



# The Arthur Szyk Society

Dedicated to the 20th century master illuminator,  
miniature painter and activist-artist

Vol. 14

Newsletter

Fall 2015

## National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education Features Szyk Exhibition Universities Gather for Major Conference, Mark 50th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* (Vatican II)

### Szyk Elected to Hall of Fame



The **Society of Illustrators** inducted Arthur Szyk and six other artists into its Hall of Fame during its annual awards dinner in New York City on May 1, 2015. To celebrate the occasion, Szyk's daughter **Alexandra Szyk Bracie** donated one of her father's watercolor originals, "The Lady Who Was Bitten in the Cheek" (1948) from *The Arabian Nights Entertainments* to the Society. The highlights

of the awards dinner were the acceptance addresses by the artists or their representatives. Irvin Ungar accepted Szyk's Hall of Fame plaque and certificate, remarking on the power of art to engage its viewers in dialogue. Among the two hundred guests at the sold-out event were staunch Szyk supporters **Daniel & Joanna Rose** of New York.

The other 2015 inductees were **Walter Baumhoffer**, **Bernard D'Andrea**, **Will Eisner**, **Virgil Finlay**, **Ted & Betsy Lewin**, and **Pat Oliphant**. The Society of Illustrators produced a five-minute film on each artist just for the event and distributed an illustrated program booklet. (Irvin Ungar's essay for the booklet can be read on the Society of Illustrators' website, [societyillustrators.org](http://societyillustrators.org)—search for "Arthur Szyk".

(from left to right):

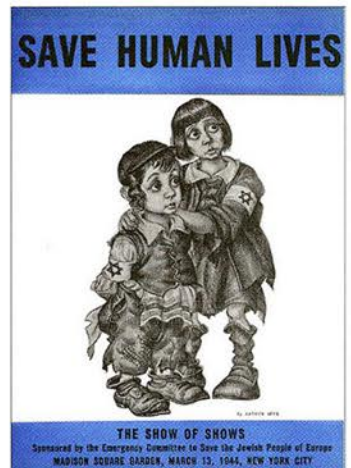
Society of Illustrators Board member  
Dennis Dittrich, Irvin Ungar,  
and Society of Illustrators President  
Tim O'Brien at the Hall of Fame  
awards ceremony.



This fall, October 25–27, 2015, **Seton Hill University's** National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education (NCCHE, in Greensburg, PA) will host the triennial Ethel LeFrak Holocaust Education Conference, intending to attract representatives from more than 100 Catholic universities in the United States. The conference theme is "The Holocaust and *Nostra Aetate*: Toward a Greater Understanding". (The 1965 papal encyclical *Nostra Aetate* [In Our Time] addresses the Catholic Church's relationship with non-Christian religions such as Judaism.) **Father Patrick Desbois**, author of *The Holocaust by Bullets*, will offer the keynote address.

With rising anti-Semitism worldwide, and the de-emphasis on Holocaust education in public and private K-12 schools, this national conversation comes at a critical moment. To better illuminate the lessons of the past, the conference leadership has elected both to showcase Arthur Szyk's timeless art and to explore his artist-activist legacy in a featured lecture.

The Arthur Szyk Society's **Seymour Fromer Traveling Exhibition**—"Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk"—will be displayed October 15–November 12, 2015 at the Seton Hill campus specifically to coincide with the conference. Society Curator **Irvin Ungar** will attend the full conference and present the lecture "Injustice Illuminated: The Holocaust Art of Arthur Szyk" on Monday, October 26. Society Honorary Board Member **Father John T. Pawlikowski** will attend the conference as well (see page 2 for more information).



Program for the pageant  
"Save Human Lives" at Madison  
Square Garden. New York, 1944.

To learn more about the Ethel LeFrak conference, or to register to attend, please visit [alumni.setonhill.edu/lefrakconference](http://alumni.setonhill.edu/lefrakconference).

# The Arthur Szyk Society

A NOT-FOR PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Friends,

Every time the Newsletter goes to press, I am delighted and humbled to see all that The Society can accomplish in a single year. With the support of like-minded allies across the world, a small team of committed folks can make a once-forgotten artist famous again.

We are fortunate to have so many allies in the Catholic Church, which has been working to combat anti-Semitism for many years now. From the lecture and exhibition at the upcoming Holocaust Education Conference at Seton Hill (*page 1*) to a seminar at Georgetown and a lecture at the Catholic Theological Union (*page 4*), Szyk's art is definitely making inroads in Catholic teaching and thought.

Szyk's legacy is not just for the classroom, however. In May, Szyk was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Society of Illustrators (*page 1*)—an honor much overdue but richly deserved. His international reputation also continues to grow: Chinese journalists from Xinhua News visited The Society for a video segment on Szyk's WWII artwork (*page 6*), and the Arthur Szyk Prize for Disruptive Thought and Zionist Art was awarded in Israel (*page 6*). Our newly redesigned website (*page 16*) will help reach our potential audience abroad. Fortunately, the new, wordless Szyk documentary film "Soldier in Art: Arthur Szyk" (*page 7*) will need no translation!

I hope you also feel a surge of pride knowing the impact that Szyk's amazing art has in the world. Please consider supporting our efforts either online ([szyk.org](http://szyk.org)) or by returning the enclosed contribution envelope.

We so appreciate your ongoing enthusiasm and support.

With wishes for more tolerance and freedom in our world (as Arthur Szyk promoted so well),

Sandy Stadler

## Spotlight on the Board

The upcoming Ethel LeFrak Holocaust Education Conference offers the Society another chance to renew its connections with the **Reverend John T. Pawlikowski**. Not only is the Reverend a longstanding member of the Honorary Board of The Arthur Szyk Society, he is also the Chair of the NCCHE Advisory Board.

Pawlikowski has also served as President and Chair of the Theology Committee of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ), on the National Advisory Council of Facing History and Ourselves, and as a decades-long Chair of the Church Relations Committee, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.



Pawlikowski (*left*) speaks with Pope Francis (*right*) during their meeting at the Vatican this summer.

Pawlikowski is the author/editor of more than fifteen books including *The Challenge of the Holocaust for Christian Theology*. He is Professor of Social Ethics at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

To read an address by Dr. Pawlikowski on the impact of Vatican II on Jewish-Catholic relations, please visit the Seton Hill website (search for [setonhill.org](http://setonhill.org)—"Pawlikowski LeFrak") or go to: [goo.gl/dSbjfe](http://goo.gl/dSbjfe).

## Give Bigotry No Sanction

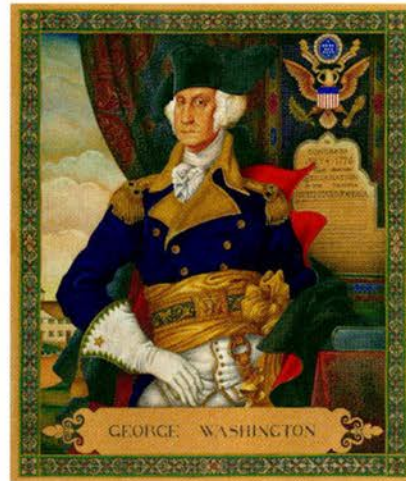
Thirty scholars, authors, and public figures contributed essays inspired by George Washington's well-known letter on religious liberty to a new publication: *Washington's Rebuke to Bigotry: Reflections On Our First President's Famous 1790 Letter To the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island* (edited by **Adam Strom, Dan Eshet, and Michael Feldberg**), published this summer by **Facing History and Ourselves**. The first U.S. President's promise to

"give to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance" serves as a springboard for exploring different approaches to understanding religious freedom in the U.S. now and throughout history.

The contributors are prominent thought leaders including Supreme Court Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsburg**; **Gordon Wood**, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Professor of History Emeritus at Brown University; **Jonathan D. Sarna**, prominent historian of American Jewish History at Brandeis University; New York University President **John Sexton**; **Eboo Patel**, founder and president of Interfaith Youth Core; and **Martha L. Minow**, Dean of the Faculty of Law at Harvard University.

Among this elite group of authors is Irvin Ungar, who is honored to share his illustrated essay, "Arthur Szyk: Artist for Freedom." Ungar wrote of Szyk's long-time admiration for George Washington, which culminated in 38 paintings tracing the American Revolution. (The completed series *Washington and His Times* was prominently displayed in the White House when President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered his famous "Four Freedoms" speech in January 1941.)

Copies of this exciting volume can be ordered from Facing History's website ([facinghistory.org](http://facinghistory.org)) or Amazon.



George Washington, *Washington and His Times*. Paris, 1931.



*Washington's Rebuke to Bigotry*  
(Facing History and Ourselves, 2015)



FACING  
HISTORY  
AND  
OURSSELVES

Facing History and Ourselves is an international educational and professional development organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and anti-Semitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry. Read more at [facinghistory.org](http://facinghistory.org).

## Upcoming Exhibition in Wisconsin "Arthur Szyk: The Art of Illumination" February 4–May 15, 2016

Early next year the **Jewish Museum Milwaukee** will present "Arthur Szyk: The Art of Illumination." Co-curated by **Molly Dubin** and Irvin Ungar, this new exhibition will feature 25 to 30 original works of art, plus additional objects. Dubin previously curated the 1997 exhibition "Arthur Szyk: The Man and His Art" at the Mizel Museum of Judaica in Denver. More information available soon at [jewishmuseummilwaukee.org](http://jewishmuseummilwaukee.org).



Lwów Medallion. Łódź, 1931-1932.

## New York's 92nd Street Y to Host Szyk Lecture

The prestigious 92nd Street Y in New York has invited Society Curator Irvin Ungar to serve as an Everett scholar for the 2015-16 season. Ungar will deliver a talk about Arthur Szyk on the morning of Sunday, October 4, 2015. (Registration is required; visit [92y.org](http://92y.org) for details.)

The program is under the auspices of the Everett Institute, founded and sustained at the Y since 1985 by **Edith Everett** and her late husband **Henry Everett**, supporters of many Jewish educational and cultural programs both in the U.S. and Israel. The Institute's participants have included some of the world's finest scholars exploring Jewish thought, philosophy, history and their meaning for today's world.

## Szyk Presentations at Catholic Institutions

### Szyk Seminar Included in Georgetown's Summer Program at the Jan Karski Institute for Holocaust Education

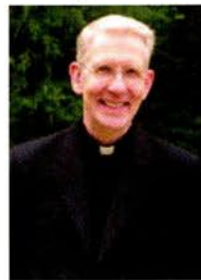


Students from the Holocaust Education Summer Certificate Program pose with a life-size sculpture of former Georgetown history professor Jan Karski.

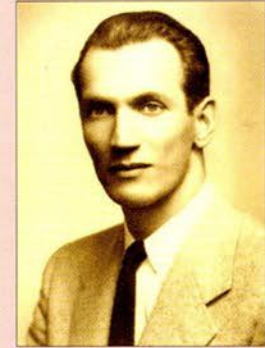
**G**eorgetown University, the oldest Catholic and Jesuit institution of higher education in the United States, is home to the **Jan Karski Institute for Holocaust Education**. The Institute, an integral part of Georgetown's Program for Jewish Civilization, hosts a seven-day Holocaust Education Summer Certificate Program in Washington, DC each summer for high school teachers. (Participants satisfy state requirements to serve as educators in public, private, and parochial schools.)

In July, Associate Director **Reverend Dennis McManus** invited Irvin Ungar to deliver a seminar on "Holocaust Art and Arthur Szyk", and on Szyk's advocacy for European Jewish rescue.

Among the other guest speakers were Father Patrick Desbois and **Andrzej Rojek**, the chair of the board of the Jan Karski Foundation.



Rev. Dennis McManus



**Jan Karski (1941-2000)**

Jan Karski's heroic and unrelenting work to rescue European Jewry is a great WWII story of courage and determination. A diplomat and Polish resistance fighter, Karski was the first to make an eyewitness report to President Franklin Roosevelt on the ongoing Holocaust of Polish Jews in German-occupied Poland. After WWII, Karski remained in the United States; he received his Ph.D at Georgetown and served on its faculty for 40 years.

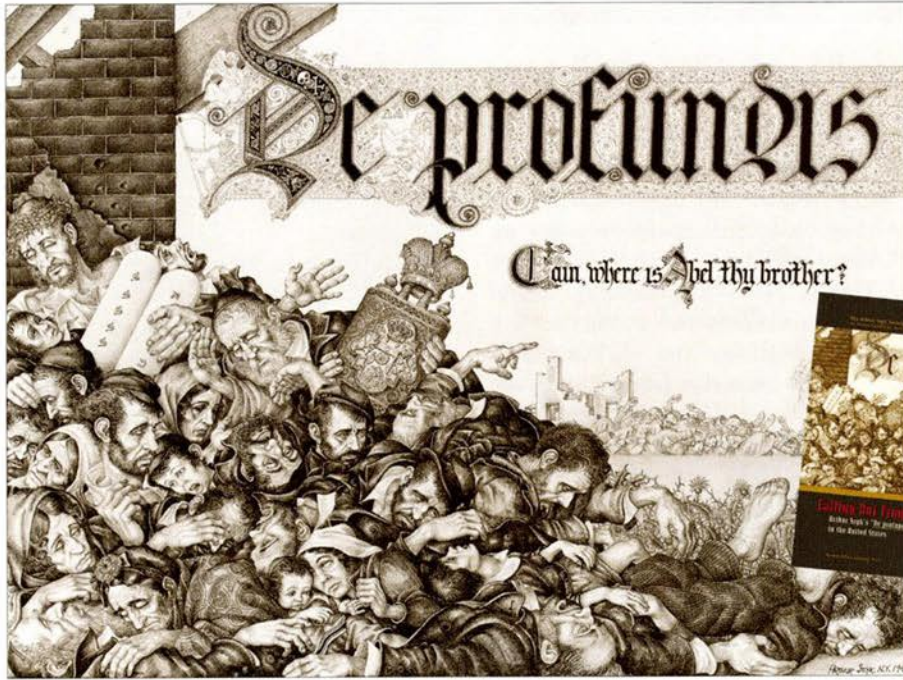
Karski was raised as a Catholic in Łódź, Poland, Arthur Szyk's hometown. Though it appears their paths never crossed, Karski and Szyk are linked by their passionate action to inspire the free world to action against Nazi atrocities. In 2014, cities in the United States and Poland commemorated the 100th anniversary of Karski's birth as well as the 120th anniversary of Arthur Szyk's birth.



### Lecture at the Catholic Theological Union

**Catholic Theological Union (CTU)**, one of the largest Roman Catholic graduate schools of theology and ministry in the United States, has invited Irvin Ungar to deliver the annual Shapiro Lecture on its Chicago campus. Established in the 1970s by **Rabbi Dr. Hayim Goren Perelmuter**, the Shapiro Lecture series (funded by the Shapiro Foundation) brings outstanding Jewish speakers to the CTU campus. Each Shapiro Lecture is designed to give CTU students, faculty, and friends a better understanding of Judaism, especially in the area of Jewish-Christian relations. (Society Board Member John T. Pawlikowski is Professor of Social Ethics at Catholic Theological Union; CTU faculty are Catholic as well as Jewish, Protestant, and Muslim.)

## De Profundis: Cain, Where is Abel, Thy Brother?



Szyk's heart-rending WWII work "De profundis" [Out of the depths] confronts the viewer with the horrors of the Holocaust. The Textbook Commission—a non-profit organized by the Protestant Digest, Inc.—published this image in the *Chicago Sun* (February 12, 1943) in an advertisement decrying anti-Semitism in American textbooks: "Out of the depths they speak....2,000,000 sensitive human beings tortured, starved, butchered, in an orgy of hate reaped by Hitler but sown in the very soil of Christian civilization, sown in the texts of intolerance."

Read more in The Society's original publication, "Calling Out From the Depths: Arthur Szyk's "De profundis" and Holocaust Protest in the United States" (2004), available online at [szyk.org/art-history-papers](http://szyk.org/art-history-papers).

## Two Szyk Portrayals of Jewish-Christian Cooperation in Poland

The history of Poland includes the story of its Jewish citizens, who have participated in every level of Polish society, contributed to the arts and sciences, and even fought for Polish independence. In 1264, the Grand Duke of Poland signed the *Statut Kaliski*

[Statute of Kalisz], which codified Jewish rights and privileges, a remarkable move in Christian Europe. Subsequent rulers upheld the statute and for centuries Polish Jews enjoyed civil and religious freedoms far beyond what was usual elsewhere.

Arthur Szyk celebrated this remarkable history in his stunning illustrated portfolio of the *Statut de Kalisz*, created in the late 1920s and published in 1932. This body of work, comprising more than 40 illuminated leaves, is arguably the greatest illuminated manuscript since the 16th century. The original watercolor and gouache paintings, now in the collection of The Jewish Museum (New York), were actively exhibited throughout Poland in the early 1930s, in a government-sponsored effort to highlight and celebrate the centuries-long, mutually beneficial relationship enjoyed between Poles and Jews.

Though the Statute was Szyk's fullest exploration of historic Jewish-Christian relations in Poland, he returned to the theme in other works as well.

As anti-Semitism rose in Europe in the early 1930s, Arthur Szyk illustrated the dramatic story of **Michael Landy** to remind his Polish brothers and sisters of the kinship Jews and Christians had shared throughout the centuries. In 1861, during a peaceful demonstration in Warsaw, a



Michael Landy.  
Łódź, 1932.

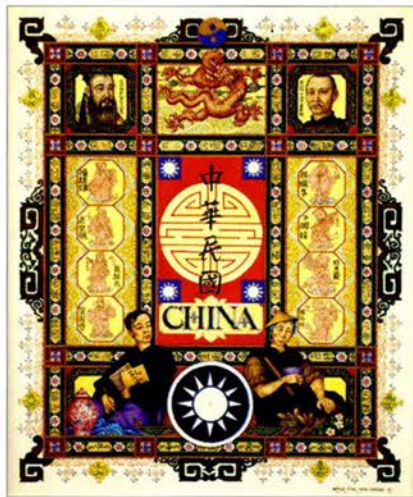
Russian soldier shot a priest, who dropped the tall cross he bore. Seventeen year old student Landy—a Jew who supported his Christian brethren's civil and religious freedoms—picked up the fallen cross, a

brave act of solidarity that cost him his life. By painting this moving event, Szyk wished to show that all have the opportunity to co-create a free, tolerant society rather than turn to fear and indifference. This work was reproduced on the back cover of a 1932 issue of the Polish magazine *Panorama* (published in Warsaw).



Berek Joselewicz. Paris, 1927.

## Chinese News Agency Visits “Szyk Central”



**O**n May 27, 2015, a Los Angeles-based film crew from **Xinhua News** (China) visited The Arthur Szyk Society for a story on Arthur Szyk.

Xinhua News is producing several feature stories commemorating the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. Chinese journalist **Jason Zhang** was attracted to Arthur Szyk's story by way of Szyk's 1941 donation to the China Relief Aid and his celebration of Chinese culture in the "Visual History of China" (New Canaan, 1947). Zhang, who met Irvin Ungar at a Los Angeles art show

in January 2015, attended Ungar's talk in March at American Jewish University and then arranged for the visit to Burlingame in May. Szyk's anti-Axis art, particularly his art against the Japanese, is of particular interest to the journalists. By most reports, more than 5 million Chinese civilians perished during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), in part due to the racist policies of the Japanese occupying forces. Szyk had good reason to view the Japanese as the Nazis of the East.

Watch the news story online at: [youtube.com/watch?v=A8VO0qIFWkA](http://youtube.com/watch?v=A8VO0qIFWkA).

## IDF Veteran, Painter Tomer Peretz Wins Szyk Prize

In 2014, the inaugural **Arthur Szyk Prize for Disruptive Thought and Zionist Art** was awarded to Jerusalem-born, Los Angeles-based artist **Tomer Peretz**. The Arthur Szyk Prize, which recognizes an artist whose work has the power to ignite positive conversation on Zionism in the 21st century, is co-sponsored by **Artists 4 Israel**, **Jewish National Initiative** and The Arthur Szyk Society.

Peretz's work was selected out of more than 100 submissions for the \$1,000 award. See Peretz's award-winning work on the artist's website ([tomerperetz.com](http://tomerperetz.com)); and read more about the Prize on the website of *The Algemeiner* ([algemeiner.com](http://algemeiner.com))—search for "Peretz Szyk Prize"—or visit [goo.gl/wuUzdh](http://goo.gl/wuUzdh).



Tomer Peretz.  
"Play Time at the Gulf War."  
Two Israeli children wear gas masks as they play in an underground bomb shelter.



## University Students Write Theses on Szyk

Each year university students contact The Arthur Szyk Society seeking research assistance for their undergraduate and graduate work on Arthur Szyk and his art.

We extend our belated congratulations to the following scholars:



**Frances Kahan**,  
Colgate University,  
senior thesis (Spring 2014), "The Szyk Haggadah: Masterpiece of Passion, Conviction and Beauty".



**Sophie Boffa**,  
University of Notre Dame, Sydney, Australia, Honors Dissertation (October 2013), "Next Year in Jerusalem: Visual expressions of Zionism in The Szyk Haggadah".



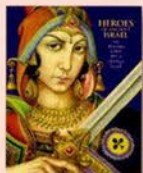
**Monica Senczyk**,  
Bard College, senior project (May 2012), "Patterning the Past: Arthur Szyk's Kaleidoscopic Re-Imagination of Historical Identity".



Bar Kochba, Jack of Clubs.  
Łódź, 1930s.

In the 1930s Szyk illustrated an exquisite set of twelve court cards — four Kings, four Queens and four Jacks. Each features a different Jewish hero from the Bible or the ancient Land of Israel. For his warrior Jacks, Szyk passed over Samson and Gideon in favor of revolutionaries from the second century BCE to the second century CE: Judah Maccabee, Simon Bar Giora, Bar Kochba, and John of Giscala.

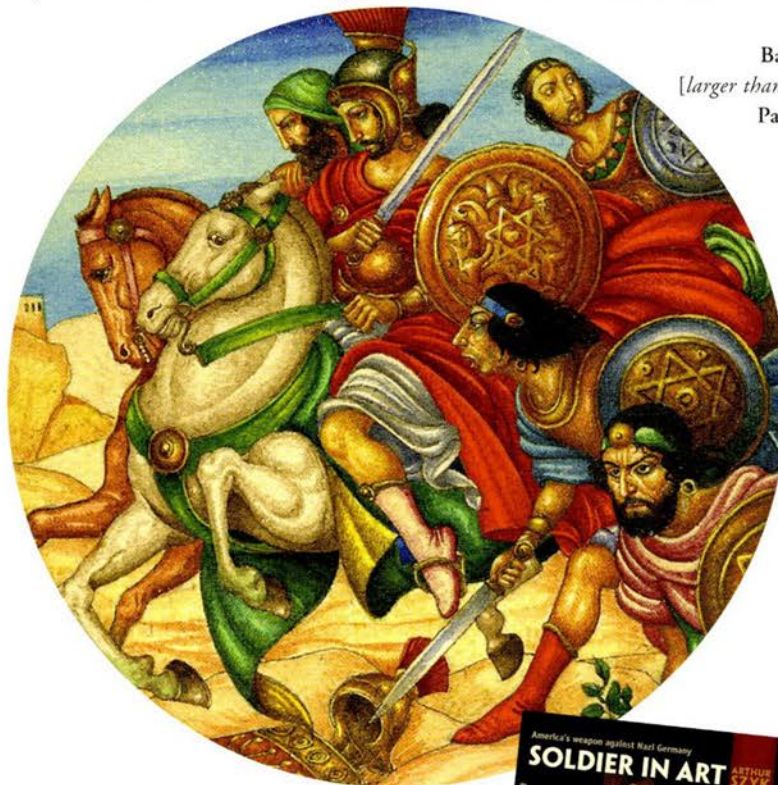
The playing cards were published for the first time as part of the original publication “Heroes of Ancient Israel: The Playing Card Art of Arthur Szyk” (Historicana, 2011), which can be ordered from [szyk.com](http://szyk.com).



## Szyk’s Bar Kochba Art to be Exhibited in Tel Aviv

The **Eretz Israel Museum** in Tel Aviv is preparing an exhibition on Bar Kochba in its Rothschild Center, scheduled to open in February 2016. The exhibition will examine the historic image of Bar Kochba and the myth that the Zionist Movement built around his character since the end of the 19th century. Bar Kochba led the Jewish revolt against Rome in 132 CE, establishing an independent Jewish State in the Land of Israel for three years.

Objects of all kinds will be presented, such as archeological items from the period of Bar Kochba, artworks and crafts, music, theater items, posters and photos. In addition, two artworks by Arthur Szyk will be included in the exhibition. The academic advisors of the exhibition are **Professor Amos Kloner** (from the Archeology department of Bar Ilan University) and historian **Dr. Mordechai Naor**.



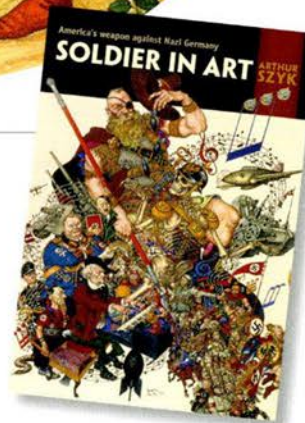
Bar Kochba  
[larger than life-size].  
Paris, 1927.

## Short Documentary “Soldier in Art” Now Online After Screening Internationally

Directed by **Jim Ruxin**, the 2014 short film “Soldier in Art: Arthur Szyk”<sup>\*</sup> is a four-part suite interpreting Szyk’s visual commentary on American democracy, the horrors of Nazism and the Holocaust, and the rebirth of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. Together, the images and music by composer **Richard Friedman** express the essence of Szyk’s activism for freedom, dignity, and the human soul.

The ten-minute film was featured at nine film festivals on three continents in 2014, in addition to a week-long run at the Laemmle Theatre in Los Angeles. Its venues included Cleveland, Palm Beach, FL, Providence, Palm Springs, CA, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, New York City, Berlin, and Melbourne and Sydney, Australia.

The documentary can be viewed online at [szyk.org/documentary-films](http://szyk.org/documentary-films).



<sup>\*</sup>Ruxin also created a 2006 documentary short, “Arthur Szyk: Soldier in Art,” which may be viewed on the Society website.

## Arthur Szyk's Stylistic Symphony: The Łódź and Paris Years

Was Arthur Szyk an illuminator, a painter, an illustrator, a cartoonist? He was, of course, all of those things, but one of the many unique factors about Szyk is that he employed distinctly different styles in the various genres in which he worked. Rather than corresponding to particular phases in his career, these styles often overlapped and Szyk often seems to have employed a style he thought most amenable to a particular work, leading his various finished works to exhibit extreme and, for a lover of art, very exciting diversity.

Szyk's earliest sketches reflect the classical training he would have received as a youth in Łódź. They demonstrate an effort to master the use of shading and modeling to render the human form. Following his years of study in Paris, from 1912–1914, however, Szyk experimented with several modern artistic movements. Art nouveau, especially orientalism, would inform Szyk's work from that point onward and is reflected in his "David, Rex Judeorum," completed in 1918 after his return to Łódź. It depicts David in a flattened, stylized manner recalling byzantine icons using bright colors and lively line and curve patterns.

By the early 1920s, after his return to Paris, much of Szyk's work begins to reflect the unique iteration of art nouveau by many artists of the Bezalel school, the academy of artists dedicated to creating a national Jewish style in Israel. Many extant works from this period in Szyk's career contain signature elements of that movement such as vistas of the Land of Israel, themes of national redemption and the use of ancient Near-Eastern archeological forms.

In Szyk's 1925 *Book of Esther*, for example, the king Ahasuerus is depicted as resembling ancient portraits of neo-Assyrian kings, with a long, braided beard and conical helmet.

During the same period in which he created these pieces, Szyk completed his 1926 illustrated version of Flaubert's *The Temptation of St. Anthony* in a very different stylistic vein. For this project, the telling of a surreal and emotionally charged narrative in book form, Szyk seems to have drawn from German expressionist book artists and the surrealists of 1920s Paris. He employs a highly contrasting color palette, lots of dark, brooding colors and stylized, whimsical portrayals of nature.

Between 1926 and 1928, Szyk executed his *Statute of Kalisz*, the first work that gained him widespread recognition as a leading artist in Poland and the United States. To illustrate this document, which Szyk hoped would be a monument to the contributions of Jews to Polish society, Szyk looked to late medieval East-European illumination. His figures, clad in renaissance garb, are highly naturalistic, and he employs a rich color palette and delicate shading in rendering various Jewish guildsman diligently at work in their trades.

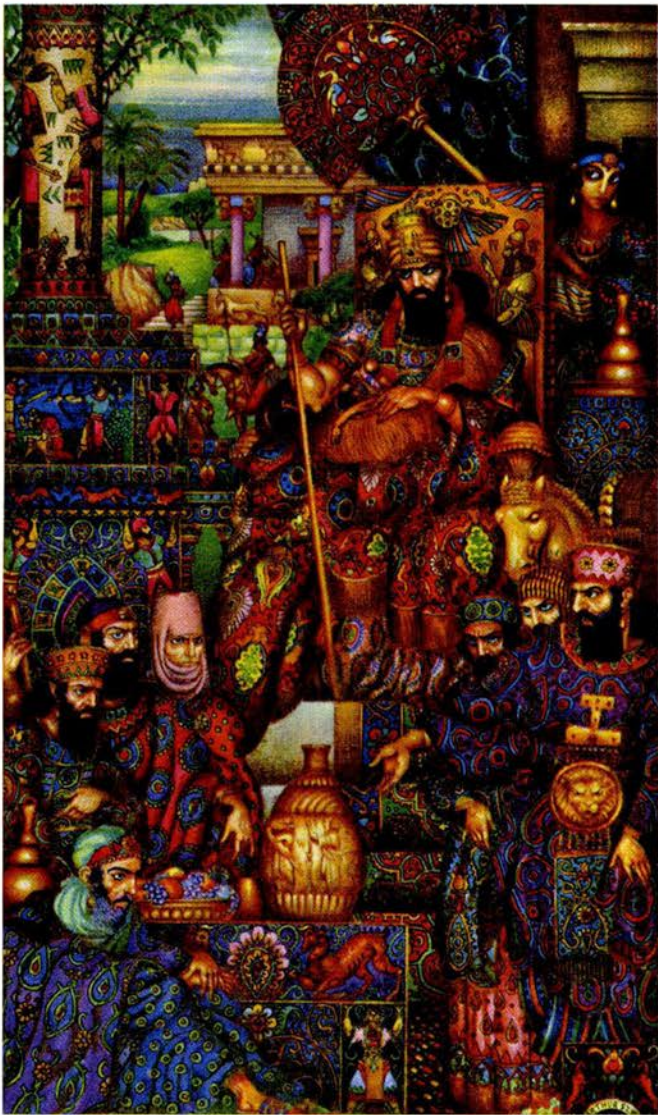
In the decade after the Statute, Szyk perfected the style that characterizes much of his most well-known works such as his 1940 Haggadah, which reflects medieval Jewish and Christian manuscript art as well as the art nouveau details of his early career. However, Szyk would continue to work in and experiment with various other stylistic genres, leaving behind a legacy that is truly, and perhaps uniquely, manifold.



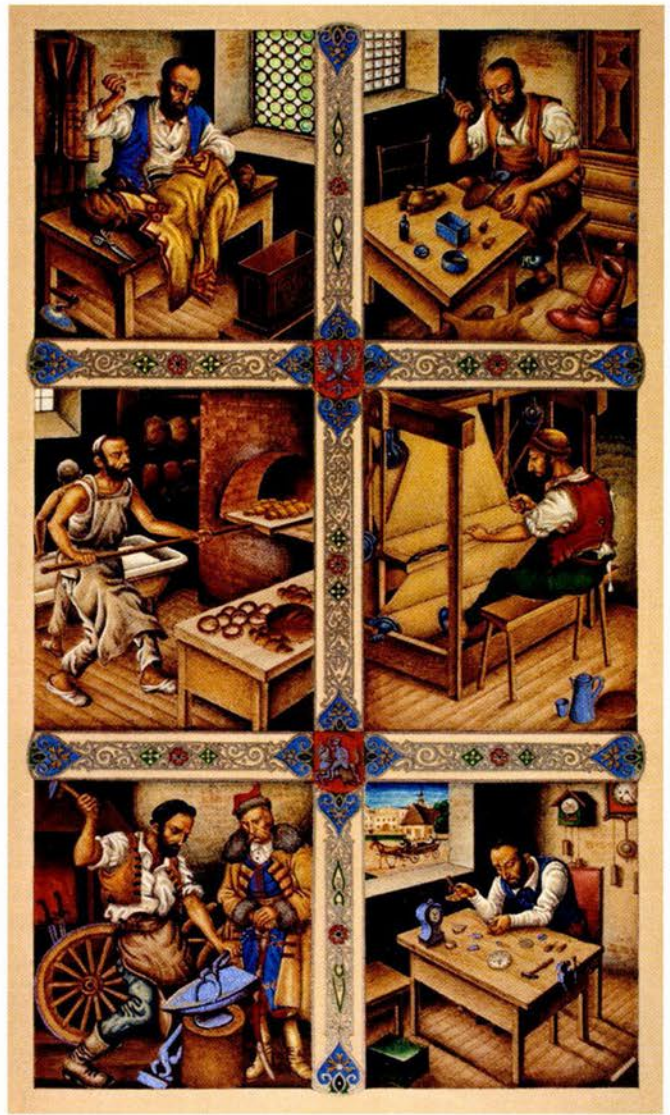
David Rex Judeorum [David, King of the Jews]. Łódź, 1918.



Yitzchak Schwartz is an historian and art historian working towards a Ph.D. at New York University. This article is informed by his recent visit to the Szyk archives at The Arthur Szyk Society in Burlingame, CA.



King Ahasuerus with Princes of Persia and Media,  
*Livre d'Esther (Book of Esther)*. Paris, 1925.



Jewish Craftsmen and Tradesmen,  
*Statute of Kalisz*. Paris, 1927.



**Szyk and The Temptation of Saint Anthony**  
 In content and style, Gustave Flaubert's 1874 book *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* [The Temptation of Saint Anthony] is wholly unlike Arthur Szyk's other illustration projects of the 1920s. It is not a biblical story or contemporary Jewish tale but rather an unstageable morality play. During one long strange night, the Christian monk and mystic Saint Anthony meets historical and mythological figures while fending off supernatural temptation. Szyk's 20 untitled paintings—none of which include Szyk's usual borders, calligraphy, dense patterns, or distant landscapes—perfectly illustrate Flaubert's grotesque yet beautiful dreamscape. The limited edition volume was published in Paris in 1926.

Illustration for *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*  
 [The Temptation of Saint Anthony].  
 Paris, 1926.



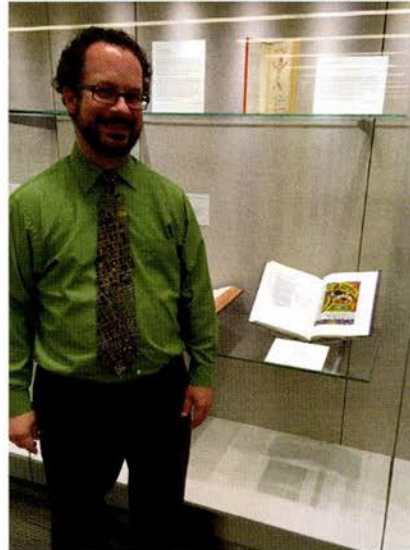
**Musee d'Art et Histoire du Judaisme**

(Paris)

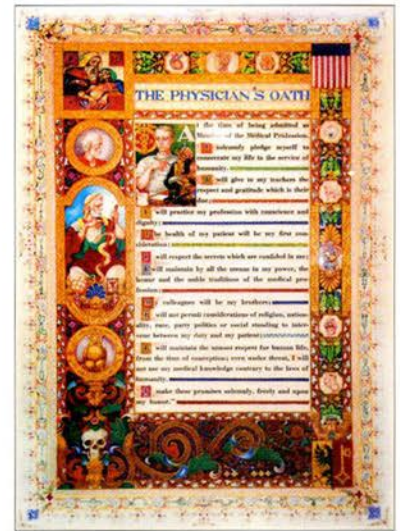
[Museum of Jewish Art and History] Szyk's "Visual History of Israel" and his "Proclamation of the Establishment of the State of Israel" are displayed in the permanent exhibition...

**Georgetown University**

The new Premier edition of *The Szyk Haggadah* was on view at the Special Collections Library...

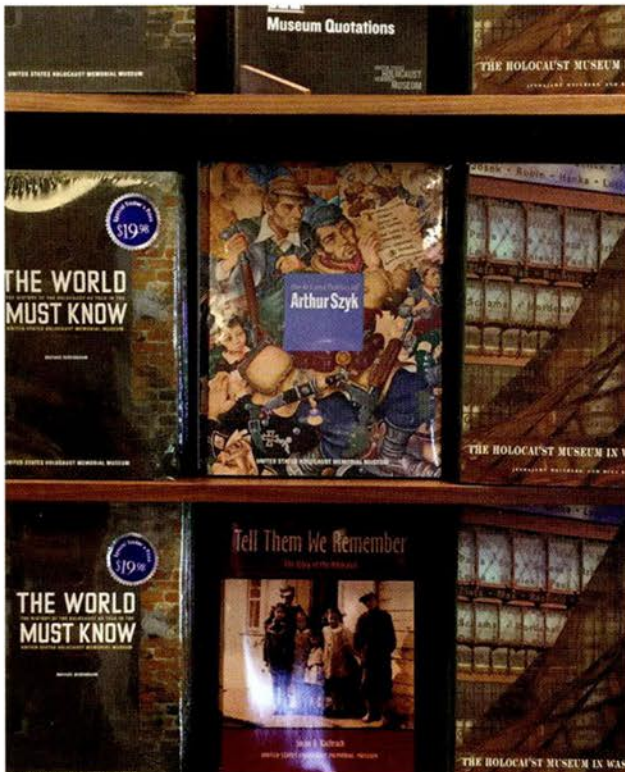


John Buchtel, head of the Booth Family Center for Special Collections



**Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Yeshiva University**

Szyk's original watercolor and gouache artwork "The Physician's Oath" hangs prominently...



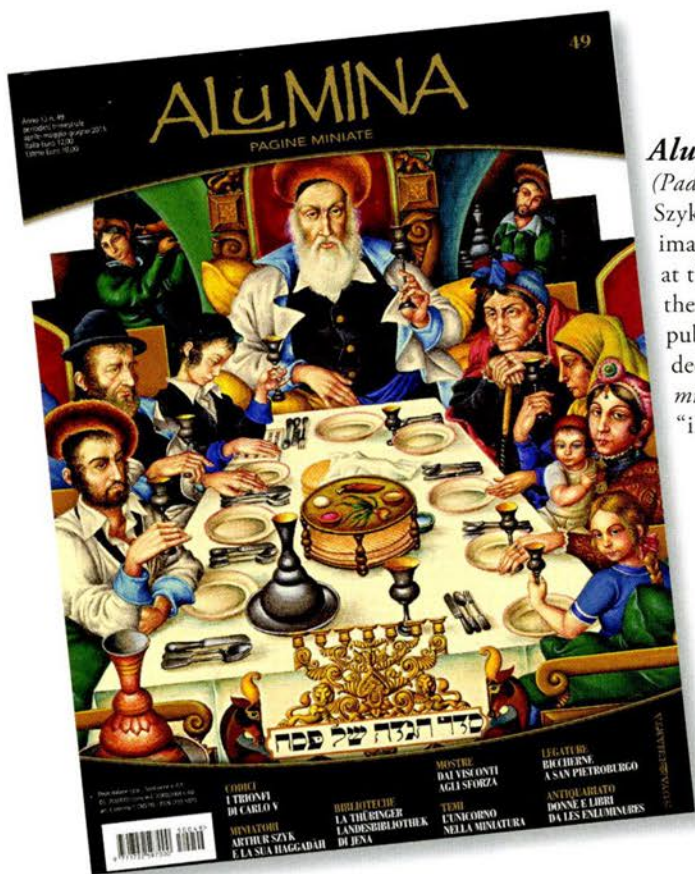
**United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

Copies of *The Art and Politics of Arthur Szyk* are offered for sale near the entrance to the gift shop...



**George Washington University**

The Albert H. Small Washingtoniana Collection includes a lithograph of Szyk's portrait of George Washington, presented to the University in Mr. Small's honor...



### Alumina magazine

(Padova, Italy)

Szyk's colorful Haggadah image "The Family at the Seder" graced the cover of an Italian publication (May 2015) dedicated to *pagine miniate* (literally, "illuminated pages")...

## Traveling Exhibition Stops in Texas and New York

### The Art Museum of Southeast Texas (AMSET)

Beaumont, Texas  
April 25–May 30, 2014



Rabbi Joshua S. Taub (*far right*) of Temple Emanuel, (Beaumont, Texas) arranged for the exhibition at AMSET.

### Harriet & Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives (KHRCA)

Queensborough Community College  
New York  
June 18–September 26, 2014



Society Curator Irvin Ungar with Arthur Flug, Executive Director, KHRCA.

### The Library of Congress

The new LoC publication *A Thousand Years of the Persian Book* includes an illustration and description of Szyk's "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam"...



### Marek Edelman Dialogue Center

(Łódź)

Irvin Ungar reunited with filmmaker **Piotr Zarebski** (creator of the 2005 film "Arthur Szyk: Illuminator") at the Marek Edelman Dialogue Center, which mounted a Szyk exhibition in summer 2014.

# Haggadah Originals Exhibited at Contemporary Jewish Museum



A view of the CJM exhibition from the gallery entrance.

For the first time in more than sixty years, all the original watercolor and gouache paintings of Szyk's Haggadah—on loan from the **Robbins Family Collection** (Palo Alto, California)—were displayed for the delight of the public. The **Contemporary Jewish Museum's** new exhibition *Arthur Szyk and the Art of the Haggadah* (February 13–June 29, 2014) dazzled, inspired, and challenged viewers with a gorgeous presentation of Szyk's masterwork, executed between 1934 and 1936 in Łódź, Poland. In addition to

the Haggadah art itself, the jewel box-like exhibition included materials such as the luxurious first printing of the Haggadah (1940), later editions, and even additional leaves not included in the final publication.

*San Francisco Examiner* journalist and blogger **Nancy Ewart** wrote that the Contemporary Jewish Museum show “continues to place [Szyk's] work firmly within the realm of fine art and returns Szyk to his rightful place in the art world.”



An oversize reproduction of a colorful detail from the Haggadah faced an open window, capturing the attention of passersby.

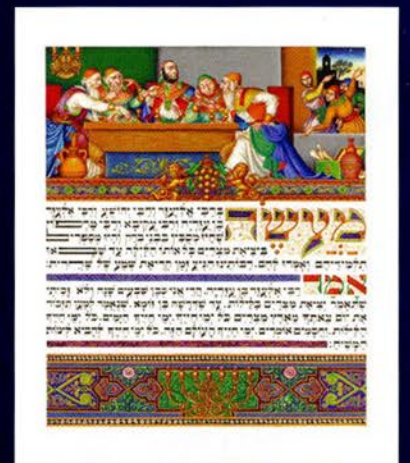
*“Thanks for sharing so much of your time and expertise with my class yesterday. It was a terrific presentation, and your excitement was contagious. While the arresting beauty of Szyk's images speaks for itself, the cultural, historical, and biographical context you provided was invaluable. We all learned so much.”*

*Thank you! Paul [Hamburg] was absolutely right—the experience was the perfect culmination to our semester.”*

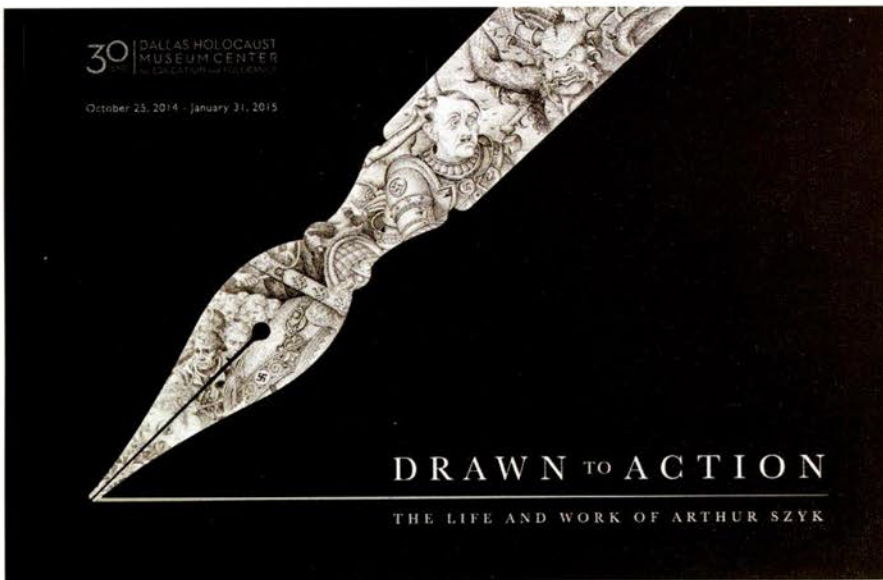
— Rabbi Mira Beth Wasserman,  
Visiting Scholar, UC Berkeley



Students from UC Berkeley's Jewish Studies 101 course enjoyed a private tour led by Irvin Ungar.



The Rabbis at B'nai Brak, *The Szyk Haggadah*. (Łódź) 1935.



This handsome promotional piece features a detail of Szyk's work *Walpurgis Night* (New York, 1942), from his *Nibelungen* series.

## Szyk Exhibition Held in Dallas

The Dallas Holocaust Museum / Center for Education and Tolerance hosted the exhibition "Drawn to Action: The Life and Work of Arthur Szyk" (October 25, 2014-January 31, 2015). The exhibit was organized and curated around several themes: Perpetrators, Resistance, Propaganda, Ode to Homeland, and Warning Calls. It primarily featured the collection of **Gregg & Michelle Philipson** of Austin, Texas. The Philipsons donated to the museum copies of Szyk's illustrated books of wartime caricatures (*Ink and Blood: A Book of Drawings* and *The New Order*), which were displayed in the special exhibits area.

As part of the exhibition programming, local art collector **Rogge Dunn** lectured on "Art as Propaganda" (January 12, 2015). Dunn, an attorney and fifth-generation Texan, has a special interest in World War I and II propaganda posters. "As propaganda and persuasion, Arthur Szyk's art inspired the American home front during World War II like no other artist," said Dunn.

## Szyk's Stained Glass Windows to be Preserved

In 1947, Arthur Szyk designed jewel-toned stained glass windows for the temple of Zionist activist **Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver** in Cleveland, Ohio. The windows were dedicated to the 765 men and women of the congregation who served in the U.S. armed forces in World War II. These historic windows will soon be relocated to the **Temple Tifereth Israel's** newly-to-be renovated Beachwood location.

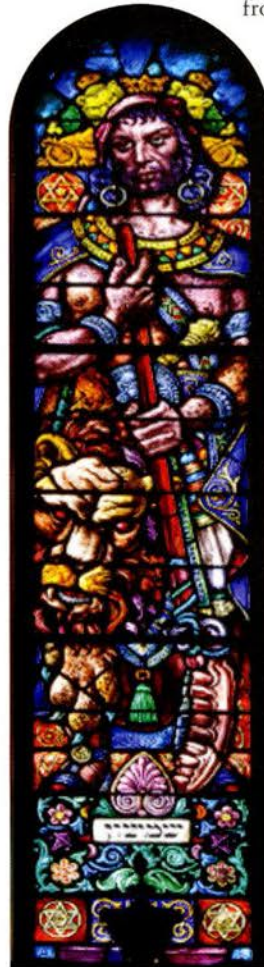
Under the leadership of **Rabbi Richard Block**, the synagogue intends that Szyk's windows will decorate a domed chapel at the heart of the 18-month, \$24M expansion of the synagogue. Twelve of the fifteen windows are emblazoned with the names of 22 congregants who died in the war. The other three windows, nicknamed the "warrior windows," feature vivid portrayals of biblical Hebrew warriors Gideon, Samson, and Judah Maccabee. All windows were originally installed in the Gries Memorial Chapel at the University Circle building.

The only other known three-dimensional synagogue art designed by Arthur Szyk is the monumental Ark (with accompanying freestanding bronze menorahs and Eternal Light) at the Forest Hills Jewish Center in Queens, NY. **Rabbi Ben Zion Bokser** and **Rabbi Jacob Pressman** (a Society Board Member) both helped recruit Szyk for the synagogue project and its development.

Szyk's "warrior windows" in Temple Tifereth Israel, Cleveland, Ohio.



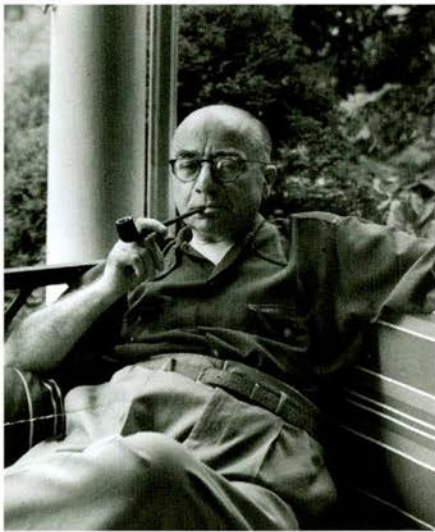
Gideon



Samson



Judah Maccabee



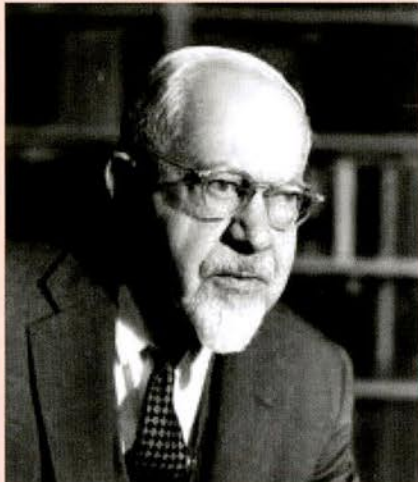
Arthur Szyk (1894-1951)

## Arthur Szyk's Reputation Among the Rabbis

**A**rthur Szyk was conversant with the classical rabbinic period (Hillel the sage, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Joshua) as well as the Jewish scholarship of medieval centuries (Abravanel, Caro, and Maimonides), painting these historic figures throughout his career. However, his religious contacts during his childhood in Poland are largely unknown. The identities of his personal teachers and mentors remain a mystery, though reportedly Szyk is descended from a prominent line of learned Jews going back to Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller, the great 17th century Bohemian-Polish rabbi.

That said, we do know what Szyk's rabbi friends said about him during his lifetime. Their words confirm what many already knew: Arthur Szyk was not only a great artist and a passionate activist, but he was also a great man. A recent discovery of the diaries of **Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan**—one of America's most influential 20th century rabbis—sheds light on Szyk's personality, artistic talent, and love for his people. Read what Rabbi Kaplan had to say about Szyk, and then, if your breath is not taken away, take in **Rabbi Mortimer Cohen** and **Rabbi Ben-Zion Bokser's** thoughts on Szyk's ever-expanding legacy as a Jewish immortal.

### Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan



"Our friends the Salzmans took us this afternoon to visit with Arthur Szyk. I consider him among the greatest in our generation, and certainly among our people. The vast range of his interests and knowledge is stupendous and the power of artistry is overwhelming. In addition he is a great Jew, consumed by a love for his people. In all the years of my life I have not met a person of such moral and artistic stature... he is so abounding, so gifted and so genial that I, for one, would keep silent and hear what he has to say..."

*Personal Diary, July 22, 1951*

"Lena and I returned a little while ago from a condolence visit with Julia Szyk. Arthur Szyk died last Thursday and the funeral took place yesterday... we were on the way toward developing a strong bond of friendship for each other. To me he would've been just the kind of heroic Jewish personality that I am sorely in need of knowing in the flesh to enhance my own being... the more I learn about him the more striking seems to me the fact that he embodied that rare combination of a great artist and a great all-around human being. Seems to me that those who are highly talented as artists, poets or writers are generally vain, snobbish, selfish and impossible people to get along with. Szyk was the very opposite of all this. He was generous, compassionate, humble and heroic. I wish I had the gift to do justice to him at least in a biographical sketch for the *Reconstructionist*. I hope someone will have the good sense to write the story of his life and art in such a way as to place him to the roster of our Jewish immortals."

*Personal Diary, September 15, 1951*

### Rabbi Mortimer J. Cohen

"In viewing the life and work of Arthur Szyk, one cannot but realize that the great artist must first of all be the great man. The great man is one who lives intensely, feels intensely, and believes intensely. And seeks to serve that which is greater than himself. As such, Arthur Szyk has become through his dedicated art, the living chalice in which the Divine spirit has brewed a rich mixture of passion, conviction and beauty that brings its elixir of life to the Jewish people and mankind."

*"Szyk—Illustrator of Jewish Books", Jewish Book Annual, 1946*

### Rabbi Ben-Zion Bokser

"Arthur Szyk was more than a great artist. He was a great man, a champion of justice, a fearless warrior in the cause of every humanitarian endeavor. His art was his tool and he used it brilliantly. It was in his hands a weapon of struggle with which he fought for the causes close to his heart."

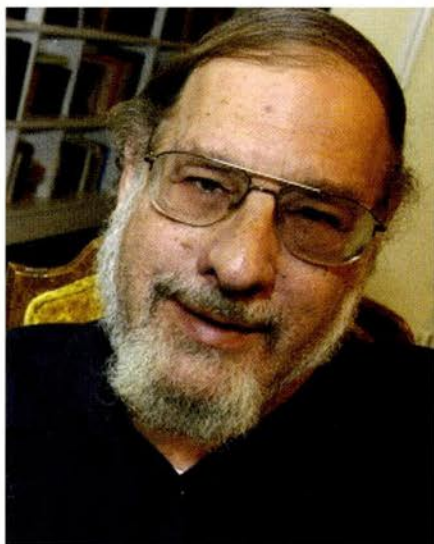
*Eulogy at Szyk's Funeral, September 13, 1951*



Arthur Szyk and Rabbi Bokser at the Forest Hills Jewish Center (New York), circa 1949.

Our thanks to **Professor Eric Caplan**, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, who is publishing and editing Kaplan's diaries. He alerted the Society to the existence of Kaplan's entries about Szyk and provided permission to publish a portion of them here.

## Rabbi Byron L. Sherwin (1946–2015) *A Personal Tribute by Irvin Ungar*



**B**yron was a friend, a mentor, and a collaborator in my work with Arthur Szyk. Words cannot express how dearly I miss him.

Many will recognize Rabbi Sherwin as the translator and commentator of the new luxury edition of *The Szyk Haggadah* (Historicana, 2008) and again in its popular edition (Abrams Books, 2011). Byron first encountered Arthur Szyk in 1952 (a year after Szyk's death), when he as a young boy experienced the artist's work in person. "My family had migrated from The Bronx to Queens. It was Rosh Hashanah. With my parents, I entered the main sanctuary of The Forest Hills Jewish Center, and there, towering above me, was the imposing Holy Ark, two stories tall...who created such imposing magnificence? Years later, I learned his name—Arthur Szyk."

A protégé of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, Byron was a profound scholar who made the most complex Hebrew texts and Jewish ideas accessible to the layman. He was clear, precise, and insightful. He was a thinking man's thinker. He was a theologian, he was an ethicist, and he was an educator. His teaching lives on in more than two dozen books and more than 150 articles and monographs.

I first met him in the mid-1970s when, as a young Jewish educator, I attended his lectures at CAJE conferences.

Years later, after I left the rabbinate, I sought out Byron's High Holy Day sermons for spiritual insight and read them to encourage myself during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. Year after year I re-read many of these sermons and often passed them to anyone sitting near me, anticipating the pleasure and inspiration they too would receive from Byron's words and instruction.

In 1996, after a decade as a rare book dealer, I approached Byron with the idea of hosting an exhibition of Szyk's artwork at the Spertus Museum. In August 1998, "Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk" opened in Chicago. The exhibition catalogue—with an introduction by Byron—was the first illustrated book about Arthur Szyk ever published. None of it would have happened without his invitation and continued encouragement.

In 2002, The Arthur Szyk Society launched its traveling exhibition program, also entitled "Justice Illuminated: The Art of Arthur Szyk". Again, I called upon Byron, this time to write a Study Guide to accompany the exhibition. His

remarkable insight and careful work produced an indispensable educational guide to decoding and understanding Szyk's artwork.

I am eternally grateful to Byron Sherwin for all his kindnesses, his guidance, his friendship, and for unlocking the door to let Arthur Szyk once again enter our world.

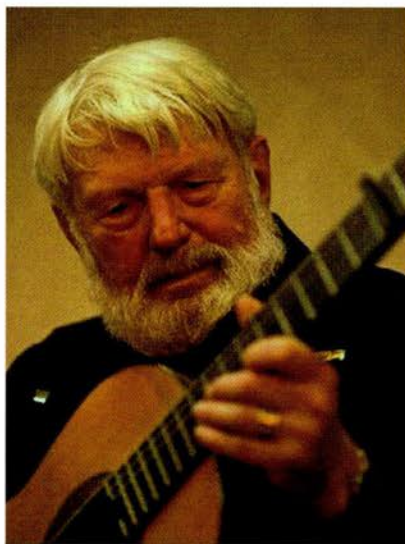
It was Byron who provided the key that granted me the privilege to journey with Szyk in his revival.

It is Byron who allowed me to fulfill that special relationship echoed by the Talmudic tradition: "Find yourself a teacher and you found yourself a friend."



For the full text of this tribute, please visit: [szyk.org/in-memoriam-byron-sherwin](http://szyk.org/in-memoriam-byron-sherwin)

### Theodore Bikel (1924–2015)



Read the full obituary on the New York Times website ([nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com)—search for "Theodore Bikel").

Honorary Board Member Theodore Bikel was a multifaceted performer with a heart of gold. *The New York Times* obituary is excerpted here:

"Theodore Bikel, the multilingual troubadour, character actor and social activist who created the role of Baron von Trapp in the original Broadway production of "The Sound of Music" and toured for decades as Tevye in "Fiddler on the Roof," died on Tuesday in Los Angeles. He was 91. ...

"A bulky, bearish man with an international background — he was born in Vienna and lived for years in England and British-administered Palestine — Mr. Bikel (pronounced bih-KEL) sang in 21 languages and was comfortable playing characters of almost any nationality, whether comic buffoons or scoundrels..."

# Society Debuts Updated Website

The Arthur Szyk Society's online home ([szyk.org](http://szyk.org)) now has a new look! All the articles and information from before—plus brand-new material—have been moved over to a faster, more stable WordPress site that is better optimized for search, and much easier for Society staff to update and maintain.

Our deepest thanks to **Clare Bond**, who spent a productive year at the Society as our first-ever Art Historian-in-Residence, responsible for Special Projects such as this beautiful new website. Well done, Clare!



Three pages from the new Society website (left to right): an image-driven introduction to Szyk's Judaica; an overview of documentary films about Szyk (which you can view on the site); and the dramatic home page.



Enjoy this newsletter? Join us in promoting Szyk's legacy—make a donation today!  
Visit us online at [szyk.org](http://szyk.org)