

63rd Anniversary of the Liberation of Mauthausen

“Memento” by Ars Electronica is a part of the commemorative ceremony

On May 5, 1945—63 years ago today—troops of the 3rd US Army’s 11th Armored Division liberated the Mauthausen concentration camp. In accordance with a 1997 resolution passed by both houses of Austria's Parliament, the 5th of May is now marked as a day of commemoration and public expression of opposition to violence and racism. The official commemorative ceremony is held in the historic chambers of Parliament. At the centerpoint of these proceeding are the young people who were victims of the Nazis—children in concentration camps, children in ghettos, children murdered in euthanasia facilities and children in hiding, as well as those who were sent on *Kindertransporte* to safety abroad.

An installation entitled “Memento” is Ars Electronica’s contribution to this year's commemorative ceremony. In intentionally minimalist form, this work thematicizes the murder and systematic obliteration of human beings and their identities. Accompanying the computer animation is music by Brian Eno.

Memento

“Memento” accessed names of children murdered in Auschwitz who are listed on the website of the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. These names were handwritten and then digitized. Using a computer program developed by American artist Zachary Lieberman, the names in white script lettering are animated and then projected onto a black background. As though each individual signature were a thread being tugged by an invisible hand, the script letters of which they are composed unravel until all that remains is a slightly wavy white line. Shortly thereafter, the line vanishes too.

There is no large-format screen serving as a projection surface here; instead, the imagery is projected onto the 10 statues arrayed behind the dais in Parliament's historic chambers. Wrapped in semi-transparent projection foil, these statues are transformed into stele that are reminiscent of commemorative columns. In this way, "Memento" become a part of the space and engenders an imminent presence.

Yad Vashem

Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, was established in 1953 by an act of the Israeli Knesset. Since its inception, Yad Vashem has been entrusted with documenting the history of the Jewish people during the Holocaust period, preserving the memory and story of each of the six million victims, and imparting the legacy of the Holocaust for generations to come through its archives, library, school, museums and recognition of the Righteous Among the Nations. Additional information about Yad Vashem is available online at www.yadvashem.org.

The official website of the Mauthausen Concentration Camp Memorial is www.mauthausen-memorial.at.

Contact:

Christopher Ruckerbauer
Ars Electronica Press Officer

Tel +43.732.7272-38
Fax +43.732.7272-638
Cell: +43.664-81 26 156

e-mail: christopher.ruckerbauer@aec.at
URL: <http://www.aec.at/press>