



A Virtual Memorial
Commemorative Interventions

RIGA
1-8 June 2012



*International Conference of Holocaust Museums Riga/Latvia
4 & 5 June 2012 @ Academy of Sciences Riga/Latvia
organized by Riga Ghetto and Latvian Holocaust Museum*



*Agricola de Cologne's presentation of SFC – Shoah Film Collection @ International Conference of Holocaust Museums stands under the Patronage of the European Parliament
4 & 5 June 2012 @ Academy of Sciences – 4 June – 11:20h – 13.20 – Ambassadors session
image: from the right to the left – Agricola de Cologne, the Ambassador from Austria, the Ambassador of the Netherlands, the Ambassador of Czech Republik, the Ambassador of Belarus, Victoria Shaldova (SHAMIR) conference leader*

Shoah Film Collection and the idea of a nomadic memorial

Lecture by Wilfried Agricola de Cologne

Founded on 27 January 2010, the 65th return of the Liberation of Auschwitz, SFC - Shoah Film Collection is representing a worldwide unique initiative by Wilfried Agricola de Cologne, director of artvideoKOELN - the international curatorial initiative art & moving images from Cologne/Germany to encourage young artists generations to reflect the topic of Shoah (Holocaust) by using new technologies and contemporary approaches in art in order to keep vivid the memory of the collective trauma which was changing mankind and the perception on the human individual profoundly.



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There were good reasons to refer to Shoah so many years after World War II, since the distance of time, the general loss of the personal emotional affection and this way, also the loss of memory is allowing different points of view what the holocaust may mean to people nowadays and in general.

While depending on the country where people are living, the Holocaust is mostly is not perceived as anything else than a heinous historical phenomenon, people do not feel affected to, at all, for those who go deeper into the subject matter, the holocaust is not describing a final result in form of millions of exterminated anonymous victims, but the endless processes an individual, as well as countless individuals had to pass which were finally leading to the industrial extermination.

By finding its starting point, different levels need to be explored first, from the smallest cell of society, the family, until its psychological, political, economic and historical conditions. But after exploring, a shocking perception is remaining, like any genocide also the Holocaust can happen all the time anywhere, if we are not very careful. We all, each individual are holding the keys in our hands.

The divers genocides happening before and after the Holocaust before our very eyes in Africa, Asia or elsewhere give evidence, and all of us, who are not immediately affected, let it happen from less or more distance, like we let it happen when people are attacked by other people on the street. Have we learned from history, is it possible, at all, to learn from history, do we learn from our own mistakes or are we condemned to repeat continuously the same mistakes?

In my personal course of life, the Holocaust became a symbol to stand up and become active against the crimes against humanity. While I would even say, the essence what nowadays the holocaust means to me, was already there when I was born, SFC - Shoah Film Collection is not representing my first major artistic initiative in this field. During the years after the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), I realized already my first ideas of a nomadic memorial between 1993 and 1999, manifested in the artistic representation form of the installation incorporating divers conventional artistic media like photography, computer-based multi-media and 3 dimensional objects, entitled: A Living Memorial - Memorial Project Against the Forgetting, Racism, Xenophobia and anti-Semitism. This project has been exhibited 43 times between 1995/1998 under the patronage of Ignatz Bubis, the late President of the Central Jewish Council of Germany, until the basic part of the project has been destroyed in an act of mad vandalism by Neonazis in September 1998.

While defending the memory of the victims of holocaust, I had become a victim of violence myself, whereby the act of the destruction was just the final accumulation point of a many years lasting process development since 1993. It was causing a dramatic change in my life. When I returned to life in May 1999 after a many months lasting coma I needed to start life again from point zero.



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It took more than 11 years after these hyper-traumatic experiences, that I was physically, emotionally and psychologically able to continue my visions of keeping vivid the memory of the holocaust, and these were my own experiences which were motivating me to do so. But during the years, I got new perceptions about art as a medium for transporting memory. The traditional static art media were failing in being able to represent processes and give the viewer of art an idea in a contemporary way about the processes taking place inside of a person emotionally or psychologically, for instance when people are discriminated, persecuted or attacked, while time based new linear forms like digital video or non/linear forms like interactive works have the potential to involve the viewer, spectator or user actively in an art work leaving the familiar passive merely consuming position.

This new artistic initiative is part of the global networking activities I started in 2000 as a virtual artist and curator. The idea and motivation for releasing Shoah Film Collection as an initiative cannot be thought without this networking concept, whereby I function simultaneously as an artist, a curator, a mediator and catalyst of the total work, which includes me also as an artist of one of the incorporated experimental films. Each year on 27 January, SFC - Shoah Film Collection is releasing a new call in Internet, resulting meanwhile the inclusion of 50 outstanding works of experimental film and videoart.

But SFC - Shoah Film Collection is not standing alone, it is part of a concept to attract a major audience for the collection and the aims of the initiative. In this way, I modified my previous ideas of a nomadic memorial and created *A Virtual Memorial - Commemorative Interventions*, an event structure, whose basic goal is to activate the audience - placing SFC in the context of complementary lectures, workshops, artists talks, round tables and discussions, whereby the aspect of the workshops or courses to be held at some European art schools have a particularly relevance for realizing the concept of the nomadic memorial as a starting point for initiating new processes and motivate students already on their way to become an artist.

So, SFC – Shoah Film Collection & A Virtual Memorial incorporate different initiatives addressed to special target audiences, while being presented both are addressed to a general non-restricted audience to be activated.

A Virtual Memorial Riga 2012 - Commemorative Interventions - realized in partnership between Riga Ghetto & Latvian Holocaust Museum, the association SHAMIR, Culture and Arts Projects NOASS Riga and artvideoKOELN – the international curatorial initiative ” art & moving images” from Cologne/Germany is taking place at NOASS between 1 and 8 June 2012 as the first event in a series presenting SFC – Shoah Film Collection in Europe, USA and Asia and a complementary event to the international conference of Holocaust Museums taking place in Riga on 4 and 5 June 2012.



Links

Riga Ghetto and Latvian Holocaust Museum

<http://www.rgm.lv>

Association SHAMIR

<http://www.shamir.lv>

SFC – Shoah Film Collection

<http://dts.engad.org>

<http://dts.engad.org/sfc-index.html>

A Virtual Memorial Riga 2012 – Commemorative Interventions

<http://riga2012.a-virtual-memorial.org>

The A-Team – Artists for Change

<http://ateamartistsforchange.wordpress.com/category/latvian-category/>

artvideoKOELN

the international curatorial initiative art & moving images

<http://video.mediaartcologne.org>

Agricola de Cologne

<http://www.agricola-de-cologne.de>