

Daily Mirror, October 23rd, 1926



**SCHOOLBOY ARTISTS' EXHIBITION.**—“From My Window,” a remarkable painting by a fourteen-year-old artist, S. Kluska, which is among the pictures at the Exhibition of Schoolboys' Art being held in the Whitechapel Art Gallery.

Westminster Gazette, October 23rd 1926



**SCHOOLBOYS' ART EXHIBITION AT WHITECHAPEL.**—“From My Window,” a remarkable painting by S. Kluska, a 14-year-old schoolboy.

### **The Westminster Gazette, October 22nd 1926**

TALENTS IN THE GHETTO. BOY'S PICTURE OF CHIMNEY-TOPS.

Talented children in the East End of London are giving an exhibition of paintings and craft work at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, which was opened by the Earl of Haddo yesterday. Boys and girls, of whom half are of Jewish and foreign extraction, from the age five to fifteen, have contributed work done in school hours and as unaided homework. S. Kluska, age 14, is one of the most promising pupils in Whitechapel, and his complicated study of chimney-tops seen from his bedroom window has won praise from experts. Original watercolour sketches of the country and the seaside by children who have hardly ever left their East End streets, political cartoons, designs for posters, imaginative scenes depicting pirates, brigands, ships, and sunsets are included.

### **The Scotsman, October 22nd 1926**

Young East End Artists.

For the first time since the war there was opened to-day in the Whitechapel Art Gallery an exhibition of school children's artwork. It is representative of the drawing, painting, and handicraft of about sixty elementary and secondary schools in the East End of London between the eastern boundary of the City and Bow. Taking the exhibits in the mass, and judging them by the ages of the pupils, they show a decidedly high standard. The applied arts, such as needlework, metal work, and woodwork, are considerably superior to the other side of the exhibition, although in one or two instances some of the drawings and paintings reveal considerable talent.

The example of artistic work in brass sent by the Jews Free School suggest a prosperous future for some of the executants. There is only one contributor, however, who shows outstanding talent -- a boy of 15, S. Kluska, of the Whitechapel Foundation School. His study of the roofs of the Whitechapel slums, painted from his bedroom window, stands far above anything else in the Gallery, and he has other exhibits which bear the same stamp of superiority. Many of the schools specialise on lines of their own. The Thomas Street Central School, Limehouse, for instance, has given much study to colour values, and the corner devoted to their collection is one of the most attractive of all. Similarly, another school is doing good work by means of its sketch club, in which originality is obviously encouraged. The whole exhibition indicates sound teaching by the staffs, backed by keen enthusiasm among the pupils, and the wonder is that amongst such drab surroundings there should be such an appreciation of the beauty of line and colour.

### **The East London Advertiser, October 30th 1926**

Schoolboy Artists. Clever Studies at Whitechapel.

The first exhibition since pre-war days of the art of East End children at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, has two great interests. One is sentimental — the appreciation of what this essay in color and line must mean to the little inmates of countless drab homes, the pride and happiness that must fill them when their work is chosen to represent their school at this original art show. The other is severely practical. Here is definite evidence on the much-vexed question of whether art teaching in County Council Schools is justified.

When a boy, looking out of his bed room window in Whitechapel, can discern colour and light on the roofs of the neighbouring tenements, and then can make a water-colour drawing of this happy discovery, he deserves his own delight. He also merits the applause of his schoolmates, and there will be many such crowding into the exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, of the schoolchildren's art-work, opened by the Earl of Haddo, on Thursday. This glimpse, "from my window," by S. Kluska, is not going to be acclaimed as a Turner, but it serves to illustrate the eagerness towards the light displayed by hundreds of young children down East. The walls are spaced to hold the works of many East-end schools, and at the Whitechapel Foundation young Kluska has a friend who is a bit of a wag — D. Langdon — who has done a little coloured sketch of the "Westminster Follies,"

depicting "Stanley and Ramsay as the world's greatest back-chat comedians."

**Jewish Chronicle, January 21st 1927**

Jewish National Activities.

EAST LONDON.

[Excerpt]

The Young Zionist League has arranged a dance to be held at the Westminster Palace Rooms on Saturday, January 29th, when Fred and Adele Astaire have consented to be present and judge a Charleston competition. The League is now sending out collectors for articles for the East London Jewish National Fund Bazaar, and people desirous of giving articles are asked to write to the Bazaar Secretary, East London Young Zionist League, 23, Osborn Street, E. 1. Mr. M. Kluska [sic], who exhibited some sketches at the Art Gallery, Whitechapel, recently, will be making a number of sketches that will be sold at the coming Bazaar.

**The East London Observer, December 17th 1927**

Whitechapel Foundation School Speech Day.

Praise For Jewish Boys.

Many Academic Successes

[Excerpts]

At the Annual Speech Day of the Whitechapel Foundation School on Thursday last week, when Sir Robert Blair, late Education Officer of the London County Council, distributed the prizes, the fact that the school was founded by Dean Champneys, when he was rector of Whitechapel, was several times referred to. It was also announced that his daughter had presented the sounding-board from the late Dean's pulpit to the Parish Church as a memento. The Rev. J. A. Mayo, M. A., the Rector of Whitechapel, and Chairman of the Governors, presided, and among those present were: Professor Lees, Mr. W. Warren (Headmaster) and Mrs. Warren, Mr. T. Melcalfe, Mr. W. Minn, Mr. Twallen and Mr. S. F. Hodsoll.

PRIZE LIST.

The prize-list was as follows: —

General Proficiency.

Form II. 2nd, D. Langdon

Special Prizes.

Drawing. — Upper Division, S. Kluska; Lower Division, D. Langdon.

**BOYS' TWO PICTURES AT R.A.**



Sylvain Kluska, a seventeen-year-old art student, who had two pictures accepted for this year's Academy, working in his home in Little Turner-street, Commercial-road.—("Daily Mirror" photograph.)

## TWO YOUTHFUL ARTISTS WIN HONORS



Sylvain Kluska (above), a seventeen-year-old Polish boy from London's drab East Side, has been awarded recognition this year by the Royal Academy. Joan Manning-Sanders (inset), fifteen, also has been honored.

### Daily Mirror Photo



### The Manchester Guardian, May 2nd 1929

Early Starters.

Mr. Sylvain Kluska, who has had two pictures accepted for the Royal Academy at the age of seventeen, is possibly in the right tradition, for precocity has been the mark of more than one famous artist. Millais painted "Pizarro Seizing the Inca of Peru" when only sixteen, and his "Ophelia," "Autumn Leaves," and other famous works were exhibited before he came of age. Turner, too, was hung at the Academy when only 15, Hoppner painted his well-known "Sleeping Beauty" at nineteen, and Holman Hunt was very little older when he won fame with "The Light of the World." Most precocious of all was Sir Thomas Lawrence, who was only fourteen when he painted "Mrs. Siddons as Zara," and at seventeen held a one-man show in London.

### The Western Morning News, May 4th 1929

YOUTHFUL PRODIGIES.

Miss Manning Saunders [sic], the Cornish school-girl artist, has a companion schoolboy exhibitor this year is Sylvain Kluska, the 17 years-old East-end youth, who paints housetops from his window. Despite the thousands that have been rejected, Kluska has succeeded in having two pictures hung. "Odds and Ends" is the smallest in the exhibition, a water-colour about two and a half inches by three; but it, too, is packed with detail. The subject is a corner of an untidy yard.

### **The Jewish Telegraphic Agency, May 5th 1929**

Jewish Artists Exhibit at Royal Academy

Jewish artists will be prominently represented at the forthcoming annual exhibition of the Royal Academy, it is seen from the published list of exhibitors. Considerable interest was evinced in the young Jewish artist of Whitechapel, Sylvain Kluska, who is seventeen years old. Two of his paintings have been accepted by the Royal Academy for exhibition. He will be the youngest artist exhibiting this year.

Kluska's parents came to London from Poland [Paris] fifteen years ago. In an interview with the representative of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, the boy stated that he takes an interest in Jewish affairs. His parents, who were poor, helped him greatly toward his success. His first pictures were exhibited three years ago in the Whitechapel Art Gallery. Since then he has studied art at St. Martin's School.

### **The Telegraph (Brisbane, Australia), June 19th 1929**

Boy Artist's Success

Royal Academy Hangings

Sylvain Kluska, aged 17, a junior student at St. Martin's School of Art, has had two pictures accepted for this year's Academy. Kluska, who has lived practically all his life in a drab East-end street, is the first "junior" student to have attained such a distinction. The accepted pictures are water-colour drawings, entitled "Soho Roof Tops" and "Odds and Ends," the latter a sketch of extraordinary details, only four by three inches.

In the picture "Soho Roof Tops," painted from a window of the St. Martin's Art School, showing an array of roofs, including that of the Palace Theatre, he has painted separately every single brick and tile. One wall alone shows 900 bricks, and the complete painting, although only 18 inches by 12 inches, took him 14 days' continuous work to finish. The tiny picture, "Odds and Ends," shows the litter of rubbish, broken boxes and ashpans the young artist sees in the backyards behind his home in Little Turner Street, Commercial Road.

Kluska, who is a tall, dark lad, of Polish extraction, showed his artistic aptitude at 3 years of age, when he surprised his parents with quaint pen-and-ink sketches. At 7 it was difficult to keep him away from a paint box, and at 15 he first attracted public attention at the Whitechapel Art Gallery with a painting of the pathetically ugly roof-tops he saw from his bedroom. "Don't think I specialise in roof-tops," he explained to a "Daily Chronicle" representative, "but I have lived amongst them so long that it is not surprising that I see more in them than most people. "I can hardly believe that I am to have two pictures hung," he continued, "especially when 6,000 pictures have been rejected. "My ambition is to win a scholarship to the Royal College of Art, and one day to become an R. A. "But I realise that I shall have to earn my living before I can paint what I want to, and to begin with I shall apply myself to commercial art."

Young Kluska has profound philosophical ideas about art, and he has written a book, which he hopes shortly to publish in reply to Tolstoy's "What is Art?" With the audacity of youth, he declares, "I do not agree with Tolstoy by any means!" He has just invented an electric-automatic cigarette machine, which he claims will give change as well as the packet of cigarettes. Several years ago he made an apparatus to prevent fog accidents on the railway, which he took to a railway company, who declared the idea perfectly practical. Unfortunately, he had been forestalled, for the device was already in operation, although he had never seen it.



**YOUNG ACADEMY EXHIBITORS.—(A to B) Victor Ledger, Sylvian Kluska, J. Oskotoski and Michael Goldberg leaving Burlington House yesterday after varnishing their pictures which have been accepted for the Academy Exhibition.**

The Hull Daily Mail, May 2nd 1931

[Excerpt]

The water-colours and tempera paintings are a quiet and restrained collection. Henry Winslow has painted a fanciful representation of the "Leda" fable, which shows Leda and the Swan attended by a faun who pipes away merrily on Pan-pipes, and Charles W. Taylor shows a sense of humour in "A Welsh Mile," for the picture depicts a road twisting and turning uphill as far as the eye can see. Sylvain Kluska, the untaught Polish boy who created a sensation last year with his "Soho Roof-tops," shows again a picture in the same style. It is called "A Back Room View," and one sees again the astounding detail which characterises his work. He has improved a great deal since last year, for he manages his colour more skilfully and has a firmer sense of balance. Otherwise the water colours, although beautiful in some cases, contain nothing very exciting.



**The Times of London, June 26th 1931**

FOYLE ART GALLERY

Most of the good things in the present exhibition of contemporary art at the Foyle Art Gallery, Manette-street, Charing Cross-road, are in the form of careful drawings or engravings. "Soho Rooftops," a very detailed study in line and color wash that still hangs together as a composition, by Mr. S. Kluska, is an example, and there are some uncompromising drawings of Birmingham, "Prince of Wales' Power Station, Birmingham," in particular, in a simpler style, by Mr. E. Lea, which excite interest in the future of the artist. More mannered, but still definite in their intentions, are the water-colours, such as "The Straw Rick," by Mr. Thomas Clark, and Mr. Sidney Rogers has four excellent wood engravings. Otherwise it is a matter of something a little better here and there; such as "Silvery Morning, Dedham," by Mr. J. Ernest Foster, "The Rick Yard," by Mr. Sidney Harmsworth, "The Girl in Blue," by Mr. Victor J. Voysey, and the etching, "English Roses," by Mr. Kenneth C. Scharff. From its association with a very well known bookshop this gallery has its convenience and opportunity, and it can well afford to keep on raising the standard of its exhibitions.

**The Liverpool Echo, November 28th 1932**

Student Criticises Famous Artist

A few days ago Sir William Rothenstein, principal of the Royal College of Art, criticised the work of Sylvain Kluska, a twenty-year-old student at the college. Kluska, who at the age of seventeen had two pictures hung in the Royal Academy and won a L. C. C. scholarship to the Royal College, took exception to the criticism. At the opening of the college sketch club Kluska suddenly jumped to his feet and attacked the teaching methods of the principal. Sir William Rothenstein and several hundred students and professors listened in amazement.

Kluska accused Sir William of making students work "by means of a plumb line," and said that the name of the college should be changed to "The College of Rothenstein." Friends of Kluska quickly hurried him out of the hall. Sir William Rothenstein told the *News-Chronicle* that he did not know whether any disciplinary action would be taken against Kluska.

**The Belfast Telegraph (Belfast, Ireland), October 3rd 1938**

London Day By Day

[Excerpt]

One Man Show

An exhibition which should set the seal on the reputation of one of our greatest artists, Sir William Rothenstein, is to be held in London shortly. Consisting of about 70 pictures, ranging over his whole artistic career, from the first picture he ever exhibited at the age of 19, up to his very last work, completed only a few weeks ago, it is the biggest one man show he has ever held. Sir William is distinguished as a brilliant teacher of art, and has held a number of important official positions as well as achieving great success as a writer.

Six years ago, however, when he was present at the opening of the Royal College of Art Sketch Club at the Victoria and Albert Museum, a young student, whose efforts Sir William had criticised a few days before, jumped up and attacked his teaching methods. Sir William, who was principal of the school, and several hundred students and professors listened in amazement. The student, Sylvain Kluska, who at the age of 17 had two pictures hung in the Royal Academy, and subsequently won an L. C. C. scholarship, accused Sir William of making students work by the "plumb line," and said that the name of the Royal College of Art should be changed to the "College of Rothenstein." His friends quickly hurried him away.

#### **News Chronicle and Star House Magazine, 1944**

Sylvain Kluska

The process department records with profound regret the loss of their colleague, Warrant-Officer Kluska, RAF pilot, accidentally killed whilst flying on May 9. The tragic news cast a gloom which will not easily be dispelled, for Kluska was a man whose very presence radiated happiness. He endeared himself to his colleagues, and to many members of other departments, by a charm of manner, a delightful smile, a ready wit and repartee.

Kluska joined the firm after first contributing occasional sketches to the Feature Department. He was a fine artist with an ability to go to endless trouble to achieve the desired effect. He was born in Paris and his parents came to England when he was young. Before the war he served for a time in the Territorials and was also a member of our company of Home Guard. Brilliant at his work, he was also brilliant as a pilot, and we who are left mourn the passing of a friend.



Courtesy Andrew Almanza