

TEMPORARY MONUMENT

„Wäscherei P“: A cultural initiative of the Hall Psychiatric Clinic in cooperation with Franz Wassermann

PROCESSES OF REMEMBRANCE

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At present, there are 360 known names of patients of the Psychiatric Hospital of Hall in Tirol, who were victims of the Nazi´s Euthanasia Program T (1940-45). In the course of my research of the history of these murdered victims, I have developed a concept for a memorial in their honor, which will consist of five parts.

Space dedicated to the victims´ memory will be created by various processes:

PROCESS 1 – GIVING STREETS NAMES

The birthplace of the victims will be established through consultation of existing documents and lists. Requests will then be made of the governing bodies of the corresponding communities (cities, villages, etc.) to name a street after each of the victims born in that place.

PROCESS 2 – PICTURES IN TREES – PARK OF MEMORY

A porcelain plaque will be made with the name and, where possible, photograph of each victim. These plaques will then be mounted onto trees, by cutting out pieces of their bark and placing the plaque within this cut, or scar. The bark will, in time, grow over the plaque, thus allowing the wound in the tree to heal. The trees will either be newly planted or selected from those already growing in the park of the hospital in Hall.

PROCESS 3 – QUILTS – BLANKETS OF COMPASSION

A quilt will be made for each of the victims. A quilt is an object of remembrance. A request will go out to the population of the various communities to make an active contribution to this memorial to their murdered fellow-citizens. This contribution will be in the form of a donation of a personal article of clothing. This piece of clothing will function as PLATZHALTER for the victims and symbolize their absence in the community. These articles of clothing will be sewn onto bedsheets donated by, and coming directly from the Psychiatric Hospital of Hall, and will form the basis for the quilts. The completed quilts will then be displayed in a public space and will be spread out during a memorial service.

PROCESS 4 – THE RETURN

A performance comprising following objects:

A table, a chair, a cardbox, cards with victim's names written on them, a white doctor's coat, a textile pen, a coat-hanger and the audience/the community/society

Installation:

There is a table and a chair in the room. A doctor's coat hangs over the chair. On the table there is a cardbox with 360 cards; name, date and place of birth of a victim is written on each card with a typewriter.

Course of action:

I enter the room, wearing a pin-striped suit and a striped tie (red-white-red), I approach the table and the chair, I put the white coat on, open the cardbox with the victims' names and read each name aloud, one by one.

From this moment on the audience becomes part of the performance. I ask the present community to fulfill the following task: If after one of the names somebody feels the urge to write down the name, he or she is supposed to get up, thus leaving the community behind and approaching me. I hand over the card to the person in question, and he/she is supposed to take the textile pen from the table and to write down the victim's name on the white coat that I'm wearing. After writing the name on my coat, he/she puts the textile pen and the card back on the table and leaves the stage, thus becoming part of society again. There are no rules in terms of how and where the name is supposed to be written down, it is also possible that one person writes several names down or that several people write down names at the same time. After all names had been read out or written down, I take off my coat as well as the pin-striped suit, hang them over a coat hanger and leave the room.

PROCESS 5 – THE LIVING ARCHIVE

The cardbox comprising the cards that were used in the performance thus becomes a live archive as it is possible to add objects that belong to the victims' relatives, such as pictures, stories about the victims, newspaper articles, birth certificates, letters to the victims written by their offspring. In case any new victims should be found, the ARCHIVE is also open to documentation concerning them.

Translation by Marija Dabic