

The Forensic Turn in Holocaust Studies?

(Re-)Thinking the Past Through Materiality

25 & 26 June 2015
Bruno Kreisky Forum
für internationalen Dialog
Armbrustergasse 15
1190 Wien

WIENER WIESENTHAL INSTITUT
FÜR HOLOCAUST-STUDIEN (VWI)



The Forensic Turn in Holocaust Studies? (Re-)Thinking the Past Through Materiality

In Holocaust Studies, a new turn seems to advance: after the era of classical written source based historiography and 'the era of the witness' characterised by the paradigmatic role of survivor testimony in Holocaust research and remembrance, a forensic approach comes to the foreground nowadays. In recent years, the sites of the former concentration and extermination camps, as well as the mass graves at the 'killing sites', have become the objects of archaeological research contributing to the development of 'Holocaust archaeology' as a new subdiscipline. Centred on material traces of genocidal violence, such as spatial structures, physical remnants, mass graves and human remains, the 'forensic turn' could be seen as a response to the gradual passing away of Holocaust victims. At the same time, it reflects broader changes in practical and conceptual approaches to legacies of (genocidal) violence across cultures and geographies brought about by the urge for historiographical, historical, ancestral and personal clarifications, quests for justice or processes of reconciliation in its aftermath.

While acknowledging its unquestionable importance for fostering historical research on post-Holocaust landscapes, this workshop seeks to investigate the theoretical, methodological, political and practical implications of the 'forensic turn' for their investigation, memorialisation and experience. Taking as a vantage point debates surrounding archaeological research at post-Holocaust landscapes, the workshop also aims to provide a comparative view of Holocaust and genocidal archaeologies within a broader framework of the 'forensic turn' in Europe and beyond. The interest in materialities and spatialities of genocidal violence opens, therefore, space for new theoretical and ethical questions, methodological perspectives and research topics.

GEFÖRDERT VON



Thursday, 25 June 2015

12:00 Lunch

KEYNOTE

Chair: Éva KOVÁCS (Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocaust-Studien, WWI)

13:00 **Ewa DOMAŃSKA** (Uniwersytet Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu/Stanford University)
Corpus Delicti, Non-Human Witnesses and Post-Secular Turn

14:00 Coffee Break

ARCHAEOLOGY AS POLITICAL PRACTICE –

Chair: Juliane WETZEL (Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung, Berlin)

14:30 **Francisco FERRÁNDIZ/Luis RÍOS**
(Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas – Spanish National Research Council, Madrid)
Scientific Rituals in Contemporary Spanish Civil War Exhumations

14:55 **Robert Jan van PELT** (University of Waterloo, Ontario)
Brick by Brick

15:20 **Keith K. SILIKA** (Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent)
Forensic Archaeology and Politics in Zimbabwe

15:45 **Małgorzata WOSIŃSKA** (Uniwersytet Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu)
Turning to Present. Forensic Methods in Holocaust Studies as a Practical Approach in Modern Post-Conflict Societies

16:10 Discussion

16:30 Coffee Break

CONTESTED METHODOLOGIES –

Chair: Dominique TRIMBUR (Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah, Paris)

17:00 **Caroline STURDY COLLS** (Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent)
To Dig or not to Dig, "That Is the Question". Reconsidering Archaeological Approaches to Holocaust Landscapes

17:25 **Ivar SCHUTE** (RAAP Archeologisch Adviesbureau, Leiden)
The Archaeological Excavations at the Sobibor Extermination Camp. An Example of the Forensic Approach in Holocaust Studies

17:50 **Claudia THEUNE-VOGT** (Universität Wien)
Fragestellungen – Quellen – Methoden – Erkenntnisgewinn

18:15 **Thomas POTOTSCHNIG** (Wien)
Zeitgeschichtliche Archäologie und forensische Methodik im Dienst der Holocaustforschung

18:40 Discussion

19:00 Dinner

EVENING PROGRAMME

20:00 **"If that's so then I'm a murderer ..."** (Walter MANOSCHEK, A 2012, 65 minutes)
followed by a discussion with the director and Éva KOVÁCS

Friday, 26 June 2015

12:00 Lunch

KEYNOTE

Chair: Éva KOVÁCS (Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocaust-Studien, VWI)

13:00 **Robert van der LAARSE** (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
Bones Never Lie? Unearthing Europe's Age of Terror in the Age of Memory

14:00 Coffee Break

RESEARCH, PRESERVATION, MEMORIALISATION

Chair: Brigitte BAILER (Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstands)

14:30 **Jean-Marc DREYFUS** (University of Manchester)
Corpses in Societies. A General Reflexion on the Reinscription of Human Remains in Societies after Mass Violence and the Holocaust

14:55 **Francesco MAZZUCHELLI** (Università di Bologna)
From the Era of the Witness to an Era of Traces. An Epistemic Turn in Traumatic Memories

15:20 **Roma SENDYKA** (Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Kraków)
Forensic Memorials. Memorialisations on Non-Sites of Memory

15:45 **Borbala KRIZA** (Budapest)
What to Do With a Mass Grave? Significance and Insignificance of Holocaust Victims' Mass Graves in Kőszeg to the Local and National Memory in Hungary

16:10 Discussion

16:30 Coffee Break

ETHICS AND AESTHETICS

Chair: Béla RÁSKY (Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocaust-Studien, VWI)

17:00 **Eyal WEIZMAN** (Goldsmiths University of London)
Violence at the Threshold of Detectability

17:25 **Layla RENSHAW** (Kingston University, London)
The Forensic Gaze: Reading Bodies and Objects as Evidence

17:50 **Zuzanna DZIUBAN** (Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocaust-Studien, VWI)
Human Remains and the Politics of Survivance

18:15 **Johanne Helbo BØNDERGAARD** (Aarhus Universitet)
Forensic Memory Culture and Literature after Testimony

18:40 **Stephenie A. YOUNG** (Salem State University)
Bodies of Evidence. Forensics, Photography and the Post-Yugoslav Document

19:05 Discussion

Concept: Zuzanna Dziuban (VWI)

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