

1897-01-10
Nordau, Maxa Simone

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Maxa Nordau
Paris - 1897 - Paris – 1991

Maxa Nordau grow up in a parisian wealthy family. Her father, Max Nordau, who comes from Germany, was a doctor. He was one of the theorist and a collaborator of Theodore Herzl and he contributed to the creation of Israel.

Maxa Nordau learns with Lopez Mesquita and Jules Adler who teach her oil painting, drawing and watercolor.

During the First World War, she lives in Spain with his father. She exposes in the official shows, and take part at the Colonial exhibition in Strasbourg in 1924 and in Paris in 1931. She participates at the decoration of the Palestinian pavilion for the International Exhibition of Paris in 1937.



In 1939, Maxa Nordau participates in England in an exhibition of French art. During the Second World War, Maxa Nordau exiles herself in United States where she takes part to several exhibitions in New York and she teaches painting at the New York City College.

Back in Paris in 1946, she still paints and exposes in private art galleries. As she loved to travel, Maxa Nordau visits Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Turkey and Greece. She executes a lot of portraits and illustrates several books which « Contes pour Maxa » (published by « Presse du Temps Présent ») written by Max Nordau and « Le Vent dans les Cheveux de Pierre Créange ».

Israel will always remain her home ».

Fra www.jacobsamuelart.com 2021

Maxa was born to a middle class Parisian family. Father, Max, A physician, was one of the founders of the international Zionist organization.

With her friends, Lopez Mezquita and Jules Adler she studied the methods of oil painting, sketching and acrylic painting. During World War I, she stayed in Spain with her father. In 1924, she presented her works in the official Salon as part of the colonial exposition in Strasbourg. In 1937, she contributed her decoration to the Palestinian Pavilion in the Paris World Fair of .

In 1939, she participated in a French art exhibition which was held in England. During World War II, she left France and moved to the United State where she took part in several exhibitions in New York, also she used her journey to continue study painting in the New York City College. As she returns to Paris in 1946, Nordau proceeded painting and presenting her work in private galleries. Nordau traveled many times, and she has been in Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Greece, Morocco and other countries. When she died in 1991, she left a large number of portraits and several illustrations.

Although she was indeed French, Maxa Nordau is considered to be a part of what is called "School of Paris", a group of non French artists, who worked in Paris before and during World War II. Most of Nordau paintings are portraits, women's portraits in particular. The influence from her many journeys to the Middle East and to other Arabic countries are well shown in the characters she describes in her paintings. The orient fascinated Nordau, and she described the Arab women in a very vivid and colorful manner.

Nordau wasn't the only artist who had an interest in the orient, this theme was very common among Jewish artists in the beginning of the 20th century, specifically artists from Zionists families who had visited Palestine and some even left Europe and came to live and work in the raising Jewish state. Nordau also dealt with traditional themes such as still life, landscape and interior in her paintings. Her unique method combines the techniques and the conceptual ideas of her time, and one might find in her works an interesting combination of realism, primitivism and the influence of expressionism and fauvism. In many ways, her work captures the spirit of her time.

Nordau's landscape paintings mostly describe an oriental landscapes- warm climate, Arabic architecture and pine trees. Her interior paintings are very humble and simple, and yet, full of warmth and domestic grace. In her illustrations she express other sides of her personality- she proves in her illustrations a sense of humor and somewhat childishness, which comes in an interesting conflict with her very mature and profound portraits. Maxa Nordau's body of work is very versatile and intriguing, and the interest in this artist has grown in the past few years.

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Fra www.en.wikipedia.org 2021

Maxa Nordau (Hebrew: **מקסה נורדאוו**, 10 January 1897 – 17 September 1993) was a French painter. She was from a Jewish family and was the daughter of Max Nordau, a prominent Zionist. She often travelled in the Middle East, and many of her paintings are portraits or nudes of Arab or Jewish women whom she met there.

Life

She was born on 10 January 1897. Her parents were Max Nordau (1849–1923) and Anna Dons-Kaufmann.^[1] Her father was a doctor, born in Pest, Hungary, who was associated with Theodor Herzl in creating the state of Israel.^[2] In 1892 he wrote *Degeneration*, in which he violently attacked what he saw as the degenerate art and literature of the time.^[3] Her mother, Anna Dons-Kaufman, was a widow with four children when she married Nordau.^[4] Maxa grew up in a middle-class environment.^[2] Her father wrote a book of fairy tales for Maxa with carefully selected messages, which he published in 1905.^[5]

Maxa Nordau studied oil and watercolor painting under José María López Mezquita (1883–1954) and Jules Adler (1865–1952). She lived in Spain with her father during World War I (1914–18).^[2] She married Kalman (Claude) Gruenblat, and they had a child, Claudie Nordau-Gruenblat.^[6] Nordau's work was shown at official exhibitions included the 1924 Colonial Exhibition in Strasbourg.^[2] In the Spring of 1926 she visited the United States for a lecture tour in the major cities and an art exhibit at The New Gallery in New York, hosted by the critic George S. Hellman.^[7] Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the Revisionist Zionist leader, sent a letter of greeting in which he wrote:

Your father's spirit may be proud of his daughter not only in your loyalty but also in your own personality. You have inherited a great deal of that sober analytical sharpness, that humorous contempt of cant and 'bunk,' that clear perception of the main thing as distinct from sparkling or noisy trivialities, which were among your father's charms; and you temper all this by a gentle feminine mentality. America will listen to Nordau's message through the medium of an intelligent messenger.^[7]

Maxa Nordau became a member of the Société des femmes artistes modernes (FAM).^[3] This group held its inaugural exhibition in Paris in 1931.^[8] The Jewish members of FAM such as Nordau, Alice Halicka, Alice Hohermann and Rosette Idzkowski had to deal with growing anti-Semitism in the artistic scene during the 1930s,^[9] Évi Patai published an article on Nordau in the November 1936 issue of József Patai's *Mult és Jövő* (Budapest).^[10] Nordau helped decorate the Palestine pavilion for the Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne of 1937^[2] In 1939 her work was shown in an exhibition of French art in England.^[2]

During World War II (1939–45) Nordau exhibited in the US, including several exhibitions in New York City. She taught painting at the City College of New York.^[2] She collaborated with her mother in a life of her father, *Max Nordau: A Biography*, published in New York by the Nordau Committee in 1943.^[11] The work gives an intimate and loving portrait of the man, but not a detailed account of his career.^[12] The biography was translated by Ludwig Lewisohn, but Maxa Nordau was critical of it and the *Morgen Journal* refused payment.^[13] After the war Maxa Nordau returned to Paris. She continued to paint and exhibit in various private galleries, and to travel widely in Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Turkey and Greece. She considered Israel her homeland.^[2] Nordau died on 17 September 1993.^[6]

Work

The bulk of Nordau's work consists of portraits, mostly of women. They include vivid and colourful depictions of Arab women whom she met during her frequent visits to the Middle East. Although she was French, she is considered to be part of the School of Paris, a group of mostly non-French artists.^[14] She was influenced by her father's Zionist views but did not share his rejection of modernism. More than other women artists of the day she did not feel a need to represent bourgeois French values of femininity and domesticity.^[3] She often exhibited very naturalistic paintings of nude

female Yemenite and Palestinian models whom she met and studied during visits to the Middle East. She also made portraits of pioneer Jewish women in Palestine and other Middle Eastern countries. She painted male and female Jewish settlers working the land in Palestine, and idealized desert landscapes.^[15] She exhibited in Paris in the Salon d'Automne, Salon des Independants, Salon Société Coloniale Nouveau, Galerie Zivy, Galerie Simonson and Galerie Carmine and others.^[16]

