



Children waiting outside the registration office of a transit bureau, Schlachtensee Displaced Persons Camp, Zehlendorf, Berlin (Roman Vishniac)

Workshop

Visualizing Jewish Experiences during and after the Holocaust

Monday, April 29th, 2019 | 9:00–12:00 am

Library of the CJS | Beethovenstraße 21 | A-8010 Graz

Visualizing Jewish Experiences during and after the Holocaust

Schedule

- 09:00–09:45** *Exile at Home.*
Jewish Amateur Photography under Nazism, 1933-1939
Ofar Ashkenazi (Jerusalem)
- 09:45–10:30** *Europe as Transit.*
Jewish Displaced Persons-Camps and the Photographs
of Roman Vishniac
Hildegard Frübis (Berlin)
- Break
- 10:45–11:30** *A Nazi Photograph of the Warsaw Ghetto Revisited in*
Nir Hod's Painting Series 'Mother'
Anat Gilboa (Graz/ Tel Aviv)
- 11:30–12:00** Concluding Discussion

Exile at Home. **Jewish Amateur Photography under Nazism, 1933-1939**

My talk offers a reading of German Jewish family albums as contemplative responses on the part of their owners to their new experiences under the National Socialist regime. In considering family albums as “ego documents” I seek to explore the capability of photo-analysis to cast new and different light onto experiences historians studied mostly through the lens of written sources. The paradigm of exile photography, I argue, facilitates the reading of the images in these albums as multifaceted (albeit often unwitting) commentaries on the changes endured by Jews living in the Third Reich.

Europe as Transit.

Jewish Displaced Persons-Camps and the Photographs of Roman Vishniac

Postwar Europe meant for many Jewish survivors just a temporary transit station. This situation is most evident in the “Displaced Persons Camps” (DP-Camps) in Germany, Austria and Italy in which between 1945 and 1952 more than 250.000 Jewish „displaced persons“ lived and were administered by the Allies. In this situation between the end of the war and the insecurity of a new beginning a cultural life began to establish itself under the most difficult circumstances: The DP-camps became places of “a life anew.” The social-documentary photographs of Roman Vishniac emerged in this spatial as well as temporal situation of “transit.” In my talk I will show how Roman Vishniac’s work from 1947 to the 1950s follows traditions of pre-war social documentary photography as well as his own photographic projects from the 1930s – photographs which had been created in Eastern Europe and commissioned by the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).

A Nazi Photograph of the Warsaw Ghetto Revisited in Nir Hod’s Painting Series ‘Mother’

This talk analyzes the reconstruction of traditional concepts of the ‘Jewish Mother’ through visual culture. Based on the 1943 Holocaust photograph of the Warsaw Ghetto by Nazi Officer Franz Konrad, Nir Hod, an Israeli-born artist, created a series of paintings entitled Mother (2012). In the series, one of the photographed women is painted on several large canvases. Influenced by the Post-war German artist Gerhard Richter, whose photography-based paintings such as Onkel Rudi (1985) were important references for the Israeli artist, Hod chose to depict an overlooked female figure in the photo and painted her. As opposed to the German artist, whose paintings underline the importance of documenting Germany’s Nazi past and its ideology, Hod chose not to commemorate the past but to use the photograph to paint a better future. I will argue that Hod’s work is a visual discourse, promoting cultural internationality and gender equality. I will demonstrate that he utilizes the photograph-based painting, not just as a reminder of the past, but to offer alternatives to traditional assumptions. To support my argument, I will consider discussions such as Ulrike Brunotte’s studies on traditional gender roles in Judaism as well as in antisemitism. In sum, by dedicating a series of paintings entitled ‘Mother’ to an overlooked female figure in the photograph of the Warsaw Ghetto, Nir Hod created a symbolic figure of a modern woman whose role as a ‘Jewish Mother’ is a manifestation of modernity.

Prof. Ofer Ashkenazi is the Director of the Koebner-Minerva Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His publications include the monographs: “A Walk into the Night: Reason and Subjectivity in Weimar Film” (2010); “Weimar Film and Modern Jewish Identity (2012); and the forthcoming “Anti-Heimat Film: The Jewish Invention of the German Landscape.” He also published articles on various topics in German and German-Jewish history, including on the interwar German peace movement, German-speaking athletes in Palestine, Holocaust-related humor in contemporary Germany and contemporary documentary films.

Dr. Hildegard Frübis studied art history and ethnology in Tübingen and Bologna. She received her doctorate in 1993 with a thesis on „Entdeckung Amerikas in den Bildprägungen des 16. Jahrhunderts“ (Berlin: Reimer 1995). Her habilitation followed in February 2005 at the Humboldt-Universität Berlin (Die Illustrationen Max Liebermanns zu Heinrich Heines „Rabbi von Bacherach“. Bilder der Jüdischen Moderne im Kontext von Judenfrage und Kunstwissenschaft). She holds various guest and substitute professorships at home and abroad as well as research fellowships (Gerda Henkel Foundation 2014/18), 2015-2017 Lise-Meitner position at the Center for Jewish Studies, Karl Franzens University Graz. Her research focuses on early modern and modern art, gender and postcolonial studies in the visual arts, history of photography, art and art discourse of Jewish Modernism.

Dr. Anat Gilboa is an Israeli art historian. She is currently the Kurt-David-Brühl Visiting Professor at the CJS. Last year she returned to Israel from the United States, where she taught at several universities, and during the last years – at UCLA. Recently, Dr. Gilboa was invited to serve as the Academic Director of the German-Speaking Summer Course at Ben Gurion University in the Negev. Dr. Gilboa’s research and teaching reflect a focus on cross-disciplinary analysis of visual culture, history, politics, religion, gender and literature.

Concept and Organization

Klaus Hödl, Susanne Korbelt, Gerald Lamprecht and Olaf Terpitz

Eine Veranstaltung im Rahmen des universitären
Forschungsschwerpunktes „Kultur- und Deutungsgeschichte Europas“



Impressum: Herausgeber: Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, Centrum für Jüdische Studien, <https://juedischestudien.uni-graz.at/>