



### Lola Taumann (1920 – 2010)

Lola was born in Kielce (Pinczow), Poland on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1920 into the Fajnszat family of textile merchants. She grew up during the interwar period as a typical middle class Jewish teenager of her time.

Lola, who became a beautiful girl (many of those who knew her then, even described her as one of the best looking girls in Kielce, who broke the hearts of many young men) - a pupil of the Jewish gymnasium - loved fashion and was upbeat and sporty (ice skating).

Together with her mother and siblings (she was the third of five children) she was an active member of the Zionist Revisionists Movement. This worldly, outgoing activity was not necessarily unusual for a daughter from a traditional Jewish home at the time, but demanded a daring spirit. And that she had.

Almost until the outbreak of the war with Nazi Germany, Lola enjoyed a very comfortable youth.

This changed more or less abruptly (the situation of the Jews had become increasingly difficult since the coming to power of Hitler in Germany in 1933) with the entrance of the German troops into Kielce on the afternoon of September 4<sup>th</sup>, 1939.

One and a half years of hardship later - her father had committed suicide; her elder brothers were deported to forced labor and shot - on the eve of Passover, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1941, Lola was locked into the ghetto of Kielce together with 28,000 Jews.

Here, still dreaming of a better future, she married her first husband David Taumann on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1941. Half a year later, Lola was pregnant; she had to see the liquidation of the ghetto and the departure of the rest of her surviving family to Treblinka where they were killed on arrival.

Lola survived many hells. She lost her first child and after slave work in an ammunition factory, she was "evacuated" to Auschwitz. From here her via dolorosa brought her to many slave workers' camps in Germany where she was finally able, under the bombardments of the allies, to save herself from a burning train near Berlin.

She returned to her hometown in Poland only to face the bitter reality that she remained the only survivor of her entire family. There, she met her second husband, Abram Rembiszewski. Soon, both of them had to escape from Kielce, due to what became known as the Kielce Pogrom (July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1946), during which 42 survivors of the Holocaust were lynched by their Polish neighbours. After a lengthy odyssey through Poland and Germany, Lola and Abram found themselves in Hamburg, which although initially was meant as a temporary arrangement, turned out to be their home until the end of the century.

In Hamburg, they started a new family with their children, Sarah and Jimmi and Lola struggled to make ends meet and to ensure a comfortable life for their children. It took until the early 60s for Lola to return to her fashion roots, where in fact she had always belonged. She founded COCO MODEN, the first French-

style boutique in Germany. From the very beginning COCO MODEN grew to become the 'in' fashion shop in Hamburg, known for its outrageous, fashion-forward choices and welcoming a clientele from across Germany and beyond. The success of this led to the creation of her own label, with her own designs, which attracted celebrities like politicians, movie/TV stars, royalty, as well as famous industrialists. Surprisingly, even the conservative Hamburg clientele loved and respected Lola, or COCO as they called her.

She became the subject of many TV, radio and newspaper reports and by the 70s/80s a celebrity in her own right. Leading newspaper publisher Axel Springer was particularly fond of her personality and her work reported on a regular basis in his newspapers about "news" from COCO-MODEN.

Lola was passionate and very liberal and tolerant, traits which were rather exceptional in post-war Germany. Open-mindedly she welcomed the stormy 60s and 70s, and often became the trend leader for new fashion. So it was not surprising that COCO MODEN was the first boutique to sell Hot Pants, for example.

It was her unique and sparkly personality, which made the shop come to life. People came from far and wide to scope out the latest on-trend items in her shop, but most importantly, they came to see her.

With all this, Lola also supported various Jewish and non-Jewish charities of which children were always a key part, and still managed to have the time to be the best and most doting mother to us.

For health reasons, she had to give up COCO MODEN in the late 90s, having worked into in her 80s and came to Israel, which she always considered her home. She passed away in Israel in 2010.

We hope her generosity, character and passion will live on in the form of this grant.

**Bezalel  
Academy of  
Arts and Design  
Jerusalem**



Mount Scopus, P.O.B 24046  
91240 Jerusalem, Israel  
Tel: +972(0)2-5893333  
Fax: +972(0)2-5823094  
[www.bezalel.ac.il](http://www.bezalel.ac.il)