



Left: Elisheva Gilad with a portrait of her painted by her great-uncle, Eduard Einschlag. Right: Einschlag with another of his works.

Photos: Limor Edrey and courtesy of the family

Leipzig mayor hand delivers Nazi-era art to painter's heirs

By *Moti Katz*

An unexpected phone call two weeks ago surprised and moved Elisheva Gilad. On the other end of the line was her lawyer, Yoel Levy. He gave her the good news. The mayor of the German city of Leipzig, Burkhard Jung, had called him and said the city had agreed — after years of legal wrangling — to return to Gilad's family pictures painted by her mother's uncle, the Jewish painter Eduard Einschlag. Jung also said he would come to Israel to return the paintings in a ceremony to be held this Thursday at the German ambassador's residence. Yesterday Jung arrived in Israel.

Einschlag was born in Leipzig in 1879 and studied at the local art academy and later in Munich, Berlin and Paris. He was a central figure

in Leipzig's art scene and led a movement of impressionist painters.

With the Nazis rise to power, Einschlag was declared a painter of "degenerate art." Despite being born in Leipzig, Einschlag was not a German citizen. His family was originally from Poland, but had been in Germany for generations. He was deported with 5,000 other Jews from the city to Poland, along with his wife, three sisters and brother-in-law. His left behind property and the artwork in the studio in his apartment. After two years in the Warsaw Ghetto he and his entire family were sent to the Treblinka death camp and died there. His brother Martin reached Palestine in 1947, after spending the war in hiding in France. Martin's daughter, Ruth, arrived in Palestine before the war. She was the

mother of Elisheva Gilad and Yael Lifshitz, who inherited the paintings.

Gilad had little information on her great-uncle the painter until about 10 years ago. All she had was a portrait of herself, which hung in her mother's house and is now in her living room. Einschlag drew the picture of Gilad when she was 2 years old and went with her mother on a visit to Leipzig. The family managed to save a few other pictures, too.

"My mother, Ruth Einschlag," said Gilad, who was born in 1937, "like many Holocaust survivors after the war, chose to cut herself off from the past and forget what happened. At home we did not speak at all of Germany during that period. Despite that my parents spoke German at home.

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