

A survivor of the Holocaust visits his portrait at the Palace of Holyroodhouse

Holocaust survivor, Arek Hersh MBE, recently visited the Palace of Holyroodhouse to view his portrait, painted in 2021 by Massimiliano Pironti, which is part of the exhibition 'Seven Portraits: Surviving the Holocaust' until 6 June 2022.

Arek's portrait was one of seven commissioned by His Royal Highness The Duke of Rothesay (The Prince of Wales's title when in Scotland) to pay tribute to the stories of seven remarkable Holocaust survivors. These portraits serve as a living memorial to the six million innocent men, women and children who lost their lives in the Holocaust and whose stories will never be told.



Seven Portraits: Surviving the Holocaust. Photograph David Cheskin for Royal Collection Trust.

Arek was just ten years old at the outbreak of the Second World War, in which he endured unimaginable suffering and 81 members of his close and extended family perished. After being liberated from Theresienstadt in May 1945, Arek was brought to England as a part of a group of 300 children known as the Windermere Children.

In his portrait, Arek rests his right hand on his left arm, covering the spot that bears a tattooed number from Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Due to Coronavirus restrictions, Massimiliano Pironti was reliant on virtual sittings with Arek until it became possible to finish the portrait in-person. He described Arek as 'a transparent and pure soul, which radiated from the computer screen and reached out to me'. Painting on an aluminium surface allowed him to render his subject in a hyper-realistic manner.



Thursday, 17 March until June 2022, a visit to the Palace of Holyroodhouse includes the special display *Seven Portraits: Surviving the Holocaust*. Photograph David Cheskin for Royal Collection Trust.

'*Seven Portraits: Surviving the Holocaust*' is part of a visit to the Palace of Holyroodhouse from 17 March until 6 June 2022.

Visitor information and tickets: www.rct.uk, +44 (0)303 123 7306. The Palace of Holyroodhouse is open five days a week, Thursday to Monday, remaining closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.