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# MEMORIA

MEMORY • HISTORY • EDUCATION



## POLISH PREMIERE OF "THE ZONE OF INTEREST" BY JONATHAN GLAZER AT THE AUSCHWITZ MUSEUM

ONLINE  
EXHIBITION:  
WEDDINGS  
DURING THE  
HOLOCAUST

USING DIGITAL

TOOLS AND  
METHODS TO  
FACILITATE  
HOLOCAUST  
RESEARCH

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DAFFODILS IN

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LIBRARIES AND  
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EVERYDAY  
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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.

Paweł Sawicki, Editor-in-Chief

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# ONLINE EXHIBITION: WEDDINGS DURING THE HOLOCAUST

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**Jewish couples got married throughout the Holocaust period, in the shadow of anti-Jewish policies, dispossession, hardships, uncertainty, pervasive hunger and deprivation, and the omnipresent threat of death.**

During the war years, weddings took place in occupied countries, in the ghettos, the concentration and labor camps, and in hiding. Even when no one knew what the next day would bring, people felt the need to get married. Some married for love, while many others married in order to overcome loneliness, to share a common destiny, and sometimes – in order to save their lives. The bond between two individuals in difficult circumstances became a source of stability, and at times the key to survival.

After liberation, many couples among the She'erit Hapleita (the surviving remnant) chose to get married. As well as the need for love, weddings were an expression of the survivors' determination to rehabilitate themselves, to build new lives and to resurrect the severed family lineage.

This exhibition presents the stories of Jews who decided to throw in their lot with each other and get married during the war, and Jewish couples who got married after the war in an effort to build new lives.

## **Fragment of the exhibition – weddings in ghettos and camps.**

“Jewish men and women continued to get married even after deportation to ghettos and camps, and under indescribable conditions. Alongside those couples who married for love, and entered into the marriage in order to have someone to share the hard times with, fictitious marriages were also held in the ghettos, in the full knowledge of the officiating rabbis. These were sometimes entered into in order to improve quality of life.



**Weddings during the Holocaust**





Mauritz Jacobs i Berta Levi w dniu ślubu. Haga 1942  
Yad Vashem

# “THE FILM WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE MUSEUM'S COOPERATION.” POLISH PREMIERE OF “THE ZONE OF INTEREST”

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On 15 February, the Polish premiere of the film 'Zone of Interest,' directed and written by Jonathan Glazer, was held at the Auschwitz Museum. The film, depicting the family life of Auschwitz camp commandant Rudolf Höss, was awarded the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival last year. It also received five Oscar nominations.

The audience comprised, among others, representatives of local authorities and institutions, people involved in the film's production, museum staff and guides, and journalists. Director Jonathan Glazer, production designer Chris Oddy, and producers Jim Wilson, Ewa Puszczyńska, and Bartosz Rainski were among the notable individuals featured in the post-screening discussion.

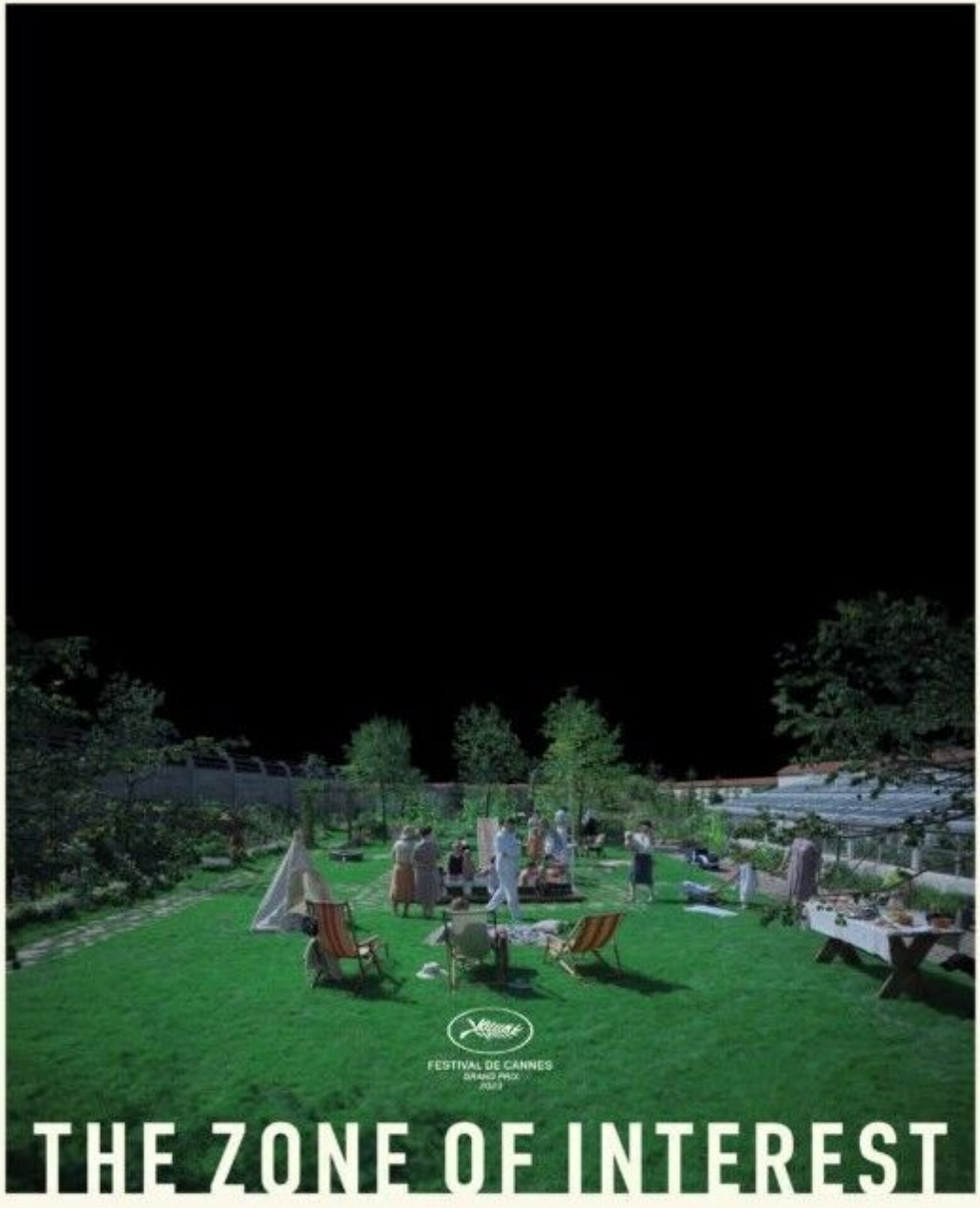
"The Zone of Interest" was created in close cooperation with the Museum on various levels. In addition to consulting on elements of the script or set design, the overall significance and symbolism of the picture were also discussed with the Museum. The Museum also supported the filmmakers through access to camp documents, Survivor accounts, and factual consultation. According to the film director, "the film would not have been possible without the cooperation of the Auschwitz Museum."

'This project is, in fact, a nine-year journey. It all began with an impulse. We were aware of our intention to broach this subject, but we lacked clarity on the precise approach we would employ. We visited the Museum, met with Director Cywinski and the historians working here, and began meticulous research,' said Jonathan Glazer.

'We searched the archives for any references to the camp commandant's family, upon which the film is based. The book by Dr. Piotr Setkiewicz on the private lives of SS men at Auschwitz was also an essential source for us. Through this, a gradual portrayal of how the perpetrators integrated themselves into this setting to execute their deeds unfolded. This became the central focus around which our film revolved,' stressed the director.

Glazer added: 'But rather we were trying to show it as something still in our world and still in ourselves as human beings and not an anomaly or some event that happened once and couldn't possibly happen again. It felt very important to tell a story about our human capacity for violence.'

'Filmmakers come to us with their fully developed ideas and are astounded to learn about the script's numerous historical deficiencies, rendering cooperation impossible.'



FESTIVAL DE CANNES  
GRAND PRIX  
2023

# THE ZONE OF INTEREST

'Upon viewing a very early cut of this film, which lacked sound, I perceived this wall as the barrier between the two worlds. Only later did I realise that this wall was not a divide but a bridge between these two worlds,' added Piotr Cywiński.

Producer Ewa Puszczynska emphasised that we are dealing with two films: 'One that we hear, and one that we see. We do not show the victims, but the perpetrators. However, what we hear, somewhere in the subconscious, builds up a picture of this nightmare. We see a "wonderful paradise" right next to hell. This horror becomes all the more terrifying.'

'We pondered whether we were inadvertently overlooking something by excluding numerous situations in the film and opting not to incorporate a narrator who could perhaps guide us through the experience. However, the young people I spoke to felt the film and its atmosphere. I hope this all-encompassing experience holds the most significant potential to infiltrate the subconscious and establish a profound connection to this tragedy,' underlined Jonathan Glazer.

'We wanted to place the audience in a position where they could somehow relate to the perspective of this family. We would like to be as objective as possible - to be observers and anthropologists,' said producer James Wilson.

Another theme explored in the film is the assistance provided to Auschwitz prisoners by Poles from Oświęcim and the surrounding area who lived outside the titular zone of interest.

'It is a story inspired by the fate of Aleksandra Kolodziejczyk, who helped the camp prisoners, risking her life and that of her family. The history of Höss and everything uncovered about him was dark and pitch-black. It gave us no hope, and we looked for something to lighten that darkness a little,' said Bartosz Rainski.

As the filming could not be done on the historical site, the filmmakers had to digitally scan part of the post-camp space. Only the film's final sequences, documentary footage showing the Museum's work and the objects left behind by the victims, were shot on the Museum's premises.

"The Zone of Interest" was co-financed by the Polish Film Institute. The picture will officially be released in Polish cinemas on 8 March.



#### **"The Zone of Interest"**

Director and screenwriter: Jonathan Glazer  
Producers: James Wilson, Ewa Puszczynska  
Co-producers: Bartek Rainski, Bugs Hartley  
A24 Films, Film 4, Access Entertainment





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# USING DIGITAL TOOLS AND METHODS TO FACILITATE HOLOCAUST RESEARCH

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The Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) hosted the EHRI Methodology Seminar "What's New in Austrian Holocaust research? Digital Tools & Methods" from January 16-18, 2024. The participants came to the VWI from Israel, USA, Sweden, Romania, the Czech Republic and also Vienna to spend three days learning about the latest developments in Austrian Holocaust research and new methods.

The seminar included lectures on topics such as "Digital Mapping", "Tracking and Tracing" in connection with Open Data or "Visual Sources" in Holocaust research. The facilitators – including archivists, researchers, software developers – of the EHRI-AT partner organisations, for example [erinnern.at](http://erinnern.at) or the INJOEST (Institute for Jewish History in Austria), presented their own databases and methods, such as the victim database produced by the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW) or the "OpenAtlas" database system (Austrian Centre for Digital Humanities and Cultural Heritage). The National Fund of the Republic of Austria for the Victims of the Holocaust, the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Graz and the VWI were also represented with presentations on projects connected to digital mapping and online exhibitions.

Among the international EHRI partner organisations, the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (Amsterdam) and the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History (Munich) were represented. The EHRI partners presented digital tools and offers of the European Research Infrastructure such as the EHRI Portal, the Conny Kristel Fellowships and the EHRI podcast, to which the VWI also contributed an episode on Simon Wiesenthal's book "The Sunflower".

The fourteen participants also presented their own research work in a Pecha Kucha panel, to mention just a few topics: Jewish women in concentration and labour camps in Austria 1944-1945 using the example of the Lenzing Cam; or digital photo constellations; or the question of the representation of children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors in museums and archives. They discussed their questions together and supported each other with problems in their own research.

In break-out sessions, the participants were encouraged to deepen what they had learned. In three sessions, the participants learned, for example, how they could use the EHRI Document Blog or the previously presented databases for themselves and their own research. The second part of the break-out sessions focussed more on the making of podcasts and online exhibitions. The break-out group session on the last day dealt with oral history collections, online curriculum development and working with visual sources. After the inputs, the participants were able to discuss their own research and experiences with experts.

In addition to the content and break-out sessions, the DÖW and the VWI also presented two commemorative tours, where the participants explored Vienna's first district. These tours



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# ACTION DAFFODILS IN SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

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The Museum of the History of Polish Jews POLIN invites you to join in the commemoration of the 81st anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising on 19 April. We invite schools, libraries and cultural institutions to join the social and educational campaign Daffodils commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

On the 81st anniversary, we will make new educational materials available, each tailored to the needs and abilities of children and young people. Our expanded offer this year will include:

- animated film based on the story "Memory of Particles" by Zofia Stanecka, prepared for primary school pupils - grades 1-3,
- short story "The Drawer" by Zuzanna Orlińska for primary school pupils - grades 4-6; the story will be available in a text version with beautiful illustrations by Aleksandra Artymowska and an audio version narrated by actor Jędrzej Fular,
- animated film based on the story "Było-nie ma-jest" (There was-there isn't-there is) by Katarzyna Jackowska-Enemu, prepared for primary school pupils - grades 4-6.

The educational materials for Action Daffodils are tailored to cater for people with various

disabilities. All the stories and texts, including the accompanying worksheets and lesson plans, are also ready for download in an accessible version, and the stories aimed at pupils in grades 1-3 and 4-6 are available as audio materials. This year, there is also a simplified daffodil template that can be used to create a paper flower yourself - this is aimed at preschool children and those with reduced manual dexterity.

Registered applicants of Action Daffodils will receive online training on the utilisation of educational materials from the POLIN Museum. A dedicated campaign hotline will also be launched shortly.

Details of the offer for  
schools

Form for schools

Form for libraries and  
cultural institutions



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# EVERYDAY LIFE IN GERMAN–OCCUPIED EUROPE

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The next webinar of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) will be dedicated to a online portal “Societies under German Occupation A source edition”. It will start at 3 pm CET on Zoom.

During the Second World War, approximately 230 million people in 27 countries lived under German occupation. Despite these high numbers, the German public knows very little about the experiences of the occupied societies throughout Europe. The Online Portal “Societies under German Occupation” ties in here and provides sources on everyday life of occupied societies during the Second World War, with a specific focus on dealing with hunger and scarcity.

World War II occupation is a central part of Europe’s dark heritage. This online source edition documents the impact of this occupation on the everyday lives of millions of Europeans. Aimed both at academic researchers and students, it presents more than 600 sources from all the European countries occupied by Nazi Germany between 1939 and 1945.

These sources have been researched, transcribed and annotated by leading international experts from all of the European countries occupied during the war, as well as from the Federal Republic of Germany, and they have been taken from 92 archives, museums and other institutions, following carefully planned criteria.

Originally written in 21 different languages, they have been translated into English by professional translators. Each source is presented in three versions: in an English translation, which also provides comprehensive annotation; as a transcript in the original language, which allows for full-text access to the source in its original form; and as a high-resolution scan of the original document. Interactive modules such as an advanced document search, map, timeline and virtual workspace also open up a wider range of research possibilities.

The portal also underscores the multi-layered persecution experienced by the Jewish population: not only did they face the challenges of living in occupied societies, but they also lived in fear of antisemitic persecution and murder shortly after the occupation began.

The portal is designed for a broad audience – for those generally interested in research, academics, pupils, and teachers. The sources are available with an English translation, in their original language transcription and as a scan of the original document. The digital source edition builds on the print edition, *Fighting Hunger. Dealing with Shortage*, an international cooperation project published in 2022 and recently awarded by the American Library Association. The digital portal was created in cooperation between the Chair of Modern and Contemporary History at the University of Wuppertal and the Trier Center for Digital Humanities.

## **Hosts of the webinar:**

**Tatjana Tönsmeier** (Bergische University Wuppertal) is a Professor of Modern European History at the University of Wuppertal. She is the project leader of both the print edition and

Europe at the height of German expansion, 1941-1942

- Nazi Germany\*
- Areas under German occupation
- German allies', co-belligerents, and puppet states\*
- Nominally unoccupied
- ▨ Retaken during Soviet 1941-1942 winter-offensive
- Allied-held areas
- Neutral countries
- \* Including annexed and occupied territories

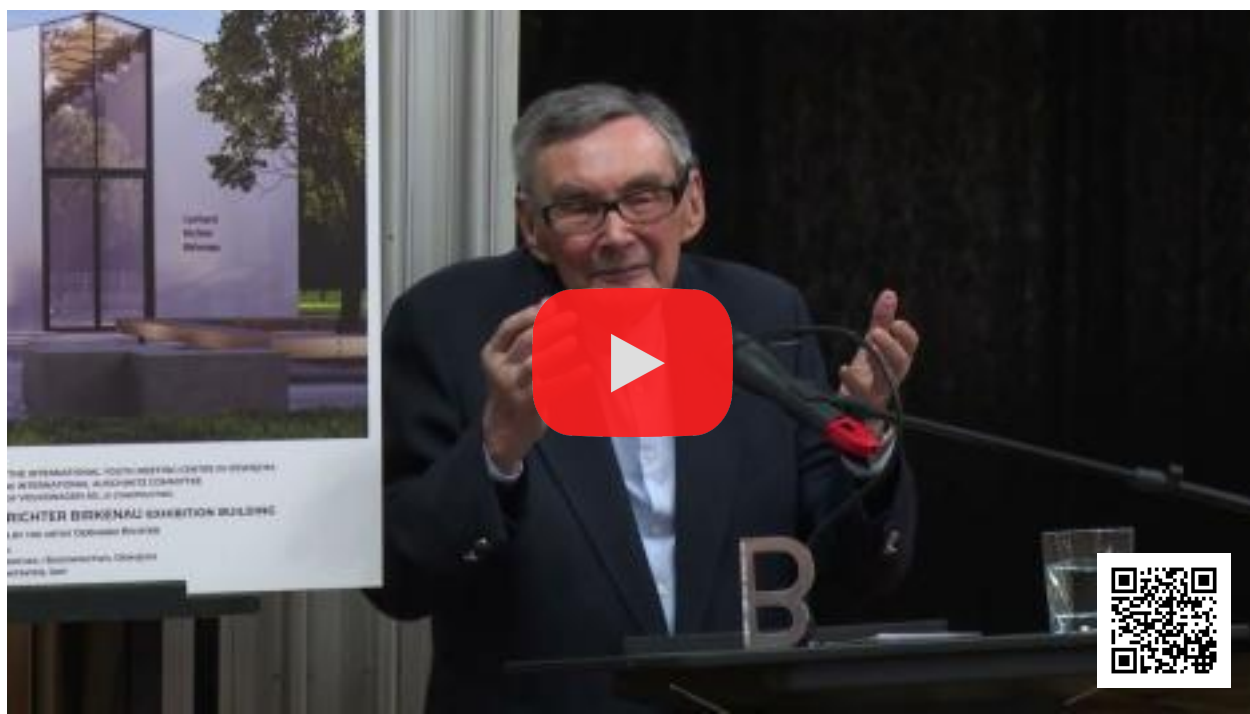


# INAUGURATION OF THE GERHARD RICHTER BIRKENAU EXHIBITION PAVILION

On February 9th, a solemn inauguration of the Gerhard Richter BIRKENAU exhibition pavilion took place at the International Youth Meeting Center in Oświęcim. The artist's wife, Sabine Moritz-Richter, participated in the vernissage. The honorary guest of the event was Marian Turski, a historian, journalist, former prisoner of Auschwitz concentration camp, and chairman of the International Auschwitz Committee.

The ceremony was moderated by Christoph Heubner, a writer and executive vice-president of the International Auschwitz Committee. Addresses to the audience were delivered by Dr. Alicja Bartuś, chairwoman of the Board of the Foundation for the International Youth Meeting Center, Marian Turski, Sabine Moritz-Richter, Janusz Chwierut, the Mayor of Oświęcim, Piotr Hertig, chair of the Foundation Council for the International Youth Meeting Center, Wolfgang Schmidt, Minister for Special Affairs and Chief of the Federal Chancellery Office, Daniela Cavallo, chairwoman of the Volkswagen works council, Krzysztof Klęczar, the voivode of Lesser Poland, architects Edwin Heinz, Marcin Susuł, and Krzysztof Strama, as well as Joanna Klęczar, the director of the International Youth Meeting Center in Oświęcim. The event was attended by many distinguished guests, including those involved in the creation of the gallery, representatives of the Polish and German government administrations, diplomats, representatives of local and regional authorities, artists, art and culture experts, journalists, educators, and friends of the International Youth Meeting Center.

In the Gerhard Richter BIRKENAU exhibition pavilion, one of the editions of the "Birkenau" series is exhibited: four abstract compositions made using a unique technique of printing on metal plates, as well as an eight-meter gray mirror and copies of four photographs taken clandestinely by members of the Sonderkommando in 1944 near gas chamber and crematorium No. V in Birkenau.







**Gerhard Richter**  
**BIRKENAU**



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