

MAUTHAUSEN

HISTORY  
THROUGH  
ART



# sound in the silence

Co-funded by  
the European Union



20  
22

# About the Project

**Sound in the Silence** is an educational project arising from the need to find an engaging way of familiarising pupils in the later years of secondary school with difficult aspects of Europe's past. By combining art and history, this international interdisciplinary offers teenagers a more multi-dimensional perspective on the past resonating with their emotional sensitivity. In 2022 we organised two editions of the project. In September 2022, four groups of students from different European countries visited Kaunas in Lithuania to learn about the Kaunas Ninth Fort Museum. A few days after the project ended in Kaunas, another group of students travelled to Linz in Austria, to get to know the history of the Mauthausen and Gusen memorial sites better.

Together with artists representing different disciplines and educators from the memorials, participants explored the history of the former

places of prosecution. This exchange, which took into consideration varying experiences and sensitivities, culminated in the production of a final performance: an interdisciplinary work through which the teenagers interpreted newly acquired historical knowledge and expressed their opinions and emotions. The main part of the **Sound in the Silence** project was complemented by a programme for teachers. The course focused on informal and participatory education and consisted of workshops, discussions and meetings with educators from other countries.

Each edition of the project takes place in a different carefully selected location. So far we have visited, among other places, the Denkort Bunker Valentin memorial site, Neuengamme, Ravensbrück and Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial sites, as well as Žilina in Slovakia and Warsaw in Poland.



## Schools taking part in the Mauthausen edition:

1. Federal Grammar School Enns / Austria
2. Alytaus r. Daugu Vlado Mirono Gymnasium / Lithuania
3. International American School of Warsaw / Poland
4. The Emil Racoviță National College / Romania

# History of the Memorial Site

The Mauthausen Concentration Camp was opened in 1938 and, until May 1945, was at the centre of a system of over 40 subcamps and was the leading site of political, social and racial persecution by the Nazi regime on Austrian territory. The camp belonged to the third category of such centres, which meant that the living conditions were worse than in the other camps, mainly due to slave labour in the quarries.

The main Mauthausen Camp is well preserved, in contrast to Gusen Camps I and II, which are now hard to find on the map. The conditions in Gusen Camps I and II were even worse than in Mauthausen, and almost 35,000 people perished there. Primarily the Gusen Camps were populated by Polish prisoners; there were also a large number of Spanish Republicans, Soviet citizens and Italians. Today, the main Mauthausen Camp is a place of memory, a cemetery and a site of political and historical education. The area of the camps in Gusen (due to its complex history after the war) was turned into a primarily residential area, with only a few original buildings (including the crematorium) and a visitor centre.

The year 2021 was a milestone for the culture of remembrance in Austria: the Republic purchased the land of the former Gusen Concentration Camp in order to develop a new memorial site. The Mauthausen Concentration Camp Memorial was commissioned in order to start a participation process where all important stakeholders are invited to contribute their ideas.

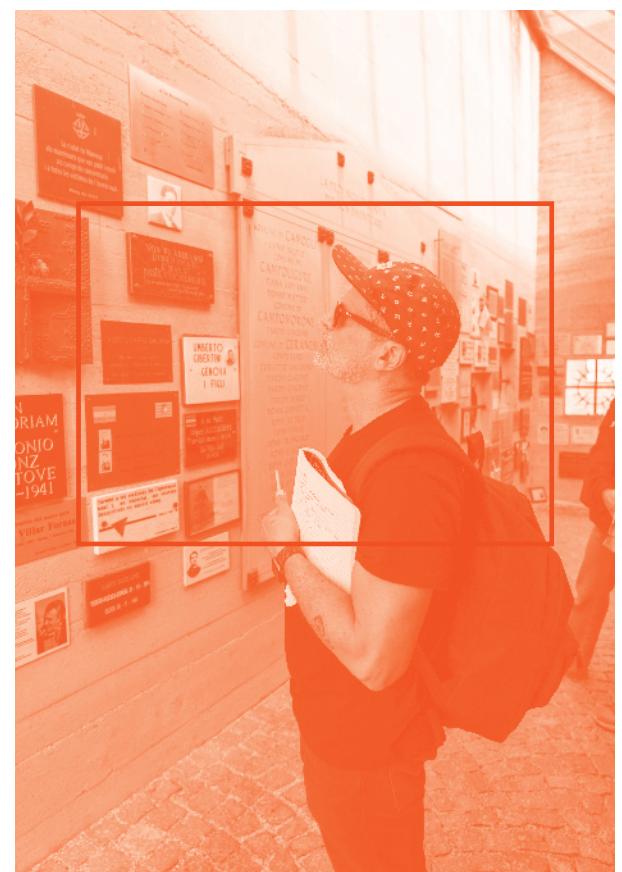


# Freedom in Performance

**Freedom in Performance** is a performance workshop that focuses on finding freedom for the actor and their body. The group used improvisational theatre and freestyle rap in order to build connections with one another and gain new perspectives. The workshop guided youths to create a performance that developed through the spaces the group had been exploring. Students produced three pieces: rap lyrics, a short poem and 'a letter to the future', which could be a monologue or a dialogue. The song 'What's the Point of History' created for the final performance (together with the students from other workshops) turned out to be very meaningful, even iconic.



## Rap, Poetry and Performance



### Workshop by Dan Wolf

Dan Wolf is an actor, rapper, playwright, director, producer and educator from the United States. Dan's work crosses artistic and cultural boundaries to combine conventional theatre styles with themes, language, music, history and aesthetics of the hip-hop generation. Dan is a founding member of the critically acclaimed hip-hop music and theatre collective Felonious.

# Dance Workshop



# For All the Bodies

Historical knowledge about the location was the starting point for creativity. The group worked with principles of authentic movement, mindfulness, contact improvisation and improvisation itself to bring about an awareness of the body and the space where the body was placed. It helped participants to connect to their own bodies, to the location that surrounded them and to others in the group. The students developed confidence about their movements and at the end of the workshop, they understood the power of abstract expression in the complexity of the whole performance.



## Workshop by Katarina Rampáčková

Katarina Rampáčková is a choreographer, performer, teacher and dance activist born in Košice, Slovakia. Kat currently lives in Barcelona, where she deepens her dance education in contact improvisation and somatic work – Body Mind Centering – that aims to improve mental health by focusing on body movement. Kat specialises in site-specific performances, inclusive dance and the creation of performances. Together with Michaela Sabolova, they lead PST (Space of Contemporary Dance) in Košice, which, in addition to educational activities, produces performances, organises an annual festival called MOVE Fest, where Kat is in charge of the festival's dramaturgy.



The vocal workshop, for singers and non-singers alike, allowed students to take part in creating an anti-singing choir. They worked with various exercises and singing techniques including classical, vocal improvisation, body percussion, beatbox, screams, growls and whispers. The students also drew individual graphic scores, which allowed them to create highly unique and emotional vocal work based on their individual and/or shared experiences of the historical site.



Workshop by Sean Palmer

Sean Palmer is a singer, an active creator, collaborator and educator, who trained in theatre and visual arts at the Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. He has been a part of the Warsaw theatre and performance scene since 2000, traversing multiple forms of music and theatre from experimental fringe to pop radio broadcasts. Currently (2022-23) he is co-running MONT – a youth orchestra in Warsaw, leading a course called multivoice at the University of Warsaw and collaborating with the Museum of Contemporary Art, leading short choral projects. Since 2015 he has been the front man of a band, the White Kites, and jazz trio, William's Things.



During the programme in Kaunas, participants were under the supervision of the moderator Tetiana Kriukovska, who organised different activities every day for a better group dynamic. Thanks to so-called 'opening and closing circles', participants learnt more about each other in a fun way; they discussed the upcoming activities and possible challenges. Those slots helped them to develop better relationships within the group and establish stronger, more cooperative bonds with the team.

## Group Dynamics



### Workshops by Tetiana Kriukovska

Tetiana Kriukovska is a filmmaker from Ukraine, the head of NGO Tolerance in You and a youth worker. Tetiana is currently based in Germany, where she coordinates the LIKHTAR project in Bredbeck, supported by The German-Polish Youth Office. During the **Sound in the Silence** project, Tetiana was responsible for ensuring the participants' wellbeing and promoting positive group dynamics.

# Visual Approaches to Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust



The workshop was open both to teachers that came with students as well as to local teachers interested in this topic. The opening session was based on creative and interactive elements, the group discussed examples of non-curricular and aesthetic research and analysed the concept of commemoration. The workshop showed examples of bridge building between school and university practice. The second session focused on graphic novels depicting the Holocaust – the

participants were invited to try using graphics and discussed how to implement this approach in teaching and learning about the Holocaust.

The workshop in Mauthausen was enriched by the meeting with Marek Zajac, the secretary of the International Auschwitz Council and chairman of the Board of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation. Zajac talked with teachers about commemoration at the Gusen Camp and the Polish culture of remembrance.



## Meeting with Marek Zajac

Polish journalist and publicist, Marek Zajac serves as the secretary of the International Auschwitz Council and is chairman of the Board of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation. Marek is the director of the documentary film about the Gusen camps *In the Depths of Gusen*.



## Workshop for Teachers by Maja Sturm

Maja Sturm is a senior teacher at Ernst-Moritz-Arndt Gymnasium, Senior Secondary School, Osnabrück, coordinator of school development / educational quality development involved in various committees and fields, e.g. gender equality. She graduated from Paderborn University. Maja holds certificates for the Fulbright seminar 'Diversity in US Education' and the International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem, seminar 'Holocaust and Education'.





# Final Performance

The project finished with a promenade performance through the House of Remembrance – the place in which the youths had their workshops during the programme and in the area around the entrance to KZ Bergkristall. The audience engaged in the location by actively following the performance around the building, on the surrounding grass and at the entrance to the underground tunnel system. The audience was given the chance to experience what the participants had learned, rather than just watch a presentation of their findings. The group started to FEEL what the combination of artistic disciplines offers a viewer, and they themselves had an artistic experience of the location.

The performance was wrapped up with a discussion with students, educators, artists and guests about the artistic act and alternative methods of historical education.





# Lyrics from the song 'What's the Point of History?'

I see what's written on this page  
 It evokes so much rage / I feel caged  
 Standing here spotlight center stage  
 I can still feel the fears that are buried near  
 It's really clear  
 Something definitely happened here  
 I can feel the tears streaming down my face  
 In this place I need space to face this disgrace  
 These buildings are laced with blood and sweat  
 Everybody disappeared, surely all of them are dead  
 Wake up from your slumber  
 Don't try to hide under the covers  
 You're outnumbered from the quarries to the tunnels  
 We're not here to stay quiet,  
 We're here to rumble, bring the thunder we discovered  
 There's a whole person behind each number  
 They walked the streets naked with bare feet  
 We walk listening to the what's beneath the concrete  
 While you plant roses in your garden  
 I beg your pardon  
 If you don't care I have to say your heart has hardened  
 Modern houses  
 Perfect peaceful families  
 Swimming pools amongst the flowers and the trees  
 Mother and child smile as they wave at us  
 When do you tell them about the devil's deed  
 That there's a river full of blood beneath the soil  
 That people died here, lives were lost and spoiled  
 You act as if it is but none of this is normal  
 My heart is broken and my bloods about to boil  
 So many lives went unfinished  
 So many voices went unheard  
 All the evidence has vanished  
 So many bodies that were burned  
 Human lives got diminished  
 You act as if your memories are blurred  
 We're here to hear their voices and tell their stories,  
 'cause what's the point of history if we never learn?

**Radu - Ioana - Kasparas**  
 The architects of hell had something on their minds  
 Build tunnels, kill people, force them to stand in lines,  
 Work under harsh conditions, this is where the hope dies,  
 The walls saw the officers commit thousands of crimes  
**Clara - Pavan - Alexandra**  
 They hoped for the best  
 And got mocked  
 'work will set you free'  
 The truth left them shocked  
**Tobias - Vicky - Marie**  
 The blood of the children that were put in the sack  
 You can feel it drip-drip-drip-dripping down your back  
 The wall still remembers all the stains left behind  
 But the people keep ignoring it, what a surprise  
**Redas - Leonie**  
 I try to erase the memories off the blood  
 To forget all the images of them in the mud  
 It haunts my memories, hurts me inside  
 Sometimes I feel like there's no place to hide  
 Sometimes I feel like there's no place to hide  
 Sometimes I feel  
**Radu - Ioana - Kasparas - Clara - Pavan - Alexandra**  
 Let's talk about their fear, their hate, their life, their fate  
 Everything was so real, but today it seems vague  
**Tobias - Vicky - Marie - Redas - Leonie**  
 Let's talk about my tears, my fears, my time, my turn  
 'cause what's the point of history if we never learn  
**Radu - Ioana - Kasparas - Clara - Pavan - Alexandra**  
 Let's talk about their fear, their hate, their life, their fate  
 Everything was so real, but today it seems vague  
**Tobias - Vicky - Marie - Redas - Leonie**  
 Let's talk about my tears, my fears, my time, my turn  
 'cause what's the point of history if we never learn  
**All**  
 'cause what's the point of history if we never learn  
 'cause what's the point of history if we never learn  
 'cause what's the point of history if we never learn

performed during  
the final performance

STUDENTS

TEACHERS

PL



Tobi Gica



Julia Sochatciewska



Zoya Kantaravskaja



Pawan Pokala



Pola Szlosek



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Victoria Wagner



Yannick Schott



Leonie Fuchthner



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Maria Blaga



Maia-Ioana Boufelea



Alexandra Coca



Ileana Grigore



Maria-Emilia Mihuț

LT



Kaspars Kelmelis



Redas Zalickas



Karolina Bičavaitė



Meida Muzikvičiūtė



Kotryna Dobravoiškaitė



Augustė Ciraikėvičiūtė



Vakarė Juskevičiūtė



Małgorzata Wesołowska



Julia Mayr



Mihaela Hendres



Stasė Vitkauskienė

Closing Information

The **Sound in the Silence** project in years 2022–23 is organised as a consortium of seven institutions. The educational programme takes place in four countries: Lithuania / Kaunas and Austria / Mauthausen in 2022 and Germany / Wannsee, Berlin and Croatia / Jasenovac in 2023. While selecting the locations, we also intended to raise awareness of those historical events connected to

the Holocaust that are less known, and at the same time showcase the fates of various persecuted groups (involving representatives of different nationalities, genders, ages, religious views, ethnic and social background, etc.). Addressing them on a local and community level aims to create a link between global and local histories.

Institutions involved in the creation of the 2022–23 editions of the **Sound in the Silence** project:

1. European Network Remembrance and Solidarity / Poland (Head of the Consortium)
2. Motte Cultural Centre / Hamburg, Germany
3. Kaunas Ninth Fort Museum / Lithuania
4. Jasenovac Memorial Site / Croatia
5. Documenta – Centre for Dealing with the Past / Croatia
6. Memorial and Educational Site House of the Wannsee Conference / Germany
7. Mauthausen Memorial / Austria

EU STATEMENT

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PARTNERS OF THE 2022 EDITION:



PARTNERS OF THE FINAL PERFORMANCE:



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The project in Mauthausen and Gusen took place from 9 to 16 October 2022. First, the participants and their teachers explored the complex history of the former Mauthausen Camp and attended the audio walk through of the former area of Gusen I and II Concentration Camps. They had a unique chance to visit the former tunnel system 'Bergkristall' in which prisoners were forced to work – constructing Messerschmitt planes. This tunnel system was a part of the Gusen Concentration Camp. After getting to know the location better, each student participated in a writing workshop called the 'Art of Remembrance' that uses creative writing exercises to create a personal connection to history. These creative exercises formed the foundation for their work in artistic workshops where they experimented with either dance, voice or performance to create original material. This material was then woven together into a site-specific performance and presented to the public.

