



Far Removed. Austria in Auschwitz. Renewal of the Austrian Exhibition at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum

29 May 2015

On 2 June 2015 the concept and design for the new Austrian exhibition at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the documentation of the old exhibition will be presented at the Vienna Museum. This presentation will introduce the fundamental idea for the new exhibition and the design with which it will be realized.

Architect Martin Kohlbauer, who was commissioned by the National Fund to design the exhibition in March 2015 following a Europe-wide call to tender, wants to do justice to the subject-matter by taking a minimalistic approach:

"I have tried to do justice to both the content requirements and ideas and to this incomprehensible place with a very clear and simple room-in-room concept."

Hannah Lessing, Secretary General of the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism, which has been entrusted with coordinating the renewal, will present the Documentation of the Austrian Memorial 1978–2013.

The discussion with the exhibition team

- Birgit Johler (Curator)
- Albert Lichtblau (Scientific Director)
- Christiane Rothländer (Historian)
- Barbara Staudinger (Curator)
- Hannes Sulzenbacher (Project leader)
- and the exhibition designer, architect Martin Kohlbauer

will be moderated by Matti Bunzl, future Director of the Vienna Museum.

Time and Place

- Vienna Museum Karlsplatz, Atrium
- Tuesday, 2 June 2015, 18.30

The subject

The Austrian exhibition at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, opened in 1978, greeted visitors with an entrance display reading "Austria – First Victim of National Socialism". For a long time this "victims paradigm" formed part of the Austrian national identity. With the change in awareness of Austria's shared responsibility for the crimes perpetrated under National Socialism came the calls for a new exhibition. In 2013, the 1978 exhibition in Block 17 of the memorial was closed down. Following Europe-wide calls to tender, in 2014 a team was commissioned to develop a new concept for the exhibition and in 2015 an architect was commissioned with its design.

The idea for the exhibition, "Far Removed. Austria in Auschwitz" refers to the geographical distance between Austria and Auschwitz and, at the same time, to the physical removal of those deported to Auschwitz – from Austria and from the realm of the living. The exhibition focuses on this notion of removal, bringing the historical beginnings in Austria and their end in Auschwitz closer, creating proximity between two places so far removed from each other. The interwoven portrayal of the

stories of the Austrian victims and the Austrian perpetrators will help convey to visitors in a fitting manner the role played by Austria in the history of National Socialism.

As the first remembrance project to take up the notion of the distance between Auschwitz and Austria, following the presentation the exhibition team will introduce the publication "Auschwitz/Austria. Drawings by Jan Kupiec (1945)".

Free entry.

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