



HANNAH FRANK:
ART IN THE STREETS
Govanhill International Festival

HANNAH FRANK: ART IN THE STREETS
GOVANHILL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL – AUGUST 2ND – 15TH, 2021

Now in its fifth year, Govanhill International Festival began in 2016 as an antidote to racism towards migrant communities. It started as a carnival, parade, and weekend of music, aiming to celebrate the diversity of the area and combat division and hate. It has since grown into a beautiful two-week extravaganza, embodying the richness and diversity of the flourishing arts and culture scene in Govanhill. This program features over fifty events including talks, music, workshops, film, exhibitions, theatre, heritage events, and guided walks. At its heart, the Govanhill International Festival and Carnival is an anti-racist festival: celebrating the contributions immigrants have made to a community that is home to people of 40+ nationalities speaking 60+ languages.

Hannah Frank's family was among thousands of Jewish families who came to Glasgow from Eastern Europe at the turn of the last century and we are proud to take our place at this festival.

Prints of Hannah Frank's iconic black and white drawings will pop up in local independent shops and cafes around Govanhill during the festival, making an outdoor exhibition suitable for both children and adults.

In this catalogue we provide a short introduction to Hannah Frank's life, and some contextual information and a visual analysis of each of the drawings featured in the exhibition. For more information about the artist and for information about purchasing prints and sculpture, have a look around the website www.hannahfrank.ourg.uk.

Work on this catalogue, the planning and curating of the exhibition, and the associated Hannah Frank Art walking tours, creative workshops and talks has been undertaken by Belen de Bacco, Meg Gray, Mari Wall, Iona Wallace and Finley White, all Glasgow University History of Art students who have worked alongside Fiona Frank, the artist's niece, throughout 2021.

HFDS Plate No. at the bottom of each of the prints refers to the page number in 'Hannah Frank, A Glasgow Artist: Drawings and Sculpture'. Published in 2004 by the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre, this book is available for sale at the Govanhill Festival Office, Outwith Books and Burning House Books, for the special price of £10.00.

[Introduction](#)

[Night](#)

The Bungo,
17 Nithsdale Avenue, G41 2AL

[Fairies in a Wood](#)

The Bell Jar,
21 Dixon Avenue, G42 8EB

[Woman and Trees](#)

Transylvania Shop and Coffee,
462 Victoria Road, G42 8YU

[Sun](#)

Locavore,
349 Victoria Road, G42 7SA

[Woman with Birds](#)

Wee Plate Café,
68 Govanhill Street, G42 7PX

[Dance](#)

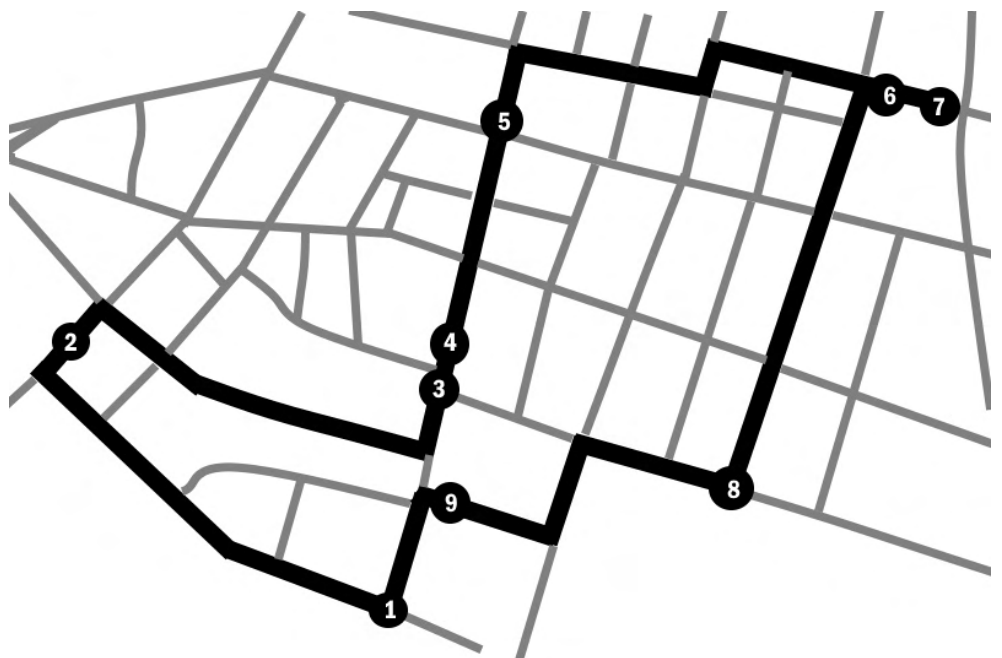
Burning House Books,
446 Cathcart Road, G42 7BZ

[Spring Frieze](#)

Outwith Books,
14 Albert Road, G42 8DN

TOUR ROUTE:

1. **Queens Park Entrance:**
tour starts here.
2. **The Bungo**
3. **The Bell Jar**
4. **Transylvania Shop and Coffee**
5. **Locavore**
6. **Wee Plate Café**
7. **Burning House Books**
8. **Dixon Avenue:** turn right.
9. **Outwith Books**



INTRODUCTION

In 1917 at the age of nine, Hannah Frank and her family moved from the Gorbals to 72 Dixon Avenue in Govanhill, an area popular with up-and-coming Jewish families, as the presence of synagogues and kosher shops at the time suggests. Her father Charles Frank was originally from Vilkomir, Lithuania and came to Glasgow in 1905. Her mother Miriam Lipetz came to Edinburgh from Lithuania with her family as a baby in the 1880s. Jewish migration was a widespread phenomenon towards the end of the 19th Century as many Jewish refugees escaped oppression and persecution in Eastern Europe.

Charles Frank had opened a photographic and scientific apparatus shop in 1907 in the Saltmarket, Glasgow, which became one of the best-known photographic centres in the city (and provided Saturday work for the young Hannah Frank when she became a student).

Hannah Frank was educated at Strathbungo School and Albert Road Academy. A talented artist from a young age, she discussed taking up an artistic career with her teachers, with plans to go to the Glasgow School of Art. However, her father asked for advice from a neighbouring shopkeeper, the Scottish painter John Quinton Pringle who had never given up his own career offering optical and electrical repairs despite his success in art. He told Frank's father: "Art should be the icing on the cake, not the whole cake" - so she studied English and Latin at Glasgow University from 1927-

1930 while attending evening classes at the School of Art in drawing, lithography, and wood engraving, for which she won the James McBey prize.

While at Glasgow University, her student poems and drawings were published in the GUM (Glasgow University Magazine) under the pen name of Al Aaraaf, the name of a brilliant but short-lived star used as the title of a poem by Edgar Allen Poe.

After graduating from Glasgow University, she attended Jordanhill Teacher Training College and became a primary school teacher, until her marriage to Lionel Levy in 1939, when she left Govanhill and moved to First Avenue, Netherlee, where the couple lived until their move to a care home in Newton Mearns in 2003.

Hannah Frank's black and white drawings probably featured in every Glasgow student flat in the 1960s. Throughout a truly spectacular 75-year artistic career, her drawings and later bronze sculptures were exhibited in the Royal Academy, Royal Glasgow Institute, and Royal Scottish Academy.

Hannah Frank died in 2008 at the age of 100. She had thought that her artistic career would, like the star she used as her pen name, disappear after a brief flash. However, she achieved her dearest wish: in the words of the poet Longfellow, she has left 'footsteps in the sand of time' in the shape of her contribution to the art of Govanhill, Glasgow, Scotland, and the world.



Night



Night was drawn by Hannah Frank in 1930 and was published in Glasgow University Magazine and displayed at the Royal Glasgow Institute in the same year.

This drawing showcases Hannah Frank's mastery of both highly detailed elements and unadorned planes of black and white. A singular plant is detailed across the width of the drawing, starting from the bottom and at times forming high peaks reaching upwards. It appears as if this floral element is made of individual delicate flowers placed upon, and adjacent to, one another, creating a large floral mass that covers much of the pictorial frame.

In the foreground of the image six figures stand, partially obscured by the multitude of flowers, and seen emerging from the right-hand side of the image. It is as if the figures materialise from within the bush of flowers. The two figures seen in the bottom right are drawn in profile, and both hold a narrow cylindrical object to their mouths; they are probably playing the flute. Only their chests and arms are visible, the rest being hidden by the floral bushes. While the first figure looks straight in front of him, the second one, slightly above the first and to the left, looks up. Above them, slightly to the left, the upper body of a female figure appears. She is naked, her bare breasts - a body part the artist often chooses to hide behind dresses - are unobscured. While her body faces the left of the drawing, she looks towards the right, as if alerted by something happening behind her. A masculine figure is drawn behind her, his head appearing slightly above the female figure, with the remainder of his body obscured by the plant matter. Towards the left-hand side, two other female figures emerge, depicted in profile. One of them also only showcases her upper body and directs her attention upwards. The other figure's body stands below the frame, exposing her bust and head only; she gazes downwards. They are drawn in the same manner as the first one; all three women are adorned with flowers around their neck and head. Their floral necklaces, naked bodies, and hair differentiate them from the artist's usual depiction of figures.

After focusing on these figures, the viewer's gaze finds a second variety of flora; growing from beyond the lower edge of the drawing, slightly off centre to the left and reaching up in different directions. One stem stands in between the figures and creates a diagonal as it rises to the top right corner of the composition. The stems are rather thick and appear like small branches on which buds appear to be developing into flowers.

This floral scene is set against a plane of pure black. A window is drawn in the top left corner, taking a third of the drawing's length and two thirds of its width. The window seems to be open. The bust of a woman appears, she leans on crossed arms which rest upon the window's edge. Another woman is drawn behind her; her body is hidden under a black dress and the frame of the drawing only lets us see her open mouth. While the woman in the window looks out towards the landscape, she doesn't seem to acknowledge the scene taking place underneath her. Can she not see the figures partially hidden in the bushes? Why then do the figures whose gazes are directed upwards appear to look towards her? This contributes to the feeling of mystery brought by the mystical creatures depicted

FAIRIES IN A WOOD



1925
Pen and ink

10.5 cm x 21 cm

**Tour Stop No. 2:
The Bell Jar, 21 Dixon Avenue
G42 8EB**

Fairies in a Wood is Hannah Frank's first known pen and ink drawing, drawn when she was only seventeen. When compared to her later works, the drawing clearly demonstrates the artist's youth in terms of her artistic maturity. The audience can see that the work marks the start of Frank's lifelong interest in both natural landscapes and flora, as well as her interest in mythical and mystical themes. As her career progressed, Frank refined her depiction of these themes as well as her artistic style, with more distinct geometrical shapes and polished line-work.

Contrasting with the later works that Frank became known for - such as *Night, Dance*, and *Spring Frieze* - the linework within this drawing is uncharacteristically rounded and creates an overall feeling of softness and a child-like atmosphere. Frank blends fine and viscous white lines to depict the scene, resulting in an unrefined and blurred impression that makes it difficult for the viewer to focus on a particular feature.

In the foreground, the viewer can see a field of flowers, a motif revisited many times throughout the artist's career. Hovering above the field are five fairies dancing in a circle. They are drawn clothed in elegant, light dresses with long, flowing curly hair. To the right, above the fairies dancing, Frank depicts a tranquil looking fairy with dark, curly hair that falls to her waist: she looks out of the pictorial frame to meet the viewer's gaze.

From this point, the viewer's attention is brought to the branch of a tree which divides the drawing diagonally, leading their eyes to notice the plethora of trees found in the background of the image. This branch highlights a tree on the left-hand side of the pen and ink drawing, on which a last figure is depicted. This last fairy, depicted more like a humanised butterfly, is less clearly identifiable than the other figures. It is drawn in the background, sitting on a branch and looks androgynous. It has butterfly wings, its left leg is pointed to the ground like a ballet dancer, and it seems to be watching over the dance scene happening beneath them.

The original drawing was untraced for many years and surfaced in a gallery in London in 2003 where it was purchased by a cousin of the Frank family. It was again exhibited at the 100th Birthday exhibition at Glasgow University Chapel in 2010 and later at the MacLaurin Gallery in 2014. A print was exhibited at the 110th Birthday exhibition.

WOMAN AND TREES



1931
Pen and ink

41 cm x 28 cm
HFDS Plate 15

Tour Stop No. 3:
TransylvaniaShop and Coffee, 462 Victoria Road
G42 8YU

Woman and Trees was drawn by Hannah Frank in 1931 and is a haunting depiction of a woman gliding silently past silhouetted trees, her long pleated dress dragging through a grouping of flowers. Seemingly cast in night-time, the figure's bent arms give the impression that she is sleepwalking; however, with her eyes open and head tilted downwards determinedly, the figure's movement appears to be rather conscious and resolute, raising the question: where is this figure headed and why? Although peaceful, this uncertainty contributes to the drawing's eerie and foreboding atmosphere.

The dominant feature of this composition is this female figure, elongated across the height of the drawing and facing towards the left. Due to the bright white of her face, hair and hands, this figure becomes the focal point of the composition. She wears a solid black long-sleeved robe which flows to the ground. Because of her black outfit, the woman resembles a tree, thus reflecting the surrounding environment.

The ground on which the female figure stands is highly detailed, and the perspective of the piece allows the viewer's eyes to gaze along the field and up towards the background of the drawing that is filled with detailed, fine lines. This can be interpreted as a skyline or a body of water. Drawn very close to each other and with an irregular pattern, the lines that Frank uses in the background of this work mimic vibrations. The irregularity of the lines therefore create aquatic-like movement within the piece. The woods that the female figure stands within, are cut off before the viewer can see upper branches and crown of the tree, thus emphasising the flora's vast height and the minuteness of the woman that Frank depicts.

Woman and Trees appears to be a second rendition of Frank's earlier drawing *A Look That's Fastened to the Ground*, created four years earlier. Frank worked in a constant state of improvement and revision; by comparing the different renditions of certain scenes, the ways in which Frank developed artistically can be further understood and appreciated. Omitting the direct textual reference as well as simplifying and stylizing the forms, in *Woman and Trees*, Frank updates the scene of her earlier work *A Look That's Fastened to the Ground* to encompass a more distinctive and unique style. In addition to this, potentially due to a change in her conception of melancholy, Frank evolves the figure that originally symbolized melancholy in the earlier work to appear less passive, instead assuming a forceful and determined presence.

SUN



1943
Pen and ink

45.5 cm x 32.3 cm
HFDS Plate 20

**Tour Stop No. 4:
Locavore, 349 Victoria Road
G42 7SA**

Sun was drawn by Hannah Frank in 1943 and exhibited at the Royal Glasgow Institute in 1945 and is an example of Frank's visual exploration of relationships between female figures and nature.

Sun was drawn in Frank's third subdivision of her artistic style. This period of her artistic career is thought to have been influenced by her marriage to Lionel Levy in 1939. From this point onwards, her pen and ink drawings became brighter as Frank began to favour using white as the predominant colour within her works, where she used to prefer using black. Exemplifying this mature style, this drawing is filled with light and thus gives an impression of joy.

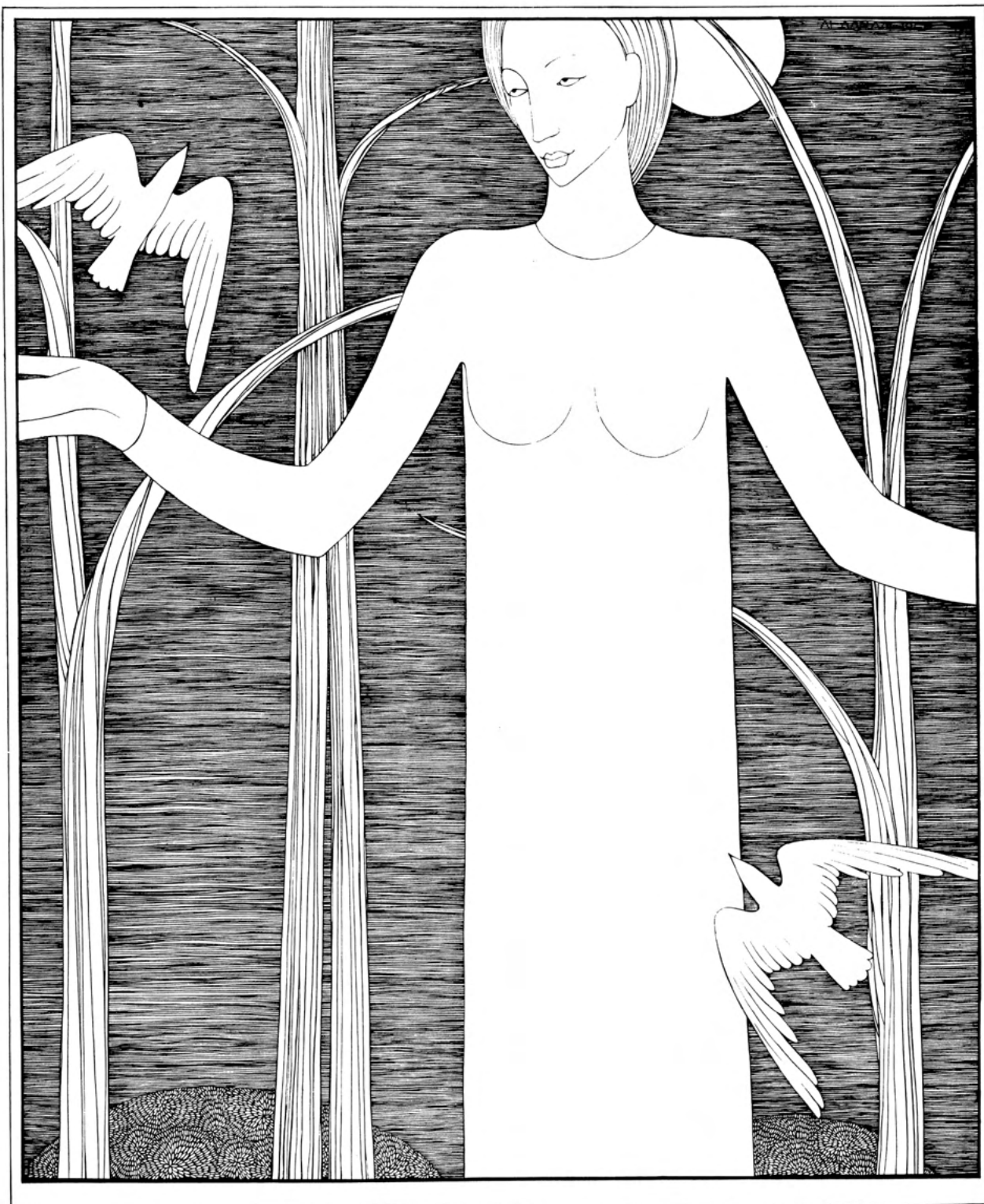
The viewer's eye is first drawn to the only figure present in the composition, who emerges from the bottom left of the pictorial frame and rises towards the centre of the drawing. This female figure is depicted as an elongated form and is presented in white with no nuances or shading. However, her breasts are clearly shaped and are the only sign of the figure's gender as her face does not display any stereotypically gendered aspects.

Her face looks up towards the sky, or rather to the sun depicted directly above her. With a smiling expression, she raises her arms and hands, slightly away from her body, as if praising the sun as if it was a divine entity. The figure stands on a very detailed field of grass and flowers. On this field, right after the figure, stand sunflowers – a clear allusion to the theme of the drawing, the sun, and more precisely what appears to be a celebration of its light.

The background is covered with multitudes of thin lines that form irregular curves and create a strong sense of movement within the piece. At some points in the drawings, those lines are entwined, which could be Frank's attempt at representing the abstract strength and movement of the wind. The hair of the woman adds to this interpretation as it floats in the air, as if blown by the wind. Furthermore, three birds are flying in the background, adding to the feeling of movement. However, the sunflowers in the foreground stand straight and do not seem to be affected by what is going on in the background.

Above this mass of curved lines representing the wind or the clouds, the sun appears. Half of its circle is depicted at the very top and at the centre of the drawing, with the other half presumably evident beyond the frame of the image. The sun radiates rays drawn with very thin and straight lines, covering the space of the sky that is not already taken by the clouds. It appears as if light is trying to break through the clouds and, consequently, illuminates the whole scene. This interpretation seems to justify the posture of the woman, thankful for the sun bringing light into a gloomy day.

WOMAN WITH BIRDS



1947
Pen and ink

42.8 cm x 34.9 cm
HFDS Plate 27

**Tour Stop No. 5:
Wee Plate Cafe, 68 Govanhill Street
G42 7PX**

Woman with Birds was drawn by Hannah Frank in 1947 and exhibited at the Royal Glasgow Institute in the same year.

This drawing clearly stands in Hannah Frank's third artistic period. Made in 1947, it attests to the artist's mature drawing style, bright, calm, and celebratory in nature. The most visually imposing feature of the piece is a woman, depicted slightly to the right of the centre of the composition. She stands almost like a tree trunk – a linear block of white strongly grounded. As in many of the artist's other drawings, the figure's legs are not outlined, which gives the figure a trunk or block-like appearance. It appears as if the legs are not shown because the woman is wearing a dress, as indicated by a line forming a collar under her neck and another line around her right wrist. Whilst this explains that the female figure's legs are not visible, the artist has still outlined the breasts of the figure, therefore accentuating her femininity. Both of her arms are raised from the core of her body; her right arm shows her palm facing the sky, her fingers reaching beyond the frame. Half of her left forearm is hidden in the same way.

The viewer's eyes are led up towards the female figure's face, where they find her finely traced figure and her bright hair arranged at the back of her head. She is looking towards her right; this gaze leads the audience to notice a bird right above her right hand facing the sky, in the left of the composition, flying towards the top of her head. A second bird is drawn at the bottom right of the drawing, again flying upwards towards her head. The birds could be doves, as suggested by their pure white and the form of their wings – shaped by the rounded form given to their feathers and the angular aspect of their very large wings. This interpretation of the nature of the birds coincides with the overall feeling of the drawing: peace.

The figure is surrounded by tall plants that take up the full height of the composition. Their very thin branches, or thick leaves, lean in different directions, breaking with the woman's posture and her strong verticality. These tall white leaves are detailed with very fine black lines across their height, texturing them. The whole scene seems to stand on a hilltop, as hills are visible at the bottom of the drawing. They are highly detailed, as if a field of flowers was growing on their surface in the form of many small spirals. Those heavily detailed hills are barely distinguishable at first sight, because they are drawn directly against an equally detailed background. As in many of the artist's drawings, the background is made of very thin black horizontal lines. Here it covers the whole height and width of the work, behind all the other elements. This depiction of the sky, darkened by the many black lines, leads us to imagine a foggy evening – in which the moon (although it could be the sun varying on the interpretation one chooses to adopt) floats at the very top of the composition, next to the woman's head, on her left, and slightly hidden behind her.

DANCE



1950
Pen and ink

49 cm x 34.6 cm
HFDS Plate 19

**Tour Stop No. 6:
Burning House Books, 446 Cathcart Road
G42 7BZ**

Dance was drawn by Hannah Frank in 1950 and exhibited at the Royal Glasgow Institute in the same year.

The drawing stands in Hannah Frank's third artistic period where visual results as well as themes are much softer than in the previous darker period, focusing on notions such as unity, warmth, and movement. The visual elements employed by Frank in this monochromatic ink drawing highlight these qualities further.

Dance begins in the upper third fragment with a curved line ranging from the top of the woman's head, expanding through her open arms and then down, reaching through and following along the curvature of her body, ranging through the mid-section of the image – from the centre to the left, and finally down to the bottom right. This movement is then repeated in a smaller detail: in the seagull in the upper section of the third horizontal section. It is in this section that the intersection of the woman and bird occurs. In the union of the two figures, unity is found within the composition. This union is furthered through Frank's choice of a monochromatic colour palette, and the bright white of both the woman and bird. It is interesting to note that after Frank married Lionel Levy in 1939, the use of white in her work grew. Where she used to favour using black to engage focus in her works, Frank now utilised white in the same way. The connotations of this are evident in the joy that radiates through the piece and the parallels of connection – as seen both in the intersection between woman and bird, and the union of Frank and Levy – further this through associating this 'joy' with a marriage. Finally, the curved line motif is repeated in the movement of the grass. Though, despite the echoed intersections of the leaves, the union of the bird and woman remains as the critical crossover of the piece. At this point it becomes obvious that the woman is somewhat otherworldly – is she perhaps momentarily lapsing into a hybrid form combining woman, bird, and the long grass – united through nature to culminate in one 'dance' – like movement?

The woman's body, as we often encounter in Frank's work, is very elongated. In fact, very few of her characteristics link her to a human figure. Only her face, her arms, and her breast inform us of her nature. The face is depicted simply with very thin lines forming a calm expression – her eyes and mouth are closed, and she rests her head upon her left shoulder. The viewer's eyes next drift downwards to her clearly outlined breasts. No other human characteristic is visible beyond this point.

The field stands before a harsh black background, contrasting with the whiteness of the figure's body and letting her shine. The leaves are drawn with very thin vertical lines depicted throughout their length and almost appear like trees. They start and end beyond the frame of the drawing and thus span from the very bottom to the very top. They represent her whole environment and encircle her as she dances between them. Some leaves appear in the very foreground, before the woman, and bend in different directions, mimicking her posture. As is often notable in Frank's drawings, the figure reflects her natural environment and here even dances with it. To the right of the composition, beneath the figure's left arm raised in the air, is a very simply outlined white bird flying towards her.

SPRING FRIEZE



1945
Pen and ink

43 cm x 31.6 cm
HFDS Plate 23

**Tour Stop No. 7:
Outwith Books, 14 Albert Road
G42 8DN**

Spring Frieze was drawn by Hannah Frank in 1945 and was exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy in 1946.

In the bottom right corner of the drawing, a figure depicted in profile sits on the ground. The figure is androgynous in presentation but can be interpreted as masculine as Frank has not outlined their breasts as she did for the other figures within the piece. Although a part of his back stands beyond the composition, it appears as if he is leaning his back against the frame of the drawing. He wears a white dress, as indicated by the line around his neck, left wrist, and foot. The dress is neither detailed nor textured and stands as a plane of white. The only lines bringing detail into the figure are the ones giving texture to the figure's hair. He holds a small flower in his hand, perhaps a daisy. With his face pointed downwards and his eyes closed, the figure's head appears to lean forward heavily, perhaps expressing a melancholic expression, or simply just resting his eyes.

This first figure is sitting on a field of grass on which more daisies have grown. The grass is detailed by very short and vertical lines covering the ground. Horizontal and slightly curvilinear continuous lines layer the field and give relief to the environment. Those lines, spanning across the width of the drawing, are depicted at an equal distance from each other.

On the second plane, three female figures are depicted standing. They are drawn in the same way as the figure sitting in the foreground, their dresses are similarly white and unadorned. This time, the dresses follow the form of breasts and stop at the women's knees – revealing their legs and feet. Their shoes are simple; a single line around their ankles indicate their presence. The figures are pictured across the width of the composition, a first one to the left, with her right foot partially hidden; a second one more towards the centre of the work but still very close to the figure on the left, with part of her right leg hidden by the first figure's body. Both, although facing the viewer, look towards the left of the composition. The third woman is depicted on the right, above the man sitting in the foreground and looking to her left towards the right of the composition. Due to the direction and position of their feet indicate movement, it appears as though the figures are dancing towards the right of the drawing. Their bodies connect and are almost intertwined. They could be forming a circle with more figures outside of the frame, as indicated by their gaze which looks beyond that which is visible to the viewer.

The figure's hair, shorter than the hair Frank usually draws on her female figures, stops above the shoulders and floats in the air, perhaps corresponding to the movement created by the dance. The field of grass and flowers begins the change behind the three women. The horizontal curvilinear lines discussed earlier are now becoming thicker and brighter and resemble the women's strands of hair. This resemblance is emphasised by the sky directly behind the figures' heads at the very top of the drawing – furthering the feeling of movement in which three birds begin to participate. Like in many of Frank's artworks, the figures' natures are reflected by their surroundings.