

Henryk Gotlib - Polish painter, graphic artist and sculptor. Born on 10 January 1890 in Kraków, in the bourgeois family of Karol and Matylda née Tilles. He graduated from a secondary school in Kraków. Between 1908 and 1910, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków under Wojciech Weiss and Józef Unierzyski. He further developed his artistic skills in Vienna at the Kunstgewerbeschule (1910-1913) and in Munich, where from 1915 he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, in the drawing class of Angel Janek. He presented his first works at a solo exhibition in 1918 in Warsaw. In the same year, Henryk Gotlib volunteered for the Austrian army. In 1919, he left Warsaw and went to Kraków, where he became involved with the avant-garde movement of the Polish Formists, who were influenced by Cubism, Expressionism, Futurism and folk art. In 1920 he joined the Polish Army, where he served in the 6th Field Artillery Regiment. In the following years, he perfected his artistic craft and exhibited works with the Formists until 1923, after which he left his homeland.

From 1923 to 1929, he lived mainly in France, where he developed creatively and participated in many painting exhibitions. In 1928, he became a member of the Society of Polish Artists in Paris and a number of national groups, including the Association of Visual Artists 'Zwornik' and the Cracow Group. In 1930, he returned to Poland and joined the so-called Group of Ten. For three years he taught painting and drawing at Ludwika Mehoffer's Free School of Painting. He soon began working with the avant-garde Cricot theatre of artists, active in Krakow between 1933 and 1939 (he was probably the author of the name of this informal artistic group). Between 1933 and 1935, he travelled extensively, visiting Italy, Greece and Spain in search of inspiration. Between 1935 and 1936, he was editor-in-chief of the monthly magazine Voice of the Artists, dedicated to the subject of contemporary art. During this time, he also became known as an art critic through his publications in Wiadomosci Literackie. Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, he travelled to Cornwall, where his wife was from. In the turmoil of war, he decided to remain in England, associating himself with The London Group, an artistic group open to expatriates. From 1942 to 1945 he was director and lecturer of the Polish College of Art, established by the Polish government-in-exile. In the second half of the 1940s he became head of the School of Art in Hampstead, where he also taught. In 1945 the first solo exhibition of Gotlib's work took place in London. At the turn of 1949/1950, he accepted the position of professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow. In 1951 he returned to England and settled in South Godstone, Surrey, near London, where he spent the last years of his life. He died on 30 December 1966.

Henry Gotlib's work is characterised by a rich, warm colour palette. He painted still lifes, landscapes, nudes, portraits and genre scenes. In addition to painting, he was involved in printmaking, sculpture and stage design. He wrote about art and popularised it. His most important publications include the books "Polish Painting" (London, 1942) and "Wędrówki malarza" (Warsaw, 1947).

The works on show are a gift from Anna Dockery and a deposit from TPAE