PARALLEL TRACES



TEMPORARY EXHIBITION | **MUSEUM OF JEWISH HISTORY**

OCTOBER 2019 - APRIL 2020

aepj jewishheritage · CUMEDIAE · imascono · Patronat Call de Girona · Tačka Komunikacije · Israeli House · Tarbut Foundation · FBK Fundacja Bente Kahan

Co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union

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A new lens on Jewish Heritage

Much of the rich and complex European history and cultural heritage is deeply rooted in Jewish related elements (not only with the story of migrations, persecutions and precariousness but also resulting from the profusion of cultural, scientific and social exchanges between nations and individuals). Just as many other cultures and countries contribute to our shared heritage, Jewish history is an indispensable component of what we call Europe today. Yet it still remains much unknown to the general public nowadays.

Initiated by the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (AEPJ), the Parallel Traces is a cross-cutting, collaborative, cross-European project that aims to bridge this gap. By unearthing the traces of the Jewish cultural heritage in urban architecture and planning in Europe, it offers an original and rigorous perspective on the past, present and future of European Jewish history and encourages mutual understanding and respect amongst different cultures and modes of artistic expression.

Parallel Traces is co-funded by the European Union within the framework of the Creative Europe programme.

The exhibition is divided into two different areas. On one hand, the works by guest artists are located on the **temporary exhibition's hall of the Museum of Jewish History**, on the ground floor. On the other, on **the first floor of the Museum**, there's a room with the works by the awarded artists and other participants in the Parallel Traces contest.

GUEST ARTISTS

Rethinking the Jewish Heritage with renowned guest artists

In the framework of the Parallel Traces project, each local partner invited a guest artist to highlight the project mission through digital artworks revealing the understanding and discovery of the Jewish Heritage in the urban environment. The selected artists produced a work inspired by the Jewish Heritage of each one of the city partners, giving special relevance to the heritage in danger of disappearance and recovering the memory through artistic creations.



Dina Oganova (DIKARKA)

Tbilisi, Geòrgia



Dina Organova (1987) is a documentary photographer, working as a freelancer on a personal, long term projects mostly in Georgia and Post-Soviet Countries.

www.dikarka.ge

I grew up in Tbilisi. I am a part of it and my city is my main inspiration. Tbilisi has been a historic crossroad of different cultures (Georgian, Jewish, Armenian, Kurdish…) and each of them gave unique colors, vibes and flavors to its architecture, history and soul. I would never imagine Tbilisi without Jewish people, without beautiful Jewish details which you can recognize with one glance. The places featured in this project have always been parts of my everyday walks.



There are many hidden, mysterious places in Tbilisi. Jewish cemetery is one of them: located in the multiethnic neighborhood of Isani, between open market, school and residential area, it keeps many untold stories, unrealized dreams and names which have been faded away by winds and rains. This is one of the gravestones from the Tbilisi Jewish cemetery. It has no face, no name, just a stone with cracks and the Star of David. It reminds us of the soul of human: damaged but not broken, strong in faith. This stone is a key to the whole project: we all travel from our world to another one day. This stone with its memory could be in honor of anyone, who has been forgotten but not lost.



The Great Synagogue of Tbilisi, also known as the Georgian Synagogue, was built from 1895 to 1903 in an eclectic style by Georgian Jews. Since than it has been one of the most significant cultural and spiritual monuments in our Capital. Even though many Jewish people migrated from Georgia in 90s, this place still keeps its importance for the city as an inseparable part of its identity. These two boys, standing shoulder to shoulder, facing the gate of the Great Synagogue symbolize the present heading to the future: it is important to be together and to know where we are, where we want to go.



This wonderful house (a real pearl of Tbilisi architecture) is located on the left bank of Mtkvari River, on Aghmashenebeli Avenue. The building which is used as a hotel now is one of the outstanding monuments keeping the history of Jewish people in Georgia.



Old Tbilisi streets tell colorful stories of love, friendship and respect of Georgian and Jewish people living here, in this magical atmosphere. Looking at these balconies, the real treasures of my ancient city, I can imagine the first owners of the houses, Georgian and Jewish neighbors and their very special relationship, so typical for Tbilisi.



Sometimes our shoulders become too heavy and when it happens, we try to find enlightenment in different ways. Sometimes we need to stay alone to face ourselves and God.



Many legends are connected to the house located in Machabeli Street #17, in the heart of Tbilisi. We do not know which of them are true, we also do not know much about the first owners who left Georgia when the Red Army invaded the country. There is one thing we know for sure: nowadays this is one of the most visited buildings in Tbilisi, which equally attracts locals and guests of the city.

Israel Ariño
Girona, Spain



Israel Ariño (1974) is graduated in Fine Arts from the University of Barcelona. Since 2001 he established himself as a professional in the field of photography, dividing his time between teaching, his work as editor for Ediciones Anómalas and the production of personal artworks. His work (present in numerous public and private collections) is exhibited regularly in Spain and particularly in France.

www.israelarino.com

Stones know everything

The project "Stones know everything" is about an imaginary promenade around the neighborhood, the Call. At first, we discovered the neighborhood thought the narrowness of its streets. From there, the series continues its wanderings as a journey.

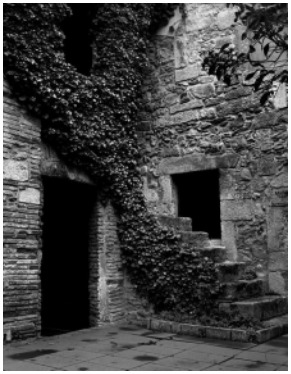
Particular emphasis is placed upon the stones, acting as a metaphor for the passage of time, for memory, for the wisdom they have been accumulating over the centuries. Stones also allow us to speak about all the historical episodes they have experienced, as we can see on walls surface different stratifications, the accumulation of times that we find in el Call.

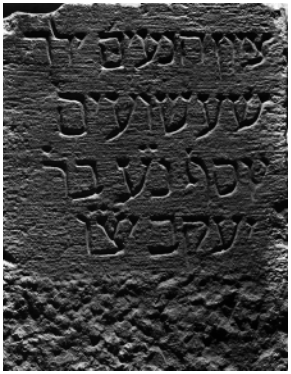
The end of the ensemble refers to the painful episode that took place around 1391, when the Jews were persecuted and forced to move to the Gironella Tower, the highest point in the city. The last images are made at this place, pushing us to that moment, trying to pass on the experiences lived during that confinement.













Agnieszka Traczewska
Wroclaw, Poland



Agnieszka Traczewska (1969) is a photographer and documentary producer.

Her strong Polish background creates phenomenon of seeking the „lost world", traces of Jews who for centuries lived with Poles side by side with the tragic end of that close, national relationship which came with WW2.

The fact she is women, non-Jewish photographer, requires acceptance and flexibility of her orthodox characters what provides an additional flavor to her persistent quest.

Traczewska says: "Despite our vast differences and cultural disparities, the side by side coexistence between Poles and Jews can be relived on a micro scale in my photographs. It is my sincere hope that by breaking my own stereotypes, I can inspire people from the world over to bridge gaps for a better and more unified socio-cultural society."

www.agnieszkatraczewska.com



The Old Cemetery

The entire Jewish population of Breslau perished in the Holocaust. The Old Jewish cemetery, one of two still existing in the City, during World War 2 was turned into a battlefield. Visitors still can notice destruction of tombs and bullet holes in the walls. However, many names and graves remain readable. In 1945 German Breslau became Polish Wroclaw. In 1975 abandoned and neglected, "The Old" cemetery, was incorporated by the Municipality to the list of city heritage monuments. Since 1991 it got an official status of "Museum of Funeral Art".



The New Cemetery

According to the Jalta conference declaration (1945), the Polish eastern borderlands were annexed by the Soviet Union. In return, Poland received partial territorial compensation in the west from Germany, incl. Breslau/Wroclaw.

The continuation of pre-Holocaust German Jewish tradition was cut off. With the gap to fill, the small post war Jewish community was built mostly by Jewish refugees from the East.

Among two Jewish cemeteries in Wroclaw, "The New" one, houses the monument of the German-Jewish soldiers of the World War I. The cemetery is still functioning to this day.



Stolpersteine

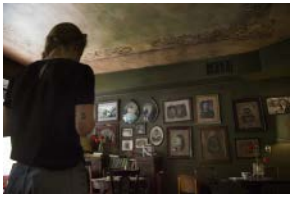
They are brass plates with names of Holocaust victims installed in pavements.

They are a symbol of memory and recall traces of Nazi victims persecuted in the Holocaust. It's a part of a larger European project initiated by German Artist Gunter Demnig. They usually list the names, dates and places they were killed. The plates are installed in front of the victim's houses. In Wroclaw, unlike other Polish towns where this project wasn't widely adopted, there are four places with Stolpersteine. The project includes 27 European countries. This makes the Stolpersteine project the world's largest decentralized memorial.



The White Stork Synagogue

The only synagogue that survived the destruction of World War 2 was the 19th century White Stork Synagogue. In 2006, The Bente Kahan Foundation was established by the Norwegian-Jewish performing artist with the same name. The Foundation restored the badly damaged building and transformed it into a vibrant Centre for Jewish Culture and Education open for all. The synagogue also serves as a prayer house for the Jewish community.



Jewish Sentiments

In current Poland, sentiments toward multi-cultural history of the country, including the significant Jewish contribution are ever present. Jewish culture festivals, cafes and restaurants styled resembling the "old good times" is an example that "Jewish" memories sell well.



Gaps

Emptiness. The most typical symbol of pre-War Breslau as it pertains to Jewish heritage.

Most of glorious synagogues were destroyed. Most of Jewish buildings changed their identity. The place where once the Jewish Theological Seminarian of modern Jewish scholarship proudly stood, was turn into a parking lot.

The building and institution which once was a beacon of modern Jewish scholarship is now commemorated only by an easy-to-be-missed plaque with inscription testifying to its fading memory.

Daniel Grünfeld

Sighetu Marmației, Romania



Daniel Grünfeld (1981) works as a photographer mostly between Germany, Eastern Europe and SE Asia. His work is often published internationally in books and magazines. He is originally from a border-town in Transylvania and has a degree in social anthropology from Scotland. He is currently working on various projects concerning Jewish history in Romania.

www.danielgruenfeld.de

Towards the end of my six weeks long stay in Sighet, I decided to revisit the sites that intrigued me the most. By way of a silent contemplation, I then stood in each of these places, simply paying attention and reflecting on all that I have learned about this region's Jewish past. My camera was mounted on a tripod next to me and with a cable release in my hand I waited until I felt it was time.

The resulting photographs are a combination of fairly long exposures, between 1/25th and 1 full second, as well as multiple exposures of the same image. Everything is done in camera. There is hardly any post processing.

The pictures are in black and white because I wanted to maintain a certain timelessness. I wanted them to connect to the images that I kept finding in archives. I wanted to add something to that material, or rather to enter into some kind of a dialogue with it. The other part of this dialogue, as you will read in the captions, is with Elie Wiesel. His voice and his memories permeate each of these pictures.



Jewish Cemetery, Breb

Observing the trajectories of people and animals while taking this picture, I was reminded how every landscape is ultimately collapsing into movement and temporality. My former professor Tim Ingold once wrote that "human beings do not, in their movement, inscribe their life histories upon the surface of nature as do writers upon the page;" that is to say that the landscape is not just a passive backdrop to our lives, but rather, that our "histories are woven, along with the life-cycles of plants and animals, into the texture of the surface itself."



Pillars of the Great Synagogue

Where the Great Orthodox Synagogue of Sighet once stood, only these twelve inconspicuous pillars and the fence remain today. Built in 1790, it must have been an impressive temple with several neighboring structures: a school, the home of the rabbi and a large mikveh behind it.

Standing there like austere guards from the twelve tribes of Israel, they could speak volumes about how the community thrived and prospered here. "You might think Sighet was one enormous synagogue" wrote Elie Wiesel somewhere in his memoirs. They have no temple to guard anymore, but they are guarding our memory.



The Jewish House

This particular abandoned house has been catching my attention ever since I first saw it six weeks ago. Perhaps it is something about the size of the windows and various anachronistic details in its structure. This house, in the middle of what was once a rich Jewish neighbourhood in the centre of Sighet, stands with all those houses across Transylvania that people refer to as a "Jewish House". This concept intrigued me ever since I first heard it.

The Jewish house is not a Jewish House because of some particular style of architecture. It is a house that was once inhabited by Jews, who were then expelled, gathered in the ghetto, transported to death camps and never returned. The Jewish house is mainly a house in the landscape of narrative and social memory.



The first Rebbe

There is a school behind me and the entrance to the bustling city market is right around the corner. It is a vivid spot in the middle of town. In front of me, in the yard of this brutalist apartment block, built during Romania's communist period, stands a forlorn Jewish grave, a remnant from another era entirely: the first Rebbe of Sighet, Zvi Ben Mose Abraham, remains buried here and his grave is perhaps the earliest trace of Jewish life that exists here. This unmovable grave felt to me like an anchor; like the center of gravity around which the entire Jewish history of Sighet revolved.



The Jewish Court

We are right in the centre of Sighet, so to speak on High Street. Behind this gate in the entrance to the inner courtyard you'll find the floor decorated with circular ornaments containing each a Magen David: the only traces that remind us of what was once a wealthy Jewish residence.

Buildings once rich and luxuriant, some forming a gass, an alleyway that connected the center with the Jewish neighborhood behind it, are now all, if not in ruins like the famous Kahana Court right next to this one, mostly run-down private apartments or social houses. "Sziget", wrote Elie Wiesel in a message to the editors of the Sziget Book, "a flourishing and vibrant Jewish community filled with song and dream, destined to be carried away by a tempest of fire to an abyss of death under a dark and silent sky."



Akos's Orchard

Crossing the river Iza, I climbed up the hills overlooking the city.

Many Jews of Sighet had their gardens in these hills. Judging by the age of some these trees I assumed they must have been planted about one hundred years ago. Later on, a chance encounter with a local topographer confirmed that these lands indeed belonged to a Jew by the name of Sekely Akos. I sat in Akos's orchard… My thoughts kept coming back to this single line that Elie Wiesel once wrote: "how was one to speak of them without trembling and a heart broken for all eternity?"

Nikola Radić Lucati
Belgrade, Serbia



Nikola Radic Lucati (1971) has a BFA at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade 1997 and MFA studies at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, 2000.

www.nikolaradiclucati.com

My growing-up in Belgrade Jewish community has fortunately given me a primary "memory vault" to draw upon. The persons whose facets of life and work I am weaving into the work are frequently the ones that were part of my childhood. Both the voices and music in audio, as well as the angles and shadows of photography are drawing on the tension between the present and that far-from idyllic past of the 70s and 80s.

Process of creation of the artwork within the Parallel Traces project? The methods are outwardly simple. I walk, look, read, remember, learn and listen. Taking photographs of what results opens the work to the unexpected. The intersections of meanings, their relevance and inter-referential structures are growing in complexity, pressuring the ability of the work to communicate to people outside the field of references. The framework for the works in this case is a given, but mercifully comfortable enough. The process of creation is hard to limit, as the work and its referential field always tend to grow. Choosing how to highlight the small parts of that growth while keeping the rest visible, or at least hinted at, is the crucial part of the work for me, while avoiding being overly technical or explanatory. The origins of the work, and the personal memories at its root are what gives me hope it may become relatable and relevant to others, as memories are triggered by images and sounds, and have the potential to connect people in ways I can hardly predict, but only hope for.



Ivo Andric, «Biffe Titanik» (1950), adapted to cinema by Emir Kusturica: Buffet Titanic (1979).

Photo: Andric's wartime apartment balcony, in Prizrenska st, Belgrade, with direct view over the Sava to the camp at Sajmište / Judenlager Semlin.



"We have been moving through the Dalmatian villages that had to feed us while having no food for themselves. Still, somehow, we made it to the shore. We came up to a hill and gave our weapons to the local partisans, as there were enough guns on Vis. Up, on that hill, we were to wait for a boat. We looked around, there was nothing and no one. It was raining, and we had spent several days in that rain, with very little food. As if abandoned, we would descend to the shore, waiting for the boat. When the boat would not show up, we would climb back up to wait for the next evening."

Andreja Preger, A century with music.

Photo: Andreja Preger's piano, donated to the Jewish community.



"...translating, I didn't go for the beauty, and especially not for the beautification. I tried to follow, intentionally letting the roughness and forcefulness of the original expression be, in the measure that can be achieved in transposing the material from one idiom to the other, from the age of antiquity to our own time."

Eugen Verber, Talmud (Belgrade, 1990), from the preface to his Serbian translation.

Photo: Jewish community-building elevator, the oldest in Belgrade was a gift from the king Aleksander Karadordevic, assassinated by the pro-Ustashi terrorists in 1934.



"For a while, during his tumultuous life, he was a part of an amateur theatre troupe where he added a certain refinement to his uncouth language. (One of his nicknames Dantes, testifies of that transformation; Korshunidze himself would deconstruct it as Dante and Dantes: he had singlehandedly fired a bullet through his poetic skull, and from that famous shot was born an equally famous Ursar)."

Danilo Kiš, Grobnica za Borisa Davidovica (1976). Translated as A tomb for Boris Davidovic (1978).

Photo: Great social hall of the Jewish community building, Samuel Sumbul arch. performing arts, classical music, rental, elections…



"A man does not die when he passes away, but when he is forgotten."

Nandor Glid, Menorah in flames (1988-1990).

Photo: Menorah in flames, sculpture by Nandor Glid, Dorcol neighborhood (Belgrade). Nandor Glid's name and monument title do not feature on the new sculpture plaque. The treeline follows the line of the Jevrejska street, ending with the sculpture.



"In connection with that, we will not indulge here in developing the heretic and dangerous thought that could be deduced from this example: that the illness, and its shadow, the death, are, especially in the eyes of a tyrant, only forms of emanation of the supernatural, and that shamans are magicians of sorts": the logical consequence of a certain worldview."

Danilo Kiš, Grobnica za Borisa Davidovica (1976). Translated as A tomb for Boris Davidovic, (1978).

Photo: Tabanovacka st, Belgrade, facing the Topovske šupe camp, where Kiš lived when writing A tomb for Boris Davidovic and Anatomy lesson.

AWARDED ARTISTS

The main goal of the Parallel Traces project is to unearth the common imprints of Jewish presence in the spaces where everyday life happens in cities, such elements of the Jewish cultural heritage that belong not just to the past but also very much to our present.

In order to accomplish this goal, we have gathered a first view and interpretation of these "traces" by guest artists from each of the cities participating in this first edition of the project. Then, because this belongs to the essence of every European project, we have sought the participation of European citizens who have submitted their audiovisual and photographic works to an open competition aiming to reflect the individual residents of these cities' own regard.

The foundations on which this exhibition has been built are the cities of Tbilisi (Georgia), Sighetu Marmatiei (Romania), Belgrade (Serbia), Wroclaw (Poland) and Girona (Spain).

A jury of twelve experts in visual arts and the Jewish heritage, after carefully evaluating the 64 works submitted in the two categories, has chosen the following winners:

From Now: Presence at Present

First prize: Josep Maria Oliveras (Girona, Spain)

Second prize: Ewa Rossano (Wroclaw, Poland)

From the Past: Pictures with History

First prize: Witja Frank (Wroclaw, Poland)

Second prize: Tsotne Tsereteli (Tbilisi, Georgia)

Winning works are part of the "Parallel Traces" exhibitions and will be displayed throughout Europe in order to promote cross border exchanges of art and artists.

PARALLEL TRACES APP

The Parallel Traces project also includes the creation of an app for mobile devices with additional information on the Jewish heritage of the participant cities. Visitors will be able to navigate through geolocalized points with multimedia information, one of which will have a special access to discover an object through augmented reality. We encourage you to download the app and discover the Jewish heritage of Girona (Spain), Tbilisi (Georgia), Sighetu Marmatiei (Romania), Belgrade (Serbia) and Wroclaw (Poland) and to share through your networks the object hidden in each city.

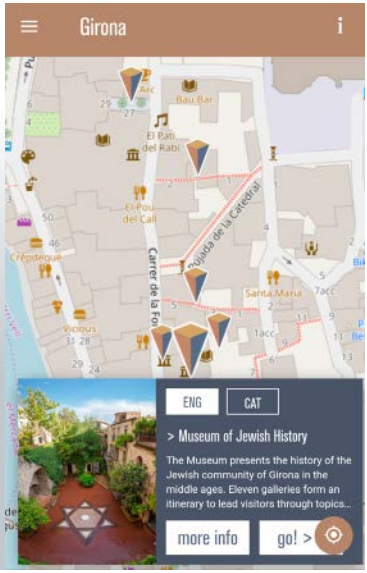
The app is available for free for both iOs and Android devices:

Available on the App Store

Get it on Google play

Once installed, you can navigate through the map to the city you are interested in, and move through the different geolocalized points, with information in English and Catalan of each of them (button **more info**).





From the point of the Museum of Jewish History, click on the button **AR effect** and point your mobile to the following image to discover our hidden object through the augmented reality.





PARALLEL TRACES

A new lens on Jewish Heritage



Coordination: Patronat Call de Girona

Direction: AEPJ (European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage)

Commissioner: Rosa Juanco Martí

Design and production: Mostra Comunicació

Artistic works: Israel Ariño, Witja Frank, Daniel Grünfeld, Josep Maria Oliveras, Dina Oganova (DIKARKA), Nikola Radic Lucati, Ewa Rossano, Agnieszka Traczewska and Tsotne Tsereteli

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Design: Cristina Taberner - DL Gi 1682-2019