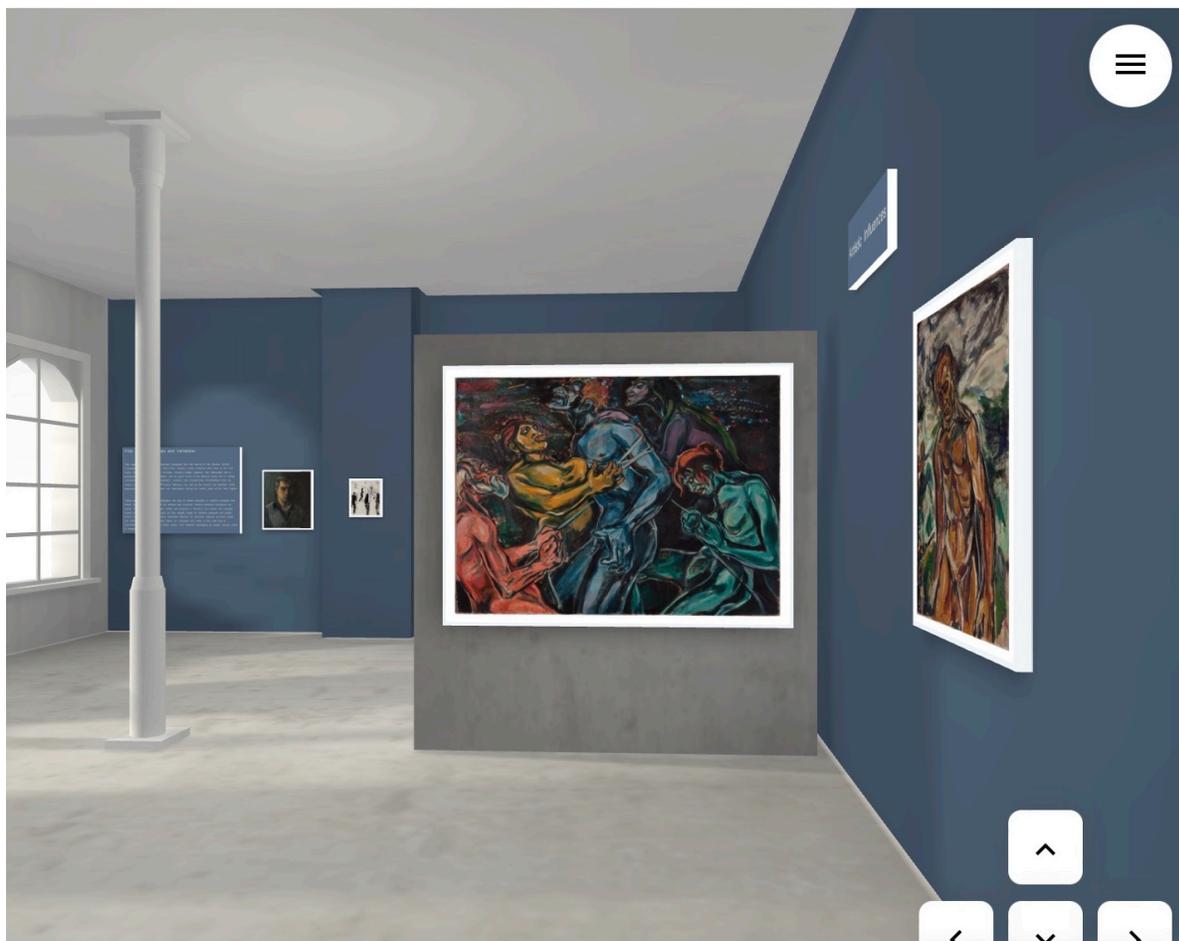


VIRTUAL EXHIBITIONS

“Fritz Ascher: Themes and Variations”

**<https://fritzaschersociety.org/fritz-ascher-themes-and-variations/>
until September 30, 2026**

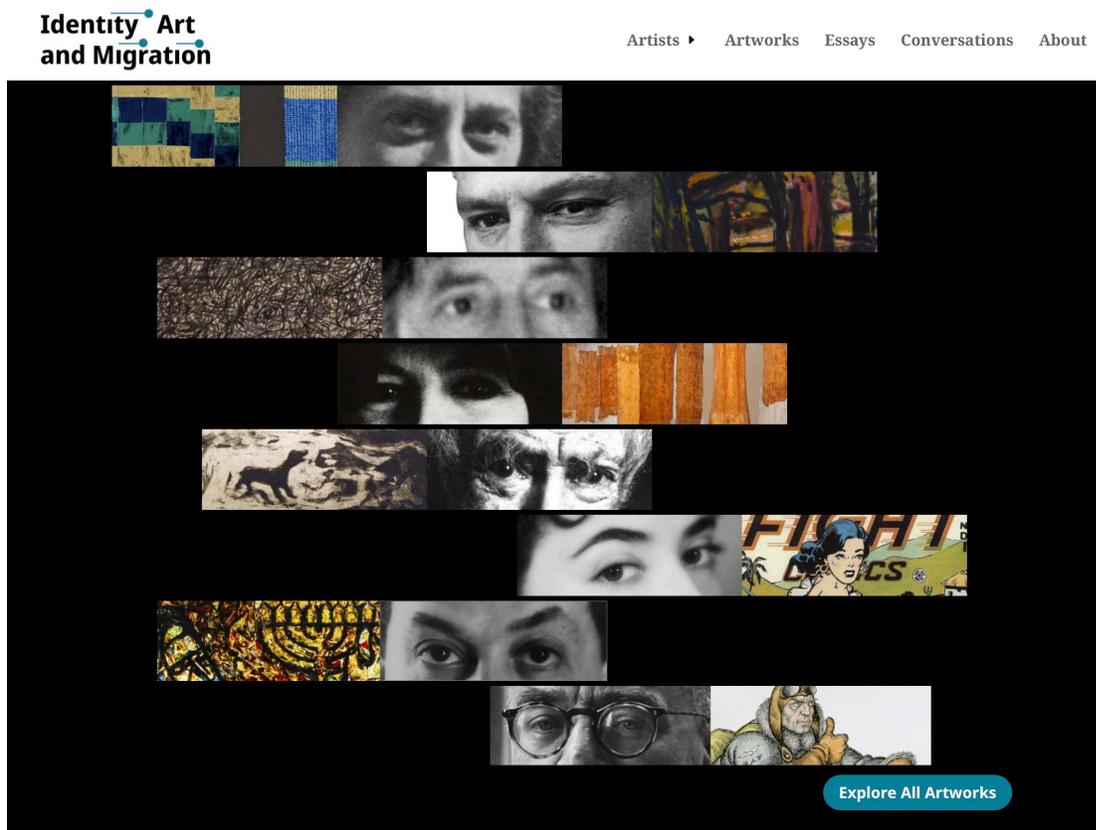
This exhibition allows a virtual tour of important examples from the oeuvre of the German Jewish Expressionist artist Fritz Ascher (1893-1970). These selected works are representative not only of critical moments in Ascher’s personal and artistic development, but also of key themes that occupied Ascher’s attention throughout his career. Through the links in every image description, and again on the website page dedicated to the exhibition, those key themes are explored in videos and interviews, photos and artworks, short introductions and scholarly texts.



“Identity, Art and Migration” (IAM)
(<https://migration.fritzaschersociety.org/>)
until February 27, 2027 (exhibitions planned for 2028)

Responding to today’s unprecedented numbers of migrants, our virtual exhibition “Identity, Art and Migration” investigates the experience of eight Jewish European artists who were forced to abandon their country of origin, or remain in hiding for years, in response to Nazi policies in effect from 1933 to 1945. These seven artists: Anni Albers, Friedel Dzubas, Eva Hesse, Rudi Lesser, Lily Renée, Samson Schames and Arthur Szyk emigrated to the United States, while one, Fritz Ascher, stayed behind in Germany, hiding in a basement for three years.

These artists’ lives and work address the multi-layered concept of identity and the particulars of its expression from slightly different angles. We invite you to explore with us how these wrenching experiences affected their sense of who they were, and the art they made.



In 2025, we added the Frankfurt-born artist Samson Schames to the exhibition.



VIRTUAL EVENTS

We continued the highly successful **online lecture series “Flight or Fight. stories of artists under repression,”** which investigates the untold stories of artists marginalized and persecuted by the German National Socialist regime and the context they lived in. All lectures were recorded and are available on our YouTube channel @fritzaschersociety.

Thank you to the artists, their friends and descendants and to the scholars who shared with us incredible artwork and inspiring life stories of creativity, determination, and resilience.





January 8, 2025

Fred Kormis (1894-1986) -
Sculpting the
Twentieth Century

Presentation by Barbara Warnock,
London (England)



The Wiener
Holocaust Library **fritz!**



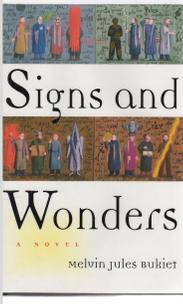
January 22, 12:00pm ET online

Making Way for Berthe Weill -
Art Dealer of the
Parisian Avant-Garde

Presentation by Lynn Gumpert,
New York



The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art



February 12, 2025

Signs and Wonders.

Author Melvin Jules Bukiet
in Conversation with
Artist David Stern



February 27, 12:00pm ET online

Love and Betrayal.
The German Jewish Artist
Fritz Ascher (1893-1970)

Presentation by Rachel Stern, NY
Organized by Richard Quinlan
Saint Elizabeth University, NJ



March 12, 2025

Art and Conscience
in a Time of Upheaval.
Ben Shahn (1898-1969)

Presentation by Ori Z Soltes,
Washington, DC



March 26, 2025

"There is something mad
about the art"
The German-Jewish Art Dealer
Alfred Flechtheim
and his Heirs' Fight for Restitution

Presentation by Michael Sontheimer,
Berlin (Germany)



April 9, 2025

Léo Maillot (1902-1990):
The Broken Mirror

Presentation by
Erik Riedel, Frankfurt am Main
(Germany)



For I See Old Things Happening Again:
Jill Freedman's "Missing Generations"

Presentation by
Susan Chevlowe, PhD
followed by conversation with
family member Wendy Wernick
both New York

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Through the Lens of Trude
Fleischmann (1895-1990)

Presentation by
Carey Mack Weber
and conversation with
Barbara Rosenberg Loss,
both Fairfield, CT



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May 21, 2025

Tamara de Lempicka:
Modern Maverick

Presentation by
Alison de Lima Greene,
Houston (TX)



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June 11, 2025
Victor Brauner's Departures and Returns

Presentation by Irina Cărăbaș, Bucharest (Romania), followed by conversation with Nicola Baird, London (UK)

Organized by The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art, NYC in collaboration with SOA - Romanian Diaspora and #CaracadeeYnet (CDV)

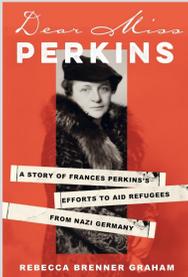


June 25, 2025

The Art Spy. The Extraordinary Tale of WWII Resistance Hero Rose Vallant

Book Talk by Michelle Young
 New York and Paris

Organized by The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art, NYC



July 9, 2025

DEAR MISS PERKINS. A Story of Frances Perkins's Efforts to Aid Refugees from Nazi Germany

Book talk by Rebecca Brenner Graham, Ph.D.

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July 23, 2025

WHAT IF?

Presentation by Ori Z Soltes, PhD Georgetown University Washington, DC

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August 20, 2025

Ruth Morley and Lore Segal, Kindertransport Survivor Artists on Film

Film Director Melissa Hacker in conversation with Rachel Stern

The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art, New York



August 27, 2025

The Three Exiles of the German-born artist Samson Schames (1898-1967)

Presentation by Annika Friedman (Germany) Rachel Dickson, PhD (UK) Ori Z Soltes, PhD (USA) Moderated by Rachel Stern

The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art New York



September 3, 2025

Theodore Fried (1902-1980): In Hiding and Beyond

Presentation by Sofia Thornblad, Tulsa, OK

The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art, New York



September 17, 2025

Samson Schames (1898-1967): Family and Friends

Conversation with Natalie Green Giles James McCaffrey Charlie Scheidt Moderated by William Weitzer, PhD

The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art New York

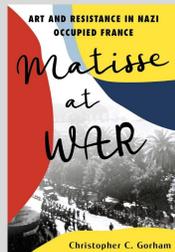


CHANGE OF DATE! September 30, 2025

Ossip Klarwein (1893-1970): An Architect's Journey from Berlin to Jerusalem

Presentation by Jacqueline Hénard, Berlin (Germany)

The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art



October 22, 2025

Matisse at War. Art and Resistance in Nazi Occupied France

Book talk by Christopher C. Gorham

The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art





November 12, 2025

**Confronting the Holocaust
in Midcentury American Art**

**Presentation by
Jennifer McComas
Eskenazi Museum of Art,
Bloomington (IN)**



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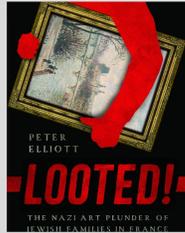
November 19, 2025

**From Vienna to Movies:
Costume Designer Ruth Morley at 100,
a birthday commemoration**

**Presentation by
Melissa Hacker
and Susan Gammie**



Organized by The Fritz Ascher Society for
Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art, NYC



December 10, 2025

**Looted! The Nazi Art Plunder
of Jewish Families in France**

**Book talk by Peter Elliott
(France)**



The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art, New York



IN-PERSON EVENTS



December 1, 2025

**Resistance and Art. The
"Red Orchestra" Anti-Nazi
Resistance Group in Berlin**

**Presentation by
Stefan Roloff, Berlin (Germany)**

School of Visual Arts, New York, NY

The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art, New York



December 3, 2025

**Flight or Fight? Artists
in Nazi Germany, 1933-1945**

**Presentation by Rachel Stern
New York, NY**

**Kupferberg Holocaust Center,
Queensborough Community College**

The Fritz Ascher Society for Persecuted, Ostracized and Banned Art, New York

