

STIFTUNG EXIL \ MUSEUM
/ Berlin

Press Kit

Stiftung Exilmuseum Berlin
2018

Press Information	3
Initiators and Staff	5
Voices on the Museum	7
Donations	8
Your Personal Story	10

Press Information

Development of an Exile Museum in Berlin

Life stories at Anhalter Bahnhof

Under the patronage of Herta Müller, the private initiative Foundation Exilmuseum Berlin has declared its goal of founding an exile museum in the heart of Berlin. The planned site is the narrow area located directly behind the partially-destroyed portal of the former Anhalter Bahnhof. Tens of thousands of individuals set out from this train station into an unknown exile during the Nazi era. This location carries a powerful symbolism, with its spatial proximity to the documentation center planned by the *Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation* as well as the documentation center Topography of Terror.

Time-frame, Financing, Initiators

Almost 75 years have passed since the end of World War II, which makes the swift realization of the museum all the more important. Research and planning for the Exilmuseum has already begun. The museum is being planned as an initiative of the Foundation Exilmuseum Berlin; The Chairman of the Executive Board is André Schmitz, former State Secretary for Culture. The museum will be financed for the first several years by a substantial donation from Bernd Schultz. Schultz is a member of the Executive Board and founder and principal shareholder of the Villa Grisebach. The museum will be financed through the non-profit Schultz-von Schacky Family Foundation and later through additional donations from around the world. Further board members include Kai Drobe and Ruth Ur. Professor Christoph Stölzl, former founding director of the German Historical Museum, will oversee the conception and implementation of the museum together with curator Cornelia Vossen. Distinguished exile researcher Prof. Dr. Claus-Dieter Krohn will serve as academic consultant. The research and development team is already in place.

Starting Point, Idea and Focus of the Exilmuseum

Expulsion and exile: The forced exile of citizens from Nazi occupied areas began in 1933. Exiles were often (but not only) members of Jewish families. Exile was both a personal and existential catastrophe and also represented an exodus of German culture, industry and science. As a result, the Nazis deprived Germany, Austria, as well as Czechoslovakia, of the majority of their avant-garde – those who stood for progress and culture and who served as role models for Europe and the world. Those who were able to save themselves by going into exile are not considered to be typical victims of the Nazi regime and therefore, for instance, not included in the federal government's national memorial sites concept.

But exile did not end with the war. Only a fraction of those displaced either wanted or were able to return to a divided Germany after 1945. Only half of all those who were politically persecuted and only four to five percent of Jews who were exiled from areas controlled by the Nazi regime actually returned. Both post-war West and East Germany miserably failed at the moral challenge of bringing these displaced persons back to their homelands in a dignified manner. The Exilmuseum endeavours to fill some of this gap by remembering these individuals and commemorating their lives and achievements.



The museum will use multi media and scenographic narratives to tell these important stories, instead of relying primarily on material testimonies. The museum has already initiated partnerships with a number of institutions which engage in research, collection and exhibitions, in order to augment and amplify its efforts and at the same time, to expand the perspective on exile. The museum narrative provides comprehensive information on the harrowing panorama of forced migration and genocide in the 20th century. This information in European and global comparison is essential to understanding and classifying the Nazis' singular practice of rights deprivation, expulsion and genocide. The museum focuses on the biographies and lives of the exiles – and therefore on the individual person. Whether in the section “Path of Exile”, “Culture Transfer in Exile” or “Space for Discourse and Resonance”, the museum aims to make exile a perceptible experience. Rotating exhibitions and an animated, vibrant framework program will continuously provide new points of access to the subject.

Exile Today

The great wave of flight and migration in our current times has awakened a new sensitivity for displacement, emigration, exile and genocide. Emigration as both catastrophe and challenge was not only a 20th-century German phenomenon, and certainly is not now in the 21st. Nationalism, religious conflict, war, civil strife and natural catastrophes have and still do force multitudes into exile. At a time when many refugees are seeking protection in Germany, it has become even more important to understand what the word exile really means, and to make a stand for humanity and against intolerance. This is what this new museum would like to achieve. By focusing on exile after 1933, it allows us to reflect on what was saved through emigration, and on what we can learn from this historical experience today.

Implementation

The initiators have requested help from the borough of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, in order to ensure planning permission for the implementation of the project at the Anhalter Bahnhof location.

An architectural competition will be run in agreement with the borough to draft plans for a new building. The project currently allows for approximately 4,000–5,000 square meters of floor space. The opening is planned for 2023/25.

Further information can be found at
www.stiftung-exilmuseum.berlin

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Initiators and Staff

The Foundation

Herta Müller is a Nobel laureate in literature. In 2011 she appealed to Chancellor Angela Merkel in an open letter requesting support in establishing a museum dedicated to the subject of exile, not least because of her own personal experiences. She is the patron of the future Exilmuseum.

André Schmitz, former head of the Senate Chancellery of the Land Berlin, as well as State Secretary for Culture in Berlin (2006–2014), is Chairman of the Executive Board of the Foundation Exilmuseum. As Chairman of the Schwarzkopf Foundation, his private and professional involvement includes the culture of remembrance and European unification. Schmitz was named European Culture Manager of the Year in 2014.

Bernd Schultz, founder and long-standing chairman of the Villa Grisebach, considers the establishment of a museum dedicated to the subject of exile as a focus of his life. As an art dealer, he has been confronted with the fate of German exiles on an almost daily basis. This has influenced his decision to establish the Foundation Exilmuseum and to support the museum for the first several years of its existence through a substantial donation. He is vice Chairman of the Executive Board of the Foundation Exilmuseum.

Kai Drabe is a member of the Executive Board of the Foundation Exilmuseum. He is responsible for the Foundation's finances and manages its funding. As holder of a Family Office, he is also the co-initiator of the Open Society Foundations Berlin and serves on the board of various foundations and supervisory bodies.

Ruth Ur serves as a consultant for German and international public and private clients in the strategic conception, financing and implementation of art and culture projects, as well as museums. Her current clients include the Liebermann Villa on Wannsee, the Holocaust Museum of Thessaloniki in Greece and the Deutsche Bahn. She is a member of the Executive Board of the Foundation Exilmuseum.

Prof. Dr. Peter Raue is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation Exilmuseum. In addition to his work as senior partner in the law firm Raue LLP and his honorary professorship at the Freie Universität Berlin, he is actively involved in the art and culture scene. As co-founder of the Verein der Freunde der Nationalgalerie and its Chairman for a number of decades, he initiated Berlin's MoMA exhibition of 2002, as well as the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition in 2007.

Prof. Dr. Claus-Dieter Krohn is academic advisor to the Exilmuseum. As a historian, his focus is on exile research, especially economic emigration and the question of transatlantic cultural transfer. He was a board member of the Gesellschaft für Exilforschung for many years, chairman of the scientific advisory board of the Herbert und Elsbeth Weichmann-Stiftung and co-editor of the almanac Exilforschung.



The Museum

Professor Christoph Stölzl is President of the University of Music Franz Liszt in Weimar and Founding Director of the Exilmuseum. A cultural historian and cultural politician, he was Founding Director of the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin and has organized many large exhibitions on European culture and art history. Among his many publications on European history, culture, and art is a book on portrait photographs of German emigrants by Stefan Moses, which was published in 2013 by Nimbus Verlag. This book provided the initial impulse for the Exilmuseum.

Cornelia Vossen M.A. is an art historian and curator of the Exilmuseum. Together with Professor Stölzl, she curated the 2016 exhibition “Harry Graf Kessler, a flâneur through Modernism” in Max Liebermann Haus at the Brandenburg Gate. She specializes in themed exhibitions and the use of contemporary media in museum settings.

Meike-Marie Thiele M.A. is Project Manager at the Exilmuseum. She has many years of experience in the overall management and production management of extensive exhibition projects, especially the founding of museums.

Sarah Blendin M.A. is senior research associate at the Exilmuseum. A literary scholar, she has worked as project manager and content designer in the area of art education and knowledge transfer since 2008. In 2016 she collaborated as research associate on the Harry Graf Kessler exhibition at the Foundation Brandenburger Tor.

Dana Müller M.A. has a degree in cultural studies and is research associate at the Exilmuseum. Since 2010 she has been involved in various projects on the subject of exile, including for the Moses Mendelssohn Zentrum, as well as for Iglohaut + von Grote, which provided management services for the project “Arts in Exile”, organized by the German National Library.

Philipp Sukstorf M.A. is research associate at the Exilmuseum. A historian, he has worked since 2008 on various online projects in remembrance of the victims of National Socialism. His employers included the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and Iglohaut + von Grote on the project “Arts in Exile” organized by the German National Library.

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Voices on the Exilmuseum

“Forced emigration and exile still shape our world today. For this reason, it is so important to safeguard an awareness of emigration during the Nazi era and to establish places of remembrance. The bitter reality of what has been suffered, the broken biographies...they should not be dealt with only in the ivory tower of academia but experienced and understood by people today through the individual stories of those from the past. This is what I expect from the Exilmuseum.”

Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, President of Goethe-Institut, Berlin

“Really a brilliant idea! All you can do is shake your head and ask why such an important idea was not implemented a long time ago.”

Frank Herterich, Author, Berlin (Grandson of Mies van der Rohe)

“Exile is one of the most sorrowful of all human experiences; the trauma remains a lifetime. Ovid's *Tristia* or Israel Singer's *The Family Carnovsky* are among the most outstanding literary references on the subject. The Exile Museum will connect the general with the specifically German and extend far beyond literature and documentation; it will connect the Nazi period with the present. It is to be feared that this topic will never end, which is why I consider the founding of an exile museum all the more important.”

Michael Wolffsohn, Historian und Publicist, München

“The foundation of an exile museum is a magnificent project for a theme which confronts us daily in our thoughts, in our encounters with those who have suffered, and in music, which reflects the multitude of histories destroyed forever.”

Eliahu Inbal, Conductor, Bern

“A museum of exile is a challenge especially suited to our time, with its networked spaces but also with its many precarious and vulnerable existences! What will be exhibited here is not what has always and unquestionably been a part of it, but rather what reminds us of broken cultural traditions and communities and makes visible the intertwining of our history with the history of others.”

Doerte Bischoff, University of Hamburg, Head of the Walter A. Berendsohn Research Center for German Exile Literature

“It is not easy to communicate this abundance of personal fates without ranking the emigrants, so that the not-so-prominent are not forgotten alongside the more famous, but it is possible. This subject, so very pivotal for German history and the 20th century, has never been addressed as a comprehensive history. It would be irresponsible to not tell the story.”

Jens Bisky, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Berlin

“When confronting Berlin's history today, one senses again and again that this city is missing a certain intellectual substance. With the annihilation and expulsion of Jewish culture, Berlin robbed itself of one of its essential and characterizing foundations. An exile museum which reminds us of this is long overdue.”

Florian Illies, Managing Director, Villa Grisebach, Author, Berlin



Donations

[The first large donation to the Exilmuseum Berlin: portrait photos by Stefan Moses](#)

It is with great appreciation that we are happy to announce a generous donation which is groundbreaking in its symbolism. Stefan Moses gifted the new cultural institute 158 large-format portraits from his series “German Emigration”.

Stefan Moses, born in 1928 in Liegnitz/Silesia, resided in Munich from 1950 to 2018 and is the grand seigneur of German portrait photography. His work, which has garnered many prestigious awards, been exhibited in numerous renowned museums and appeared in major publications, is the quintessence of the country's cultural memory. “The Germans” are Stefan Moses's dominating topic, the faces of the prominent as well as the nameless, their characters, remain the focus of an unprecedentedly consistent life's work.

As an observant and empathetic portraitist, he was interested from the start in the “simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous” (Ernst Bloch). Moses always thought in sweeping arcs of continuity. He was aware of the biographical connection of West and East Germany with the preceding epochs, which is why he portrayed contemporaries with the same interest as he did the “great veterans” who were important as either co-creators of the Federal Republic and the GDR or as monuments of the past who were projected into the present.

It is no surprise that the subject of emigration is a common theme in Stefan Moses's work, since it exemplarily brings together the continuity and breaks in German history, but also the fate of German Jewry. It also interweaves the fate of his family; many but not all of his Silesian-Jewish relatives were able to flee Nazi Germany. He himself survived persecution through numerous miracles. When everything came to an end in 1945, Moses decided to remain in Germany and with his camera explore all the facets of a fatherland which had become sinister and eerie.

As a young theater photographer in 1949, Moses took portraits of Thomas and Katia Mann, who had arrived from America for the Goethe anniversary hosted by the city of Weimar. From these first emigrant portraits to the last photographs taken in 2003, it was the people forced to leave Germany following 1933 who enjoyed Moses's empathy, an empathy born of his own experience. He wanted each to have their own place in his great saga of German portraiture. He was able to capture well over one hundred important figures with his lens; many, however, not: some were scattered too far throughout the world, others died too early. Moses called his emigrant portraits “something like the sunken continent of Atlantis”, but his pictures keep their memory alive.

Prof. Dr. Christoph Stölzl



The Collection of Prof. Dr. Claus-Dieter Krohn

A generous financial donation has enabled the Foundation Exilmuseum Berlin to acquire the library of Prof. Dr. Claus-Dieter Krohn, an exile researcher who over several decades has collected primarily exile texts dating from 1933 to 1945. The approximately 5,000 titles – for the most part first editions – mainly include exile journals, series published in exile, as well as works by exile authors and secondary literature.

The collection consists of three sections: texts on political exile, literary accounts, and publications on the scientific and intellectual emigration.

Among the political journals are agitation writings and so-called covert letters, which were illegally distributed in Germany to support the fight against the Nazis.

The exiles, who spent the years of banishment “with their gaze turned toward Germany” and who waited for the first opportunity to return, have their say in the primary literature. But so do the authors who considered themselves emigrants and who, after fleeing Germany, quickly decided to never return. The library thus enables a comparative view: The years of flight led to new experiences, convictions and certainties for the exiles – especially the politicians and writers among them – which could be used as important impulses in establishing democracy following their return to the old homeland. One thing applies to them as well as to the emigrants: Their experiences of flight and banishment contributed to the break-down of the erstwhile national-cultural container mentality. Thus, they became the pioneers of a transnational culture transfer which was hardly developed in the first third of the 20th century.

The library places special emphasis on this aspect of the cultural and especially the scientific transfer. The intellectual integration and impact made by refugee intellectuals on their new environment remained long unknown. The compiled material first made it even possible to carry out research in this field. Prof. Dr. Krohn provided important impulses and introduced this area into the area of exile research.

Many books in his collection are unique; numerous texts have never been made available to the book trade. They provide information on how the integration process of refugees was deliberately promoted by philanthropical foundations, especially in the USA, and which organizational apparatuses were established for this purpose. The testimonies, hardly available in Germany, illuminate the intellectual gain acquired by taking in these scientists and scholars, and the scientific loss it meant for Germany.

The later role of the USA as a nation of importance in the areas of academia and science would have been impossible without the targeted acceptance of scientists and scholars who fled Germany following 1933. Not without reason did the director of one of New York University's institutes enthusiastically declare in 1934: “Hitler is my best friend; he shakes the tree and I collect the apples.”



Your Personal Story

Did you yourself, your family or friends flee from Nazism to a foreign country? What stories can you tell about exile, flight and emigration, about persecution, life abroad, about farewells and new beginnings?

We would be honored and glad if you told us about your experiences.

Please contact us sending a brief summary of your story (preferably one page) either by post or by email: info@exilmuseum.berlin

With this call on its website, the Exilmuseum seeks to collect stories. We would like to connect with people who are willing to share a life story – because the Exilmuseum focuses on people: They are the actors, bearers and symbol of exile history.

The “experience of exile” also forms the overarching theme of the exhibition’s narrative. With the help of this call, the Exilmuseum would like to make the specific experiences and adventures of unknown individuals, respectively their relatives, accessible and preserve them for future generations.