**Timeline**

1913* Born in Kamyanets in Southern Russia near the border of Romania. (*according to the artist)

1924 Yonia and his family escape the Bolshevik Revolution by moving to Vilnius (Vilna), Poland, where his father is a professor of mathematics and physics at the University of Vilnius.

1936 Yonia earns a bachelor’s degree from the University of Vilnius, Poland.

1937 Yonia earns a Master of Fine Arts from the Academy of Fine Arts, University of Vilnius, Poland.

1939 Yonia flees from Warsaw due to occupation by the Nazis.

1940 Yonia escapes the Nazis, but is captured by Soviet troops and imprisoned. He and his wife, Nuta, are released into Russia where they obtain Japanese transit visas. They flee the country, traveling through Siberia and on to Japan.

1941 Yonia is forced to relocate to Shanghai, China, in the fall and lives in the International Settlement. The bombing of Pearl Harbor traps him in Shanghai. He spends the war there and earns a living painting portraits of soldiers; he has a number of exhibitions during this period.


1943 A Jewish Ghetto is established in Shanghai in May, and Yonia Fain relocates there along with 18,000 other Jews.

1946 Yonia moves to Mexico City.

1947 *A l'tye unter di shtern (A Gallow Under the Stars).* Published by Di shtime.

1947-1953 Teaches at the University of Mexico.

1948 *Exposicion de Yonia Fain.* Solo exhibition at the Palacio de Las Bellas Artes, Salon Verde, Mexico City, Mexico, in January. Catalog text for exhibition written by Diego Rivera.

1949 Paints 600-square-foot mural in Mexico City’s Pantheon Dolores. Diego Rivera delivers a series of three lectures on the significance of this work in the history of Mexican mural painting.

1950 Galeria Arte Moderno de Caracalla. Solo exhibit.


1953 Galerie Arte Mexicana de Inez Amor. Solo exhibit.

1953 Yonia moves to New York City.


1957 October 21-November 2: *Yonia Fain.* Bodley Gallery, NYC. Solo exhibit.


1959 March 2-14: *Yonia Fain.* Krasner Gallery, Madison Avenue, NYC, with catalogue. Solo exhibit.


1960 Krasner Gallery, NYC. Solo exhibit.

1961 Krasner Gallery, NYC. Solo exhibit.

1964 June: Yonia is featured in a French magazine publication, *La Revue Moderne des Arts et de la Vie,* for his work as an artist and a teacher.


1971-1985 Yonia joins the faculty of the Department of Fine Art and Humanities at Hofstra University, teaching art history and the philosophy of art.

1973 *Faculty Show:* Emily Lowe Gallery, Hofstra University. Group exhibit.


1977 *Faculty Show:* Emily Lowe Gallery, Hofstra University. Group exhibit.

1978 *Faculty Show:* Emily Lowe Gallery, Hofstra University. Group exhibit.

1980 *Fain and Gordon: Recent Works.* Emily Lowe Gallery, Hofstra University. Two-person exhibit.


1995 *Nyu-Yorker adres: Dertseylungen (Yiddish edition).* Published by Farlag “Dray shvester.”


1999 July: Retrospective exhibition of Fain’s work at Magdalen College, Oxford University.


2008 *A Painter’s Witness to History: Recent Work by Yonia Fain.* Rochelle and Irwin A. Lowenstein Conference and Exhibition Hall, Hofstra University.

2008 Yonia’s poetry is included in *Voices From Shanghai: Jewish exiles in wartime China.* Published by University of Chicago Press, edited by Irene Eber.

2009 Yonia’s poetry is included in *Yiddish Literature in America 1870-2000.* Published by KTAV Publishing House, edited by Emanuel Goldsmith.
YONIA FAI N

TRIBUTE TO YONIA FAI N

The war produced a great variety of effects upon those artists who were caught up in the maelstrom, suffered and survived it.

We know of only a very few artists who have been able to express with emotional intensity and sensitivity the tragedy they experienced. The greater number of artists who experienced the war content themselves with merely reporting the events. Others attempt to interpret dispassionately the abstract esthetics of the war and what it means objectively and subjectively to those who suffered it. Only very exceptionally does the work of the latter category of artists reach an emotional intensity or achieve a high degree of quality.

Yonia Fain is among these rare exceptions. The shaking-up he experienced did not level off his talent, but rather brought it to an equilibrium.

He has given great and profound plastic expression to his reactions as an artist to the events of which he was a part. His paintings have the swift force of their themes. And just as life attacked and shook him, so he seems with his brush to attack the canvas. Each tone and color that he applies is an emotional vibration. His drawings seem to be made up of the acting void of suffering, of the sharp stabs of pain and hunger. Fain’s paintings and drawings express both the actual and the sublime of the state of mind in which they were conceived.

Everything experienced by the artist in the days of suffering and flight which took him more than half way around the world is contained in the paintings and drawings of Fain. From this very fact results their high esthetic quality, along with their complete sincerity and spontaneity.

The Mexican public is fortunate that this artist, with his baggage, his by force of circumstances arrived here. We should all extend to him — as I do now — the warmest welcome.

DIEGO RIVERA

[Preface to catalogue of paintings by Yonia Fain exhibited at the “Palacio de las Bellas Artes” in Mexico City, January 1948]

YONIA FAI N