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

25 & 26 June 2015
Bruno Kreisky Forum
für internationalen Dialog
Armbusterfasse 15
1190 Wien
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.
### Thursday, 25 June 2015

#### 12:00  
**Lunch**

#### 13:00  
**KEYNOTE**

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

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

#### 14:00  
**Coffee Break**

#### 14:30  
**ARCHAEOLOGY AS POLITICAL PRACTICE –**

**Chair:** Juliane WETZEL (Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung, Berlin)

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

- **Robert Jan van PELT**  
  (University of Waterloo, Ontario)  
  *Brick by Brick*

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

- **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**

#### 17:00  
**CONTESTED METHODOLOGIES –**

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

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

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

- **Claudia THEUNE-VOGT**  
  (Universität Wien)  
  *Fragenstellungen – Quellen – Methoden – Erkenntnisgewinn*

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

#### 19:00  
**Dinner**

#### 20:00  
**EVENING PROGRAMME**

- **"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*
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<td>Robert van der LAARSE (Universiteit van Amsterdam)&lt;br&gt;<em>Bones Never Lie? Unearthing Europe’s Age of Terror in the Age of Memory</em></td>
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<td>Jean-Marc DREYFUS (University of Manchester)&lt;br&gt;<em>Corpses in Societies. A General Reflexion on the Reinscription of Human Remains in Societies after Mass Violence and the Holocaust</em></td>
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<td>Francesco MAZZUCHELLEI (Università di Bologna)&lt;br&gt;<em>From the Era of the Witness to an Era of Traces. An Epistemic Turn in Traumatic Memories</em></td>
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<td>Borbala KRIZA (Budapest)&lt;br&gt;<em>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</em></td>
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<td>Eyal WEIZMAN (Goldsmiths University of London)&lt;br&gt;<em>Violence at the Threshold of Detectability</em></td>
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<td>Layla RENSHAW (Kingston University, London)&lt;br&gt;<em>The Forensic Gaze: Reading Bodies and Objects as Evidence</em></td>
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<td>Zuzanna DZIUBAN (Wiener Wiesenthal Institut für Holocaust-Studien, VWI)&lt;br&gt;<em>Human Remains and the Politics of Survivance</em></td>
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<td>Johanne Helbo BONDERGAARD (Aarhus Universitet)&lt;br&gt;<em>Forensic Memory Culture and Literature after Testimony</em></td>
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<td>Stephenie A. YOUNG (Salem State University)&lt;br&gt;<em>Bodies of Evidence. Forensics, Photography and the Post-Yugoslav Document</em></td>
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Concept: Zuzanna Dziuban (VWI)

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