

**Inauguration of the Exhibition “12 Witnesses of the Holocaust”
by painter Petra Teršlová
On the Occasion of
The Day of Holocaust Remembrance and Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity
Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic,
January 27, 2026**

Dear Mr. Chairman, esteemed Senators, honored survivors, and distinguished guests,

It is my honor to present to you the artistic project entitled “*12 Witnesses of the Holocaust*.” This is a series of oil paintings depicting the portraits of twelve Jewish Holocaust survivors. I created these portraits to contribute to preserving the testimonies of those who survived the Nazi concentration camps, as well as the stories of the children who were hidden at that time—whose lives were forever marked by the horrors of the Holocaust.

Through working on this project, I had the honor of meeting each of the portrayed survivors in person. Each painting is accompanied by a brief account of their life, as they shared it with me during our personal encounters. This work is dedicated primarily to them. Symbolically, however, I also dedicate it to all the victims of the Holocaust who can no longer bear witness. Meeting these survivors was both a profound and challenging life experience for me. Each conversation was a lesson in humility and a reminder that life and freedom are never to be taken for granted.

I am deeply honored to present the entire series of portraits here, within the halls of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, on this significant day, when we internationally commemorate the victims of the Holocaust, on the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp.

Allow me now to introduce the names of all twelve survivors, some of whom are present here in this hall today:

- RNDr. Michaela Vidláková
- Marta Neužilová
- Eva Benešová
- Ing. Pavel Jelínek
- Eva Pokorná
- Jana Dubová
- Ing. Petr Lewi
- Dr. Toman Brod
- Selma Menezes
- Prof. em. Ivan Lefkovits

- † Ing. arch. Jiří Munk
- † Olga Jirásková

I am deeply saddened that the last two named persons are, unfortunately, no longer with us and could not witness this day.

In conclusion, allow me to thank all those who helped realize this project. First and foremost, I thank you, the survivors, for the time you spent with me and the trust you placed in me. I will strive to ensure that, through these paintings, as many people as possible learn about your experiences and that they are never forgotten. I also extend my sincere gratitude to the Foundation for Holocaust Victims and its director, Marta Malá, for their support in realizing the entire project.

Allow me now to invite you to the opening of the exhibition. The paintings can be viewed in the adjoining hall (just beyond the reception area).

Thank you for your attention.

JUDr. Petra Teršlová
author