

**ESTHER LURIE PAPERS, 1919-1995**  
**1995.A.0989.1**

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

Title: Esther Lurie papers

Dates: 1919-1995

Accession number: 1995.A.0989.1

Creator: Lurie, Esther (1913-1998)

Extent: 2.5 linear feet (3 boxes, 1 oversize box, and 1 oversized folder)

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

Abstract: The Esther Lurie papers include biographical material, restitution files, correspondence, subject files, and photographs relating to Esther's wartime experience in the Kovno ghetto, Stuthoff concentration camp, and Leibitsch forced labor camp. The collection also includes correspondence, exhibition and publication development material, programs, and photographs relating to Esther's professional career as an artist.

Languages: Yiddish, Hebrew, English, German, French, Russian, and Italian

**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), Esther Lurie papers (1995.A.0989.1), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC.

Acquisition information: Esther Lurie donated the Esther Lurie papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1995.

Related archival materials: Esther Lurie donated a purse (1995.A.0989.2), wooden mixing spoon with patch (1995.A.0989.3a-b), remembrance pin with card (1995.A.0989.4a-b), commemorative pin and ribbon (1995.A.0989.5a-b), sketches (1995.A.0989.6-.40), photographic negatives, and exhibition posters in 1995. Esther also donated several books that are housed in the Library.

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

Processing history: Morgan Voth, February 2018

### **Biographical note**

Esther Lurie (1913-1998) was born in Liepaja, Latvia, to Josef and Bluma Lurie. From 1931-1934, Esther studied at the Institut des Arts Décoratifs in Brussels, Belgium and in 1934 she moved to Antwerp, Belgium to study drawing and painting at the Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts. Her family immigrated to Palestine in 1934. At the beginning of the war, while visiting her sister, Muta, in Lithuania, Esther was imprisoned in the Kovno ghetto. She began recording her experiences through sketches and written testimony. Esther worked in the painting and drawing workshop where Nazi officials ordered paintings on demand. As the situation in the ghetto worsened, she hid her drawings in a clay pot and buried it, but only a few of the drawings were later recovered. In July 1944, Esther was deported to Stutthof concentration camp, and Muta and her family were sent to Auschwitz, where it is believed they were killed. In 1944, Esther was sent to the Leibitsch forced labor camp, where she continued to document the people and scenes around her. After the labor camp was liberated in 1945, Esther worked briefly as an interpreter for the Soviet Union in Italy before reuniting with her family in Palestine. After the war, Esther continued in her career as an artist and settled in Israel where she married Joseph Shapiro and had two children, Saul and Judith. Along with developing many exhibitions, Esther won the Dizengoff Prize in 1936 and 1948. Her artwork was also presented as evidence during the Adolf Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961. Esther lived in Israel until her death in February of 1998.

### **Scope and content of collection**

The Esther Lurie papers include biographical material, restitution files, correspondence, subject files, and photographs relating to Esther's wartime experience in the Kovno ghetto, Stutthof concentration camp, and Leibitsch forced labor camp. The collection also includes correspondence, exhibition and publication development material, programs, and photographs relating to Esther's professional career as an artist.

Biographical materials include Esther Lurie's British passport and copies of her curriculum vitae.

Correspondence includes Esther Lurie's personal and professional correspondence during and after the war. Personal correspondence includes post-war communication between Esther and her family. Professional correspondence includes material relating to exhibition development, recovering lost art, and general communications between various organizations and institutions.

Subject files include Esther's manuscript, passes and a certificate from Aversa camp, and letters relating to people looking for survivors. Also included are notes, programs, and speeches regarding the development and opening of exhibitions, including those of Esther's art, at various institutions. This

series also includes material relating to the development of several of Esther's books, including *Jewesses in Slavery* and *A Living Witness*.

Printed material includes newspaper clippings, articles, and magazines featuring interviews with Esther and articles featuring her artwork as well as wartime newspaper clippings and clippings from the Adolf Eichmann trial, where Esther's drawings were used.

Photographic materials consist of prewar photographs of the Lurie family and postwar photographs of Esther and some of her artwork and exhibitions. This series also includes photographic postcards.

### **System of arrangement**

The Esther Lurie papers are arranged as six series:

- Series 1: Biographical materials, approximately 1945-1989
- Series 2: Restitution files, 1954-1965
- Series 3: Correspondence, approximately 1939-1995
- Series 4: Subject files, approximately 1930-1980
- Series 5: Printed material, approximately 1945-1987 and undated
- Series 6: Photographic material, 1919-1986 and undated

### **Indexing terms**

Lurie, Esther.

Stutthof (Concentration camp)  
Leibitsch (Concentration camp)  
Kovno (ghetto)

World War, 1939-1945.  
Jewish ghettos--Lithuania--Kauna.  
Jewish families--Palestine.  
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)  
Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945), and art.  
Jewish artists.  
Art--exhibitions.

Israel.  
Kaunas (Lithuania)  
Liepaja (Latvia)  
Brussels (Belguim)  
Palestine.

Correspondence.  
Photographs.  
Newspapers.

## **CONTAINER LIST**

### Series 1: Biographical materials, approximately 1945-1989

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Lurie, Esther, approximately 1945-1989

### Series 2: Restitution files, 1954-1965

Box/Folder	Title
1.2	Lurie, Esther, 1954-1965

### Series 3: Correspondence, approximately 1939-1995

Box/Folder	Title
1.3	Lurie, Esther, approximately 1939-1963
1.4	Lurie family, 1944-1962
1.5	Estival, I.L., approximately 1945-1988
1.6	Golub, Abraham, 1945-1951
1.7	Gur Arich, Yehudah, approximately 1945
1.8	Magnus, Erica, approximately 1945-1951
1.9	Recovering lost art, approximately 1945-1946
1.10	Stern, Noah, 1945
1.11	Morris, Jessie F., approximately 1946-1990
1.12-1.13	Professional correspondence, approximately 1946-1993 (2 folders)
1.14-1.16	Yad Vashem, approximately 1954-1988 (3 folders)
1.17	Bloch, Edith, 1959-1992
1.18	Kapiloff, Elsa, 1972-1988
1.19	March, Hugh, 1984-1990
1.20-1.21	Miscellaneous, approximately 1930-1995 (2 folders)

### Series 4: Subject files, approximately 1930-1980

Box/Folder	Title
2.1-2.2 4.1-4.3	Esther Lurie exhibitions, approximately 1930s-1990s (5 folders)
2.3-2.4	Notes and reflections, approximately 1940s-1960s (2 folders)
2.5	Esther Lurie manuscript, 1945-1952
2.6	Aversa Camp, 1945
2.7	Looking for survivors, approximately 1945-1951
2.8-2.9	Programs, approximately 1945-1992 (2 folders)
2.10	Society of Lithuanian Jews, 1945-1979
2.11-2.12 4.4	A Living Witness, approximately 1948-1982 (3 folders)
2.13	Speeches, approximately 1960s-1990s
2.14 OS 1	Jewesses in Slavery, approximately 1962 (2 folders)

2.15	Union of the Israel Artists of Tel Aviv, 1962-1965
3.1-3.2	Yad Vashem, approximately 1963-1984 (2 folders)
3.3	History of German-Israel Relations, 1973
3.4	U.S. lecture tour, approximately 1980s

**Series 5: Printed material, approximately 1945-1987 and undated**

Box/Folder	Title
3.5 4.5	Newspaper clippings, approximately 1945-1985 (2 folders)
3.6, 4.6-4.7	Adolf Eichmann trial newspaper clippings, approximately 1961-1962 (3 folders)
3.7-3.9, 4.8	Esther Lurie newspaper clippings and articles, approximately 1962-1987 (4 folders)
4.9	<i>Beit Yakov</i> , 1959
3.10	On the 20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Liberation, Raia Milstein, 1965
4.10	Moshe Sharett, 1965.
4.11	Fortnightly Illustrated Women's Magazine, 1968-1968
4.12	<i>Women's American ORT Reporter</i> , 1977
4.13	In the Warsaw Ghetto, no date
3.11	<i>Veronica Shleivitye: Catalog of Picture Gallery</i> , 1985
3.12	Miscellaneous, approximately 1940s-1960s

**Series 6: Photographic materials, approximately 1919-1986 and undated**

Box/Folder	Title
3.13	Lurie family, approximately 1919-1940
3.14	Lurie, Esther, approximately 1945-1986
3.15	Yad Vashem, approximately 1960s
3.16	Esther Lurie drawings, undated
3.17	Photographic postcards, undated