

## EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

### Deliverable D9 EDS – JCQ Testimonies

PROJECT	
Participant:	1 - Stichting Joods Historisch Museum (JCQ)
PIC number:	940744995
Project name and acronym:	Looted Art and Judaica Project — LAJP

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	WP9 - D11		
Event name:	JCQ Testimonies		
Type:	interviews		
In situ/online:	in-situ		
Location:	The Netherlands, Amsterdam		
Date(s):	May 31, June 6, October 8, November 2, 2024		
Website(s) (if any):	<a href="https://jck.nl/verhalen-en-verdieping/ooggetuige-max-amichai-heppner">https://jck.nl/verhalen-en-verdieping/ooggetuige-max-amichai-heppner</a> <a href="https://jck.nl/verhalen-en-verdieping/ooggetuige-moana-hilfman">https://jck.nl/verhalen-en-verdieping/ooggetuige-moana-hilfman</a>		
Participants			
Female:	61		
Male:	42		
Non-binary:	1		
From country 1 the Netherlands:	104		
Total number of participants:	104	From total number of countries:	1
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>JCQ Testimonies is a series of public interviews with first- and second-generation survivors of the Holocaust. The event aimed at making their experiences of the Holocaust available to the wider audience. The interviewer focused on how the pain and injustice caused by the Nazi crimes of looting of Jewish property resonates up until today in present-day society by making the personal experiences of survivors with the looting of art and with restitution processes tangible for the wider audience in an accessible and empathic way. Selected interviews were also recorded on film and made available online via JCQ website and YouTube channel. The activities were organized and facilitated by the Jewish Cultural Quarter and took place at the National Holocaust Museum in Amsterdam.</p>			

*Max Amichai Heppner (1933) – May 31, 2024*

The German-Jewish art dealer and art historian Albert Heppner and his wife Irene Marianne Heppner-Krämer fled from Berlin to the Netherlands in the spring of 1933. They settled in Amsterdam and on 15 October of that year, their son Max was born there. Albert resumed his art dealership in Amsterdam and offered guided tours of the Rijksmuseum.

After the German invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940, the family tried to escape. In 1942, as mass deportations of Jews began, the Heppners attempted to flee to France with the Graumann family but were betrayed by human traffickers. The traffickers murdered 16-year-old Michael Graumann, but resistance fighters saved the others. The Heppners and Graumanns were hidden by farmer Harry Jansen on his farm in Zeilberg, where Max, then a young boy, drew extensively, capturing his experiences.

After the war, Albert Heppner died in 1945 from the war's hardships, and Irene and Max returned to Amsterdam, only to find their home looted. Irene attempted to relocate the family's possessions and art collection but was confronted with the larger part of the collection lost. In 1946, they emigrated to the United States, where Max adopted the name "Amichai," embracing his Jewish identity. Amichai pursued the search after his mother passed away and continues to do so up until today.

This 75-minute interview by Esther Göbel, Curator Sjoa Collection at JCQ, was attended by 20 direct participants, of which 14 female and 6 male participants. Additionally, another 9 persons joined the activity, but were not counted as direct participants of this activity as they had joined an activity in another work package the previous day. The interview was recorded and made available on the JCQ website and [YouTube channel](#).

*Moana Hilfman (1938) – June 6, 2024*

Moana (Frederika Grace) Hilfman was born in Amsterdam in 1938, to Dutch parents who had returned from the Belgian Congo shortly before her birth. During World War II, the family tried to flee to Congo but were forced into hiding in 1943. Moana went into hiding at a family in Laren, while her parents were deported and murdered at Sobibor. After the war, Moana was sent to live with her uncle, Mozes Hilfman, who had survived Japanese internment camps during the occupation of the Dutch East Indies. She lived with her new family in Indonesia for some years before returning all alone to the Netherlands at the age of 11 to live in a Jewish orphanage, where she was renamed "Mona". After retiring, she reclaimed her name, Moana, and continued to mourn her parents and reflecting on the loss of everything material that could have commemorated her family.

This 90-minute interview by Esther Göbel, Curator Sjoa Collection at JCQ, was attended by 20 direct participants, of which 12 female and 8 male participants. It was recorded and made available on the JCQ website and YouTube channel.

*Flight Stories – October 8, 2024*

Loes Gompes (1956) is a programme maker and journalist. In her book *De vlucht wordt duur betaald* ("The flight is paid dearly") that was published in 2024, Gompes tells the flight stories of her father Simon Gompes (1925-2010) and his business partner Herman Schpektor (1919-2015). As teenagers, Gompes and Schpektor both fled Nazi-occupied Europe. In 1940, the Dutch Gompes family left its life and house in Antwerp and in 1941 escaped via France, Portugal and South Africa to the Dutch East Indies. After the Japanese occupation, the family was placed in internment camps for Dutch citizens. The Schpektor family escaped to Spain in 1942, from where they fled to Jamaica. Both families returned to the Netherlands after the liberation. In her book, Gompes describes the reserved and reluctant attitudes of the Dutch government towards Dutch Jews who fled Europe and after the war returned to the Netherlands to rebuild their lives.

Based on Gompes book, Anita Mizrahi (1954) made the documentary *Lisbon, Harbour of Hope* on the stay of the Gompes family in Lisbon in 1941. After a screening of the documentary, journalist and writer Ronit Palache (1984) interviewed Gompes and Mizrahi. This activity was attended by 12 documented direct participants, of which 9 female and 3 male participants. Several direct participants wished to stay undocumented and thus are not counted.

*Esther Barendse-Boas (1942), Samuel de Leeuw (1941), Rudi Cortissos (1939) – November 2, 2024*

During the evening event 'Museumnacht' on November 2, Esther Göbel, Curator Sjoa Collection at JCQ, interviewed three Holocaust survivors. Göbel focused on their stories of survival and their loss. Each interview took 20 minutes plus an additional 10 minutes for exchange with the audience. The three interviews were attended by 52 direct participants, of which 26 female, 1 non-binary and 25 male participants. Several direct participants wished to stay undocumented and thus are not counted.

Esther Barendse-Boas (1942) went into hiding when she was 1-year old. After denouncement, escape and several new hiding places, Esther was reunited with her parents Salomon and Seraphina Boas-Prins. The family eventually was deported to Theresienstadt in 1944 and survived the Holocaust together.

Samuel de Leeuw (1941) went into hiding in the south of the Netherlands after his father was arrested by the SD in 1942. Samuel survived the Holocaust in the good care of his foster parents. His mother Elisabeth Italiaander also survived in hiding, but his father David de Leeuw was murdered in Auschwitz in 1943. After the war, Samuel was reunited with his mother and as a result separated from his foster parents, which added to the war trauma. After the war, Samuel dedicated much of his life to preserving the memory of the Holocaust and actively contributed to the Yom Ha-Shoa commemorations in Amsterdam.

Rudie Cortissos (1939) was born as Salomon Cortissos and went into hiding in 1942. He and his father Louis Cortissos survived together, but his mother Emmy Cortissos-Dreesde was arrested on the street and after her deportation murdered in Sobibor. After the war, he kept his first name from his hiding name Rudie Poort. In 2009 and 2010 Rudie was one of the Dutch 'Nebenankläger' (co-plaintiffs) in the trial against the Ukrainian Iwan Demjanjuk, accused of complicity in the murder of 28,000 Jews, including Dutch victims.