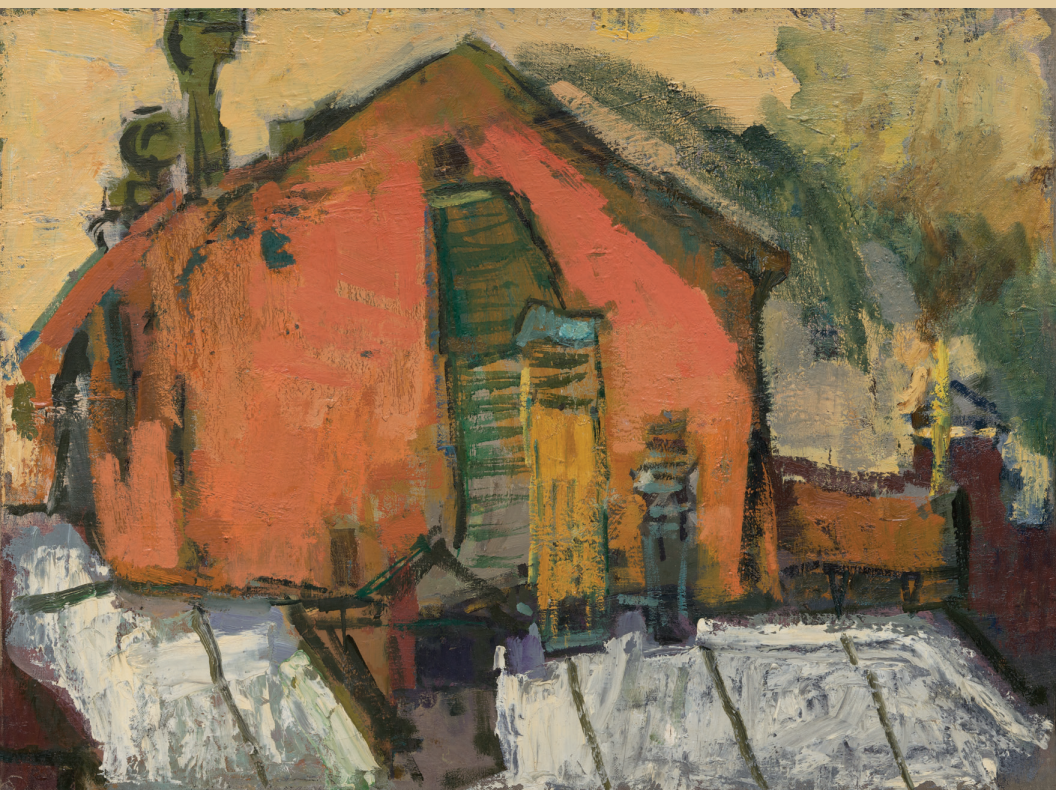


**Beings**  
AND **Being** Felix  
Lembersky



**APRIL 24 – MAY 17, 2013**

**Pushkin House London**

# Beings AND Being Felix Lembersky

## Opening Reception

Wednesday 24th April 2013, 6-9.00 pm

at 7.30: Introduction by Yelena Lembersky and reading by Robert Chandler

## Lecture

Tuesday 14th May, 2013, 7.30-9.00 pm

Joseph Troncale, Professor of Russian Literature and Visual Studies, University of Richmond,  
"Art That Stops the Mind and Moves the Heart"

## Exhibition Hours

Monday – Friday, 4-7.00 pm

Pushkin House

5a Bloomsbury Square

London, WC1A 2TA

The United Kingdom

**Felix Lembersky** (b. Lublin, Poland, 1913; d. Leningrad, 1970) was a painter, set designer, teacher, creator of artistic groups and a vocal proponent of freedom in the arts. Rooted in Avant-Garde and academically trained in Leningrad, Lembersky melded realist and modernist forms, realigning them to create emotionally charged and thought-provoking imagery, expressed through a masterful technique and exquisitely complex color. His visual context is grounded in Poland, where he was born; in Ukraine, where he was raised; in Leningrad (St. Petersburg), where he lived; and in cities in Russia and the Urals, where he traveled. He became a refugee at the onset of World War I, grew up in the crucible of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Civil War, and lived through World War II, including the Siege of Leningrad and the murder of his parents in occupation. Despite the painful historical events he addresses, Lembersky asserts life through beauty, empathy, and shared humanity. He shows people coming out of the shadows of catastrophe, who, nonetheless, find inner resources to seek meaning. His landscapes transform nature and man-made structures into living participants in his work.

*For more information visit [www.lembersky.org](http://www.lembersky.org)*



*Building after Gun Fire, Leningrad, 1959*

I attempt to uncover hidden spirituality in nature and to express it as a metaphor. —Felix Lembersky, *Autobiography*, 1960



*On a Walk. The Time of War* (ca. 1949)



## WORKS IN SHOW

### OILS

Untitled, *Execution. Babi Yar* series. Nizhny Tagil or Leningrad, ca. 1944–52. Oil on canvas, 39 x 51<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>

*On a Walk. The Time of War*, Leningrad, ca. 1949  
Oil on canvas, 35<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 23<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>

*Red Workshop*, Leningrad, 1959  
Oil on canvas, 23<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 32<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>

*Building after Gun Fire*, Leningrad, 1959  
Oil on board, 28<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 20<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>

*The Yard Keeper Katya*, Leningrad, 1959  
Oil on canvas, 42<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 28<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>

*By the Bakery*, 1963. Oil on board, 22<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 28<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

*At the Construction Site*, Leningrad, 1965  
Oil on board, 29<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 26<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

*Midday. Crucifixion. Church with Yellow Background*, Leningrad, 1964. Oil on board, 21 x 29<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

*Lezhashchaya. The Siege of Leningrad*, Leningrad, 1964. Oil on canvas, 31<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 42<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>

### WORKS ON PAPER

*Portrait of a Boy*, 1942–46  
Charcoal, watercolor, and ink, 30 x 21

*Workers' Town*, Nizhny Tagil, 1958. Gouache, 8 x 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

*Stair*, Nizhny Tagil, 1958. Series *Landscapes of Nizhny Tagil*. Gouache and watercolor, 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

*Old Factory in Nizhny Tagil*. Nizhny Tagil, 1958  
Gouache, 7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 12

*Night at the Urals Plant*, Nizhny Tagil, 1958  
Gouache and watercolor, 8 x 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>

*Interior Court of Metallurgical Plant*, Nizhny Tagil, 1958  
Brush and ink, 8<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

*The Yard at an Old Plant*, Nizhny Tagil, 1958. Ink, 7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 11

Four untitled works from the series *Miners*, Leningrad

Gouache and oil, 6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, 1958–63

Gouache, 7<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>, 1960–63

Gouache and oil, 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 8, 1960–63

Gouache, 6<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>, 1960–63

*Dimensions are in inches; height precedes width.*

# TIMELINE

## LIFE & TIMES OF FELIX LEMBERSKY SOVIET & WORLD EVENTS

- 1913** Born November 11 in Lublin, Poland
- 1914** World War I begins  
Lembersky's family become refugees and move to Berdichev, Ukraine
- 1917** Russian Revolution
- 1918-22** Russian Civil War
- 1924** Lenin dies. Joseph Stalin appoints himself political heir
- 1928-29** Attends the Jewish Art School, known as Kulture-lige, in Kiev
- 1930** Begins work as a theatre set designer at the Kiev Jewish Theatre
- 1932** Socialist Realism becomes the state policy regarding art; all other types of art banned
- 1932-33** The Great Famine in the Ukraine, the result of Stalin's first Five-Year Plan, leads millions to die of starvation (estimates vary widely)
- 1933** Attends the Kiev State Art Institute
- 1935** Studies at the Russian Academy of Arts in Leningrad, studio of Boris Ioganson; attends lectures by Nikolay Punin, visits the studios of Pavel Filonov and Alexander Osmerkin
- 1938** Tours Nizhny Tagil

## SOURCES

*Felix Lembersky. Paintings and Drawings*  
(Moscow: Galart, 2009)

*Torn from Darkness: Works by Felix Lembersky*  
(University of Richmond, 2012)

*Felix Lembersky: Soviet Form, Jewish Context*  
(University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, 2013)

- 1941** June 22 – Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union  
July – wounded in the defense of Leningrad  
September 8 – The Siege of Leningrad begins; it will last 900 days and claim up to 1 million lives  
September 15-16 Nazi massacre of nearly 20,000 civilians in Berdichev, Lembersky's parents among the victims  
September 29-30 – Nazi massacre of 34,000 Jews in Babi Yar ravine near Kiev (up to 80,000 people murdered during entire Nazi occupation).  
December 2 – Graduates from the Academy in the besieged Leningrad, earning honors for academic achievement with his thesis *Strike at the Urals Plant*
- 1942** Evacuated to Sverdlovsk and moves to Nizhny Tagil. In Nizhny Tagil, organizes an art school, the Artists Union, and an art gallery, now the Nizhny Tagil State Museum of Fine Arts. Creates images of the Urals homefront
- 1944** Returns to Leningrad; rejoins postgraduate program at the Academy of Arts, with the thesis theme portraying the Urals workers during World War II
- 1945** World War II ends  
Joins Leningrad Union of Soviet Artists, LSSKh. Leaves postgraduate program
- 1940s-50s** Exhibits at major national venues, work purchased for art museums and permanent installations in Leningrad and other cities across the U.S.S.R.
- 1946-47** Teaches at the Art College (now Roerikh Art College) and privately in his studio in Leningrad
- 1953** March 5 – Stalin dies
- 1956** February 25 – Nikita Khrushchev denounces Stalin's dictatorial rule and oversees the 'de-Stalinization' of the USSR
- 1956-57** Creates *Novgorod, Pskov, and First News: Revolution 1917* series
- 1958** Returns to Nizhny Tagil to collect materials for *Nizhny Tagil, Miners and Railway Switcher* series
- 1960** Berlin Wall erected  
Featured in a two-person exhibition with sculptor Moisey Vayman at LOSKh (previously LSSKh)

The paintings of Lembersky are a measure of the viewers' ability to perceive. Lembersky's art is an invisible and constant work of his soul, "the second layer of a painting." The first layer is the painting, the drawing, the composition, and the subject. It is a painting of restrained tension... The second layer of the painting is the soul of the painting. The soul of Lembersky. Subtext. The space between the lines is define by means of conscious awareness. The subtext of a canvas is what the viewer takes after interacting with this work of art. Not the visual memory of the aesthetics, but the memory of the soul.

—August Lanin

Letter to Galina Lembersky,  
Leningrad, 1999

**1962** Repression of the arts after Manezh exhibition in Moscow

Vladimir Serov, secretary of the directorate of the Union of Artists, inspects artists' studios to fulfill Khrushchev's orders to root out non-conformism in Soviet Art

**1963** Serov arrives at Lembersky's studio and presses for Lembersky's expulsion from the Union of Artists; Serov's demand is rejected by the Leningrad Union of Artists

**1964-66** Creates *Dzintari* series (current location of these works unknown)

Teaches at LISI (Leningrad Institute of Construction and Civil Engineering, currently Saint Petersburg State University of Architecture and Construction) and the Palace of Culture for Professional Unions

**1970** Dies December 2 in Leningrad

#### **DETAIL**

Untitled, *Execution. Babi Yar* series (ca. 1944-52)



# Acknowledgments

## ORGANIZERS

Pushkin House, London, the United Kingdom

The Uniterra Foundation, Cambridge, Massachusetts, the United States

## CURATORS

Robert Chandler, Yelena Lembersky and Elena Zaytseva  
with Masha Karp and Joseph Troncale

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Vitaly Slobotskoy, Joseph Troncale and Ursula Wooley

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## EXHIBITION SPONSORS

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Mia Dubosarsky and Roy Katz

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Mikhail and Yelizaveta Vaynshteyn

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Anonymous donor

*Dedicated to Uri Blushtein, 1941-2012*

*Stair, Nizhny Tagil, 1958*

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Susan Duehl, [dualitycmyk.com](http://dualitycmyk.com)