

Varnsdorf Episcopal High School and a story of



František Peter Kien



851	Karel Ing. Rudolf	4851	Hilfsarb.	1896	XIII, Russische Str.40
852	Eta Gustav	4852	Hilfsarb.	1898	XI, Sudnierechitzstr.11
853	Kerstan Kurt	4853	Hilfsarb.	1906	VII, Messestr.67
854	Eisenbaum Franz	4854	Koch	1909	I, Regartstr.4
855	Kien Franz Peter	4855	Hilfsarb.	1919	XIX, Hennerg.6
856	Klatsch Otto	4856	Hilfsarb.	1910	XIV, Michl, Jaurde-gasse 1114
857	Klausner Leopold	4857	Hilfsarb.	1909	I, Kastelusg.11
858	Klein Emil	4858	Hilfsarb.	1903	XI, Herrnhuterstr.15
859	Klein Franz	4859	Hilfsarb.	1903	XI, Lotharstr.63

Painter no. 855



"I love life that is silly, ugly, harsh, painful or marvellous. There's no reason for this, I just love it"



Mysterious Man



F. P. Kien

Self-Portrait



His life

František Peter Kien was born on January 1, 1919 in Varnsdorf. His father was a dealer in textiles. At the end of 1929, the Kien family moved from Varnsdorf to Brno, where Peter continued his studies and began to draw, paint and write poetry under the influence of Dostoyevsky and Kafka.

In 1936 he left for Prague. In 1938 he met his future wife Ilsa Stránská with whom he concluded what was known as a "Terezín Marriage". Peter was promised that he would be given a U.S. visa, but he was too close to his family and his country to leave.

In December 1941, Peter Kien was deported to the Terezín ghetto, which was a transit camp for Jews en route to the extermination camps. During his stay at Terezín, Peter Kien was deputy head in the art room of the Jewish self-government's Technical Office. In his spare time he drew still lifes and scenes from Terezín, using stolen drawing materials. As a result, we can now see work that faithfully captures the cruel, inhuman conditions that prevailed in the Terezín ghetto. Also in Terezín, Peter Kien wrote poetry (the Plague Town series), plays (The Puppets) and a libretto for the opera Emperor of Atlantis. However, he did not live to see the premiere of his work, as he allowed himself to be included on one of the last transports to Auschwitz so that he could be with his close relatives. He died of an infectious disease in Auschwitz in October 1944.

Why we are searching

It all started with the "Neighbors Who Disappeared" project, which involved us and many other schools. We know that about 211 Jews used to live in Varnsdorf, so we went to Terezín to explore what happened to them. We were interested in documents on the Jewish painter Peter Kien, having found out that he lived in Varnsdorf. He even went to the same school as us. This is why we altered the project slightly and entitled it Neighbors Who Disappeared - Peter Kien Discovered. We managed to acquire paintings for his very first exhibition in the Czech Republic, which was held this year in Varnsdorf. In the future we intend to focus on the fates of other Jews from Varnsdorf.

Education

Peter Kien completed his elementary education in Varnsdorf and then went on to a state Realschule. Due to a national economic crisis, the family moved to Brno, where he continued his studies at a German Realschule, from which he graduated in 1936.

In 1937 he was accepted at Prague's Academy of Fine Arts to study under Willi Nowak. Nowak's department was closed down after the Nazi invasion and Kien then attended the Officina Pragensis, a private art college.

Girl in Blue Blouse



The following people researched the life of Peter: Adela Nohodimová, Barbora Louková, Eva Stocklová, Helena Kostová, Iveta Skalníčková, Jakub Kittl, Jana Kopečková, Jana Spáčeková, Jiří Jíro, Kateřina Krejčí, Lenka Gogová, Lenka Oborníková, Lucie Koudelková, Martina Skalníčková, Martin Fleba, Martina Janoušková, Martina Štejskalová, Martina Tognarová, Michaela Flusková, Michaela Vlková, Michal Salas, Milan Janek, Monika Cibulková, Petr Kestler, Petr Vaněk, Stanislav Rejzler, Vendula Řídková, Veronika Kozelková



Terezín



The used pieces of work come from Terezín Memorial collection