

Richard GRUNE

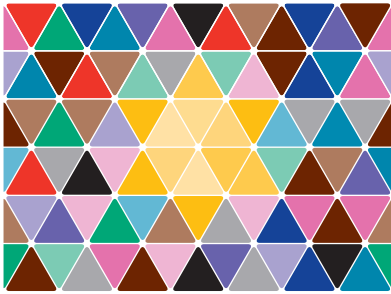


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Mosaic – Victims of
Nazi Persecution





Richard Grune

Richard Grune was born on 2nd August 1903 in Flensburg in northern Germany. Richard was

interested in drawing from an early age and he attended art college in the nearby city of Kiel. In 1922 he moved to Weimar to study at the world famous Bauhaus school where his teachers included the artists Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee. Richard had his first exhibition in 1926 and he was seen as an artist with a promising future.

Richard also developed a passion for art education and began to teach poor children in Kiel. However, Kiel was a small conservative city where a gay man like Richard could not fully express his identity so he also spent time travelling around Germany and abroad. In particular, Richard often visited Berlin, where a large and open gay scene allowed him more freedom. Richard eventually moved to Berlin in February 1933.

However, Richard arrived in the capital only a few weeks after the Nazis had come to power. The police increasingly raided gay bars and clubs and arrested homosexual men. Richard was himself arrested on 4th December 1934. He was held in so-called 'protective custody' for five

months in Lichtenberg concentration camp until May 1935 when he was sent back to Flensburg to await his trial. The trial took place in September 1936 (three months after the law against homosexuality had been tightened) and Richard was sentenced to 1 year and 3 months in prison, minus the time already spent in custody.

However, when Richard was released from prison in the summer of 1937, he was immediately rearrested by the Gestapo and again sent into 'protective custody', this time in Sachsenhausen concentration camp. In April 1940 he was transferred to another camp, Flossenbürg, where he remained until April 1945, when he was able to escape before the Nazis evacuated the prisoners. Apart from a gap in 1935-36, Richard had spent more than a decade in camps or prisons.

After the war, Richard created a series of drawings showing scenes of life in the concentration camps which were published in a book, *The Passion of the 20th Century* (1947), one of the first accounts of the Nazi camp system. Despite his courage in portraying his experiences, Richard clearly felt uncomfortable in Germany and he emigrated to Barcelona in 1949. However, financial difficulties led to him returning in the late 1950s. Richard died on 26th November 1963.