



Survivors: Exodus, 1958.
Oil on canvas, 60 x 84"

ANNA WALINSKA
ECHOES OF THE HOLOCAUST
Paintings, Drawings & Collage, 1940-1989



Survivors, 1953. Oil on canvas, 54 x 40"

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MOST OF ANNA WALINSKA'S WORK on the theme of the Holocaust was produced before the world was ready to build museums and memorials where people might come to view it.

The painting she considered her greatest achievement – *Survivors*, 1953 – made its public debut in 1957 at a one-woman show at the Jewish Museum in New York, but the Holocaust works were not displayed as a group until 1979. This exhibition of 122 paintings and drawings, sponsored by the Museum of Religious Art at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, while praised by art critics and visitors, led some to wonder: how could someone who had not experienced the Holocaust first-hand create such art?

"I can only say that for me this theme has exercised an inescapable compulsion," Walinska explained at the time. "The paintings and drawings of images in flight, embracing, parting, being herded together for deportation, the bodies in the pits, are all metaphors for the Jewish community disappearing in the Holocaust. With each image, I have attempted time and again to renew, to deepen, and to strengthen the statement... In a sense, we are all survivors. We all share the burden and the memory."

For Walinska, depicting the Holocaust was an inevitable outgrowth of a strong Jewish family heritage. Born in London in 1906 to Russian immigrants, she was the daughter of labor leader



The Naked and the Dead, 1956.
Casein on paper, 53 x 29 1/4"

Victim: Woman Reading, 1953.
Ink on canvas, 22 x 16"
Collection: Brandeis University
Women's Studies Research Center



Ossip Walinsky and sculptor-poet-activist Rosa Newman Walinska. In 1914, the family relocated to New York and became a magnet for the intelligentsia. They were active in the union movement, the founding of the State of Israel, and in the Yiddish theatre, where Walinska appeared for a season under the name Vera Stanova.

WALINSKA STUDIED at the Art Students League, lived in Paris on and off from 1926 to 1930, and participated in the WPA Federal Arts Project. In 1935, she founded the Guild Art Gallery in New York City, where she exhibited Arshile Gorky, Zygmund Menkes, Chaim Gross and others. In 1939, she served as Assistant Creative Director of the Contemporary Art Pavilion at the New York World's Fair. In



Survivors: Three Musicians, 1956. Oil on canvas, 47 x 37"

1955, she spent four months in Burma where she sat in cabinet meetings to draw Prime Minister U Nu, one of the many well-known figures in the arts and politics who were her portrait subjects. Upon her return to New York, she became artist in residence and instructor at the Riverside Museum, participating in numerous shows there and with the American Federation of



Victims: Ghetto Scene #1, 1973. Oil on paper, 43 1/2 x 31 1/2"

Modern Painters & Sculptors, the National Association of Women Artists and the Silvermine Guild.

Walinska's work on the Holocaust, which continued virtually until her death in 1997, exemplified the many artistic styles in which she worked: from the calligraphy of line she developed in Paris, the abstract expressionism of the New York school, and the



Victims: Yemenite Family, Ink on paper, 28 1/2 x 22 1/2", 1940

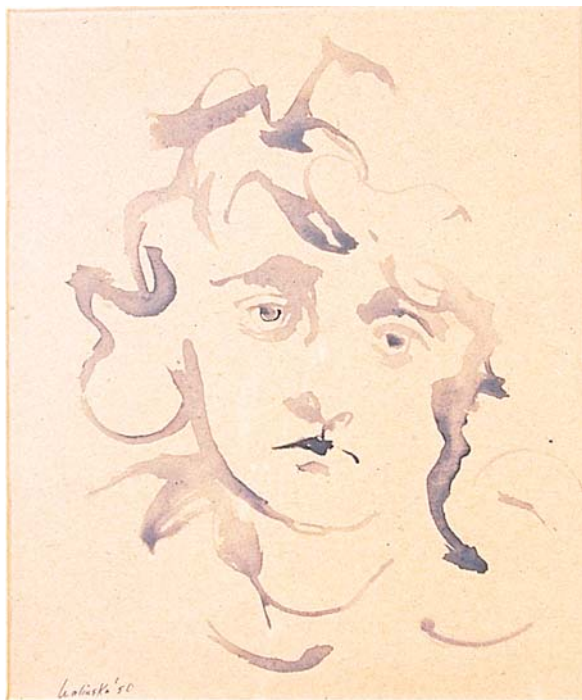


Victim: Buddha Figure, 1956. Ink on paper, 58 x 34"
Collection: The Herbert L. Johnson Museum, Cornell University

use of handmade Shan paper she discovered in Burma, to the small collages of her mature years.

IN THE LAST TWO DECADES, many of Walinska's Holocaust works have become part of prestigious collections in the U.S. and Israel including the Museum of Religious Art, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yad Vashem, the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley, The Herbert L. Johnson Museum at Cornell, the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Museum at Rutgers University, and the Interfaith Center of New York. Others works by Walinska are part of the collections of the National Portrait Gallery, the National Museum of American Art, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, the Jewish Museum, and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

Anna Walinska created more than 2000 works on canvas and paper over nine decades. During her lifetime, her work



Victim: Head of a Girl, 1950.
Oil on board, 18 x 16"
Collection: The Shoah Foundation

was exhibited in venues throughout the U.S. and abroad, including the Salon des Independents in Paris, the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Academy of Design, the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum and numerous galleries. Posthumously, there have been seven one-woman exhibitions of her paintings, drawings and collages.

"For me, words are difficult," Walinska often said. "I express myself with paint, ink and charcoal on canvas and paper. My work must speak for itself. I hope it will speak to you."

Anna Walinska: Holocaust Works Exhibition History

1957

The Jewish Museum, New York City

1979

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York City

1980

War Memorial Building, Baltimore *

Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore *

Hebrew Union College, New York City

Mercy College, Detroit

1981

College Misericordia, Dallas, Pennsylvania

1999

Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies, Clark University,
Worcester, Massachusetts

2000

Muzeum Ghetta, Terezin Memorial, Czech Republic

2001

New Century Artists, New York City

2003

Harlan Gallery, Seton Hill University
Greensburg, Pennsylvania

* simultaneous exhibition