

History of the modern 20th century art resembles a jungle of styles, full of personal or collective expressions and many errant ways. Big roads of early 20th century -ISMs were planned and marked out by names known today around the world or at least in Europe. These main streams navigated whole groups of artists and their followers. They were, however, very often interconnected with a complicated network of sidewalks, shortcuts and detours, full of hard working individuals searching for their own complex, but still unique invention. Staying in the shade and trying to understand similarities between the "high art" of their famous companions, they became philosophical bridges between styles as well as tireless engineers dismantling or connecting them.

Martin Salcman was such an individual. He was born in ~1896 in a poor family. His father died when he was 10, his mother shortly after he became 14. Still a student of local secondary school he has shown his strong sense for artistic expression and doubtless talent. It may have been recognized by some of his relatives or school authorities. His self-portrait "A Young Boy dressed in a Working Cloth", surprisingly in oil, is certainly untouched by any professional training but it clearly shows Salcman's future potential. It is necessary to admit that

Around the

his

age

village Druztova

where he spent

beginnings

of 15 Martin

were anything but

Salcman left his

(near Plzen)

most probably

easy.

native

kaolin mines before he was

and moved to Horni Briza

four years working in

officially assigned to

general courses at the Prague Academy of Fine Arts. His

studies were not very continuous. First four-year

interruption came in 1918 when he returned to kaolin

mines. In 1920 his traces could be found in Ejpvovice

mine. During this period there is no information about

any private studies or any other form of education he

had started at the academy in Prague....