

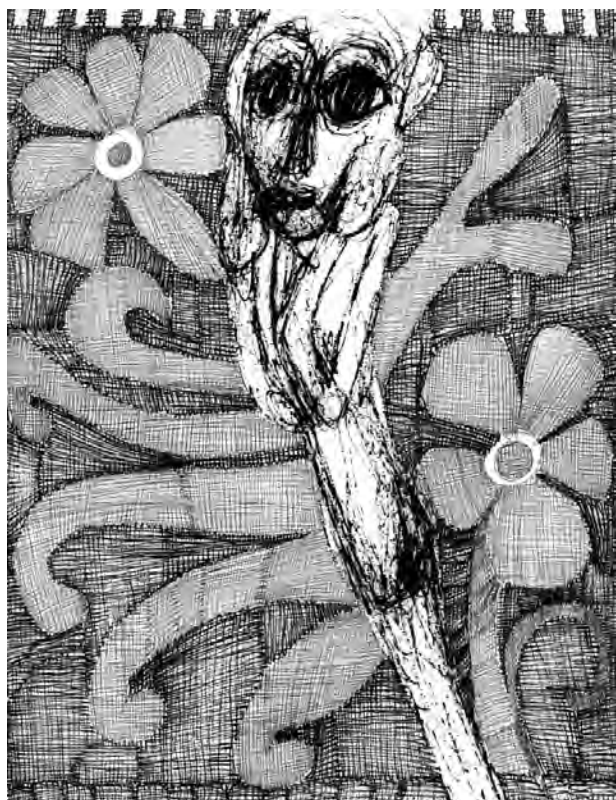


Callan Park Gallery

For Self-Taught and Outsider Art

‘I Am Weaving You a Shroud’ Rosemarie Koczÿ’s Holocaust Memorial

Rosemarie Koczÿ (1939-2007) was a maker of pungent ink drawings, as well as paintings, tapestries and woodcarvings, which together are intimately connected to her traumatic childhood. Born to Jewish parents in Recklinghausen in northern Germany, she was deported at the age of three to the Traunstein concentration camp, near Dachau, and later to the Ottenhausen camp. Having lost almost her entire family, and with death and misery all around, she somehow survived, only to be shoved into a succession of orphanages after the Liberation. At the age of twenty, she moved to Switzerland and enrolled in 1961 at the School of Decorative Arts in Geneva, where she received her diploma after four years study in various media, including tapestry-weaving. In 1973, she met the art-collector Peggy Guggenheim and the museum director Thomas Messer, who encouraged her in her work in textile sculpture. Yet she felt unable to pursue a conventional style or career, for her creative impulse was dominated by the compulsion to speak of the unspeakable and bear witness to the horror of the Holocaust. Her most distinctive work emerged during



the mid-1970s and 1980s, when she produced hundreds of pen drawings of anonymous, emaciated figures, which appear to writhe within a maelstrom of black needles. A solo show of her work in 1985 inaugurated the *Neuve Invention* series of exhibitions at the Collection de l’Art brut in Lausanne. The artist explained her art as a symbolic endeavor to “weave a shroud” for those who had perished. She also composed a thousand-page memoir about the camps, which is now lodged in the Holocaust museum archive in Jerusalem.

In 1984, Koczÿ married the American composer Louis Pelosi, and lived with him at Croton-on-Hudson, New York State, in a house amid trees where, in addition to continuing her stream of drawings, she was able to carve in wood, producing stark and challenging figures. She also continued to create large and richly colored oils and pastels which, like all her work, transmit an inescapable sense of pain. Much of Koczÿ’s abundant output is lodged in major collections, including the Collection de l’Art brut in Lausanne, the ‘abcd’ Collection in Paris, the Dr Guislain Museum in Ghent, the Anthony Petullo Collection in Milwaukee, and the Yad

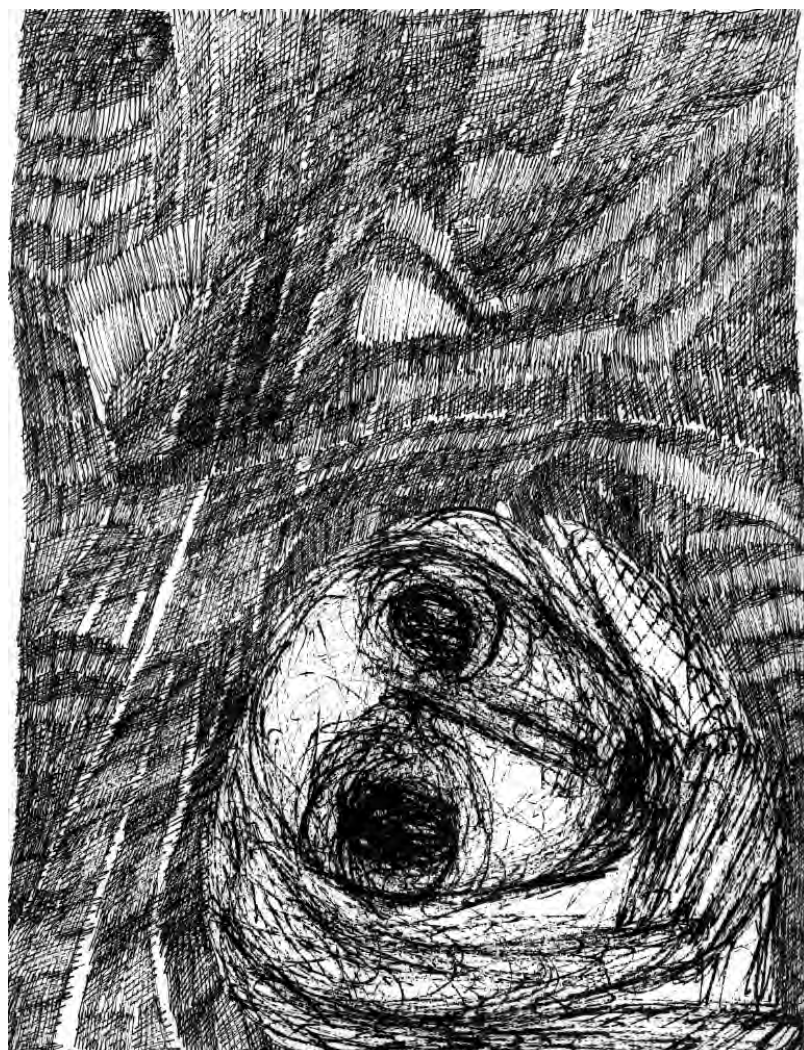
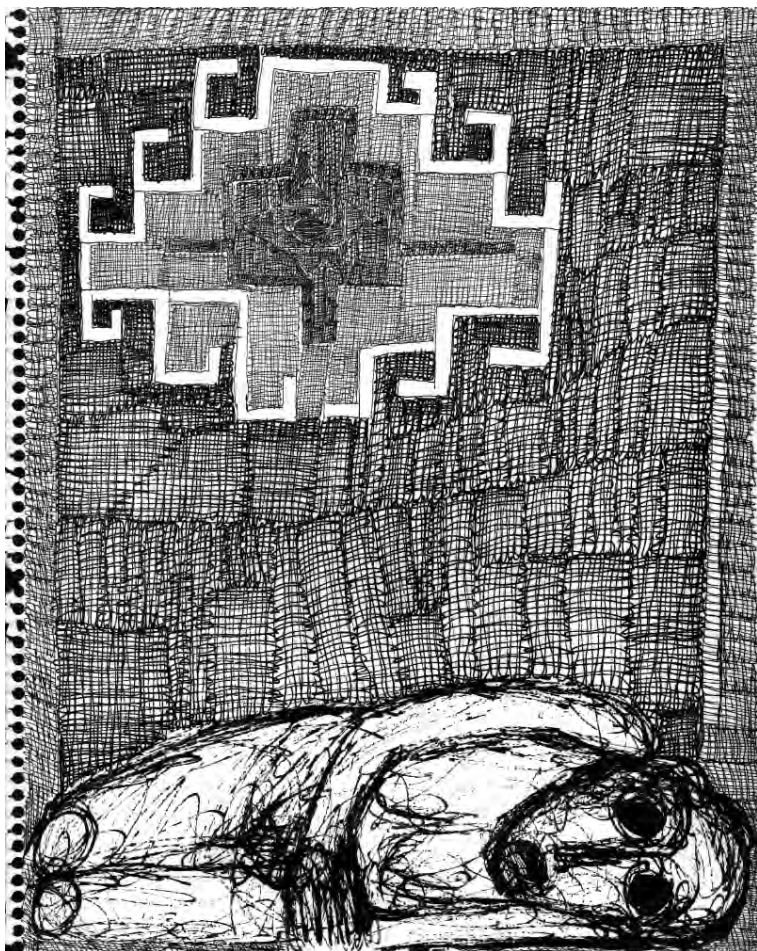
Vashem museum in Jerusalem. The current exhibition presents 21 immensely powerful drawings from the last decade of her life.

Roger Cardinal

Emeritus Professor of Literary & Visual Studies, University of Kent, UK. Author of numerous books and articles on subjects ranging from Outsider Art to Expressionism and Surrealism. His groundbreaking 1972 book on Art brut, entitled Outsider Art introduced the term into the language.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Rivais, Jeanine, '“I am Weaving you a Shroud”': an interview with Rosemarie Koczÿ', in *Raw Vision*, No 25, Winter 1998-99, pp 32-39.
Rosemarie Koczÿ. *Zeichnungen 1980-1990*, [Drawings], exh. cat., Cologne, 1990.
“I Weave You a Shroud”. Rosemarie Koczÿ (1939-2007), Japanese/French/English memorial-book. Preface by Michel Thévoz, Tokyo 2009.



'I Am Weaving You a Shroud': Rosemarie Koczÿ's Holocaust Memorial will be on display to Saturday 1 August 2009.

Gallery hours: Saturday, 11am to 4pm.
By appointment on other days.

For further information please contact:

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Images: (front page, top to bottom) Rosemarie Koczÿ, *I am weaving you a shroud* No. 32, 2000; Rosemarie Koczÿ, *I am weaving you a shroud* No. 31 (Italian laces, Bobin / Fuseau), 2000; (back page, top to bottom) Rosemarie Koczÿ, *I am weaving you a shroud* No. 60 (Uzbekistan embroidery pattern), 2000; Rosemarie Koczÿ, *I am weaving you a shroud* No. 33 (Yom Hashoah).

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