99 (12/2025)

MEMORIA

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We invite all of you to work closely with us. We would be grateful to receive information about events, projects, publications, exhibitions, conferences or research that we should share with our readers. We also accept proposals for articles.

Paweł Sawicki, Editor-in-Chief

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NEW MAIN EXHIBITION. THE FIRST PART DEVOTED TO THE EXPERIENCES OF AUSCHWITZ PRISONERS IS AVAILABLE TO VISITORS

The first of the three parts of the Museum's new main exhibition was opened to visitors on 12 December. The exhibition "Auschwitz – Experiences of Camp Prisoners" in Blocks 8 and 9 presents the fates and experiences of those registered in the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz.

The remaining two parts will be completed within the next five years. Ultimately, visitors will first encounter an exhibition presenting Auschwitz as an institution consciously created and developed by Nazi Germany, followed by an exhibition on the extermination of Jews in Auschwitz.

The authors of the exhibition scenario are Museum Director Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński and Head of the Research Center Dr. Piotr Setkiewicz. The entire multi-year project is financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

During the session of the International Auschwitz Council held on 18-19 November, Director Piotr Cywiński said: "This is a deeply moving moment for us, because we have been working on the exhibition for over 12 years. It is also profoundly important that members of the International Auschwitz Council—among them Survivors whose voices were so crucial in shaping the postwar memory of Auschwitz, such as Prof. Władysław Bartoszewski, Marian Turski, and Israel Gutman—contributed to this work. Their reflections were of immense value to us."

He added: "I would also like to thank the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Governments and ministers changed several times, yet all respected the decision to carry out this exhibition,
a very costly undertaking, as it includes the conservation of six historical post-camp buildings."

The exhibition in Blocks 8 and 9 is built around three core themes: registration, daily life in the camp, and the prisoners' inner experience. These themes are illustrated through original objects, quotations from Survivors, and artistic works.

The first part introduces visitors to the different groups of prisoners registered in the camp, as well as the stages of the brutal and humiliating process of transformation into a prisoner: the initial shock, forced nudity during bathing, shaving of hair, confiscation of all personal belongings, receiving the striped camp uniform, and the registration itself, symbolized by personal cards, camp photographs, and the tattooed number.

The second part presents daily camp life: from the morning bell, to washing, meals,

include exhaustion, hunger, cold, corporeality, fear, numbness, hopelessness, and death.

"When considering the entire exhibition in the Museum, one must clearly understand that visitors will enter the display in the original camp blocks after having passed through the 'Arbeit macht frei' gate. After leaving it, they will remain for a long time in the post-camp landscape, both in Auschwitz I and Birkenau. In creating the exhibition, we had to remember that it is only an introduction, preparing visitors for the confrontation with the authentic place where such immense evil occurred," said Dr. Piotr Setkiewicz.

Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński emphasized: "In
a world in which narrative-historical exhibitions have become fashionable, we have consciously taken a major step back and created an exhibition that is decidedly more phenomenological, one that does not define or narrate but presents."

As the exhibition catalogue states: " Instead of telling the story, the exhibition focuses on showing it. This is a conscious decision, inspired by the approach of Survivors who developed the first post-war exhibition. They were guided by the principle that in such a location, history should speak with images and evidence, not just words. That is why in the new exhibition, the guide serves as the narrator, explaining the issues as they arise."

The author of the conceptual design, Bartłomiej Pochopień, explained that the exhibition, created for millions of visitors over the coming decades, places great emphasis on universality and durability of message: "It does so by highlighting the significance of the authenticity of the place and the objects, among other means by minimizing architectural interventions."

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"Both the choice of the most meaningful objects and the architecture of the exhibition: the interior design, the choice of finishing materials, and technological solutions, take into account not only the special location and the conservation needs of the historical buildings, but also the high number of visitors moving through the Museum in guided groups."

Across the two blocks, visitors can see 153 original objects, including: prisoner clogs and striped uniforms, bowls and a spoon,

CLAUDE LANZMANN'S "SHOAH". UNPUBLISHED RECORDINGS

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of Claude Lanzmann's birth and the 40th anniversary of the film Shoah, the Mémorial de la Shoah is hosting an exhibition prepared in collaboration with the Jewish Museum in Berlin.

In the spring of 1985, Claude Lanzmann (1925–2018) premiered a preview of his monumental film "Shoah" in Paris, a project he had dedicated twelve years to completing. Today, this film, which runs over nine hours, remains a seminal work in the portrayal of the genocide committed by Nazi Germany against six million Jews.

The exhibition, "Claude Lanzmann's Shoah: Unpublished Recordings," provides the public with access to previously unreleased archival audio recordings related to the film for the first time.

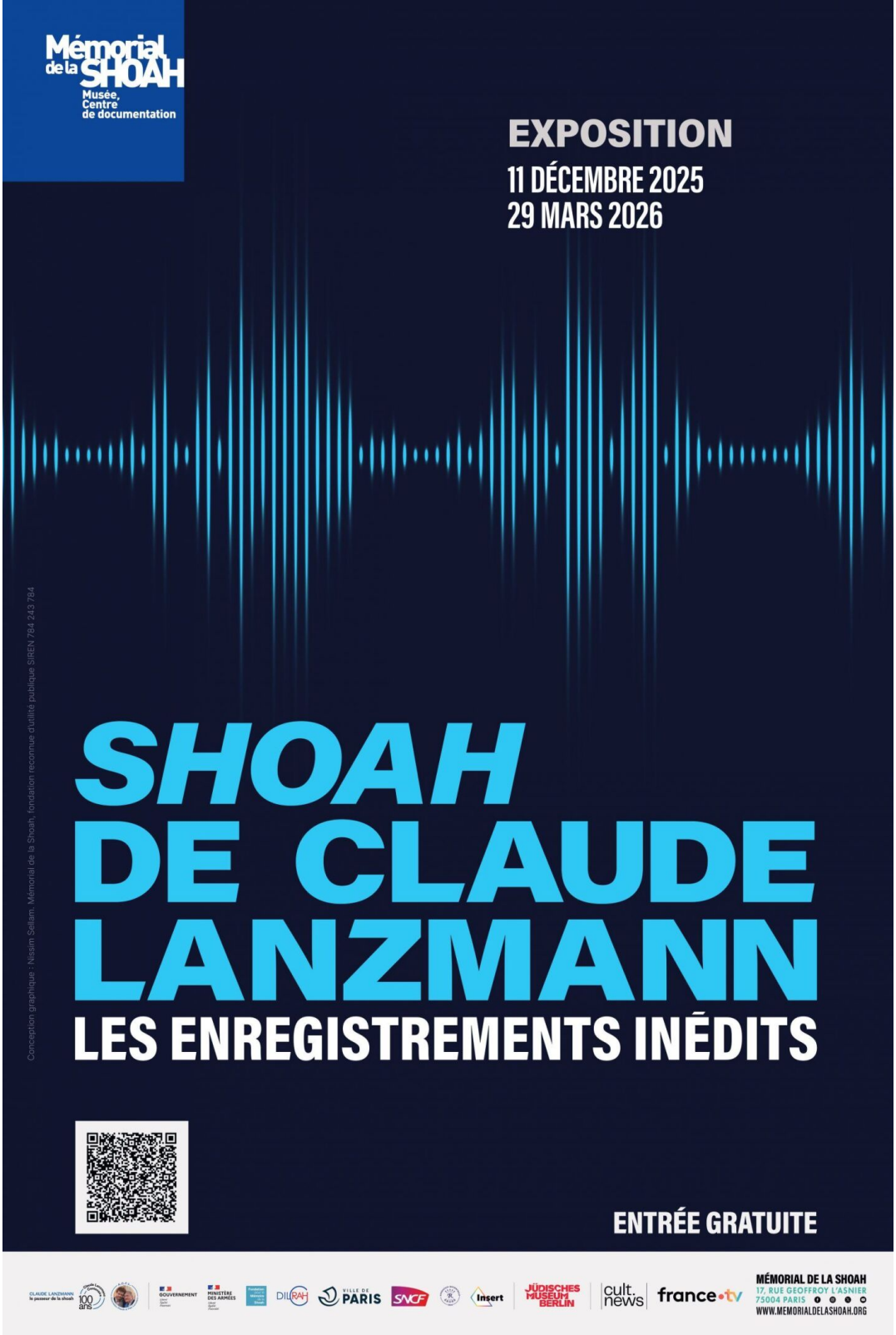
In the process of creating Shoah, Lanzmann conducted interviews with survivors, perpetrators, and witnesses. He also visited extermination sites with his camera in search of traces of history, deliberately choosing not to include archival footage in his film.

The exhibition focuses on the extensive preparation that preceded filming. During this time, Claude Lanzmann, along with his assistants Corinna Coulmas and Irena Steinfeldt-Levy, conducted research in various countries and held numerous preliminary interviews, all of which were recorded. These previously unknown recordings reveal Lanzmann's deep interest in multiple aspects of the Holocaust before making extermination the central theme of his work. They also provide insight into the recollections of these events three decades after the war ended.

The exhibition is based on the Lanzmann Collection, located at the Jewish Museum in Berlin, thanks to a donation from the Claude and Félix Lanzmann Association. This collection includes approximately 220 hours of audio recordings in eight languages. In 2023, this collection, along with the film "Shoah", was included in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.
For the first time, the exhibition presents excerpts from these recordings simultaneously in Paris and Berlin. Organised into six sections, the exhibition invites visitors to engage in an immersive audio experience—starting from Lanzmann's initial reflections, through conversations with witnesses about specific aspects of the Holocaust, and culminating in the making of the film Shoah.

The exhibition features accounts from witnesses not included in Claude Lanzmann's film, as well as those he was unable to film. These witnesses comprise survivors from various ghettos and camps, such as the poet Avraham Sutzkever, Erich Kulka (Auschwitz), and Ilana Safran (Sobibór). The exhibition also includes individuals who rescued Jews, like Friedrich Graebe, along with former decision-makers and executors of the "final solution."

These recordings hold particular significance today, as the era of direct testimony is coming to an end with the passing of the survivors. The witnesses in the film speak as if they are "returning" from the dead.



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REPORT FROM THE SEMINAR "THE EXTERMINATION OF THE ROMA AND SINTI"

Over thirty educators, guides, and teachers participated in the seminar "The Extermination of the Roma and Sinti," which was organised from December 12 to 14.

The event began with a meeting featuring Małgorzata Kołaczek, PhD and Noemi Łakatosz from the Towards Dialogue Foundation. They discussed the role of Roma men and women in commemorating the Roma Holocaust and combating anti-Gypsyism. Following this, Halina Postek, PhD, from the Warsaw Ghetto Museum delivered a lecture titled "How to Teach About the Extermination of Roma and Sinti?"

On Saturday morning, participants travelled to Oświęcim, where they attended a lecture by Prof. Sławomir Kapralski on the Extermination of Roma and Sinti during World War II. They then visited the Centre for Roma History and Culture and the Jewish Centre in Oświęcim, where they learned about the activities of both institutions and their local initiatives to commemorate the minorities of Oświęcim who were persecuted and murdered by the Germans during the war.

On Sunday, seminar participants visited the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim. Under the guidance of Daria Janowiec, PhD, they toured the sites of Roma martyrdom, including the so-called Gypsy camp (Zigeunerlager) in Auschwitz-Birkenau BIIe.

The German Nazis began persecuting the Roma as soon as they assumed power. The racial laws issued in 1935 in Nuremberg classified them as an alien element. Shortly after the outbreak of World War II, mass resettlements of Roma groups from the Third Reich to the General Government began. Many Roma were placed in Jewish ghettos, primarily in Łódź and Warsaw, and were subsequently murdered, including victims in the extermination camp at Chełmno nad Nerem (Chełmno on the Ner river). Throughout the occupation, nomadic Roma were actively hunted down and often killed on the spot.
The deportation of Roma to the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp started in February 1943 and continued through July 1944. Most of the prisoners were brought from Germany, Austria, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and Poland. However, there were also groups of Roma from France, the Netherlands, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Belgium, Russia, Lithuania, Hungary, Spain, and even Norway.

In total, around 23,000 Roma and Sinti were taken to Auschwitz, with about 21,000 being officially registered. Tragically, the majority perished or were killed in the gas chambers, with only several hundred managing to survive the camp. In 2011, Poland became the first country to officially recognise August 2nd (the date marking the liquidation of the "Gypsy camp" in Auschwitz II Birkenau) as the Day of Remembrance for the Extermination of Roma and Sinti.


Warsaw Ghetto
Museum

Bartłomiej Pochopień, Auschwitz Memorial

THE SHAPE OF ARCHITECTURE AND THE RHYTHM OF DRUMS

Heavy buildings with solemn colonnades—Nazi and Soviet classicism—are an obvious example, much like nearly every despot's fondness for the splendor of antiquity, regardless of latitude, political views, or economic convictions. It therefore seems that classicism and authoritarian power form an indispensable alliance, even if we must remember that the spectrum of references to antiquity is as broad as European culture itself, and that the ancient world has permeated all the major epochs of the last two thousand years. Antiquity has always been a vast lexicon in which every sensibility could find a point of reference. And this is true whether we consider medieval basilica layouts derived from Roman times, the harmony of Renaissance sculpture, Enlightenment classicism, the antiquity-infused architecture of modern universities or grammar schools teaching Latin and Greek, parliamentary buildings rooted in republican ideals, the profoundly democratic spirit of nineteenth-century theatres in industrial cities, or the hundreds—indeed thousands—of libraries and museums in Europe and beyond, whose entrances were designed according to Roman and Hellenistic models.

What is then the difference between what we might call civic, post-Enlightenment classicism and the authoritarian classicism in which satraps so eagerly surround themselves? The difference—typically in architecture—is, of course, encoded in proportions, intentions, and context. Suffice it to say that the very same Roman Pantheon from two thousand years ago could become a point of reference for the library of the venerable University of Virginia, founded by Thomas Jefferson, and also serve as a model for the Grosse Halle, the Great Hall—an enormous dome planned at the very heart of Germania, the world capital the rebuilt Berlin was meant to become after the war. The first of these projects was designed personally by Jefferson himself, a humanist philosopher and the third President of the United States who fought against slavery; the second was, of course, the joint work of Adolf Hitler and his beloved architect Albert Speer. For both, slavery was an indispensable modus operandi. Among the many concentration camps, those at Flossenbürg and Mauthausen were meant to supply millions of tons of granite to satisfy their megalomaniacal, classicizing dreams of towering buildings and compositional axes stretching to the horizon.

Yet while almost all motifs drawn from antiquity can be interpreted in such radically different ways—sometimes dictatorially, sometimes democratically—there is one among them that is unmistakably closest to the aura of despotism: the triumphal arch. It is a peculiar form that resists simple classification. Sometimes placed within defensive walls as an entrance to a city, it is more often associated with freestanding architecture—an object then more symbolic and sculptural than functional. It spread in ancient Rome, forming the culminating moment of a triumphal military procession: an army marching with its leader at the head—the triumphator returning to the city after victorious battles—bringing treasures and captured slaves led on leashes.

The classical arch—modern ones most often inspired by the Roman arches of Titus and Constantine the Great—was, from its sheer size, through the expressive force of its stone blocks, to the narrative bas-relief scenes on its side walls, a clear emanation of imperial power. It was meant, in its entirety, to speak of victory, of rewarded soldiers, and of thanksgiving sacrifices offered to the gods. Yet in doing all this, the triumphal arch also carried a narrative of another's defeat, often depicting in stone relief conquered armies, looted goods, and tributes rendered.

Carole Raddato from FRANKFURT, Germany, CC BY-SA 2.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>, via Wikimedia Commons

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National Archives Catalogue, https://catalog.archives.gov/

was architecture: the interior of Les Invalides with Napoleon's sarcophagus, the Eiffel Tower, the Opéra Garnier, the triumphal arch in the Empire style, and the Haussmannian, monumental urbanism of the French capital. But while on 23 June 1940 Adolf Hitler and Albert Speer were photographing themselves on the terrace of the Palais de Chaillot with the Eiffel Tower in the background, a week and a half earlier the first mass transport had arrived at Auschwitz. In the camp, for three days already, Jan Liwacz, a blacksmith from Dukla, had also been imprisoned; later that same year, on the orders of Kurt Müller —one of the most brutal functionary prisoners—he made the inscription Arbeit Macht Frei. Earlier forged for the gate of the Dachau camp, present also in Sachsenhausen and Flossenbürg, and in the form of an arch still visible today above the gate in Theresienstadt as well as at the entrance to Gross-Rosen.

For a long time, it was not obvious to me that I could look at the gate in Auschwitz as a triumphal arch. First of all, because the inscription was always the most important thing. Three words. They drew the eye, forced reflection and indignation, evoked dread and disbelief. Besides—triumph? What a category. Surely it is obvious that this is the last place where one could use that concept. And then some art-historical digressions? In a world in which, like
a commandment, there sound the words of Clausner, a French prisoner who, on the bottom of his mess tin—where others scratched their camp number—wrote: "Ne pas

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a commandment, there sound the words of Clausner, a French prisoner who, on the bottom of his mess tin—where others scratched their camp number—wrote: "Ne pas chercher à comprendre" / "Do not try to understand"? It is also known that Auschwitz is above all an unspeakable tragedy, millions of tragedies, and that the human being is its core. That is why, if one considers the problem of architecture here at all, it is only through the prism of its agency and functionality. Auschwitz, which escaped all the categories of the humanities up to that point, is also—en masse with other problems—as if beyond the reach of aesthetic categories, traditional styles with their chronology of great epochs, and artistic references fixed in the lexicons of architectural history. That is probably why art historians considering the dark years of Nazism most often do not venture beyond the boundaries of Berlin and Nuremberg, beyond the architectural megalomania of Speer and Hitler. There, unlike in Auschwitz, the classic art-history textbooks still more or less work.Yet perhaps what was needed was simply time—and an awareness of how closely, and how perversely, aesthetics and ethics sit side by side. That evil men, even at the bottom of hell, hang comforting landscapes with idyllic panoramas on the walls of their SS quarters. And that the camp gates of Birkenau, Mauthausen, or Gross-Rosen—behind which there was
a functionalist machine for killing—have, in and of themselves, that absurdly theatrical, historicizing shape, like medieval fortified gates, at which an SS man indoctrinated with pseudo-Germanic ideas could look with pleasure.

Only—is it permissible for us to look at the gates of anus mundi in the context of prosaic kitsch—after all, one of the most widespread and at the same time most ambiguous aesthetic categories? Is it fitting to engage in such reflections—doubly dangerous, because they not only brush against our pop-cultural everydayness, but above all concern sites of execution and mass crimes? Well, I would have remained silent on this if not for the awareness of how dangerous kitsch can be: spiritually demoralizing, intellectually draining, feeding on human ignorance, and therefore most often something convenient for all kinds of dictators and seducers of the masses. After all, that familiar, Orwellian aesthetic of totalitarian systems—the cinematic visions enclosed in dark concrete buildings invariably silhouetted against
a steel sky—is most often a Hollywood cliché with a grey filter over the lens. Meanwhile, Hitler's dystopia began in Bavarian beer halls. Its essential expression was formed not only within the framework of the Nuremberg party rallies, with Speer's decorations and a variation on the Pergamon Altar of Zeus, but also during sunny Sundays in the gardens of Gasthäuser, amid jaunty slogans, schnapps, and pork knuckle.

that makes one free. In the foreground, in place of the proud soldiers from the photographs, he shows us, of course, prisoners in striped uniforms. "The basic rule one must always remember, if one wants to survive," Samuel Pisar said after the war, "is: never to admit and never to show the slightest sign of weakness or disability." In Kościelniak's drawing, they therefore walk evenly, with effort straightening their bodies, even thrusting out their chests as a sign of vigor that was meant to increase their chances of living even one more day. By the gate stand SS men counting the even rows. At first glance one might mistake them for officers receiving the parade of some victorious army. And there is one more thing: what could not be drawn—music. For instance, the often played Salve Imperator, or the Gladiatoren March. The latter piece murderously fast for such extremely tormented bodies. And the steady beat of the drum. As Dr. Jacek Lachendro recalled in his scholarly work, whatever was played, among all the instruments the drum must have struck the strongest. It had to beat a rhythm that would reach the battered people—allow them to keep an even line, because a single stumble could at any moment drive one of the bandits into a fury.
But to see in the Arbeit Macht Frei gate the frame of a "triumphal procession," Władysław Siwek's work allows us even more. His panoramic composition titled "Return of the Penal Company from Work" shows an endless procession of brutalized prisoners. Those in the foreground have already marched under the gate. Some are so close to death that their companions must support them or carry them on their own. It was Good Friday of 1942. For
a sadistic joke, one of them was therefore elevated. He sits on a platform carried by several prisoners. He is barely alive. And yet a tool of torture—a shovel—was thrust into his left hand, and a crown of thorns was placed on his head. But the Passion-like quality of this scene is readable only through the crown and the half-dead figure evoking the Ecce Homo motif, while the proper context of the Paschal Triduum can be read only once one knows the specific day on which it happened. If one were to look for an analogy to the Gospel, what Siwek evoked in the painting is, compositionally, probably closer to Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. What it can certainly be associated with, however, is that characteristic arrangement of ancient triumphal processions—later inherited, in various forms, by successive epochs and all social estates.

The first thing we see here is an enormous number of figures. Roman triumphal processions were known for their length and multitude—and Siwek's camp veduta looks no different. In those processions there also marched lictors, the dictator's attendants, holding in their hands the so-called lictors' rods, a symbol of imperial power. In fact, it is from those fasces—thick bundles of birch rods bound with a red thong—and from the Latin fascis, meaning "bundle," that the word we know today as fascism derives. Looking at the painting, one could probably identify them with kapos and functionaries—except that instead of ancient bundles, the painting shows batons and sticks. There is, of course, an orchestra and most likely a loud, rhythmic drum. And only because there is no decorative triumphal chariot in the ancient tradition—the one on which the victorious leader stood (for Hitler it was his beloved Mercedes-Benz 770, gliding amid ovations and Hitler Youth drumrolls beneath the triumphal gates of the cities hosting him)—in Auschwitz we see an ordinary platform of planks.

But if we stay a moment longer with triumphal chariots and the association with the Mercedes 770, it is worth looking at the two-and-a-half-meter, intricate Triumphwagen, a sixteenth-century woodcut by Albrecht Dürer in which the master depicted the triumphal procession of the Roman emperor Maximilian I. Above his head we can read a few words carved in elaborate lettering. They include, among other things, the four cardinal virtues: Iustitia (justice), Fortitudo (courage), Prudentia (prudence), and Temperantia (moderation).

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UNVEILING OF THE RESTORED GATE OF THE FORMER EBENSEE CONCENTRATION CAMP

On 25 November, the newly restored camp gate was unveiled for the first time within a special protective structure in front of the cemetery for victims of the German concentration camp in Ebensee.

During the ceremony, several speakers emphasised the importance of preserving cultural heritage, which includes the remnants of the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp system. Deputy Mayor Hermann Neuböck, representing the municipality of Ebensee; Stephan Matyus (the Mauthausen Memorial); Provincial Councillor Christian Dörfel, PhD (Province of Upper Austria); Christoph Bazil, PhD (President of the Federal Monuments Protection Office); and Hannah Lessing (National Fund of the Republic of Austria) all highlighted the significance of maintaining these relics as material evidence of a tragic era in history.

Pupils from the HAK in Bad Ischl read excerpts from the accounts of survivors of the Ebensee concentration camp. The musical accompaniment for the event was provided by instrumentalists from the State Music School in Ebensee, who played throughout the ceremony, culminating in the laying of white roses next to the camp gate.
The gate had been exposed to the elements for nearly 20 years, as it was displayed under a roof at the entrance to the memorial tunnel in Ebensee, leading to considerable damage. In 2023, the gate was dismantled and urgently restored by Christine Rotter.

Since November 2025, the newly restored gate has been displayed in a transparent protective structure designed by architect Bernhard Denninger, which is located in the entrance area of the victims' cemetery. This structure, along with the KL Memorial's visitor centre, will create an educational link for visitors. The structure not only protects against weather conditions but also limits excessive temperature fluctuations, ensuring the long-term preservation of the historic wooden gate.

The Ebensee concentration camp operated from November 1943 until its liberation on 6 May 1945, as a subcamp of the Mauthausen-Gusen camp system. The first prisoners arrived in late January 1944 to construct a barracks camp in a wooded area near the village. Inmates were forced to perform hard labour under challenging conditions, including digging tunnels. In the summer of 1944, following the high mortality rate among the prisoners, a crematorium was built within the camp.

In total, just over 27,000 people were imprisoned in Ebensee, and more than 8,000 lost their lives there. The camp held prisoners from over 20 different nationalities, with the largest groups being Poles, Russians, Hungarians, French, Germans, Italians, Yugoslavs, Greeks, and Czechs. Additionally, Jews deported from various countries made up approximately 30% of the prisoners. Today, only remnants of the former concentration camp remain, scattered in several

View of the main gate of the concentration camp in Ebensee. The banner behind it reads: 'French prisoners salute the Allies.' Source: USHMM, https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1043096

„AN AUSCHWITZ ALBUM STORY“

In honor of Holocaust Remembrance Day, join Mitchell Kreitenberg and Jeffrey L. Gary as they present their new film, An Auschwitz Album Story. This moving documentary explores the powerful discovery of the Kreitenberg's family and friends found in the Auschwitz Album.

Time & Location
1 February 2026, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
AMC The Grove, Los Angeles, USA

An Auschwitz Album Story shares the extraordinary survivor story of Mike and Joe Kreitenberg and their life-changing discovery in the Auschwitz Album: the only existing photographs of their family and neighbors who were lost in the Holocaust.

Mitchell Kreitenberg is the son of a Holocaust survivor (2G) and a docent at HMLA, where he speaks to students, donors and a wide range of professional groups. He has presented around the world about his family's discovery in the Auschwitz Album, including across the United States, England, South Africa, Canada and even aboard a Danube River Cruise. This film marks Mitchell's debut in the world of film production.

Jeffery L. Gary is an award winning director and cinematographer, primarily focused on documentary films. Mr. Gary is a graduate of the USC School of Cinema and Television. His love of film and all things visual was developed at an early age while growing up as the 8th of 13 kids In Birmingham Alabama. Jeffery previously directed the award winning documentary Letters From Brno. He was Director of Photography on the award winning documentary short Drawn Together and Director/DP/Editor on the award winning documentary short Creating Beauty.

an Auschwitz Album *story*

THE ALBUM THAT SPEAKS WHEN MILLIONS CANNOT

A FILM BY JEFFERY L. GARY

PRODUCED BY MITCHELL KREITENBERG, EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ERNIE KREITENBERG, STEVE KREITENBERG

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER DARI KREITENBERG, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MARIANO DE LUCA, ADF, EDITOR TAL SKLOOT

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JEFFERY L. GARY

Austin McKinney, FASPE

ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING AT THE SPEED OF BUSINESS

Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics (FASPE) promotes ethical leadership for today's professionals through annual fellowships, ethical leadership trainings, and symposia, among other means. Each year, FASPE awards 80 to 90 fellowships to graduate students and early-career professionals in six fields: Business, Clergy & Religious Leaders, Design & Technology, Journalism, Law, and Medicine. Fellowships begin with immersive site-specific study in Germany and Poland, including at Auschwitz and other historically significant sites associated with Nazi-era professionals. While there, fellows study Nazi-era professionals' surprisingly mundane and familiar motivations and decision-making as a reflection-based framework to apply to ethical pitfalls in their own lives. We find that the power of place translates history into the present, creating urgency in ethical reflection.

Each month one of our fellows publishes a piece in „Memoria". Their work reflects FASPE's unique approach to professional ethics and highlights the need for thoughtful ethical reflection today.

I remain profoundly grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in FASPE's fellowship program, where we confronted the role that business professionals played in enabling the atrocities of the Holocaust. That experience impressed upon me that ethical responsibility is not a single moment of reckoning but an ongoing practice of discipline—one that demands we examine even small decisions with humility, clarity, and care.

The reflections that follow were written shortly after that 2019 trip. In the years since, the questions of professional responsibility have only become more urgent. The rapid emergence of artificial intelligence has expanded our capabilities as leaders while simultaneously amplifying the consequences of our choices. We now operate in an environment where decisions are made faster, impacts scale more widely, and ethical blind spots can propagate more quickly than ever before.

As we navigate this new landscape, the lessons of history—and the warnings they carry—remain indispensable. They remind us that technology does not absolve us of responsibility; instead, it heightens the need for vigilance, honesty, and moral imagination. My hope is that this article serves as a small reminder that ethical reflection is not a luxury reserved for moments of crisis but a habit we must practice in the ordinary cadence of our work.

I recently faced an ethical dilemma at work that almost slipped under my radar. Because the stakes were relatively low, I initially did not even recognize it as worthy of ethical consideration. Yet, as we learned during the

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I recently faced an ethical dilemma at work that almost slipped under my radar. Because the stakes were relatively low, I initially did not even recognize it as worthy of ethical consideration. Yet, as we learned during the FASPE trip, small decisions we make as professionals can have enormous consequences, even, or especially, if left unexamined.

After graduation from my MBA program, I joined a tech company that provided sales and marketing automation software to businesses. One of my primary projects was to research whether our company should sell its products in additional international currencies, and, if so, which currencies should be prioritized. As part of this process,
I had to design the operational plan for implementing these potential changes. My superiors then expected me to recommend
a strategy based on my research for approval by more senior executives. It was, by most standards, a normal initiative for a mid-level manager.
When assigned the task, my education and experience kicked in. attacking the problem the same way that many business leaders would:
I studied what our peer companies were doing and dove into the internal data to see what had happened when we had previously opened sales in other currencies, Using this method, I created a financial model for potential future results and started previewing my recommendations to leaders throughout the company.
The data I surfaced made me feel certain that I had an airtight argument. I looked at five different case studies in our company's history to create reasonable comparisons for what we should expect to happen to revenue and costs if we took this course. The numbers looked strong. I was

In some ways, the answer to all of these questions was "yes." FASPE taught me that commonplace human emotions and ordinary professional pressures can motivate awful actions. Sometimes, that poor decision-making can lead to disastrous consequences for others. Business professionals pursuing their immediate self-interest can participate in acts of great harm to the company, its employees, and the society and environment in which it operates.
Ultimately, I decided to include the sixth case study. In my presentation to senior executives, I relayed this perspective that could undermine my entire set of recommendations. I still lobbied hard, however, for my vision of the future.

In the end, I felt that I had been thoughtful and purposeful in my actions—giving due ethical consideration to a decision point that might have otherwise slipped by unnoticed. In the sometimes-chaotic world of business, with its ever-present demands for making decisions, taking risks, and achieving big goals, professionals

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AT THE CROSSROADS OF GENERATIONS: THE IHRA JERUSALEM PLENARY

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) has concluded its Plenary at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel, bringing together over 200 delegates from Member Countries, Observer Countries, and Permanent International Partners.

Held under Israel's Presidency of the IHRA, led jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Yad Vashem, the plenary week provided a valuable opportunity for delegates to meet in person and advance cooperation on Holocaust remembrance, education, and research in a setting of profound historical and moral significance. The week was preceded by a preliminary conference hosted by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which brought together delegates and experts to examine intergenerational transition, new technologies, and contemporary challenges related to antisemitism.

The Jerusalem Plenary was guided by the theme of Israel's Presidency, "Crossroads of Generations". Delegates reflected on the shared responsibility to ensure that Holocaust remembrance remains accurate, meaningful, and rooted in historical truth.

Addressing this generational shift, IHRA Chair Dani Dayan emphasized the need for deliberate and sustained action: "Memory does not sustain itself. Remembrance is not automatic. It depends on conscious transmission, on future generations choosing to carry it forward. That insight speaks directly to the crossroads we have reached in Holocaust remembrance. We are no longer merely witnesses to living memory; we are becoming its custodians."

This perspective shaped the plenary's engagement with IHRA's mission and reinforced its role as an international alliance committed to safeguarding Holocaust memory for future generations.

The week opened with a minute of silence in remembrance of the victims of the recent antisemitic attack in Sydney, Australia. Delegates through the week remembered and paid tribute to the victims and reaffirmed the Alliance's increased commitment to confronting

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In her opening speech, IHRA Secretary General Michaela Küchler stressed the inseparable link between remembrance and democratic values: "Holocaust remembrance is about the past. We remember those who lived and those who died because they matter. But Holocaust remembrance is also about safeguarding our democratic values in the present. Democracy rests on the principle that everyone's rights are equal. When Jewish communities are not safe, that principle is already beginning to fall apart. The threat we face is not abstract. It is real, and it is taking lives."

The opening was followed by a session examining the implications of the Presidency's theme for practitioners in the different professional contexts represented in the IHRA. The

"LIVING MEMORY" EXHIBITION

The "Living Memory" exhibition provides a unique glimpse into the depths of the Yad Vashem Collections and the ongoing endeavors to discover the identities and the stories behind the rare items that have been collected over the years.

The artifacts, artworks, documents, photographs and testimonies on display in the exhibition invite reflection on the preservation and shaping of Holocaust memory, and on our sacred responsibility to pass the torch of memory to future generations.

"My dear brother, hello! [...] Remember what I said to you: if you live — I would live within you."

From the farewell letter seventeen-year-old Pinchas Eisner left for his brother, Mordechai. Approximately one month after writing the letter, Pinchas and another seventy Jews were led to a nearby forest and shot to death
Some 400 rare items from the Yad Vashem Collections are displayed for the first time in
a unique exhibition that focuses on the collections themselves. Artifacts, documents, photographs and artworks each one bearing witness to a world that no longer exists, and telling a story about people, families and entire communities.

This exhibition takes the viewer on a journey traversing three layers of memory: documentation in real time, testimony and commemoration after the Shoah, and the creation of a visual language that has become an integral part of our collective memory. Alongside the authentic artifacts, the survivor testimony videos on display add their living voices to the experience, creating an emotionally-charged atmosphere.

The last section of the exhibition provides a "behind-the-scenes" glimpse of the new Shapell Family Collections Center. In this space, storage and preservation methodologies are showcased via several authentic artifacts, reflecting the diversity and depth of the collections. Interactive stations invite visitors to discover the work that is performed on a daily basis preservation, cataloging and research which enables the continued existence of Holocaust memory and its transmission to future generations.

In a period in which the Holocaust survivor generation is dwindling, the exhibition offers
a rare experience: a firsthand encounter with authentic artifacts bearing Holocaust memory. This also serves as
a timely reminder of our obligation to remember, to preserve Holocaust memory and to pass it down through the generations. As

„DAS FALSCHE WORT"

On 15 January 2026, Kazerne Dossin will commemorate the departure of Transport Z with a special evening featuring representatives of the Sinti community.

82 years earlier, on 15 January 1944, Transport Z departed from the Dossin Barracks in Mechelen. This transport deported 352 Sinti and Roma. Only 32 survived. One of them was Rosa Keck.

During the evening, we will screen the documentary Das falsche Wort, a film by Melanie Spitta, daughter of Rosa Keck, about the deportation of Sinti during the Second World War. This 1987 film is the first coherent account of the genocide of the Sinti population. Drawing on unpublished police files, photographs and documents related to the registration of Sinti, as well as interviews with survivors, Melanie Spitta reconstructed the story of the genocide.

After the screening, Carmen Spitta – granddaughter of Rosa Keck, daughter of filmmaker Melanie Spitta, and the last surviving member of her family – will engage in conversation with Dutch activist and spokesperson for the Sinti and Roma community, Lalla Weiss.

Kazerne Dossin warmly invites everyone to join this special evening, to commemorate together, to listen to contemporary voices from the Sinti community, and to reflect on the importance of education.

Programme:
- 19:00 Welcome by curator Veerle Vanden Daelen
- 19:15 Start of the film screening
- 20:45 Conversation between Lalla Weiss and Carmen Spitta
- 21:15 Q&A

Important:
The film is in German with English subtitles. The discussions will take place in German (with English

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memoria.auschwitz.org

PUBLISHER

Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum

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