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Press information

Preview of the programme for 2019/2020 at the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism

In 2019, the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism will intensify its focus on issues of an international, current and political nature in several exhibitions and a new programme of events. These issues will be discussed in their historical context and their implications for the culture of remembrance examined. Racism, genocide and the Holocaust are the main themes of the programme for the coming year. They will be addressed from both a historical and a contemporary perspective in a series of lectures, discussions and other formats. The future of the culture of remembrance and the political dimension of museums and memorial sites will likewise feature in the Documentation Centre's programme of exhibitions and events.

The new programme will be realised in cooperation with many different partners from Munich, other parts of Germany and abroad. The programme was devised under Mirjam Zadoff, who became the

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Munich Documentation Centre's new director in May 2018.

'The doors of the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism open in many different directions. Our programme seeks to reach both the increasingly diverse Munich public and an international audience', says Director Mirjam Zadoff.

'Our topics are just as diverse as our public is. A growing number of people are starting to look to the past to find out why the changes in Europe and the United States are happening. They are asking why dictatorships emerge and why people vote against liberal democracies in favour of authoritarian regimes that are precursors to dictatorships. Why have egalitarianism, open-mindedness and diversity come under fire and been replaced by exclusion, homogeneity and blinkered views? We are observing a newly awakened interest in history, especially the history of the twentieth century. What this means for our programme is that – alongside the traditional Nazi themes – we will seek to draw connections with the current situation, to develop a more international focus and to adopt a more interdisciplinary and participatory approach. Over the past year we have launched many new initiatives, entered into new co-operations and tried out different formats. The significant increase in visitor numbers has strengthened our resolve to continue along this path.'

Communicating history to a broad public is a central mission of the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism. To this end, the Documentation Centre continually develops new participatory and inclusive educational programmes that convey a knowledge of history and encourage people to engage in a critical examination of current social and political questions.

As well as evolving a digital strategy, the Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism has resolved in the coming year to focus especially closely on the question of how to make the history of the Nazi era and related topics accessible to a diverse audience, many of whom have a migration background, and to create a basis for discussion. The concept and substance for the memorial site at the Forced Labour Camp Neuauubing will continue to be developed in the coming year.

The following is a just a brief selection of the distinguished speakers in our diverse programme of evening events: Géraldine Schwarz (22.1.) Christopher Clark (31.1.), Ibram X. Kendi (18.2.), Omer Bartov (24.6.), Ian Buruma (27.6.), Andrea Pető (1.7.) and Roger Cohen (4.7.). Alongside big names like these the Documentation Centre will be providing a platform for young people to express their views. Come and discover new, exciting and surprising themes from many different spheres, including history, music, literature, art, pop culture and film.

As part of our educational programme in political history we will be offering a Spring School devoted to how to approach the memory of Nazi crimes at historic sites and in families. The central focus of this programme will be how contemporary society deals with the memory of the actors of the Nazi era and what kinds of repercussions Nazi crimes continue to have to this day. The Spring School will take place from 1 to 4 April 2019 and is designed for multipliers, teachers and students.

In June, a congress of international experts will convene to discuss the subject of 'Gewalt im Nachkrieg – Post-war Violence 1945–1949'. The conference, which will be attended by many well-known guests, will look at the post-war years in Germany and Europe as a phase of unrestrained violence. The participants will apply new approaches from violence research, looking not just at actors but at spaces, situations and practices of violence as an entire scenario.

The following exhibitions will be shown in 2019/2020:

Ronit Agassi. The Fifth Season 14|02–05|05|2019

Under the title 'The Fifth Season' the Israeli artist Ronit Agassi will present an art installation featuring works whose themes are simultaneously the seasons and various aspects of human threat. Ronit Agassi likes to work with organic, fragile materials such as leaves, pebbles and Japan paper, which she either paints or embroiders in fine stitches. In this way, the artist takes her audience on a journey to the fifth season whose sinister tales only gradually emerge below its fragile surface.

Ronit Agassi was born in 1948 at Merhavia Kibbutz in northern Israel. She studied art and art education at the Oranim Art Institute in Tivon and the University of Haifa, where she qualified as an art educator and art therapist. She then worked as an art therapist at the Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv until 1987.

Ronit Agassi's work has been shown all over the world, including Britain and Germany as well as Israel. She has won many prizes and scholarships. In 2007 and 2014, she was Guest Artist at the Villa Waldberta, the international artist residence of the City of Munich.

Not Black and White. An Intervention in Colour 28|02–05|05|2019

From 28 February the Documentation Centre will present the results of a project that it conducted jointly with Munich's Vocational School for Colour and Design: What threatens us, what secures our future? Which values do we consider important? How do we eliminate prejudices and hostile stereotypes? 200 students training in seven different professions – visual marketing designers, church painters, varnishers, painters, sign and illuminated advertising producers, gilders and chandlers – will create artworks that address the Nazi past and current socio-political issues.

Many of those participating have migrant backgrounds, some of them are refugees from Afghanistan, Nigeria and Iraq. The young adults use colour, shape, text and light to express their ideas and create artistic interventions in the exhibition rooms of the Documentation Centre. Their creativity is based on materials and techniques specific to their future profession. 'Not Black and White' was conceived in the context of the school's long-term commitment to a society based on solidarity and opposed to discrimination and exclusion.

Diverse methods and a target group orientation are important principles of the educational work of the Documentation Centre. It regularly engages in co-operations with schools and other educational institutions. These co-operations yield works of art in which students have been actively involved.

THE CITY WITHOUT. Jews Foreigners Muslims Refugees 30|05–10|11|2019

From 30 May to 10 November 2019, the Documentation Centre will show a temporary exhibition entitled 'THE CITY WITHOUT. Jews Foreigners Muslims Refugees' in co-operation with the Jewish Museum Augsburg. The 1924 film 'The City without Jews', a satire on the anti-Semitism rife in Vienna at that time based on Hugo Bettauer's eponymous novel, forms the central theme of the exhibition. Taking particular scenes from the film as its starting point, the exhibition traces the stages in the process of exclusion: from the polarisation of society all the way to the final expulsion of alleged enemies.

The exhibition follows this process during the rise of National Socialism, when anti-Semitic voices demanding the exclusion of Jews became ever louder. In the film the Jews return to their home city – historical reality was very different. Starting with Bettauer's fiction the exhibition turns to address the real historical repercussions of the persecution of the Jews, which culminated in the Shoah. Examples from the present illustrate how Jews, foreigners, Muslims and refugees are being excluded and made the targets of hostility today.

'THE CITY WITHOUT' thus asks whether and to what extent the division of society during the rise of National Socialism can, should or perhaps indeed must be compared with the situation today. With its explicit relevance to the present 'THE CITY WITHOUT' is conceived not only as a historical exhibition but also as a contribution to a critical reflection on contemporary social dynamics.

Tell me about ~~yesterday~~ tomorrow 28|11|2019–30|08|2020

In 2019/20, in collaboration with the internationally renowned curator Nicolaus Schafhausen, the Documentation Centre will present the project 'Tell me about ~~yesterday~~ tomorrow', which will set up an exchange between contemporary artistic positions and institutional remembrance practice. For the exhibition project, international artists will create works that reference not only the complex German history of the twentieth century, but also its connection with current global realities. Other contemporary works will invite viewers to think about the complex narratives of the recent and very recent past, highlighting such topics as language in public discourse, political rhetoric and aesthetic enactments.

The interdisciplinary project 'Tell me about ~~yesterday~~ tomorrow' will run from 28 November 2019 to 30 August 2020. The exhibition will be accompanied in spring 2020, by a discursive programme in public space spread over several days and designed to add an active component to the exhibition via theoretical, performative and participatory formats.