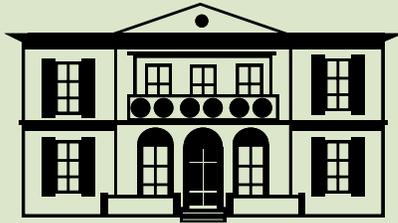


In Touch

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE
JEWISH MUSEUM HOHENEMS, INC.

ISSN: 1559-4866 • November 2020



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Letter from the President

TIMOTHY L. HANFORD

Dear Friends and Supporters of AFJMH:

It is my honor to share this year-end newsletter with you. For all of us, 2020 has been the *annus horribilis*, but there is growing hope that the COVID-19 pandemic and its adverse impacts on people, businesses, and institutions worldwide will soon just be part of history. As you will see from the articles in the newsletter, the Jewish Museum Hohenems has persevered in the face of substantial difficulties.

Museum Director **Hanno Loewy** tells us in this issue about the immediate and longer-term impact of the pandemic on the Jewish Museum Hohenems and how the Museum has been able to reopen and continue its educational and exhibition activities in a surprisingly robust manner. However, the pandemic has decimated admissions revenues and hollowed out government budgets. As a result, this year and next, the Museum will be especially dependent on private contributions to sustain its mission, and I am hoping that the AFJMH will continue to provide significant support.

Longtime AFJMH Trustee **Susan Rosenthal Shimer** shares happy moments from February when the AFJMH co-sponsored an event in New York City celebrating the life and contributions of **Ely Jacques Kahn**, the Hohenems descendant who transformed New York's skyline in the early part of the last century. And archivist **Raphael Einetter** (whose responsibilities include maintaining the Hohenems Genealogy database) tells us about several of the fascinating new additions to the Museum's collection. The staff of the Jewish Museum Hohenems deserve thanks from all of us for keeping the Museum interesting and relevant.

As you are no doubt aware, the mission of the AFJMH is to provide additional financial support for the Jewish Museum Hohenems. The AFJMH also provides financial assistance for maintaining the Hohenems Jewish Cemetery. Your support for the museum's exhibitions, its publications, its research, and its events is indispensable. **I am all too aware that the pandemic has created economic uncertainty for many Americans, but if you are able, I would like to encourage you to continue your financial support.**

The AFJMH is proud to have so many American Hohenems descendants as members. But we are always pleased to welcome more! Please send a note to your siblings and cousins and urge them to take a look at the AFJMH website (www.AFJMH.org) and consider joining AFJMH.

I also want to take this opportunity to extend our best wishes to all for another productive year in 2021. Your past generosity to AFJMH is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Tim Hanford



Letter from the Director

DR. HANNO LOEWY

Dear friends of the Jewish Museum,

This is a difficult year for all of us. I don't need to say how much this crisis affects all our lives, and how much and how many we have lost, here in Europe, in the U.S. and all over the world.

Parts of Europe though, Austria included, luckily reacted a little earlier and more vigorously, keeping the toll of lives lower. But the effects on the economy are evident everywhere. And those in need, the poor, those who are not among the “winners” of our global economy and the refugees on the periphery of Europe have been hit even harder. Let us at least hope that people might learn something from it for the future. We will see...

And we will try to do what a museum might be able to do.

In March we had to close (as almost all public life came to a halt). In the middle of our successful exhibition on testimony we had to cancel all events, group visits and school programs. For three months we had to reconsider everything, our exhibitions, our program, our plans for the future, our financial situation. Luckily we found support, even surprisingly generous financial donations from you and from friends in the region. This was incredibly encouraging, and helped us substantially to survive.

If anyone else considers supporting us by a donation, I can only and wholeheartedly say: thank you so much. The next year probably will be particularly difficult, as public budgets will suffer heavily under the impact of the economic fallout of the coronavirus lockdown in spring and the new harsh measures we are already seeing in the fall and winter.

But there is also good news. Our museum was able to open again in June. We took the chance to extend our “Testimony” exhibition into August and received enthusiastic visitors in great numbers, as so many people from the region stayed home during the summer and explored the rich cultural offerings of their country. Many regional tourists from Germany and Switzerland as well as from inner Austria also explored Vorarlberg rather than travelling long distances.

On October 4, we opened our new exhibition “The Last Europeans.” We could not be more timely with this show which is asking all the crucial questions about what came out of the European dreams to build a new political union of values, human rights and peace. These dreams and ideas were not only stimulated by the European catastrophes of the 20th century, the two world wars and the shoah, but had also been prominently developed and implemented by Jewish politicians and intellectuals, artists, entrepreneurs and social activists. Some of them had Hohenems' ties, such as **Stefan Zweig**, the writer and European activist, or **Simone Veil**, the first president of the European parliament, or **Moritz Julius Bonn** (a member of the Brunner family), who was one of the most eminent academics of the Weimar Republic in the fields of liberal economy and the political theory of democracy and a bright critic of colonialism and the devastating impact of nationalism.

Today, all these values are in a deep crisis. We will examine the impact of the increasing nationalistic egoism and populism on the fabric of Europe. Part of this history, emblematic and symptomatic, is the story of a Hohenems Jewish family, the Brunners. We are most grateful to the children of **Carlo Alberto Brunner**, who gave his estate and his collection of memorabilia, documents, photographs, portraits and books as a permanent loan to the museum, enabling us to present a family story as a European story.

Let us try to learn from this crisis, not to follow populist leaders who—instead of confronting the real issues—build their power on propaganda, against minorities, against “others” against those in need and against those who are hardly able to claim their rights.

And please continue your support for our museum, our activities and our efforts to preserve the heritage of a Jewish community that so much contributed to the dream of a better world. Together with the Central European University, now starting to operate in Vienna, we want to explore possible futures of Europe—as well as role Jewish heritage and Jewish presence can play in this open game.

With Love from Hohenems,
Hanno Loewy



**Your tax-deductible donations are welcome; please make donations payable to AFJMH,
and mail to: AFJMH • P.O.Box 237 • Moorestown, NJ 08057-0237**

News from the Museum:

Exhibitions: *The Last Europeans.*

The Brunner family. An Estate. • Jewish Perspectives on the crises of an idea.

Curated by Michaela Feurstein, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek and Hannes Sulzenbacher

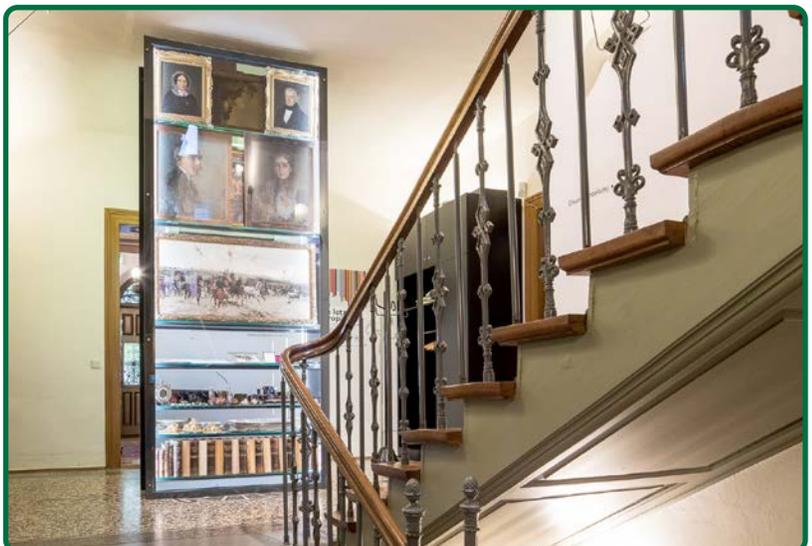
Seventy-five years after the end of World War II, Europe is threatened by a relapse into nationalistic and inhumane ideologies. The European imperative of “Never Again!” is being challenged by many, including here in Austria. At the same time, Europe’s nationalists are discovering their own fantasy of the “Judeo-Christian West” as a battle cry against immigration and integration. The purportedly universal values of the Enlightenment, which were part of the foundations of European rapprochement in the wake of the catastrophes of the 20th century, show their flipside in becoming means of seclusion and exclusion.

For one year, the Museum will become the site of an open debate about the future of Europe by calling for a discourse on the actual and ideational substance of the European Union, on threats and opportunities, on future-oriented and outdated concepts. Here, it will be possible to argue about European Enlightenment as well as about its offspring: secularization and modernity, emancipation and participation, nationalism and chauvinism, colonialism and capitalism. www.lasteuropeans.eu

The Brunner Family. An Estate.

Four years ago, the Jewish Museum received an extensive permanent loan: the estate of **Carlo Alberto Brunner**. Paintings, letters, documents, photographs, memorabilia and everyday objects enable a critical look at life in a European century and open a panoramic view on a family that, in the first half of the 19th century, set out from Hohenems to Trieste to contribute to the development of the Habsburg Monarchy’s Mediterranean metropolis.

From there, members of the Brunner family went on to Vienna and Switzerland, to England, Germany, and the USA. Their steep social and cultural ascent ended in Europe’s catastrophe, in the ravages of a continent filled with mutual hatred, and in the devastations of two world wars, which dispersed parts of the family around the world.



Photos provided by Hanno Lowey

News from the Museum (Cont'd)

Exhibitions: *The Last Europeans.* *The Brunner family. An Estate. • Jewish Perspectives on the crises of an idea.*

Curated by Michaela Feurstein, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek and Hannes Sulzenbacher

Jewish Perspectives on the Crises of an Idea

What was “Project Europe” and what has become of it? And what will become of it? Has the European Union drifted apart even further in times of alarming global challenges, posed not solely by the coronavirus pandemic, instead of moving closer together? Are national interests increasingly pitted against European solutions?

Against the background of these questions, the Jewish Museum Hohenems looks at Jewish individuals who, in the face of Europe’s devastation and the attempted annihilation of the European Jews in the 20th century, transcended national and cultural borders, demanded anew the universal application of human rights, and vigorously pursued a European dream. Based on their commitment to a united and peaceful Europe, the exhibition examines at the same time the renewed threats that commitment faces today.

For this look at European utopias and frustrations, the exhibition begins by looking back on the history of violence of the 20th century, on wars, genocides, and civil wars in Europe and under the banner of European colonialism.

The European project has long seen itself as a comprehensive peace project, not through the lens of the almost inconceivable sacrifices and the boundless violence Europe’s “civilized” societies had exacted. Nowadays, the EU increasingly emerges as a defensive alliance, limited to security and economic interests. Is Europe, therefore, doomed to fail?

“A Very Central European University”

Parallel to this, the museum will be—for a year—the venue of open debate on the future of Europe, calling for a discourse on the real and ideal substance of the European Union, on potential threats and opportunities, on forward-looking and outdated concepts. The European Enlightenment will be a topic of discussion as well as its offspring: secularization and modernity, emancipation and participation, nationalism and counter-enlightenment, colonialism and capitalism. The European Summer University for Jewish Studies, which has been held in Hohenems every year since 2009 in cooperation with six universities from Austria, Germany and Switzerland, will also be under the sign of the “last Europeans” in 2021. For one year Hohenems will thus become “A Very Central European University.”

A calendar, lectures, statements from the program of our “Very Central European University,” all texts of the exhibition and more can be found at: www.lasteuropeans.eu.



Photos provided by Hanno Lowey

News from the Museum (Cont'd)

Always something new—additions to the permanent exhibition “At Home. Diaspora”

In March 2019, a renewal of the permanent exhibition was initiated with the idea – next to the more readable texts and audible sections – to switch old and fragile objects with new objects, or add additional ones. In the fall of 2020, three new major objects will be placed within the existing narrative about the history of the Jews in Hohenems: the fragment of a Torah scroll, the model of a locomotive and a plaque from the Jewish Cemetery Hohenems.

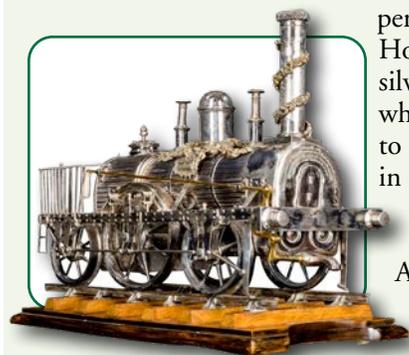
The fragment of a Torah scroll (as well as the locomotive) was presented for a short time already in the exhibition “Odd”



in 2016. On its backside, a handwritten address shows that the fragment was used as wrapping “paper” for a package. It was sent by the soldier **Ivo Diem** back to his family in Hohenems during the Second World War. The fragment probably originates from Hungary, since

Ivo Diem was deployed there at the time with the O.F.K. Donez (from 10.06.1944 O.F.K. 397 in western Hungary). The stamp is missing, but prints can still be seen.

One can only speculate which Jewish community was exterminated (and plundered) so that a piece of its Torah scrolls could end up as a soldier’s package to Hohenems. Such Torah fragments appear again and again, used as packaging material, but also as shoe soles or as reinforcement of painted canvases with portraits by German soldiers, SS, SA or policemen. It demonstrates the common practice of a symbolic triumph by those who are not solely satisfied with the destruction and elimination of the “other” but must also desecrate and disparage what is sacred to the other.



The second addition to the permanent exhibition “At Home. Diaspora” will be a silver model of a locomotive, which was given as a present to **Heinrich von Sichrovsky** in 1845. The silver locomotive recalls not only Sichrovsky’s achievements in the K&K Austrian railway business, but also his social assimilation to the Austrian Bürgertum.

Heinrich Sichrovsky was one of the first Jews in Vienna to have citizenship in 1850, only a few years before he was ennobled.

The locomotive, a symbol of belonging and status, was later given to his daughter and to his grandson **Rudolf Gomperz**. Before Gomperz, one of Austria’s ski pioneers located in St. Anton, Tyrol, was forced by the Nazis to move to Vienna in 1942 and later deported and murdered in Maly Trostinec, he gave the locomotive into “good hands.” For years and years, the model was not to be found and became a myth. In 2015, a call to the Jewish Community in Innsbruck revealed that the locomotive had been hidden in an attic for over 70 years.

The search for possible rightful heirs to this unique piece of craft work is still ongoing. Until then, the Jewish Community Innsbruck, as contemporary owner, has loaned it to the Jewish Museum Hohenems. In the permanent exhibition the model will be placed in a mobile showcase on the second floor to give visitors the opportunity to see it from a 360° angle. It will supplement—in a most disturbing way—the narrative of the Holocaust, situated near **Rudolf Gomperz’s** last letter from Vienna to his wife in St. Anton am Arlberg and the list of deportation trains from Vienna, trains that ran exactly on the tracks of the former Kaiser-**Ferdinand-Nordbahn**, the railway company led by **Heinrich Sichrovsky**.

The third new object is a cemetery plaque, which was uncovered during the restoration of the cemetery wall in 2016. The plaque informed cemetery visitors about the settlement of the Jewish community and the layout of the cemetery. It can be dated back to the beginning of the 20th century, probably installed after the last expansion and renovation of the cemetery in 1900.

The plaque was smashed to pieces during the Nazi era and later covered with a new stone (with a changed inscription). The coverup took place in 1959 during the restoration work that was, for the first time after 1945, at least in part supported by the municipality.

The stone from the 1950s is now once again placed in the cemetery wall—the broken one, a shattered specimen, was given to the Jewish Museum of Hohenems and taken care of by a stone restorer. The plaque will be placed in the second floor of the museum and will connect the visible impact of the Holocaust with the post-war efforts of the Association of the Jewish Cemetery Hohenems.

The catalogue to the permanent exhibition |
Edited for the Jewish Museum Hohenems by
Hanno Loewy | Bucher Verlag | Hohenems 2008 |
384 pages | 17 x 24 cm | Richly illustrated

<https://www.jm-hohenems.at/shop/products/at-home-diaspora>



News from the Museum (Cont'd)

“End of Testimony?”

Impressions from the exhibition

In November 2019, Jewish Museum Hohenems opened its last temporary exhibition “End of Testimony?” which had been created in cooperation with the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial, sponsored by the Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future” Berlin. In the last AFJM Newsletter, we were able to present the content of the then upcoming exhibition—but not its look. Due to coronavirus and the temporary closing of the museum, the exhibition was extended until August 16th and opened with adaptations at the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial on September 25, 2020.

The exhibition has been extremely successful, with the general public and schools as well as scholars and professionals, and working with survivors and survivor testimonies in museums, memorials and local history activities of all kinds. During its time in Hohenems, many enthusiastic visitors had the chance to see it, particularly during this summer, after the museum’s reopening. On many occasions, including special tours guided by the curators, the interaction between the curating personnel and the visitors was intensive and moving. This discourse about contemporary witnessing, the sociocultural role of the survivors and the focus on collected material, such as audio and video interviews, accompanied the exhibition vividly. Moreover, the special educational programs as well as the events, such as movie screenings and lectures, attracted a highly diverse audience.

In Hohenems, we were able to present video interviews with survivors from our video collection (mostly produced by the USC Shoah Foundation between 1996 and the early 2000s), focusing on the subject of escape into Switzerland, survival under false identities and starting a new life as DP in Hohenems and Bregenz. The memorial in Flossenbürg will rely on its own collections of video material, presenting another dimension: the diversity of prisoners in the concentration camp. The wide variety of survivor interviews made in or for the Concentration

Camp Memorial is shown in the exhibition. Furthermore, the adaptation focuses on the question of a “Future of Testimony?” looking closer at the idea of survivor holograms, as already on display in various museums in the US. Therefore, the exhibition at the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial reflects not only the stock of video material with a close connection to the actual place of torture and murder, but also reflects on the function of a memorial as a cultural and educational institution today—and in the near future.

Our successful show will travel further after its Flossenbürg presentation. It will be a continuing discourse about memory, presented in an analytic approach to storytelling and in a socio-cultural history of the survivor interview from 1945 until the present, and the particular memory of the place it will be shown. The Munich Documentation Center for the History of National Socialism, one of the major institutions in Germany commemorating the history of National Socialism, will present our exhibition “End of Testimony?” from April 8 September 26 2021. In 2022, it will also be shown at the Centrum Judaicum, the second big Jewish Museum in Berlin, located at the Great Synagogue in Oranienburgerstraße.



<https://www.gedenkstaette-flossenbuerg.de/en/visit/exhibitions/ende-der-zeitzeugenschaft>

The Female Side of God

Jewish Museum Frankfurt, October 23, 2020 to February 14, 2021

Another successful exhibition of the Jewish Museum Hohenems is now on the road as well. In 2017, we confronted visitors with “The Female Side of God” and provoked many vivid discussions. Now, an extended version of our exhibition will be the first temporary show presented in the new annex of the recently reopened Jewish Museum Frankfurt after its major reconstruction and extension.

We are proud to be part of the re-launch of one of Germany's major Jewish museums. The show, curated by **Felicitas-Heimann Jelinek** and **Michaela Feurstein-Prasser** will include many new contributions by various major contemporary artists and additional manuscripts and paintings from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

<https://www.juedischesmuseum.de/en/visit/detail/female-side-of-god>

News from the Museum (Cont'd)

Film about the Reunion now in English and Spanish

Film about the Reunion now in English and Spanish **Bernd Seidel's** film about the Reunion 2017—"Who am I"—is now available online with English and Spanish subtitles, thanks to **Julius Peltz** and **Karla Galindo-Barth (Hirschfeld)**.

You find the film on our website on: <https://www.jm-hohenems.at/en/descendants/descendants-reunion-2017>



The Rosenthal-Edition

We are happy to announce a special homage to the history of the Rosenthal family and its company. Together with **Hayri Can**, a former staff member of the museum and son of Turkish immigrants to Vorarlberg, we are launching the "Rosenthal Edition" this fall: fine cloths for many uses, from scarves to the Hammam, made from cotton and tencel and produced in Turkey, with patterns from the Rosenthal company of the beginning of the 20th century interpreted in modern colors.

Soon you will find more information in our shop and on our website: <https://www.jm-hohenems.at/shop>



Education

On July 1, **Claudia Klammer** started her work in the education department. A studied art historian, she has been working as a tour guide for several years at the Jewish Museum Hohenems and was able to prevail against almost 60 other applicants in a broad-based application process at the beginning of this year. Claudia Klammer fills a 50 percent position. With her precise knowledge of our museum, its context and content, she was able to start her work very smoothly. We are very happy about this valuable addition to our team!

With the lockdown in mid-March due to the worldwide coronavirus pandemic, all workshops and guided tours had to be cancelled. More than 100 classes already booked—a very promising level of bookings at this early stage of the year—could not take place. After the reopening of the museum in mid-May, school classes were not allowed to visit the museum until the end of the school year and, in general, the demand for guided tours

continues to be subdued. In the museum itself, we can currently only welcome small groups with a maximum of 12 people, and visitors must wear a mouth-nose protection. Fortunately, we are in the happy position to be able to offer wonderful guided tours outdoors in the Jewish Quarter and in the Jewish cemetery or along the escape routes to the Swiss border. So this summer we programmed additional guided public tours along the escape routes accompanying the current indoor exhibition "End of Testimony?" and focusing on the complex topic of eyewitness interviews. For school classes, we offered an alternative to an indoor workshop of the current exhibition, a digital package of classroom materials with detailed lessons that enabled students to discuss the topic in school.

Despite all of these alternatives, we very much hope to welcome school classes and other groups back to the museum as soon as possible!

News from the Museum (Cont'd)

Yerusha Database Online—JMH documents Jewish Life in Western Austria and Switzerland

In 2017 **Dr. Severin Holzknicht** and **Rebecca Mursec, MA** joined the museum's team as external researchers for a two-year research project documenting Jewish life in western Austria. The Rothschild Foundation Hadaniv Europe started its Yerusha program several years ago, a database collecting information about archival collections regarding Jewish life and culture in Europe and worldwide.

The JMH joined the group of Yerusha partners with a project aiming to research archives in four countries—Austria, Italy Liechtenstein and Switzerland—in order to find documentation of Jewish life in Western Austria.

We are looking forward to the publication of the results of our second Yerusha project in 2021. **Severin Holzknicht** started researching multiple institutional and non-institutional, Jewish and non-Jewish archives in German-speaking Switzerland last year. The results will give an overview over the archival documents on Jewish history and culture in northern Switzerland from early modern times until the present.

The new website of the Yerusha program recently went online: www.yerusha.eu

The results of the JMH projects can be found under: <https://yerusha.eu/network/jewish-museum-hohenems>

Events

In a moving evening event in the Salomon Sulzer auditorium on February 3, 2020, **Eva Grabherr**, the founding director of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, received the *Kurt-Schubert-Memorial Award for Interreligious Understanding*. **Mouhanad Khorchide**, professor for Islamic theology in Münster, Germany, spoke about Islamic Youth between tradition and modernity, and **Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek** in her laudatory remarks, reflected upon Eva's incredible ability to create a museum as a space for public discourse on the crucial issues of our time.

On February 12, just before the Coronavirus pandemic started to reach Europe and the US, we had the chance to meet in New York, celebrating **Ely Jacques Kahn**, the architect who helped to shape New York in the 1920s.

The premiere of the film "*Ely Jacques Kahn. A New York Architect Standing the Test of Time*," by **Ingrid Bertel** and **Nikolai Dörler**, in the Austrian Cultural Forum in Manhattan attracted a large crowd of both descendants and connoisseurs of New York architecture. **Susan Rosenthal Shimer** welcomed the guests for the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems and **Michael Haider** for the ACF. **Ely Jacques Kahn III** discussed Kahn's personality, his family background and his position in New York's history. A trio of the New York Opera Society performed a piece by the composer, **Marcus Nigsch**, and **Alisa Jordheim** performed a song from the opera "Letters from Ruth."

Though most of our events had to be canceled due to the Coronavirus pandemic, we celebrated the diversity of Hohenems in a great public outdoor event in the Jewish quarter together with the municipality, the youth center and the Collini company that employs so many migrants, mostly from Turkey, who have become part of the town's population. The "Hock"—a hardly translatable expression for coming and sitting together—became a great success. More than 700 people from different "tribes" participated during a day of music, dance, food and other attractions, while being observant to the

Coronavirus-related distancing rules that kept participants scattered all over the square between the museum and the former synagogue.

At the end of the program, all the chairs, donated by locals in the weeks before the event, were auctioned to support the local language-café for refugees in Hohenems.

The event included the installation of a sculpture at the well on the cross section of Christengasse and Judengasse. **Günter Blenke** and **Franz Sauer** created an impressive "Angel of History" using a burned piece of a tree hit by a lightning, recalling Walter Benjamin's famous essay about the "philosophy of history" written shortly before he committed suicide on the French-Spanish border in 1940, when he feared to be sent back into Nazi-occupied France.



Susan Rosenthal Shimer
welcomes Guests



New York Opera Society Performance



Ely Jaques Kahn III and Hanno Loewy

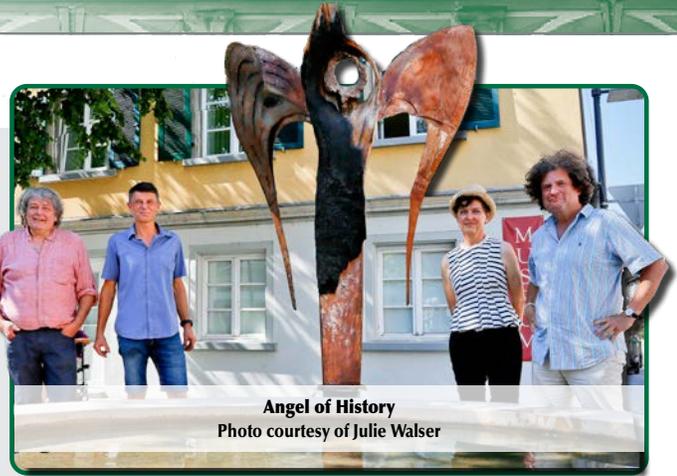
Photos Courtesy of Stefanie Korherr Photography

News from the Museum (Cont'd)

“A Klee painting named Angelus Novus shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress,” Benjamin wrote.

Equally successful was a “theatre walk,” directed by **Brigitte Walk**, following the life of **Franziska Rosenthal**, who, with her husband **Iwan** lived in the “other” Rosenthal-Villa that, after years of neglect, is now being developed as Vorarlberg’s “House of Literature.” Hundreds of people came to the six performances of “*The Longing of Franziska Rosenthal*” with actress **Luka Oberhammer**.

Other events, such as the European Summer University of Jewish studies on the subject of the upcoming exhibition, had to be postponed into 2021. Some of this will be “on air” in the future, either as Zoom events or at least on YouTube, and some of it will be in English.



Angel of History
Photo courtesy of Julie Walsler



Auction raised 1000 € for the Language-Café for Refugees



Turkish folk dance
Photo courtesy of Julie Walsler



Hock
Parish Priest Thomas Heilbrunn
Photo courtesy of Julie Walsler



The Contact-Choir
(mostly people who worked with refugees in Vorarlberg)
and the collection of chairs that were auctioned



Angel of History
Photo courtesy of Julie Walsler



Theatre Walk
Photo courtesy of Hanno Loewy

News from the Museum (Cont'd)

New objects in our collection: Hans Schwarz (1922 - 2003)

RAPHAEL EINETTER, MA

In June 2020, two parcels from England reached the Jewish Museum of Hohenems. They contained a part of the legacy of **Hans Schwarz**, who escaped from Vienna in 1939 at the age of 16 on a “Kindertransport.” He went on to work as a painter and graphic designer, married and had two sons. One of his sons first contacted the museum in early April—during the COVID-19 lockdown—via the Hohenems Genealogy. This was followed by a successful exchange of information, the expansion of our genealogical database and the generous donation of drawings, sketches, photos, books and documents.

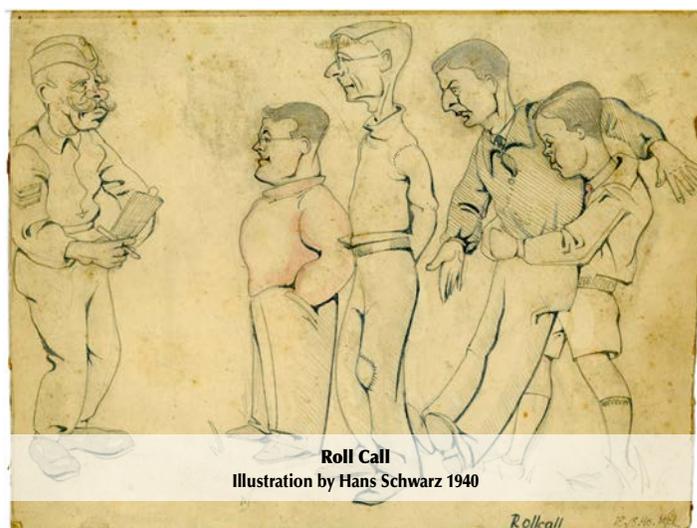
Hans Schwarz was born on 29 December 1922 in Vienna. His grandfather **Abraham Jakob Schwarz**, who was born in Hohenems in 1850, emigrated to Bozen/Bolzano in 1878. Before that he married **Anna Thalmessinger** in Hohenems. In Bolzano he worked as a wine merchant and insurance agent. His cousin, **Siegmund Schwarz**, gained some prominence at that time. As an entrepreneur and banker, Siegmund was responsible for several railroad projects in South Tyrol, such as the “Virglbahn” or the cable rail to the Mendel Pass. But **Abraham Schwarz** also took an active part in social life. In 1925, for example, he was honored for his 40th anniversary as a member of the volunteer firefighters of Zwölfmalgreien (now a district of Bolzano). This is documented in a diploma that his grandson Hans kept and which, thanks to the donation, is now part of the museum's collection.

Abraham's son **Viktor Schwarz** was born in Bolzano in 1880 and served as a captain in the Habsburg Army during the First World War. In 1922 he moved to Vienna, where he worked as a bank clerk and married the Viennese **Emilie Gibs**. In the same year, their only son Hans was born. The family now appears in the records without any religious affiliation. This changed after the early death of Emilie in 1935, which was a heavy blow for the young family.

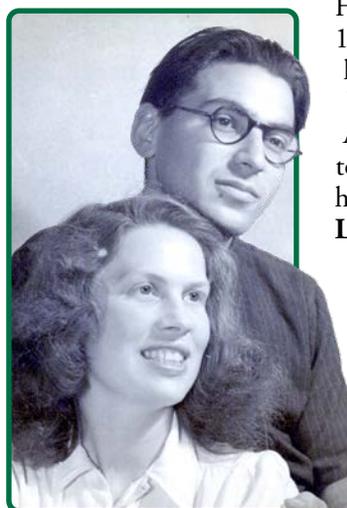
Hans Schwarz became a member of the Catholic Church at that time. This might have had something to do with the fact that **Leopoldine Peter**, the previous Catholic housekeeper, took care of Hans and Viktor. Hans showed artistic talent at a young age. As a teenager, he was able to show this in the Vienna “Gewerbeschule,” which he was allowed to attend from 1937 until the “Anschluss.” After the National Socialists came to power, the father and son's Jewish roots came back into focus. Viktor and “Aunt Poldi,” as Hans used to call her, were now trying to find a way to escape. Hans successfully did so in May 1939 with a children's transport to England. His farewell from Vienna ultimately also meant a farewell forever from his father. His Jewish ancestry was to

become his fate. Viktor, who last lived in a shared apartment at Berggasse 8, had to board a train to Riga on January 11, 1942. Deportation with Transport 14 probably meant he died soon after, though a date is not known.

Hans, who at that time also appeared in documents under the name “**Ebbo**,” first stayed with other refugees at a village house in Bournville, a suburb of Birmingham. The house belonged to the company of Cadbury, which supported him and other refugees. Hans was able to work in the printing department of the Cadbury chocolate factory. As the Second World War was about to begin, he attended the Bournville School of Arts and Crafts at Ruskin Hall. However, the chaos of the war led to his transfer to an internment camp, the Peveril Camp, on the Isle of Man in 1940. One of his early works shows the “Roll Call” which is illustrated here.



Roll Call
Illustration by Hans Schwarz 1940



His internment ended in January 1941 and he was able to return to his place of work and residence. He then attended the College of Art in Birmingham from 1941 to 1943, during which time he also met his soon-to-be wife **Lena Jones**. They married in Birmingham in October 1944 (the photo shows them at that time) and had two sons. The family lived in Halesowen, where Schwarz also worked as a freelance commercial artist. During this time,

Hans Schwarz (1922 - 2003) (cont.)

he designed many theater brochures. In 1953 they moved to the London district of Hampstead and Schwarz worked as an illustrator for newspaper editorial offices and advertising. He continued this work until 1964, during which time he also designed a certificate for the British Overseas Airways Corporation, for example, which confirmed that the equator had been crossed (the illustration dates from around 1960).



In these years, he managed to establish himself as a painter enough to give up his work as a graphic designer. He now devoted himself to his passion in a cottage in Somerset. In 1970 the Schwarz family moved to the London district of Greenwich. His artwork was shown in many galleries throughout his career including in London at the Hyde Park Gallery in 1960, the Compton Gallery in 1982, or the Steinberg Centre for Judaism in 1992. He also sold many of his paintings, transactions that are documented in an account book which is now also in the

museum's collection. Furthermore, he published several books in which he dealt with different painting techniques. These include the works "Figure Painting" (1967), "Painting in Towns and Cities" (1969) and "Draw Sketches" (1981). All of these books are now also in the descendant library of the Jewish Museum Hohenems.

Hans Schwarz remained active as an artist throughout the rest of his life. Another photo shows him working on a painting, which shows him painting the same harbour view. Hans Schwarz was also a member of several associations, such as the "Royal Society of British Artists," the "New English Art Club" and the "Royal Watercolour Society." He died in Greenwich on May 28, 2003 at the age of 80.



Thanks to the grateful donation by his son, the Jewish Museum's collection has now grown by: 20 books, 404 photographs, 34 drawings, sketches and lithographs, as well as a poster, a certificate and a collection of newspaper clippings.

Cemetery

66 years ago, the association for the maintenance of the Jewish cemetery Hohenems was founded

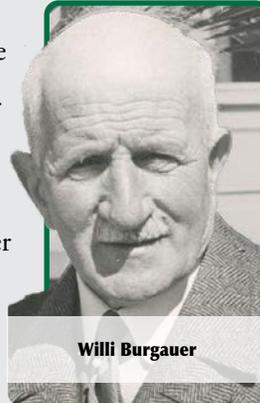
The Jewish cemetery in Hohenems is as old as the first settlement of Jewish people, dating to 1617. The area of the cemetery was subsequently enlarged several times, and a water drainage system was added in 1900. Thanks to the commitment of **Rabbi Aron Tänzer**, who was active in Hohenems until 1905, many tombs can still be assigned today. Despite some acts of vandalism, the cemetery remained more or less undamaged during the National Socialist regime. However, the future of the cemetery was uncertain in the postwar years. The Hohenems

cemetery was given to the Jewish Community for Tyrol and Vorarlberg as legal successor to the former Jewish community in 1950. In June 1953, the community leader **Rudolf Brüll** explained in a letter to the St. Gallen Rabbi **Lothar Rothschild** why he was thinking of selling the cemetery. He said that the town of Hohenems had suggested that the hillside could be used as a tree nursery, because the existing trees would probably be suitable for pencil production. He added that the gravestones could no longer be assigned anyway, which is why they should be placed along the wall. The history of the place should be commemorated by a plaque.



Cemetery (Cont'd)

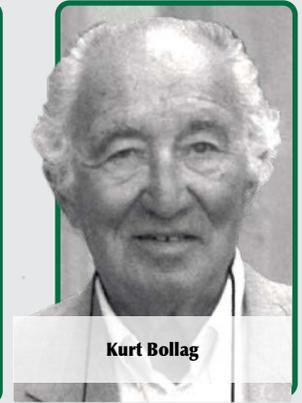
Some descendants of Hohenems families who were living in Switzerland wanted to prevent this, so they decided to take over the administration of the cemetery themselves. This group founded the "Verein zur Erhaltung des jüdischen Friedhofs in Hohenems" (association for the maintenance of the Jewish cemetery in Hohenems) in 1954. On October 1 of that year, the founding statutes were signed by **Willi Burgauer** from St. Gallen as president, the St. Gallen **Rabbi Lothar Rothschild** as actuary and **Kurt Bollag**, who lived in Widnau, as treasurer. Afterwards they bought the cemetery from the Jewish Community. The contract was signed on December 15. Numerous restorations were to follow.



Willi Burgauer



Rabbi Lothar Rothschild



Kurt Bollag

Starting in 1957, the entrance portal and the hall were renovated. In 1967, the cemetery was placed under monumental protection. In 1978, **Adi Pleterski** was hired as the cemetery gardener for the ongoing conservation measures. He was to look after the grounds for exactly 40 years. During this time, further renovation work was carried out and the cemetery was researched and documented. For one of the first museum's exhibitions in 1992, the Vorarlberg photographer **Arno Gisinger** took professional pictures of the gravestones.

The cemetery is maintained and regularly restored by the association under supervision of the Federal Office of

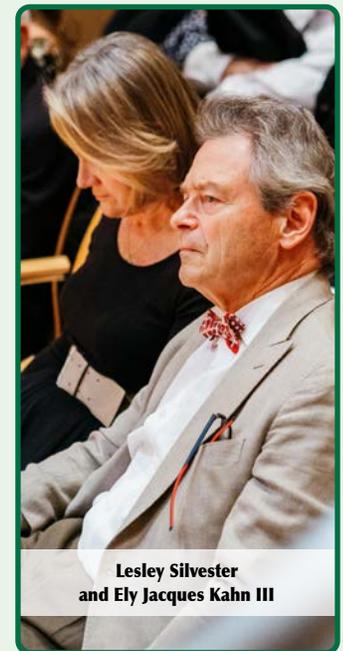
Preservation with funds from various families, the National Fund for maintenance of Jewish cemeteries in Austria, the municipality of Hohenems and the State of Vorarlberg. In 2018, **Johannes Inama** decided to end his function as actuary and was succeeded by **Raphael Einetter**, who had already been working in the museum's archive since 2014. **Yves Bollag** is still the president of the association, which is also supported by architect **Reinhard Rinderer** as an advisor. In memory of **Walter Mintz** (1929-2004) a new book is going to be published about the cemetery, which was made possible by the generous donation of his wife **Sandra Mintz**.

Austrian Cultural Forum

The Jewish Museum Hohenems was highlighted by the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York in a publication about the programs it sponsored. It reported that in February 2020, the Cultural Forum celebrated the life and contributions of **Ely Jacques Kahn**, one of the pioneering architects of Manhattan's skyline. The Austrian Cultural Forum presented the film *Ely Jacques-Kahn- A New York Architect Standing the Test of Time*, produced by **Ingrid Bertel** and **Nikolai Dörler**. Attending the US premiere of the film were the filmmakers and the composer of the soundtrack, **Marcus Nigsch**, and his wife. The Report from the Austrian Cultural Forum also highlighted that the Jewish Museum in Hohenems was one of the institutional partners of this event and that **Dr. Hanno Loewy**, the Director of the Museum and his wife, attended. The article pointed out that the program was made possible by **Ely "Terry" Jacques Kahn III**, a grandson of **Ely Kahn**, and his wife **Lesley Silvester**. Ms. Silvester, in her capacity as **President of the New York Opera Society**, introduced the musicians who presented a live performance. This was the penultimate event in the framework of Austrian Cultural Forum's outgoing exhibition "Resident Alien," a show dedicated to Austrian American architects and designers in the United States.



President of the New York Opera Society – Lesley Silvester



Lesley Silvester and Ely Jacques Kahn III

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A Report on the Celebration of the Contributions of Ely Jacques Kahn—a Hohenems Descendant

SUSAN ROSENTHAL SHIMER

On February 12, 2020, I was fortunate to be able to attend the event at the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York City celebrating the life and contributions of **Ely Jacques Kahn**. Presented at the event, for the first time in English, was the film, *Ely Jacques-Kahn—A New York Architect Standing the Test of Time*, produced by **Ingrid Bertel** and **Nikolai Dörler**. Co-sponsors of the event were **Ely Jacques Kahn III**, the **American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems**, **Lesley Silvester**, the **State of Vorarlberg**, the **City of Hohenems**, the **Republic of Austria**, the **Future Fund of the Republic of Austria**, the **National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism**, and the **New York Opera Society**.

Ely Jacques Kahn was born in New York, his father having emigrated from Hohenems as a young adult, but Ely Kahn did not forget his European roots. His father visited Hohenems every year, and Ely chose to go to Austria on vacations and to visit Hohenems and Vienna. The film highlights Ely Kahn's very significant contribution to New York's architecture. He built some four-dozen skyscrapers in Manhattan, the first almost 100 years ago. And they were not just tall buildings, but buildings with amazing architectural details, including sophisticated ornamentation. Ely Kahn studied at Columbia as an undergraduate and also at its School of Architecture. Then he continued his studies at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Paris, where he acquired essential technical skills; he even expanded his education by working at the atelier of a renowned French architect. That gave him the opportunity to be with workers at the construction sites.

The film shows that architecture and art also were changing at this time in Vienna, thanks to the work of a number of people to whom details were important, including **Otto Wagner** and **Joseph Hoffman (Wiener Werkstätte)**. What Ely Kahn learned on his studies abroad greatly influenced his work. That work can still be seen in the overall view of the New York skyline, and includes The Film Center Building at 2 Park Avenue, 120 Wall Street, and the Squibb Building. The film contains significant footage from New York City, Paris, Vienna, and Hohenems, the "*heim*" of many of our members; some portions were filmed during the 2017 Descendants Reunion.

The delightful and fascinating evening at the Austrian Cultural Forum also included music by **Marcus Nigsch**, the composer of the music in the film. Artists, **Alisa Jordheim** (singer), **Bruno Pena** (violin), **Suzanne Saba Hughes** (cello), and **Francisco Salazar** (viola) of the New York Opera Society, performed a number of selections. In addition to the film and the music, there was a discussion by **Dr. Hanno Loewy**, the Director of the Museum and **Ely (Terry) Kahn III**, a grandson of the famous architect, that highlighted what Hohenems can offer a visitor. I gave a short talk, excerpts of which appear below.

We, the American Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems, are honored to co-sponsor this event. And I am thrilled to have such an illustrious relative. I still remember my first view of the skyscrapers of New York when I arrived here at the age of three. I did not know that I owed that amazing sight at least in part to Ely Jacques Kahn. Only recently did I become aware that I shared a common ancestor with Ely. I learned that his mother's name was **Regina Bernheimer**, the same name as that of my great great grandmother; they were first cousins. I never had the good fortune to meet Ely, but I did meet his sister **Rena**, who married another relative, **Rudolph Rosenthal**, a first cousin of my grandfather; she had an amazing shop on Madison Avenue selling beautiful art deco pieces.

We whose ancestors came from Hohenems have always known that our ancestors intermarried. Our Hohenems families rarely traveled to find a marriage partner until the nineteenth century when we began to move elsewhere; some like **Jakob Kahn** came directly to New York where Ely was born; my great grandmother, my Regina's daughter, moved to Vienna. Eventually, almost all of us settled in different lands— the United States, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, Israel, Australia, and, of course, in a number of European countries. Some remained, like **Iwan Rosenthal**, the brother of my great grandmother, Mathilde, and an Uncle of Rena, in whose home in Hohenems some of this story was filmed. Some of us were lost in the Holocaust, including Rena's sister-in-law, Clara, who lived in Hohenems until her deportation.



Lesley Silvester with members of the New York Opera Society



Christine Angiel-Brunner



Ely Jacques Kahn IV

A Report on the Celebration of the Contributions of Ely Jacques Kahn—a Hohenems Descendant (Cont'd)

As we settled in other lands, many of us lost touch. But we never forgot our connection to Hohenems, even if we did not visit. And then everything changed.

In 1991, thanks to the efforts of many people, none Jewish, a Museum was founded based in the Rosenthal family house in which **Clara Heimann Rosenthal**, Rena Kahn's sister-in law, lived until her deportation. In 1998 the descendants celebrated their first reunion in Hohenems. Almost immediately upon our return, **Stephan Rollin**, a Rosenthal, thought we should form an organization, the American Friends Jewish Museum Hohenems, to help support the Museum. He pulled it off with help of **Uri Taenzer**.

Through the years, we have marveled at what the Museum has done. It has offered fascinating exhibitions about Jewish life from Jewish food shops in New York to a history of Tel Aviv-Jaffa. A number of the exhibitions have been of wide interest,

traveling to other museums. Just now the Jewkbox show ended its long journey in Australia; the End of Testimony Exhibition is traveling to the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial and to major institutions in Munich and Berlin. For the past 11 years, the Museum has collaborated with other Austrian, German and Swiss institutions to present the European Summer University for Jewish Studies Hohenems. The Museum has created a database of descendants—hence I could figure out that Ely Kahn's mother **Regina Bernheimer** was not the same person as my Regina Bernheimer ancestor. Not only descendants visit the Museum, visitors come from many lands—last year there were nearly 20,000 visitors, some from nearby, but also from distant places, including the United States, Israel, France, Italy, Hungary, Great Britain and Australia. In other words, the Museum is a gem, do visit it and do read our newsletter to learn about the Museum's most recent activities.



The English Premiere of the film, *Ely Jacques Kahn—A New York Architect Standing the Test of Time*



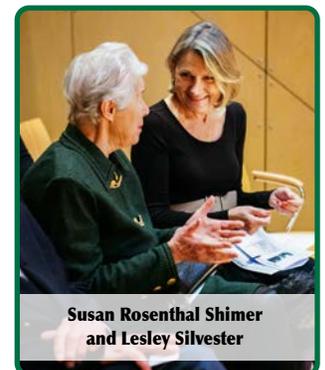
Susan Rosenthal Shimer and Uri Taenzer



Alisa Jordheim



The New York Opera Society



Susan Rosenthal Shimer and Lesley Silvester

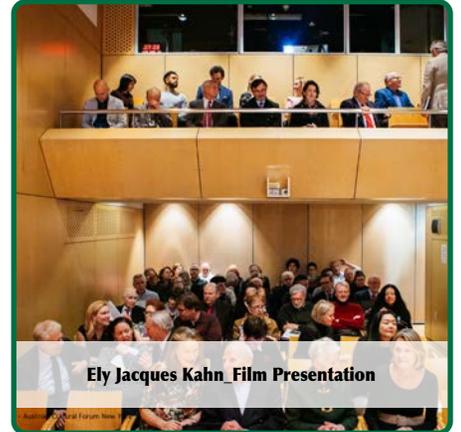
Photos Courtesy of Stefanie Korherr Photography



Mr & Mrs. Michael Haider & Ely Jacques III



Uri and Marlena Taenzer and Astrid Loewy



Ely Jacques Kahn Film Presentation



Suzanne Saba Hughes



Dr. Michael Haider opening the event



Dennis and Francesca Kennedy-Brunner with Hanno Loewy



Marlena Taenzer & Astrid Loewy



Producer of Ely Jacques Kahn—A New York Architect Standing the Test of Time Ingrid Bertel along with Ely Jacques Kahn III



Susan Rosenthal Shimer



Bruno Peña

Photos Courtesy of Stefanie Korherr Photography

Photos Courtesy of Stefanie Korherr Photography



Ely Jacques Kahn—A New York Architect Standing the Test of Time producers Ingrid Bertel and Nikolai Dörler at the Reception



The New York Opera Society



Ely Jacques Kahn III and Hanno Loewy



Ely Jacques Kahn III and Dr. Michael Haider

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