

Lock(er) of Memory

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<https://www.lockerofmemory.com>



Skirotava Train Station

Photo credit: Karen Frostig (2007)

Introduction to Deportation Installation Project in Six Cities

Background

The Deportation Installation proposal is dedicated to remembering 3,984 victims of the Jungfernhof concentration camp, a small makeshift camp located on the outskirts of Riga, Latvia. The installation will present the unique set of circumstances that determined their fate.

The first transport destined for Riga, containing 1,000 Jews left Berlin on November 27, 1941. The train arrived in Riga on November 29th. The Riga ghetto was full. There was no place to house 1,000 German Jews so they remained on the train until the next day, when they were taken to the Rumbula Forest and shot into mass graves. Four more transports were scheduled to

arrive in a matter of days. In order to manage these new transports, the Germans devised a two-step solution. Starting at 4:00 am on Sunday morning, November 30th, and again on December 8th, up to 24,000 Latvian Jews confined to the Riga Ghetto, were taken to the Rumbula Forest and shot into mass graves.

As these massacres were underway, four transports from four cities in Germany and the territory of Austria arrived in Riga and were diverted to the Mazjumprava Manor, an abandoned farm located outside of Riga. During the coldest winter on record, SS commandos in collaboration with the Latvian Auxiliary police turned the manor, lacking heat, shelter, or food into a brutally sadistic and ruthless camp. Up to 800 victims were killed or died of disease and inhumane treatment during the first two months of imprisonment. Two thousand more were shot into mass graves by the Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing squads) in the Bikernieki Forest on March 26, 1942. At the end of the war, only 148 people survived. Regarded as an endangered camp, today many Holocaust historians and local Latvians have never heard of this camp.

The Transports



November 27, 1941 First transport of Jews from Würzburg to Berlin.

Yad Vashem archives 7900/64

The Deportation Installation in Six Cities will take place at the end of November, 2021, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of five deportations leaving five cities: Berlin, Nuremburg, Stuttgart, Vienna, and Hamburg, to travel to Riga, Latvia. The Deportation Installation will tell the harrowing story of how 3,984 persecuted Jews ended up at the forsaken Jungfernhof concentration camp. Starting with the first Berlin transport, followed by the “Bloody Sunday” massacre, the Deportation Installation will conclude at the final destination point, the Skirotava train station and the Jungfernhof concentration camp, as outlined in the history below.

1. The first transport left Berlin on November 27, 1941. Arriving in Riga on November 29th, 942 Jews were brought directly to the Rumbula Forest and shot into mass graves.
2. During the “Bloody Sunday” massacre, occurring on November 30, 1941, and the Rumbula Action, occurring one week later on December 8th, 24,000 Latvian Jews from the Riga Ghetto were brought to Rumbula Forest and shot into mass graves.
3. The Nuremburg transport left the station on November 30, 1941, destination Riga, diverted to Jungfernhof.
4. The Stuttgart transport left the station on December 1, 1941, destination Riga/Jungfernhof.
5. The Vienna transport left Austria on December 3, 1941, destination Riga/Jungfernhof.
6. The Hamburg transport left the station on December 6, 1941, destination Riga/Jungfernhof.
7. All transports arrived at the Skirotava train station outside of Riga, Latvia, at a distance of 3-4 kilometers from the Jungfernhof concentration camp.

The Deportation Installation will take place in six cities and three countries, representing the earliest systematic liquidation of German Jews to the Baltic States. By creating an installation that joins these three countries in the imprisonment and murder of approximately 30,000 Jews over the course of one week, the machinery of Nazism and its industrialized approach to mass murder will be on display. Rather than focus exclusively on the victims, the installation project provides context, while examining crimes of murder conducted under Nazi German occupation.

The Plan for Developing Six Installations

In commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the original deportation dates, a series of installations will be installed in six cities, beginning on November 30, 2021 and continuing

through the first week of December. The Locker of Memory team will work with city officials in each city, who may be in the process of organizing independent plans for commemoration. The Deportation Installation project would be contained within a larger set of plans.

Identified sites, such as assembly points, collection centers, or platforms at an existing railway station, will be determined by partners in each city, who would negotiate securing necessary permissions. Each installation will consist of a looped video, projected onto a flat surface at or near each identified site. Project director will work with a video editor to curate a short 10-15 minute video montage of selected visual data about the camp, such as photos or videos of Jews waiting to board the trains, retrieved by project historians from the archives. Additional footage from drone surveys, as well as video clips from geospatial scientists' conducting non-invasive explorations of the site, panoramic panning of the camp, contemporary drawings of the site, archival photos and maps, and a selection of spinning AR heirloom objects, will be inserted beneath a scrolling overlay of 3984 victims and survivors' names. Presented as a stream of consciousness experience, the video will capture an evidence-based depiction of the fragmented and chaotic process of bringing thousands of Latvian and German Jews to their deaths over the course of one week. With adequate funding, the video will be projected onto the façade of six buildings in six cities, confronting German, Austrian and Latvian spectators with a story about mass murder, revealed for the first time. Refraining from producing a coherent narrative about a series of incomprehensible events, the video will rely on actual photographs taken in real time, to convey the brutality and murderous intentions of Nazi officers in concert with the Latvian police, during one of the bloodiest campaigns in history.



Photo of Skirotava Train Station with still from Stuttgart video, coupled with victims' names.



Photo of Skirotava Train Station with photo from camp, and victims' names. Credit: Karen Frostig (2007/2021)

The final installation will depict the final destination--the Skirotava train station and the Jungfernhof concentration camp. Under the ruse of resettlement, emotionally charged, monumental images of the different transports, depicting families in distress carrying cumbersome possessions and boarding trains to an unspecified journey's end, will be projected onto the façade of the Skirotava train station. The authenticity of this surface holding these iconic images, is likely to strike a poignant chord.

In conclusion, the Deportation Installation project regards Holocaust history as an integral component of national heritage. Recognizing the triadic relationship between Germany, Austria and Latvia, the project promotes empathy and understanding, while championing the structures of memory over forgetting the past.

About the Director

Prof. Dr. Karen Frostig is an interdisciplinary, conceptual, public memory artist, author, cultural historian and social activist. She is Professor of Art at Lesley University teaching coursework in Trauma, Memory and Public Art; Art Activism in the Community; Performing Social Justice in Public Space; Memorials Commemorating Difficult Histories; and the History of Monuments and Memorials. Frostig is also a Resident Scholar at Brandeis University's Women's Studies Research Center, researching Holocaust history and memorial culture. Her father was an Austrian Holocaust survivor and her grandparents were deported from Vienna to the Jungfernhof concentration camp in Riga, Latvia. The [Locker of Memory Memorial Project](#) honors 3836 victims and 148 survivors of this abandoned camp. In 2013-2014, Frostig also directed [The Vienna Project](#), a temporary memorial dedicated to remembering seven persecuted Austrian victim groups, murdered under National Socialism.

Frostig holds dual citizenship in the United States and the Republic of Austria. The Locker of Memory project represents an international team of historians, scientists, artists and technologists, and a distinguished advisory board of 24 internationally renowned scholars.