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## Exhibition: “The Wedding of Auschwitz”

06 Jul 2022

The Vienna Library at the City Hall recently came into possession of a collection of documents that tell an extraordinary story. They will be on display from tomorrow in the exhibition “The Wedding of Auschwitz”.



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The documents tell the story of the Viennese resistance fighter Rudolf Friemel, who joined the International Brigades in 1936 to fight against Franco in the Spanish Civil War. In Spain, he fell in love with Margarita Ferrer Rey. Their son Edouard was born on 26 April 1941 before the couple were torn apart.

In 1942, Rudolf Friemel was sent to Auschwitz as a political prisoner. While still in the concentration camp, he tried to have his civil marriage to Margarita legitimised under German law in order to enable her and Edouard to stay in the German Reich.

Miraculously, his application was approved. Rudolf's father, his wife and their son were allowed to come to Auschwitz, where the wedding took place on 18 March 1944. The photographer from the identification service, the prisoner Wilhelm Brasse, photographed the couple, who were given a room in the camp brothel for their wedding night. After the wedding, they went their separate ways, never to meet again. Friemel was executed together with other resistance fighters after an escape attempt was uncovered in 1944.

What remains are the telegram wedding invite and photos of the “Wedding of Auschwitz”, and some messages of congratulation from fellow prisoners.

During the research for the new Austrian exhibition at Auschwitz, the curators were in contact with the grandson of Rudolf Friemel, who entrusted his grandfather's estate to the Vienna Library at the City Hall in spring 2022.

Among these documents is a photo of a very special reunion. Almost 60 years after Rudolf Friemel's execution, his son Edouard met his half-brother Norbert from Rudolf Friemel's first marriage for the first time. The photo captures the two of them standing in front of the memorial plaque for their father in Vienna Favoriten.

EGE 1

IN DIESEM HAUSE WOHNTE  
ÖSTERREICHISCHE FREIHEITSKÄMPFER  
UDOLF FRIEMEL  
RDET IM KZ AUSCHWITZ AM 30.12.1944.  
TOD IST UNS MAHNUNG u VERPFLICHTUNG.  
ESVERBAND DER ÖSTERREICHISCHEN K.Z.-LER.



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## Exhibition opening

At the exhibition opening, guests were welcomed by Anita Eichinger, Director of the Vienna Library at the City Hall, and Patricia Anderle, Member of the Vienna Parliament and City Council.

Afterwards, Rodolphe Friemel, grandson of Rudolf Friemel, recalled his own family history, his father Edouard, who was present at the wedding at Auschwitz in 1944 as a small child and whom he had asked, much later, about his grandfather Rudolf Friemel.

This was followed by a discussion between the curators of the exhibition at the Vienna Library, Hannes Sulzenbacher, Albert Lichtblau and Barbara Staudinger, who also co-curated the Austrian exhibition at Auschwitz.

Finally, actor Robert Reinagl read excerpts from letters written by Rudolf Friemel at Auschwitz to his wife Margarita shortly before his execution





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Video of the exhibition opening on 30 June 2022 from 6.30 pm from the reading room of the Vienna Library:

Visiting the exhibition

**Foyer exhibition, Vienna Library in the City Hall**

1<sup>st</sup> District, City Hall, Felderstraße entrance, staircase 6, glass lift, 1st floor

T: +43 (0)1 4000 84915

Monday to Friday, 9 am to 7 pm, free admission

Summer closing times:

From 1 to 19 August 2022 the exhibition can be visited by appointment. Guided tours of the exhibition [here](#).