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# Documents of Persecution

Memory cultures and the Romani Holocaust

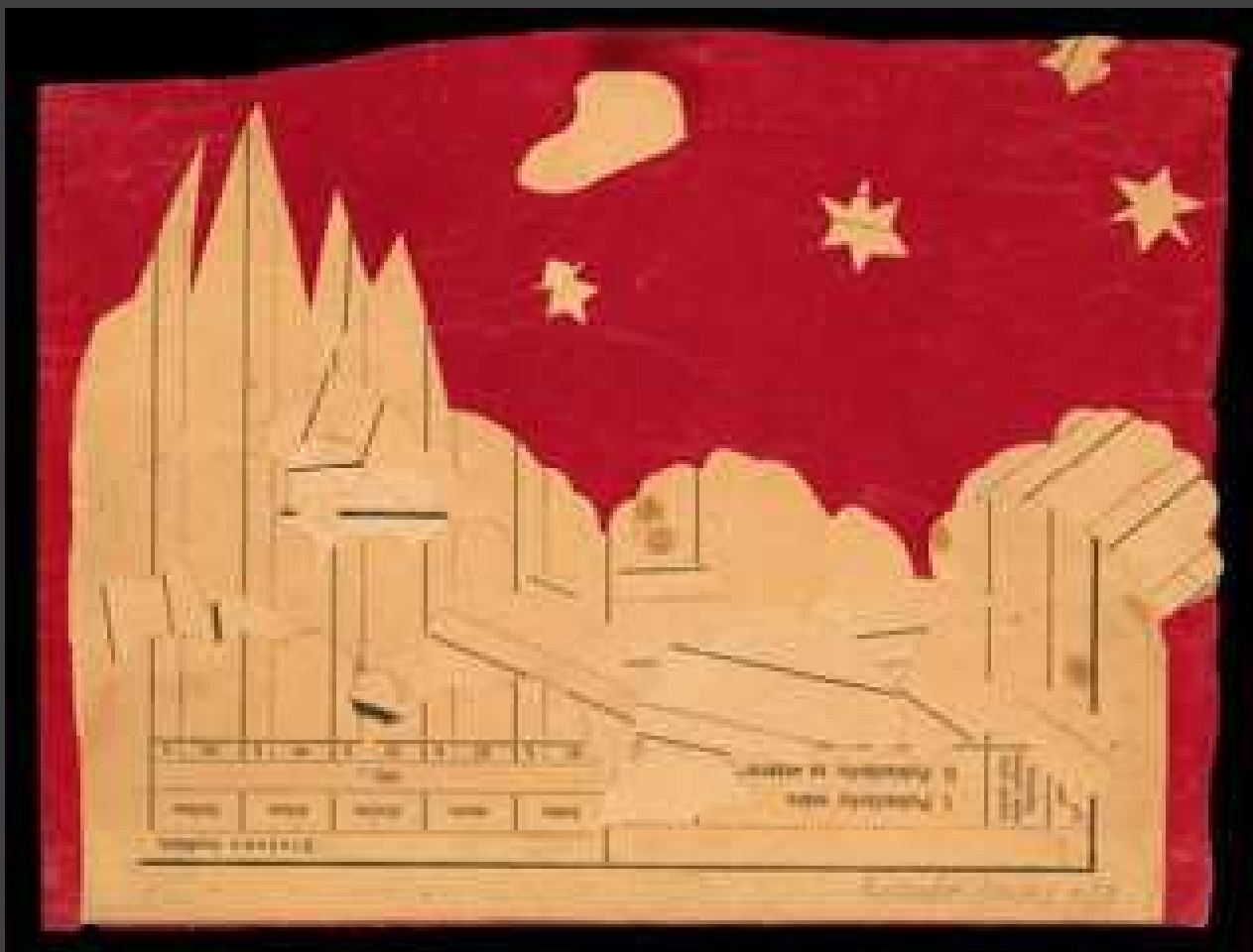
30 March 2023



Bedřich Fritta (Friedrich Taussig) (1906–1944) Rear Entrance, Theresienstadt Ghetto, 1941–1944



Edith Birkin (1927–2018), The Death Cart - Lodz Ghetto, 1980, IWM London

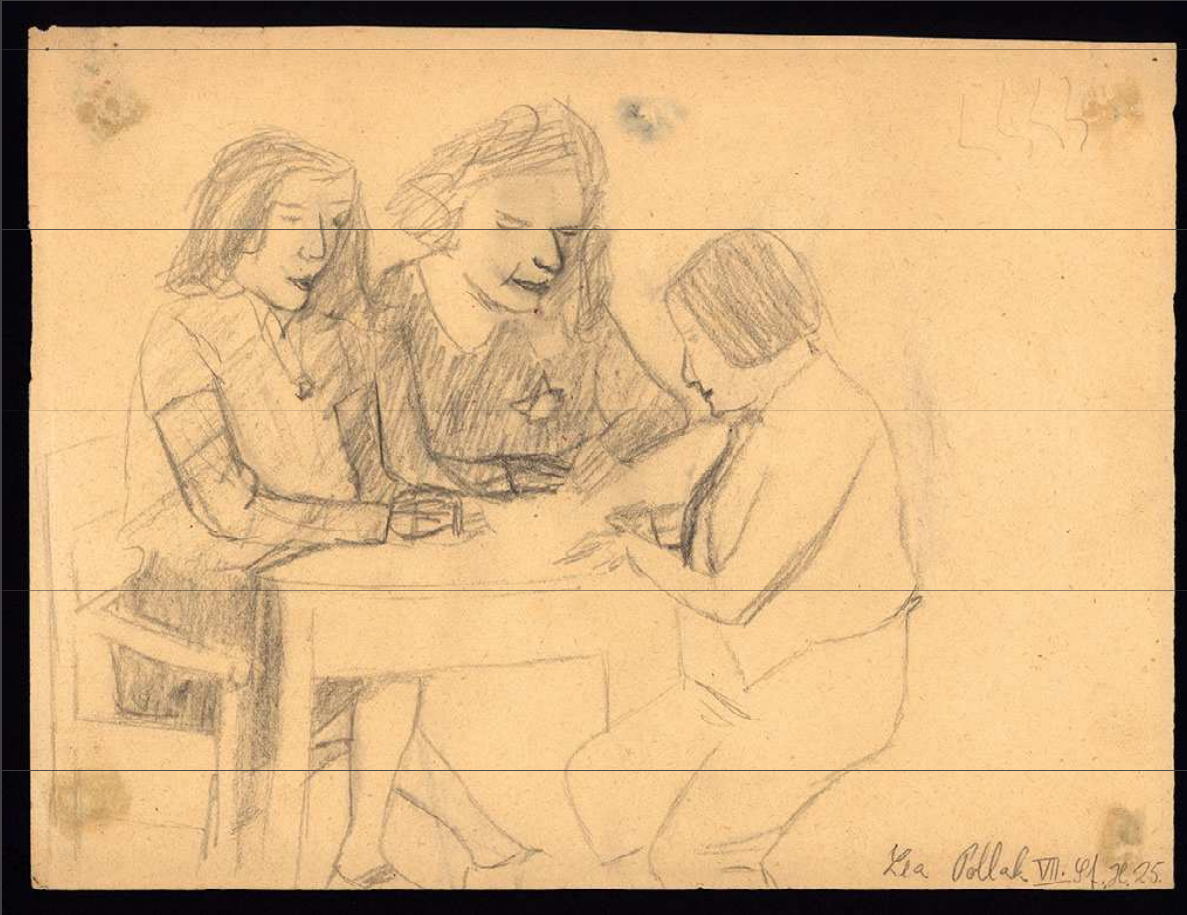


t was really I think the worst time of the war. Although we were free and liberated, it was the very worst time because we realised, or I realised that nobody was going to come back, and that life is never going to be the same, and what I hoped for would happen after the war is never going to happen. The hope was gone.

"Edith Birkin". British Library. Archived from the original on 1 March 2023. Retrieved 28 January 2018.

Helena Mändlová (1930–44), Undated (1943), Paper collage of old printed forms, 20.5 x 27 cm, Signed on the verso UL: Helene Mändl N72, Jahrgang 1930, XV. Stunde / and LR: Helenka Mändl 28 B. Provenance: created during the drawing classes in the Terezín Ghetto organized between 1943 and 1944 by the painter and teacher Friedl Dicker-Brandeis (1898–1944); in the Jewish Museum in Prague's collection since 1945. Acc. No. JMP 121.586

Friedl Dicker-Brandeis (1898–1944)



Lea Lenka Pollak (1930-1944): Class in a Dorm, graphite pencil on paper, 217 x 278 mm, Ghetto Theresienstadt / Terezín (1943-1944) • Collection of the Jewish Museum in Prague, #130.957



"Sometimes I felt like she was a doctor. She herself was a medicine. Until today I cannot understand the mystery of her freedom. It flew into us from her like a current."

Edna Amit



Peter Eisenman and Buro Happold. Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin, 2003–2004



“Stumbling Blocks”



Rachel Whiteread, The Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial, Vienna, 2000



Memorial for murdered Roma, Sinta and Lovara, Barankaplatz, Vienna, 1999

Lety u Písku. The Memorial to the holocaust of the Roma and Sinti in Bohemia.



<https://www.newmemoriallety.com/proposals/1st-place/>



Ateliér Terra Florida v. o. s., Jan Sulzer, Lucie VogelováAteliér Světlík, Jan Světlík, Vojtěch Šedý, Filip Šefl

The main element of our composition is the forest. Forest. Its inner space. Its edge. Open space created by the edge of the forest. Forest as a community. Here, the most general metaphor for the Roma community. The absence of the forest as a metaphor for the absence of those who did not survive Roma holocaust. **Memorial** : The first goal of our project is to anchor the commemoration of those who suffered in this concentration camp. **Education** : Our second goal is to tell this story of horrors and bring it before the eyes of the society. **Community** : The third goal is to create a space of encounter: coming together as an opportunity to maintain or start friendships, to share our lives.



Whose memory is it?



Dina Gottliebová-Babbitt (1923–2009), Portraits of inmates from the Roma camp  
Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum Collections

## Art as resistance



Maja Berezowska, *The two Friends*, 1942

“When we sat around the table, I hid a piece of paper on my lap and made quick drawings, scenes full of joy, cheerful and loving, which then went from hand to hand, giving the tormented women a moment of forgetfulness, evoking laughter and hope. I drew their portraits. Often those sheets endured better than young bodies that fire turned to ashes.”

Maja Berezowska, *Piórkem przez stulencja* (Warsaw, 1985).

Asavei, M. A. (2020). "Call the witness": Romani Holocaust related art in Austria and Marika Schmiedt's will to memory. *Memory Studies*, 13(1), 107–123.



- The Right to Memory
- Artistic memory as confrontation in counter-public spheres
- National unification and victimhood – different forms of memory
- Memory work and participatory artistic practice

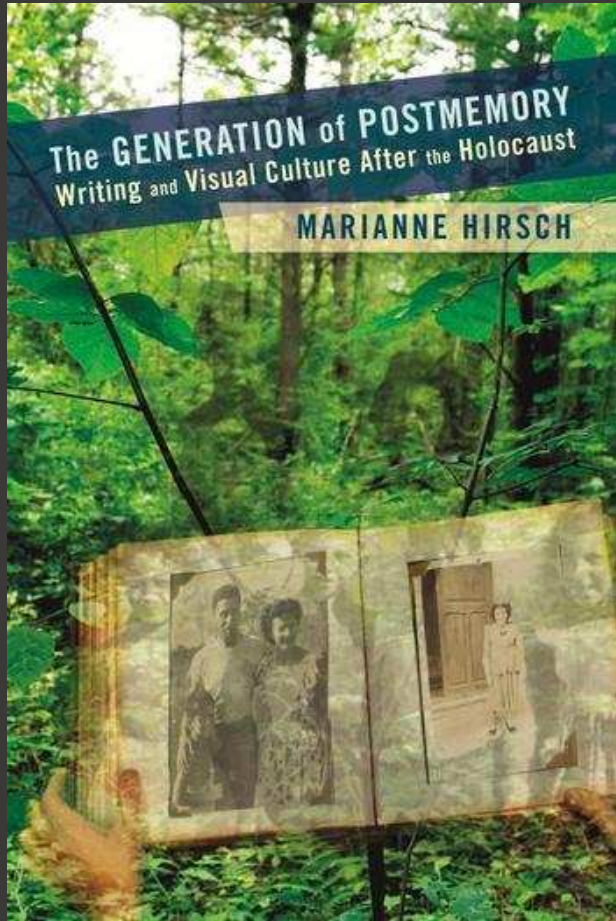
## What Remains. Fragments of a Continuing Past

Opening of the Exhibition and a Guided Tour with Artist Marika Schmiedt.



Exhibition catalogue, 2015: [http://www.uckermark-projekt.org/sites/default/files/veranstaltungen/files/ausstellung\\_uckermark\\_12.pdf](http://www.uckermark-projekt.org/sites/default/files/veranstaltungen/files/ausstellung_uckermark_12.pdf)

## Marianne Hirsch – POSTMEMORY



Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*,  
New York, 2012

“Postmemory” describes the relationship that the “generation after” bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before — to experiences they “remember” only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. As I see it, the connection to the past that I define as postmemory is mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. To grow up with overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one’s birth or one’s consciousness, is to risk having one’s own life stories displaced, even evacuated, by our ancestors. It is to be shaped, however indirectly, by traumatic fragments of events that still defy narrative reconstruction and exceed comprehension. These events happened in the past, but their effects continue into the present.’

An interview with Marianne Hirsch, <https://cup.columbia.edu/author-interviews/hirsch-generation-postmemory>

# Marika Schmidt (\*1966)

**Was bleibt** What remains  
 Fragmente einer fortwährenden Vergangenheit Fragments of a continuous past

Marika Schmidt, *What remains*, 2014

An undesirable Society

in preparation

640 KL Ravensbrück 1852

*An undesirable Society*, 2001

Marika Schmiedt (\*1966) Futschikato—The Missing Roma and Sinti  
from Kirchstetten and the “The Weinheber Case”



“Marika [Schmiedt] has made the subaltern speak, in a certain way for sure, through representation, but much more forcefully. If the subaltern is the group that cannot achieve the state – Antonio Gramsci’s classic definition – the Roma Holocaust didn’t even make it into Hannah Arendt’s insistence that the banality of evil springs from the premises of the state. The Roma Holocaust is not allowed into this widely accepted generalization. That is subalternity, not just not achieving the state, but not even achieving the record of the banality of the evil state.”

Quote by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak,

<https://marikaschmiedt.com/2015/08/06/regarding-marika-schmiedts-request-for-permission-of-showing-her-art-installation-in-kirchstetten/>

<https://marikaschmiedt.com/futschikato-die-verschwundenen-roma-und-sinti-aus-kirchstetten-und-der-fall-weinheber/>

Ceija Stojka. This Has Happened, (Museo Reina Sofía, 22 November 2019 – 23 March 2020)



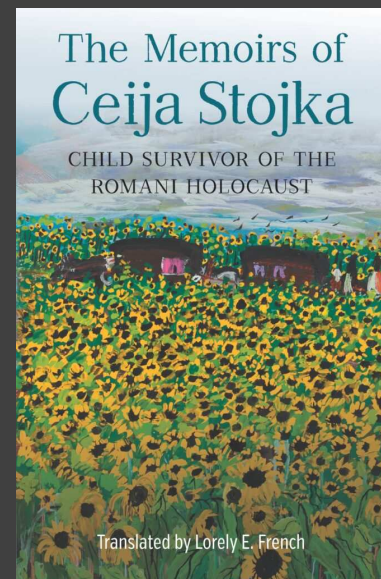
Ceija Stojka, Sans titre, 1993, acrylic on board, Courtesy Hojda et Nuna Stojka, © Ceija Stojka, © ADAGP, 2017



Ceija Stojka, image from:  
<https://volksgruppen.orf.at/v2/roma/stories/2904664/>



Ceija Stojka (1933–2013)



The Memoirs of Ceija Stojka, Child Survivor of the Romani Holocaust, 2022 (Engl. Translation)

“The dead fly off in a rustling of wings. They rush out, they shake themselves. I can feel them. They sing, and the sky’s full of birds. It’s only their bodies that are lying there. They’ve left their bodies [...] we’re carrying them along with our own lives.”

*Ceija Stojka, Je rêve que je vis? Libérée de Bergen-Belsen*



“If the world does not change now ... if it does not build peace-so that my great grandchildren have a chance to live in this world, then I cannot explain why I survived Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, and Ravensbrück” (Stojka quoted in Keen, 2015: 80)



Ceija Stojka: „Endauflösung von Auschwitz“, Gouache auf Karton, 2011, Sammlung Wien Museum

## The “dark works”



Ceija Stojka, *Personne n'avait vu cela...ref 828*, 1995, © Ceija Stojka, ADAGP, Paris. © Photo: Rebecca Fanuele.

The "light works"



Ceija Stojka: „Der Rest der Stojkas“, Öl auf Karton, 1997,  
Sammlung Wien Museum



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