**Joseph H. Rogozen, 1901–1975**

An American landscape and portrait painter of Russian Jewish background, who was born on 10 August 1901 in Vilna – now Vilnius, Lithuania, but then in north-east Poland and part of the Russian Empire. His parents were Barnet Rogozen (1877–1939) and his wife Esther (nėe Gershon/Gerson, 1874–1932).

In 1904 his father emigrated to the United States and gained work as a cigar maker at the Ohio Stogie Company in Cleveland, Ohio, with the family following in 1906. The other children were ‘Ette’/Ethel, Abraham, Alex, Hyman, and Ida (later Orner), one or more of the younger ones being born in America.

‘Jo’ Rogozen, as he became generally known, graduated from the Cleveland School of Art in 1926 and was taught there by F.C. Gottwald, who said that he was the most talented student he had in 41 years of teaching. He left with the School’s Gottwald travelling scholarship to study in Europe for a year and was accompanied by his wife Cecilia (nėe Horwitz). They married in Cleveland on 23 August 1926 when both gave their professions as ‘artist’, so were perhaps fellow students, though when they landed in London on 6 September she was listed as ‘housewife’.

Rogozen’s intended specialisation was portraiture and in London he studied at the Slade School for two years, from October 1926 to 1928. In 1926–27 he won second prize for head painting and in 1927–28, first prize for life painting and first for head painting. The last two entries, a full-length standing female nude and a bust-length of a woman in red, are still in the UCL collection. During their stay the Rogozens lived at 161 Camden Road (though their immigration record says no. 151) and his wife’s parents at 10629 Greenlawn Avenue, Cleveland, are noted as guarantors for payment of his college fees.

On their return home in 1928, Rogozen appears to have first lived with his in-laws since he exhibited late that year at the Cleveland Museum of Art from their address, the works being portraits and townscapes (including etchings and pastels). His marriage, however, did not long survive his return and in the US census of April 1930 he was noted as divorced and living with his parents, brothers and sister Ida. He was by then listed as a ‘portrait painter’ and his father as a rabbi. In 1932 Rogozen exhibited at the Museum of Art from 5713 Euclid Avenue and in 1935 from no. 3608, his final Cleveland address. The latter was apparently his first home with his second wife, Esther F. Katz, a Cleveland-born secretary from a large Jewish family, whom he married there on 16 June 1934, and also where he was listed in a US Emergency Relief report on contributors to public works of art during 1933–34. His contribution, apparently in 1933 since a patent was registered for it that year, appears to have been a bust (for cast reproduction) of President Franklin Roosevelt, whose ‘New Deal’ countering the inter-war depression was then in progress. In 1934 he was also linked with a Joseph G. Gervin as an associate in a Cleveland advertising company selling printers’ ink and in 1947 mentioned as a painting restorer.

By 1948 the Rogozens left Cleveland for Phoenix, Arizona, where he either joined the Arizona School of Art as a founding member of its teaching staff in that year, or was one its founders, working with his wife. An obituary note on her (*Phoenix Jewish News*, 30 August 1957) says they had arrived there 12 years earlier (1945) and that both ‘established’ it. He at least later became its director, was still so in 1973, and reportedly influenced the development of many mid-20th century artists in the area. Although five years older, the animal and townscape painter Mabel Lloyd Lawrence (1896–1986) was one of his notable students.

Esther Rogozen died on 8 August 1957 in Cleveland and was buried there close to other members of her family: why she was there at the time is unclear. He died at his home, 2504 E. Devonshire Avenue, Phoenix, on 16 April 1975 and was buried in the Beth Israel Cemetery there. No children are mentioned, his sister Ida was noted as his only surviving sibling, and the ‘Find a Grave’ record apparently mistakes his year of birth as 1902.

*Summarised from Art UK discussion of Rogozen’s prize-winning Slade ‘Portrait of a Woman’ in the UCL collection.*

PvdM 13.4.22