



A Virtual Memorial
Commemorative Interventions

Vilnius
23/09 - 29/10 2013



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



JCIC – Jewish Culture & Information Center

23-26 September 2013– Symposium

23 Sept – 27 Oct 2013 - Exhibition

Kedainiai Regional Museum

02-29 October 2013



KĖDAINIŲ KRAŠTO
MUZIEJUS

Vilnius Jewish Culture & Information Center

Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum

Regional Museum of Kedainiai

artvideoKOELN international

Valstybinis Vilniaus Gaono
žydų muziejus
Vilna Gaon State
Jewish Museum



artvideo**koeln**

A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013

23 September – 29 October 2013

standing under the **Patronage of the European Parliament**

is the manifestation of **SFC – Shoah Film Collection** in Lithuania at the two venues Vilnius (23 Sept – 27 Oct 2013) , & Kedainiai (02-29 Oct 2013) realized in partnership between Vilnius Jewish Culture & Information Center, Municipality of Vilnius, Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum, Kedainiai Regional Museum and artvideoKOELN, directed and curated by Wilfried Agricola de Cologne.

By taking Patronage over **A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013** , *the European Parliament* is honouring **SFC – Shoah Film Collection** as a worldwide unique initiative by Wilfried Agricola de Cologne addressed to young generations of artists and film makers to deal with the topic of **Shoah** and collective trauma caused by totalitarianism, by using new technologies and contemporary approaches in order keep vivid the memory and sensitize and activate the artists, as well as the audience via art.

A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013 was additionally embedded in the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the liquidation of Vilna Ghetto (23 September 1943) and the 4th World Litvak Congress (Litvak=Lithuanian Jew) running at the same time (22-25 September 2013) in Vilnius and many other Lithuanian places. In this way, as the Presence **A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013** was rooted on the historical context of this commemoration (Past), as well as in the future orientated international meeting for finding proper ways to transfer the memory of the collective trauma to future generations (Future).



After *A Virtual Memorial Riga 2012*,

A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013

was a next pilot project on the way of finding an ideal presentation of Shoah Film Collection to an audience by placing the films of the collection into complementary interventions like the screenings, an exhibition, lectures, a symposium, performances, concerts, artists presentations, talks and discussions in order to establish a dialogue between the artworks/artists and the audience and activate both.

The manifestation in Vilnius was consisting of two main components, the interventions are embedded in *The symposium* – 23-26 October 2013 and

The exhibition - 23 Sept – 27 Oct 2013 at Jewish Culture and Information Center Vilnius, Vilna Ghetto State Jewish Museum & St. Catherine's Church and 02-29 October at Kedainiai Regional Museum.

It was the Israeli Embassy (located in Riga) who was inviting to the inauguration of "**A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013**" scheduled on 23 September 2013, 10.a.m as a private view to be attended by honoraries from the Vilnius based embassies like the ambassadors and cultural attachés of Sweden, Austria and Switzerland, Finland, Italy, the municipality of Vilnius, as well as local cultural institutions,, and of course the attending Shoah Film Collection artists. Like 2012 in Riga, it was also in Vilnius her Excellency **Hagit Ben Yaakov**, ambassador of Israel, (third from left – image below), who started the series of introducing words explaining the relevance of art for the remembrance of the Holocaust, followed by **Algis Gurevicius**, head of Jewish Culture and Information Center and **Wilfried Agricola de Cologne**, the creator and curator of Shoah Film Collection, who gave an a short introduction to the complex artistic project context of Shoah Film Collection and the relevance of "moving images" as a vehicle to transport collective memory to the future.



Ieva Sadzeviciene, Algis Gurevicius, Israeli ambassador Ms. Hagit Ben Yaakov, moderator, Wilfried Agricola de Cologne

The exhibition (23 Sept – 27 Oct 2013)

The inauguration was finalized when Agricola de Cologne was inviting the private view visitors to a guided tour through the exhibition installed at the two floors of Jewish Culture and Information Center. As an intervention itself in the frame-work of “A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013, the **exhibition** is consisting of a variety of integrated interventional components, including the representation of “**Shoah Film Collection**” & “**A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013**” together with the attending participants. The screenings of the films in Vilnius & Kedainiai have a particular relevance, because a wide range of programs related to collective and individual memory including Shoah Film Collection are presented in Vilnius as the launch of 9th Cologne International Videoart Festival. In Vilnius. The screening of the films are complemented by the exhibition of photographs by **Eitan Vitkon** (Israel) using experimental techniques for visualizing Doron Polak’s Riga performances, prints (**Paolo Bonfiglio** (Italy), **Shelley Jordon** (USA), **Tammy Mike Laufer Israel**”, and **Grace Graupe Pillard**, giving the viewer background information about the “making of” of their films included in SFC, and the original installation “Silent Cry” by **Wilfried Agricola de Cologne**, not to forget the installation of three interactive works by **Ariel Yannay-Shani**, **Joseph Rabie** and **Agricola de Cologne**, running from computers and the 18 screening programs of the entire film collection running on a couple of computers independently from the daily screenings at JCIC Vilnius, but the (visual art) performance by **Doron Polak** on 25 Sept 2013 and the electro-acoustic performance by **Arturas Bumsteinas** and **Wolumen Trio** on 26 Sept. 2013 belongs to that, as well demonstrating how artists using these artistic media for dealing with the remembrance of the Holocaust. In total, a diversity of aspects how artists deal with the topic of Shoah can be experienced by an audience who is curious of the unexpected and not-yet-known.



The Symposium (23-26 September 2013)

The second major field of interventions is representing the symposium open to the local Lithuanian and international audience. Moderated by Wilfried Agricola de Cologne, it was located at the JCIC Vilnius downstairs at the cellar, which was representing quite an appropriate place for the topic of Shoah, but it was really close to claustrophobia, and probably one reason, why the local Lithuanians were hesitating to join.

As the public opening of A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013, the **symposium** started on 23 September 2.p.m, when Wilfried Agricola de Cologne was holding his introducing lecture explaining his personal motivations to deal with the Holocaust as an artistic topic and the personal and global conditions to start his project "SFC – Shoah Film Collection. This lecture, as well as many of the following artists' contributions were recorded on video and will be published online.

The 13 attending artists played that essential role, not only as presenters of their own works, but as audience, as well, either via their personal presentations or visually present via the interviews during Internet conferences, moderated by Wilfried Agricola de Cologne. Via SKYPE, it was possible to connect additional artists and film directors from Cambodia, USA, Israel, France, Hungary making clear that collective trauma caused by totalitarianism is not just a matter of the Holocaust solely, but is affecting most people on all continents, even if the geographical, ethical, religious, cultural conditions may be completely different from each other. The Internet conference with the directors of the films dealing with the Cambodian genocide made this particularly evident.

A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013 – became really that memorial on the final day when Danute Selcinskaja, curator at Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum presenting the documentary about the Lithuanian children's rescue during the Nazi occupation and the SKYPE conference with Moshe Kukliansky from Tel-Aviv, one of the children who survived. This was one of the most touching moments of the whole event.



The attending artists and film directors

The second major field of interventions is representing the symposium (23-26 September 2013) open to the Lithuanian and international audience. The 13 attending artists, however, played the essential role, as presenters, as well as audience, either via their personal presentations or visually present via the interviews during Internet conferences, moderated by Wilfried Agricola de Cologne. Via SKYPE, it was possible to be connected to additional artists and film directors from Cambodia, USA, Israel, France, Hungary playing the essential part of the symposium artists local As an intervention itself in the frame-work of "A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013, was the exhibition, a visualization of the commemorative project intending to give background information about the aims, ways how artists deal with the topic of Holocaust. The component of the exhibition is following rather educational purposes in order to initiate a discussion than presenting a mere "art exhibition" to an audience, and motivate not only artists, but people in general, to open their heart for art as a medium to transport the memory of the collective trauma. But for doing so, it needs an active, but no passively consuming audience



Wilfried Agricola de Cologne, Cristiano Berti, Marcantonio Lunardi, Annetta Kapon, Michael Lazar, Feleice Hapetzeder, Doris Neidl, Dova Cahan, Arturas Bumsteinas, Doron Polak, Eitan Vitkon, Ariel Yannay Shani, Jake J. Podber

The Inauguration

23 September 2013 – 10 a.m.



Israeli ambassador –Ms. Hagit Ben Yaakov



Wilfried Agricola de Cologne



Symposium/Meeting

23-26 September 2013

daily 10h-19h – moderated by Wilfried Agricola de Cologne

23 September - Inauguration

10h Inauguration, opening of exhibition – screening special selection from SFC

14h Start: Introducing lecture by Wilfried Agricola de Cologne

15h - 17h Presentations: Cristiano Berti (Italy), Felice Hapetzeder (Swe)

17h - 19h talks/discussions/screenings

Internet conference: interviews with Heike Liss,(USA), Menachem Kaiser (USA)

24 September – Collective Trauma

10h - 14h talks/discussions/screenings

- Internet conference – Royal University of Phnom Penh – “Looking Back” films about genocide in Cambodia, interview with the Cambodian directors

- Interview with Sopheak Sao (Cambodia), director of “The Survivor”

14h - 17h Presentations: Annetta Kapon (USA), Dova Cahan (Israel), Doris Neidl (Austria)

17h - 19h talks/discussions/screenings – Internet conference: interviews with Jay Needham (USA), Angela Aguayo (USA) , Ben Neufeld (USA)

25 September – Israel Day

10h-14h talks/discussions/screenings

Internet conference: interviews → Jasmine Kainy, Shahar Marcus

presentation: Michael Lazar (Israel)

14h → Tolerance Center/Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum: performance by Doron Polak

15h-17h presentations: Eitan Vitkon, Doron Polak, Ariel Yannay Shani (all from Israel)

17h-19h talks /discussions /screenings

26 September – Finalization

10h -14h: talks/discussions/screenings

- Danute Selcinskaja presents film by Lilia Kopac (Lithuania) - The Pit of Life and Faina Kukliansky

- Internet conference: interviews with Istvan Horkay (Hungary), Isabelle Rozenbaum (France) & Andrea Nevi (Italy)

14h-17h presentations: Marcantonio Lunardi (Italy), Joseph Rabie (F), Jacob J. Podber (USA)

17h-19h final talks/discussions /screenings

19h finalization @ St. Catherine’s Church: soundart performance by Arturas Bumsteinas & Wolumen Trio (Lithuania)



Dova Cahan, Cristiano Berti, Marcantonio Lunardi, Agricola de Cologne, Annetta Kapon



Felice Hapetzeder

Symposium

23 September 2013

Introducing lecture by
Wilfried Agricola de
Cologne

Live presentations by
Cristiano Berti
Felice Hapetzeder

Via SKYPE
Internet conference with
Heike Liss (USA)
Menachem Kaiser (USA)



Agricola de Cologne

was opening the symposium with an introducing lecture explaining the historical conditions for making the "Holocaust" as a topic in his art creations, from the early family rooted beginning, via the fall of the Berlin Wall 1989, motivating him to create his first major exhibition project dealing with the Holocaust "A Living Memorial Spaces of Art" (1000 Years, 50 Years and Still so Terribly Young), its more than 43 successful presentations and its destruction by a terror attack in 1998, the return to life after a several months lasting coma, re-creating himself as an artist and curator working with new media starting in 2000, until he was ready emotionally and intellectually to return also to the topic of Holocaust again, by initiating SFC – Shoah Film Collection in 2009 to be launched on occasion of 27 January 2010, the 65th return of the Liberation of Auschwitz.

The lecture can be reviewed on by using this link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXBYTGZuErk>

Symposium

23 September 2013

Live presentations by
Cristiano Berti
Felice Hapetzeder

Via SKYPE
Heike Liss

After Agricola de Cologne one hour lasting introduction, Cristiano Berti from Italy and Felice Hapetzeder from Sweden were the first live presenters. They were presenting their videos as a part of Shoah Film Collection - "Lety" (Cristiano Berti) and "Origin On Re-cut Trailer" (Felice Hapetzeder), eg. the screening of their videos and afterwards explanations of the creating processes, the context of work in their oeuvre and their experiences and personal statements, afterwards the discussion with the audience followed. Cristiano Berti is dealing in his video with the forgotten concentration camp "Lety" in Czech Republik and the persecution of Sinti & Roma during the Holocaust, while Felice Hapetzeder is confronting the viewer with the phenomenon of a relation between a victim and a perpetrator

Cristiano Berti

Lety, 2009, 19:40

Lety is a video documenting an event which took place in May 2009, involving two Slovak Roma singers, František Ďuďa and Martina Ďuďová. Ferko and Martinka are brother and sister; they are blind and forced by illness to move about in a wheel chair. The event involved visiting a commemoration for the victims of the concentration camp at Lety, a village that is now in the Czech Republic, which during the Nazi occupation was the prison for 1,309 Roma, most of whom were later transferred to the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. Since the 1970's the site of the Lety camp has been used as an industrial pig farm. For this reason, the commemoration is held in a nearby woodland clearing.



Felice Hapetzeder

Origin On Re-cut Trailer, 2009, 7:02

The theme of this work is how deeply war can affect people who haven't experienced it themselves. The psychological material has been transmitted by an older generation that was in direct contact with the events and the mental climate at the time.

It is these traces and their identity-building processes, which I am studying thru video interviews with people who want to share their experiences. There is Anatka, whose whole family on her grandmother's side was extinguished during the Holocaust. There is Robert, whose grandfather met his grandmother in a bomb building facility of the Third Reich.



Heike Liss & Thea Farhadian (USA)

ZeroPointTwo, 2007, 18:00

ZeroPointTwo, a video collaboration between Armenian-American sound artist Thea Farhadian and German visual artist Heike Liss presents a poetic and simultaneously disturbing account of a woman having her head shaved. The work moves between states of ordinary consciousness and the collective unconsciousness. The metaphorical, cultural, political, historical, aesthetic, and religious connotations of head shavings trigger images of monks, skinheads, soldiers, cancer patients, witches, and the victims of concentration camps. Filmed in real time, *ZeroPointTwo* invites the viewer to enter an intimate and complex ontological space.



Symposium

23 September 2013

SKYPE

Internet conference with

Menachem Kaiser
reVilnia



Menachem Kaiser

reVILNA.org

reVILNA is a project dedicated to re-imagining the historical space of the Vilna Ghetto; to allow, via technology and geographical science, the Ghetto to be digitally explored.

Researchers went through memoirs, archives, original ghetto documents, and histories, and geographically tagged nearly two hundred significant points and events in the ghetto. These were then mapped out, painstakingly organized into either chronological or location-based narratives, and paired with dozens of rare photographs. The result is an unprecedented work of Holocaust scholarship: a fully immersible, dynamic, and interactive map of the Ghetto. Users can follow a tour, use the filters to explore on their own, or search for specific sites or events with the built-in search tool.

The map offers a rare glimpse into the Vilna Ghetto's little-known histories: the resistance fighters, who smuggled arms through the sewer systems and trained in the basement of the library; the short-lived uprising; the remarkable hospital, which had laboratories and operating room, even, reportedly, brain surgery; the towering cultural achievements; the wildly popular sporting tournaments; the manufacturing of pharmaceutical drugs in the Ghetto; capital punishment carried out by the Jewish Ghetto administration -- and so much more.

reVILNA is a three-tiered project. Firstly, the map is fully accessible online and completely free. Second, the database/software will be made available to any interested museum/institution for either physical or online installation; each institution can easily customize the map to their specifications. Third, a dedicated mobile version, with GPS-capability, will be finalized in the coming weeks; visitors to the Vilna Ghetto will then be able to pinpoint their location and view relevant information and photographs.

Menachem Kaiser is a Brooklyn-based writer and critic whose fiction and non-fiction have appeared in such publications as Wall Street Journal, The Atlantic, Slate, Salon, Los Angeles Review of Books, Tablet, Stumble, Vogue, and New York. He is the creator of reVILNA, a digital interactive map of the Vilna Ghetto, and the author of the upcoming book *Seven Streets*. He is currently a fellow at the Writers Institute at City University of New York, and a recent Fulbright Fellow to Lithuania, where he taught Creative Writing in Vilnius University.

"How people perished in the Ghetto - that I understand; what I cannot understand is how they lived." -- Chaim Grade

"reVILNA is one of the most significant advancements in Holocaust scholarship I've ever seen -- a dazzling and effective combination of technology, geography, and history." -- Laimis Briedis, Geographer at the University of British Columbia

<http://www.revilna.org>

Symposium

Collective Trauma

24. 9. 2013

via SKYPE – Internet conference

Film makers from Phnom Penh

Live presentations by

Annetta Kapon, Dova Cahan, Doris Neidl

Via SKYPE – Internet conference

Angela Aguayo, Jay Needham & Ben Neufeld

All of them were talking about the making of their videos included in screening programs



Via SKYPE – André Hartlapp, director of GIZ Cambodia & Touch Yinmony, Chey Sambath, Meas Roth, film makers from Phnom Penh (Cambodia) about their documentaries dealing with the Cambodian genocide 1975-1979 as a part of Collective Trauma Film Collections

The 2nd symposium day was dealing with the phenomenon of collective trauma worldwide and some representative examples from „Collective Trauma Film Collection“. The collection “Cambodia 1975-1979” a collaboration with META House Phnom Penh, Royal University of Phnom Penh and GIZ, a German NGO active in the field of media and education is including a range of documentaries about the Cambodian genocide and the post genocide era until these days. The Internet conference offered the unique opportunity to meet three of the young Cambodian film directors and the head of GIZ, Andre Hartlapp, who explained the goals of the NGO GIZ encouraging young Cambodians to deal with the national trauma, which is still very visible in the country.

<http://cambodia.engad.org>



Ben Neufeld

Castaway pt. 2, 2009, 7:57

In Robert Zemeckis' Castaway, Tom Hanks--stranded on an island for four years--maintains his sanity by personifying a volleyball named Wilson. On his voyage back home, Hanks loses Wilson in a convenient plot twist that allows him to avoid the problem of reconciling the irrationality of his experience during his return to society. What happens when you can't just get rid of Wilson?



Jay Needham

This is a Recording, 2009, 4:29

This is a Recording recounts some of the experiences I had while video-taping survivors of the Holocaust for the Shoah Visual History Foundation in the late 1990's. The piece is a part of a series of inter-related works that include 13 Buildings and OPENED. These pieces are recomposed largely from my own fragmented family albums and sound recordings, and are essentially post-memory works, sound and visual pieces that explore personal migrations and erasures of memory. In the research and creation of my work, I situate narrative and documentary elements together in order to heighten creative relationships and also to reorient my audience's expectations.



Angela Aguayo

Not One More, 2010, 18:00

Since 1993, over 430 young women have been found raped, tortured and murdered in the cities of Chihuahua and Juarez, Mexico. Over 600 women are still missing from the area without explanation from local or federal authorities. The circumstances of this atrocity, formally made visible by documentary filmmaker Lourdes Portillo in Senorita Extraviada, have evolved and exploded in the last 13 years. Once considered the maquiladora murders, this unthinkable phenomenon is more likely caused by a complex web of social, legal and political conditions exacerbated by negative media depictions of the abducted and missing women. This documentary explores the developing culture of violence towards women that allows injustice and oppression to continue.

Symposium

24 September 2013

live presentations

Doris Neidl (Austria)
Annetta Kapon (USA)
Dova Cahan (Israel)

The live presentation include Doris Neidl and her video „If this is a man“, Annetta Kapon’s video “My German Vocabulary” and Dova Cahan’s documentary “A Zionist Journey from Romania to Eritrea”. The special characteristics of Shoah Film Collection – the diversity of artistic and personal approaches is manifesting itself also in three positions of these female artists, their form of presentation and the kind of discussion after the presentation.



Doris Neidl

If this is a Man, 2009, 5:09

“If this is a man” is a free adaptation of Primo Levis book “Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity”. The film relates to the theme “Memory, Tragedy, and Truth” recalling Primo Levis words which call on us to never forget, to always see what had happened. I used excerpts from the book, images of the Holocaust and I filmed water, leaves blowing in the wind and a solitary tree; three things that will carry on if man does not destroy them – as the memories should not be destroyed and should carry on, for us, for our children, and above all for the people who died.

Annetta Kapon

My German Vocabulary, 2007, 2:09

These are all the 57 words I know in German, in the order in which I remembered them. They betray something of my ethnicity (Jewish), nationality (Greek), age (57), politics (left), cultural identity (artist) and education (professor).





Dova Cahan

"A Zionist Journey from Romania to Eritrea"

For the reader of Romanian origin may be of interest my documentary film "A Zionist Journey from Romania to Eritrea". This movie is a short documentary film, which was made by me in memory of my dear father, Herscu Saim Cahan, a Romanian Zionist, born in the small town of Ivesti (Romania) in 1912.

My father, Herscu, received an education of high quality, including a strong Zionist education. When in Romania started the persecution of the Zionist Jews, they suddenly found themselves in front of large and dramatic problems.

On these issues many historians have written in the Jewish world.

Prof. Raphael Vago, Rabbi Efraim Guttman and Mrs Lilli Snitzer which is also related to the family, give a broad description of Romania at the time of the second world war all over Europe and in consequence also in Romania.

Lilli Snitzer describes Herscu's wife and her love for him through the eyes of a young girl at the time. In Bucarest, she spent a lot of time with the family because it was the period of Antonescu, the Romanian partner of the Nazi regime which did not allow the Jewish population to perform a free life.

Her memories about Herscu are of a young Zionist activist and this was the way the whole family knew him.

In February 1948, Herscu Saim Cahan, in order to escape the life of terror of the communist, fled with his wife Esther and his two small daughters, Lisa and Dova, from Romania to Palestine, which at the time was still under the British rule.

All that happened shortly before the creation of the State of Israel, which was proclaimed only on May 1948. The family not having the requested permission to remain in the promised land of Israel due to the British White Book, which restricted the number of immigrants over there, obliged him to take again a long trip towards an unknown country: Eritrea.

Herscu was forced to take refuge with his family in Asmara, the former Italian colony under the British Protectorate from 1941, after the Italians were defeated in the Second World War.

The audience will ask here and now how I am related to the Shoah or to the Holocaust, or what my documentary movie has to tell us about it?

I can assure you that my aim was just to glorify the Zionist spirit of my late father and his great personality.

Since his life occurred during the intermediate period of the two world wars in Romania, when he as a young boy was not allowed anymore to go through his studies at the Galati commercial high school and he had to submit himself to the anti-Semitic rules of the time and to remain in his small town of Ivesti in attendance to be called to the labour force duty.

During this period he did not remain passive to what was happening in the rest of Europe and around himself, therefore he dedicated his free time to open a local Jewish school for the young scholars who were not allowed to go on with their studies in the private or public Romanian local schools.

The Rabbi Efraim Guttman, who is the chiel Rabbi of the Jewish Romanian community in Tel Aviv, did not have the occasion to meet personally Herscu Saim Cahan, but only through the innumerable articles on the local newspapers "Viata Noastra" which were published on every occasion, while celebrating Herscu's birthday or commemorating his death anniversary. All that were performed each year by his late wife Esther together with his two daughters Lisa and Dova.

This was the only way we used to remember the horror of this Holocaust that touched every Jewish family in Europe and as a consequence also mine. As I told to you before, my aim was not of mentioning the Shoah or the Holocaust in my documentary film, although all what I mentioned before appears more amply in book "An Askinazi from Romania to Eritrea" GDS Edition.

Coming back to Eritrea which for me was an ideal state far away from all the horrible sins of Europe, I have to bring to your knowledge and perhaps also to your surprise that the racial laws existed over there not only against the local population but also against the Jewish people. I do not want to mention the historical facts which happened during the first world war in the far away Italian colony of Eritrea with Asmara the capital.

Definitely it was very ambiguous the policy of the Fascist Italian regime towards the Jews of the Eritrean colony as well as the Jews in Italy. There was already a determinate plan how to transfer them to the North of Ethiopia as a project in common with other European countries to populate parts of their African colonies, as the British in Tanzania, the German in Madagascar as so on...It is amazing to reveal that at the time also the American President Roosevelt knew about this project which by the end was not realized and to which he opposed himself.

The other problem of Mussolini, the Italian Fascist commander, that governed Italy at the time although there was a king in power, Vittorio Emanuele III, induced the Duce to become the best ally of the German Nazi Hitler.

At the very beginning Mussolini plans were very cautious with the Jewish Italians also not to show that a big transfer of these citizens can hurt Palestine and the Arab countries as a future solution as was planned to be found for them over there.

To make a long story short, the last part of my film is dedicated to my father's commemoration in 1999. The ceremony of this tragic day, 3 March 1974, in which Herscu Saim Cahan passed away in Asmara, and that this year marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death, his wife and his two daughters donated in his memory 25 trees in the park of Modiin - Keren Kayemet LeIsrael, which were planted in the occasion by those guests who attended the ceremony.

In 2009 there was the commemorations of his thirty-five years from his death and the two daughters give a nice presentation of the whole life of their father which was described in details by Prof. Raphael Vago head of the Romanian and East European history at the University of Tel Aviv which covered the years 1912 -1948, that were the years Herscu Saim Cahan lived and acted in Romania as one of the most important Zionist of the time.

Professor Hagai Erlich, that I mentioned before, gives a colourful description of Herscu's life in Asmara and the local atmosphere of the time 1948-1974, when Herscu at the age of 35 arrived over there as a young refugee with his wife and his two small daughters.

After this commemoration which took place at the cultural center Leonardo In Tel Aviv, I and my sister Lisa decided to perform a similar commemoration in Bucarest.

Then we arrange that during our trip there in September 2009, in search of the historical roots of our family, we will give a cultural Sunday morning in the presence of the Romanian Jews of Bucarest who did not leave the country despite of the chance to emigrate to Israel but they remained faithful to their country of birth under the Communist regime from 1948 till the end of the dictator Ceaucescu.

Many of the present elderly people that I had the opportunity to meet, where during their youth period young Zionist follower and as a result being Jews and Zionists obligated them to spend many years in prison only because of that.

This unforgettable Sunday morning in Bucarest which was performed also under the auspices of the Federation of the Jewish Community of the Romanian Capital on September 6, 2009 that coincided also with the day of the Jewish Culture in Europe.

In order to end my presentation of my documentary film "Herscu Saim Cahan - A Zionist Journey from Romania to Eritrea", which was realized also with the historical cultural advice of Prof. Marco Cavallarin, a researcher of the Jewish community in Eritrea, author of the book "Jews in Eritrea" and of the famous and historical documentary film "Shalom Asmara".

My film, a documentary film of 38 minutes is being produces by the young Englishman of Israeli origin, Amit Gicelter together with Hadas Zaigher. This documentary is a detailed story of our life in Asmara with the evocation of the Romanian historical roots of the Cahan family, my love for the land of Israel, where I came to live with my sister Lisa, who unfortunately passed away on March 9, 2011, in 1967 immediately after the Six Days War.

A very short description is giving of our dear and unforgettable mother, Ester, a small and tiny woman but very clever and social woman which for us represented the typical figure of the "Jidishe Mame". She knew also in that hard time of her life to keep a well kosher house according to our Jewish tradition

despite all the difficulties of those days. She rejoined us in Israel after our father's death in 1974, and in the same year, a few months after Herscu was buried in Asmara temporarily we brought him to Israel to be buried at the Cemetery of Kyriat Shaul in Tel Aviv.

Esther succeeded to live near her daughters until she also unfortunately passed away in April 30, 2003 day that according to our religious calendar fe;;s in the day of the Israel Yom Hazikaron for the Holocaust.

My film can be considered as many people mentioned to me a big contribution to the Israeli, Romanian and Italian ex colonial culture full of historical documentation of the last century. In Europe, Israel and as well in Africa.

Symposium

Israel Day – 25. 9. 2013

Performance by
Doron Polak
@Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum

vai SKYPE – Internet conference
Jasmine Kainy, Shahar Marcus

live presentations by
Michael Lazar, Eitan Vitkon
Doron Polak & Ariel Yannay

A man, Doron Polak, stands in the threshold of a weathered wooden doorway. He is wearing a black jacket, black trousers, and a brown fur hat with earflaps. He holds a small silver digital camera in his right hand and a large, rectangular, mesh-like object in his left. The doorway is heavily graffitied with black and white tags. The surrounding wall is made of peeling blue and white paint over a reddish-brown base. The ground is a rough stone step.

Doron Polak

Symposium

Israel Day – 25. 9. 2013

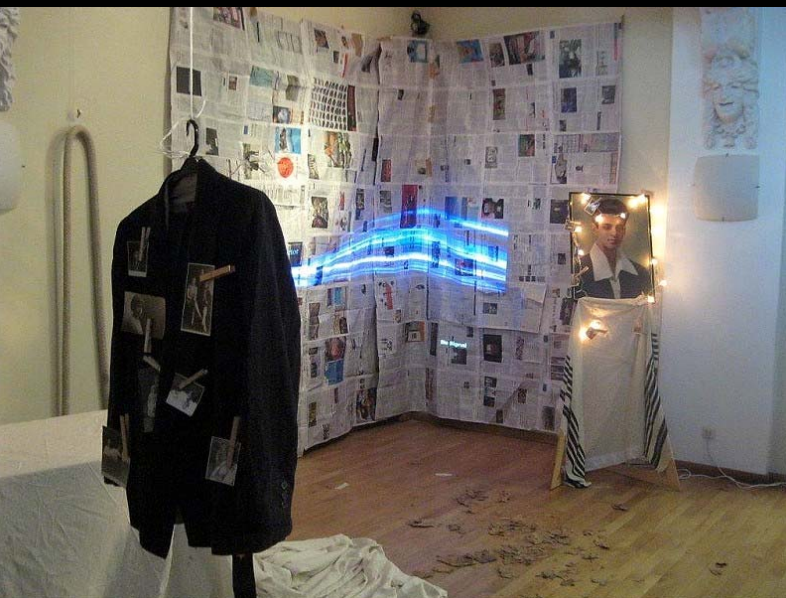
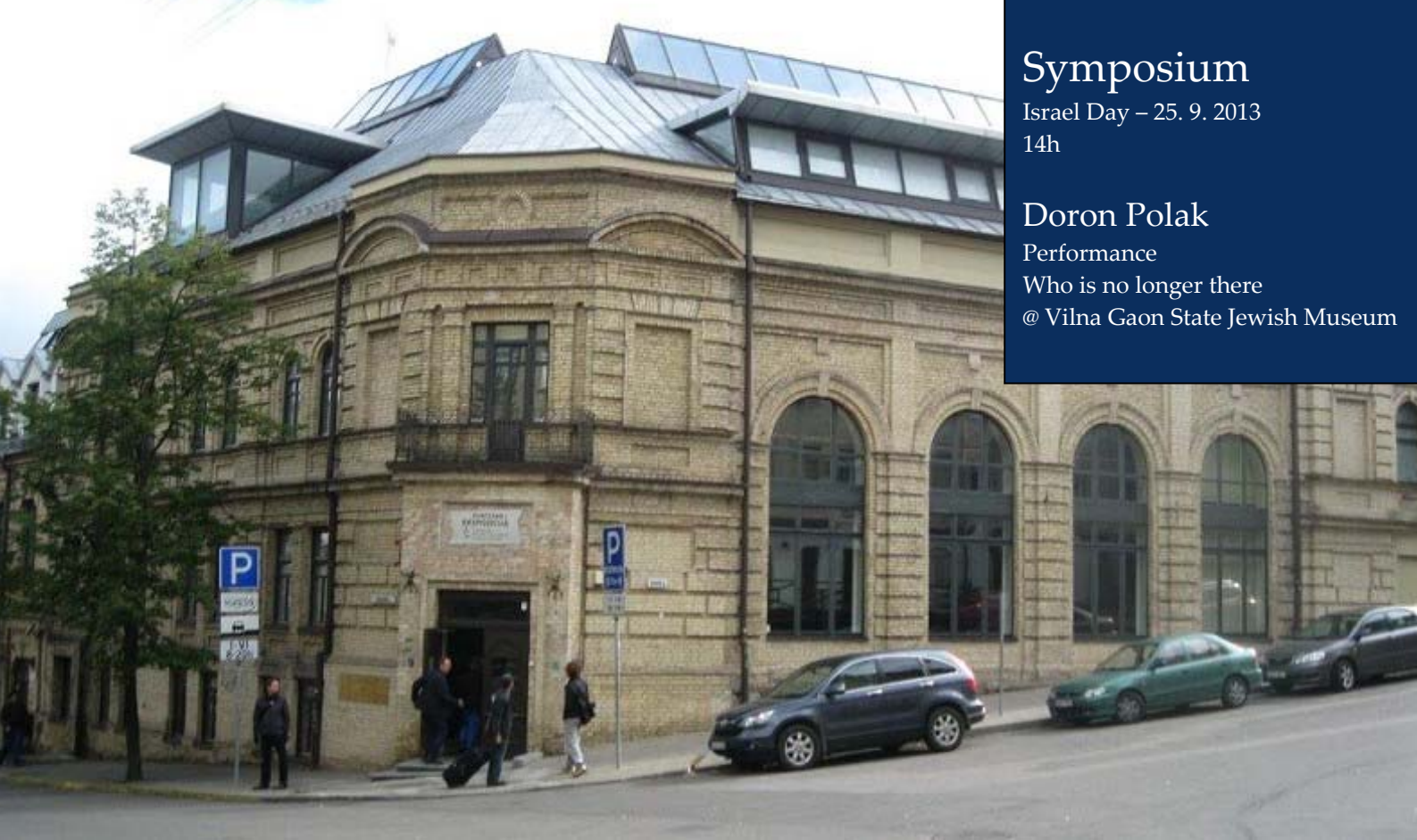
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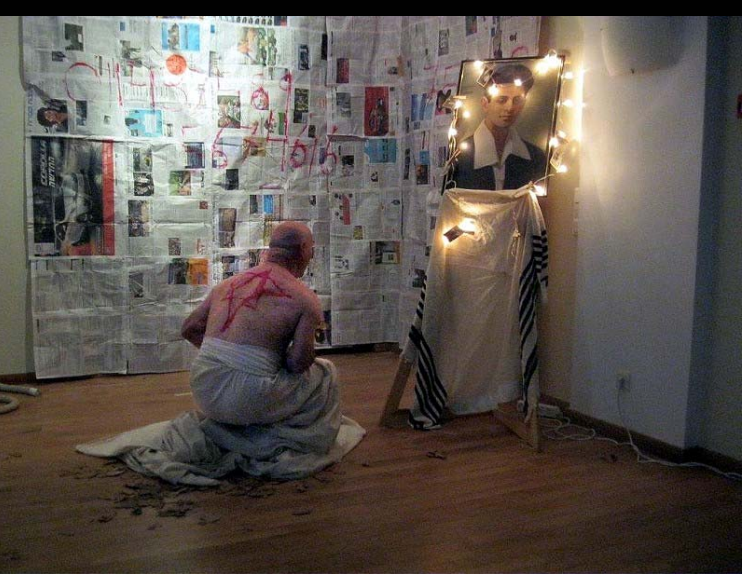
Doron Polak

Performance

Who is no longer there

@ Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum





Doron Polak (performance @ Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum)

He who is no longer here

The confrontation of the living body with the absence of the missing body. This may be the essence of the search for personal traces and memories. A personal journey of each one of us through pictures of memory, a present-day confrontation with portraits of people whose body language at a specific moment in time is all that is left to remember them by.

An ongoing journey of a body born only 8 years after the end of the atrocities: from the crazy coming to terms of a young boy, born in a free country plagued by wars, looking for evidence of his family's roots. The journey includes a Sisyphean attempt to understand stories and pictures of history's incomprehensible brutality. This dramatic undertaking includes a personal dialog expressed through touching objects and images in an attempt to come to terms with materials that were silent observers that absorbed the painful terrors.

The living body learned from all these sources, which allowed it to search for a way to locate the missing one who was present all along – to locate *that man*. At age 11, on the stage of the National of Theater - Habima, I am cast in the part of a Jewish boy from the Vilna Ghetto in the play "Iztik Wetenberg" (The Ghetto Bird). The boy meets for the first time, one of the young leaders of the Ghetto who was betrayed and executed. Five years later, as part of the final project in the theater school where I studied, I played the part of an old man transported by train to his death. On a subconscious level, I am probably trying to meet with that miserable old man, to feel and to understand something of that atrocity. Since then, I read books on the Holocaust obsessively, read and assimilate, unable to understand but trying to find the meeting point with our lives, with the present.

My father's book, written in 1987, tells the story of his stay in a work camp in Latvia and only increases my desire to understand and to know. I ask and interview my father, film him on video, and begin a journey of theatrical examination – borderless and total. In my studio in Israel, in an old building from the 1920s with a concrete floor and a high wooden roof that reminding me of the horror houses where the doomed Jews waited for death to come, I hold experimental meetings, which are documented in photography. I am joined by two friends, artistic colleagues – Eitan Vitkon a gifted photographer who strives to study and learn through the lens of his camera, and Michael Lazar who sculpts figures in raw metal and who examines, as a scientist, a geophysicist, the hidden secrets of the earth.

I find myself traveling to the Rumbula forest in Riga where the bodies of my massacred family are buried. Eitan Vitkon takes photos of my naked body in between the trees that keep silent about the atrocities. From this chilling encounter in those woods he creates a living installation and video of people wrapped in white cloth - living, breathing souls that move in madness between the trees. Wondering and questioning. Searching for answers. Afterwards I perform in an underground concrete room located in the gallery where a symposium of Holocaust films is being held. I make the presence of my body known – naked, wrapped in a Talit with photographs of the lost portraits surrounded by the local air and atmosphere.

This year I continue the process of research and the eternal question of how this happened and how a living body feels within the earth. For this long process I was joined by Michael Lazar, my partner in performance, a generation younger than me, also dealing with a photo album of family murdered in Treblinka. We represent two generations of existing and present, existing and absent. Together we bury our bodies in trenches dug in the ground, photograph it and sew the photos to "curtains" of newspapers or remains of bread and matza. We try to paint and stamp the body with words and colors, and fix them to paper creating a document of movement and life from body parts. All the while we ask who was and who is that absent presence. Who is *that man* that was part of us, that man who may in fact be each one of us? Who was *that man* who is a symbol of memory and whose traces provide the code and reason for our continuing journey to understand and to remember?



via SKYPE – **Shahar Marcus** & **Jasmine Kainy** were talking about their videos presented in the featured screening program of Israeli art videos

Symposium

Israel Day –
25. 9. 2013 - 10h



Ariel Yannay Shani

"Black-and-White Forest:Two Journeys to Treblinka"

Ariel Yannay, director of the photography department at Camera Obscura, School of Art in Tel-Aviv is the son of Warsaw-born Shmuel "Samek" Yannay, the last commander of the Palyam naval unit, whose family was wiped out in Treblinka. The exhibition "Black-and-White Forest:Two Journeys to Treblinka" contains photographs taken by Ariel Yannay in the forests near the murder sites and a dialogue between Yannay and Chavka Folman-Raban, who had reached Treblinka on a mission as liaison-courier of the Warsaw ghetto's underground Zionist movement "Dror" to verify rumors about the extermination of Jews there. The exhibition deals with the meaning of the journey and the ability of photography to provide evidence and serve as a channel for memory.



Symposium

Israel Day –
25. 9. 2013

live presentation
Michael Lazar



Michael Lazar

Inscribed in Earth

Inscribed in Earth, Is an interim summary of a process that cumulated with a gift- a family album I received two months ago for my birthday, and the ensuing art book I produced as a result. For The first time, I faced the holocaust from a personal, artistic point of view. My art never dealt with the holocaust. In fact, I never really let it effect me. As a child, I knew that something had happened to my father's family. Growing up in Israel, we would stand in silence for one minute every year as the sirens sounded in Memory of the 6 million.

But during my 15 years as a professional sculptor, this was one topic that I never tried to deal with.

Although it was always in the back of my head, my art never dealt directly with the holocaust. And then I met Doron Polak and started to photograph him at work.

Through his performances and research, he would try to examine his position on the holocaust. At first I just documented him at work – taking pictures of him as he stood naked in a corner. But Then I started to question. --- But Doron why is bread the holocaust? --- Because it is --- But Doron why are newspapers the holocaust? --- Because They are --- But Doron why is earth the holocaust? --- Don't you understand? Bread is the earth and newspapers are the earth and earth is the holocaust. So I set out to try and understand --- to understand why. This led me on a journey that changed me personally and the art I produced.

I placed myself in the role of victim, digging a hole in the sand and burying myself. Blindfolded, naked and humiliated, I covered myself with newspapers – layers of history, of symbolic earth. Earth and sand were combined with spit, hair and semen – physical traces and memories – to produce “paintings” for an exhibition in Paris; an attempt to immortalize my DNA forever in a work of art.

I meticulously sewed and stitched images of myself and Doron in the ground to large tapestries of Newspaper – the thread connecting two artists, two different generations removed from the holocaust, In a joint journey. I began to look for ways integrate my science, geophysics – the investigation of the earth, into my art. I measured vibrations in Time Square. The marching of hundreds of people reminding me of the Nazi death marches. I produced images of the Earth's response to these vibrations. The silent witness to the past atrocities. I found data recorded across tunnels. Tunnels! Tunnels in the Earth used to smuggle, used for food, weapons, people. Survival. These I turned into pleasant sunsets, amazed by the striking irony. But most of all, I strived to leave some sign of those traces, those memories.

Bringing mud from the Dead Sea in Israel to Texas and using local sand, I left two prints onstage. Two generations. Two artists. Back in Israel, as I wondered naked on the set, I used my present – the family album I received not a month before that contained, among other things, images of my family murdered in Treblinka – as a headstone.

A pile of leaves became the grave. A suit hung on the wall and an old painting became traces and memories of those absent. I took a book – nature in Israel – cut out the center. Dug my hole. My trench.

Burned it, filled it with leaves, candle wax, nails, hair. And a sole black and white picture. The journey was complete.



The Forest & The Peeling

selected works for the series of photographs, 2012 -2013

For the last few years now Doron has been examining his memories, searching for the questions to ask to the answers he grew into. He digs deep into his family tree, which was cut off in that Ghetto in Riga and sprouted again in different soil across the sea. I met him while he was trying to fill the void between here and there, his body in a state of submission and trying to tie the ends of that root.

Over the course of a year we worked in his studio. The meetings vacillating between theatrical to purification rituals. The camera followed every move, recording its impressions of every of Doron's memories or of the one who was absent, yet present in the form of a white, almost transparent, robe hanging in the air, strung up before the solid body of those in the room.

At the end of a year, we took the "Peeling" series to that place in Riga to close the circle in the Rumbala Forest where thousands of Jews were murdered as well as most of Doron's family. He now stood naked on the spot where the axe came down and severed the source of his roots. A group of volunteers replaced the white robe from the studio that for a year had symbolized the missing, and here, in the forest, became present. Absent-present or present-absent that moves unrelentlessly between those trees and in front of the same camera that tries so hard to burn into solid consciousness.



Symposium

Finalization – 26. 9. 2013

Live presentation by
Danute Selcinskaja, curator @
Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum

Via SKYPE
Moshe Kukliansky
Holocaust survivor (Israel)

Istvan Horkay (Hungary)
Isabelle Rozenbaum (France)

live presentations by
Marcantonio Lunardi (Italy)
Jake J. Podber (USA)
Joeseeph Rabie (France)

Concert
Arturas Bumsteinas &
Wolumen Trio



THE PIT OF LIFE AND TORMENT

Dokumentinio filmo pristatym
2013 m. sausio 24 d. 17.30 val.
Filma kūrė:
Lilija Kopač, Danutė Selcinskaja,
Alga Lickovičaitė, Anuolija Šečiulienė
Vilniaus Valstybinis Gėjų ir Lėšų muziejus
Informacijos centras, Vilnius, 2013

Danute Selcinskaja,

the Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum
Head of the Department of the Righteous

Before the screening of the documentary "The Pit of Life and Torment" first of all Lilija Kopač, the movie's director and me, Danutė Selcinskaja, script author of this documentary, we would like to express our deep gratitude to the curator and initiator of the project – Shoah Film Collection Wilfried Agricola de Cologne for the including our documentary in the independent Project Shoah Film Collection.

It is really remarkable that after A virtual memorial Riga 2012, today, in the year of commemorating 70-th anniversary of the liquidation Vilnius Ghetto, A Virtual memorial Vilnius 2013 started, talented artists involved in this project arrived in Vilnius and their works were shown here in the Jewish Culture and Information Center located in the former Vilnius Ghetto territory during the World War Two.

The goal of my today's presentation is, as you know, to introduce our movie "The Pit of Life and Torment". But before I'll start talking about the movie let me to share with you some thoughts that came to my mind after watching one video from "Shoa film collection".

This video is associated with the place where we are now – the former Vilnius Ghetto and tells about the people imprisoned there who amaze us by their endurance and spiritual resistance.

Ona Šimaitė – librarian from the Vilnius University - almost legendary person whose name I'd like to mention today was very close with the Ghetto Jews. She carried food, weapons, forged documents, books, hope and consolation to the residents of the Vilnius ghetto. Being deeply impressed by their heroism she repeatedly stressed that despite the terrible hunger and humiliations, the people did not stop living a cultural life! She used to say: Try to imagine – they managed to stage plays, make exhibitions of the works of painters and sculptors, and there were concerts too. There were schools that were always open do not ask me under what conditions, but the children studied.

Speaking like this, Ona Simaite had in mind a number of poets, writers, painters, teachers, university professors and their students who found themselves in Ghetto. She knew quite well the most of them.

Unfortunately, I can't say today if Ona Simaite, who went to Ghetto almost each day, knew doctor Roza Shabad-Gavronska whose name was mentioned in the video piece by Yaohai Avrahami and Karin Elliyahu "From the Middle to the Start" from Shoa Film Collection.

In this video Holocaust survivor Sophie Libo Wawryzniac, Zosha in the presence of life size mannequins is seen talking about her adopting mother, about confronting a German soldier. Zosha also remembers her Grandma – pediatrician Roza Shabad-Gavronska. I cite her words: She went to her death like Janusz Korczak, she was an orphan manager.

The first comprehensive publication about the physician Roza Shabad-Gavronska appeared in 2012 in the "Brasta" almanac of the Lithuanian Jews history and culture (editor – Daliya Epsteinaitė).

Muriel Choichois, the French researcher and the publication author, wrote: In the 20-th century the third decade Vilnius there was no one who didn't know the name of doctor Tzemach Shabad. He was the honored citizen of the city, the member of Seimas, promoter of Yiddish culture, one of the YIVO - Institute for Jewish Research founder, famous doctor

Muriel Choichois found many testimonies about the orphanage children and their tutors – doctor Roza Shabad-Gavronska and Mania Levi. From Dr. Moshe Feigenlberg's testimony kept in Yad Vashem: "About hundred orphans from the orphanage aged from 3 till 12 were propelled between two lines of SS monsters. Miserable, barefoot, poorly clothed, hungry, –the little ones adjoined the elder ones who tried to comfort them. Doctor Roza Shabad-Gavronska, their manager, disappeared together with them".

I've recollected this today, because, probably, we need some impulse – to watch the human size dolls that Sophie Libo-Wawryzniac created in memorium of her Grandma doctor Roza Shabad-Gavronska.

The composition is exposed in Yad Vashem museum. Another dolls composition dedicated to Janusz Korczak was gifted by Sophie to the museum of Ghetto fighters in (kibutz "Yad Mordehaj") Israel.

Maybe, such an impulse is required for understanding – why the name of Roza Shabad-Gavronska is forgotten in Vilnius. It's curious also, that Shoa film collection have reached Vilnius.

Now our trip in the past moves us from Vilnius Ghetto to a little Lithuanian provincial town Veisiejai because my today's presentation goal is to introduce the movie "The Pit of Life and Torment".

This my job is facilitated by the presence of the movie's director Lilija Kopač, and Kukliansky family members: Faina Kukliansky, Veisiejai pharmacist's younger son Samuel's daughter, Ruth Reches, Samuel's granddaughter. For our new documentary we've used Moshe Kukliansky's memoirs as a base of this movie. In the meantime Moshe Kukliansky, living in Israel, is the only alive participant of the story showed in this movie.

The story told by Moshe gives an very precise picture of this historical period, describes the destruction of the Jewish population of a small Lithuanian town Veisiejai and its neighbouring towns, as well as an almost incredible survival of four Kukliansky family members.

Soon after the Nazis Germany occupied Lithuania the Kukliansky family tried to escape in countryside but they were confronted with unbelievable and absolutely unexpected persecution, hatred campaign and scorn of local people wearing white arm bands on their sleeves. They had never heard before about instigations of the Lithuanian Activist Front that equated Jews with communists. They could not even imagine that accusation of such a kind could be brought against the family head – Saul Kukliansky, a highly respectable pharmacist.

But Saul Kukliansky, Veisiejai pharmacist, and three his children – Moshe, Anna and Samuel managed to survive. The dramatic way of the Kukliansky family survival – escape from the occupied Lithuania, 1.5 years living in Grodno Ghetto, return to Lithuania, and finally –1.5 years living in an excavated pit in Lithuanian forest was full of constant danger and fighting for the life.

All the Veisiejai Jews with many Kukliansky's relatives among them were killed on the 3-d of November 1941 in Katkiškės.

The Kukliansky family's history, told by Moshe, reveals the Holocaust scale level in Lithuania and extremely tragic Lithuanian Jews' destiny – only four members of the large Kukliansky family survived – the Veisiejai pharmacist Saul Kukliansky and three his children – Moshe, Anna and Samuel. They are the only Jewish family from Veisiejai who managed to survive during Holocaust in Lithuania.

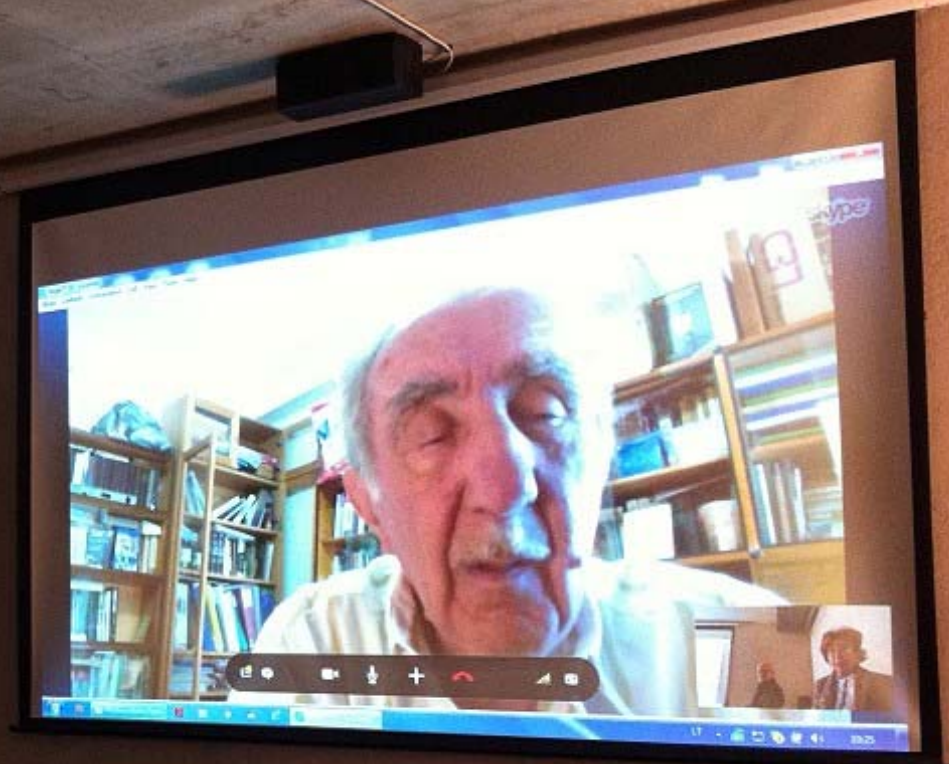
This story also reveals the influence of surroundings – meaning, how easy somebody becomes a murderer while the other one takes a risky decision – to rescue the innocent people in spite of warnings to execute.

Moshe Kukliansky was lucky in his way of torment and life he met good-natured people and, thanks to them, the Kukliansky family survived.

The movie was shot in all places mentioned: in Grodno, in spectacular Dzūkija. Many Kukliansky family members – Moshe's, Anna's and Samuel's children and grandchildren – have participated, together with descendants of the rescuers family.



Via SKYPE
Moshe Kukliansky
Holocaust survivor
from Tel-Aviv



Letter from Moshe Kukliansky to Wilfried Agricola de Cologne

My Very Dear Sir,

My name is Moshe Kukliansky. My memoirs and testimonies were used as the basis for the documentary "The Pit of Life and Torment". I also participated in the movie as the storyteller. I currently live in Israel, but maintain regular contact with Danute Selchinskaya, the person who initiated the creation of the movie, an energetic and talented partner in the creation process and the producer of the movie, and she told me about you and forwarded me your letter.

About 6-7 years ago I began documenting my memories on our experiences in the Holocaust. I had two main goals: to provide my descendants information on our past and to make our saviors and supporters during the Holocaust known publicly. In the process of my work another goal got crystallized – by emphasizing the correct facts to draw attention to falsifications and tendentious interpretations on the matter of Holocaust. I assume that our experiences in the Holocaust, and the background to these events could, to a certain extent, make perceptible the challenges and the suffering endured by many of numerous victims destined for extinction at some stages of their lives before they finally perished. As I progressed in my writing, I took great satisfaction in the fact that I am undertaking a task and leaving a correct description of my life during the Holocaust for the next generation, so that my descendants will not regret that I did not uphold my obligation.

The core of my memories is my family's struggle for life. We, who were marked as the most wanted criminals, escaped death three times at the most critical moments. For the same reason we left three separate Jewish communities, each time helpless, under the open sky and for unlimited periods of time. The third time lasted a year and a half. On our path of horrors my family came in contact with hundreds of different people, from different nationalities, religions, personal philosophies and political opinions. They included bitter enemies, evil, apathetic, and good-hearted people (I sincerely feel like calling them angels), brave heroes and people who take no risks, the rich and the poor, generous givers and misers; people from all walks of the population. I am spending much effort to carefully convey the bare facts, the atmosphere, the opinions, the behaviors and the activities of all people. I understand my responsibility, because first-hand testimonies are extremely important, and in our case may be also for the posterity, because our condition is constantly intertwined with the most common events and macabre existence.

I am very happy that you took interest in the movie and with your help it will achieve a wider circulation, especially in light of the fact that it can affect, to a certain extent, also the moral level of its viewers, because it is emotional and educational. I even allow myself to say that it can be used as illustrating material in history, education and ethics lessons in schools.

I thank you for your request to meet someone from our family at the symposium, on September 26. It would have been wonderful to meet you but the entire month has been booked up for a long time and I can't promise that anyone else in my family who is knowledgeable enough can come from Israel. But maybe!

We thank you for appreciating the significance of the movie, for your participation and assistance in distributing it and increasing interest in the movie and in the entire Holocaust theme. Also we are grateful to you for your efforts in developing methods to make sure that the Holocaust is remembered forever.

We are wishing you good health and success in all your endeavors. With much appreciation and best wishes,
Moshe Kukliansky

Symposium

Finalization – 26 Sept 2013

Via SKYPE – Internet conference

Isabelle Rozenbaum (France)

Istvan Horkay (Hungary)



Isabelle Rozenbaum

Two Trees

I filmed her, Frida.

The dead, the transparent words, mixed-up reconstructions, deaf memories, nightmares in black and white – my own; I dozed.

Photos of emaciated bodies, embedded images, men's shadows, scorched earth, my grandfather showed me.

At Auschwitz, I saw.

At Birkenau, I understood.

The birch trees were bent.

Frida confided in me.

I have woken up, I am 48 years old.

Her story, I restored, my own, ours.

PAUL CELAN/TENEBRAE

ISTVAN HORKAY/DAVE SUDMALIS

כשם שהוא יוצר, וכשם



via SKYPE

Istvan Horkay

was talking about his video Tenebrae, based on the poem of the same name by Paul Celan and the context of his artistic creations and the collaboration with Peter Greenaway

Welcome to the symposium of A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013.

I am happy to include the contribution of your interview in English.

What was the reason for creating your video on the heavy topic of HOLOCAUST?

Is it just to keep vivid the memory of historical incidents or has the

Holocaust a particular relevance to you or should have to people in general?

Our names are Andrea Nevi, author of the editing of "Everything collapses and disintegrates around me", and Eleonora Beddini, author of the soundtrack of the video. The idea of our video was inspired by some videos about the release of Nazi extermination camps and by Leni Riefenstahl's movie "Olympia" (1938), about the 1936 Berlin Olympics that Adolf Hitler intended to turn into a powerful propaganda weapon to glorify the Third Reich. The divers' shootings from the Berlin Olympics and the mass graves' images shot by the Allies appeared to us to be somewhat incredibly similar: the same camera motions (vertical pan shots), the same subjects' movements (moving downwards). We have used this similarity, result of a crude analysis that we have made, far from any rhetoric, as a reading key to an age in history marked by totalitarianism and by the systematic use of propaganda: that age, in the video, symbolically starts with the 1936 Olympics and ends with the lager's release. At both edges, falling men and women, bodies yielding to gravity, willfully or not. Disguised as a big dream, the dives become a premonitory nightmare of what will occur within the next few years, when the victims and the collaborators will be countless and there won't be medals, but only losers. Finally, the title of the video is a quotation from the last page of the novel "The Truce" by Primo Levi.

What has the Holocaust to tell us contemporarily living people today 70 years after World War II?

I think that the Holocaust remembers us that intolerance, prejudice and propaganda are dangerous threats and that also the most modern and civil societies couldn't be immune to these phenomena. It's incredible that only few decades ago certain incidents happened in a continent such as Europe.

What can be the meaning to use the medium of the moving images for keeping vivid the memory, and what kind of message do you want to give to the audience of your video?

I think that nowadays video can be a great medium to reach large amount of people, especially young people, who use the web to be informed and to feed their culture. The use of videos and images in the internet era could be a powerful way in order to make people aware of contemporary facts and incidents but also for keeping vivid the memory of past events. This may be crucial nowadays by the fact that youngest generations haven't lived the sufferings of the war and haven't anyone in their family, like grandparents, who have lived them and can't narrate memories. - The message we'd like to give to the audience of our video but obviously to us too, is that sometimes beauty can hide a dangerous dark side, so we must feed our critical mind in order to better elaborate and deepen the events and the messages that surround us every day. "Olympia" is a cinematographic masterwork but when we watch it now, knowing what happened only few years later, we have chills running on our skin.

Do you see any relation between your video and incidents nowadays?

Yes, I think that there are some relations between the video and incidents nowadays. Videos and images can build and create some consensus and are often used to legitimate controversial political decisions. As regards sport, for example, we may think to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games: the Opening Ceremony was huge and grandiose and drew hundreds of millions of viewers around the globe, but what about the freedom and human rights in China?

What is your professional artistic/cinematographic background?

We are a filmmaker and a psychologist (Andrea) and a musician and composer (Eleonora). Our collaboration dates back to 2006, with the direction and scoring of short films and music videos. Further collaborations have been essentially video art works and video installations, included in collective art exhibitions in many countries among which Italy, Armenia, Israel, Russia and Argentina. For our works, we have a particular interest in small format films, as super 8mm film, and archival footage, as in "Everything collapses and disintegrates around me".

Finally, please say some greetings to the audience in Vilnius in English.

We are very glad to be part of A Virtual Memorial and honoured that our work has been included in Shoah Film Collection. Bye!

Symposium

Finalization – 26 Sept 2013

Via SKYPE – Internet conference
with Andrea Nevi & Eleonora Beddini
which did not take place





Symposium

Finalization – 26 Sept 2013

Live presentations by
 Marcantonio Lunardi (Italy)
 Jake J. Podber (USA)
 Joseph Rabie (France)

Marcantonio Lunardi

Video Title: *No*, 2013, 2:29 - *NO* is a work about the victims of nazi-fascist cruelty. Every *NO* is the cry of a victim, is the refuse of abandon the life. *NO* is the contrast between the normal aspect of this bucolic landscapes and the dramatic events happen on the Tuscany lands between 1944 and 1945. *NO* is also the contemporary reject of the all totalitarian violence. *NO* is narration, *NO* is membership and identity because only through the force of collective memory is possible the survival of the human society. The landscapes of the film are the real places of the nazi--fascist massacres.



Jake J. Podber

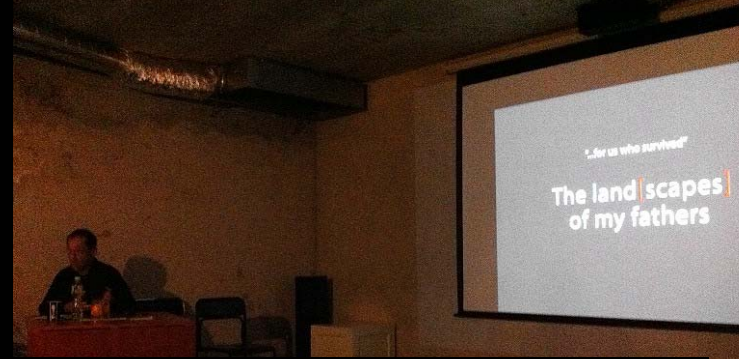
September 25, 2013, 3pm.

It's oh so strange here. As if Vilna were on another planet closer to the sun. There is a heaviness here, as if the gravitational pull is stronger in Vilna. After visiting all the ghetto exhibits, museums, and the killing fields of Ponar, the stories become the same. A diary kept by a peasant near Ponar wrote, "Today the shooting started at 4am and lasted until 8pm. Day 2: Today the shooting started at 8am and lasted until midnight. Day 3: Today the killers brought vodka with them and the shooting lasted from 6am to 4pm." There was no need to read the rest of the diary. One knows what happened during the following days.

You look at pictures of corpses and see piles of bodies...all the same, all dead. You understand that these are not just corpses, they were once fathers, mothers, sons and daughters, doctors, artists, and yes, thieves and ganiffs. The perpetrators may have been different; Germans, Lithuanians, or Poles (among others), and the victims may have been different; Litvaks, Galitzianas, Germans, or Poles (among others), but the stories are the same. We hid, we didn't hide; they killed us with bullets, they killed us with clubs, they killed us with gas. Yet, so many people I meet on my journey were searching for their own personal version of the "truth" of what happened to their ancestors. I struggle with the differences between personal and collective memory and wonder/fear that the personal is rooted in egocentrism.

I'm at the Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013 - Shoah Film Festival and Symposium, where my documentary about my father's experiences during the Holocaust is being shown.

It coincides with the International Litvak conference commemorating the 70th anniversary of the liquidation of the Vilna ghetto at Ponar. Hundreds of sons and daughters of Jews from Lithuania are here frantically searching for their lost history. They (like me) support a specialty tourism industry, flooding millions of dollars, pounds, and euros into counties that were responsible for the deaths of millions of their ancestors. I'm reminded of the four questions from the four sons in the Haggadah. What happened to MY family? What happened to OUR people? Why are YOU people coming here to support an industry built on murder? What's going on here?



Joseph Rabie

"...for us who survived"

1. Place

The subject of my ongoing research is about place: "What makes place". The original title in French (since I work in that language) is "Ce qui fait lieu".

I have always been deeply moved by the beauty of the earth, from my earliest age. You will understand this better a bit further on when I tell you about the place where I came from: it is one of the most beautiful places I know. A beautiful place where terrible things happened. Place is a human construct upon a natural core, where a multiple complexity of factors come together to determine how we *dwell* upon the earth. For the French geographer Denis Retaillé, who has developed the idea of *nomadic space* in his study of the Sahel region, a *place* is that somewhere where circumstances, the crossing of paths for example, instigate a human presence¹. He gives an example of an ephemeral market which will appear and disappear in the desert sands.

2. Dachau: the Prototype

Before March 1933 Dachau was a small town in the vicinity of Munich. It is probable that the farmlands surrounding the town supplied the city markets with foodstuffs. Why was Dachau chosen to inaugurate the Nazi terror machine? - Munich had been one of the strongholds of the rise of the regime and perhaps the decision to build the camp close by was due to the availability of a well-trained and motivated political cadre ready to take on the task of policing the camp. It is of note that Heinrich Himmler, future *Reichsführer* of the SS, was at the time Munich Chief of Police and instrumental in the setting up of the camp.

In this way Dachau - the camp, not the town, but today the town no longer has a collective identity of its own separate from the horror of the camp (except for local inhabitants) - became a *place* which would be the *locus* for the engineering of barbarism.

Immediately after Hitler's accession to power at the end of January 1933, the institutional framework for the Nazi project was put into place, starting with the abrogation of large sections of the constitution. Individual freedoms, the right to freedom of speech, freedom of press and assembly could now be sanctioned; communications could be monitored, house searches undertaken, property confiscated; all those who opposed the regime could be incarcerated¹.

The creation of the first concentration camp at Dachau followed upon this immediately, with the express purpose of imprisoning all communists as well as left-wing functionaries "...who endanger state security (...) [and] cannot be released because attempts have shown that they persist in their efforts to agitate and organize as soon as they are released", according to a statement by Chief of Police Himmler¹.

Later in the year the SS issued their "*Disciplinary and Penal Code for the Prison Camp*", which stated that anyone who "*engages in subversive politics, holds provocative speeches, congregates with others for this purpose...*", followed by a whole litany of proscribed actions including smuggling information out of the camp "*to be used in our enemies horror propaganda*", or who "*in order to incite rebellion climbs onto the roof of the huts or up trees*" or in any other way tries to make contact with the outside "*will be hanged as a subversive instigator under the terms of the revolutionary law*"¹.

This was the planned destruction of the living being, the annihilation of the soul followed by the extinction of the body. Thus it was that Dachau was the first prototypical *place*, where the methodology of a society founded upon terror would be conceived, experimented upon, perfected and refined, prior to being exported to a network of camps throughout Europe. And outside the camps, in all the cities and towns, fields and forests, the regime would put into practice its ideology of terror in what has undoubtedly been Europe's most darkest age.

One visits the camp as memorial, as a *place* which commemorates what happened within its barbed wire boundaries, and as a microcosm which commemorates what happened in Europe as a whole, a continentally defined *place*. When one faces the reconstructed camp as memorial, in its utter bleakness, its curatorial orderliness, with the aghast absence of the clamour of the dead, one asks: How does one give back to those who were annihilated here their proper *place*, so that though obliterated they might be *visible* forever?

The work is made up from three main sequences of images, each representing one of the primordial places of existence and death in the concentration camp. These are the barracks, where the prisoners, who were generally subjected to slave labour, lived; the bunker, a prison in the prison where they were held and tortured by the SS; the crematoria, where the bodies of those either murdered, or dead from disease or exhaustion, were disposed of. The three sequences are arranged vertically on the screen, the barracks occupying the top third, the bunker the bottom third, and the crematoria in-between the two. As long as the observer does not intervene, the images of the three sequences continue to merge into each other in a never-ending fade. The observer interacts with the work by moving the mouse about vigorously. This causes the work to speed up, and each of the three places take precedence on the screen, in relation to the mouse's movements.

3. *The Land[scape] of my Fathers*

I grew up in Africa, at its most southernmost tip. One could get no further away from Europe. When I was about ten years old, my mother introduced me to our collective memory. A book of horrifying pictures, documenting the camps at their liberation by the Allied forces: in this way the Shoah came to be part of my life. In reality, as young Jews growing up in South Africa, we were more preoccupied with the survival of Israel during the period before and after the Six Day and Yom Kippur Wars. We were, after all, the *ones who survived*, the progeny of European Jews who, in their millions, at the end of the nineteenth century, looking for a better life, wishing to escape the pogroms, left Europe and founded new communities in the New World. We were proud of the prescience of our forebears, the ones "*who had known to get out in time*". It was only after I came to live in Europe (*returned* to live in Europe?) and became part of a French family that the Shoah became a much more material reality, through the incorporation of their experiences into my own narrative.

Now we are meeting in Lithuania, and being in Lithuania means far more to me than simply presenting "Dachau: the prototype". It is for me *an act of return*, something I have been waiting for my entire life, for this is where my family comes from: both my parents' families have their origins in Lithuania. For some reason South Africa was a favourite destination for Lithuanian Jews, and a large part of the Jewish population of that country (much reduced now, as many emigrated during the Apartheid years) came from Lithuania. Thus for me this opportunity offered by Wilfried Agricola de Cologne and *A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013* to present my work here doubles with the desire to create some sort of dialogue with my family roots. My thanks go to them as well as the Institut Français for having allowed this to happen.

In reality my family's collective memory of Lithuania is non-existent. It was generally the men who left first, the generation of my great-grandparents, leaving their families behind. It took a good few years of hard work to raise enough money to pay for steerage, returning all the way from Africa to Europe to fetch their families. My four grandparents and their siblings arrived in South Africa as children at the beginning of the 20th century. As someone who is very sensitive to place and landscape, I have always conjectured upon the dramatic encounter, experienced by these people, between the so radically different realities of northern Europe and southern Africa. South Africa was divided between Anglo-Saxon and Dutch-Afrikaner domination over a vast territory and its indigenous black population. The cultural and social shock must have been considerable for these generally devout, Yiddish speaking Jews coming from the Russian empire; with the resourcefulness born of desperate self-reliance, they acclimatised rapidly. I can only speculate upon this by using landscape as both a *material* and *metaphorical measure* of that confrontation between two worlds so strange to one another.

Lithuania is a generally flat country, from a low coastal plain on the Baltic it rises gradually to a region of muted hills no higher than 300 meters in its easternmost part. It is well watered, covered with forests and a dense network of rivers and lakes. Much of the land has been transformed for agriculture, mechanised on a large scale. One can distinguish large planted forests serving the timber industry. One must imagine that at the end of the 19th century, the landscape would have been quite different, a finer grain in the layout of the fields, more forest coverage. However, despite these differences, one should still be able to recognise the landscapes that fell upon the eyes of my forebears. A *mild* landscape, an alternation of field and wood, openness and closeness, a constant, slightly undulating horizon, running water and resting water, a plentifulness that characterises much of northern Europe all the way across from the Netherlands to Russia. A landscape that is more vegetal than mineral, tonalities of blues and greens that would turn to orange at harvest time. But winter would be dark and cold, deep snow muffling all, wolves and bears on the prowl.

Lithuania has been visited by the Google-mobile, which makes it easier for someone who has never set foot there to construct an impression of its landscape. It would appear that many members of my family came from Vilnius or the surrounding area. My paternal grandfather came from Birzai, a rural centre in the north of the country. At the end of the 19th century, the town had a population of over 4000, more than half of whom were Jews¹. I have no idea of my family's profession: the surname was "Rebe" which suggests that at some point there was a rabbi in our ancestry. How many family relatives stayed behind? On the 8th August 1941, a month and a half after the arrival of the Germans, the Jewish population was massacred and thrown into a mass grave in the forest just beyond the town limits¹.

On my mother's side, a snippet of clear memory: my uncle recalls their father and his brother reminiscing upon the poverty of their existence in Lithuania. He remembers them "*commenting wryly, while hugely enjoying the material pleasures of a South African braai*" (Afrikaans for barbecue), *that it was exactly the same as they had experienced in Kavarsk*"¹. Kavarskas is a small village north of Vilnius. One can only wonder if some family member walked these village streets... Their family name, originally Koven, might come from Kovno, what is today the city of Kaunas¹.

One arrived in Cape Town in those days by boat. From a great distance, one would see Table Mountain looming up over the sea, a large mountain mass 1000 meters high rising directly out of the ocean and standing in splendid isolation over the vast, low flats barely above sea-level that separate it, and the city at its feet, from the African mainland. One can only wonder about the impression - of the sublime? - before that sight, that must have risen in the spirits of these weary immigrants, about to disembark into the absolute unknown, coming from their flat, low, water-plenty country. Here was a new empire of forms and colours, of textures and materials, a dry, mineral country with riotous, colourful, exotic vegetation and flowers where the presence of water allowed it, rising up in successive mountain layers to the arid inland plateaus of southern Africa.

I was born under that ocean fraught mountain, a concatenation of landscapes that impregnated my consciousness. The settlement of Cape Town was established by the Dutch, setting up a halfway station and garden to feed their crews making the long journey from Holland to the East Indies. It is interesting that the Dutch, inhabitants of another flat country, chose this mountain and its bay as their base: was it for the protective shelter, real or psychological that it accorded along this desolate coast? Or some form of esthetical subjugation that pushed them to take possession of such a remarkable geographical landmark?

My great-grandparents, like so many of the other Jews arriving from Lithuania and elsewhere in Europe took the route going deep into the interior, looking for opportunities to eke out a living as pedlars - or *smouses*, the Afrikaans term. They would take long journeys from one remote farm or settlement to another with their wagons, plying goods brought from the city. They would buy skins from farmers and sell them in the cities, saving up for the fare to bring their families to South Africa. It would appear that they had little, if any nostalgia for the Old Country.

This period is richer in souvenirs. My maternal great grandfather went far north, settling with his family near Bulawayo in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia). It is told that he was returning from work on his bicycle one day and came face to face with a lion. Not a hungry lion, it would appear... according to legend, the following day he had gone entirely grey. He lived to the age of 92. My paternal grandfather's brother, named Joseph Rabie (a namesake, though I am not named after him) was enrolled (or volunteered) at the age of 17 in the British army as a scout, during the Boer War against the Afrikaner republics (1899-1902). Captured, he was brought before the Boer general Manie Maritz, who greeted him with "*Joodjie, wat maak jy hier?*" ("*Jewboy, what are you doing here?*"), and shot him in the head at point blank range.

Gradually they would settle down in some small dorp, set up shop, buy land, farm, and go about constituting Jewish communities, building synagogues, creating institutions, their eastern European cultural substructure gradually undergoing a synthesis in its contact with African colonial life. My maternal grandparents, the one who used to joke about their precarious existence in Kavarsk, lived in a town called Upington, a regional centre located on the Orange River, which I would visit as a child. A narrow belt of fertile farming land on either side of the river, at the edge of the Kalahari Desert. How much further from Lithuania could one get? Ultimately, most of these country Jews would gravitate to the larger cities, either inland to Johannesburg or coming back to Cape Town, setting up businesses and taking great care to have their children educated in the best schools.

These people did not, however, forget their European roots: after the Second World War broke out, many volunteered to serve in the Allied armies. So much so, that when the local anti-Semites accused the Jews of shirking "from fighting in a war that was after all their own", the statistics showed that a greater proportion of Jews than any other group had volunteered. In this way my early childhood imagination *was* engaged with European landscapes, through the stories my father told. Though not any landscapes: Tuscany, over the Apennines and the Po Valley... my father, Monty Rabie¹, and his regiment participated in the liberation of Florence. And many of these Jews also honoured their newly adopted African heritage, taking up the fight against Apartheid. I mention the names of Joe Slovo and Helen Suzman, who with courage accompanied Nelson Mandela on his long road to freedom.

To finish, I wish to speak of a place that has great meaning for me. Cape Town and Table Mountain are located on the northern part of a long, narrow peninsula which juts southward into the ocean: into two oceans, as this is near where the cold, polar Atlantic meets the warm, equatorial Indian. A narrow split of land rises up before it falls into the sea: this is the sublime Cape of Good Hope, otherwise called the Cape of Storms. One goes up a steep hill, whipped by the windy sea air; a vast view spreads out over the sea in all directions, northwards to the back of Table Mountain, eastwards across the vast, luminous bay to the first ranges of mountains that hint at the interior.

As I said at the beginning of this communication, a beautiful place where terrible things happened. South Africa was one of the last countries to maintain legislation based upon racial segregation, and during the Apartheid years the black majority of the country suffered conditions of extreme discrimination. I wish to commemorate a woman named Dulcie September, from the coloured community of Cape Town who was ANC¹ representative in France. Living in exile, unable to return, she would say how much she wished to return to this particular place¹, look out upon the ocean from the Cape of Good Hope. She was assassinated in Paris¹ by the South African secret police on the 29th March 1988.

Symposium

Finalization – 26. 9. 2013

19h

Concert @ St. Catherine's Church

Arturas Bumšteinas & Wolumen Trio



Wolumen Trio play music inspired by "Musikaliszer Pinkos" (A.M.Berenstein 1927, Wilna)

Wolumen Trio play music inspired by "Musikaliszer Pinkos" - a collection of more than two hundred Hebrew religious hymns and Chassidic songs compiled and published by A.M.Berenstein in the year 1927 in Wilna. The selection of songs from "Musikaliszer Pinkos" is being re-constructed by Wolumen Trio in a new context of electronic art-music and free improvisation. The concert is presented as a 6-channel surround situation which enables audience members to immerse themselves into the minute details of melody and harmony. Duration of the whole concert is around one hour.

Wolumen Trio:

Arturas Bumšteinas – synthesizers, idea || Dominykas Vyšniauskas – trumpet, shofar || Kamil Szuszkiewicz – trumpet, shofar

Arturas Bumšteinas is composer of experimental electronic and acoustic music and sound-artist with projects presented in festival, exhibitions and various events all over the world. He is also a founding member of ensembles Quartet Twentytwentyone, Wolumen, Zarasai (with Anton Lukoszevicius), Works & Days. His radiophonic work was awarded the Palma Ars Acustica award by European Broadcasting Union. His music is documented in dozens of releases by various European record labels. He lives in Vilnius and Berlin.

Dominykas Vyšniauskas first musical experiences were through his father, the legendary Lithuanian sax player Petras Vyšniauskas. Despite receiving first jazz impulses at home, he initially studied classical music. In his teenage years Dominykas mastered classical music skills at M.K. Čiurlionis High School of Arts. In 2001 he moved up to Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in Vilnius. It was during this time that he began to immerse himself in jazz, started getting noticed as a promising performer and subsequently took part in student exchange programme at the University of Music and Theatre "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy" in Leipzig, Germany. After finishing his BA degree in Vilnius, Vyšniauskas moved to "Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten" in Amsterdam, Holland, where he received his second BA as well as Master's in Jazz. As an exchange program member he also studied at SUNY Purchase college in New York. Currently Dominykas lives and works in Vilnius.

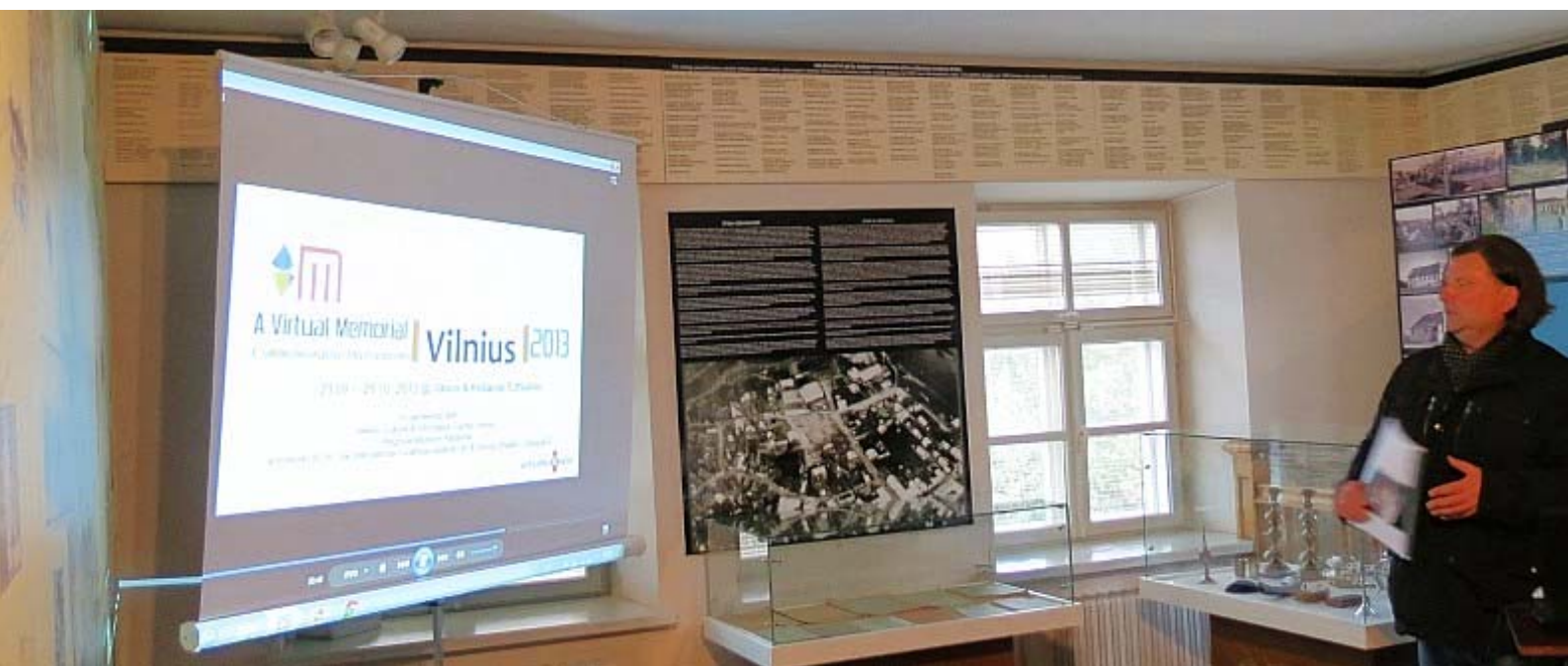
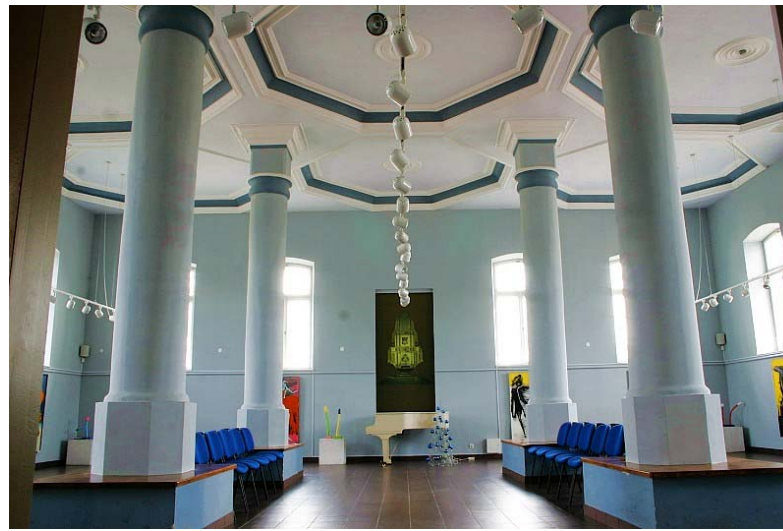
Kamil Szuszkiewicz is Polish trumpet player, improviser, composer, active part of Warsaw's underground music scene. Kamil performed and recorded with many remarkable Polish and international artists, including among others Jan Jelinek, Adama Kamissoko, Ziv Ravitz, Ray Dickaty, Wolfram, Marcin Masecki, Maryla Rodowicz and many others. In 2011 he released avant-jazz album "Prolegomena" |

Exhibition

@ JCIC Vilnius - 23 Sept – 29 Oct 2013



Exhibition
@ Kedainiai Regional Museum
02 – 29 Oct 2013



A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013

Socializing





A Virtual Memorial Vilnius 2013

23 September – 29 October 2013

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Wilfried Agricola de Cologne

Organisation & coordination in Vilnius

Jewish Culture & Information Center

Algis Gurevicius

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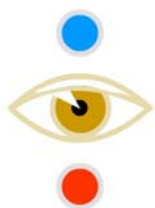
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