

ICP



ROMAN VISHNIAC

rediscovered

family guide

Welcome to the **International Center of Photography**, the world's leading institution dedicated to the practice and understanding of photography and the reproduced image in all its forms. We're glad you're here!

We are proud to present *Roman Vishniac Rediscovered*, an exhibition that brings together four decades of work by a remarkably versatile and innovative photographer and one of the most accomplished photographers of the 20th century. Many of Vishniac's photographs, which you will see today, have never been published or exhibited before. Use this guide to explore his work and the historical significance of his images.

Getting Started

Think of the many places you have seen photographs in your life. Were they in advertisements? In books? In museums or art galleries? Why might someone make a photograph?

Vishniac was best known for making black-and-white photographs of people in real-life situations. Through his photography, he hoped to bring awareness to the lives of people living in Jewish communities in Eastern Europe before and after World War II as well as immigrant communities in the United States.

Do you ever make photographs? Why? What type of camera do you use? A film camera? A digital camera? A phone?

Vishniac often used a Leica camera. The Leica was one of the first compact cameras to use film, which made it possible to make candid pictures of people at any place or time.

Beginning in Berlin

Find the work titled ***People behind bars*** from the Berlin Zoo. Describe what you see in this photograph. Why do you think Vishniac chose to make the photograph from this point of view? What is unique about it?

When Vishniac was a young man, he moved from Russia to Berlin. He was fascinated by his new home, and as a foreigner, documented life on the streets of Berlin.

Is there something about this photograph that might suggest that the photographer was an outsider looking in? How would this photograph be different if Vishniac had made it from a different angle? What if it had been taken from the other side of the bars?

Exploring Eastern Europe Before World War II

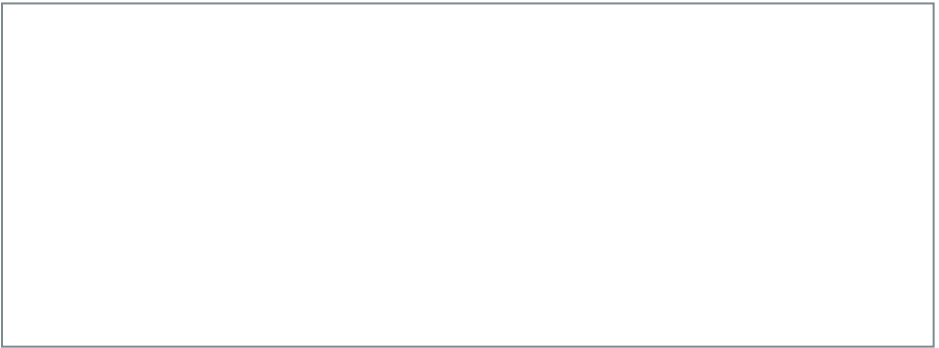
Find the photograph of ***David Eckstein and classmates in cheder*** (a Jewish elementary school). How would you describe the people in this photograph?

Between 1935 and 1938, Vishniac made photographs of people living in poor Jewish communities in Eastern Europe.

What clues does Vishniac give you about the time and place this photograph was made? Who else might be in the room that is not pictured?

Documentary photographers try to capture everyday life and in doing so make choices about what to show us. When you make a photograph, how do you decide what to show the viewer? Why do you think Vishniac chose to focus on these boys?

Take a closer look at the main boy in this scene. In the space below, write a sentence describing what he might be thinking at the time this photograph was made.



Find the photograph entitled ***Fish is the favored food for the kosher table*** from Eastern Europe.

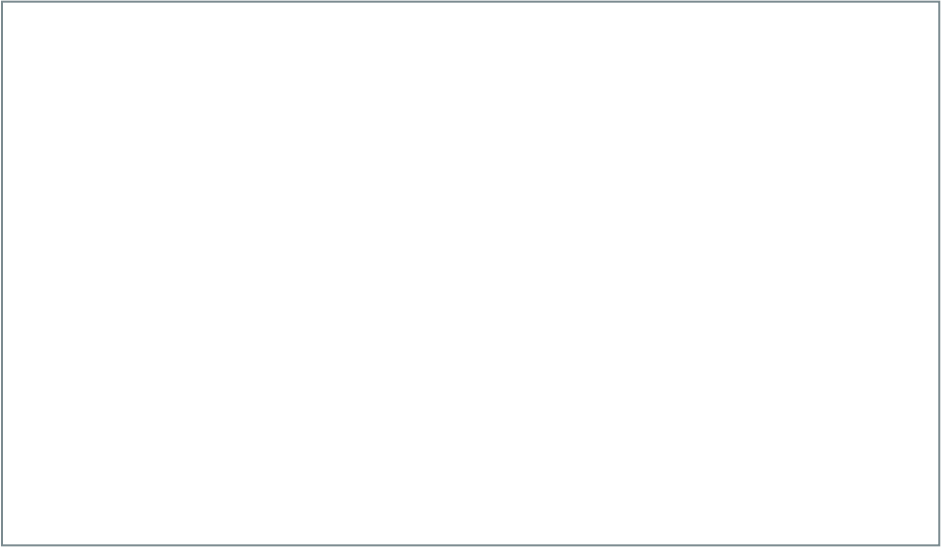
What is happening in this photograph? What might be happening beyond the edges of the frame?

Similar to the way he documented Berlin, Vishniac also spent years capturing the daily life of Jewish people in Eastern Europe before World War II.

What might this photograph tell you about daily life in a Jewish shtetl (town) in the 1930s? Compare this photograph to the one you just viewed. Is the mood similar or different? How?

Returning to Europe After World War II

Find the image titled *Boy standing on mountain of rubble* in Berlin.
What details stand out in this photograph? Sketch a few of them below.



Photographs tell a story. What kind of story does this photograph tell?
What kind of place is this? Think about who this boy was. Where might he
have come from? Where might he have gone after this image was made?

**Keep exploring Vishniac's work and learn more about the rediscovered
images of this masterful artist!**

Visit vishniac.icp.org for more information.

This exhibition is made possible with support from Mara Vishniac Kohn, whose generosity founded the Roman Vishniac Archive at ICP, and from the Andrew and Marina Lewin Family Foundation, Estanne and Martin Fawer, The David Berg Foundation, Righteous Persons Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Olitsky Family Foundation, the ICP Exhibitions Committee, James and Meryll Tisch, Koret Foundation, Caryl and Israel Englander, Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund, Tamar and Eric Goldstein, Laura and Murray Huberfeld, additional anonymous donors, and by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. We also acknowledge the continued collaboration of our partner, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, with whom we are developing a shared digital database of the Vishniac holdings at ICP.



Front: Roman Vishniac, [Jewish schoolchildren, Mukacevo], ca. 1935–38. © Mara Vishniac Kohn. Courtesy International Center of Photography.

 International Center of Photography

STAY CONNECTED

www.icp.org

212.857.0000

