Stories of our objects

A selection of articles
from Creating the House
of European History

HOUSE OF
EUROPEAN HISTORY

— CONTENT —

Page 1

A European Collection
Constanze Itzel

Page 3

Introduction
Blandine Smilansky

Page 5

Objects in the Framework of a Historical Exhibition
Andrea Mork

Page 6

Object Lessons
Kieran Burns

Page 11

In Quest of Objects
Perikles Christodoulou

Page 16

To the One to Come
Joanna Urbanek

Page 21

The Black Ravens and Stalinist Terror
Zofia Wóycicka

Page 25

Displaying European Integration
Étienne Deschamps

Page 28

The Revolutionary Year of 1989
Anna Maria Huth

Page 31

Chasing the Stars
Martí Grau Segú

Page 34

The Memory of Migration
Constanze Itzel

A European Collection

Constanze Itzel

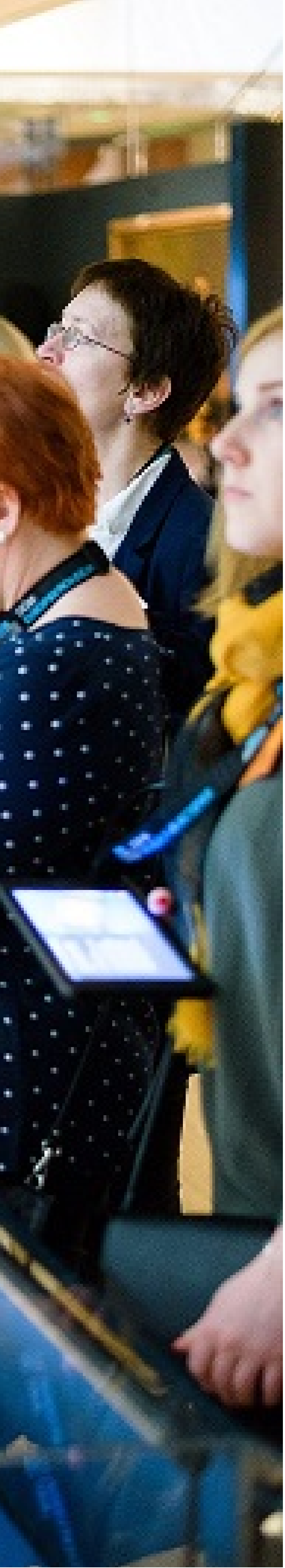
At the House of European History, a European story is being told by way of objects, documents, and audio-visual testimonies from across Europe and beyond. This first ever museum of European history was built from a clean sheet of paper, without any pre-existing collection. Finding objects to support the transnational narrative was not an easy task: Not all museum collections are documented online, and searching databases, the literature, or contacting knowledgeable curators in all European countries and languages required complex teamwork of an international team of curators.

As a result, more than 1000 objects from over 300 lenders in 37 countries were brought together in Brussels for the permanent and temporary exhibitions. The museum is also acquiring its own collection. Collecting during the first years was targeted towards the exhibitions, but contemporary collecting actions are also being carried out, notably about European integration history and current challenges of Europe today.

Objects of transnational significance, which do not belong to any specific national history, find their logical home here and the museum fills a gap in preserving the material testimonies of European integration history alongside the relevant archives.

The House of European History’s exhibitions narrate history through the juxtaposition of objects and documents of various origins. Covering the same topic, for example, on national and democratic movements in the nineteenth century, objects from Portugal, Ireland, Poland, Belgium, Greece, Germany and Hungary are displayed together in one showcase.

This new contextualisation of objects leads to an interesting change in meaning. An object which previously could have been symbolic for a particular national history is now embedded into a European context. Hence it has become representative for transnational historical phenomena. The object is also, very often, ‘confronted’ with similar objects from other countries, and is therefore turned into part of a story about similarities, connections and mutual influence, rather than representing a fixed, bounded entity.



This transnational curatorial practice can raise awareness for the fact that cultural heritage was shaped by centuries of interactions and contact, and has therefore a much more transnational character than is generally assumed. It also stirs reflection about whether there is a truly European heritage which Europeans can consider as shared.

The objects displayed in the museum's exhibitions and online offers are open to interpretation. When the museum organises events in which historians or writers from different countries guide through the displays, they all tell their own story, interpreting the museum's objects in the light of their narratives. The collection thus visualises the diversity of meanings that objects can have for different communities. It contributes to stimulating debate, raising curiosity, and enhancing understanding.

Therefore, if the newly contextualised objects take on a new meaning – one could potentially speak of an 'Europeanisation' of their significance. The curatorial and collecting activities of the House of European History contribute to conveying a new layer of meaning to cultural heritage: a European, transnational layer that visualises and enhances the complexity of material testimonies of our past.

Introduction

Blandine Smilansky

This online magazine is a welcome invitation to reflect on the role that our objects play in the permanent exhibition of the House of European History. And on a larger scale, their impact in the context of a history museum with a strong transnational dimension. By starting with the objects, this can awaken the fullest understanding of the museum's content and messages, and create the richest kind of museum experience.

The publication features a selection of articles originally written for the book "Creating the House of European History" (2018) which narrates the long road towards the creation of the museum. These articles give exemplary insight into the content of the House of European History's permanent exhibition and explain the critical work of the curatorial team to create a transnational narrative on the recent history of the continent. Each of the authors are, or were members of the House of European History's team that went "in search of objects"—to quote one of the articles' titles. Working as historians and curators for a museum project with no museum collection to start with, meant they had to search each corner of Europe for the items that would give the House of European History its bricks and mortar.

Throughout this magazine, you will discover a selection of our curators' perspectives on the search and the choice of certain key objects that can be found in the House of European History's permanent exhibition. You will learn the context and history of those objects in more detail, and come to understand their profound significance for Europe's shared memory and history.

The next step would be to look at the way those objects are encountered and experienced by visitors and those who welcome and accompany them —providing an educators' perspective on the House of European History exhibition.

We hope this online magazine allows you to step further inside the walls of the museum and provokes a broader understanding of what exhibiting European history means.

Objects in the Framework of a Historical Exhibition

Andrea Mork

The most significant and trend-setting processes in Europe's history have been transnational developments, even though they have manifested in very diverse ways.

The chosen methodological approach of this museum means that we do not adopt one—apparently global—point of view, but instead we try to initiate a conscious interaction with the relativity of perspectives. It is part of the original concept and presentation of the House of European History that the objects shown in the permanent exhibition are, for the most part, loans from very different geographical and national provenances and therefore are liable to be replaced in the foreseeable future. This procedure corroborates the multi-perspectival character of the exhibition.

Objects are the centrepieces of any museological presentation. They are sources of historical information and knowledge. Contextualised by texts and other objects, they reflect the multiplicity and complexity of historical events—and the difficulty of understanding the past. ‘The object is an actor: a good actor can play ten different roles’(1). This insightful description offered by the painter Henri Matisse about the changing significance of the objects in the composition of his paintings is equally valid for the construction of historical exhibitions.

The interpretation of each object has to be created anew in the concrete framework of each new presentation, depending on its history and with respect to its inherent significance. The coordinates of the permanent exhibition in the House of European History have three dimensions: the chronological historical framework, the concrete examples, and structural leitmotifs. The alpha and omega of a good exhibition lie in a successful balance between the thread of the basic argumentation and the enlightening presentation of significant details.

This text is a short extract from Andrea Mork's article "The Narrative", in Creating the House of European History (2018), 129-221.

(1) “Témoignages: Propos recueillis par Maria Luz et approuvés par Henri Matisse”, XXe Siècle, No. 2, janvier 1952, 66–67.

Image credit on side panels pages 1,4,5: © Bernard De Keyzer bdkz.net

Object Lessons

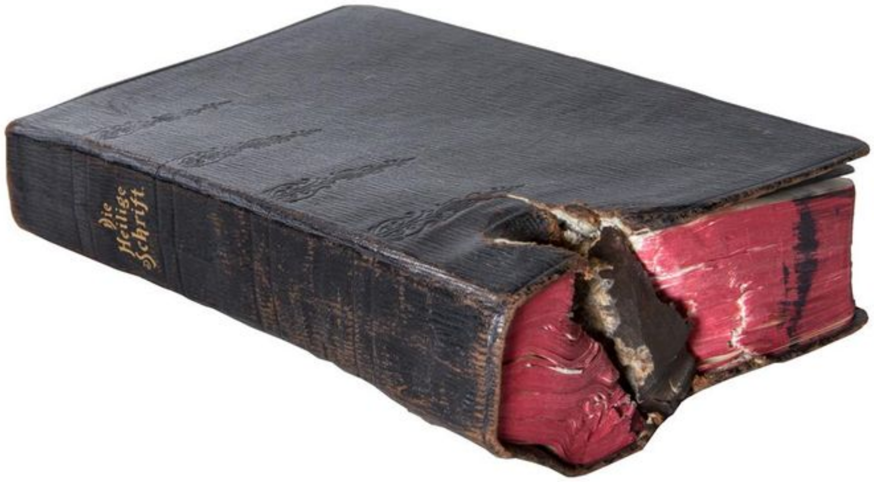
Kieran Burns

Everything has the capacity to become an object of wonder;
it just depends how you look at it.
JULIAN SPALDING(*)

It is a truth universally acknowledged of museum work that every object tells a story. A truth that at times verges on cliché, uttered more in hope than as an accurate description of the object before us in the display case. Some objects struggle to tell us stories. Lacking either personal testimony, being mass-produced and replicated, or without any intrinsic value, objects in museums often stand as ciphers, props in the telling of a larger story. They are important in illustrative terms perhaps but remain theatrical devices nonetheless.

Occasionally, however, as a museum curator you come across something of a different order. An object that was there. A witness object, if you like, capable of breaking down the barrier between past and present and bringing the visitor directly into contact with the historical moment. It has been our privilege in the House of European History to come into direct contact with many such objects from across Europe. Often this happens as the result of labour, research and fruitful cooperation with partners in our field equally dedicated to making history known to the public. Sometimes chance or serendipity takes a role. In either case, the inclusion of these pieces in our exhibition by the grace of their custodians has added a truly human dimension to our museum. Since it is difficult to be selective after six years of working on this project, it is only by way of illustration that I mention these three examples.

(*) Spalding 2002: 72



1.
Bomb-damaged Bible that belonged to Kurt Geiler

Private collection, Germany

A soldier's bible

Kurt Geiler was a young German soldier serving on the Western Front in France in 1917. Geiler was a religious man and like many soldiers on all sides in the First World War he held his faith close to him—in this case in the form of a small leather-bound Bible, which Geiler was said to have kept under his head as he slept. One night his trench was heavily shelled and many of his fellow soldiers were killed or wounded. Geiler however, emerged almost unscathed, discovering that his Bible had prevented a large piece of shrapnel from hitting his skull. It had saved his life. Geiler kept his Bible after the war, still with the 4-cm piece of metal embedded in it. It was, his grandson stated,
a 'family anti-war memorial'.

Like many war objects in households across Europe, this Bible was preserved and treasured by Geiler's family through several generations. It came to public attention through the remarkable public history project, Europeana 1914–1918. Through fruitful cooperation with Europeana and the kindness and public spiritedness of the Geiler family, the Bible was lent for the inaugural permanent exhibition of the House of European History, where it stands, shrapnel included, as a vivid reminder of the personal experiences of soldiers in this war.

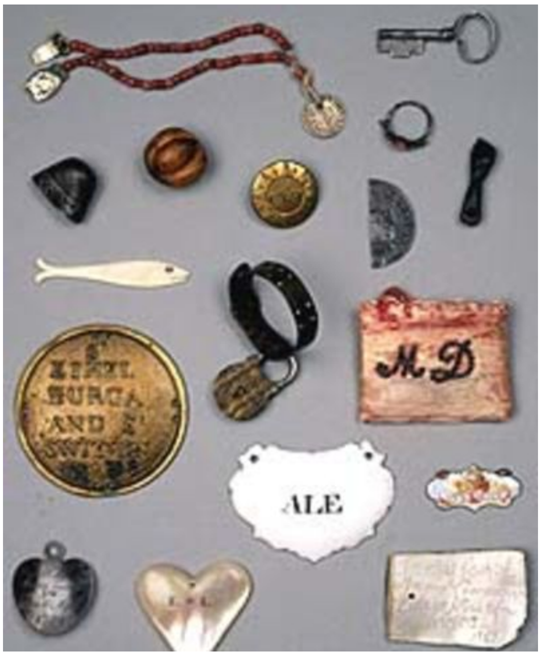
2.
Life jacket from torpedoed Lusitania. United Kingdom, c. 1915.

Eric Sauder Collection, United States of America

A survivor’s life jacket

Two years earlier, in May 1915, a torpedo fired from a German submarine struck the passenger liner Lusitania, off the south-west coast of Ireland. The ship sank in 18 minutes, claiming the lives of nearly 1,200 people, in the cold May Atlantic within view of the shoreline. The event, deeply controversial then and now, was represented as a turning point in the war. The death of 128 United States citizens on board was used by many to call for American entry into the conflict, thereby ending the country’s policy of international isolation. The United States did indeed join the war in April 1917, though for many reasons. On a fundamental level, the story tells us how civilians could be drawn into and impacted by conflict.

For the First World War gallery of the House of European History we wanted to convey this message to the public and were lucky enough to be able to borrow a passenger life jacket from the ship from an American collector who has devoted his life to the study of the Lusitania. The Boddy Patent life jacket, well-worn by time and circumstances, belonged to an Irishman who fortunately survived the disaster. Life jackets from the Lusitania are rare survivors themselves. There remains but a handful in private collections and in museums worldwide. This evocative object tells a powerful story, namely how a global historical turning point affected ordinary people and how a European war shaped lives in Europe and beyond.



3.
Tokens to identify children given away. London, late eighteenth century.

Foundling Hospital Museum, London, United Kingdom.

A parent's token

Despite what our history books at school might have told us, European history is not only about the battle, the war or the treaty. History is also important when it comes from below and is of the everyday. The historical quotidian shows us how much has changed in the human experience, how far we have progressed, and that the past can be a foreign country', in the words of L. P. Hartley (¹). Yet the history of everyday life also shows how little is new under the sun. While the problems that societies face change, the common humanity with which we deal with them does not. Personal objects embody that experience, functioning as a unique form of evidence and conveyors of memory, evoking empathy in a museum visitor and through empathy, understanding. In Shaping Europe', in the topic 'Memory' at the very beginning of the permanent exhibition, are a series of 10 small tokens on loan from the Foundling Museum in London. Ranging from an unmarked key, to a broken crucifix, and an engraved heart, they are ordinary objects from extraordinary situation. They come from the Foundling Hospital and mostly date from the late eighteenth century, when some parents, through economic or social circumstances, could not raise their young child. Children were placed in the care of the Foundling Hospital in the hope that should life improve the parents would return to claim them. These tokens were the means by which a mother or father, often illiterate, could identify a child on return. They were physical proof of the connection between a parent and a child and of huge emotional and practical importance. One poignant token is a coin cut in two. One half of the coin was deposited with the hospital; one half remained in the possession of the parent. They were never reunited. The separation of the two parts suggests the ultimate separation of parent and child. It tells us at once so much and so very little.

(¹) The Go-between, London 1953.

‘Learning’, according to the ground-breaking educationalists John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking ‘is not just facts and concepts; learning… is a rich, emotion-laden experience, encompassing much, if not most, of what we consider to be fundamentally human’ (Falk and Dierking 2000: 21). In this regard, these artefacts described above, as well many more unmentioned, all assembled for the exhibition of House of European History, are purveyors of true object lessons.

Bibliography

Spalding 2002
Julian Spalding, “The Poetic Museum”, Munich, London, New York: Prestel.

Falk and Dierking 2000
John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, “Learning from Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning”, Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

In Quest of Objects

Perikles Christodoulou

Creating a museum from scratch, without the benefit of a pre-existing core collection, proved to be an incredibly rewarding experience, but it was also challenging and extremely time consuming. Finding the right objects to convey our messages in an optimal way—objects that were also of museum quality and complementary to one another—required both abstract reasoning and practical thinking. How three key objects came to jointhe House of European History's permanent collection offers a fascinating glimpse into this selection process.

An updated globe

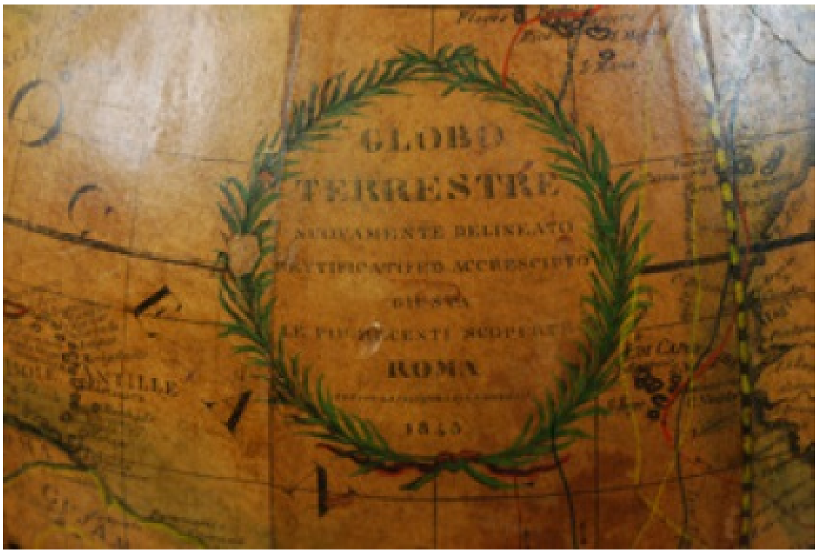
'Mapping Europe' is the central section in the introductory part of the exhibition. Eight objects, together with a circular audio-visual element, form a display that highlights the idea that Europe is not just a geographical term, but rather an intellectual and cultural entity. It was clear from the outset that one of those objects had to be a globe, and ideally an early one. We felt that a globe would best illustrate the changes to the world view following European contact with the Americas and the realisation and the realisation that Europe is only a small part of a world that is much bigger than previously thought.

Early globes are rare and expensive objects and, in our case, we had an additional requirement: the globe needed to fit into a showcase with a depth of 60 cm. It was some time before our researches led us to a Milan-based dealer with a rather later globe, but of the right size and capable of embodying our message, whilst adding additional layers of meaning to it (fig. 1).

1.
Terrestrial globe, based on templates by Giovanni Maria Cassini (1745-1824), Italy, after 1843.

House of European History

2.
Detail of the globe of fig. 1. The text encircled by the wreath explains that the map was newly drafted, corrected and expanded according to the most recent discoveries' in 1843.

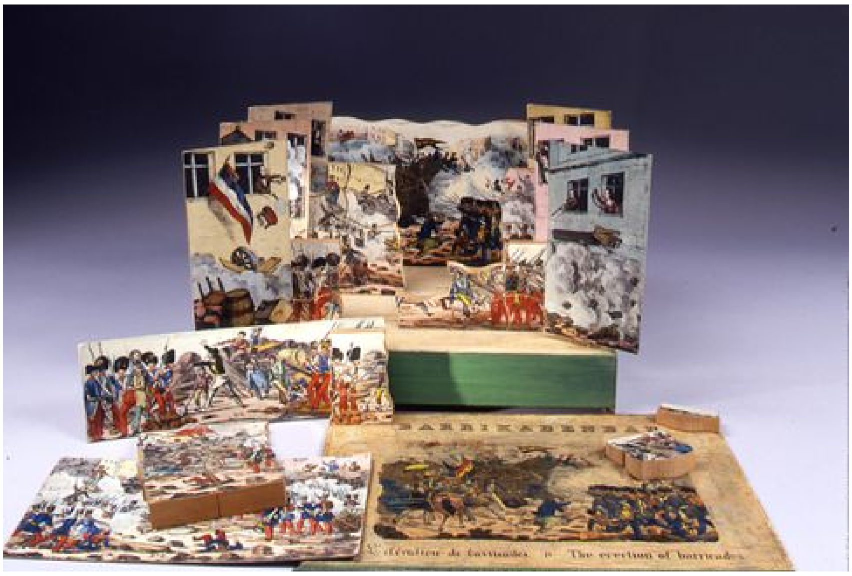


The globe is after Giovanni Maria Cassini (born in Venice 1745, and died in Rome c. 1824), a member of the religious order of Somascan Fathers, an engraver, and a pupil of Piranesi (cf. Baldwin 1995; Valerio 2005). Although not a cartographer himself, Cassini produced influential atlases, maps and globes at a time of major political upheaval in Europe, immediately following the French Revolution. He published the segments, or gores, for his terrestrial globe in his Atlas of 1792. In a posthumous edition of that Atlas in 1843 by the Calcografia camerale, the Papal publishing house, the globe template was updated 'according to the most recent discoveries' (fig. 2). The House of European History's globe derives from that edition, and is testimony to the continuous changes in our knowledge and perception of the world.

Revolutionary 'Lego'

In the exhibition, the narration of the political changes of the first half of the nineteenth century starts with an exclamation: 'The nineteenth century—an age of revolutions!' In the public imagination, those revolutions are inextricably linked with barricades (cf. Hazan 2013). The problem for the curator is to steer a course between kitsch recreations and lifeless engravings or paintings.

There are two daguerreotypes by Thibault in the Musée d'Orsay (PHO 2002 4 1 and PHO 2002 4 2). They show the barricade of rue Saint-Maur-Popincourt before and after the attack by the forces of General Lamoricière on Sunday 25 and Monday 26 June, during the 1848 revolution in Paris. These photographs are important historical documents, and they were initially considered for inclusion in our display, but, for all their authenticity as early examples of photojournalism, they can never transmit the danger of the street battles and the excitement that they evoked for contemporaries. That excitement is, however, evoked by an unexpected object, a rare construction toy from 1848 that invites children to create and act out their own barricade scenes (fig. 3). We found the toy in



3.
Barrikadenbau/L’élévation de barricades/The erection of barricades, construction toy. German Confederation, c. 1850.

House of European History

the collection of the German film director Werner Nekes (1944–2017), an avid collector of objects, including toys, reminiscent of stage sets or containing optical illusions. Nekes, who bought this piece from an American antique dealer, was initially reluctant for the toy to leave his collection, but became convinced of its importance for the House of European History, and agreed to sell it to us.

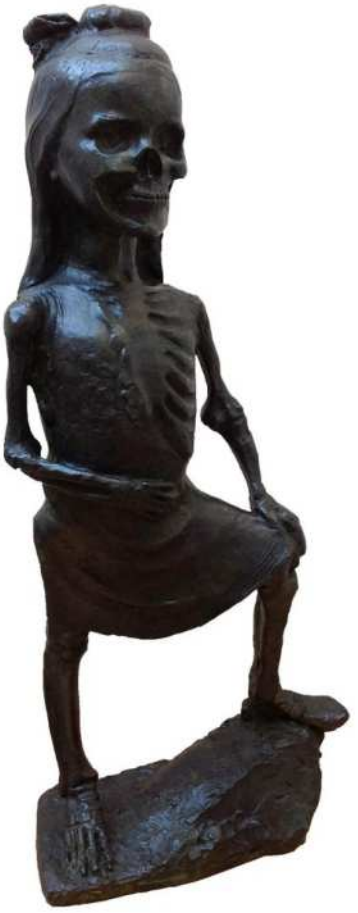
The toy is an eloquent witness to the revolutionary currents that stormed Europe during what became known as ‘the year of revolutions’ and of the fascination that they provoked in the public at large. Confronted with such an object, the visitor is able to experience a child’s excitement at the drama being acted out at revolutionary barricades in the streets of many of Europe’s towns and capitals. The multilingual cover (German, French and English) of the box not only shows that the toy was intended to be sold in countries where those languages were spoken, but also indicates an international market for such products, reflectingthe wide territorial spread of the revolutions, and the considerable public interest that they aroused.

Another Guernica

The bombing and destruction of the Basque town of Guernica on 26 April 1937 by German and Italian planes was one of the most horrific episodes in the Spanish Civil War, immortalised in Pablo Picasso’s arguably most famous painting Guernica, today in the Museo Nacional–Centro de Arte Reina Sofía,

Madrid. It would be hard to find anything as compelling and as expressive as Picasso’s masterpiece. Yet, as luck would have it, we discovered that the Musée Fabre in Montpellier had a plaster model in its collection by the French sculptor René Iché (1897–1954), also entitled Guernica.

The sculpture shows a young girl as a skeleton with long hair, wearing a knee-length dress that leaves the bones of the left side of her thorax uncovered. Iché created in April 1937, to express his horror at the



4.
René Iché (1897-1954): Guernica, 1937
(posthumous cast in bronze, 2004).

House of European History

of Guernica. It was his way of responding to the insistent questions of his little daughter Hélène about what happened in the Basque town and why he was so upset about it. The artist used Hélène as a model for the work. Because of the work’s violence, he never exhibited it during his lifetime and he never proceeded to create a bronze sculpture, as would normally have been the case.However, before donating the plaster to the Musée Fabre, the granddaughter of the artist, Rose-Hélène Iché, commissioned a posthumous cast in bronze (2004). As soon as we heard of its existence, we made efforts to secure the bronze (fig. 4) for the House of European History.

Iché is the perfect example of an honest and politically engaged artist. His creation is an impressive complement to our presentation of the Spanish Civil War, showing how that war epitomised the cruel political confrontation between democratic and totalitarian regimes in Europe before the Second World War.

We have sought to illustrate the story of Europe through objects with a European dimension. In some cases, that European dimension is brought into relief when an object is placed alongside similar objects from other European countries. In other cases, the European dimension is obvious and compelling, intrinsic to the object itself. This is the case of the best pieces in our collection, as exemplified by the three acquisitions described above.

Bibliography

Baldwin 1995
Robert W. Baldwin, “P. Giovanni Maria Cassini, C. R. S. (1745–1824 ca.) and his globes”, Der Globusfreund 43/44, 201–218.

Hazan 2013
Eric Hazan, “La barricade. Histoire d’un objet révolutionnaire”, Paris: Autrement.

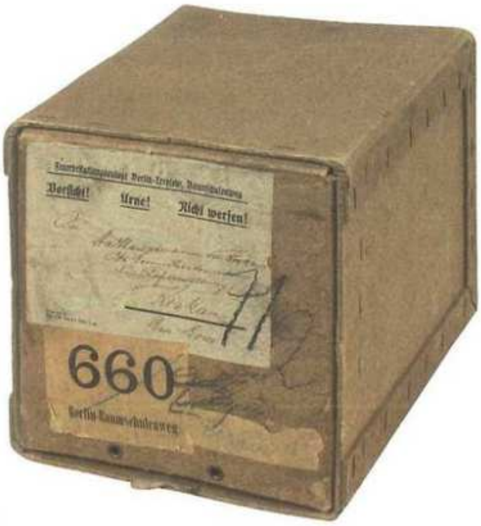
Valerio 2005
Vladimiro Valerio, “Giovanni Maria Cassini’s Globe Gores (1790/1792) – A study of text and images”, Globe Studies 51/52, 73–84.

To the One to Come

Testimonies of violence on display

Joanna Urbanek

The Second World War industrialised violence against civilians, very often leading to individual stories getting lost in a maze of numbers. Likewise, the vast showcase in the House of European history, where information on various aspects of this conflict is provided, strikes the viewer with a multiplicity of objects and images. But behind each and every one of them hides a story of human life—or, sadly, death.



1.
Box for the ashes of Professor Stanisław Estreicher.

Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie, Kraków, Poland.

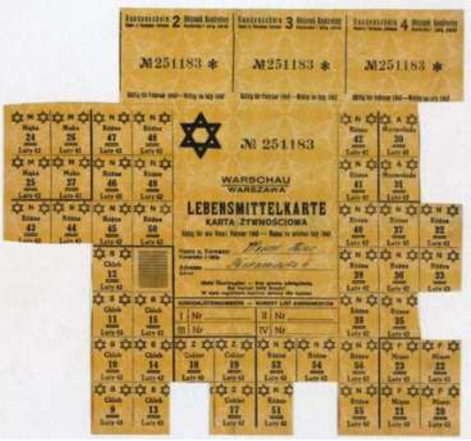
Sometimes this is literally the case, such as in the copy of the box in which the ashes of Stanisław Estreicher were sent to his family from the Sachsenhausen concentration camp (fig. 1). Stanisław Estreicher died in December 1939, one of the victims of the action conducted against the Polish elites by the Nazi German occupiers. Let us not forget that beyond Professor Estreicher's tragic end, he was first and foremost an expert in law and rector of the University of Cracow. An attentive viewer, after the visit, may find out more about him in books and on the internet. Unfortunately, many of the people whose personal stories are portrayed at the exhibition remain anonymous. How, for example, to narrate the experience of the last moments of the captured Jewish women lined up for execution? The photograph we have of their last moments (fig. 2) was taken by a member of the German death squad, participating in the killing. Susan Sontag wrote in her essay On Photography that in those kinds of circumstances, to photograph meant to tame, to possess… and to destroy (Sontag 1977). Sontag's remark reinforces my reservation regarding our moral right to use such an image. I do not know anything about the lives of these anonymous women so violently ended. In fact, I am reducing them to their last minutes. Although museums, in one way or another, have been putting life and death on display for decades, we touch their mystery to a very limited extent, with the risk of trivialising them. How to show individual and collective experience of war

2.
Jewish women executed by the SS killing squads. Liepaja, occupied Latvia, 1941.

Bundesarchiv, B 162 Bild-03236,
Koblenz, Germany

by objects without reducing peoples' lives to a mere snapshot? Photograph, paper, or even a personal souvenir after all… objectifies. In search for any material evidence available, we choose to speak over remaining silent, ever conscious that we only reveal a glimpse of reality.

However, some of those who were experiencing the horror of war themselves, decided to build a bridge between them and future generations, to enable them to understand better what that global conflict meant. In 1940 a group of Jewish intellectuals from the Warsaw ghetto created a clandestine organisation Oyneg Shabbos, whose goal was to document the fate of Jews under German occupation. The Hebrew name Oyneg Shabbos means 'the joy of Saturday', because its members were meeting on Saturdays, the day of Shabbat celebration in the Jewish culture. Devout Jews do not work on Saturday—according to the religion, the only exception to this rule is to save human life. The members of Oyneg Shabbos were originally planning to write a book based on gathered documents in order to save the memory of human life in the ghetto, and to publish it after the war. Soon, it turned out that this plan might prove impossible. Realising that there would be someone else to write their story, they placed testimonies, photographs and documents in containers, which then, in the face of the ongoing liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, they buried. After the war, the containers were excavated.



№251183 ✻

№251183 ✻

№251183 ✻

№ 251183

WARSCHAU
WARSZAWA

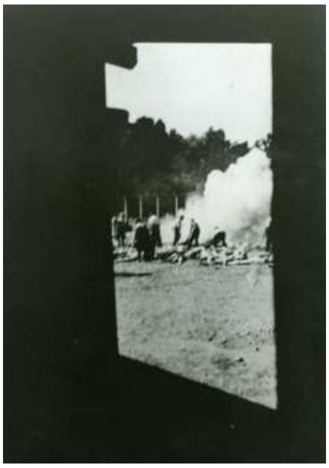
LEBENSMITTELKARTE
KARTA ŻYWNOŚCIOWA

3.
Warsaw ghetto ration card, 1942.

Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, Warsaw, Poland

Today, on display in the House of European History we can see a small fragment of that collection, which has been proclaimed part of the UNESCO heritage treasure ‘Memory of the world’ (¹). It is a ration card (fig. 3): a document necessary for buying groceries like a few grams of bread or a bit of flour. It belonged to Wasser Hirsz. We do not know whether he forfeited voluntarily on his right to food supply, or being aware of the catastrophic situation in the ghetto he simply gave up trying to buy anything on the legal market. In any case, his decision meant self-abnegation.

Following along the display case, we come across perhaps the most extreme example of a historical testimony, provided by the slave labourers of the so-called Sonderkomando, who were forced to work at the gas chambers in the death camp of Auschwitz, forced to work at the machinery of annihilation. They knew that soon they were to share the fate of those whose bodies they were removing. From their powerlessness and anger the urge to pass on the truth was born. Time was pressing, as the inmates realized that the camp’s SS crew would attempt to hide any traces of their crimes. In the summer of 1944 a camera was found, and under the risk of cruel punishment, pictures were taken, showing women led to gas chamber, their bodies roasted (fig. 4). With the help of prisoners involved in the resistance movement inside the camp, the photos were smuggled outside and then secured by the Polish Underground State in Cracow. Showing violence at the exhibition, the curator only briefly touches the mystery of the lives of those people who had been subjected to it. Sometimes it feels like being an intruder. Sometimes, however, those who passed away in most tragic circumstances, consciously and actively passed on their testimonies. Although we are still moving in the darkness of the ethical concerns, the documents they left are a torch



4.
Burning the bodies of victims of mass extermination. German concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, occupied Poland, 1944.

Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz Birkenau, Oświęcim, Poland

(¹) The Go-between, London 1953.

Tadeusz Gajcy (¹)

To the one to come (²)

(...)
Not that I'm in fear or crying
not that I'm waiting as condemned
for fragile life-span—I seek in stars
to see your figure. Between us
like two hands are joined
our memories and loves,
and only one and common home,
which above me grows in you.
I'm writing—it feels like digging a grave
for the stillness of body, the grief of hand
a small word lays sometimes
like a cross or wreath.
If it could last—your hand
will open it and fulfil with heart,
and the time—which leans the youth
towards the autumn—will recall the face
stone-like and forever dark.
(…)
I don't know much, as you perhaps:
we walk together looking carefully:
you—on the sky full of stars
seeking the flame, and me in the glow,
me—with my back turned—heart
full of clouded love I carry like
a soldier grave under his helmet
carries through the time(³) .

Do Potomnego

(...)
Nie żebym uląkł się lub płakał,
nie żebym czekał już skazany
na trwałość kruchą – szukam w gwiazdach
zarysu twego. Między nami
jak dłonie dwie złączone są
pamięci nasze i miłości,
a jeden tylko wspólny dom,
który nade mną w tobie rośnie.
Piszę – jak grabarz dół wybiera
na ciała bezruch, dłoni rozpacz
i słowo małe staje nieraz
jak krzyż lub wieniec. Jeśli zostać
dane mu będzie – ręka twoja
otworzy je i sercem spełni,
a czas, co młodość ku jesieni
przechyla twardo – twarz wywoła
kamienną już i nocną wiecznie.
(…)
Niewiele wiem jak ty zapewne:
idziemy razem patrząc czujnie:
ty – na gwiaździstym, prostym niebie
szukasz płomienia i mnie w łunie,
ja – odwrócony – serce pełne
miłości smutnej niosę jak
żołnierz mogiłę pod swym hełmem
niesie przez czas.

(¹) Tadeusz Gajcy was a Polish poet who fought and died in the uprising against German occupation in Warsaw, in August1944. His body was exhumed and buried a year later.
(²) Madeline G. Levine proposes the title To My Descendant (Levine 1978). Gajcy, however, addressed his piece to an anonymous member of future generation. The link with the one to come remains metaphysical. Gajcy himself remained childless; he died at the age of 22.
(³) Translated by the writer of this paper.

Bibliography

Levine 1978
Madeline G. Levine, “History’s Victims: the Poetry of Tadeusz Gajcy and Kamil Baczyński”, The Polish Review, Vol. 23, No. 3, 30–46.

Sontag 1977
Susan Sontag, “On Photography”, New York: Anchor Books.

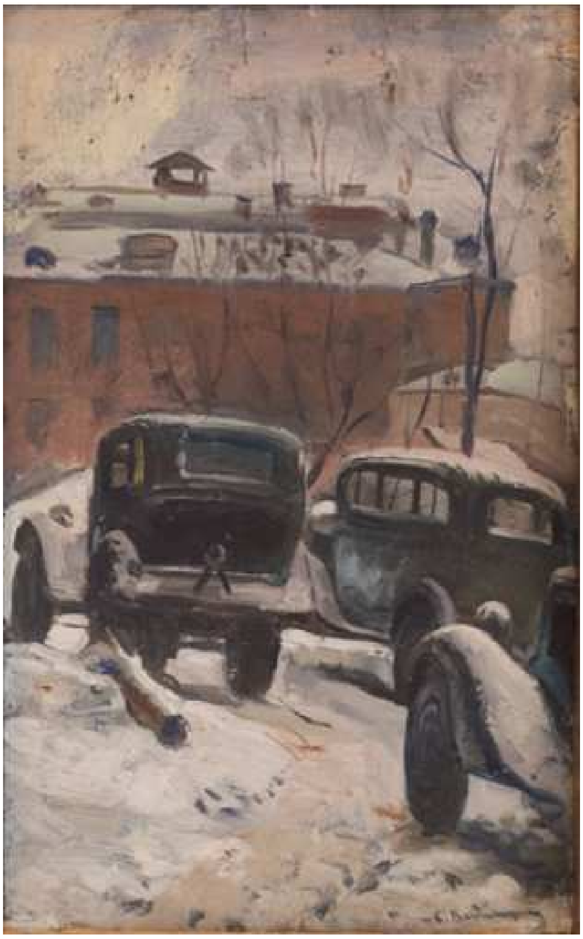
The “Black Ravens” and Stalinist Terror

Zofia Wóycicka

One of the objects in the House of European History exhibition I am particularly fond of is the oil painting ‘Black Ravens’ (fig. 1) created in the 1930s by Boris Vladimirski and shown in the part of the exhibition dealing with Stalinism. The painting shows a street in a big city, presumably Moscow. It is dawn, a cold, winter day. Dirty snowdrifts lie on the street. In front of a massive building—it might be a prison or an apartment block—we see three black Volgas, Soviet cars used at that time by the state security service (NKVD). Boris Vladimirski (born in Kiev in 1878 and died in Moscow in 1950) was not one of the most prominent Stalinist artists. However, his social-realist paintings depicting the ‘New Soviet Man’, workers, peasants and young pioneers, and his large-scale portraits of Lenin and Stalin gained recognition by state and party officials; he got commissions and his works were presented during big official Soviet exhibitions (Cullerne Bown 1989: 343). He himself did not fall victim to Stalinist purges. Nonetheless, he must have been under a grave impression of the all-encompassing terror of the late 1930s as he painted this rather small piece (32 x 20 cm). The meaning of the painting isnot explicit but its message must have been clear to everyone living in that time: during the Great Purge (1937–1938), the NKVD used black Volgas to arrest people. The Black Ravens or Black Marias, as they were called, became a symbol of the ubiquity and unpredictability of the Stalinist terror. During these years, nobody, even a true Bolshevik and high ranking party member or celebrated Soviet artist could be sure they would not be the next one to be executed, sent to the Gulag or deported to one of the forced settlements in the East. There is a poem by Anna Akhmatova, entitled ‘Requiem’, which is also quoted in the exhibition. Many of Akhmatova’s closest friends and family members perished during the Great Purge. In the poem, created in the years 1935–1940, she expressed her grief:

The stars of death hanging over us,
Writhing in pain, innocent Russia
Under the bloody soles of the boots,
Under the tyres of the Black Marias. (¹)

(¹) Anna Akhmatova, Requiem, translated from the Russian by Alex Cigale, The Hopkins Review, vol. 9, No. 3, Summer 2016, 340.



1.
Boris Vladimirski (1878–1950):
Black Ravens. Soviet Union, late
1930s.

Horvath Collection for Political Art,
Linz, Austria

While in Central and Eastern European countries it is quite common to juxtapose Nazism and Stalinism, describing both regimes as totalitarian, in Western Europe such comparisons are treated with great suspicion. This can be partly explained by the different historical experience: whereas many of the former Eastern Bloc countries faced both regimes, Western European societies knew about Stalinism only from hearsay (Leggewie 2011: 21-27; Assmann 2013: 154-165). In Germany, there is also a well-founded fear that such juxtaposition could lead to a relativisation of Nazi crimes. Also in academic discourse, the classical totalitarianism theory as formulated by Hannah Arendt has been criticised as a tool of ideological battles during the Cold War. The sole concept of totalitarianism was questioned as highly theoretical and lacking a strong empirical basis. The opening of Russian archives in the 1990s gave new insights into the functioning of the Stalinist dictatorship, which allowed an in-depth comparison of both regimes, revealing the parallels but even more so the fundamental differences. This gave new impulses to the comparative approach.

Many researchers would agree that the ‘total claim’ Nazism and Stalinism made on the ruled societies as well as the scale of repression and terror they introduced not only distinguishes the two systems from other authoritarian regimes of that time but also make them unprecedented in history (Kershaw 1997: 88–89; Kershaw and Lewin 1997a: 344). In addition, the immense impact both regimes had on twentieth-century European and global history seems to justify such juxtaposition. However, for a deeper understanding of the functioning of the two systems it is not less important to explain the contrasts than to seek their common features (Kershaw 1997: 88–89; Geyer and Fitzpatrick 2008: 26).

At the House of European History, we decided to risk a comparison of Stalinism and National Socialism. Our aim was not to equate both regimes, but the contrary: to present their similarities and their genuine differences. In the exhibition-making process, the latter proved to be much more difficult.
There is lots of very powerful visual material,such as busts and portraits of Hitler and Stalin, films and photos showing Soviet and German mass gatherings and parades, models and sketches of the monumental Nazi and social realist architecture, which—at least at first glance—suggest a resemblance between both dictatorships. It was much more challenging to find significant objects that would highlight and visualise the contrasts.

The painting by Boris Vladimirski is one of those precious objects, as it points to one of the most important specifics of Stalinist terror. As shown in the exhibition, Nazi persecutions followed a racial and political pattern; their targets were clearly specified: they were all those considered ‘racially inferior’ or even ‘unworthy of life’—first of all the Jews, Roma people, some Slavic nations, the handicapped, but also political opponents. For most people living under German rule it was quite clear if they were among those to be drowned’ or those to be ‘saved’. In contrast, Stalinist persecutions were much more random and unpredictable (Kershaw and Lewin 1997a: 353–356). In Soviet propaganda, the victims were defined by their socio-economic status and political conviction—they were the bourgeois, the kulaks (allegedly wealthier peasants), ‘enemies of the people’—but in reality the repressions could hit anybody. The permanent reinvention of new foes created an atmosphere of constant terror and threat felt even by Stalin’s minions, such as Boris Vladimirski.

Bibliography

Assmann 2013
Aleida Assmann, “Das neue Unbehagen an der Erinnerungskultur. Eine Intervention”, München: C.H. Beck

Cullerne Bown 1989
Matthew Cullerne Bown, “A Dictionary of Twentieth Century Russian and Soviet Painters”, 1900–1980s. London: Izomar.

Geyer and Fitzpatrick 2008
Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Introduction: After Totalitarianism – Stalinism and Nazism Compared”, in: idem (eds), Beyond Totalitarianism. Stalinism and Nazism Compared. Cambridge University Press, 1–37.

Kershaw 1997
Ian Kershaw, “‘Working towards the Führer’: Reflections on the nature of the Hitler dictatorship”, in: Kershaw and Lewin 1997, 88–106.

Kershaw and Lewin 1997
Ian Kershaw and Moshe Lewin (eds), “Stalinism and Nazism. Dictatorships in Comparison”, Cambridge University Press.

Kershaw and Lewin 1997a
Ian Kershaw and Moshe Lewin, “Afterthoughts”, in: Kershaw and Lewin 1997, 343–358.

Leggewie 2011
Claus Leggewie, “Der Kampf um die europäische Erinnerung. Ein Schlachtfeld wird besichtigt”, München: C. H. Beck

Displaying European Integration

Étienne Deschamps

One of the main challenges in choosing content for the museum’s permanent exhibition was striking a balance between the history of the European integration process, or of the idea of Europe, and other context essential to understanding relatively recent periods of history. Given the number of European museums with their own collections it was rather easy to identify, locate and obtain exhibits linked to a certain period in history—be it the industrial revolution, the World Wars or the Cold War—and which shed light on social movements or changes to daily life. However, when it came to the history of European integration, or at the very least its political and institutional dimensions, the story was a very different one.

For a few reasons, it is rare for objects relating to the history of a united Europe—even those produced and distributed by European institutions, national authorities, political parties and foundations, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, pro- or anti-European movements or pressure groups over the last 70 years—to be kept in properly organised, accessible collections. Focused on the management of everyday business and other campaigns, the European institutions never implemented any system for archiving this kind of material that they produced. Archivists and researchers with the technical skills and the will to preserve these objects are rare.

1.
“Milestones of European Integration III” in the exhibition.

House of European History

As a result, their archive services only keep paper sources. Even professional historians working in this particular field often tend to focus on archives and written evidence rather than physical or audio-visual evidence and iconographic sources. On the other side, if history museums in Europe do keep objects in their collections relating to the European integration process, it tends to be from a national perspective. This in turn makes it difficult to exhibit them in such a way as to reinforce the messages the House of European History wants to put across. It is equally rare to find these objects in sales rooms or antique shops.

Faced with this problem, and all too aware of the cultural-heritage mission of the museum, the curators of the House of European History have had to be imaginative (fig. 1). Through word of mouth and oral history programmes with former politicians or retired European civil servants, items that have lain neglected for a long time and whose owners are happy to donate them can sometimes be unearthed and retrieved. Institutional stakeholders and the European Parliament and Commission information offices in the Member State capitals have also been a great help in their task.

2.
T-shirt against Britain’s EU membership, 2016.

House of European History

3.
Objects collected during the 2016 European Union referendum campaign in the United Kingdom.

House of European History

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union in 2012 provided an opportunity to launch a pilot operation to collect objects and documents, mainly those released in the context of the official presentation ceremonies. The two curators sent to Oslo collected, and very probably saved from premature destruction, objects and documents that very often only have a short lifespan. Three other events also provided ideal opportunities to pre-emptively collect and preserve many original objects and gadgets—the information campaign for the eighth European Parliament elections in 2014; the public events held prior to the European elections for the nomination of candidates for the post of Commission President (the infamous Spitzenkandidaten); the campaign ahead of the 2016 referendum on whether the United Kingdom should remain in or leave the European Union (fig. 2 and 3). Banners, badges, posters, armbands, stickers, flyers, crockery, official gifts, T-shirts, rosettes, placards, flags, newspapers, magazines and cartoons—each of these, in its own way, tells the story of the Europe that is being built. All these objects are now part of the permanent collection in the House of European History. Some of them already feature in the permanent exhibition; others will be put to use in a range of future activities.

The Revolutionary Year of 1989

A chain of events

Anna Maria Huth

The 1989 revolutions, which led to the fall of the Iron Curtain and marked the beginning of a new era, could fill an entire museum. However, when exhibiting it as a topic of a permanent exhibition that also includes nineteenth- and twentieth-century European history, the topic needs to be condensed.

There is a positive effect of such limitation; it forces a subject to be distilled to its essence, changing the perspective and applying a bird's-eye view; by regarding the developments from a greater distance and in a larger context, a new picture becomes visible. This interest in finding the key features in pan-European developments was the driving force behind the whole exhibition—the aim being to present a focused view of the complexity of European history, to give visitors a better understanding of interrelations and parallels. Thus, the 1989 revolutions are not an exception, but an example of this approach.

The 'story' of 1989 as a topic of the permanent exhibition goes back to the Conceptual Basis for a House of European History(1). It was one of 88 topics suggested for the permanent exhibition. Later on, when the Academic Project Team developed the storyline, what had been a paragraph within the Conceptual Basis evolved into a separate section of the permanent exhibition.

A first step in this process was developing a general concept of the narrative, followed by an imaginary allocation of space to the various topics. With thehelp of a concept designer, the exhibition area was visualised in 3D—the building was still under construction—and, from this very early stage, the visitor experience became an important element of the exhibition's creation.

The next step was detailed research and narrowing down the multiplicity of historical facts to core messages. I remember struggling for months with overly long lists of events, with too many details, challenged to shorten, to synthesise, to prioritise and to find the right balance between local and general importance of the depicted events. Where to begin and where to end the storyline were pressing questions and subjects of discussion—since the events and processes leading to the revolutions start earlier than and reach beyond the year itself. It was a work of constant refinement. Alongside the content research, available exhibits were collected, and potential lenders and other object sources were identified.

---

(1) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/745/745721/745721en.pdf

FREEDOM OF
NATIONS

1.
View of the showcase dedicated to the events of 1989.

House of European History

This complex 'distillation' process was accompanied by researching content and identifying objects, by having in mind the spatial restriction and the needs for a visitor-friendly design. Finally, it resulted in the definition of the key messages of this exhibition area, which were to be accentuated through the design. The idea was to present the fast acceleration of the revolutionary events in 1989, to depict the role of media—especially television news—and the interconnectedness of the upheavals in different Eastern European countries, the noticeable domino effect of this breath-taking chain of events.

The final realisation of the exhibition area now consists of two main parts: an audio-visual section with original film footage and a showcase with exhibits linked to the different events (fig. 1). Space limitation and considerations on the visitor flow made it impossible to introduce a segment of the Berlin wall, as we had originally planned.

The creation of a main audio-visual section reflects the role that television played in the development of the revolutionary events in 1989. These moving images convey the messages this area required to show the chronology of main events, the revolutionary achievements, the border-crossing interactions, the role of the mass media—which by crossing borders connected people in different countries and inspired them to go ahead in this unforeseen process.

The chronological presentation expresses the acceleration of the events by the end of the year. A slogan of the Velvet Revolution —'Poland: 10 years, Hungary: 10 months, GDR: 10 weeks, Czechoslovakia: 10 days', later completed with 'Romania: 10 hours'—expresses well this speeding-up, as well as the consciousness about the interconnectedness.

On the one hand, the side-by-side presentation of these interconnected but

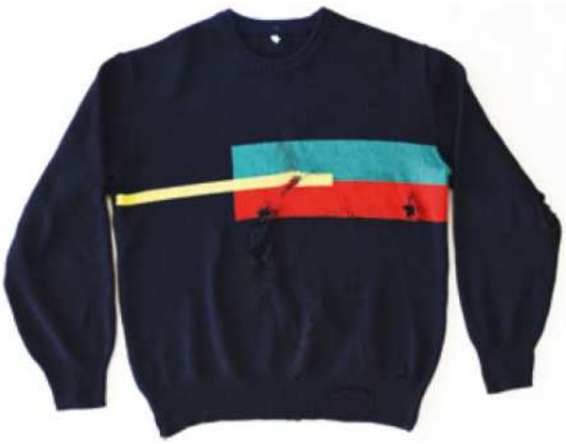
2.
Microphone used during the round-table talks of 1989 in Poland.

Kancelaria Prezydenta
Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Warsaw,
Poland

highly different events and developments sheds light on certain common processes, such as negotiations between reigning political parties and opposition. The presentation would also reveal peaceful aspects of these revolutions and the optimism of people when breaking boundaries. On the other hand, the presentation of the gradual development of these events, shows how much this process was characterised by the fear of possible counteractions. The only violent revolution, in Romania, demonstrates the tragic outcome when negotiations between state power and citizens were not possible.

Original objects in a showcase tell the story of the revolutionary features of 1989 in another manner. The microphone used in the Polish round-table talks (fig. 2) highlights the negotiated nature of the event; a pole from the Austrian-Hungarian border makes the dismantling of the Iron Curtain visible; an earring made of a piece of the Berlin wall is a highly personal souvenir of this historical event.

Many objects in the showcase come from private individuals, not from museum collections: the certificate proving the authenticity of a piece of the Iron Curtain from the Pan-European Picnic; a bunch of keys used in the Velvet Revolution; the jumper of a young victim of the revolution in Romania (fig. 3).
The assembly of these objects tells another story about the role the House of European History might play: to collect and connect objects, stories and people; to show them from a new, pan-European perspective, while respecting their particularities; to contribute to their remembrance and understanding as part of a shared European memory.



3.
Sweater of Radu Ionescu, victim of the revolution in Romania.

Ioana Ionescu, Bucharest, Romania

Chasing the Stars

Martí Grau Segú

Back in 2011, a group of historians joined a multinational team to set up a House of European History. We were all eager to contribute with multiple ideas, and to make our previous backgrounds useful to the project. In my case, the archaeologist of the early years of my career had given way to a specialist in recent European and Mediterranean history. What connected these themes was a focus on the role of history in social and political discourse. For that reason, I was looking forward to contemplating, and being involved in, the shaping of a new historical narrative in its farthest outreach and broadest span.

Excitement certainly helped while making it through the lengthy discussions of the first months—of the first years, to be completely honest—to boil down everyone's initial expectations and ideas to a common denominator. Every now and then I was reminded how the remarkable Franco-German history textbook, called Histoire-Geschichte, was brought to completion only after the German historians on one side and the French historians on the other could acknowledge their differences in an additional one-page chapter. A recurrent thought popped into my mind: would our museum require footnotes expressing minority views within our academic team? Far from it. Little by little we saw a cohesive narrative emerge, one that each of us could stand behind while keeping our own distinct perspective. Then it was time for us to embark on fieldwork: we split up the map of Europe and, next, we headed to all corners of the continent in search of partner museums and object loans. I visited Strasbourg, in France, Spain, Albania, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Sarajevo, I was particularly interested in discussing a possible loan of objects related to the 1,425-day siege the city had endured in the mid-1990s. A sign warning of the presence of snipers caught the eye, handmade objects for everyday activities such as heating or watering plants, cans from the infamous 'market massacre' of February 1994. One object stood out: a can containing beef that was part of the aid delivered during the war (fig. 1). The display of the European twelve-starred flag on the

can makes one think about the pivotal role played by the European Union—if not in stopping the conflict, at least in relieving its effects. Then I learned about the local perception: city dwellers remember that meat had been inedible, sometimes even expired, not even fit for dogs or cats. As a local testimony to this shared recollection, a few metres away from the museum's door stands a monument to the international community, precisely featuring a giant version of that can.

CANNED
BEEF

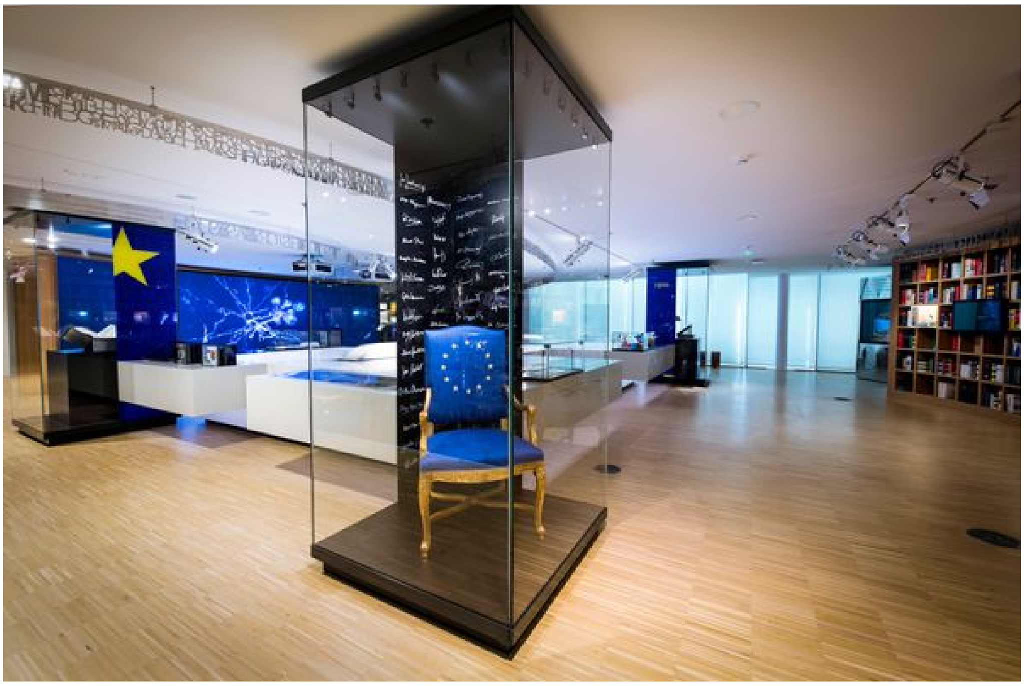
1.
Aid relief: canned beef, 1990s.

Historijski muzej Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Hercegovina

That is exactly the kind of object we need, I thought to myself: one that can be read from multiple perspectives.

In Strasbourg, at the Musée de l'Oeuvre Notre-Dame, more stars: in my conversation with one ofthe curators, she mentioned the story of how the European flag had been chosen in the 1950s via a local competition. Not long afterwards, the symbol was used in one of the stained glass windows of the cathedral, as a crown to the Virgin Mary. The authors of the European flag symbol later acknowledged that they had found inspiration in traditional iconography of the Virgin, but denied any religious significance to the symbol they created. The use of the symbol on the stained glass clearly echoed the new European flag, and at the same time connected with the iconography that had served as inspiration. Stars were also the motif we chose in creating a specific trail within our permanent exhibition devoted to the unfolding of European unity, from initial modest steps in a world dominated by opposing ideological blocs, to the magnetic appeal of the European Union in the immediate post-Cold War world. Visitors primarily interested in this topic can follow the stars in the background design of the pillar-shaped showcases, which tell the story of the most relevant milestones on a path dotted with successes and with setbacks.

We decided that the last milestone would be devoted to one of those bittersweet episodes. In the early 2000s, a consensus had emerged among states and European institutions for the drafting of a European Constitution. The text was solemnly signed in Rome in 2004, but dropped the next year after two referenda, in France and the Netherlands, resulted in wins for the 'no' camp. We heard hints of the possibility that one of the chairs from the signing event in Rome was still kept somewhere. Initial research in the Italian capital was unfruitful. We decided to try in the Netherlands, the country that had held the European Union semester presidency at the time. Still, the chair could not be located. After many formal and informal inquiries, phone calls and emails, one day we just received the straightforward answer that we had been hoping to hear for so long: 'Yes, sure, the chair is here in our storage, and you can come pick it up any time.' The magic words came from Protezione Civile, in Rome,



2.
Chair from the Rome signature, as displayed in the exhibition.

House of European History

not far from where we had started our search. One of our first visitors, right after we had installed the chair in its showcase (fig. 2), noted how the fairly luxurious features of the chair when seen from the front were somehow diminished as one inspected the back. From that perspective, the object was more prop than pomp. ‘Let our visitors decide what to make of it’, I responded. Not for nothing had we decided to give this section an open-ended title: ‘Does Europe need a constitution?’ That we have the Lisbon treaty as an outcome of the long constitutional debate instead of a proper constitution seems to point to a ‘no’ as answer. But then again, who knows what the future holds?

Per aspera ad astra (‘through hardships to the stars’), I would be tempted to say to summarise our work. But not quite so: being immersed in a wide, public conversation on Europe’s past—and on what that past tells us when facing the time ahead—has smoothed any possible hardship in our task.

The Memory of Migration

Constanze Itzel

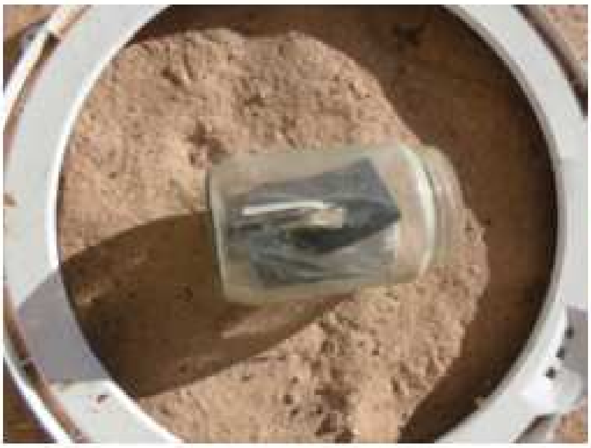
At the start of the House of European History's permanent exhibition stands a story of voyage and transfer: according to the ancient myth, Europa came to Greece from Phoenicia, as did her brother Cadmus, who is reported as searching for her and credited for bringing the alphabet to Europe. Migration, as old as humankind, has contributed to shaping the history of the European continent across the centuries.

Throughout the permanent exhibition of the House of European History, migration is a recurring topic present in different parts, marking Europe's development from a continent of emigration to one of immigration. Massive waves of emigration due to difficult living conditions in the era of industrialisation are addressed in the nineteenth-century section. Flight, expulsion, deportation and displacement are shown with many examples from the Second World War and the post-war period. Guest workers starting to arrive in the 1950s are addressed, as are the precarious workers moving westwards following the fall of the Iron Curtain.

So far, so relatively easy to research, as these topics are widely present in migration museums across Europe. Far less easy was the attempt to assemble, for the last part of the exhibition, evidence of today's migrants trying to reach Europe by all means. Although the space for this topic was very limited, strong objects were needed to draw attention to the human drama that has been going on for years.

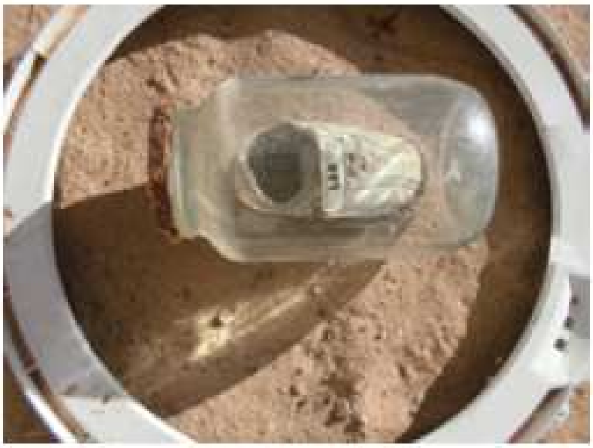
As Lampedusa had become a symbol both for the tragic fate of migrants and for the huge challenge for the migrants' country of first entry, the first research went in that direction, but all attempts to cooperate with a local association running a museum unfortunately failed. Some interesting objects researched in Calabria could not beborrowed as they were still needed as proof in a legal investigation. Contacts with diverse associations caring for migrants were more successful and resulted, for example, in getting authorisation to reproduce a list of 17,306 migrants who had died when trying to reach Europe, or from racist violence in Europe. This list was drawn up in 2013 by a group of associations(¹) and it was based on lengthy efforts to identify and give a name to the victims. But still, personal objects telling the human side of these tragic stories were missing. Objects commonly used to represent migration, such as suitcases, were not eligible for this topic: overseas migrants travel with almost nothing.

(¹) The group was led by "Travailler ensemble, jeunes et engagés, TEJE, Strasbourg".



1.
Notebook washed ashore from the Mediterranean onto a Tunisian beach, collected and inserted into a glass container by Lihidheb Mohsen, Tunisia.

House of European History



2.
Baby shoe washed ashore from the Mediterranean onto a Tunisian beach, collected and inserted into a glass container by Lihidheb Mohsen, Tunisia.

House of European History

Eventually, contact with migration researchers and curators hinted at a Tunisian artist, Lihidheb Mohsen, a postman who established a museum in Zarzis, Tunisia, dedicated to the Memory of the Sea(²). For more than 20 years, the poet and artist has been walking along 150 km of Tunisian beaches and collecting what he finds that the sea has brought in. Numerous objects found on the beaches, among corpses, which Mr Mohsen strove to have buried, must have belonged to migrants who did not survive their journey. Life vests, water bottles, personal items, clothes and shoes are part of is somber collection. He preserves them and creates artistic installations and memorials with them, hence preserving and honouring the memory of their owners, for whom the promise of a better life in Europe turned into a mortal trap. His art, his installations and his poems testify of the human tragedy that is still happening every day in the Mediterranean. From this collection, Mr Mohsen agreed to give us two objects: a booklet (fig. 1) and a baby shoe (fig. 2). He gives the following background for these objects. ‘These particular objects had been found in 2003 and 2005, at a time when the majority of illegal immigrants were departing from the coast of Libya. Because of the strong

---

(²) Warm thanks to Anna Chiara Cimoli, who organised a photo exhibition about this museum in 2013. A. C. Cimoli, "Il Museo della memoria del mare. Oggetti testimoniali sulla soglia liquida del Mediterraneo", roots§routes12 (‘Liquid borders’), October 2013–January 2014.

ocean currents and winds, the lost possessions of the unfortunate travellers were washed up along the coast of Zarzis. They were among the hundreds of pairs of shoes, items of clothing ... and other things that the collector had, over a twenty-year period, and with a fervent sense of compassion and solidarity, respectfully made into a collection. The majority of these traces of humanity had been found in South Zarzis and the Lemsa region, where incursions were frequently expelled by ocean currents, only to be swallowed by the sea.'

According to Mr Mohsen, when the booklet was still readable, it was a last will and testament in English language, which also contained some leaflets with personal addresses. According to him, it presumably belonged to people originating from Pakistan or Bangladesh. As the migrants can take almost nothing on the overcrowded boats, they take what is most important to them. In this case, addresses and phone numbers of the people they wanted to reach when arriving at the other shore. Bibles and Qurans are also often taken along in the hope they might help to have a safe journey.

Mr Mohsen tells very touching stories about his efforts to preserve the memory of the sea. From a telephone number found in an address book, which he called to bring sad news, to money hidden in shoes, which he gave to a charitable institution, to contacts made with an Italian on the northern shore of the Mediterranean who has been collecting in the same way—it is an impressive endeavour to preserve the dignity of those who lose their lives trying to reach Europe.

In the exhibition, these objects are shown together with a film, in which Zakaria Mohamed Ali, a Somali documentary film-maker, recounts his journey to and across the sea and his arrival in Lampedusa; a strong reflection about the total loss of identity of migrants when stripped by the authorities of their personal photos, their documents, and the proof of their qualifications—the last remains of their past. For him, memory is the only bridge a person has with the past. Zakaria Mohamed Ali, Lihidheb Mohsen and the associations collecting the names of migrants, strive to restore the dignity of migrants by safeguarding their memories.

The works of Lihidheb Mohsen and Zakaria Mohamed Ali are linked to the narrative on memory running through the House of European History's permanent exhibition and make an important statement: among all memory of their own difficult past, Europeans should not forget the memory of those

people from other continents whose history is strongly intertwined with European history.

HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

Follow us on social media

Visit us

Rue Belliard / Belliardstraat 135
1000 Bruxelles, Belgique

https://historia-europa.ep.eu/

July 2021