

**Artistic projects (selection)**

## **The White Elephant Archive, Setting No. 3**

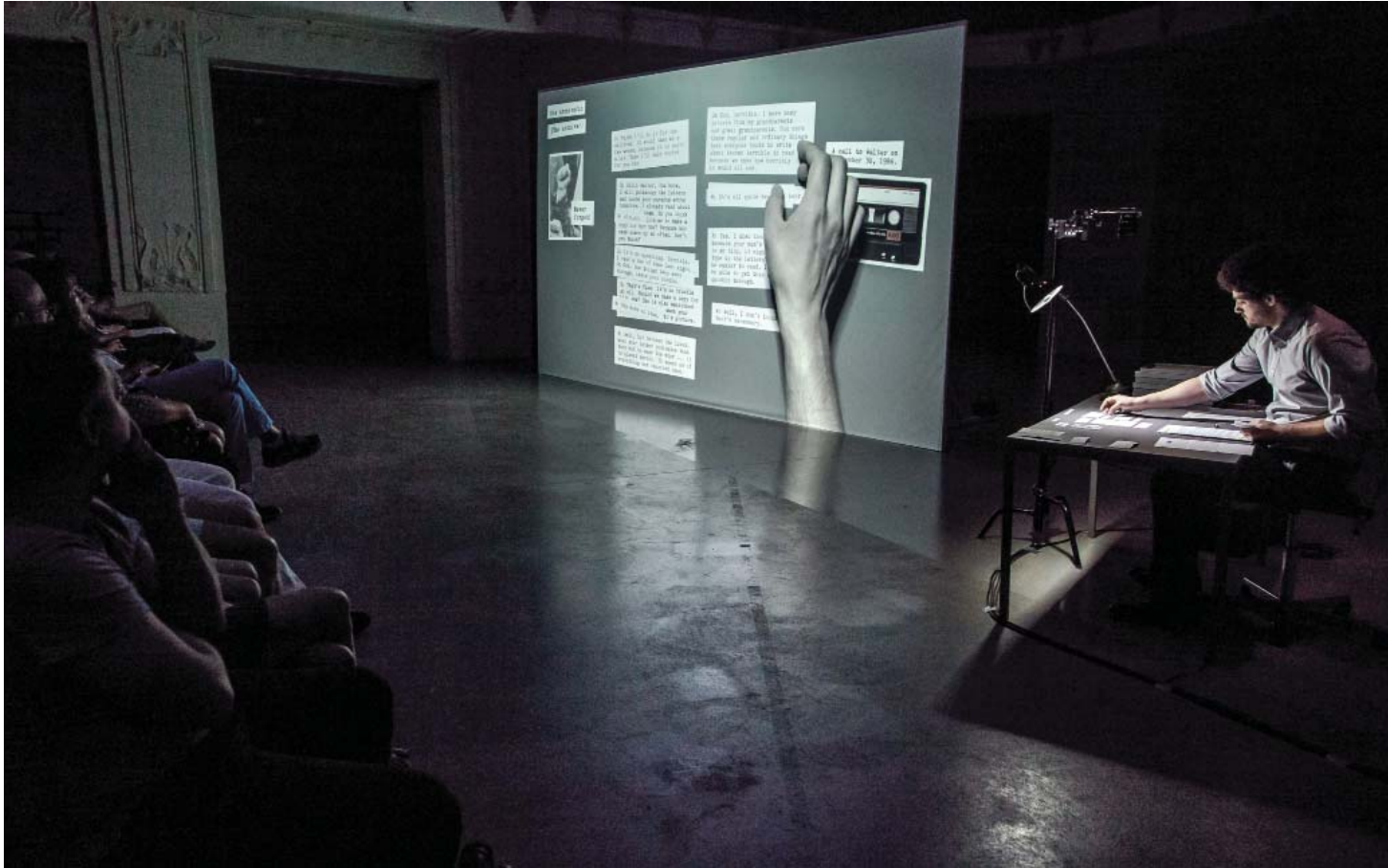
**Performance, 2015-2018**

*The White Elephant Archive, Setting No. 3* explores the legacy of the Holocaust from the perspective of the third generation living in Austria today.

In this feature-length live performance Freudmann uses his family's archive—which includes poems written by his grandfather while imprisoned in concentration camps—to explore his family's silence about the trauma, and his own attempt to understand the burden of this legacy through art.

Freudmann brings documents and objects as protagonists on the stage in order to consult them about how to speak of a horror once its witnesses are gone or silent.

Video documentation:  
<https://vimeo.com/152676411>  
Password: franza



Ideological Return Tickets



Arise!





Der Schreiber

(The Clerk)

THE MUSELMANN

Yesterday tired, more still today.  
Was work really all that heavy?  
Limbs are heavy, that's for sure  
I should be getting up again.  
But - Oh god! - I simply can't.

Oh, I can not lie, or stand.  
If at least I could just sit!  
I really should go wash myself  
And sew the rip in the coat,  
Clean all the cement off of me.

Never have I ever so grudgingly  
Waited for food as today.  
I will not linger for seconds.  
I won't die of hunger without.  
Besides, I wouldn't have a turn.

I can not miss the food pick up  
Comrade, do me a favor,  
And please pick up for me as well.  
You can leave the stuff over there.  
I'm also going to bed.



The Shoah was the elephant in the room in my own family, but even more so in the society in which I grew up. After 1945 Austrians collectively denied their responsibility in the Shoah, insisting that they were the Nazis' first victims. But at a certain point some of the perpetrators' and bystanders' children began questioning this narrative, and joined forces with survivors and their descendants to publicly refute the national myth about Austria's wartime actions. It was a small but powerful alliance. Painful debates ensued, ranging from the public forum of the national parliament to the intimacy of the family dining table, and led to a social split in the country. Today, after decades of silencing, and political, cultural and social struggle, large parts of the society accepts the nation's responsibility for the Shoah, though there is still ignorance and a lack of responsibility among many Austrians.

My grandparents' silence was not a means of denial but a way to deal with their trauma. However, theirs was an ambivalent silence. They wanted us to "look forward instead of backward," but they also wanted us to know. In 1979, my grandmother began creating a family archive. She collected all sorts of documents to pass on to the next generations. When I was 12 years old I first read the poems my late grandfather had written in the concentration camps. They became important companions to me and as a young artist I started to research my family's history. My uncle provided me with the material my grandmother had collected: a large cardboard box full of letters, biographical documents, testimonies, poems, photographs, audio and super8 recordings. My family's history became a personal obsession that has been haunting and challenging, a treasure and a burden. Over the years I have vacillated between feeling a magnetic attraction, and a self-protective repulsion to

the archive. I have conceived dozens of plans for art projects dealing with the material, but eventually I dropped all of them.

But the archive never let go of me and in 2012, when I was awarded an artist residency in Tel Aviv, I decided it was time to face its material artistically. Israel was a favorable environment for coming to terms with a challenge I had a hard time confronting in Austria. The first task was to come up with an artistic format. As an artist I like to choose a format, a medium that suits the content of a project. I have created books, installations, videos and carried out interventions in public spaces. I read a few theatre pieces my grandfather had written after returning to Vienna from the camps. He believed in theatre as a tool of political agitation. He wrote plays for the Communist theatre that were never produced. Theatre—documentary theatre, object theatre and post-dramatic theatre—became the missing link; the format to confront silence and to tell my family's story.

*The White Elephant Archive* is a series of performances: the first version, *Setting No. 1*, was shown in 2012 at a Tel Aviv art gallery, and *Setting No. 2* in an empty Jewish theater in Vienna. *The White Elephant Archive, Setting No. 3* premiered at the Spinoza Theater in Budapest in 2015. The performance series is the result of a personal and artistic struggle to speak what was deemed unutterable by both my family and parts of the Austrian society. My family spoke about their experiences through documents and images because they could not bring themselves to speak directly about their trauma. Their silence was a challenge for me personally, but foreshadowed the silence we face today with the increasing absence of survivors. When documents and images are all that is left—how will this change the way we speak of the Shoah?

*Artist statement on  
The White Elephant Archive*

**The White Elephant Archive, Setting No. 3**

Premiered on April 30, 2015

at Spinoza Theatre Budapest

Duration: 112 minutes

Scenic arrangement: Eva Reinold

Executive Producer Vienna: Živa Vavpotič

Executive Producer New York: Helena Gindi

Stage Design: Ulrich Dertschei

Language Editing: Julie Dawson, Benjy Fox-Rosen

Translation of Poems: Sam Osborn

**Venues**

German House, Columbia University

Bond Chapel, University of Chicago

Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles

JCC Palo Alto

Jewish Museum Oregon

Penn State University

Muzeum Współczesne Wrocław

OFF-Biennale Budapest: Spinoza Theatre

Wiener Festwochen: Theater Nestroyhof Hamakom

Volkshaus Graz



## **„Was sie unterließ, haben wir getan.“**

**Performance and intervention in public space, 2015**

**Zsuzsi Flohr, Benjy Fox-Rosen,  
Eduard Freudmann, Eva Reinold,  
Luisa Ziaja**

The project *„Was sie unterließ, haben wir getan.“* (“*What they neglected, we did.*”) deals with commemoration culture in public space in Vienna, specifically at Morzinplatz, location of the former Gestapo-Leitstelle, the Nazi Intelligence headquarter, in Vienna.

The performance was organized in the framework of the festival Wiener Festwochen and linked the elements of ritual, discourse and intervention in a performative setting. It consisted of a panel discussion, a choir, an actress and a crew of workers who illegally erected a monument dedicated to those who had illegally erected a monument on that spot in 1951.

Video documentation:

<https://vimeo.com/159699684>













**„Was sie unterließ, haben wir getan.“**

[“What they neglected, we did.”]

Panel discussion on the struggles for memorialization and a commemoration ceremony for a never erected obelisk at Morzinplatz

“From the beginning of the commemoration ceremony, a group of former concentration camp inmates worked in the rubble unnoticed, obscured by a line of men and women. By 19:00, a truck arrived, which was immediately surrounded by comrades; under the professional grip of our KZlers, using the two beams – the stone was set its place. By 19:20 the truck drove off, the line dissolved and the monument was unveiled.” (*From: Der Neue Mahnruf, Association of Former Concentration Camp Inmates*)

As early as 1949 the KZ-Verband called for the creation of a monument, dedicated to the victims of the Nazis at Morzinplatz. After two years of willful ignorance on the part of the city, it was decided to take action “without government authorization” and to erect a memorial stone on the sixth anniversary of the liberation of Vienna. The stone became a central place for anti-fascist remembrance. In 1968, the stone was relocated because of the construction of the

Leopold Figl-Hof, and then in 1985 the stone was replaced by the monument that stands today. At that moment the yellow star, representing Jewish victims, was added to the stone’s original red triangle, representing political victims, thereby enlarging the scope of the memorial. Since the 1990’s there has been a struggle to commemorate homosexual and transgender victims as well – so far with limited success.

The panel will discuss the struggle for memorialization on Morzinplatz. Self-organized interventions, and the official culture of commemoration are the markers of larger historico-political fault lines: which monuments were built on site, which were not? How does their visibility interact with discourse and public debate, on the one hand, and ritual and commemoration, on the other? Why does the city of Vienna have such a strained relationship to anti-fascist commemoration and the critical handling problematic monuments? Why must the city so often be forced into dealing with these issues?

During the event, a commemoration ceremony will be held for a never erected obelisk. Appropriately festive dress is required.



**„Was sie unterließ, haben wir getan.“**

The performance took place on June 13, 2015, at Morzinplatz in Vienna within the framework of *Into the City/Wiener Festwochen*, curated by Anton Lederer, Birgit Lurz, Margarethe Makovec and Wolfgang Schlag.

Concept and realization:

Zsuzsi Flohr, Benjy Fox-Rosen,  
Eduard Freudmann, Eva Reinold, Luisa Ziaja

Mistress of ceremonies: Eva Reinold

Musical arrangement: Benjy Fox-Rosen

Choir: Gegenstimmen

Choir director: Stefan Foidl

Panel discussion curated

and moderated by Luisa Ziaja.

Participants: Ruth Beckermann,

Marty Huber, Harald Walser, Florian Wenninger.

Intervention workforce: Sheri Avraham,

Julia Edthofer, Zsuzsi Flohr, Eduard Freudmann,

Niki Kubaczek, Tomash Schoiswohl.

Concrete cast by Mischa Guttman.

Supporting structure by Ulrich Dertschei.

## **A Stone Stands Here. Formations of Remembrance, 1949–**

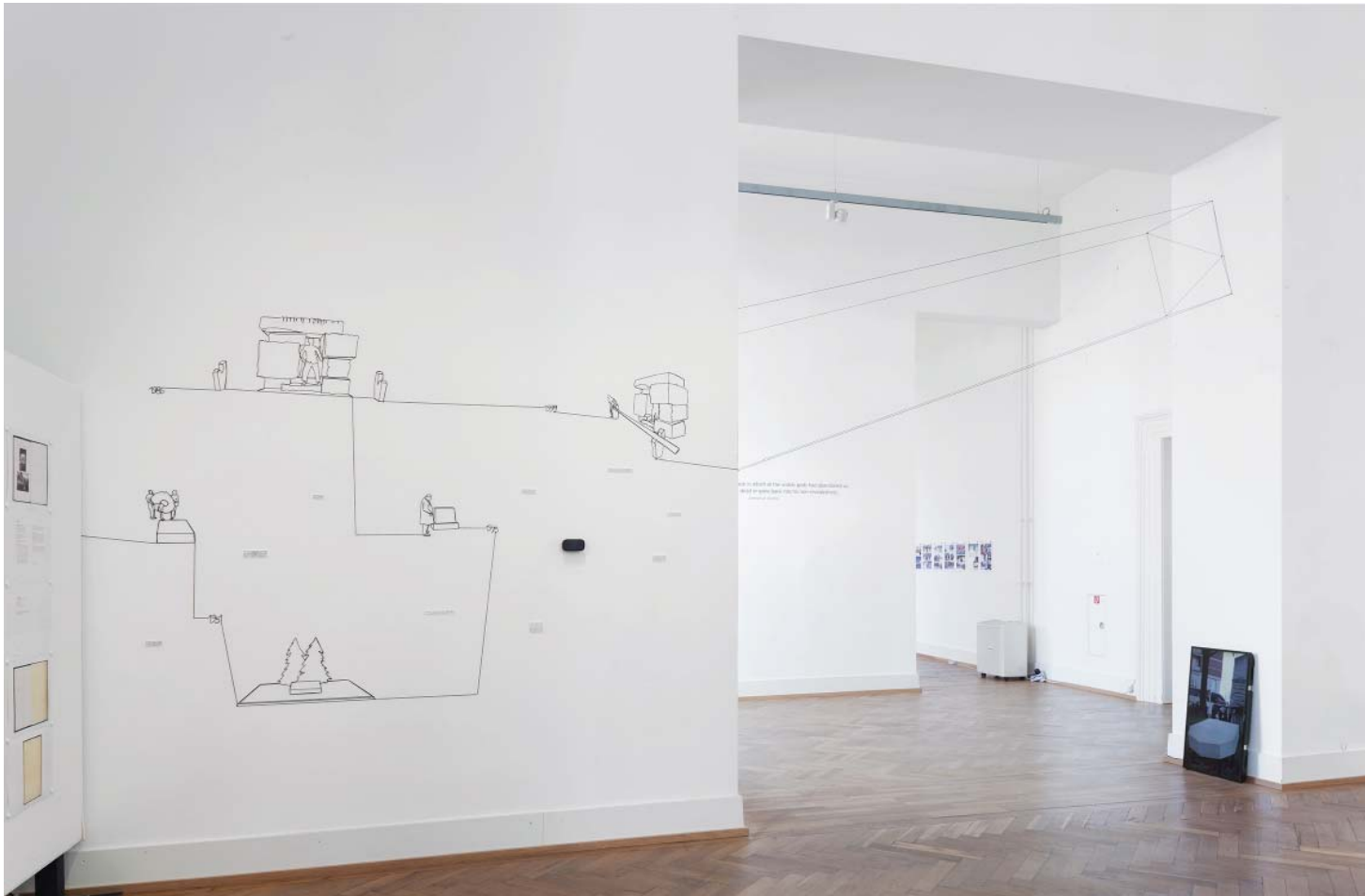
**Spatial installation, 2016**

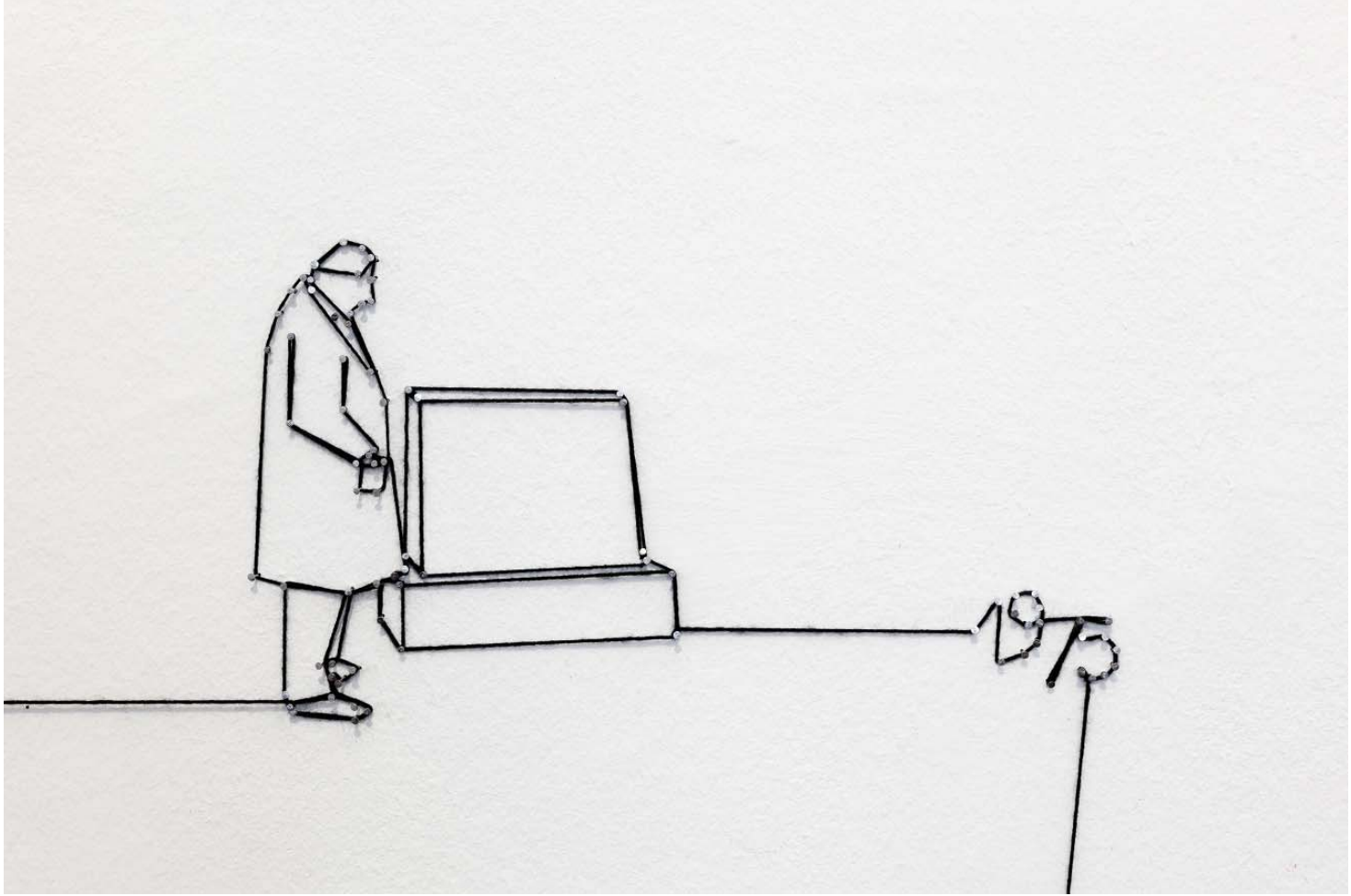
**Zsuzsi Flohr and Eduard Freudmann**

**Music by Benjy Fox-Rosen**

The installation is based on the performance „*Was sie unterließ, haben wir getan.*“, it was developed for the exhibition *Uncanny Materials, Founding Moments of Art Education*.

The work considers the spatial, aesthetic and political dynamics between self-organized interventions and the official culture of commemoration that have since unfolded on Vienna's Morzinplatz, location of the former Gestapo headquarter, and manifested in different formations of remembrance.







**A Stone Stands Here.**  
**Formations of Remembrance, 1949–**  
Concept and realization:  
Zsuzsi Flohr, Eduard Freudmann  
Music: Benjy Fox-Rosen

Developed for the exhibition *Uncanny Materials,*  
*Founding Moments of Art Education,* curated by  
Elke Krasny and Barbara Mahlkecht.

# The Monument May Be A Forest

Monument, 2015

Gabu Heindl and Eduard Freudmann

*The Monument May Be A Forest* is the winner of the international competition *From Those You Saved*, to erect a monument in Warsaw, dedicated to Poles who saved Jews during the Shoah.

The monument has not been realized until today, due to a series of controversies around the competition and the envisioned building location next to the POLIN Museum, in the center of the former Warsaw Ghetto.

The winning proposal regarded these controversies not as a bitter pill to be swallowed but a unique asset that should be incorporated into the monument.

The Monument Is A Dilemma  
The Monument Is A Forest Nursery  
The Monument Is A Process  
The Monument May Be A Forest  
The Monument May Be A Failure









The plan to erect a monument dedicated to Poles who saved Jewish lives is exceptional because it is to be established by “Those You Saved”, by Jews who want to commemorate the Righteous, those who saved their lives or the lives of their family members.

First and foremost, erecting the monument is urgent. Time is passing and 70 years after the end of Nazism both those who saved and those who were saved are dwindling in numbers. Therefore we should open the monument as soon as is feasible. But there is a dilemma: This is not an easy task that can be rushed to completion. Erecting a monument “From Those You Saved” requires time - both for the creation of a \*We, that is, those who desire to establish the monument, and for joint decision-making regarding important issues such as to whom the monument is addressed or selecting the best location for the monument.

We believe that this dilemma is not a bitter pill to be swallowed. Rather, it is a unique asset that should be incorporated into the monument. At its grand opening, the monument is not a forest but a forest nursery, a vision of a forest. The forest nursery is located in a large, raised bed next to the Polin Museum, a formal reference to the small hill upon which stands the historic linden tree, the only remnant of the pre-Ghetto period. It consists of dense rows of two-year saplings of common trees in Warsaw (lime, ash-tree, aspen, birch, hornbeam, field maple, norway maple, common oak tree, common alder). The number of trees can only be estimated (a few thousand) and it will change over the course of time since some of the trees planted will not grow roots, a perfectly normal occurrence in a nursery.

After the opening of the monument as a forest nursery, a social discourse will aim to create the \*We and decide on the future of the monument as a forest, that is, enable it to become a forest - at an urban

location in Warsaw to be decided. The monument is not only the forest nursery or the forest but also the process, which will take place in cooperation with the Polin Museum and is limited in duration. The inherent fragility of the nursery is an intricate part of the monument, without which it could not achieve its full dimension.

The forest shall be planted permanently in a participatory process. The urban location of the forest is key. It stands for the alienating character of the helping action, of the saving, which was only carried out by a minority of Poles who, in many cases, remained isolated after the end of the German occupation due to Polish anti-Semitism. The main motive behind planting a forest in a city to be a monument is the ambiguity represented by the forest. This ambiguity parallels the ambiguity of saving Jewish lives and the ambiguous history of how those actions have been dealt with in Poland from the end of the German occupation to the present day. The forest was a place of death, where Jews were killed by execution. The forest was a place where many Nazi concentration camps were located. But the forest was also a hide-out, a place of survival and a place of resistance. Who helped Jews, who saved Jews? It will never be possible to set ultimate criteria; it will never be possible to pinpoint exact numbers. These questions can only be answered with ambiguity. And that very ambiguity should be represented in the monument.

If the \*We fails, there will be no forest and the monument fails as well. This failure would manifest itself in the diminutive nature of the forest nursery, which would never become a forest and in the ephemeral nature of its trees, which would not have space to grow. The potential inability to express gratitude as a \*We is thus an intrinsic feature of the entire project from the outset.

*Artist statement on  
The Monument May Be A Forest*

**The Monument May Be A Forest**

Concept and realization:

Eduard Freudmann and Gabu Heindl

Architectural staff / GABU Heindl Architektur:

Daniela Mehlich, Jan Růžička

Landscape architect: Marlies Rief

Architectural model: Nenad Ikudinović

Research: Tamara Kramer

Language editing: Julie Dawson

Translation: Rafał Morusiewicz

## **Weinheber ausgehoben – Unearthing a Nazi Poet**

**Performance and intervention in public space, 2013**

**Plattform Geschichtspolitik**

This work deals with a memorial to Austrian poet and Nazi Josef Weinheber (1892-1945) which stands at the Schillerpark in Vienna's city centre.

The intervention is the result of years of critically dealing and debating with the responsible city authorities. The intervention aimed at exposing the monument's conflicted history and leading to its permanent artistic reconfiguration and contextualization.

Video documentation:

<https://vimeo.com/225017936>











Schillerplatz and the adjacent Schiller Park were designated and named in honor of the classical German poet Friedrich Schiller in the 1870s, when the Academy of Fine Arts building was also constructed there. Subsequent to the Anschluss (Nazi Germany's annexation of Austria in 1938), many public spaces across the city of Vienna began prohibiting Jews from gathering within them; at the initiation of the Academy, Schillerplatz was among these spaces. Today Schillerplatz is marked by a large monument to Schiller, along with several smaller monuments to writers of the past, including Weinheber.

In 2010 Plattform Geschichtspolitik was invited by the Academy of Fine Arts to participate in a symposium *Regime*. On this occasion the group initiated two actions to call attention to the Academy's own compliance with the Nazis during the Nazi era, hoping to provoke conversation about the culpability of the institution, and about these specific historical events. One action was to rename Schillerplatz *Platz der auf Betreiben der Akademie 1938/39 vom Platz vertriebenen Jüd\_innen* (*Square of the Jews who got expelled from the square on the initiative of the Academy in 1938/39*). The proposed name was printed on stickers and posted around the square; several remained posted for a few weeks. Plattform Geschichtspolitik also produced a paper wrapping for the Weinheber monument, bringing the audience out into the square to cover the monument together during the symposium. The wrapping too would remain in place for several weeks. Providing the caption, "A monument honoring a Nazi belittles Nazism and the Shoah," the wrapping's text described Weinheber's Nazi activities, and the expulsion of Jews from both the Academy and Schillerplatz during the Nazi era. Members of Plattform Geschichtspolitik composed a call to action, to address the still-visible manifestations of Austro-Fascism in Vienna, and challenge the extent to which the city has actively preserved them.

This intervention on the Weinheber monument in 2010 sparked a series of negotiations back and forth between the collective and the city department responsible for public art. After further research, members of the group submitted a formal proposal to the City of Vienna to permanently mark the monument in light of its historical legacy. The proposal, which specified unearthing the monument's foundation and installing a plaque on the pedestal contextualizing the intervention, was conditionally approved and then subsequently dismissed, leading to the decision to realize elements of this design in 2013 without official authorization.

On Friday June 28, 2013, a group of students and teachers affiliated with the Academy of Fine Arts arrived at Schillerplatz dressed as art restorers and equipped with shovels, wheelbarrows, and extra rolls of turf. One participant wore a white lab coat and held a clipboard, informing curious passersby that the group was a conservation class from the Academy, there to conserve the statue. The group dug a rolling ditch around the base of the monument, exposing its concrete foundation and altering the surrounding landscape, and then naturalizing the alteration by planting rolls of turf over the ditch.

The site remained like this over the weekend, before the excavation was filled in and leveled by the city on Monday, using the same turf that had been purchased for the intervention. Plattform Geschichtspolitik was not criminalized for their action. Instead the Secretary of Culture was recorded as saying that he appreciated the group's effort—which came as a surprise considering the restrictions and complications with which the group's proposal had initially been met. Despite the city's quick reversal of their intervention, responses to the group's subsequent attempts since June 2013 to get the city to integrate a more permanent change to the monument have been characterized by slowness.

*Excerpt from Sarah Mendelsohn:  
Unearthing a Nazi Poet (in: Memorial  
and Revision, Open Systems, 2014)*

**Weinheber ausgehoben –  
Unearthing a Nazi Poet**

2009-2010

Research and temporary reconfiguration:  
Plattform Geschichtspolitik

2011-2012

Project idea and admission

*Weinheber ausgehoben:*

Eduard Freudmann, Chris Gangl,  
Gabu Heindl, Katharina Morawek

2013

Intervention: Eduard Freudmann,  
Chris Gangl, Tatiana Kai-Browne

Workforce and support: Annegret Bauer,  
Imayna Caceres, Niki Kubaczek, Sam Osborn,  
Sophie Schasiepen, Tomash Schoiswohl, Philipp  
Sonderegger, Ruth Sonderegger, Konrad Wolf

2017

Video: *Poeta Laureatus!*

Concept: Tatiana Kai-Browne,  
Chris Gangl, Eduard Freudmann

Camera: Nina Kerschbaumer,  
Ludwig Löckinger, Eduard Freudmann

Video editing: Eduard Freudmann

Audio mix: Martin Riha