

# In Touch

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE  
JEWISH MUSEUM HOHENEMS, INC.



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## SPECIAL REPORT • 2015 IN REVIEW

### Listen to Silent Heroes



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The Jewish Museum Hohenems, together with the Castrum Peregrini Foundation in Amsterdam, the Jewish museums in Warsaw and Amsterdam, the resistance memorial in Berlin and the MAROM Klub in Budapest, explored the memory of Silent Heroes during the Holocaust. People who hid Jews or helped to cross borders were rarely acknowledged, and their motivation was diverse and complex. After the war, they did not serve the desire for glamorous

heroes easy to fit into national, political or religious images of history.

With funds from the European Community and their Grundtvig projects on adult education, we were able to examine the diversity of memory in different European capitals—and in Hohenems—debating strategies of education, public commemoration and academic research, that would help bring a better understanding of the past and the challenges of our own times.

### Silver Jubilee!

On April 10, 1991, the Jewish Museum Hohenems opened its doors. So in 2016 our Museum will celebrate its silver jubilee: 25 years of remembering the past, examining the presence and discussing the future of Jewish life, of diversity, and migration in Hohenems and the world. Stay tuned for things to come.

## Do You Understand Jerusalem?

On May 10, 2015 we welcomed 400 visitors to the opening of our exhibition *A Streetcar Named Desire. A Journey through Yerushalayim-Jerusalem-Al Quds*. Curated by Hannes Sulzenbacher. This encounter with all facets and conflicts of this contested city, by Tel Aviv based photographer Galia Gur-Zeev, presents a photographic journey through the old city along the light rail—and a thought-provoking selection of artifacts, representing the conflicting dreams and ideologies, religious expectations



and political claims that make this city unique, beautiful and disastrous at the same time.

On the occasion of this exhibition (on display until February 2016) we also published a seminal book about Jerusalem, with contributions by Avraham Burg, Sari Nusseibeh, Assaf Gavron, Sayed Kashua, Ari Rath, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, Max Küchler, Yossi Yonah and many other experts.

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## 70 Years After— V-E Day Commemorated



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Together with cultural and tourist associations in Hohenems, we celebrated the end of the war in 1945 with a twist. Members of the Vorarlberg Willys Jeep Club came to the Rosenthal Villa to take us all up to the fortress on the “Schlossberg” to raise a white flag (like some brave people in the region did 70 years ago, acting against Nazi orders). Some locals were puzzled to see this armada of U.S. Army vehicles carrying French flags, perhaps taken back in time to a past long forgotten or suppressed.

## Smelling Diversity

The Jewish Museum participated in the first art festival “on site Hohenems” that took place from July 15 to 24, 2015.

In the garden of the Museum, Vienna based artist Paul Divjak created his smellscape installation “Last Year in Jerusalem,” reflecting aspects of our Jerusalem exhibition with a witty composition of scents. And all over Hohenems, in various public spaces, young artists from Austria, Germany and Switzerland, offered interactive experiences for all citizens.



© Paul Divjak

## Learning in the Old Jewish School



In 2015 our European Summer University of Jewish Studies, held from June 28 to July 3, 2015 and conducted together with the Jewish studies departments in Munich, Vienna, Zurich, Basel, and Bamberg explored a subject rarely covered in the academic field: “Poor Jews! About poverty” brought together scholars from various disciplines and students from Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Italy.

Jewish life in Europe was affected by the experience of poverty for centuries. Behind both, the success stories and the dramatic catastrophes, and apart from the nostalgia of the Shtetl and the

discourse about cultural traditions, the reality of poverty and hardships in everyday life are forgotten all too often. The majority of European Jews lived on the verge of misery. Subordinated to various laws and regulations they were cut off by large parts of the economy, limited in their social and cultural life, and—particularly in Eastern Europe—confined in a partial autonomy that was characterized by repression and poverty. The Summer University 2015 offered insights into social realities but also into reflections and representations found in literature, religious tradition, in the arts and in media.

## The Emsiana Festival: Every Year a New Discovery

The Emsiana Festival, our joint celebration of history and future of the smallest metropolis of Europe, this year offered enchanting (and disturbing) artistic incursions in the town. Exhibitions in the Jewish quarter and the “Christengasse” and a painted house surprised visitors and locals. Artist Tone Fink turned a whole former Rosenthal and then Collini mansion—one that housed a variety of migrants (Jewish, Bohemian, Italian and Turkish alike) throughout two centuries—into a colourful reminder of diversity and migration. Jeanette Frei showed her paintings about love and Jewish poetry in the old Mikvah. And Margit Bartl-Frank explored the hidden memory of escape along the Austrian-Swiss border.



Ending the festival a theatrical discourse about Jewish identity brought “The DNA project” of Zurich based artist Marina Belobrovaja on stage—project that was born in Hohenems in the exhibition “A Certain Jewish Something” that we held from October 2010 to March 2011.



## A Long Night in the Museum

Every year a great day: the long night of the Museum on October 3, 2015, this year offered exhibition tours through Jerusalem every 30 minutes, almost like the Jerusalem Light Rail. And in the auditorium in the attic, the film *24h Jerusalem* presented all facets of life in the city between 10:00 a.m. and



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1:00 a.m. the next day, from the Palestinian quarters in the east and the Jewish quarters in the west, between the old city and the Jewish settlements.

About 760 people showed up, making this night a special night among the nights.

## Hans Elkan and Paul Grüninger Commemorated

The memorial curatorium in Upper Swabia commemorated Paul Grüninger, the courageous Swiss police officer who helped to save Jews in 1938 and 1939, and Hans Elkan from Hohenems, who was deported and killed in Theresienstadt. The two were among several victims and resistance activists after whom various buildings, student dormitories and new homes for asylum seekers, and also the little new Jewish community in Weingarten, southern Germany, have been named. A mixed

crowd gathered, when Professor Marcus and Rabbi Pushkin, together with students from Weingarten, local activists and guests from around Lake Constance, refugees from Syria and Iraq, Russian Jews who live in Weingarten, and descendants from local Roma people who were killed in Auschwitz, installed the bronze plaques remembering Georg Elser, Paul Grüninger, Hans Elkan and others in a moving ceremony.



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## Jukebox. Jewkbox! A Jewish Century on Shellac and Vinyl is Now on Tour Through Europe

A series of events at the Museum concluded the presentation of our successful exhibition exploring the history of popular culture, global communication and the music industry of the 20th century—from a Jewish angle. An English edition of the catalog is available and includes a history of popular (Jewish) music, the history of the music industry and 40 essays about “the Jewish record that changed my life,” covering experiences with popular music and Jewish identities all over the world, from the US to Russia, from England to South Africa and Australia, from France to North Africa and Israel.

After Hohenems the exhibition moved to the Munich Jewish Museum from March to November 2015. From February to May 2016, it can be seen at the Museum of Communication in Frankfurt. And in 2017 the exhibition will stop in Warsaw at the Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

*Save the Date:*

**Hohenems Descendants Reunion**  
Jewish Museum Hohenems • July 27–30, 2017