



Children of a Vanished World

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Between 1935 and 1938 the celebrated photographer Roman Vishniac explored the cities and villages of Eastern Europe, capturing life in the Jewish *shtetlekh* of Poland, Romania, Russia, and Hungary, communities that even then seemed threatened—not by destruction and extermination, which no one foresaw, but by change. Using a hidden camera and under difficult circumstances, Vishniac was able to take over sixteen thousand photographs; most were left with his father in a village in France for the duration of the war. With the publication of *Children of a Vanished World*, seventy of those photographs are available, thirty-six for the first time. The book is devoted to a subject Vishniac especially loved, and one whose mystery and spontaneity he captured with particular poignancy: children.

Selected and edited by the photographer's daughter, Mara Vishniac Kohn, and translator and coeditor Miriam Hartman Flacks, these images show children playing, children studying, children in the midst of a world that was about to disappear. They capture the daily life of their subjects, at once ordinary and extraordinary. The photographs are accompanied by a selection of nursery rhymes, songs, poems, and chants for children's games in both Yiddish and English translation. Thanks to Vishniac's visual artistry and the editors' choice of traditional Yiddish verses, a part of this wonderful culture can be preserved for future generations.

Earlier books of Roman Vishniac's photographs include *To Give Them Light: The Legacy of Roman Vishniac* (1995), *A Vanished World* (1983), and *Polish Jews* (1947).

A major exhibition titled "Children of a Vanished World: Photographs by Roman Vishniac" is scheduled at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York. The show will open to the public on March 7 and run through June 4, 2000.

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