

## Worksheet: Jewish artists in Wales: case study, Josef Herman

### Who was Josef Herman?

Josef Herman (1911–2000) was a realist artist who was known for his sketches and paintings of working people. He was born in Warsaw, Poland in 1911. He was one of several Jewish artists who fled Eastern Europe to escape Nazi persecution. In 1938, he became a refugee and travelled to Britain. In 1942, he discovered that he had lost his entire family in the Holocaust.

### What is his connection to Wales?

In 1944, Herman came to Ystradgynlais in the Swansea valley. His visit was initially for a holiday, but he ended up staying for eleven years. He was quoted as saying, “I stayed here because I found all I required. I arrived here a stranger for a fortnight; the fortnight became 11 years.” He became an important part of the local community where he was fondly nicknamed ‘Joe Bach’. Herman was inspired by the strong sense of community in the town and the people of Ystradgynlais, particularly the miners, appeared in his art works.

### Examples of Josef Herman’s work:



*Miners Singing by Josef Herman (1911-2000).*

©The artist's estate/Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales.



*Two Miners by Josef Herman (1911-2000).*

*©The artist's estate/Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales.*

**Questions:**

a) How would you describe Josef Herman's **style**?

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b) Who are the **subjects** of Herman's work and how are they portrayed?

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**Key words:** composition, medium, colour, shape, form, texture, tone.