DEATHGATE BY DAN ELBORNE
1,3 MLN HANDMADE STONES IN MEMORY OF PEOPLE DEPORTED TO AUSCHWITZ
SPIS TREŚCI

LINKING THE MEMORY OF THE WORLD

DEATHGATE BY DAN ELBORNE. INTERVIEW WITH THE ARTIST.

FREEDOM BREAD. THE FIRST COMIC BOOK ABOUT MAJDANEK.

SURVIVAL OF THE SMALLEST CHILDREN IN THE FOREST DURING THE HOLOCAUST. PERSONAL ITEMS FROM YAD VASHEM.

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THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE MEMORIAL PARK IN OŚWIĘCIM

BERLIN/LONDON: THE LOST PHOTOGRAPHS OF GERTY SIMON AT THE WIENER LIBRARY
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.

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Paweł Sawicki, Editor-in-Chief

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All editions: memoria.auschwitz.org
The exhibition “Auschwitz. Not Long Ago. Not Far Away” created by the Auschwitz Memorial and the Spanish company Musealia was officially inaugurated in New York at The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. It is the first presentation of the exhibit in the USA.

’Auschwitz is not only history, it is not a story, a message or a warning. Auschwitz is authentic human pain, sadness, and death. A very concrete tragedy - not a tragedy of more than one million people, but more than one million individual tragedies. Therefore, this exhibition must be based on authenticity,’ said Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński, the director of the Auschwitz Museum.

’It is an exhibition about our contemporary world – ‘not long ago and not far away’. The language of hatred, the extremist propaganda, populism, xenophobic movements, racism, antisemitism, terror attacking innocent victims, separatism, exclusion, and indifference are constantly growing in strength,’ he added.

‘Our responsibility today is the same as it was 'not so long ago and not so far away,’ stressed director Cywiński.

The exhibition allow visitors to experience artifacts from the Auschwitz Memorial as well as 20 other institutions and collections.

"Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away." arrived in New York City after the exhibition completed a successful run in Madrid, where it was extended two times, drew more than 600,000 visitors, and was one of the most visited exhibitions in Europe last year.

MORE ABOUT THE EXHIBITION
"The exhibition... avoids simplistic cause and effect. Rather, it illuminates the topography of evil, the deliberate designing of a hell on earth by fanatical racists and compliant architects and provisioners, while also highlighting the strenuous struggle for survival in a place where, as Primo Levi learned, "there is no why.""

Read The New York Times review of the Auschwitz Exhibition by Ralph Bloomenthal

'Hatred doesn't build overnight': behind the powerful Auschwitz Exhibition.

"Every time that a visitor comes and listens to the voices of those artifacts and the stories that we tell, it’s a victory against hatred."

Read The Guardian review by Julianne McShane

"A massive new exhibit is showing the grisly details of Auschwitz, the Nazi's largest concentration camp, in an effort to combat rising anti-Semitism — here's what visitors will see..."

Read an article by Ellen Cranley in Business Insider

"Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away." arrived in New York City after the exhibition completed a successful run in Madrid, where it was extended two times, drew more than 600,000 visitors, and was one of the most visited exhibitions in Europe last year.

The review by Anya Ulinich in The Forward
Deathgate is a ceramic installation artwork by Dan Elborne comprising 1.3 million handmade pieces, each representing one person detained in the Auschwitz network of concentration camps.

The work is presented as two separate beds of ceramic ‘stones’. One bed contains 1.1 million pieces, and the other; 200,000 pieces. This gives a direct visual reference to the number of deaths (1.1 million) among 1.3 million deported to Auschwitz.

Aesthetically, the installation is reminiscent of the railway leading through the main entrance of Auschwitz II, also known as ‘the death gate’. Various elements of the work, including the colour ratio of chosen clay types and the size of the ceramic ‘stones’ directly respond to personal impressions and reference images taken while the author visited the Auschwitz Memorial in January 2016.

As the artist says: 'In no way does the work aim to wholly represent what was experienced by those victimised, but instead, references the history from an overarching and reflective standpoint. It is by attempting representation that I wish to invoke an imaginative sense of totality.'

Paweł Sawicki spoke to Dan Elborne about the „Deathgate” project:

**Every person who visits the Auschwitz Memorial has a different place, a story or a moment which made a personal impact. For you it seems to be the railing inside the former Birkenau camp. Why is that?**

I think it's because it speaks quite profoundly to the prisoner experience as well as the sheer scale of the Auschwitz network of camps. It is terrifying to know that the vast majority of Auschwitz detainees arrived by train, many of who were selected for immediate extermination once out of the freight cars. The industrial, mechanical and systematic nature of the train line, with the camp designed around it, quickly became a prime example for me of what was perpetrated there.

**Now people can see the end result of your work - Deathgate. I wonder - how such a concept begins in an artistic mind?**

I had the idea while travelling on a train between two artist residencies in France. I had recently completed a project reflecting on a visit to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Germany years earlier. The idea for a project about Auschwitz came like a wave.

Shortly after this, I visited the Auschwitz camps to decide whether I would go ahead with the work and to confirm many of its aesthetic details. Being on site charged me to respond through art practice. Elements of time, labor and scale felt like the most effective ways for me to reference the personal effects that visit had on me.
How would you define the project. There seems to be many symbols here. One is of course a stone... Another is the number of stones. As the Memorial tries to find some way of touching both the scale and individual aspect of the crime, your project also has those two elements.

To condense the project; I have made an individual ceramic 'stone' for each detainee of the Auschwitz camps, totalling 1.3 million pieces/people. I am exhibiting the pieces to imitate a railway line, with two separate lengths of 'stones' dividing 1.1 million pieces (for those who died at Auschwitz) and 200,000 pieces. I made each object out of clay. This is because of the historic significance of the material alongside its metaphorical symbolism. In its raw state, clay is very malleable and receptive to human touch. It can record the finest gestures and details such as fingerprints. When the clay is fired in a kiln, it becomes hard as stone; making those details permanent and near unbreakable. I feel like the material itself speaks well of humanity, memory and legacy: it is intrinsically linked to ideas of preciousness, fragility, reverence and permanence, which I embrace. Making each of the 1.3 million pieces by hand was a way to indicate individualised attention and care. Regarding scale; that was always an important aspect for the work because of the camps themselves: their physical size as well as the broad and recurring effects of the crimes committed there.

Can you write a bit about the work-in-progress phase. A daily life of an artist who has an enormous task - creating of 1,3 million ceramic stones and then firing them in a kiln...

Creating the work became a kind of lifestyle for me. I confirmed the completion date of the project from the beginning. This is because I chose to produce the work in the exact timeframe that mass killing was carried out in the Auschwitz camps (from the first mass gassing of Auschwitz prisoners to the liberation of the camps: 1,242 days).

Having established the completion date, I set myself a weekly quota of 10,000 pieces a week, which very much became part of my routine. I found this difficult both mentally and physically. Ultimately though, beyond the pain, the process was meditative and constructive... even transformative for me as a person and as an artist.

You dedicated a few years of your life to this project. Is it appropriate to say that the visit at the Memorial was a changing moment for you?

Yes, I feel that the Auschwitz site profoundly affected my life. It changed my perspective on many things as did meeting Holocaust survivors throughout the project. In particular, I see those sites as examples of the polarising extremes we are capable of: horror beyond comprehension and our capacity for cruelty as well as our resilience and capacity for love and survival.

What do you think is the message coming from the story of Auschwitz for you and for people nowadays?

To remain vigilant against injustice, prejudice and hatred wherever it rises and whenever it occurs. Atrocities continue across the globe despite the lessons and tragedy of the Holocaust. The fact that it happened within lived experience is unsettling. I also created the work out of concern for the few remaining first-hand survivors. I'm interested in what the responsibilities are, and I believe they are global, in representing such history beyond direct lived experience.

Deathgate can be seen at the moment in Australia at The Goods Shed in Toowoomba.
On 11 May 2019, the State Museum at Majdanek organised the premiere of the Freedom Bread, a comic book based on the accounts of former prisoners of the KL Lublin concentration camp. The author of the concept and drawings is Paweł Piechnik, an artist from Poznań, who has been working on the project with the State Museum at Majdanek for several years. The edition marks the 75th anniversary of the creation of the Museum.

Paweł Piechnik illustrated 13 camp stories by 11 survivors of the German camp at Majdanek. The survivors include Franz Armbruster, Bluma Szadur-Babic, Zdzisław Badio, Danuta Brzóska-Mędryk, Józef Jeleń, Edward Karabanik, Andrzej Stanisławski, Estera Kerzner, Henryk Nieścior, Miriam Prajs-Fajgenbaum and Jolanta Nowakowska. The memories are derived from the books: Majdanek. The concentration camp on the accounts of prisoners and witnesses (edited by M. Grudzińska); Heaven without Birds Brzóska-Mędryk and Fields of Death by Stanisławski. The artist met Jolanta Nowakowska-Korzeniewska, now a resident of Poznań, in person and learnt that as a girl she was a prisoner of KL Lublin.

What formula did the illustrator adopt? The fourth page of the cover reads: “The term «bread of liberty» was used by prisoners of German concentration camps during the Second World War and meant bread baked in freedom”. Bread, literally and figuratively, is the central theme of the album. The graphic stories are divided into parts: About Hunger, Death and Freedom that precedes and concludes - the wordless, several-page prologue and epilogue.

The origin of the project dates back to 2012 when Paweł Piechnik visited KL Lublin for the first time. He spoke about it to a journalist from a Lublin newspaper as follows:

At the beginning of 2013, I came to Lublin to enquire if the museum would be interested at all in such a publication. They loved the idea. The head of the education department at the time recommended Ms Danuta's book to me. After reading it, I started looking for information about the author on the Internet. I then asked the editor of the Polish Radio to forward the letter to me. A few days later, I got a phone call. Ms Danuta said she would like to meet me and that she liked the idea of a comic book.

The illustrator also learned about the possibility of meeting with Mr Zdzisław Badio, who was imprisoned in the camp at the age of 17. The artist points out that personal contact with those who survived helped him to see the subject matter. He dedicated the comic book to “Ms Danuta (1921-2015) ... and all persons of similar fate”.

During the premiere in Lublin, the audience asked the publisher questions about the appropriateness of the chosen medium. Art Spiegelman already transcended this convention in his award-winning Pulitzer Mausie (1992), and comic books are no longer associated exclusively with commercial and
Chleb wolnościowy
Freedom Bread
light content. The deputy director Wiesław Wysok referred to this during the promotional meeting, emphasising the outstanding artistic values of the drawings.

[...] a form of communication that is modern, pop-cultural, but in the positive sense of the word, should not only be an inspiration to young people. I believe that it is a comic book for all those with some degree of sensitivity [...]. The comic book [...] obviously tells about the history and those times, but in truth, it also poses the questions - why do we need memory? Why do we need to recollect a story from nearly 80 years ago? What values were salvaged in this hell, which Majdanek certainly was, as well as other German concentration camps?

Older teenagers, the main recipients of the publication, will also find in it: a short historical afterword, a dictionary of terms and biographies of the prisoners whose stories became the foundation of the narrative. It is worth mentioning that there is a work of art among the museum exhibits stored at the State Museum at Majdanek, which prefigures the comic book form. In August 1944, Andrzej Janiszek wrote a poem-like fairy tale titled Film for Krysia. Krysia must have a brother. The former prisoner illustrated the story for his friend’s daughter and placed the individual drawings on a long strip of paper, like a film - on a rolled-out film plate. He added frames with historical objects of Majdanek to the scenery.

Freedom Bread is available in traditional and online sales at the bookstore of the State Museum at Majdanek. The premiere was held as part of the Lublin Meetings with Comics, while the participants of the Poznań Pyricon learned about it before the premiere. The meeting with the author in Lublin was an excellent opportunity to conduct drawing workshops: students created their screenplays and put themselves to the test as scriptwriters and cartoonists under the supervision of the artist. We have addressed the comic exposition in the city centre to the residents of Lublin, consisting of 15 selected boards, as well as two guided tours.

The comic book in autumn we will be at the Łódź Comics Festival and the Lublin Falcon. An educational workshop for secondary school students and comic book workshops will take place in Lublin at the beginning of November.
Coż ujrzała
Kryśia Mótoł?

Równiutki domki stoją,
Krasnoludki w nich się roją.

Spią w przegrodkach na barty;
Prężą się jak tylko mogą.

Ranny dzwonek usłyszały
Przed swe domki wyszcząły,
Stoją równo - szeregami
Z odkrytymi głowami.

Hodni, brudni, nie odlani,
Ale zawsze rozesmiani.

Nie wiedzą kiedy kij spadnie,
"MAMO PRZECIEZ TO NIE ŁADNIE!"
Rzecze Kryśia, "TO TAK BOLI..."
"KRASNOLUDKI SĄ W NIEWOLI!"
"PATRZAJ JAKIEŚ KARALUCHY
NI TO CHRząŚCIE, NI TO MUCHY"

"Daruj, że się tak wyraże!
ALE CHYBA TO GRABARZE...!"
"SPÓJRZ MAMUSIU CO SIĘ DZIEJE:
"KAZDY SPUSTOSZENIE SIĘJE;
"BYJĄ, GONIAJĄ, POPYCHAJĄ,
"KRASNOLUDKI UPAĐAJĄ.
"PRZERAŻENI RAN NIE CZUJĄ
"AGBARARZE ICH GAMLUJĄ"
"JEDEN GRABARZ PRZY PIEKARNI
"PIEC TYLKO GAMLAMI KARMI! !"
During the Holocaust, the forest was one of the few options Jews had to try and escape the murderous pursuit of the Nazi Germans and their collaborators. Even though it was fraught with danger – exposure to the elements, hunger and disease, and a local population who were often not any kinder than the fate they faced from Nazi soldiers – taking their chances in the forest was thought by some to be better than being incarcerated in ghettos, concentration or forced labor camps.

Jewish men, women and children sought ways to survive both as individuals and as family units among the leaves and trees. Survival in these inhospitable locations was difficult, even for the fittest of adults. For young children it was nearly impossible, and their presence often risked the safety of the entire group.

The phenomenon of hiding in the forest has been subject of several books and personal memoirs of survivors, most recently through the award-winning film Defiance, which told the story of the Beilski Family Camp.

During the Holocaust, some 1.5 million children were murdered at the hands of the Nazis. Some of the stories coming to light through Yad Vashem's national "Gathering the Fragments" campaign are those of the children who miraculously survived unimaginable conditions in the forests near their homes.

The Shawl that Saved Her Life

Miriam Noy (né Manuskin) was a newborn infant when the Germans invaded her village of Zhetl, in Poland (currently Belarus). Her parents, Yocheved (Yocha) and Shmuel (Mulka), were forced to move into the area of the future ghetto with Miriam and her three-year-old brother Kalman. Miriam's uncle lived in that part of town and so her whole family moved in with him, including her uncles, aunts and cousins.

With valued trades – Mulka was a carpenter and Yocha a seamstress – they were assigned jobs, thus surviving the first Aktionen in the ghetto. Mulka quickly realized that work alone could not ensure his family's survival, so he decided to build a hiding place under the outhouse. The couple created an additional hiding spot in the house behind a cupboard.

During one of the Aktionen, the family went into their hiding place under the latrine. Altogether there were nine people, including baby Miriam. The adults began to panic when she started to cry, fearing they would be discovered. Yocha put her hand over Miriam's mouth to muffle the cries, almost choking her infant daughter, until the Nazis left the area.

After this terrifying incident, Mulka and Yocha decided that despite the danger, they would escape to the forests. They believed that the forest was the only way to save themselves and their children. They would live, or die together, as a family.
The shawl which belonged to Yocheved Manuskin. All images in this article courtesy of Yad Vashem.
For two years, the family hid in the forest in hiding places that Mulka built himself. During the day they remained in their shelter, daring to come out only at night to look for food. Yocha wrapped Miriam in a shawl she obtained from a non-Jewish acquaintance to keep her from freezing to death. They suffered through the harsh, cold winters and starved from the lack of food.

At the end of 1944, they were liberated by the Red Army. After the war, they discovered that most of the members of their community were murdered by the Nazis.

"After the war, we went to the DP camp in Landsberg, Germany," Miriam recalls. "We lived there for four years. Many adults who lost their sons and daughters during the Holocaust would chase after me trying to give me chocolates. I was extremely frightened."

Throughout the years, Yocha kept the shawl she used to wrap Miriam in. She often reminded Miriam that this object saved her from certain death. In 1949, the family immigrated to the newly established State of Israel.

Over the past few years, Miriam began to worry that the shawl would not survive over time and decided to donate it to Yad Vashem, to ensure that this item, and her remarkable story of survival in the forest, would never be forgotten.

The White Dress of Freedom

In 1938, 23-year-old Lina (née Fuchs) and 33-year-old Yossel Kasten were married in Bukaczowce, eastern Galicia. Together they had a son Shmuel (Shmulik), born in June 1939; Ethel (Dina) was born a year later in July 1940 and Munia shortly before the family relocated to the ghetto in 1941.

Dina was only a year old and Shmulik a toddler when the Germans invaded their town. The first Aktionen in the ghetto began shortly after Yom Kippur 1941. While incarcerated in the ghetto, Lina and Yossel's infant son Munia was murdered in front of their eyes. Shortly afterwards, the family decided to flee to the nearby Vitan forest. For two-and-a-half years, they lived in a bunker that Yossel built in
While hiding in the perilous forest, the Kastens had two more children: one baby died, but Tunya, born in 1944, miraculously survived. "I recall my mother telling me that if Tunya managed to survive she believed the whole family would, and indeed we did," Dina testified.

Throughout the family's time in the forest, the Kastens received assistance from a local peasant woman, Mrs. Shostakower, who used to work with them. From time to time she would bring them food and clothes. After liberation by the Red Army, the Kastens moved to a DP camp in Austria where they had two more children, Clara and David, in 1945 and 1947 respectively. In 1948 the family immigrated to Eretz Israel.

"For almost two months after the end of the war, we still lived in the bunker, trying to figure out where to go," recalled Dina. "During this time, my mother gave me a white dress that we received from Mrs. Shostakower. I was thrilled to be able to take off the bag I was wearing and wear an actual garment, but what excited my mother most was the thought that I could leave the forest for freedom in a white dress."

Dina recently donated to Yad Vashem the very same white dress she wore as she left her hiding place 75 years ago.

Since Yad Vashem's establishment, gathering genuine artifacts has been part of the process of commemorating the destruction of European and North African Jewry. The Artifacts Department of Yad Vashem houses over 32,500 items connected to the devastating events of the Holocaust. In recent years, this mission has been kicked into high gear, in a race against the clock, before these items are lost to the passage of times and discarded as forgotten memories.

"The Nazis made a concentrated effort not only to murder the Jews, but also to obliterate their identity, memory, culture and heritage," explains Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev. "For many, all that was left behind were the artworks and artifacts, photos and documents that survived the harshest of conditions. Yad Vashem is now using these artifacts to tell the stories of their owners. Through the preservation of these treasures Yad Vashem is piecing together the puzzle of the Holocaust back together item by item, giving the victims back their voice and identity, ensuring that they will never be forgotten."
ENSURING DIGNITY

In our world today, now more than ever, there is a powerful human need to belong; to feel connected; to feel valued; to feel worthy; to feel like we matter! We are all seeking to be heard, seen, understood and loved. This is true whether you are 5, 18, 50 or 90. And, this is an immeasurable truth for our vulnerable Holocaust Survivors in the US struggling with day to day basic needs.

KAVOD~Ensuring Dignity for Holocaust Survivors, is an organization that is making a massive impact for Holocaust Survivors living near or in poverty in the US. KAVOD was created in the fall of 2015 when the founders, John and Amy Israel Pregulman, learned that 1/3 of the up to 80,000 Survivors living in the US struggle with day to day basic needs when there is an emergency situation.

Sometimes, it is their life that is in constant chaos that is the emergency. It seemed unbelievable. “We still get looks of dismay every time we share these numbers. We get asked time and time again how is this possible and why is this happening?” says Amy, Executive Director of KAVOD.

In the 3 and a half years that KAVOD has operated, close to 1300 Holocaust Survivors in 37 communities in the US have been supported. 100% of all dollars given to KAVOD go to the Survivors. KAVOD partners with Jewish Family Services and other service agencies that serve Survivors to know the needs and get the aid to the Survivors. Aid is provided on a case to case confidential basis and given in the form of gift cards for day to day needs.
It is KAVOD’s mission to meet these courageous people exactly where they are and offer them genuine compassion and love, so they can feel relief in the most dignified way. KAVOD offers more than aid for groceries and household necessities. KAVOD offers community, connection, and the very real sensation of feeling valued.

“The issue is not going away and is not dwindling! Our Survivors are getting older and are having bigger financial stresses. We only have a few years left with these courageous individuals and we feel it is our responsibility to take care of them and offer them peace in their final years. They have been through enough and as a human community, we are responsible,” says Amy.

In Spring of 2019, The KAVOD Survivors of the Holocaust Emergency Fund (SHEF) initiative in partnership with Seed The Dream Foundation was created to recognize that helping any Survivor regardless of where he or she lives, or we live, remains essential.

KAVOD SHEF exponentially multiplies the dollars (and critical services) directly reaching Survivors and serves as a secondary resource to what is in place already. In partnership with Seed The Dream Foundation, KAVOD is committed to launching this vital emergency effort, leveraging the dollars raised through a special philanthropic national matching initiative, and ensuring that 100% of the matching funds raised over the next two years will go directly toward Survivor services. Our goal is to raise $900k at the national level and an additional $900k at the local level each year. This will bring a total $3.6million additional dollars into this space over two years—providing increased access to Emergency Services in 12 designated communities (regions) across the United States. Every day, we lose more than 40 Holocaust Survivors, and yet every day we continue to see hundreds of new requests for care. There is no time to waste.

Another mission of KAVOD is to educate and advocate on behalf of the Survivors. John and Amy travel all around the world sharing their work and speaking on the subject. John also takes photos of Survivors all over the world solely for them. It has become a legacy project, a way to witness and preserve their stories and honor them. He has met and photographed 1002 Survivors as of May of 2019 and it is his intention to take 100’s more! “We need to be a witness to their stories, their lives, their legacies! They Survived the most horrific event in human history, and we want them to know we will not forget what happened and we will continue sharing their important stories!”

This really is our last chance to help our Survivors and hear their stories-- those who are still with us-- to live out their lives in dignity.

You can learn more about KAVOD and KAVOD SHEF at www.kavodensuringdignity.com
A Memorial Park is planned at the site of the Great Synagogue in Oświęcim, the town mostly known under its German name: Auschwitz. The unveiling of the park will coincide with 80th anniversary of the destruction of the Great Synagogue by the Germans at the beginning of World War Two.

The Great Synagogue was the central Jewish house of worship in Oświęcim before the Holocaust. Built in the mid 19th century in the neo-Moorish style, it was completely destroyed by the Germans in November 1939. Currently, the site holds a simple, worn-out plaque with basic historical information. It is regularly visited by youth primarily from Germany, the UK and Poland as part of educational guided tours and other remembrance projects dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust.

This year we will be remembering the 80th anniversary of the tragic destruction of the Great Synagogue (Nov 29/30, 1939). The Auschwitz Jewish Center will leverage that opportunity to create an appropriate permanent commemoration of that building in its original location. The Auschwitz Jewish Center in Oświęcim has decided to create the Memorial Park and an art installation to educate about the history of the destroyed synagogue. It will become a highly accessible space which will combine commemoration and reflection with site of historical education. It will be a strong reminder and an educational tool about the outcomes of antisemitism and other forms of xenophobia which are on the rise in Europe today.

The project is currently in the phase of intensive planning and production. The Memorial Park is scheduled for the opening in November 2019.
The Great Synagogue Memorial Park is co-funded by institutional and private donors from Poland and beyond including funds from descendants of Holocaust survivors from Oświęcim and an international crowdfunding campaign. The donors will be listed by the entrance to the Memorial Park.

We are still looking for additional funding for the project. If you are interested in contributing towards commemorating the Great Synagogue in Oświęcim (Auschwitz), please contact us at info@ajcf.pl or use this crowdfunding page.

* * *

The Auschwitz Jewish Center (AJC) is the only Jewish presence in the town of Oświęcim mostly know under its German name Auschwitz.

The AJC includes the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot synagogue, the only Jewish house of worship to survive to this day, the Jewish Museum and the Kluger Family House.

Through its educational programs the AJC teaches about the 400 years of Jewish presence in Oświęcim and the modern day dangers of antisemitism and all kinds of xenophobia.

The AJC is an affiliate of the Museum of Jewish Heritage, A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in NYC.
BERLIN/LONDON: THE LOST PHOTOGRAPHS OF GERTY SIMON

The Wiener Library’s summer exhibition displays the remarkable work of German Jewish photographer Gerty Simon, and features many of her original prints from the 1920s and 1930s. This project will bring into focus, for the first time in eighty years, the work of this powerful and innovative photographic artist.

Gerty Simon; self-portrait, date unknown © The Bernard Simon Estate, Wiener Library Collections
Gertrud (Gerty) Simon (1887-1970) was a prolific and successful photographer. Her photographs were presented in a number of exhibitions in Berlin in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Gerty Simon worked first in Weimar-era Berlin, where it seemed likely from the identity of her subjects that she had connections with the thriving and innovative creative scene of actors, writers, composers, dancers and artists there, as well as with the world of politics. She photographed the likes of singer and actress Lotte Lenya, theatre critic Alfred Kerr and his young daughter Judith, the artist Käthe Kollwitz and Albert Einstein.

In 1933, Gerty Simon and her young son fled the Nazi regime in Germany, leaving behind her husband, studio and career, and they settled in London. Astonishingly quickly, Gerty Simon was able to re-establish her photography studio and create a reputation for photographing people from the most influential circles of British society. Between 1934 and 1937, she photographed amongst many others: Sir Kenneth Clark, Peggy Ashcroft and Aneurin Bevan. Gerty Simon’s work also featured in a number of exhibitions, including London Personalities held at the Storran Gallery in Kensington in 1934. At this time, The Sunday Times described her as “most brilliant and original of Berlin photographs.”

The Wiener Library’s Photo Archivist, Elise Bath who worked on cataloguing and digitising the Gerty Simon collection commented: “The power and significance of the collection was immediately apparent and all the more important as it features individuals from the lost world of Weimar Berlin. While Gerty was able to leave Nazi Germany and build a new and successful life for herself in London, so many others were not.”
Tatiana Barbakoff, a Jewish ballet dancer from the USSR, was famous for her expressionist dancing which embraced her Russian and Chinese mixed heritage. Sometime between 1925 and 1932, Gerty Simon photographed her in her studio in Berlin. Like Gerty Simon, Barbakoff left Germany in 1933 after the Nazi Party’s ascension to power. Tatiana Barbakoff lived in France until her arrest in Nice in January 1944 and subsequent deportation to Auschwitz on 3 February 1944 on Convoy No. 67. She was murdered upon arrival on the 6 February 1944.

The quality of the photographs and significance of many of Gerty Simon’s sitters, as well as her story of displacement from Germany and re-establishment in Britain meant that, for The Wiener Library – the world’s oldest collector of material on the Nazi era – this was a particularly compelling collection.

To find out more about this exhibition, please visit: https://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk/Gerty-Simon

‘Berlin/London: The Lost Photographs of Gerty Simon’ will be on show at The Wiener Library from 30 May – 15 October 2019.