Unfinished Lives
1933-1945
An Exhibit of Remembrance
“Vorbei” (Beyond Recall)

“They’re gone beyond recall
   A final glance, a last kiss
   And then it’s all over
   under the frame of eternity
   A final word, a last farewell”

“Vorbei Vorbei”
From the song performed by Dora Gerson
Dora Gerson began her career as a touring singer and actress in Germany. Her first marriage to film director Veit Harlan shortly ended in divorce after Harlan became a Nazi. He later directed the highly Anti-semitic Nazi film *Jud Sud*. Dora was emerging as a new Silent Screen star of the early German Cinema after two stellar performances in "Caravan of Death," in 1920 and "Brink of Paradise," 1921.

Soon after, Dora was "blacklisted" by the Nazis but the multi-talented Dora recorded songs with an underground Jewish studio. One of her songs *Vorbei* (Beyond Recall) with it’s hauntingly beautiful theme and lyrics captured the deep emotions of Jewish families grieving over lost loved ones.

By the 1930s, Dora had remarried and fled to the Netherlands with her husband and two children. But it wasn’t long before the Nazis were hunting down Jews there as well. Fearful of being captured anytime by the Nazis, Dora and her family devised a desperate plan to flee in order to find safe harbor in neutral Switzerland. Tragically the family were seized at the Swiss border. At the age of 43, Dora, along with her husband and their two children, all perished at Auschwitz, February 1943.
Ernst Kirchner was a German expressionist painter and printmaker and one of the founders of the artists group *Die Brücke* or "The Bridge," a key group leading to the foundation of Expressionism.

In 1933, his work was branded as "degenerate" by the Nazis and in 1937 they sold or destroyed 600 of his works. Ernst never recovered from the personal devastation of this loss and tragically committed suicide in 1938.

The first public showing of Kirchner’s works took place at the Armory Show in N.Y. in 1913, which was the first major display of Modern Art in America. In 1921 U.S. Museums began acquiring his work and did so increasingly thereafter. His first solo museum show was at the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1937. In 1992 the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. held a monographic exhibition of Kirchner’s art. In November 2006 at Christie’s, NY., Kirchner’s *Street Scene Berlin, 1913* (pictured bottom far left) fetched 38 million, a record for the artist. In 2008, the New York Museum of Modern Art held a major exhibition comprised of his best works.
Lilli Henoch was a world class champion German track and field athlete who set four world records and won 10 German national Championships in four different disciplines. Henoch set world records in the discus (twice), the shot put, the long jump and the 4x100 Meters relay events. Lilli also won national championships in the shot put four times, the 4x100 meters relay three times, the discus twice, and the long jump. She was Jewish, and during the Holocaust she and her mother were deported and machine-gunned to death by the Nazis.

Lilli held the highest world ranking: discus world records 24.90 meters (1922) and 26.62 meters (1923); shot put world record of 11.57 meters (1925); and 4x100 meters relay record of 50.4 seconds. She missed a chance to compete in the 1924 Summer Olympics because of Germany’s WWI penalty. Not to be denied Lilli was a member of the BSC hockey team, which won the Berlin Hockey Championship in 1925.
Selma Meerbaum-Eisenger

Selma’s verse addressed the longings of a young woman in love while confronted with the incomprehensible violence in Europe. Faced with a diminishing and terrifying future, Selma wrote fifty-seven memorable poems in German and translated another five from English, Yiddish, French, and Romanian. Her poetry is now available as an audio book called “Harvest of Blossoms.” With startling honesty, Selma wrote about love and heartbreak, desire and loss, injustice and marred hope. Selma found beauty in the fragility of chestnuts, comfort in the loneliness of rain, and grief in rural poverty. With despairing courage, faced with a future that wanted her and an entire way of being to:

“fade like smoke and leave no trace.”

She died tragically of typhus at a Nazi Labor Camp. Selma was only 18 years old.

“A Poem”
July 7, 1941

I want to live. I want to laugh and give comfort, fight battles, love and hate, hold heaven in my hand, be free to breathe and shout: I don’t want to die. No! No.
Ilse Weber

The Children’s Angel: Ilse Weber was a prominent Czech writer of children’s fiction, who fell victim to the Holocaust. Her most popular book was “Mendel Rosenbusch: Tales for Jewish Children” (1929). The title character, a kind elderly man, mysteriously receives a magic coin that enables him to become invisible at will. He uses this power to perform anonymous good deeds for his neighbors. Weber’s sharp observations and gentle humor make these stories appealing for all ages.

The Webers arrived at the concentration camp in February 1942. Ilse Weber worked as a night nurse in the camp’s children’s infirmary, doing everything she could for the young patients without the aid of medicine which was forbidden to Jewish prisoners. Ilse sang her own lullabys to the dying children. Ilse along with her son Tommy were gassed at Auschwitz.

Ilse wrote around 60 poems during her imprisonment and set many of them to music, employing deceptively simple tunes and imagery to describe the horror of her surroundings. In performance she accompanied herself on guitar. Her songs include “Lullaby,” “I Wandered Through Theresienstäd,” “The Lidice Sheep,” “And the Rain Falls,” and “Avowal of Belief.”
Erwin Schulhoff (1894–1942) was a prolific and multi-faceted creative figure whose work embraced a full panoply of musical styles and influences. Like Kafka and Mahler, a German Jew in a Czech cultural milieu, Schulhoff took full advantage of his "outsider looking in" status to forge a compelling musical personality. One of the earliest and most successful exponents of music drawing on art in jazz, Schulhoff refracts multiple approaches of his time—from Dada to Expressionism. His concert appearances in 1927 included successful engagements in Paris and London and a tour of Germany and the Netherlands in 1930, featuring an appearance with the Amsterdam Orchestra as a soloist in his own Double Concerto. His compositions were also regularly heard at the annual festivals of the International Society for Contemporary Music. Some of Schulhoff’s most famous and popular works include:

— String Quartet No. 1 and Five Pieces for String Quartet
— "Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 2" (1927)
— Double Concerto for Flute, Piano and Orchestra (1927)
— Concerto for String Quartet and Wind Orchestra (1930)
— Hot Sonata for alto saxophone and piano (1930)

Schulhoff also became involved with the mechanical transmission and reproduction of sound during this time. He made his first phonograph records for Polydor in 1928, choosing to record selections from his jazz-influenced piano works. Schulhoff also worked with radio. His concerts were broadcast in Prague and London, and he was regularly heard on Prague radio from 1930 to 1935 as half of a piano-duo that performed semi-improvised versions of popular music and jazz. In addition to his radio performances, Schulhoff wrote a piece specifically for the radio in 1930—Concerto for String Quartet and Wind Orchestra. In 1941, the Soviet Union approved his petition for citizenship, but he was arrested and imprisoned in Czechoslovakia before he could leave. In June 1941, Schulhoff was deported to the Wülzburg concentration camp near Bavaria. He died there on August 18, 1942 from tuberculosis.

LISTEN to Erwin Schulhoff’s Partita composed in 1920. It consists of 4 parts: a) Tango-Rag No.3; b) Tempo di Fox alia Hawai; c) Tango No. 7; d) Shimmy-Jazz No. 8. Recorded for Polydor in 1928 with Schulhoff playing.
Vera Menchik

The daughter of a Czech father and British mother, Vera Menchik was born in Moscow but, in the aftermath of World War I and the violence following the Russian Revolution, moved with her family to England in 1921. The following year, she became a pupil of Géza Maróczy considered one of the top chess masters of the early decades of the 20th century. At only 21 years of age, Vera won the first Women’s World Championship in 1927 and successfully defended her title six times in every other championship in her lifetime—only losing one game, winning 78 and drawing four. With no female competitors that could compete with Vera in the entire world, she was accepted into the prestigious Hastings Club, becoming their first female member and began competing against the best mens players in the world.

**The Vera Menchik Club**

In 1929, Menchik entered the Carlsbad Viennese World Chess Tournament where chess master Albert Becker ridiculed her entry by proposing that any player whom Menchik defeated in tournament play should be granted membership into the "Vera Menchik Club."

In the same tournament, Becker himself became the first member of the "club". In addition to Becker, Vera eventually triumphed over Hugh O’Donnell, Alexander Abraham Baratz, Euro Book, Edgar Colle, Max Euwe (a future World Champion), Harry Golombek, Sultan Khan, Jacqui Philip, Stuart Milner-Barry, Karel Opočenský, Brian Reilly, Samuel Reshev, Friedrich Sämisch, Lajos Steiner, George Alan Thomas, William Winter and Frederick Yates. In Vera’s unbelievable career, she came within ½ point of tying Jose Raul Capablanca, still considered, even today, as the greatest Grand Master World Champion Chess Player of all time.

In 1944, as Britain was nearing its sixth year in World War II, the 38 year old Vera Menchik along with her sister Olga and their mother, were killed when a V-1 rocket made a direct hit on her home in South London. In 2011 Vera was inducted into the World Chess Hall of Fame. The sole woman amongst only 12 other men in over 100 years of sanctioned tournament recorded chess competition. Today the winner of the Womens World’s Chess Championship receives the Vera Menchik Cup in her honor.
Felix Nussbaum, born in Osnabrück, Germany, was a German-Jewish surrealist painter. Nussbaum’s artwork gives a rare glimpse into the essence of one individual among the victims of the Holocaust. Felix Nussbaum was a lifelong student, beginning his formal studies in 1920 in Hamburg and Berlin and continuing as long as the contemporary political situation allowed him. He was a recorder of this era, and became its victim. Nussbaum belongs to the "lost generation," whose artistic development was impeded, like no other generation, by the circumstances of the time, cut off and finally forgotten. A museum, the Felix Nussbaum Haus in Germany, is dedicated to his life and great works.