

# The revival of the artist J. D. Kirszenbaum (1900-1954)

## Newsletter March 2019

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## 2019: the year of art and support

15 years ago, I began an ongoing research on my grand-uncle the painter J. D. Kirszenbaum. Since then several exhibitions around the world took place. To the list of past exhibitions in Kirshenbaum's lifetime we can add now the recent exhibition which took place in Croatia at the Zagreb "Mimara Museum" as from December 2018 to February 2019.

In the series of future J.D. Kirszenbaum retrospective exhibitions, the next one will take place at the "Center for Persecuted Arts" in Solingen, Germany from the 31st of March till the 5th of May 2019. This exhibition will be the first for Kirszenbaum's art to be exhibited in Germany since he had to flee from Berlin due to the rise of power of the Nazis in 1933.

Another exhibition is expected to take place in 2020 in Boulogne Billancourt, at the new "Centre Culturel Juif de Boulogne Billancourt", France. This exhibition will be in conjunction with the "Musée des années Trentes" located also in this important Paris suburb.

As a result of my research the artistic oeuvre of J. D. Kirszenbaum was published in 2013 by the "Somogy Edition d'Arts" in Paris (available for purchase, see details below).

In conjunction with the Kirszenbaum first retrospective exhibitions in Israel and the publication of the book several academic and press articles were published. Information on these can be found in the bibliography of J.D. Kirszenbaum (also on the website). These and the last years conferences on the research results and on the painter led to the successful revival of this nearly forgotten painter.

Two additional important activities that are taking place now and are worth mentioning are:

- a. The advanced stage of the preparation of a Kirszenbaum "Catalogue Raisonné" by Dr. Marianne le Morvan in Paris, France.
- b. A post-doctorate thesis on the painter by Maleen Jupe at the Freie-Universität Berlin, Germany.

I wish to extend thanks to all the people and institutions, who are supporting my research and help me to bring the resurrection of J. D. Kirszenbaum through the organization of exhibitions, financial support and personal commitment. Especially to the Goethe-Institute Tel Aviv and the

director Dr. Wolf Iro, as they have been a great long-term partner and contributed to the ongoing research.

Thanks to the Institutes initiative several young German students have been helping in the preparation of future academic conferences and workshops as well as in the organization of upcoming exhibitions.

Thanks are due to the many great people that have believed in this project and participated and invested much energy over the course of the years, joining me, my brother and my family, in the efforts to restore a nearly forgotten painter and bring him back to his proper place in the legacy of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century artistic world.

Nathan Diament

Tel Aviv, Israel - March 2019

Website: <http://www.kirszenbaum.com>

## Upcoming Exhibition

### **Center for Persecuted Arts, Solingen, Germany**

(Zentrum für verfolgte Künste im Kunstmuseum Solingen)  
Wuppertaler Straße 160, 42653 Solingen, Germany



Zentrum für  
verfolgte Künste

*Center for  
Persecuted Arts*

**31<sup>st</sup> March - 5<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

### **„Jesekiel Kirszenbaum. Lasker-Schüler und Der Sturm“**

Initiator and Curator: Dr. Rolf Jessewitsch, Nathan Diament, Jürgen Kaumkötter.

The exhibition in the Center for Persecuted Arts in Solingen is the first retrospective exhibition in Germany on J. D. Kirszenbaum since the Second World War. It brings the artist back to a country, where he once lived, studied and established himself as an artist. The museum in Solingen puts an emphasis on artists, who were persecuted in their life being and especially defamed or marginalized.

Thanks to the interest and work of the director of the museum Dr. Rolf Jessewitsch and the curator of this exhibition Jürgen Kaumkötter the artists legacy and artistic oeuvre is being commemorated and restored today.

Further information on the museum can be viewed on their website:  
[www.verfolgte-kuenste.de/](http://www.verfolgte-kuenste.de/)

When Jesekei Kirszenbaum exhibited in 1927 in the Berlin Galerie “*Der Sturm*”, it was Herwarth Walden who planned on landing a scoop with Kirszenbaum in his gallery and continue the series of successful exhibitions that had happened with Marc Chagall before the war. The idea was good. Kirszenbaum and Chagall both come from the same Jewish imagery world of the Galician shtetls. Kirszenbaum was not unknown, who had first worked as mine worker to be able to finance his studies at the Bauhaus art school in Weimar. The exhibitions weren't a breakthrough for Kirszenbaum's career, what Else Lasker-Schüler's ex-husband Walden had hoped for, but Kirszenbaum does establish himself well within the art scene of Berlin. He works as an illustrator and caricaturist for the *Ulk*, *Querschnitt*, *Die Rote Fahne* and from 1929 on he regularly exhibits as a member of the ASSO (Assoziation revolutionärer bildender Künstler Deutschland). The Berlin Bohème's heart was Else Lasker-Schüler, in which scene Kirszenbaum was well known. One of Kirszenbaum's artistic highlights was his participation in the exhibition ‘Frauen in Not’, which caused an uproar in Berlin. In 1933 Kirszenbaum, being Jewish and politically active, was forced to flee from Berlin to Paris with his wife Helma. In 1939 they go underground in Limousin. After the Shoah Kirszenbaum is deeply traumatized. His wife Helma had been deported and murdered in Auschwitz. 600 works of art had been destroyed in his Parisian atelier. The baroness Alix de Rothschild supports him. He continues to paint, but his painted imagery is a new one and rooted in the fate of the irretrievable world of the Jewish shtetl. In 1954 Kirszenbaum dies.

The first retrospective exhibition of Jesekei David Kirszenbaum (\*born 15. August 1900 in Staszów, formerly Russia- died † 1. August 1954 in Paris) in Germany. It is exhibiting artworks from the family collections, the Frans-Hals Museum as well as caricatures: 70 paintings and drawings as well as 30 caricatures.

The artworks were previously exhibited at the "Mimara Museum" in Zagreb, Croatia. More details on the past exhibition are described further along in the newsletter.

The same description on the upcoming exhibition can be found (in German) on the Website of the *Rheinischen Museen*: <http://www.rheinischemuseen.lvr.de/ausstellung/5092605?page=3>

The inauguration of the exhibition will be held on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March in the museum in Solingen, in the presence of Nathan Diament, his wife Gilada Diament and their daughter Michal Diament as well as his brother Amos Diament.

The families Brunin & Hebelynck from Belgium will attend the opening ceremony as well. They are the descendants of Ginette and Lucien Brunin who hid and rescued Nathan during the second-world war in their home in Ghent.

Juergen Vits, whose family saved Amos Diament by hiding him for two years in their home in Belgium during the second-world war, will also be present with his wife and daughter at the opening of the exhibition.

The exhibition in Solingen is part of the program of the Jewish Culture Days Rhein-Ruhr taking place in the state of North-Rhine Westfalia, Germany. The curator of this festival Inna Goudz has been a devoted supporter and contributor to the research on J. D. Kirszenbaum for several years. Nathan Diament will also attend the opening ceremony of this festival in Düsseldorf on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March.



The entire program of the festival can be viewed here: <https://juedische-kulturtag.de/>

## Planned Exhibition

The series of retrospective exhibition of J. D. Kirszenbaum will be followed by the ones in 2020 at the new "Boulogne Billancourt Centre Culturel Juif" and at the "Musée des Années Trentes" also in Boulogne Billancourt, a beautiful Parisian suburb.

It is a great honor to bring back J. D. Kirszenbaum's artworks to the place where he lived with his wife and created many of his works before the war. His studio that was there was unfortunately ransacked and all his works there were burnt. This is where he created numerous impressionist artworks, many of them based on his artistic memory, describing also his little Polish village "the Staszow shtetl."

The organization and planning of this exhibition are now under process. Further details will be announced in the near future.

## Past Exhibitions

In the list of past exhibitions on J. D. Kirszenbaum the recent exhibition in the Mimara Museum in Zagreb (Croatia) has been added, thanks to the extensive support and commitment of the director of the museum Lada Ratković.

The exhibition was a great success and the beginning of retrospective exhibitions in Europe about J. D. Kirszenbaum. Several press reviews can be found online (in Croatian), such as:

### MUZEJ MIMARA

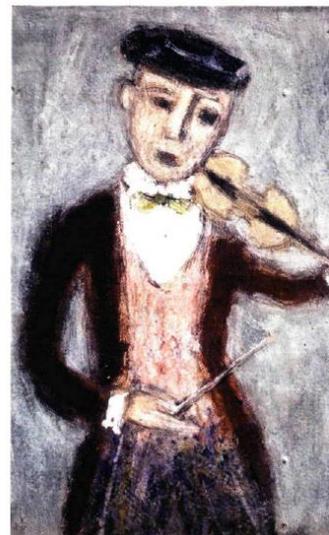


## Retrospektiva Davida Kirszenbauma

Muzej Mimara pod visokim pokroviteljstvom Predsjednice Republike Hrvatske Koliinde Grabar Kitarović predstavlja retrospektivnu izložbu eminentnog umjetnika Jechezkiela Davida Kirszenbauma, koja ostaje otvorena **do 3. veljače 2019.** Izloženo je 60-ak ulja

na platnu, akvarela, crteža iz nekoliko privatnih zbirki iz svijeta. Za kompletnu prezentaciju umjetnikova života i rada poslužio je i arhivski materijal: pisma i novinski isječci.

Kirszenbaumov životni put počinje odlaskom iz rodnog malog poljskog grada

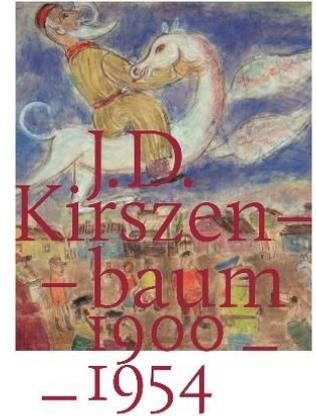


Staszowa preko Berlina, Pariza, Brazila i Maroka. Kirszenbaum je sudjelovao u renesansi židovske umjetnosti, avangardnom pokretu koji je počeo u Rusiji, proširio se Poljskom, a pripadnici su bili slikari poput Marca Chagalla i El Lissitzkija.

<https://www.nacional.hr/muzej-mimara-najavljuje-retrospektivnu-izlozbu-jechezkiela-davida-kirszenbauma/>. For more press inquiries please contact: [kirszenbaum.jd@gmail.com](mailto:kirszenbaum.jd@gmail.com).

The exhibition was accompanied by the publication of a bilingual catalogue (English & Croatian), including several articles:

- Foreword, M. Sc. Lada Ratković Bukovčan
- Kirszenbaum's Artistic Journey, PhD Caroline Goldberg Igra
- A Personal Pathway, Nathan Diament
- May God Guard You on Your Journey, Jasminka Domaš
- Pictures of paintings and caricatures and the biography of J. D. Kirszenbaum



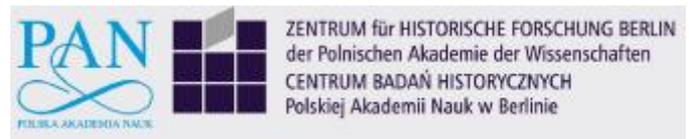
If interested in a copy, please contact: [kirszenbaum.jd@gmail.com](mailto:kirszenbaum.jd@gmail.com), or Nathan Diament.

## Past activities & further information

- Past activities:

### **Berlin Conference on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Polish-Avantgarde Art Movement**

- Zentrum für Historische Forschung Berlin der Polnischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, Germany  
(<http://www.cbh.pan.pl/de>), Dec. 2017



Next to other lecturers, topics were:

Centre and peripheries? Mobility and transfer of the interwar Avant-Garde, Transnational Avant-garde and migrating identities, the feminine Avant-garde, Contemporary art between Poland and Germany,

Nathan Diament spoke about his ongoing research results on J. D. Kirszenbaum. His lecture is available online:

Introduction by Malgorzata Stolarska-Fronia, scientific assistant of the hosting Institution:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFSBYarqkKI>

Presentation by Nathan Diament:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwiWI5Q4-yN6Fr-iIBsVrg>

### **A Testimony Talk with Holocaust Survivors**

- Goethe-Institut Tel Aviv, Israel ([www.goethe.de/israel](http://www.goethe.de/israel)), March 2019

Nathan Diament and Sara Atzmon were invited by Goethe-Institut to talk with a group of German students about their personal story of survival and connection to art. Nathan Diament talked about his family's story and how they were saved during the Holocaust by being hidden and saved by non-Jewish families. In addition, he spoke about his great-uncle the Polish artist J. D. Kirszenbaum, whose artwork dealt with many phases of his life, from the childhood in Staszow to Weimar, Berlin and after surviving the Holocaust being in Paris.

- Further Information:
  - More information on the artist J. D. Kirszenbaum, past exhibitions, artistic oeuvre in several languages visit the website: [www.kirszenbaum.com](http://www.kirszenbaum.com)
  - There will finally be works for sale. If you are interested in a specific artwork, please send inquiries to [kirszenbaum.jd@gmail.com](mailto:kirszenbaum.jd@gmail.com) .
  - The fruits of the labor of the research on J. D. Kirszenbaum initiated by Nathan Diament 15 years ago came to labor in 2013 with the publication of a book:

*J. D. Kirszenbaum (1900 -1954): The Lost Generation.*  
Paris: Somogy Editions d'art, 2013.

You can purchase it directly through the publisher or on amazon:

<http://www.somogy.fr/livre/j-d-kirszenbaum-1900-1954?ean=9782757206065>

[https://www.amazon.com/J-Kirszenbaum-1900%C2%961954-Generation-g%C3%A9n%C3%A9ration/dp/2757206060/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1395805615&sr=8-1&keywords=kirszenbaum-](https://www.amazon.com/J-Kirszenbaum-1900%C2%961954-Generation-g%C3%A9n%C3%A9ration/dp/2757206060/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1395805615&sr=8-1&keywords=kirszenbaum-)

With further questions or proposals for collaborations or artwork findings and regarding the research on J. D. Kirszenbaum contact [Kirszenbaum.jd@gmail.com](mailto:Kirszenbaum.jd@gmail.com) or Nathan Diament personally.

For further information visit the Website: [www.kirszenbaum.com](http://www.kirszenbaum.com)

We wish you a wonderful start into the spring and summer season of 2019!



From the archives of the family collection of sketches (undated) by J. D. Kirszenbaum.



This newsletter was created in conjunction with Anna Taube, who has been supporting this project as an intern from the Goethe-Institut Tel Aviv.