

**LE WITT** (previously LEWITT) Jan (1907-1991), graphic artist, painter, designer of utility forms. He was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1907 in Częstochowa, as “Abram Jakub Lewit”, the son of merchant Chaim Aron (1880-1920) and Blima Dwojra née Koblenc, the grandson of → Józef Szymon Koblenc.

The early death of his father and the family’s difficult financial situation (he had two brothers) resulted in him leaving Częstochowa after graduating from high school. In 1925-1926, he travelled around Europe and, in 1927, he was in Palestine. He studied modern art, but worked as a labourer in the engineering industry, in a soap factory, in a distillery and on a farm.

After returning to Poland, he moved to Warsaw and began working as a designer and graphic artist. In 1928, he designed the first modern Hebrew typeface - “Chaim”. He named it after his late father, the name meaning “life”. The writing resembled sans serif, one type of Latin script. It soon gained immense popularity in printing houses, as well as in stone inscriptions, information inscriptions, etc. It is still widely used in Israel today.

In 1930, having gained recognition from the artistic community, the artist presented his works at a one-man exhibition in Warsaw. In 1931, he left for Paris in order to continue his studies in modern art. In 1933, in Warsaw, he met graphic artist Jerzy Himmelfarb. Together, they established the “Lewitt-Him” creative partnership. Their first significant success was illustrating the poems of Julian Tuwim - *Lokomotywa*, *Rzepka* and *Ptasie radio*. Published as children’s books, they were reprinted in several countries and languages. The company specialised in humorous advertisements – mainly leaflets and brochures for pharmaceutical companies.

In 1937, they were invited to London, where the Lund Humphreys gallery organised an exhibition of their work. The success of the exhibition encouraged the artists to remain in Great Britain.

During World War II, they worked with the Polish government and created many posters in support of the United Kingdom’s war effort. In 1955, after the dissolution of the company, Le Witt set about his own painting and design work. In London, he became friends with a circle of artists, including Henry Moore, Piero Fornasetti and David Zwemmer. He met Pablo Picasso, with whom he later often worked.

He died on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1991 in London.

In 1939, he married Alina née Prusicka, an author of children's books, which he illustrated. They had a son - Michael Le Witt (1945–).

“Częstochower Cajtung” 1931, No. 15, p. 6. – M. Zdrenka, [https://www.signp.pl/historia-polskiego-projektowania-\(3\):-lewitt-i-him-to-szczesliwe-polaczenie,17961,artykul.html](https://www.signp.pl/historia-polskiego-projektowania-(3):-lewitt-i-him-to-szczesliwe-polaczenie,17961,artykul.html);  
Agata Szydłowska i Marian Misiak, *Chaim z Warszawy*, <https://www.dwutygodnik.com/artykul/5828-chaim-z-warszawy.html>. – APCz, unit No. 58, birth record No. 174/1907. –  
Materials from the ODDC collections.

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