

International Conference

Life Behind Fences

Artistic Production and Coping Mechanisms in Ghettos and Camps During the Second World War

Trieste (Italy) 23-25 November 2022

I go on dreaming, dreaming about survival and getting free, in order to be able to tell the world, to yell and rebuke, to tell and protest.

L. Holliday, *Children in the Holocaust and the World War II*,
Washington Square Press, Washington 1997, p.400.

The Viktor Ullmann Festival and the Department of Humanities of the University of Trieste, in collaboration with the Museum of the Jewish Community of Trieste “Carlo and Vera Wagner”, are pleased to announce the International Conference *Life Behind Fences* (LBF 2022), which will take place from **23 to 25 November 2022** in Trieste, Italy.

Aims and Objectives of the Conference

The conference aims to take stock of the most recent historiographical debates on **Holocaust Studies**: focusing on the interdisciplinary scope that they have taken on in the last decade, and of which the conference wants to become a platform to provide a communal space for dialogue between the various voices that animate this discussion.

Recently, we have witnessed the proliferation of new research, which has significantly expanded the limits of this subject. Among the many, we find *The Last Ghetto: An Everyday History of Theresienstadt* by Anna Hajkova (Oxford University Press, 2020), *Dance on the Razor Edge: Crime and Punishment in the Nazi Ghettos* by Svenja Bethke (University of Toronto Press, 2020), *Night without End: The Fate of Jews in German-Occupied Poland* edited by Jan Grabowski and Barbara Engelking (Indiana University Press, 2021), which dealt with

the daily life of internees in ghettos and camps. There are also studies on the impact of alcohol consumption in extermination operations, such as Edward Westermann's *Drunk on Genocide: Alcohol and Mass Murder in Nazi Germany* (Cornell University Press, 2021); through to works on the evolving politics of memory in the post-communist era, such as Jelena Subotic's *Yellow Star, Red Star: Holocaust Remembrance After Communism* (Ithaca, 2019).

These books are just some of the works that have contributed to making Holocaust Studies increasingly broad and multidisciplinary. It is therefore in the light of this richness that the conference will focus on three macro-themes, which will form as many sessions: the first one will deal with artistic production (understood in its broadest sense) and within coercive contexts such as camps and ghettos; the second one will deal with the concept of survival (in its various declinations); while the third one will deal with the “defence mechanisms” and the re-elaboration of trauma (including post-war trauma), implemented by individuals to overcome the experience of war.

Each session will have a keynote speaker (**45 minutes**), the presentation of 3 papers (**20 minutes each**) and, in the end, the possibility for some PhD students to present their ongoing projects (posters) (no more than **10 minutes**).

Confirmed keynote speakers LBF 2022:

- Professor Dieter Pohl (University of Klagenfurt)
- Professor Anna Hájková (University of Warwick)
- Dr PhD Anna Veronica Pobbe (Ca' Foscari University)

We, therefore, invite scholars from the following disciplines: Cultural Studies; Memory Studies; Holocaust Studies; Oral History Studies; History and Public History; Literature; Art History; Sociology; Political Science; Philosophy; Musicology, to submit papers related to the above macro-areas.

Selected proposals should preferably, but not exclusively, deal with:

- Literature, painting, and music produced within camps and ghettos.
- On language and linguistic issues within camp and ghetto contexts.
- The burden of survival: reflections and literary, artistic, and musical expressions of guilt among survivors, also from a gender perspective.
- The elaboration of war events (also in a trans-generational and gender perspective).
- Art and music as forms of opposition and “resistance” in totalitarian regimes.
- Analysis of social and power structures and relations within forced communities and their survival strategies.

As already mentioned, one of the purposes of the conference is to deal with the different nuances that currently animate Holocaust Studies. At the same time, it wants to be a framework for other research fields such as Genocide Studies, Public History, Trauma Studies, Oral History and Gender Studies. It will be particularly appreciated papers presenting comparative and multidisciplinary approaches.

Proposals, written in English, must be no longer than **500 words** and must be accompanied by a **short bio** of no more than **250 words** and should be emailed to behindfencesconference@gmail.com with the subject line “LBF 2022”. All submissions must be received by **30 April 2022**. Early career scholars and PhD students are particularly encouraged to apply. The conference will be held in English. Publication of the conference proceedings is planned.

The Scientific Committee will inform the selected papers by **1 June 2022**.

Board and lodging costs will be covered by the organising bodies.

On behalf of the LBF 2022 organising committee:

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