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JEWISH ART STUDIES IN THE LITHUANIAN YIDDISH PRESS OF THE INTERWAR PERIOD (1918–1940)

Summary. Lithuanian art studies as an independent branch of science began to take shape in the First Republic of Lithuania between year 1918 and 1940. During 22 years in a multinational free state, it followed a winding path of mastery, professionalism, and the formation of a critic's thought. However, if the origins, development, and forms of interwar Lithuanian art studies already are being explored, the Jewish art studies are still waiting for its first investigations. The purpose of this article is to broaden the scope of Lithuanian art research by incorporating the layers of interwar Jewish art studies conducted in the Yiddish language. Using the combined methodology of research as method of source studies, the aspects of social history of art and the comparative method, the Jewish art studies were analysed as a specific phenomenon which functioned alongside Lithuanian art studies. Throughout this research, over 1,000 Yiddish publications were reviewed to find the answers to the never previously discussed questions – how many Jewish art historians and critics contributed articles to the Yiddish press, what kind and quality of publications about Jewish art were featured, what aspects of Jewish art, artists, and society did Jewish art critics emphasise, and what kind of relationship existed among art critics, artists and public. The article also encompasses the short biographies of the most prominent Jewish authors in the field of art criticism.

Keywords: Jewish art, Jewish studies, Jewish art history and criticism, Yiddish press, interwar Lithuania.

INTRODUCTION

Lithuanian art studies as an independent branch of science began to take shape in the First Republic of Lithuania between 1918 and 1940. During 22 years in a multinational free state, it followed a winding path of mastery, professionalism, and the formation of a critic's thought. However, if the origins, development and forms of interwar Lithuanian art studies already are being explored, the Jewish art studies are still waiting for its first investigations. The purpose of this article is to broaden the scope of Lithuanian art research by incorporating the layers of interwar Jewish art studies conducted in the Yiddish language[1]. Using the combined methodology of research, first of all, the method of source studies in which the source itself (the press text) is considered as the object of art research, secondly, the aspects of social history of art and, thirdly, the comparative method, the Jewish art studies were analysed as a specific phenomenon which functioned alongside Lithuanian art studies.

The research investigated the extent, forms and directions of interwar Jewish art studies and aimed to address the following questions: 1) How many and what kind of publications about Jewish and non-Jewish art were featured in the interwar Lithuanian Yiddish press? 2) Which Jewish art historians and critics contributed articles to the Yiddish press? 3) What was the significance of their contributions to Jewish art? 4) What aspects of Jewish art, artists, and society did Jewish art critics emphasise? 5) What kind of relationship existed between artists and art researchers? These and other related questions were explored within the context of Lithuanian art studies.

There is a noticeable absence of works dedicated to interwar Lithuanian Jewish art studies in both Lithuanian and other languages. Consequently, this research delves into a novel topic, leveraging unique materials that have previously not been explored. The primary research source consists of texts authored by Jewish writers published between

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1918 and 1940 in the Yiddish press in Lithuania. From today's perspective, it may seem that general periodical press is not an appropriate place for art studies, even if some articles are written by art historians, however, at that time, only this kind of source was the place where the Lithuanian Jewish ideas of art history were born and developed. Throughout this research, over 1,000 publications were reviewed, with the majority of them being housed in institutions such as the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, the Vytautas Magnus University Library, and the Kaunas County Public Library. This research was made feasible through the valuable contributions of the Jewish historian, cultural expert, and translator Roza Bieliauskienė (1946–2023), who translated informational materials from Yiddish into Lithuanian.

The hub of artistic activity among Lithuanian Jews during the interwar period was concentrated in the provisional capital, Kaunas. It was in this city that the most influential Jewish newspapers, published in both Yiddish and Hebrew, were based. Most information was uncovered in one of the most popular Yiddish newspapers, *Di yidishe shtime* (*The Jewish Voice*, published from 1918 to 1940), which was the daily publication of the Lithuanian Zionist Organisation. Articles about art and exhibition reviews were also published in *Folksblat* (*People's Newspaper*, published from 1929 to 1940), the daily newspaper of the Lithuanian Jewish Education Society and the weekly *Apžvalga* (*The Overview*, published in Lithuanian from 1935 to 1940), affiliated with the Society of Jewish Volunteers in the Lithuanian Army.

A review of the Lithuanian-language press proved invaluable in addressing the questions posed in this research and in constructing a comprehensive overview of the history, theory, and criticism of Lithuanian art during the interwar period. As the 20th century began, the field of Lithuanian art studies was in its nascent stages. Concepts and ideas of art studies began to crystallise in various cultural and artistic magazines, including *Bangos*, *Baras*, *Gairės*, *Kultūra*, *Meno dienos*, *Meno kultūra*, *Naujoji Romuva*, *7 meno dienos*, *Vairas*, *Varpas*, *Židinys* and others. After Lithuania gained its independence, many intellectuals, who had previously studied abroad, returned home and assumed roles as the first generation of art researchers. Artists like Vytautas Bičiūnas (signing as V.B., V.B-s, or Spector), Paulius Galaunė (signing as P.G.), Halina Kairiūkštytė-Jacinienė, Antanas Rūkštelė, Justinas Vienožinskis, and others regularly wrote art critical articles and exhibition reviews. Notably, they also wrote about Jewish art, artists, and exhibitions, drawing comparisons between Jewish and Lithuanian art while seeking to identify distinct features of Jewish art.[2] Public figure, politician, artist, and art critic Bičiūnas (executed by the Soviet authorities in 1942) was particularly active in this field. His art critical articles were eagerly published in both Lithuanian and Jewish periodicals. Beginning in 1926, he contributed to the daily newspaper *Di yidishe shtime*, where he regularly published exhibition reviews and publications on Jewish art and artists.

During the interwar period in Lithuania, there were relatively few publications dedicated to art history or criticism. Notable among these publications was the three-volume *Universal History of Art*, self-published by the priest and art researcher Kazimieras Jasėnas between 1923 and 1938. Writer and diplomat Jurgis Baltrušaitis authored a two-volume *Universal History of Art*, which was published in 1934 and 1939. In 1930, artist and art researcher Ignas Šlapelis released the book *Outline of Art History*, which was followed by *History of the Art of the Roman Catholic Church* in 1935. However, it is worth noting that these works paid relatively little attention to the professional art of Lithuania. With the establishment of the restored independent state, the emphasis in national art research shifted towards the study of folk art. In 1929, the Lithuanian Art Society published *Lithuanian Folk Art*, a well-illustrated book authored by Rūkštelė. In 1930, the University of Lithuania released a richly illustrated monograph on Lithuanian architecture and folk art, titled *Lithuanian Folk Art: The Basics of the Development of Its Artistic Forms*, written by

Galaunė. From 1931 to 1939, the Chamber of Agriculture published a series of eight albums dedicated to folk art, *The Art of the Village*, compiled by Antanas Tamošaitis and Galaunė. Notably, Galaunė's monograph provided an important step toward recognising the multicultural heritage within the newly reconstructed nation-state. For the first time, it analysed the architecture of non-Christian ethnic communities living in Lithuania, including Jews, Karaites, and Tatars, in the broader context of Lithuanian architecture.

During the Soviet era, the development of interwar Lithuanian art criticism was not a focus of study. Contemporary researchers mainly concentrated on Lithuanian art studies, exploring the aesthetic views and pedagogical activities of individual figures. Dr. Žilvinė Gaižutytė-Filipavičienė delved into the ideas of art sociology developed by Šlapelis;[3] Dr. Jolanta Marcišauskytė-Jurašienė discussed the attitudes of Kairiūkštytė-Jacinienė, the first diplomate Lithuanian art historian, within the context of interwar feminism;[4] Dr. Aušrinė Kulvietytė-Slavinskienė analysed the contribution of Baltrušaitis to interwar art.[5] Biographical monographs also paid attention to the art critical activities of figures like Galaunė, Vienožinskis, and others.[6] While interwar Lithuanian art studies are still awaiting deeper research and systematisation, the works mentioned formed the basis for finding commonalities and distinctions between Lithuanian and Jewish art researchers.

The references provided in this article solely include art critical publications in Yiddish. Their authors discuss the development of Jewish art, analysing exhibitions and the work of artists. Although messages with informative content about exhibition openings and finissages, artists' arrivals and departures, obituaries, and similar content are important for reconstructing the interwar Lithuanian Jewish art scene, the timeline of exhibitions, and artists' biographies, the sheer volume of such materials and space limitations made it impractical to include them in the references. The Appendix at the end of the article encompass brief biographies of the most prominent Jewish authors in the field of art criticism within the interwar Lithuanian press, with their names highlighted in the text.

There is a significant problem of translating Jewish names from Yiddish to English. In this article, the most common spelling used today is, for example, Shalit (not Szalit) and Yellin (not Jelin). The unified system in transcribing Yiddish names and terms cannot exist as the same word was pronounced and spelled differently among different Eastern European Jewish communities. The Lithuanian Jewish community used the Litvak dialect of Yiddish, which was also reflected in the press of that time. In the references the Yiddish titles of the articles are translated into English because they are written not in original Yiddish letters but transcribed in Latin. The original titles in Latin alphabet, whether Lithuanian or German, do not need to be translated, as readers can translate them themselves.

THE BEGINNINGS OF PROFESSIONAL ART STUDIES

The foundation of art studies in interwar Lithuania began to take shape at Vytautas Magnus University. This is where Galaunė, a pioneering art historian and professional museologist, started teaching in 1925, and Baltrušaitis, known for his comparative studies in the context of world art studies, taught there from 1933.[7] The first Lithuanian art researchers encountered various challenges, including the absence of a standardised set of Lithuanian art terms. Baltrušaitis observed: "The history of art in Lithuanian is still relatively new, and there are many difficulties in presenting it. We still lack a well-established, precise vocabulary for various concepts, style definitions, forms, colours, and representations of individual data, and we had to seek the most crucial elements of terminology."[8] In contrast, Jewish art critic did not face this particular challenge. In their Yiddish articles, they made use of German art terminology,[9] often drawing from the five-volume *Jüdisches Lexikon* published in Berlin between 1927 and 1930.

At Vytautas Magnus University, Galaunė taught the courses in Universal Art History, Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian Art History, as well as Lithuanian Folk Art. Moreover, he led seminars on topics such as Lithuanian sacral art, folk art, and museology. Galaunė was among the first to emphasise Lithuania's multi-ethnic cultural heritage. In his monograph *Lithuanian Folk Art: The Basics of the Development of Its Artistic Forms*, he explored the architecture of synagogues, kenesas, and mosques, encouraging interest and preservation of these structures. Together with historian Augustinas Janulaitis, head of the Department of History in the Faculty of Law, Galaunė motivated students to write seminar papers on Jewish art and architecture.[10] The archive of Adelė and Paulius Galaunė at the M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art contains eleven such student papers. These papers varied in nature, with some offering overviews based on previously published information and research by other scholars,[11] while others were research papers focused on specific synagogues in Jurbarkas, Lazdijai, Prienai, and Panevėžys.[12] Students in the first group often drew from literature available in Lithuania, the *Jüdisches Lexikon* reference book, and the article titled "Jewish Painting and Art in Ancient Times"[13] by architect and art scholar Paul Romanov, published in the daily newspaper *Di yidishe shtime*. The students who explored Lithuanian synagogues primarily relied on visual sources. They closely studied the structure of synagogues, analysed drawings, deciphered Hebrew inscriptions, and conducted interviews with local rabbis and community members to gather insights into the construction of the synagogues, their architects, and decorators. Most papers stood out for their detailed analysis of the subject, the use of architectural and specialised terminology (e.g., 'aron kodesh', 'bimah', 'menorah', 'parochet'), the ability to work with archival material, and the provision of a comprehensive bibliography, demonstrating a solid grasp of professional art studies.

The second institution where students could gain knowledge of art studies was the Kaunas School of Art, which started its operation in 1922.[14] The school, rooted in the traditions of Lithuanian national art and academic-classical teaching, had two primary objectives: "to provide an outstanding pool of teachers for the network of secondary schools and to supply the country with much-needed artists".[15] In addition to providing instruction in drawing, painting, sculpture, general art history, and folk art, there was no specifically designed course programme for art studies. Each teacher at the school endeavoured to introduce students to the history and theory of art in their own manner. Adomas Galdikas, the head of the Graphic Art Studio, delivered lectures on the history of graphic art, ancient civilisations, and the evolution of Western European art. Bičiūnas was responsible for teaching the fundamental principles of art history. Šlapelis, an artist and the director of the Kaunas School of Art from 1929 to 1940, who had previously studied philosophy and art history at the Sorbonne University, offered classes on the history of art culture and the philosophy of art. These teachers did their best to expand their students' horizons, especially given that most of the art books available in the school's library were in foreign languages.[6]

The outbreak of the Second World War disrupted the operations of Vytautas Magnus University and the Kaunas School of Art. Consequently, the first generation of professional art historians and critics did not fully develop during the interwar period in Lithuania. However, art researcher Dr. Kulvietytė-Slavinskienė observed that the groundwork laid in the field of art studies during the interwar period yielded results in the following years, particularly in Soviet Lithuania, where it gained renewed significance and influence.[17]

ART STUDIES IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 1920S

In the early years of Lithuania as an independent state, the exhibition scene was not particularly robust, but it did witness several notable solo exhibitions by Jewish artists. These included exhibitions by Benzion Zukerman in 1920, Meyer Kodkin in 1921, Marc Chagall in 1922, a joint exhibition by sculptor Sarah Gorshein and Mstislav Dobuzhinsky in 1923, and exhibitions by Jacob Mesenblum

(known as Jacques Missene in Paris) in 1923 and 1924. This period saw not only the work of professional artists but also that of students. In June 1921, an exhibition featured the creations of students from the Advanced Drawing Courses led by Vienožinskis, which included young Jewish artists like Cile Epshtein, Gorshein, Meyer Grinberg, Jacob Koslowsky (known as Kazlauskas in Lithuanian press), and Isaac Kuper. From 1922 onward, annual exhibitions showcased the artwork of students from the Kaunas Art School.

During this period, both the Jewish and Lithuanian press paid limited attention to exhibitions featuring Jewish artists. The exhibitions of Kodkin and Chagall went almost unnoticed. The works of Mesenblum and Gorshein "generated relatively little interest, with few visitors to their exhibitions", according to Bičiūnas.[18] However, more attention was focused on the exhibition by Zukerman from Vilnius. This event marked the first broader publications dedicated to local Jewish art. Writer Moshe Shalit contributed a series of articles published in three issues of *Di yidishe shtime*.[19] Feivel Margolin, editor of several newspapers in Vilnius and a journalist, also wrote about the exhibition. Both authors provided professional analyses of Zukerman's work, recognising his "strong feel for Jewish art and his ability to reconstruct Jewish heritage in an original way".[20] Among Lithuanian critics, Adomas Jakštas, who was a prelate and philosopher, drew attention to the exhibition. He stressed its importance and expressed regret that other Jewish artists were not included in the exhibition. He stated, "We don't know if Mr. Zukerman is the only artist among Lithuanian Jews. If there are more of them, it is a pity that the Jewish Culture Section did not organise a joint exhibition of Jewish artists. Such an exhibition would give us Lithuanians an opportunity to better understand the ideological and technical aspects of Jewish artists' work."[21] Excerpts from his article were reprinted in Yiddish press.[22]

While the daily newspaper *Di yidishe shtime* had been in publication in Kaunas since 1918, it was not until 1920 that the first publications devoted to Jewish art started to appear. Alongside local publicists like Shalit and Margolin, the daily began featuring articles by international authors: articles by the French critic N. Frank and I. A. Lapidus, a special correspondent for *Di yidishe shtime* in Paris, about the success of Jewish diaspora painters in France;[23] an interview with Polish-born and London-based artist Leopold Pilichowski about Jewish art in Palestine;[24] publications about one of the first Eastern European Jewish artists, Moshe Maimon,[25] a sculptor who lived in the United States, Victor David Brener,[26] the creator of the portrait of President Abraham Lincoln on a one-cent coin, decorator and scenographer Leon Bakst,[27] etc.

Starting from the initial years of the Lithuanian state, Yiddish literary culture flourished. Literary societies were established, publishing almanacs that occasionally featured articles about art. In 1924, the literary magazine *Vispe* (*The Island*, published between 1921 and 1924) featured an essay by writer Yakov Flapan, exploring the artistic journey of Gorshein, a sculptor from Švenčionys who studied in Paris.[28] Jewish literature studies were more advanced compared to art studies, and thus, writers, poets, and literary critics were the first Jewish art scholars.

Judging from the press and the biographical facts of Jewish artists, in the early 1920s, there were few established Jewish artists in Lithuania. Consequently, articles dedicated to Jewish art were relatively rare. Many prominent Lithuanian Jewish artists, such as Neemiya Arbiblatas (later known as Arbit Blatas), Zale Beker, or Jacob Lipschitz, were still living in exile in Russia or Ukraine.[29] Others, like Max Band, Sholom Feigenzon, Issai Kulvianski, Girsh Markus, Yehezkel Streichman, among others, had just begun their studies abroad.

ART STUDIES IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 1920s

The Jewish art scene in Lithuania gained momentum during the latter half of the 1920s. Jewish artists, many of whom had returned from exile or

completed their studies at art institutions abroad, began actively participating in exhibitions organised by the Society of Lithuanian Art Creators and the Lithuanian Art Society. Over this period, approximately 40 solo exhibitions were held in Lithuania, with ten of them featuring Lithuanian Jewish artists. These exhibitions showcased the works of artists like Arbit Blatas (held in 1926, 1927, and 1928 in Kaunas), Band (held in 1925 in Kaunas), Feigenzon (held in 1926 in Panevėžys), David Kagan (held in 1925 and 1926 in Kaunas), Sholom Zelmanovich (held in 1925 and 1928 in Kaunas), and a joint exhibition by Moshe Cesler and Josif Levinson (held in 1926 in Kaunas). Additionally, exhibitions featuring artists living abroad were organised, including those in 1925 by students from the Bezalel Art School in Jerusalem, founded by Boris Schatz from Varniai, and in 1927 by Bezalel Malchi (Solnicki), who emigrated as a child from Simnas to Palestine. Another exhibition featured works by the Ukraine-born American Samuel Greenburg alongside Arbit Blatas from Kaunas in 1928. This flurry of solo exhibitions reached its pinnacle with the first joint exhibition of Lithuanian Jewish artists in November 1929, providing art enthusiasts and critics with a deeper understanding of Jewish art and the artists behind it.

Among the solo exhibitions held, the exhibitions of Band in 1925 and David Kagan in 1926 garnered the most attention. An article in *Di yidishe shtime* featured a speech by the director of the Kaunas Hebrew Real Gymnasium, Cemach Feldstein (signing as V.C.F.), delivered at the opening of Band's exhibition. In his speech, Feldstein not only discussed the artist's work and its unique characteristics but also emphasised the progressive role of fine art in advancing Jewish national culture:

> *For a long time, the world held onto the theory that the Jewish people were incapable of creating something significant in art, that we lacked the talent for it. But the great Jewish artists of modern times have shattered this theory. Following our great musicians, our great painters emerged and demonstrated what Jewish genius was capable of. Great artists have emerged in all the countries where our communities reside. Our Mark Antokolsky became a renowned sculptor, and now our young artist Max Band has been entrusted with the mission of representing Jewish Lithuania in the world of art.*[30]

David Kagan held his first solo exhibition in Berlin in 1924, which was met with success and garnered positive reviews. Artist Issachar Ber Ryback wrote an extensive article in the Berlin press, praising Kagan's drawing technique, the diversity of his compositions, and the specificity of his chosen themes. This article was later reprinted in *Di yidishe shtime*.[31] Following Kagan's 1926 exhibition in Kaunas, the doctor of philosophy and art critic John Veisbart published a review, in which he highlighted "the schematic fusion of Byzantine art styles and cubism" in Kagan's painting and sculpture, illustrating the connections between his work and the history and destiny of the Jewish people.[32] Veisbart also conducted guided tours of the exhibition, where he provided in-depth insights into the artist's works. Ruvin Rubinstein, the editor of *Di yidishe shtime*, also shared his thoughts on Kagan's work, referring to him as a "lamedvavnik", one of the thirty-six righteous who, according to Jewish folklore, uphold the world.[33]

Some of the solo exhibitions received less attention. However, two publications stood out for their professionalism and topical analysis of the artworks. Veisbart wrote an article about Malchi,[34] and Raphael Chasman published a piece about Cesler and Levinson.[35] The field of art studies was further enriched by articles discussing art abroad. A. Olshanski wrote about Yehuda Pen,[36] the first teacher of the renowned painter Chagall and the founder of the Vitebsk Art School. Moshe Kitai (signing as M. K-i), a Riga-based journalist whose articles were often featured in the Lithuanian Jewish press, contributed an article about the art of the Soviet Union.[37] Several publications were dedicated to artists who had emigrated to Paris, with contributions from the artist Mané-Katz, as well as journalists Sh. Gomelski and Kitai.[38]

The First Joint Exhibition of Lithuanian Jewish Artists, which took place in Kaunas in November-December 1929, featuring 105 works by sixteen artists, garnered significant attention in both Lithuanian and Yiddish press. Veisbart pointed out that this exhibition "vividly showcased the artistic endeavours of Lithuanian Jewish artists, presenting a rich collection of artworks".[39] Bičiūnas emphasised that "while the public had heard about individual Lithuanian Jewish artists like Band, Arbitblatas, Mesenblum, Markus, and Gorshein, among others, the joint art exhibition of Lithuanian Jews was an unexpected novelty".[40] The exhibition received short reviews in Yiddish, Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian publications. More in-depth articles were written by Rubinstein and Veisbart.[41] Lithuanian artists Petras Kalpokas and Šlapelis also shared their impressions in *Di yidishe shtime*.[42] Many authors stressed that the exhibition had the potential to foster closer cooperation between Lithuanian and Jewish artists. The exhibition catalogue expressed hope that "finally, it could build a bridge of true art over cultural and national divides, as the language of art has always been the most powerful medium to unite people from various backgrounds".[43] Veisbart wished that "the exhibition would contribute to breaking down national and other barriers among people".[44]

The Yiddish press also began to cover the Lithuanian art scene and various exhibitions. In 1929, the daily *Di yidishe shtime* devoted considerable attention to the conflict between "progressive" and "conservative" teachers at the Kaunas School of Art, the subsequent student strike, and the expulsion of the striking students (some of the Jewish students involved in the strike included Beker, Isaac Joffe, Lipschitz, Girsh Rozenkranc, and Abraam Sherenzon). Veisbart started to contribute regular articles about Lithuanian art. Notably, he wrote a series of three articles titled "Contemporary Lithuanian Art". In these articles, he discussed the works of Antanas Aleksandravičius, Galdikas, Kalpokas, Vienožinskis, Antanas Žmuidzinavičius, and other artists.[45] He also provided art critical reviews of exhibitions by Jonas Mackevičius, Juozas Zikaras, Kazys Šimonis, and Kajetonas Sklėrius.[46]

In the second half of the 1920s, a new and engaging format emerged in Lithuanian Jewish art criticism – studio visits and conversations with artists. One of the notable examples was Kitai's publication from the studio of the Latvian Jewish artist Mikhail Jo, which stood out for its professionalism.[47] Natan Grinblat, the editor of *Di yidishe shtime*, described a serendipitous encounter with the artist Band on a street in Marijampolė, which led to a visit to Band's studio and an exploration of his freshly painted canvases.[48] Veisbart visited the studio, a small rented room, of sculptor Gorshein in Kaunas. She had temporarily returned from Paris and was working there. Veisbart analysed the evolution of her work, the shift in artistic styles, and her latest works, and acknowledged that she "effectively conveyed the contemporary issues of our time through the means of modern art".[49] These studio visits and the ensuing discussion about the artists' works and art in general allowed readers to gain a deeper understanding of the artists and their creative processes.

ART STUDIES IN THE 1930s

In the 1930s, the exhibition scene witnessed increased dynamism and diversity, hosting approximately 200 solo exhibitions, with over 40 of them specifically showcasing the works of Jewish artists. A fresh wave of artists, trained at the Kaunas School of Art, emerged, presenting their creative endeavours. Notably, artists returning from abroad contributed to this vibrant scene – Kulvianski briefly revisited from Berlin, Band and Arbit Blatas returned from Paris. Arbit Blatas inaugurated the Gallery of Modern Art in Kaunas, holding eight exhibitions within a year. Artists like Albert Rappaport from Anykščiai, Sidney Gelfand from Viekšniai, and Malchi from Simnas made their way back from the USA, while painters Streichman from Kaunas and Israel Tal (was born as Tau) from Vilkaviškis visited Lithuania from Palestine.

This surge in exhibition activities was not confined to the temporary capital alone but extended to Marijampolė, Šiauliai, and Panevėžys. In the years

1932–1933, Lazar Kagan organised an exhibition tour across Lithuanian cities, showcasing his cartoons and caricatures in Klaipėda, Palanga, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Kaunas, Ukmergė, Telšiai, Plungė, Mažeikiai, and Biržai. These itinerant exhibitions introduced a novel cultural experience to Lithuania, notably invigorating the provincial cultural life.

Joint exhibitions featuring Lithuanian and Latvian Jewish artists were held in Kaunas in 1931 and in Riga in 1932, forging stronger collaborative bonds between the two countries. Subsequent exhibitions in Riga were held by Max Ginsburg in 1933 and Lazar Kagan in 1934. The works of Mikhail Jo and Konstantin Visotski, residents of Riga, were showcased in Kaunas.

Exhibitions promoting the art of Eretz Israel garnered considerable interest. In 1932, the Jewish National Foundation (Keren Kayemet LeIsroel) and the Lithuanian Jewish Women's Organisation WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organisation) organised exhibitions across several Lithuanian cities, offering the opportunity to acquire paintings and various artifacts crafted by artists from Eretz Israel. Streichman, an artist from Palestine and a Kaunas native temporarily residing in Lithuania, played a pivotal role in organising and designing these exhibitions.

The inaugural joint exhibition of Lithuanian Jewish artists in 1929, followed by the collective exhibition of Lithuanian and Latvian Jewish artists in 1931, spurred increased interest from critics and the public in Jewish art. Articles by Veisbart and Vienožinskis appeared in the Lithuanian press, the Yiddish press featured pieces by Feldstein, Koslowsky, Kitai, Vulf Lacki-Bertoldi, Rubinstein, and others, while Evgeniy Shkliar contributed to the Russian press. These authors discussed the features of Jewish art and grappled with the question: "What is Jewish art?" Articles by foreign authors, including the publication "Is There Jewish Painting?" from *Le Mois*, further explored the Jewish segment within the works of artists such as Chagall, Chaim Soutine, Moïse Kisling, Julius Pascin, and more.[50]

Following the establishment of the Gallery of Modern Art in Kaunas by Arbit Blatas in 1932, Veisbart as well as poet Chaim Yellin (signing Ch. J-n), and Mark Razumny emerged as the primary critics covering its exhibitions in the Yiddish press. These critics underscored the Gallery's significance in shaping the tastes of not only Lithuanian art scholars but also the broader public, introducing them to new tendencies and trends in European art.[51] Artist Markus, inspired by U.S. contemporary painters Benjamin Kopman (Copmann, b. 1887 in Vitebsk – d. 1965 in New York) and Feiga Blumberg-Kopman (later known as Yuli Blumberg, b. 1894 in Kaunas – d. 1964 in New York), wrote an article about them.[52] The exhibition of Mikhail Jo from Riga garnered substantial attention from critics, including publications[53] by Kitai, Lacki-Bertoldi, Feldstein, and the debutant art writer Jankev Gotlib. Unfortunately, sustaining the Gallery financially proved challenging for Arbit Blatas, resulting in the cessation of Gallery activities in May 1933 and prompting the artist's return to Paris.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, as exhibition activity intensified, discussions about the functions of art and the goals of art researchers became more prominent. Influenced by Catholic ideology and the Lithuanian culture shaped by national romanticism, both Jewish and Lithuanian critics predominantly stressed the cognitive and educational roles of art. An unidentified journalist, B.K., discussing an exhibition of paintings by students of the Kaunas Hebrew Real Gymnasium and its educational methods, highlighted the importance of developing the talents of all school students, "training them in the basics of drawing, including colours, shapes, perspective, and composition rules <…>, as it could play a significant role in their future lives."[54] The artist Koslowsky posed a question about why an "intelligent person" knows much less about art than literature. He suggested that "if art were taught for six to seven years in high school, introducing students to the most important art masterpieces, everyone would be able to discuss art as they do literature."[55] Koslowsky emphasised that understanding art does not come out of nowhere, it requires learning, while an art critic should not

only criticise authors and works but also teach viewers to know and understand art.[56]

After the years of 1929–1933 that were particularly rich in exhibitions, the activity of Jewish artists slowed down, a fact noted by local journalists. In 1935, editor and theatre scholar Chaim Leikovich observed:

> *In the last couple of years, our society has witnessed a complete loss of taste and interest in works of art. The vibrant constellation of young Jewish artists, once active participants in art exhibitions showcasing their skills and talent, has fallen silent, making rare appearances in public. The apathy and indifference of Jewish society toward these emerging artists have further depleted the already fragile artistic life in Lithuania.*[57]

In the 1930s, the newspaper *Di yidishe shtime* continued to publish the largest number of art critic articles. Alongside it, the daily *Folksblat* and the Lithuanian-language weekly *Apžvalga* also began to be published. While these publications covered exhibitions, artists, and their works, the authors of the articles largely remained the same as those contributing to the *Di yidishe shtime*. Veisbart remained the foremost expert in art studies. Unfortunately, his premature death in 1934 marked the loss of one of the preeminent professionals in art criticism in interwar Lithuanian art history.

In the mid-1930s, the personality of Veisbart's wife, Estera Eljashev-Veisbartienė, a doctor of philosophy, started to emerge. Her first art critical articles appeared in 1928, and since then, she consistently shared her insights in both the Yiddish and Lithuanian press. Often, her focus was on the individual artist, providing thorough analyses of the works of Ginsburg, Beker, and Rappaport.[58] In contrast to most interwar Lithuanian art scholars, Eljashev-Veisbartienė prioritised the content and ideas behind the works, only exploring their formal features afterward. Among Jewish art scholars, she stood out not just as the sole woman but as a professional art connoisseur and a profound analyst. In 1938, commemorating her 60th birthday, R. Rubinstein underscored that Eljashev-Veisbartienė was "unique", "impressing with her knowledge", and that "her range of cultural interests is extremely wide", and he continued:

> *In her critical articles, she employs psychological empiricism to extract the main idea of the work from its depths. <...> As a result, her writing might seem challenging for the reader, requiring a slow and careful perusal to better comprehend her thoughts and conclusions. <...> Following her husband Dr. Weisbart's demise, she emerged as the most renowned critic of our art. Both the Jewish press and Lithuanian publications eagerly feature her reviews of exhibitions and artworks. Possessing a keen sense of colours and the language of hues, she prioritises seeking an idea, a vital core, in works of art. Only afterward does she delve into the purely painterly aspects and technical colour combinations.*[59]

Despite regular publications in the main Yiddish and Lithuanian interwar periodicals that covered exhibition reviews, artist biographies, analyses of their work, and art history articles, a meeting-discussion of the *Naujoji Romuva* club on 28 November 1938, involving Bičiūnas, Antanas Gudaitis, Vytautas Kairiūkštis, Juozas Keliuotis, Adolfas Valeška, Vienožinskis, and others (with about 30 participants in total), concluded that "art criticism is almost non-existent in Lithuania so far, what exists is only dilettantish speculations, ignorant attacks, and tendentious propaganda."[60]

SOCIETY

At the close of the 19th century, poet and painter Mordecai Zvi Mane, born in a small shtetl in the Vilnius Governorate, Radoshkovichi (now in Belarus), a graduate of the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, wrote in a letter to a friend: "The entire goal of my articles on art is to awaken love for the fine arts among our fellow-believers and to popularise facts of art. We are still looking for material benefit in everything and above all national benefit,

forgetting that any Jew is a human being and should therefore love art and knowledge, even if they are unrelated to Jewish nationality."[61] Nearly half a century later, the objectives of Jewish artists and art historians remained quite similar, with one of the most significant aims being "to awaken love for the fine arts". Within the Lithuanian Yiddish press of the interwar period, frequent grievances can be found about the limited interest that Jewish society showed in art.

Interwar art historians and journalists often emphasised the importance of establishing favourable conditions for the advancement of Jewish art and the attitudes of Jewish society toward art. In discussing the work of Jonava-born artist David Kagan, Ber Ryback noted:

> *Our history contains hidden talents that, in their small towns, never had the opportunity to fully blossom and were lost. It would indeed be a great loss if Kagan did not have access to modern artistic culture, its contemporary technical possibilities, and the Jewish ways. Kagan must continue to develop, and then he will undoubtedly claim his rightful place in our Jewish art. To support his development, to create the appropriate conditions for him to freely express his natural talent – this is the greatest responsibility of our society in Jewish culture.*[62]

Other authors also highlighted these concerns. A correspondent from *Di yidishe shtime*, when discussing Mesenblum's 1924 exhibition in Kaunas, lamented the low attendance and stressed that, without adequate public support, a generation of professional Jewish artists would not emerge in Lithuania: "The indifference of the Lithuanian Jewish population towards art creates a void around the artists, pushing them to leave Lithuania, to roam and work abroad."[63] In 1927, journalist Kitai observed that "the Baltic countries have never been overly abundant in art, and societal indifference undermines the motivation of Jewish artists to create. The artist remains isolated and utterly desolate, lacking warmth and left to the mercy of God and their own devices."[64] A few months later, editor Rubinstein expressed similar sentiments: "Kaunas is deaf to the sounds of art and rushes to the cinema more eagerly than to art exhibitions. Artists genuinely lament the thick-skinned and unresponsive nature of Kaunas."[65]

The situation regarding the Jewish community's attendance at exhibitions remained quite similar even into the 1930s. The lacklustre turnout of Jewish community members at exhibitions was mentioned by C. Feldstein when discussing Beker's 1933 exhibition,[66] as well as by F. Icikson in relation to Beker's 1937 exhibition. The latter went further to add that "you can find all kinds of 'art' among Jewish art lovers except paintings by Jewish artists."[67] In 1940, the artist Beker himself lamented: "There is no other nation but us, the Jews, that has such a lack of cultural engagement with art. <...> Our intellectuals are unmoved by the most sophisticated visual expressions or the most beautiful and perfect works of art."[68] Beker strongly encouraged the Jewish community to attend art exhibitions and support young Jewish artists by purchasing their artworks: "During solo exhibitions of Jewish artists, not even paintings by the most renowned artists are ever sold. <...> Not to mention exhibition attendance! A mere 120–150 people attend a Jewish exhibition, while the Jewish population in Kaunas numbers 40.000."[69]

The Lithuanian public showed a significantly higher level of engagement with art exhibitions, including those featuring Jewish artists. When discussing a 1931 exhibition of Lithuanian and Latvian Jewish artists in Kaunas, a correspondent of *Di yidishe shtime* observed that "most of the visitors to the exhibition are Christians, and Jews are rarely seen among them", and posed the following queries: "What does it mean? Are we really culturally behind or lagging in comparison to our non-Jewish fellow citizens? Are we truly so immersed in our religious studies that we cannot afford spiritual enjoyment? Where are our intellectuals and our youth?"[70]

These passages from the publications illustrate that the interwar Lithuanian Jewish society displayed a

notable lack of enthusiasm for attending art exhibitions and seldom invested in purchasing artworks. As a result, it was nearly impossible for artists to support themselves solely through their art. Most artists sustained themselves by working as art teachers in secondary schools or by offering private art lessons. Some even shifted their careers to become artisans. The most determined artists ventured abroad in pursuit of better opportunities and a more vibrant artistic environment. This exodus included Band in 1920, Tal in 1923, Mesenblum, Arbit Blatas, Markus, Streichman, and Koslowsky in 1924, Joshua Jashpan and Leiba Maram in 1925, Zoma Baitler in 1927, Pinchus Abramovich in 1929, and Cesler, among others, in 1935. This mass emigration of highly talented artists thinned the ranks of professional Jewish artists and impeded the development of Jewish art in interwar Lithuania.

CONFLICTS

Conflict situations between artists and art critics were relatively infrequent, but on occasion, disagreements did emerge and were documented in the press. One such situation arose in January 1931 during an exhibition of Lithuanian and Latvian Jewish artists in Kaunas. The exhibition garnered considerable coverage in the press, with articles published in Yiddish, Lithuanian, and Russian. Prominent Lithuanian painters Kairiūkštytė-Jacinienė and Vienožinskis, as well as writer Liudas Gira, expressed positive sentiments about the exhibition. These three figures held influential roles in interwar Lithuanian art criticism. Short reviews of their articles even appeared in the Yiddish press: "Lithuanian art critics praise the Jewish exhibition"[71] and "Non-Jewish press about the exhibition of Latvian and Lithuanian Jewish artists".[72]

Veisbart also contributed a lengthy article about the exhibition, which was published in both Yiddish and Lithuanian. While he praised the initiative to organise such exhibitions, he also critiqued the work of specific artists, reserving particularly harsh criticism for Koslowsky. In his words, "His paintings reflect a great influence of his teachers and famous international artists. At the moment, this artist still has no hope of becoming an independent artist."[73] During this period, Koslowsky had already studied at the Florence Academy of Fine Arts (Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze) and the Paris School of Fine Arts (École des Beaux-Arts, Paris). He regularly participated in prestigious exhibitions such as the Salon d'Automne, Salon des Indépendants, and Salon des National in Paris. He maintained a studio in Montparnasse, frequented by famous artists like Henri Matisse, Chaim Soutine, Michel Kikoïne, Pinchus Krémègne, and other celebrated figures of the art world. Thus, Koslowsky gave his response to Veisbart's insulting words:

> *An ordinary visitor, when attending an exhibition, learns to appreciate it. Even if they may not have extensive expertise, they do not misguide others. The situation worsens with so-called critics who, lacking specialised training and not even having seen key classic originals, persist in sharing their opinions in the press. After all, what word can be more authoritative than the printed one, even when it appears entirely absurd? Therefore, such 'critics' do double harm: they impede artists and lead the audience astray. Throughout the history of art, we've seen such individuals in every era, and they've unquestionably caused significant harm to the world of art. <...> Mr. Veisbart is one of them.*[74]

Beker and Markus came to Veisbart's defence. They argued that Koslowsky had acted unethically by critiquing Veisbart and his colleagues, with whom he had participated in the same exhibitions,[75] as Koslowsky had criticised the drawing and colour scale of Beker and Markus while discussing their works. The conflict that arose within the community of Jewish artists was glossed over by the editorial board of *Di yidishe shtime*, which emphasised that "the assessment of works of art is a subjective matter":

> *Critics and viewers, alike, possess the liberty to form their distinct opinions and approaches to artistic matters. Consequently, we do not concur with Mr. Koslowsky's critique of Mr. Veisbart,*

asserting that the latter "lacks an understanding" of art, nor do we agree with the counter-arguments made by other artists against Mr. Koslowsky. Each artist, critic, or spectator is entitled to their individual perspective.[76]

In January 1933, another conflict between Veisbart and Jewish artists unfolded when the critic expressed unfavourable comments about the works of the artist Mikhail Jo from Riga, which were displayed in the private Gallery of Modern Art established by Arbit Blatas.[77] Veisbart wrote: "Mikhail Jo's paintings exhibit involvement in an extensive array of styles and colours. A consistent form, character, and unified colour scheme are absent in this exhibition. <...> These works appear to be the products of a tasteless freedom."[78] Despite Arbit Blatas's request for Veisbart to periodically provide coverage of the exhibitions in his Gallery, the artist responded to the criticism with notable sensitivity. Arbit Blatas drafted a public letter, in which he did not shy away from ad hominem remarks:

The attack by our local art recluse, Mr. Veisbart, resembles the spiteful and venomous rantings of an unwell person. <...> A true critic should possess the ability to perceive and understand works of art from various trends, recognising some degree of talent, uniqueness, and positivity in each artist's work. Such 'critics', driven by personal ambitions, find themselves deeply vexed by the emergence and flourishment of Jewish art and often vent their frustrations through a sadistic style of criticism. It's unfortunate that articles of this nature are published, given their minimal impact on our society. In my opinion, the exhibitions I've organised in Lithuania, as well as the interest they've garnered, including the one featuring Mikhail Jo, provide the most compelling critique of the artist and his works.[79]

Veisbart immediately sent a public response, in which he noted that it is "a bad sign when matter-of-fact art reviews provoke such wild anger. <...> A critic is not a philanthropist and is free to speak a critical word."[80] These episodes reveal the professionalism of the art critic Veisbart, his refusal to conform to the artists' wishes or the public's taste. Veisbart, who had earned a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Berlin, stood out as one of the most prominent, bravest and critical figures among Lithuanian art critics during the interwar period. Reasonably, artist Arbit Blatas named him as "local recluse".[81] Starting in 1926, Veisbart authored exhibition reviews and critical articles on both Jewish and Lithuanian art, which were published in Jewish, Lithuanian, and German newspapers and magazines based in Kaunas and Klaipėda, conducted guided tours for Jewish and Lithuanian art exhibitions, delivered public lectures, and spoke at exhibition openings. Consequently, his praise or critique held significant weight in Kaunas society. Regrettably, his untimely death prevented the full blossoming of Veisbart's talents, constituting a grievous loss to the field of Lithuanian Jewish art criticism during the interwar period.

Publications by other art historians and critics had a more positive tone. While they did critique the motifs, compositions, and colour choices of young artists, they emphasised their talent and encouraged them to continue their development and studies. Leikovich, Gotlib, and especially Bičiūnas were not shy about offering criticism to young talents. However, public conflicts between art critics and artists were rare.

CONCLUSIONS

Vytautas Magnus University and the Kaunas School of Art stood as the pioneering institutions in interwar Lithuania, offering foundational art studies to the youth. However, they lacked a structured curriculum dedicated to the specific training of art historians, critics, and theoreticians. With the establishment of Lithuania as an independent state, a cohort of writers, philosophers, and artists who had either studied abroad or relocated due to the disruptions of the First World War front line made their way back. It was these individuals who shouldered the responsibility of the initial art scholars, contributing articles to cultural and artistic publications. Consequently, the fundamental tenets of

art studies during interwar Lithuania did not crystallise in academic or artistic institutions but rather found development on the pages of periodicals.

From the nascent days of Lithuania's independence, a pivotal force in shaping Jewish art history emerged through the daily newspaper, *Di yidishe shtime*. In the first half of the 1920s, an average of up to ten art-related publications found their space in the newspaper annually. Subsequently, in the latter half of the decade, this number surged to 20–25. In 1929, the *Folksblat* newspaper made its debut. Both periodicals published exhibition reviews, artists' biographies, interviews with artists, and articles delving into the history of Jewish art, contemporary artistic trends, artists' education and migration, and other pertinent artistic subjects. Despite being published by different organisations, the content and style of the art-critical articles in both *Di yidishe shtime* and *Folksblat* remained similar, because the authors contributing to both newspapers largely overlapped. The disparity in the number of art-related publications between the two dailies was marginal: during the 1930s, *Di yidishe shtime* averaged about 30–40 annual articles, while *Folksblat* maintained a range of 20–25. A comparison of the attention given to fine arts against other artistic domains in the Yiddish press reveals that literature, music, and theatre garnered much more focus than fine arts.

Approximately twenty individuals contributed articles dedicated to art in the Yiddish press. In the nascent stages, the reviewers of Jewish art did not align with the contemporary understanding of art scholars. Instead, art-critical pieces and exhibition reviews were predominantly written by artists or writers. Unlike Lithuanian art studies, where artists played a predominant role, Jewish art studies were mostly shaped by writers. Figures such as Shalit, Flapan, Feldstein, and others wrote the first articles on Jewish art, artists, exhibitions, made comparisons between Jewish and Lithuanian works, and explored the specific features of Jewish art. It was not until the 1930s that publications by Jewish artists, including Arbit Blatas, Koslowsky, and Markus, appeared in the press. Unlike their Lithuanian counterparts, authors writing in Yiddish, which was a Germanic language, did not face the absence of professional art terminology as they used German art terms.

In the broader landscape of Jewish art studies, the works of Feldstein, Rubinstein, Kitai, and Grinblat stood out. Their analyses delved into pivotal issues such as content, forms, tasks, goals, the position of artists, and the evolution of public art taste in Jewish art. However, it was Veisbart and Eljashev-Veisbartienė who emerged as the foremost art historians of the interwar period. Renowned in society as active cultural figures and educators, their articles on Jewish and Lithuanian art and artists, regularly featured in both Lithuanian and Yiddish press, attested to their professionalism and resistance to conforming to the preferences of artists or public taste. Their expertise and exceptional contributions to Jewish art studies were certainly grounded in their art history studies at the universities in Germany. Flapan, Feldstein, and Razumny also pursued philosophy and literature studies in Germany, thus interwar Lithuanian Jewish art studies were intricately linked to the formal analysis method developed by German art studies, where the perception of form held primacy as the primary means of understanding a work of art.

In the early 1920s, the analysis of artworks predominantly relied on the descriptive method, characterised by laconic depictions of subjects and the identification of artistic expression. Personal insights steeped in intuition, free interpretations, and subjective preferences for artists or particular art trends were prevalent. While occasionally, expressing a subjective, especially negative, opinion could lead to conflicts between the critic and the artist, such public incidents were infrequent. As time progressed, art critics honed the method of comparative analysis, engaging in broader discourses that defined the meanings of the works alongside formal analysis. Concurrently, the ideas of the sociology of art began to germinate. However, interwar Jewish (as well as Lithuanian) art historians did not solidify a concrete methodology. Instead, they underscored the aesthetic and moral

imperatives of art, emphasising its educational function and the pivotal role of national art as the foundation for modern artistic creation.

The artist was often portrayed as a solitary, marginalised, and unhappy struggling figure. Consequently, articles frequently conveyed pessimistic sentiments about the future of local Jewish art. Art critics expressed lamentations regarding the apathy of Jewish society towards art, the persistent emigration of Jewish artists, and urged societal transformation, modernisation, and support for artists both morally, through attendance at exhibitions, and materially, by purchasing artworks. They called for the creation of conducive conditions for artistic creativity, were concerned about public education, the dissemination of knowledge about art, and sought to enhance the cultural education of the population.

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Notes

[1] Project financed by Lithuanian Council for Culture, www.ltkt.lt. The article was translated into English by Aušra Simanavičiūtė.

[2] Vilma Gradinskaite, "The First Exhibitions of Jewish Artists in Kaunas (1920–1940) from the Art Critic's Perspective," *IGGUD Selected Essays in Jewish Studies* 3 (Jerusalem 2007), 115–129; Vilma Gradinskaite, "Attitudes of Interwar Lithuanian Art Critics towards Jewish Art," *Jewish Artists and Central-Eastern Europe* (Wydawnictwo DiG 2010), 337–344.

[3] Žilvinė Gaižutytė, "Igno Šlapelio meno sociologijos bruožai," *Sociologija. Mintis ir veiksmas* 3(2) (1999), 96–104.

[4] Jolanta Marcišauskytė-Jurašienė, "Įžymi, bet nepažinta meno istorikė Halina Kairiūkštytė-Jacinienė," *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis* 62 (Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademija, 2011), 65–79.

[5] Aušrinė Kulvietytė-Slavinskienė, "Jurgis Baltrušaitis ir menotyra tarpukario Lietuvoje," *Česlovo Milošo skaitymai* 5. *Genius Loci – asmenybė ir kūryba kaip erdvės vaizdinys*, ed. Vitalija Truskauskaitė (Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas 2012), 53–60.

[6] Zita Žemaitytė, *Paulius Galaunė* (Vilnius: Vaga 1988); Dalia Ramonienė, *Justinas Vienožinskis* (Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2004).

[7] Aušrinė Kulvietytė-Slavinskienė, "Menotyra Vytauto Didžiojo universitete tarpukariu," *Meno istorija ir kritika* 7 (Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla, 2011), 77–87; Aušrinė Kulvietytė-Slavinskienė and Nijolė Lukšionytė, "Menotyros publikacijos tarpukario Vilniuje ir Kaune," *Meno istorija ir kritika* 7 (Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, 2011), 218–232.

[8] Jurgis Baltrušaitis, *Visuotinė meno istorija. Nuo priešistorijos iki Viduramžių* 2 (Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto Humanitarinių mokslų fakulteto leidinys, 1934), 6.

[9] The Yiddish language was formed in Germany in the 10th century on the basis of the Germanic language.

[10] Žydų studentų seminariniai darbai. 1931–1937. *Nacionalinis M. K. Čiurlionio dailės muziejus* (NČDM), Adelės ir Pauliaus Galaunių archyvas, R-1499-1508.

[11] E. Goldšteinaitė, "Žydų ornamentas," 27 05 1931, 7, *NČDM*, R-1499; Natanas Grinblatas, "Tapyba žydų sinagogose," 12 1933, 10, *NČDM*, R-1501; Izrelis Kaplanas, "Altoriai žydų sinagogose," 12 12 1933, 10, *NČDM*, R-1502; Šul. Movšaitė, "Žydų ornamentika," 28 02 1936, 16, *NČDM*, R-1505; A. Stražas, "Sinagogų ornamentika," 07 06 1937, 26, *NČDM*, R-1506; M. Puneris, "Žydų ornamentas," 14 05 1937, 5, *NČDM*, R-1507; F. Halperinas, "Žydų ornamentika," 12, NČDM, R-1507.

[12] Ševa Štokaitė, "Jurbarko žydų sinagoga," 13 06 1933, 15, *NČDM*, R-1500; Nenurodytas autorius, "Lazdijų sinagoga," 24 03 1934, 4, *NČDM*, R-1503; Ch. Goldbergaitė, "Prienų žydų sinagoga," 28 01 1935, 8, *NČDM*, R-1504; Mina Švabskaitė ir Icikas Zingeris, "Panevėžio žydų sinagoga," 21, *NČDM*, R-1508.

[13] Paul Romanov, "Yidishe malerey aun kunst in di alte tseytn (Jewish Painting and Art in Ancient Times)," *Di yidishe shtime* 293 (22 December 1924), 3.

[14] Apolinija Valiuškevičiūtė, *Kauno meno mokykla (1922–1940)* (Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 1997).

[15] Paulius Galaunė, "Kokia Lietuvai reikalinga Meno mokykla?", *Vairas* 2 (1934), 212.

[16] Kauno meno mokyklos Bibliotekos monografijų ir menininkų darbų katalogas, *LLMA*, f. 61, ap. 1, b. 217; Kauno meno mokyklos Bibliotekos įžymesniųjų

dailininkų darbų reprodukcijų ir monografijų rodyklės, *LLMA*, f. 61, ap. 1, b. 218.

[17] Aušrinė Kulvietytė-Slavinskienė, op. cit., 81.

[18] Spector, "Mesenbliumo paveikslų paroda," *Gairės* 4 (1923), 242; Spector, "S. Goršenaitės skulptūros paroda," *Gairės* 5 (1923), 313.

[19] Moshe Shalit, "Ben-Cion Cukerman," *Di yidishe shtime* 231 (5 November 1920), 3; 234 (10 November 1920), 3; 236 (12 November 1920), 3.

[20] F. M-n, "Cukerman bilder oisshtelung (Exhibition of Zukerman's paintings)," *Di yidishe shtime* 243 (19 November 1920), 3.

[21] Adomas Jakštas, "Knyga ir menas. B. Cukermano paveikslų paroda," *Laisvė* 2 (2 December 1920), 4.

[22] "Litvishe prese vegn Cukerman's bilder oisshtelung (Lithuanian press about Zukerman's exhibition)," *Di yidishe shtime* 267 (17 December 1920), 3.

[23] N. Frank, "Vegn yidishe kunst un kinstler in Pariz (About Jewish art and artists in Paris)," *Di yidishe shtime* 113 (21 May 1920), 4; I. A. Lapidus, "Kunst oisshtelung "fun geto" (a briv fun Pariz) (Art exhibition "from the ghetto" (a letter from Paris)," *Di yidishe shtime* 128 (8 June 1920), 3.

[24] "Di cukumft fun yidishe kunst in Palestine (a intervju mit h. L. Pilichowski) (Future of Jewish art in Palestine (interview with Mr. L. Pilichowski)," *Di yidishe shtime* 160 (6 August 1920), 2.

[25] "Geshtorbn a barimter litvish-yidisher maler Moshe Maimon (The famous Lithuanian Jewish artist Moshe Maimon died)," *Di yidishe shtime* 123 (27 May 1924), 2.

[26] "Geshtorbn a barimter yidish-amerikanish-litvisher skulptor Viktor David Brener (A famous Jewish-American-Lithuanian sculptor Victor David Brenner died)," *Di yidishe shtime* 129 (3 June 1924), 2.

[27] "Leon Bakst," *Di yidishe shtime* 3 (4 January 1925), 2.

[28] Jakov Flapan, "Sara Gorshein (cu ir ershter oisshtelung in Kovne) (Sarah Gorshein (her first exhibition in Kaunas)," *Vispe* (1924), 36–37.

[29] At the beginning of the First World War, the Russian authorities falsely accused the Jews of treachery and collaboration with the German troops and began the mass deportation of them to the central provinces of Russian Empire. In the summer of 1915, after German army occupied Lithuania, the Jews themselves fled from the war front to Russia and the territory of present-day Ukraine. After the restoration of the independent State of Lithuania, some Jews returned.

[30] Cemach Feldstein, "Maks Band un zain kunst (erefenung – rede cu Band's bilder oisshtelung in Kovne) (Max Band and his art (speech at the opening of Band's art exhibition in Kaunas)," *Di yidishe shtime* 245 (30 October 1925), 5.

[31] Isachar Ber Rybak, "Ver iz der kinstler Kagan? (Who is the artist Kagan?)," *Di yidishe shtime* 226 (7 October 1926), 7.

[32] John Veisbart, "Di bilder fun D. Kagan (The paintings by D. Kagan)," *Di yidishe shtime* 234 (15 October 1926), 2, 7.

[33] Ruvin Rubinstein, "Der kinstler – lamedvavnik (cum opfor fun David Kagan) (The artist – a lamedvavnik (for David Kagan's departure)," *Di yidishe shtime* 244 (28 October 1927), 8.

[34] John Veisbart, "Di kunst fun Becalel Malchi (The art of Bezalel Malchi)," *Di yidishe shtime* 250 (6 November 1927), 3–4.

[35] Raphael Chasman, "Kovner kunst vinklen (af der oisshtelung fun Levinson–Cesler) (Kaunas art shelters (in the exhibition of Levinson and Cesler)," *Di yidishe shtime* 238 (21 October 1926), 2.

[36] A. Olshanski, "Kinstler Jehuda Pen (Artist Yehuda Pen)," *Di yidishe shtime* 3 (9 March 1927), 3.

[37] Moshe Kitai, "Kunst oisshtelung fun di felker fun di Rusland (Art exhibition of the peoples of the Russia)," *Di yidishe shtime* 43 (20 February 1928), 1–2.

[38] Mane-Kac, "40 kinstler ibergenumen Pariz (Forty painters took over Paris)," *Di yidishe time* 272 (30 November 1926), 4; Sh. Gomelski, "Bam kinstler in Pariz. Mane-Kac (Visiting artists in Paris. Mané-Katz)," *Di yidishe shtime* 114 (21 May 1928), 6; Moshe Kitai, "Bam kinstler in Pariz. Aizik Feder (Visiting artists in Paris. Adolphe Féder)," *Di yidishe shtime* 190 (17 August 1928), 4; Moshe Kitai, "Bam kinstler in Pariz. Maks Band (Visiting artists in Paris. Max Band)," *Di yidishe shtime* 197 (27 August 1928), 5; Moshe Kitai, "Bam kinstler in Pariz. Isachar ber Rybak (Visiting artists in Paris. Issachar Ber Ryback)," *Di yidishe shtime* 209 (10 September 1928), 3; Moshe Kitai, "Bam kinstler in Pariz. Isaak Pailes (Visiting artists in Paris. Isaac Pailes)," *Di yidishe shtime* 215 (18 September 1928), 3.

[39] John Weisbarth, "Pirma Lietuvos žydų menininkų paroda Kaune," *Vairas* 2 (1930), 482.

[40] Spector, "Pirma Lietuvos žydų menininkų kūrinių paroda," *7 meno dienos* 46 (14 Decembr 1929), 9.

[41] Ruvin Rubinstein, "Aundzer kinstler (Our artists)," *Di yidishe shtime* 267 (19 November 1929), 2; John Veisbart, "Algemeine gedanken vegn shtarkeit fun aundzer kinstler (General thoughts about forces of our artists)," *Di yidishe shtime* 283 (6 December 1929), 5.

[42] Petras Kalpokas, "Af der 1-ter yidisher kunst oisshtelung (At the 1st Jewish art exhibition)," *Di yidishe shtime* 287 (12 December 1929), 7; Ignas Šlapelis, "Di malerai un skulptur oisshtelung (Exhibition of paintings and sculptures)," *Di yidishe shtime* 289 (13 December 1929), 9.

[43] *Pirma Lietuvos žydų menininkų kūrinių paroda* (Kaunas, 1929) 4.

[44] John Weisbarth, "Pirma Lietuvos žydų menininkų paroda Kaune," *Vairas* 2 (1930), 482.

[45] John Veisbart, "Modern litvish kunst (Modern Lithuanian art)," *Di yidishe shtime* 189 (17 August 1928), 5; 196 (24 August 1928), 4.

[46] John Veisbart, "Alte tendents in naye veg (vegn oisshtelung fun Mackevichius aun Zikaras) (Old tendencies in a new way (about the exhibition of Mackevičius and Zikaras)," *Di yidishe shtime* 246 (26 October1928), 3; John Veisbart, "Shpil aun ernstkeit in kunst (vegn oisshtelung fun Shimonis aun Sklerius) (Play and seriousness in art (about the exhibition Šimonis ir Sklėrius)," *Di yidishe shtime* 233 (4 October 1929), 9, 16.

[47] Moshe Kitai, "Bam kinstler Michail Jo (aindruk fun atelje) (Visiting artist Michail Jo (impressions from his studio)," *Di yidishe shtime* 91 (20 April 1927), 4.

[48] Natan Grinblat, "Mit Maks Band (fun anotic buch) (With Max Band (from the notebook)," *Di yidishe shtime* 197 (26 August 1927), 3.

[49] John Veisbart, "Bam skulptor S. Gorshein (Visiting sculptor S. Gorshein)," *Folksblat* 100 (18 June 1930), 9.

[50] "Ar esama žydiškos tapybos? (Iš „Le Mois", 1935, Nr. 52)," Židinys 5–6 (1935), 559–561.

[51] Mark Razumny, "A vichtiker kunst-oiftu (An important contribution to art)," *Di yidishe shtime* 212 (14 September 1932), 7; Ch. J-n, "Kunst galerei (Art gallery)," *Folksblat* 217 (22 September 1932), 4; John Veisbart, "Der cveiter heidesh in der kunst galerei (The second month in the art gallery)," *Folksblat* 230 (9 October 1932), 4.

[52] Girsh Markus, "Oif dem oisshtelung fun di amerikaner kinstler F. Blumberg un B. Kopman in der kunst galerei (Exhibition of American artists F. Blumberg and B. Kopman in the art gallery)," *Folksblat* 295 (28 December 1932), 6.

[53] Moshe Kitai, "Michail Jo (cu zain bilder oisshtelung in Kovne) (Michail Jo (his art exhibition in Kaunas)," *Di yidishe shtime* 300 (30 December 1932) 3; Vulf Lacki-Bertoldi, "Vegn Michail Jo's kinstlershaft (lekoved zaine bilder oisshtelungen in Lite un Poiln) (About artistry of Michail Jo (in honor of his art exhibitions in Lithuania and Poland)," *Di yidishe shtime* 285 (12 December 1932), 4; Cemach Feldstein, "Bilder oisshtelung fun M. Jo (Art exhibition of M. Jo)," *Di yidishe shtime* 3 (4 January 1933), 7; Jankev Gotlib, "Kraft fun Michail Jo in zeyn vort aun bild (A power of Michail Jo in his word and image)," *Folkbalt* 4 (5 January 1933), 6.

[54] B. K. "Derciung cu kunst (af der bilder oisshtelung fun šiler fun hebr. real gimnazije) (Education through art (in the exhibition of paintings by students of the Hebrew real gymnasium)," *Di yidishe shtime* 130 (10 June 1935), 8.

[55] Jacob Kozlovski, "Kunst, kinstler un kunst-kritiker (iber di oisshtelung fun yidishe kinstler fun Lite un Letland) (Art, artists and art critics (during the exhibition of Jewish artists from Lithuania and Latvia)," *Di yidishe shtime* 15 (16 January 1931), 11.

[56] *Ibid.*, 11.

[57] Chaim Leikovich, "Malerin C. Percikovich (Artist C. Percikovič)," *Di yidishe shtime* 93 (23 April 1935), 8.

[58] Estera Eljashev, "Der inhalt un charakter fun M. Ginzburgs kinstlerišer arbet (The content and manner of M. Ginsburg's works of art)," *Di yidishe shtime* 376 (21 November 1933), 5; Estera Eljashev, "Z. Beker's bilder oisshtelung in hebreishe real gimnazie (Exhibition of Z. Beker's paintings at the Hebrew real gymnasium)," *Di yidishe shtime* 220 (23 September 1935), 7–8; Estera Eljashev E., "Albert Rapoports oisshtelung (in hebreishe real gimnazie) (Exhibition of Albert Rappaport (at the Hebrew real gymnasium)," *Di yidishe shtime* 235 (13 October 1938), 4.

[59] Ruvinas Rubinšteinas, "Rašytoja ir kultūrininkė," *Apžvalga* 40 (6 November 1938), 4.

[60] "Meno problema Lietuvoje," *Naujoji Romuva* 49 (1938), 930.

[61] *Kol kitvei. Kovez shirav, maamrav umihtavav* 2, ed. A. Sheinhauz (Warsawa: Tushia Publishers, 1897), 199 (in Hebrew). From: Grigorij Kasovsky, *Yehuda Pen and His Pupils. Masterpieces of Jewish Art* (Moscow: Image, 1992), 20.

[62] Isachar ber Rybak, "Ver iz der kinstler Kagan? (Who is the artist Kagan?)," *Di yidishe shtime* 226 (7 October 1926), 7.

[63] "Maler Mesnblium (Artist Mesenblum)," *Di yidishe shtime* 258 (11 November 1924), 3.

[64] Moshe Kitai, "Bam kinstler Michail Jo (aindruk fun atelje) (Visiting artisy Michail Jo (impressions from his studio)," *Di yidishe shtime* 91 (20 April 1927), 4.

[65] Ruvin Rubinstein, "Der kinstler – lamedvavnik (cum opfor fun David Kagan) (The artist – a lamedvavnik (for David Kagan's departure)," *Di yidishe shtime* 244 (28 October 1927), 8.

[66] Cemach Feldstein, "Bilder oisshtelung fun Zale Beker (The art exhibition of Zale Beker)," *Di yidishe shtime* 89 (24 April 1933), 9.

[67] F. Icikson, "Z. Beker's oisshtelung (The exhibition of Z. Beker)," *Di yidishe shtime* 255 (8 November), 6.

[68] Zalė Bekeris, "Kultūros stoka," *Apžvalga* 6 (8 February 1940), 7.

[69] *Ibid.*, 7.

[70] "Af yidisher kunst oisshtelung (At the Jewish art exhibition)," *Di yidishe shtime* 9 (9 January 1931), 2.

[71] "Litvishe kunst-kritiker loibn yidishe oisshtelung (Lithuanian art critics praise the Jewish exhibition)," *Di yidishe shtime* 13 (15 January 1931), 7.

[72] "Di nit-yidishe prese vegn oisshtelung fun di letish-litvishe yidishe kinstler (Non-Jewish press about the exhibition of Latvian and Lithuanian Jewish artists)," *Di yidishe shtime* 87 (13 April 1932), 6.

[73] John Weissbarth, "Žydų meno paroda Kaune," *Vairas* 3 (1931) 357.

[74] Jacob Kozlovski, "Kunst, kinstler un kunst-kritiker (iber di oisshtelung fun yidishe kinstler fun Lite un Letland) (Art, artists and art critics (during the exhibition of Jewish artists from Lithuania and Latvia)," *Di yidishe shtime* 15 (16 January 1931), 11.

[75] Zale Beker and Girsh Markus, "Kunst, kinstler un „kunst kritiker"" (a briv in redakcije) (Art, artists and "art critics" (letter to the editor)," *Di yidishe shtime* 21 (23 January 1931), 10.

[76] *Ibid.*, 10.

[77] Vilma Gradinskaite, "The Modern Art Gallery in Kaunas," *Arbit Blatas (1908–1999)*, ed. Ilona Mažeikienė (Vilnius: Lietuvos dailės muziejus, 2019), 203–215; Vilma Gradinskaite, "The Modern Art Gallery of Neemiya Arbit Blatas in Interwar Kaunas," *Pinkas. Annual of the Culture and History of East European Jewry* 1 (Vilnius: The Centre for Studies of the Culture and History of East European Jews, 2006), 168–180.

[78] Jonas Veisbartas, "Dvi parodos Kauno meno galerijoje: Meniški bandymai iš žurnalistikos šaltinių," *Vairas* 3 (1933), 352–355.

[79] Neemiya Arbitblat, "Briv in redakcije (Letter to the editor)," *Di yidishe shtime* 7 (9 January 1933), 8.

[80] John Veisbart, "Briv in redakcije (Letter to the editor)," *Di yidishe shtime* 9 (11 January 1933), 8.

[81] Neemiya Arbitblat, "Briv in redakcije (Letter to the editor)," *Di yidishe shtime* 7 (9 January 1933), 8.

APPENDIX

Brief biographies of the most prominent Jewish authors in the field of art criticism within the interwar Lithuanian press

Chasman Raphael (1895 Kelmė – 1972 Tel Aviv) – journalist, lecturer, translator. As a son of rabbi, he received a deep religious education. He also graduated from Yuryev (Dorpat) University (now Tartu, Estonia). After the return to independent state of Lithuania, Chasman was a lecturer in journalism at Kaunas University. He settled in Israel in 1935. For many years he wrote articles for Kaunas (*Di yidishe shtime* – The Jewish voice, *Velt shpigl* – World mirror, *Dos yidishe vort* – The Jewish word), New York (*Forverts* – Forward, *Tog* – Day) and Tel Aviv (*Haaretz* – The Land) newspapers. He published editorial articles, feature pieces, critical bibliographical essays, and translations.

Eljashev-Veisbartienė Estera (1878 Kaunas – 1941 Kaunas, killed) – doctor of philosophy, writer, art critic. She studied philosophy at the high schools in Leipzig and Heidelberg and defended her PhD thesis at the University of Bern in 1906. She lectured at the Jewish People's University in St. Petersburg, worked together with the famous historian Simon Dubnov. In 1921 she returned to Kaunas. After divorcing her first husband, Aron Gurliand, she married the Berlin-born art critic John Veisbart, 17 years her junior, in 1926. He died in 1934 and she was left a widow. Eljashev-Veisbartienė wrote critical articles about literature, art, and theatre. She was killed in 1941 after the Nazis occupied Kaunas.

Feldstein Cemach (1884 Kudirkos Naumiestis – 1944 Stutthof concentration camp) – doctor of philosophy, writer, teacher. He graduated from high school in Konigsberg, studied history and philosophy at the University of Berlin, and completed his doctorate at the University of Bern. In 1921 Feldstein returned to Lithuania. He worked as the director of the Kaunas Hebrew Real Gymnasium for the entire period of the school's existence from 1922 to 1940. In 1928 had gone to the USA to seek support for the reconstruction of the school, but collected enough money to build a new one. Belonged to Kaunas Zionist organisation.

Flapan Jakov (1897 Grodzisk, Poland – 1936 Cordoba, Argentina) – writer, teacher, critic of literature and theatre. In his youth he lived in Kaunas, where he began his devotion to literature, wrote in Yiddish, Hebrew, German, Polish and Russian. In 1929, he studied at Institute for the German language and literature in Berlin. Shortly after that he emigrated to Argentina and became a founder and director of the Yiddish experimental theatre "Idrams" (Yiddish Dramatic Studio) in Buenos Aires. He also put out several books.

Gotlib Jankev (1911 Kaunas – 1945 Turkmenistan) – poet, essayist, journalist, art critic. He received a traditional religious education in Kaunas. His first poem was published in 1925; subsequently he published four collections of poetry. He worked as an editor in different Yiddish literary publications in Kaunas, was an active cultural figure. In 1941, escaping the Nazi occupation, he moved to the Soviet Union, died in Turkmenistan.

Grinblat Natan (known as Nosn Goren in Israel; 1887 Vidžiai – 1956 Tel Aviv) – writer, scholar and critic of Hebrew literature. He received a broad religious and secular education; graduated from the Vilijampolė yeshiva as well as the Faculty of Humanities of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. He worked as a journalist since 1909, writing in Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian for the press of Kaunas, Vilnius, Moscow, and Odessa. Grinblat was a teacher at private Kaunas Hebrew Real and "Tarbut" Hebrew gymnasiums, worked as an editor for *Di yidishe shtime* as well as several newspapers in Hebrew. He was accepted to the Union of Lithuanian journalists in 1930. Grinblat was an active Zionist-socialist and emigrated to Palestine in 1936.

Kitai Moshe (1886 Riga – 1942 Kuibyshev) – publicist, journalist, art critic. He spent his childhood in Žagarė where he received a traditional religious education. In 1901, Kitai returned to Riga, became an active member of the Bund, was arrested several times for his activities, had escaped to Denmark,

Germany, Switzerland. After the Nazis occupied Riga in 1941, he was forced to move to the Soviet Russia and died shortly in Kuibyshev. Kitai regularly wrote articles for Jewish newspapers in Vilnius, Riga, Warsaw, Moscow, Odessa, Kiev, and other cities. The 234-page book – the collection of his art studies "Undzer shrayber un kinstler" (Our writers and painters) was published in Yiddish in 1938 in Warsaw.

Margolin Feivel (1878–1943) – journalist, publicist, an enthusiastic devotee of both the Yiddish and the Hebrew press, Zionist activist. He was being married to the daughter of a very wealthy timber merchant by the name of Joseph Eliyahu Rivkin. In Vilnius Margolin worked as an editor in Yiddish-language daily newspapers *Yidishe caitung* (Jewish newspaper), *Di tsayt* (The Time), *Flugblat* (Leaflet), Hebrew-language newspaper *Hed ha-zeman* (Echo of the Time), and others. From 1911 to 1915 kept a printing house in Vilnius.

Razumny Mark (1896 Žagarė – 1988 Riga) – Yiddish writer. Grew up in Riga, in addition to receiving a traditional Jewish education, he studied art and architecture. As a young boy, he began to write poems in Yiddish, Russian, and Hebrew. During the First World War studied philosophy, aesthetics, and literature at the Hamburg university. He returned to Riga in 1921, regularly wrote articles for Latvian and Lithuanian Yiddish newspapers. The Second World War Razumny spent in Russia and continued his career as a journalist and writer in Soviet time.

Romanov Pinkhes (Paul Romanoff) (1898 Vilnius – 1943 New York) – writer, poet, art historian. He received a religious Jewish education in cheder, graduated from a state high school in Vilnius in 1915, and studied architecture and topography at universities in Moscow, Berlin, and Paris. He moved to Palestine in 1920, and in 1925 received ordination into the rabbinate. He emigrated to the United States in 1928, and in 1930 received doctoral degree. Romanov was director of the museum at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, wrote articles on art, as well as wrote poetry and stories in Yiddish, Hebrew and English.

Rubinstein Ruvin (1891 Utena – 1941 Komi Republic) – lawyer, journalist, editor, dramatist, public figure. He graduated from the Jewish high school in Vilnius and the Faculty of Law of St. Petersburg University. In 1920–1923, was a jurisconsult of the Lithuania in Moscow. After returning to Lithuania, he worked as an editor of *Di yidishe shtime*, and was one of the founders of the New Jewish Theatre. Participated actively in Kaunas Zionist movement. In 1940, prisoned by the Soviet authorities and deported to the Pechora district of Komi Republic, where he died.

Shalit Moshe (Szalit; 1885 Vilnius – 1941 Vilnius, killed in Paneriai) – journalist, essayist, ethnographer, promoter of Yiddish language and literature, employee of the Jewish Scientific Institute (YIVO), member of the Jewish Socialist Movement. He was an active cultural and political figure and was arrested several times due to his leftist views. From 1914, he lived a few years in the USA spending a lot of his effort in the social-educational domain. After returning, Shalit lived in Vilnius, wrote articles in Yiddish for Lithuanian, Polish, and German newspapers, and published more than 15 prose works.

Veisbart John (Weisbarth; 1895 Berlin – 1934 Kaunas) – doctor of philosophy, philosopher and historian, graduate from the University of Berlin. In 1926, he married Ester Eljashev, also doctor of philosophy and art critic, and settled in Kaunas. Veisbart was one of the most famous and productive critics of literature, art, and theatre in interwar Lithuania. He wrote more than 100 articles in Yiddish-language, Lithuanian-language, and Germany-language press.

Yellin Chaim (also Jelin; 1912 Vilkija – 1944 Kaunas, killed) – Yiddish poet, and journalist, who wrote reviews on art and theatre. He grew up reading a lot and had a nickname "The Book" given by his friends. Graduated from Kaunas Hebrew Real Gymnasium and the Faculty of Economics at Kaunas University. Although a Zionist in his youth, he later became an active communist. After the Nazis imprisoned the Jews in Kaunas ghetto, he became one of the leaders of the resistance group. Yellin managed to escape from the ghetto, but was caught and killed after long tortures.

Vilma GRADINSKAITĖ
Lietuvos nacionalinis dailės muziejus, Vilnius, Lietuva

ŽYDŲ DAILĖS STUDIJOS TARPUKARIO LIETUVOS JIDIŠ SPAUDOJE (1918–1940)

Santrauka

Lietuvos dailėtyra kaip savarankiška mokslo šaka pradėjo formuotis Pirmojoje Lietuvos Respublikoje, 1918–1940 metais. Per 22 metus daugiatautėje laisvoje valstybėje ji nuėjo vingiuotą kritinio mąstymo formavimosi kelią. Šiandien jau vyksta tarpukario lietuvių dailėtyros studijų tyrimai, tačiau žydų dailėtyros studijos dar laukia pirmųjų tyrinėjimų. Šiuo straipsniu siekiama išplėsti Lietuvos dailės tyrimų erdvę, į ją įtraukiant tarpukario žydų dailėtyros jidiš kalba klodus. Taikant įvairias metodologines prieigas – šaltiniotyrą, socialinės dailės istorijos aspektus ir lyginamąjį metodą, žydų dailėtyra analizuojama kaip specifinis reiškinys, funkcionavęs greta Lietuvos dailėtyros. Daugiau kaip 1 000 spaudinių jidiš kalba buvo peržvelgta siekiant atsakyti į naujus ir iki šiol niekada nenagrinėtus klausimus: 1) Kokio pobūdžio ir kiek publikacijų apie žydų ir ne žydų dailę buvo spausdinama tarpukario Lietuvos jidiš spaudoje? 2) Kokie žydų dailės istorikai ir kritikai publikavo straipsnius jidiš spaudoje? 3) Koks buvo jų indėlis į žydų dailėtyrą? 4) Kokius žydų dailės, dailininkų ir visuomenės uždavinius akcentavo žydų dailėtyrininkai? 5) Kokie santykiai vyravo tarp dailininkų ir dailėtyrininkų? Dailėtyros straipsnius iš jidiš į lietuvių kalbą vertė istorikė, žydų kultūros žinovė, vertėja Roza Bieliauskienė (1946–2023).

Reikšminiai žodžiai: žydų menas, judaistika, žydų meno istorija ir kritika, jidiš spauda, tarpukario Lietuva.

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