



Join the US Friends of the
Jewish Museum Vienna



**Jewish
Museum
Vienna**
US friends

Cover: Permanent installation by Nancy Spero "Remembrance / Renewal" in the Jewish Museum Vienna (1996) showing opera singer Fritzi Massary (Nancy Spero always referred to her as "Fritzi, the diva") in front of the bicycle once ridden by the Zionist visionary Theodor Herzl (1896).
Foto © Ouriel Morgenstern

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Jewish Museum Vienna

Our Mission

The Jewish Museum Vienna is a place of encounter with Jewish history, religion and culture, with memory and remembrance, with Vienna and the world from the Middle Ages to now. It preserves and interprets one of the largest European collections of Judaica—the legacy of the third-largest Jewish community in Europe before the Holocaust. By collecting, exhibiting, and communicating this heritage, it bears testimony to the past and the present of the city of Vienna—both of which have been greatly influenced by many and varied forms of migration. The Jewish Museum Vienna surprises with new perspectives on Judaism, it invites people of all cultures and generations to communicate, and encourages them to ask questions and participate in the creative process.



Sukkot holder, Vienna, 1858
JMW, Slg. IKG



Vertical neon sign with stylized white text or logo.



The First Jewish Museum in the World

The Jewish Museum Vienna was founded in 1895 and was the first of its kind in the world. It originally concentrated on the culture and history of the Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. It was closed by the Nazis immediately after the "Anschluss," and its inventory was transferred to the Museum of Ethnology and other Viennese museums. Half of the items disappeared and the other half stand as a memory to the destroyed Jewish community. At the height of the Waldheim affair, triggered by the concealment by Austrian President Kurt Waldheim of his activities during World War II, Vienna's mayor Helmut Zilk announced the re-establishment of the Jewish Museum at the opening of the exhibition "Vienna 1900" at the MoMA in New York. The Jewish Museum was officially reopened in 1988 as a Museum of the City of Vienna. Today it has exhibitions at two locations: Palais Eskeles and Museum Judenplatz. Following the visitor record of 115,000 people in the year 2015, the Jewish Museum Vienna was even able to exceed that result in 2017: Nearly 130,000 visitors at both museum locations means a sensational increase of 22 percent in relation to 2016. An absolute visitor record in the museum's history could be reached at Palais Eskeles, as well as at Museum Judenplatz, a fact that we are proud of.



First Jewish Museum Vienna (1895–1938),
views of the interior

Museum Judenplatz

In the Middle Ages, Vienna was home to a thriving Jewish community. Famous rabbis taught and worked here, turning Vienna into an influential center of Jewish knowledge. In 1420–21, the whole community was expelled or murdered. The ruins of the synagogue destroyed at the time and excavated in 1995, bear witness to the life and destruction of the medieval community. They have been on view since 2000 at Museum Judenplatz. On the square itself, the city unveiled the Holocaust Memorial, a reinforced concrete cube resembling a library with its volumes turned inside out, designed by British artist Rachel Whiteread.

The museum is also a place to present current Jewish life, as the building also houses today's Misrachi synagogue and the Bnai Akiva.



© Sanja Bachmayer



© Danielle Spiera



© Jen Peng

Excavations at Museum Judenplatz

Our City! Jewish Vienna— Then to Now

The core exhibition “Our City! Jewish Vienna—Then to Now” takes a journey from the present into the past, offering a comprehensive view on the history of Jewish Vienna. It looks back at the Austrian Jewish annals from the Middle Ages to today with a focus on the different communities that were formed over the centuries and the ruptures caused by pogroms and finally by the Shoah. It also describes the development of the Jewish community after World War II to its present day modest but highly dynamic presence. “Our City. Jewish Vienna—Then to Now,” established by Werner Hanak-Lettner, has attracted 100,000 visitors within one year.



© Klaus Peltner (3)



© JMW

Setting New Standards

Since the inauguration of director Danielle Spera in July 2010, the Jewish Museum has given a new stimulus to Vienna's museum scene. Twenty-five years after its (re-)establishment, the Jewish Museum is once again setting new standards and has established itself as an innovative landmark among Vienna's major museums. The guiding principle behind the exhibitions is to research, study, present, and communicate stories about Jewish life. The wide range of events make the Jewish Museum Vienna a place of shared experience: readings, book presentations, discussions, film presentations, conversations with artists, and concerts offer further insights into the exhibition topics and Jewish life in general.



© Klaus Pechler



© Sonja Bachmayer (3)

The Exhibition Program

Every year the museum organizes up to eight exhibitions in its two locations. Here are some highlights:



© Photofest, New York; Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell, 1953

BIGGER THAN LIFE. 100 Years of Hollywood—
a Jewish Experience (2011/12)

Jewish Geniuses
Warhol's Jews (2012)



© Jewish Museum Vienna/Salvadore



© Jewish Museum Vienna/Kallimus, Dora d'Or, La Argentina

Vienna's Shooting Girls.
Jewish Women Photographers
from Vienna (2012/13)

ALL MESHUGGE?
Jewish Wit and Humour
(2012/13)



© Archive of the Jewish Museum Vienna – Musical Comedy, Vienna, 1925

Amy Winehouse: A Family Portrait (2014)



© Jewish Museum Vienna - Sonja Bachmayer

Doomsday – Jewish Life and Death in World War I (2014)



© Central Archive for the History of the Jewish People, Simchat Thora am Isreno, 1918

Ringstrasse. A Jewish Boulevard (2015)



© Jewish Museum Vienna - Sebastian Gansigler

The University. A Battleground (2015/16)



© natekrenhof.com

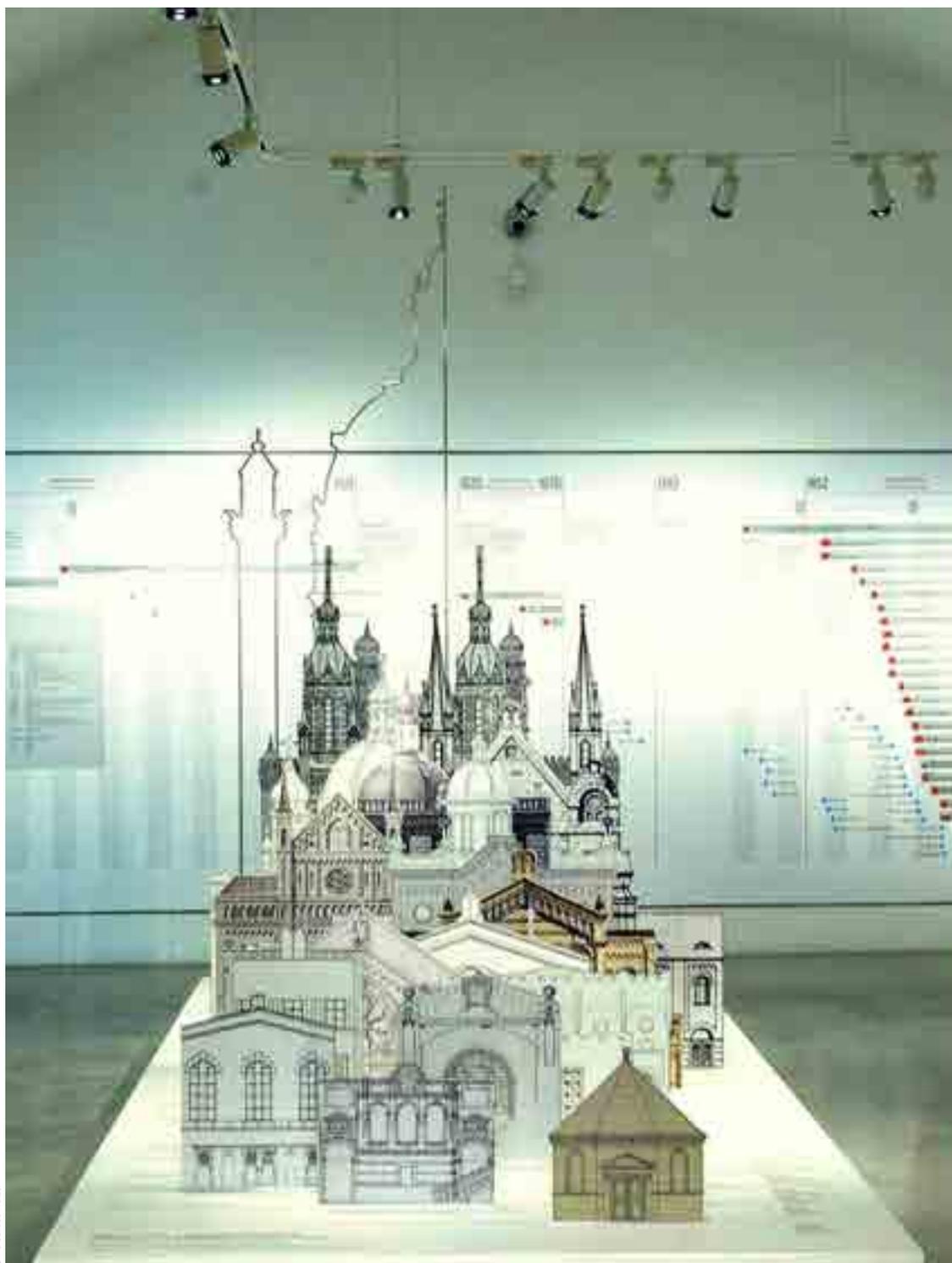
Wiesenthal in
Vienna (2015/16)



Stars of David. The Sound of the 20th Century (2016)



Viennese Synagogues: A Memory (2016)



© PID Schaub-Walzer

The Glück Family Living Room (2016/17)



© David Peters

The Better Half:
Jewish Women Artists
Before 1938 (2016/17)



Bruna Reiffenstein, Self-portrait, 1928, photograph based on the lost painting. © BelvedereArchives, Vienna, Bruno Reiffenstein

Trude and Elvis. Wien – Memphis – Hollywood (2017)



© www.wiulz.cc

Buy From Jews!
Story of a Viennese
store culture (2017)



© David Peters

Helena Rubinstein. Pioneer of Beauty (2017/18)



© Archives Helena Rubinstein, Paris - Helena Rubinstein in a Schiaparelli Dress

The Place to Be. Salons—Spaces of Emancipation (2018)



Portrait Fanny von Arnstein, lithography. © Jewish Museum Vienna

Bernstein. A New Yorker in Vienna (2018/19)



© OEF, Library of Congress - Leonhard Bernstein in front of the Albertina

Education Programs



© Jewish Museum Vienna – Sebastian Gansrigler

The Jewish Museum Vienna feels a great responsibility to educate young people not only about the Shoah but also to inform about the Jewish history and the great contribution of Jews to the development of Vienna and Austria in terms of sciences, art, economy, society, and infrastructure as more than one third of our visitors are students from 6 to 18.

The education and communication team offers workshops and education programs on various aspects of Viennese Jewish culture and history for visitors of all ages. There is no guidance from the front at the Jewish Museum Vienna, but rather interactive tours in which the visitors are involved as part of the museum, as a way of communicating that Jewish history is also part of the history of their city and country. Apart from its museum and education activities, the Jewish Museum Vienna also has a political mission aimed through its exhibitions, events, and communications activities at awareness-raising and elimination of racism, anti-Semitism, and other sentiments of that nature. Since February 2016, numerous workshops for and with refugees have taken place, offering our guests the possibility to spend a good, pleasant time in the heart of Vienna's inner city and to experience Jewish culture and history in the process. We have expanded the well-known "hands on" principle applied



© Jewish Museum Vienna – Sebastian Gansrigler



© Jewish Museum Vienna - Sebastian Gansrigler

at nearly all museums and want to encourage contemplation and reflection—about things that are foreign and of one's own, about home and exile, love and happiness, art and culture, the past and the present, Vienna and the world—minds on! Our experience with refugee visitors who do not know at all whether Vienna will ever become their home have influenced and enriched our work. We want to get our guests to speak and the dialog originates and develops through personal objects. Each of us has something in their purse or pants pocket, something from home, a memory, something to chuckle about, or sometimes to cry about, and a story to go along with it. Over this "bridge" we get to the things in the showcases, often simple, everyday objects that are perhaps not materially valuable. Since May 2017 we have been offering free workshops for vocational school pupils and those attending their last year of compulsory school, and have already hosted more than 500 pupils who are not interested at all or only very little in museums and even less in Jewish history, simply because it is foreign to them. The museum, its exhibitions and the education programs help to make "Our City!" into a friend, a very important step towards integration and a functioning society. A challenge we will be facing in the future is to improve and strengthen the collaboration with those institutions and persons in Vienna that are directly concerned with the Viennese citizens so that our programs can be made known and booked!



© Jewish Museum Vienna - Sebastian Gansrigler

A Place for Contemporary Art

The new core exhibition at the Jewish Museum continues the involvement of contemporary artists in the museum concept. 2017, **Eva Schlegel** created the installation "A Screen for Maria Theresia" for the Jewish Museum. It is reported that empress Maria Theresia received Jews exclusively behind a screen. This paravent became a symbol for an inhuman distance, which parallels her obsessive efforts to spatially divide Jews from the rest of the Viennese population.



In recent years, internationally renowned artists like **Brigitte Kowanz** and **Nancy Spero** worked with the Jewish Museum. Spero designed the permanent "Installation of Remembrance" ("Remembrance/Renewal") which can be seen from all floors of Palais Eskeles and highlights the fundamental principle of the Jewish Museum Vienna: remembrance.



Her art is well worth visiting, as a recent poll has confirmed once again: *Time Out* rated the "Best Subway Art Installation" in New York City and chose Nancy Spero's mosaic at 66th Street/Lincoln Center as the winner. The main character in the mosaic shows Viennese singer Fritzi Massary – an image Spero had used first in her "Installation of Remembrance" in the Jewish Museum.



At the Museum Judenplatz, a contemporary artist is invited at least once a year to create artworks especially for this location. These artists work with the tension field of Judenplatz and design installations particularly for this site, continuing the tradition on Judenplatz, where **Rachel Whiteread** set an example with her famous memorial.

In her work, **Tatiana Lecomte** concerned herself with the "undepictable" which is inherent in every photographic representation. For the exhibition at the Museum Judenplatz, the artist reflected beyond the notion of the inconceivability of the Shoah through the involvement with the photographic image.

"A Good Day" by the American artist **Andrew Mezvinsky** originated from Primo Levy's contemplations on survival in Auschwitz. With the help of interactive animations and the latest multimedia technology, the artist created a space at the Museum Judenplatz which reflects the fundamental conditions of human existence.

The Jewish Museum Vienna also commissioned the Israeli artist **Maya Zack**. The starting point for her installation at the second floor is the "Gute Stube" designed in 1899 by Isidor Kaufmann for the first Jewish Museum.

Maya Zack: The Shabbat Room, 2013. Room installation; four Lambda prints
Curated by Danielle Spera and Werner Hanak-Lettner



Prominent Guests at the Museum



© Jewish Museum Vienna – Oriet Morgenstern

The visit of the couple from London

April 6th, 2017 will surely go down in the annals of the Jewish Museum Vienna. Visits from the British Royal House do not often appear on the agenda of Austrian museums. We were even happier that His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, had chosen the Jewish Museum Vienna for his visit in Vienna.

This decision was preceded by exciting weeks. A delegation of the "Royal Household" took a very close look at our museum. When a group of security people from the Royal House were flown in a few days later and the Jewish Museum Vienna was examined for its security situation, a possible visit by the successors to the throne still seemed beyond all reach. Countless e-mails followed with just as many questions. A little bit later the news was conveyed that we had indeed won the race!



© Jewish Museum Vienna – Oriet Morgenstern

Under the aspect of the strictest confidentiality still, we received the request that our guests would not only see selected objects, but also wanted to meet a group of Shoah survivors, as well as take part in an education program with Muslim refugees from the Middle East. On the day of all days, we, Chief Curator Werner Hanak-Lettner, Commercial Manager Markus Roboch, and Director Danielle Spera, took position and were indeed able to welcome Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall in the foyer of Palais Eskeles.



© Jewish Museum Vienna – Oriet Morgenstern

Following a brief tour, the meeting with the survivors took place. Charles mentioned that his own grandmother, Alice of Bathenberg (the mother of Prince Philip), had hidden Jewish families herself and was also honored for that in Israel as one of the "Righteous Among the Nations". This fact still remains relatively unknown to date. At the end, time still remained for a little small talk with a lot of humor. After the departure of the Royal Couple, we drank the prepared English breakfast tea and let the intensive hours sink in.



© Jewish Museum Vienna – Oriet Morgenstern



"Thank you for the wonderful tour and all the great and important work you do preserving our history!"

Stephen Schwartz, Oscar winner and composer of „Wicked“ and „Schikaneder“

"Dear Danielle! Thanks above all to you, the city has opened a new chapter in the history of the Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien. Congratulations and all the best!"

Heinz Fischer, Austrian former President



"A history of Jewish migration and immigration during the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Very interesting, and very touching. I congratulate the museum on this exhibition."

Alexander Van der Bellen, Austrian Federal President

"Among the 'guests & friends,' I am fortunate to be counted as a friend. As always, a wonderfully refreshing evening."

Robert Menasse, writer

"Thank you for the moving initial insight and discussion. Allow me to congratulate you above all on this really important integration project. I wish you all the best for your work and look forward to meeting you again."

Sebastian Kurz, Federal Chancellor of Austria, then Austria's Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs

"Claude Lanzmann is a friend of the Jewish Museum Vienna and its wonderful director."

Claude Lanzmann, director & film producer



"Thank you very much for such an interesting and committed way of leading. A great museum in terms of design, but especially affecting in terms of content and just as convincing as important the presentation of Jewish history is for our country. As unimaginable the times of persecution and murder of our Austrian compatriots still leave us speechless today, the more the mission for a 'never again' is. Thank you!"

Wolfgang Sobotka, President of the National Council of Austria, then Federal Minister of the Interior

Activities of the US Friends



f.l.t.r.: Federal President Heinz Fischer, Hannah Lessing, Christine Moser, Danielle Spera, Andrew Mezvinsky, Austria's Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz

© Dregan Tatic



© Vienna Tourist Board

f.l.t.r.: Hannah Lessing, Danielle Spera, Helena Hartlauer, Ambassador Wolfgang Waldner



Danielle Spera and Eric Kandel

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On September 29, 2015, the former Federal President Heinz Fischer and Austria's Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz opened the exhibitions *A Good Day* by Andrew Mezvinsky and *Lessing presents Lessing* at the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York in the presence of a number of guests of honor, including Chelsea Clinton, Rebecca Morton, Nobel Prize winner Eric Kandel and the former US senator Franz Leichter. This event also marked the inauguration of the US Friends of the Jewish Museum Vienna.

The two exhibitions were subsequently shown in January 2016 at the Austrian embassy in Washington. The first event by the US Friends of the Jewish Museum was an exclusive preview and fundraising dinner for the Museum hosted by the association president Martin Mendelsohn.

f.l.t.r.: Leanne Cobb-Rogan, Ruth Block, Markus Rogan, Dr. Danielle Spera, GK Ritzinger, Pamela Schoenberg and Randy Schoenberg, Jami Morse-Heidegger and Klaus Heidegger.



The second fundraising dinner organized by the US Friends in September 2016 at the elegant Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, California, was also highly successful. It was hosted by Ruth Block together with Austrian swimming legend Markus Rogan and his wife Leanne Cobb-Rogan. Uniforms worn by Israeli athletes at the Rio Olympics were auctioned. Among the guests who took part in the auction were Klaus and Jami Heidegger, *Woman in Gold* attorney Randol Schoenberg, and the Austrian Consul General Ulrike Ritzinger. The auction raised over \$30,000 for the Museum.

A further notable event by the US Friends is being held in October 2016, when Georg Heindl, Austrian Consul General and his wife was Neline Heindl-Koornneef will hosted a US Friends Fundraising Get Together at the Austrian consulate in New York.



© David Platte

Dr. Danielle Spera and Chelsea Clinton

US Friends "get together" at the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York

In October 2017 the Jewish Museum's US Friends "get together" at the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York was dedicated to Leonard Bernstein. To put it more precisely, it revolved around our "Bernstein. A New Yorker in Vienna" exhibition. Our host, ACFNY-Director Christine Moser, pointed out the importance of the collaboration between our two organizations that form a perfect link between New York and Vienna. Werner Hanak-Lettner, presented the outline of his exhibition plans and his newest findings on Bernstein in New York and Vienna. He also showed a heartwarming

f.l.t.r.: Christine Moser, Dr. Erika Freeman, Nina Simmons Bernstein, Dr. Werner Hanak-Lettner, Dr. Danielle Spera



© Jakoa Statterly



© Jakob Statterly/ACFNY

Dr. Danielle Spera and Christine Moser



© private

Franz Leichter and Dr. Werner Hanak-Lettner

interview with Bernstein's close friend Renate Wunderer. The highlight of the evening was the talk of Nina Simmons Bernstein, daughter of Leonard Bernstein, who pointed out how important Vienna was to her father. Director Danielle Spera and Eric Huebscher, president of the US Circle of Friends, then presented the valuable lots of the silent auction.



© private

f.l.t.r.: Dr. Werner Hanak Lettner, Christine Moser, Rona Appel, Dr. Danielle Spera, Eric Huebscher



© Jakob Statterly/ACFNY

Nina Simmons Bernstein

Accomplished projects and future goals



The proceeds from the donations of the US Circle of Friends as well as their fund raising events were and will be used for various projects. The generous contributions to the Jewish Museum Vienna are essential for us.

A very important project from our educational department—the **children book *On the road with Victoria Blitz*** about Jewish Vienna—was translated into English thanks to a fund raising event in New York. The book for children from 3 years of age and adults up to 120 years offers a journey through space and time with Theodor Herzl's bicycle Victoria Blitz. The owner himself naturally has a part to play in this colorful hands-on book, along with other Viennese Jews who have left their mark on the city of Vienna. It also looks at Jewish festivals, the Hebrew alphabet, and the collecting of stories and recollections. After the reading, visitors can take a ride through the museum with Victoria Blitz on a guided tour for children and families.



Thanks to the US Circle of Friends a TV-screen was purchased for the visible storage at the museum. From now on visitors can view the **digital reconstructions of the destroyed Viennese synagogues**, as well as the synagogues in Lower Austria and Burgenland.

Computer aided reconstructions can help to commemorate the destroyed synagogues and also give an idea of what these disappeared and destroyed buildings looked like and how they fitted in with their surroundings. Interactive projections are created by virtual teleportation. They show what the synagogues looked like and enable observers to interact with what they see. The possibility of interaction intensifies the experience. Users feel as if they can look around freely with the illusion of moving left and right, up and down.



With the support of the US Circle of Friends the Jewish Museum Vienna wants to construct a **Bimah installation at Judenplatz**. Underneath the Shoah memorial on Judenplatz are the remains of the medieval Jewish community's first synagogue, which can be visited at the Museum Judenplatz. The installation will show the outline of the Bimah of the synagogue on the square itself, providing a public reminder of the expulsion of the medieval Viennese Jewish community in 1421.

The exhibition in 2018 about **Leonard Bernstein** who would have turned 100 in 2018 was also supported by the US Circle of Friends. To mark the anniversary of Bernstein's 100th birthday, the Jewish Museum Vienna dedicates an exhibition to this great New York artist in his Viennese world. Although he appeared at the Volksoper in the 1950s with Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and as the composer of *Wonderful Town*, it was his work with the Vienna State Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic that made him a favorite. His *Falstaff* premiere in 1966 was followed by an hour of applause,

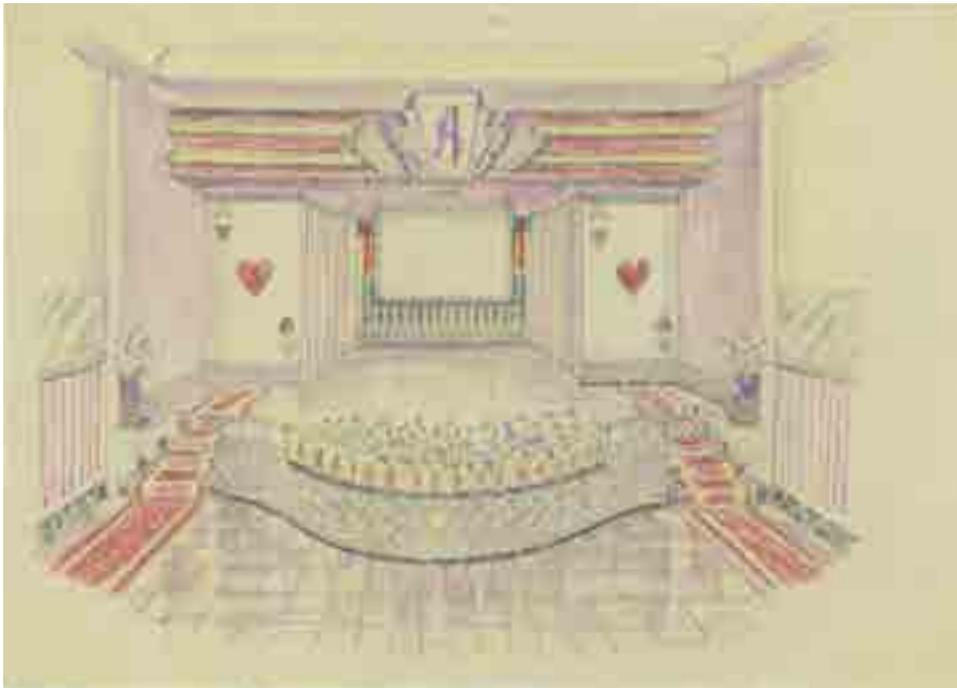
and people started to talk of a Bernstein wave. He wrote to his parents, twenty years after the end of World War II: "I am enjoying Vienna enormously—as much as a Jew can ... What they call 'the Bernstein wave' that has swept Vienna has produced some strange results, all of a sudden it's fashionable to be Jewish..."

Bernstein went on the offensive during his Vienna years, acquiring a Trachtenjanker (typical Austrian jacket) as an "antidote to German nationalism," bringing Gustav Mahler back to Vienna, and even interfering with Austrian domestic politics. The exhibition looks at the phenomenon of Bernstein, who uniquely managed to communicate classical music in both the USA and Europe to all classes of society, exploring sensory and musical aspects as well as notions of identity. It shows how Bernstein restored to the Viennese, as Michael Steinberg puts it, "the aura of a vanished past" characterized by "cosmopolitanism and sensuousness, humor and passion."



© Historie-Archiv Wien Philharmonie – Leonard Bernstein, rehearsal at Musikverein April 1966

Thanks to the support of the US Circle of Friends the Jewish Museum Vienna was able to acquire a **sensational set of architectural drawings** by **Simon Wiesenthal** from 1945. The drawings are a unique and significant testimony of an individual trying to survive the murderous system of the National Socialists. Wiesenthal is known as a person who tracked down Adolf Eichmann and who dedicated his life to justice for victims and perpetrators of the Holocaust. But before the Nazi occupation of Poland he was an architect. Now one of the last architectural works by Simon Wiesenthal have reappeared. It consists of detailed plans and drawings for a café in the city of Posnan, drawn in the year 1945, but never built. It was commissioned by a Polish prisoner, Eduard Staniszewski, who supported Wiesenthal in his last struggle to survive at Mauthausen concentration camp. They would talk about what they



© Jewish Museum Vienna, Café AS



© Jewish Museum Vienna, Café AS

were going to do when the war was over. Staniszewski said he would like to open a beautiful coffee house, and he suggested that Wiesenthal should draw up the plans. "It helped me to forget where I was and took my mind off the dead and the dying people around me", Wiesenthal says. (The Murderers Among Us, The Simon Wiesenthal Memoirs, Edited and with an Introductory Profile by Joseph Wechsberg, New York, 1967, p. 43–44) The project consists of around 60 drawings (format approx. half letter), partly with pencil and crayons. Very likely they were done in the weeks/months after the liberation. Still it seems very likely that Wiesenthal started the drawings, as he remembered, in the camp. The drawings would make a sensational exhibition.

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| Unlimited free admission for two adults for one year | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
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| All annual published catalogs of the museum | | | ■ | ■ |
| Acknowledgement on the donor wall in the museum (optional) | | | ■ | ■ |
| Behind-the-scene museum tour (archive, storage, and restoration studio) | | | | ■ |
| Limited edition of an artwork connected with the museum | | | | ■ |
| Invitation to an exclusive director's dinner in New York City | | | | ■ |
| Other individual arrangements of your choice are possible (e.g. Jewish Vienna tour, tour of Austrian "hotspots" in New York City or Los Angeles, room sponsorship, etc.) | | | | ■ |

Joining is easy!

Please contact:
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On site: Please ask at the desk for US Friends

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Wiring instructions are available upon request to email: usfriends@jmw.at

www.jmw.at/en/us-friends

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