

The Trinity College Dublin Art Collections

Artist:	Josef Herman
Title:	<i>Miners</i>
Medium:	lithograph
Dimensions:	75cm x 90.5cm
Notes:	signed: Josef Herman exhibited: <i>the College Gallery</i> , The Ulster Museum, Belfast (1963)

b. 1911, Warsaw d. 2000, Wales

Josef Herman was born in Poland, the son of a Jewish cobbler. Herman studied at the Warsaw College of Art from 1930-31, with his first exhibition in 1932. Herman left Poland in 1938, fleeing the anti-Semitic atmosphere of the time and set up in Brussels, where he met a number of significant artists, including Constant Permeke who would have particular influence on him.

From Belgium, Herman moved to Glasgow and met fellow Jewish-polish artist Jankel Adler who was also escaping persecution. Settling in Glasgow for four years, he came into contact with the poet Hugh MacDiarmid, who had strong communist ideas and was a founder member of what would later become the Scottish National Party. Herman's next exhibition was in the Lefevre Gallery in London in 1943.

Herman then took what was intended to be a two- week holiday in the Welsh mining village of Ystradgynlais, though instead the artist worked there for 11 years. Herman was inspired by the working class people, particularly miners whom he sketched, and from 1947 onwards, painted, in bold sombre tones, expressing the significance and nobility of the ordinary soul engaged in labour.

In 1951, Herman won a commission to paint a mural for the Festival of Britain, the result was a large picture titled 'Miners Crouching' which firmly established the artist's reputation in the UK. Herman lived in London from 1953 onwards, having become a member of the artist's set, 'the London Group', in 1952. A retrospective of Herman's work was given at the Whitechapel Gallery in London in 1956. The artist's work was shown in Dublin at the Dawson Gallery in 1961 and later his work featured in in the Solomon Gallery in 1982. Herman was made an OBE in 1981 and elected to the Royal Academy of Arts in 1990.

The information in this article has been taken from: David Scott, *The Modern Art Collection Trinity College Dublin*, (Trinity College Dublin Press, 1989) and <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/josef-herman-1276>