

JOSEF NASSY PAPERS, 1945-1953
1991.245.229

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW
Washington, DC 20024-2126
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Descriptive summary

Title: Josef Nassy papers

Dates: 1945-1953

Accession number: 1991.245.229

Creator: Nassy, Joseph Johan Cosmo, 1904-1976

Extent: 0.1 linear foot (1 folder)

Repository: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW,
Washington, DC 20024-2126

Abstract: The Josef Nassy papers include a letter thanking Nassy for art classes he taught at the Laufen internment camp, a travel permit allowing Nassy to cross the border into Austria and return, a program for Nassy's October 1946 exhibition of internment camp artwork in Brussels, and Nassy's 1953 employment card indicating his status as a foreign artist working in Belgium.

Languages: French, English, German

Administrative Information

Access: Collection is open for use, but is stored offsite. Please contact the Reference Desk more than seven days prior to visit in order to request access.

Reproduction and use: Collection is available for use. Material may be protected by copyright. Please contact reference staff for further information.

Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Josef Nassy papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: The Severin Wunderman family donated the Josef Nassy papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1992.

Custodial history: Severin Wunderman, a California businessman and art collector, purchased much of Nassy collection in 1984.

Related materials: The Severin Wunderman family also donated 277 original pieces of artwork Nassy created while imprisoned at Laufen and Tittmoning (1991.245.1 through 1991.245.224 and 1992.192.1 to 1992.192.53) to the Museum. Morris and Nancy Baker donated two additional paintings (2006.491.1 and 2006.491.2) to the Museum in 2006.

Accruals: Accruals may have been received since this collection was first processed, see archives catalog at collections.ushmm.org for further information.

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, August 2015

Biographical note

Josef Nassy (1904–1976) was born in Paramaribo, Suriname (Dutch Guiana) to Adolf Nassy and Elisabeth de Maesschalk. Adolf Nassy was a businessman whose Jewish family had fled Spain during the Inquisition. He joined his father in New York in 1919, studied electrical engineering, and worked in London and Paris installing movie sound systems before studying painting at the Academie des Beaux Arts in Brussels. He was arrested in German-occupied Belgium in April 1942 as an enemy national because he still held an American passport. He was held for seven months at the Beverloo transit camp in Leopoldsborg, Belgium and then transferred to the Laufen internment camp and its subcamp at Tittmoning (Ilag VII) until it was liberated by the Third United States Army in May 1945. Laufen and Tittmoning were governed by rules of the Geneva Conventions, and while imprisoned, Nassy was supplied with art materials by the International YMCA. He created more than 200 paintings and drawings chronicling the people and the appearance of the camp, with works featuring the barbed wire, watch towers, and prison bars.

Scope and content of collection

The Josef Nassy papers include a letter thanking Nassy for art classes he taught at the Laufen internment camp, a travel permit allowing Nassy to cross the border into Austria and return, a program for Nassy's October 1946 exhibition of internment camp artwork in Brussels, and Nassy's 1953 employment card indicating his status as a foreign artist working in Belgium. The employment card falsely claims that Nassy was born in San Francisco in 1899.

System of arrangement

The Josef Nassy papers are arranged as a single series:

- Series 1: Josef Nassy papers, 1945-1953

Indexing terms

Ilag VII (Concentration camp).

Concentration camp inmates as artists--Germany.

Concentration camp inmates--Blacks.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945), and art--Germany.

Artists as teachers--Germany--Laufen.
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945), in art--Exhibitions.

Laufen (Germany)
Brussels (Belgium)

CONTAINER LIST

Series 1: Josef Nassy papers, 1945-1953

Folder	
1	Josef Nassy papers, 1945-1953