



Shtetl, My Destroyed Home, A Recollection: Issachar ber Ryback (© Jewish Museum New York)

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## **The Image of the Shtetl in Chagall and his Contemporaries: Symbolism, Imagination, Memory**

Wednesday, 18 May, 2022 | 10.00am–11.30am

Library of CJS | Beethovenstraße 21, 8010 Graz

Der Vortrag findet hybrid statt.

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# The Image of the Shtetl in Chagall and his Contemporaries: Symbolism, Imagination, Memory

In his early, 1908-09 works Chagall depicted his home town as a cluster of low, crooked, wooden houses topped by a little Russian church – an image associated throughout his career with his native Vitebsk. Although actually a lively provincial city, Vitebsk - thanks to such renderings – became, for Chagall's numerous admirers, the prototype of a *shtetl*. This lecture will examine the birth and development of this image in Chagall's work, and the reasons why it developed as it did; it will also juxtapose Chagall's images of the *shtetl* to those of his contemporaries, Eliezer Lissitzky and Issachar Rybak, Jewish artists who created avant-garde art in the turbulent era of the Russian Revolution.

**Mirjam Rajner**, Ph.D., is an associate professor and the chair of the Jewish Art Department of Bar-Ilan University. She is the co-editor of *Ars Judaica*. Her research and publications deal with the early period of Marc Chagall's art, and the visual culture of the East-, South- and Central European Jews during the long nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Her book *Fragile Images: Jews and Art in Yugoslavia, 1918-1945* was published by Brill in 2019. A book co-authored with Richard I. Cohen *Samuel Hirszenberg (1865—1908): A Polish Jewish Artist in Turmoil*, was published by the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization and Liverpool University Press in March 2022.