

## Impact Statement

Amelia Klun, Grade 11

***The Efforts of Julius***, 2024.

Watercolor, colored pencil on paper, 9 x 12 inches.

Hopewell Valley Central High School, Pennington, NJ

Unsung Hero: Julius Madritsch

The story of Julius Madritsch teaches the importance of selflessness and compassion. Madritsch, an Austrian Businessman, saved thousands of Jewish lives during the holocaust by employing them to work in his textile factories. The factories were located within Kraków, Poland, and Madritsch employed around 2,000 Jewish workers where they were provided with extra rations of food as well as protection from the Nazis. When Kraków was taken over by Germans in 1942, Madritsch opened factories within concentration camps where he would continue to give help from the inside. In the end, his efforts not only saved the lives of thousands of Jews but also greatly improved their quality of life. However, the efforts of Madritsch often become lost within the accomplishments of more mainstream figures whose ideas and goals were similar.

Madritsch worked alongside the renowned Oskar Schindler whose story harbors many similarities. Both heroes had opened several factories that employed Jewish workers. However, their differences lie within the items that their factories produced. While Madritsch produced textiles, Schindler produced arms and ammunition. Despite both stories being originally unknown by the vast majority of the public, 1993 saw a dramatic change in this perspective. It was this year that Steven Spielberg's film Schindler's List was released and began to gain popularity. The film covered the accomplishments of Oskar Schindler, and he was finally recognized for his activism. As a result, Schindler's story spiked in popularity while Madritsch remained primarily unknown. This reason was a prime factor in why I chose Madritsch to be my focus for this project. I believe the efforts of Madritsch are just as important and impactful as the efforts of Schindler, and his lack of mainstream popularity should not outweigh his importance. I found it inspiring that Madritsch was able to take a talent of his, that talent being business, and turn it into something that helped save the lives of thousands of people. I believe this message is one that I, and many other artists, should live by. Having artistic talent is one thing but using that talent for the greater good makes you an all-around better person.

To bring Madritsch's story to justice, I chose to include various elements and motifs in my piece that signify his accomplishments. As the focus, I included a portrait of Madritsch in the foreground based on one of his very few existing photos. I also decided to include an image of some of his Jewish employees working within one of his factories. As a creative element, I decided to include a pair of hands sewing the image to the fabric as if it were a textile. I chose to include this to both clarify what the workers

were doing in the image as well as improve the composition of the piece itself. To further improve the composition, I decided to include a pair of sewing scissors placed on top of the fabric as well as a tape measure. Since color photography hadn't become mainstream when Madritsch opened his factories, all of the reference images I had to go off of were black and white. Because of this, I decided to keep my piece monochromatic to preserve the historic feel of the period as well as to stay accurate to Madritsch's true appearance. To compensate for my lack of color, I decided to use watercolor and colored pencils for my mediums to ensure that I could include a maximum amount of detail.

Working on this project has greatly improved how I operate within society. Not only because it allowed me to further explore the medium of watercolor, but it also drove me to work towards becoming a more caring and compassionate person. Overall Madritsch has inspired me to become a better artist as well as a better person.