



Press release
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Arnold Dreyblatt Design for a Memorial to the Nazi Book-Burning to Be Realised

On 9 March 2018, it was announced that the US artist Arnold Dreyblatt would create a memorial to the book-burning on Königsplatz. His design, entitled 'Die Schwarze Liste' (The Black List), was chosen in a competition held in 2017. Today the Culture Committee decided to follow the jury's decision and realise Dreyblatt's design.

The circular monument will be erected on the central gravel area in front of the Staatliche Antikensammlung, the place where the Nazi book-burning is presumed to have taken place on 10 May 1933. The walkable disc made of glass fibre-reinforced plastic will be set in the ground and will have a diameter of just under eight metres. It will form the base for a spiral consisting of 9,600 letters spelling the titles of the 359 books by authors banned in Nazi Germany. The selection of titles is based on the historic "black list" compiled by the Berlin librarian Wolfgang Herrmann and published several times in May 1933, which formed the basis for the books chosen for burning at the time.

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The book titles in the spiral follow one another without any punctuation, thus producing chains of words with myriad associations that create new connections and meanings: 'GERMANY'S THEATRE BISMARCK AND HIS TIME SOMEONE TELLS THE TRUTH THE ARTIFICIAL SILK GIRL ... ON FIVE MARRIAGES FROM THE TIME THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO IMAGES OF THE METROPOLIS THE LESSING LEGEND ON HISTORY AND CRITICISM'. This continuous line of text is intended to open a 'poetic window' on a lost world and at the same time recall its active destruction. The spiral form references the spiral of smoke and burning pages that can be seen in historic photos of the book-burning. The jury praised Dreyblatt's design because it focuses primarily on the intellectual and cultural achievements of the authors rather than just on the act of burning and destruction. The jury thought the art work communicated a multi-dimensional message and that it would have an impact both in the present and in the future, prompting those who see it to reflect on Nazi ideology and to take an interest in the banned books themselves.

Born in New York in 1953, Arnold Dreyblatt has lived and worked in Berlin since 1984 and has made a name for himself as a composer and media artist. Many of his installations in public space are devoted to subjects connected with the culture of remembrance, in many cases the processes of remembering and forgetting, of collecting and archiving. Particularly worthy of mention in this context are Dreyblatt's works for the Ravensbrück Memorial Site ('Liberation', 'Calendarium' and 'Inmates I & II', 2014/15), for the Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial ('Das Dossier', 2013), for the Federal Ministry of Agriculture ('Inschriften', 2010) and for the Jewish Museum in Berlin ('Unausgesprochen', 2008).

A budget of 120,000 euros has been allocated for the competition and the realisation of the art work. Apart from the memorial itself, there will be a panel explaining the work and a website with background information on the Nazi book-burning. The inauguration of the memorial is planned to take place before the end of 2018.

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