

Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin. Photography © Vlad Eftenie.

WORKSHOP

H – Loud Memory, Still Voids

An architectural journey to the sites of the Holocaust

Human memory is a marvelous but fallacious instrument. The memories which lie within us are not carved in stone; not only do they tend to become erased as the years go by, but often they change, or even increase by incorporating extraneous features. (Primo Levi)

In a complementary perspective, Daniel Libeskind put under scrutiny the architectural object marked to host the Jewish Museum in Berlin by asking a particular question: "how can you design an architectural environment evoking what has been lost, when the identity of what you are evoking has been reduced to ashes? In other words, how could he, as an architect, rematerialize the burnt matter, the lost culture, the victims and the obliterated identity? How could he commemorate the specificity of the Jewish Holocaust through architecture? The *space voids* that he theoretically attested in the end express the emptiness that remains as a unique position, a locus that centers the awareness and envisions architecture as a perceptual art. It's an art of space; an art that builds and re-builds the identity based on both memory and embodied perception.

Program: workshop

Workshop travelling dates: 29.04.2015-10.05.2015

Page: <http://crisanarch.ro/?p=2977>

Discipline(s): Architecture Theory, Architecture Critique, Visual Arts

Participant Profile: Undergraduate student (master integrated) & specialists in architecture or art studies.

Credit(s): the equivalent of 1 semester sketch

Language of instruction: Romanian

Language of final/ Published material: English

Organizer: (NGO) coordinator: Arch. Ana Maria Crisan, PhD

Key Partners: Romanian Cultural Institute (ICR) , "Elie Wiesel" National Institute for the Study of Holocaust (INSHR-EW)

Instructor: Ana Maria Crisan & Alexandru Crisan

Duration: 2 weeks travel + 2 weeks round tables (4 meetings)

Additional calendar:

Workshop traveling dates: 29.04.2015-10.05.2015

Workshop research/ discussion: 20.04.2015-25.05.2015

Exhibition: June 2015/ Romania; June – October 2015 – International itinerant exhibition

Thematic album/ domain: Architecture book: June-July 2015; language: English.

Selection: motivational letter & short description at email: ami.crisan@gmail.com

Touristic operator: Ro Team Tour*

Trail: BUCHAREST-Kosice- KRAKOW – AUSCHWITZ/BIRKENAU – TREBLINKA - WARSAW- SACHSENHAUSEN - PRAGUE - WIEN - BUDAPEST – BUCHAREST

Accommodation 11 nights: Kosice (1 night), Krakow (1 night), Warsaw (2 nights), Berlin (3 nights), Prague (2 nights), Vienna (1 night), Budapest (1 night). Hotels of 2-3 *, double and triple rooms. Details at: office@roteamtour.ro

Participation tax to workshop: 550 euros* / 12 days/ 11 nights. (price calculated for a group of minimum 40 persons).

*The workshop fee (550euros) comprise all expenses for: ACCOMMODATION (11 nights, breakfast included) + TRAVEL + non formal OPEN DISCUSSION IN SITU + participation to SEMINARS in BUCHAREST, ROUND TABLES. The FEE (TAX) will be paid by the participants directly to the touristic operator - Ro Team Tour. The price does not include the visiting taxes (granting access to museums, memorials, etc.) and will be paid by the participants in situ. The entrance taxes to the museums can suffer further reductions due to sponsorships.

The workshop fee represents exclusively the travelling and the accommodation costs and will be paid by the participants directly to the touristic operator - Ro Team Tour. The price does not include the visiting taxes (granting access to museums, memorials, etc.), to be paid by the participants in situ. The instruction and research expenses are supported by the Key Partners as part of the *H - Space Voids* general cultural project.

Pre-subscription date: 22 March 2015, subscriptions till 1 march. Details & subscription at: office@roteamtour.ro

Statement of purpose:

The workshop addresses the subject of the Holocaust sites, museums and memorials from the perspective of the young generations. Focusing on the memory-identity nexus, on the one hand, and on students born circa half a century after the Holocaust, on the other, this educational endeavor uses fundamentals of the architectural studies as a de-contextual medium for the understanding of the historical trauma. What falls under scrutiny is the ability of architecture to translate memory and identity and, ultimately, to facilitate a dialogue between the subjectivity of a vicarious witness and the objectivity of a historical catastrophe.

Contextual approach:

Marking 70 years since the liberation of the largest and most notorious Nazi death-camp of the World War II, Auschwitz-Birkenau, the workshop proposes a journey to several sites embedded with the Holocaust History. The purpose is to underline the complementary aspects of memorials as they can be (architecturally) categorized: the ghettos, the labor camps, the extermination camps, and, finally, the thematic museums and sculptural representations. When studied in such a sequence, these sites help unravel the mechanics of the Holocaust and its aftermath. Moreover, they give a moral dimension to memory and a sense of purposeful hope for historical nonrecurrence.

Since the young generations are undoubtedly visually educated, such an approach, based on direct spatial experimentation, targets a more complex understanding that transcends simple historical and visual assimilations. It substitutes vicarious comprehension with vicarious witnessing. However, historical narrations rest heavily on compressed information, which highlights victories and defeats, exultations and traumas, events that bring coherence via sequentiality. But this breaks the bond between memory and identity: one does not empathize or identify him/herself with an encyclopedia entry. Is architecture an identity-forging mechanism of understanding, beyond mere recollection, classification and repetition?

Additionally, from the “space voids” mentioned by architect *Daniel Libeskind*, to “the atmospheres” of Peter Zumthor, the vast majority of contemporary architectural theories underline the invisible link between the architectural space and the perceptual understanding in terms of memory. Nevertheless, such theories are rooted on the concept of collective memory, the survival of which depends of ever-changing socio-political factors. If it is true that a picture is worth a thousand words, what is the worth of architecture, which encompasses thousands of images and re-structures them into functional coherence? And if we are to purify the idea of the transcendent value of architecture, what are the moral guidelines that nourish it?

Structure and Method:

Structured in three stages, the research begins with a (re)visitation of the historical references, followed by in situ perception, and ends with the analysis of the results and their re-projection in the form of an exhibition with a thematic publication. Both the exhibition and the thematic publication aim to be an international mirror of shared history and to showcase Holocaust perceptions at the beginning of the 21st century.

As the Holocaust sequencing is a trauma at an international level, the exhibition will emphasize on the continuous education of the young generations. In this sense, the perceptual spaces and the architectural atmospheres that are to be captured in essays and in visual materials will become an international exchange product, dedicated to a borderless Europe. Similar to the first stage of the workshop, the exhibition itself will begin its own journey, following the Holocaust vestiges, while mirroring and capturing the reactions of the young generations to a process that ended 70 years ago. Beyond remembrance, the goal is to underline that only through knowledge such a historic error can be avoided in the future.

Thus the reviving of the Jewish culture by (re)discovery, recollections and virtual projections becomes a purposeful dialog between the transitioned countries: Romania, Slovakia, Poland, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria and Hungary.

The workshop will comprise three stages: information, experimentation and analysis. Favoring the itinerant experimentation of different architectural expressions in a relatively short time (2 weeks), the workshop will attempt to develop short and long time perceptual / affective memories (as they will be attested by the travel journals of the students).

The educational process is structured accordingly in 4 steps: (re)discovery (of the Holocaust history), responding (to the in situ information), revision (of flawed understandings) and rebuilding (worldviews via the original work that will be submitted for evaluation).

Several more technical questions arise: Are the historical landmarks to be evaluated only in direct reference to a historical place and time? Can we talk about a perceptual architecture? Which are the architectural factors or elements that are inducing a specific perception? How do the light, the chromatic and the texture concur in producing “memory embedded” architecture?

Key words 1: architecture of remembrance, memory in architecture, memory of offence, spaces of memory, space of lost, void spaces, memory path.

Key words 2: Holocaust, ghetto, extermination camp, concentration camp, memorial.

Program:

Week 1:

- 1 meeting: lecture and discussions on the general topic.

Week 2+3:

- thematic field-trip to the Holocaust sites, comprising: a selection of concentration and extermination CAMPS, GHETTOS, MUSEUMS, and MEMORIALS;
- Documentary film/ Feature film projections from the selected biography – on road documentation;
- Round table discussions at the Holocaust sites;
- Guided visits to the concentration and extermination camps: Auschwitz, Birkenau, Majdanek, Sachsenhausen.
- Visits to the remains of the Holocaust Ghettos in: Krakow, Warsaw, Berlin.
- Guided Visits to the main Holocaust Museums with insight documentation and cinematographic projections: Polish Museum Warsaw, Jewish Museum Berlin, Topography of Terror Documentation Centre – Berlin; *(optional: Memorial Visitors Centre / Berlin Wall history, Tchoban Foundation Museum for Architectural Drawing (Berlin): exhibition: Alexander Brodsky. Works)*
- Visits to the selected memorials: Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe- Berlin, *Gleis 17 Memorial – Berlin*, Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial, Budapest: Shoes on the Danube Bank *(optional: Bebelplatz - site of the Burning of Books)*
- Visits to the largest Jewish cemeteries in Europe: Weissensee Cemetery – Berlin, Brodno Jewish Cemetery – Prague.
- Visits to complementary sites: German Reichstag, optional: Jewish Gallery – Berlin, Schindler’s Factory Museum
- Optional architecture objectives: Berlin: *Neues Museum Berlin, Pergamonmuseum Berlin, Tchoban Foundation Museum for Architectural Drawing – exhibition: Alexander Bordsky. Works, Museum für Fotografie, Akademie der Künste, Berlin wall section, Memorial Visitors Centre (Berlin Wall history), Jewish Gallery, Weissensee Cemetery, “Stolpersteine” the ubiquitous memorial.*

Week 4:

- 2 meetings for discussing the field-trip and the visual material. 1 thematic lecture & discussions on Daniel Libeskind, Peter Eisenman, Peter Zumthor, Juhani Pallasmaa THEORICaL approach.

Evaluation:

At the end of the workshop, the participants are required to submit:

- 1 essay on the subject of Architecture as a memory embedded reference medium
- 1 graphic work (in an optional technique) illustrating an architecture fragment or object with specific re-collected identity – non-existing, virtual projected.
- 20 photographic works (1 or 2 series)
- Optional: journal notes, small scale models of reference elements.

Selection: motivational letter & short description at email: ami.crisan@gmail.com

May-September 2015:

An adjacent exhibition featuring selected materials from the workshop will be developed, followed by thematic publication. The workshop results, considered a part of the research project, will be the starting base for developing a thematic exhibition and publication in Album Format, an exhibition to be presented in Bucharest, Berlin, Prague, Warsaw and Vienna.

The additional exhibition and thematic publication will be developed in a smaller selected team.

(The exhibition date and place will be announced later.)

Text & references: Arch. Ana Maria Crisan, PhD

Consultant: Cosmin Stanciu-Dinulescu

Date: 10.02.2015

Images credits:

Poster. Helpless Souls: Auschwitz I & Auschwitz II – Birkenau. © Chris Barnes. Graphics © Ana Maria Crisan.

Cover: Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin. Photography © Vlad Eftenie.

Objectives selection: Camp' sites and Museums. Graphics © Ana Maria Crisan, Photography: see © credits *(down right)*

Objectives selection: memorials and art works. Graphics © Ana Maria Crisan, Photography: see © credits *(down right)*

References:**Recommended cinematographic viewing:**

*Nazi Concentration Camps*_ Nazi PLAN_ director: George Stevens_1945_USA

*First Person Singular - Elie Wiesel*_ director: Robert Gardner, David Grossbach_2002

*The Rape of Europa*_ Documentary_ director: Richard Berge, Bonni Cohen, Nicole Newnham _Production: Actual Films, Agon Arts and Entertainment, Oregon Public Broadcasting_ 2006.

*Nuit et brouillard*_director Alain Resnais _1955_France

*Le chagrin et la pitié*_director Marcel Ophüls_1969_France

*Shoah*_director_Claude Lanzmann_1985_France

*Night Will Fall*_director Andre Singer_2014_UK

*Shtikat Haarchion*_Yael Hersonski_2010_Germany | Israel

*Lodz Ghetto*_ Alan Adelson and Kate Taverna_1988_USA

*Sorstalanság*_ Lajos Koltai_2005_Hungary | Germany | UK | Israel

*Visas and Virtue*_ Chris Tashima_1997_USA

*Playing for Time*_ Daniel Mann_1980_USA

*Conspiracy*_ Frank Pierson_2001_UK/USA

*Kapò*_ director: Gillo Pontecorvo_1959 _Italy, Yugoslavia, France

*La vita è bella*_ director: Roberto Benigni_1997_Italy, Germany

*The Pianist*_ director: Roman Polanski_2002 _ France, UK, Poland

*Schindler's List*_ director: Steven Spielberg_1993_USA

Recommended thematic readings :

Soumyen Bandyopadhyay, Guillermo Garma Montiel. *The Territories of Identity: Architecture in the Age of Evolving Globalization*, Routledge November 2013;

Cathy Caruth (ed.).*Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Johns Hopkins University Press 1995;

Richard Crownshaw. *The Afterlife of Holocaust Memory in Contemporary Literature and Culture*. Palgrave Macmillan, St Martin Press LLC, 2010;

Geoffrey Hartman, Aleida Assmann. *Viitorul amintirii și Holocaustul*. Bucuresti: Universitatea "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2014;

Young, James E.. *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*. London: Yale University Press, 1998;

Young, James E.. *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*. Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1994;

Brian Ladd. *The Ghosts of Berlin. Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*. Chicago and London 1997;

Primo Levi. *Mai este oare acesta un om?*, Bucuresti: Polirom, 2004;

Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich. *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation*. Rutgers University Press, 2014;

Daniel Libeskind. *Jüdisches Museum Berlin*, by Elke Dörner. Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 3. Auflage 2006;

Anthony Vidler. *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2000;

James E. Young. *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000;

Barbie Zelizer(ed.). *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*. Athlone Press (2001).

Recommended thematic readings – online:

Domus. *EXiT: dialogue on Architecture and Remembrance*. <http://www.domusweb.it/en/architecture/2010/01/26/exit-dialogue-on-architecture-and-remembrance.html>, accessed: 01.02.2015;

Daniel Libeskind. *Exploring Thinking, Theory And Invention* – Issue 15. <http://thinking-in-practice.com/daniel-libeskind>, accessed: 01.02.2015;

Fosco Lucarelli. *Zumthor's Topographie des Terrors (1993-2004): visual history of birth, growth and death of a project*. <http://socks-studio.com/http://socks-studio.com/2011/11/14/zumthors-topographie-des-terrors-1993-2004-visual-history-of-birth-growth-and-death-of-a-project/>, accessed: 01.02.2015;

objectives

AUSCHWITZ - BIRKENAU camp

MAJDANEK camp

SACHSENHAUSEN camp

KRAKOW: Krakow Ghetto Memorial

*Schindler's Factory Museum**

WARSAW:

Polin Museum

*Warsaw Uprising Museum**

*Warsaw Ghetto - Waliców Street**

Złote Tarasy

PRAGUE:

Brodno Jewish Cemetery

*Jewish tour**

VIENNA:

Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial

BUDAPEST: Shoes on the Danube Bank

BERLIN – day 1:

Bebelplatz - site of the Burning of Books

Gleis 17 Memorial

BERLIN – day 2:

Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe;

*Tchoban Foundation Museum for Architectural
Drawing – exhibition: Alexander Borsky.
Works**

*Museum für Fotografie**

*Akademie der Künste Berlin**

BERLIN – day 3:

Jewish Museum Berlin ;

German Reichstag;

*Neues Museum Berlin**

*Pergamonmuseum Berlin**

BERLIN - day 4:

Topography of Terror Documentation Centre

*Berlin wall section**

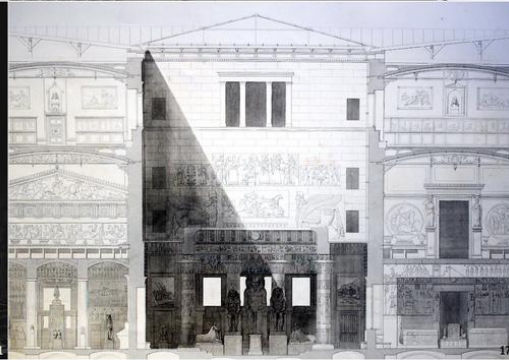
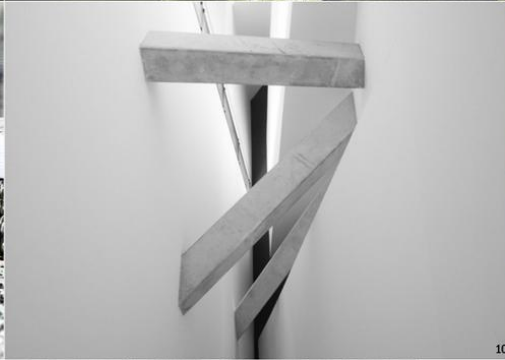
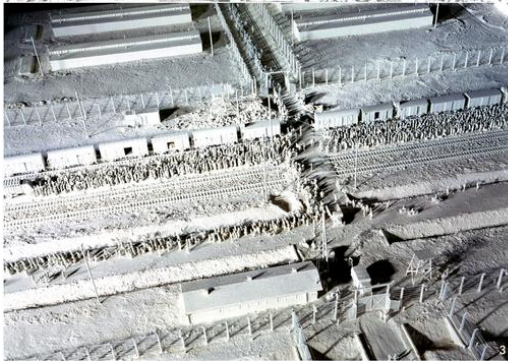
*Memorial Visitors Centre (Berlin Wall history)**

*Jewish Gallery**

*Weissensee Cemetery**

*"Stolpersteine" the ubiquitous memorial**

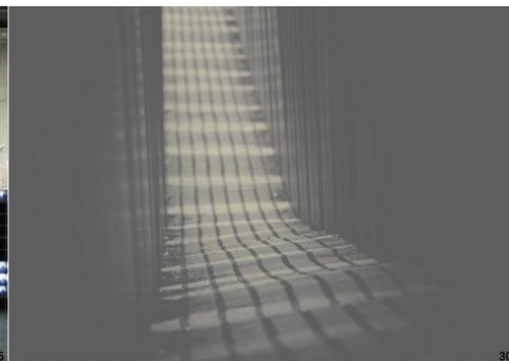
*Optional objectives

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13. 14. Polin Museum, Warsaw:
<http://www.floorartnute.it/progetti-edifici-e-luoghi-pubblici/progetto-museum-of-the-history-of-jewish-poles-warzawa-lahelma-mahmameki-1025/>

15. Topography of Terror Documentation Center
<http://www.institut.org/immuseum/topographie-des-terrors-berlin/>

16. 17. Neue Museum, Berlin:
http://www.davidstupperfield.co.uk/projects/es_museum

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