

JASENOVAC
2023



sound — in
the — in
silence

history through
art

history through art



While selecting the locations, we also intended to raise awareness of those historical events connected to the Holocaust that are less well known, and at the same time showcase the fates of various persecuted groups (involving representatives of different nationalities, genders, ages, religious views, ethnic and social backgrounds, etc.). Addressing them on a local and community level aims to create a link between global and local histories.

The fourth edition of the 'Sound in the Silence' project took place in Croatia, in the villages of Jasenovac and Stara Gradiška – an area of Second World War concentration camps.

The educational programme took place in Jasenovac and Stara Gradiška, while the artistic programme and the final performance were held in the Stara Gradiška Cultural Centre. The project ran from 15 to 23 October 2023.

Students made use of this historical site to gain impressions of history through a guided tour and workshops in Jasenovac Memorial Site, a site visit to Stara Gradiška, an educational workshop during a visit to the Roma Memorial Center in Uštica and carrying out historical studies before working with artists to connect those impressions of the past to their thoughts and feelings of the present moment. All participants had the opportunity to meet a child survivor of the Stara Gradiška camp – Zivko Zelenbrz – and take part in a commemorative walk to an anti-fascism monument with him.

After studying the site's history, each student took part in a creative writing workshop. This workshop used creative writing exercises to create a personal connection to history and to form the foundation for the final performance.

'Sound in the Silence' is an intercultural and international remembrance project for youth. In historically challenging locations, students work with artists representing different artistic fields in order to understand how the past is connected to their questions in the present.

By doing so, we give young people a chance to find new ways of looking at the history of Europe, of our nations, states and regions, and to work out their own perception of reality and to give the tools to express it.

At the beginning of the eight-day programme, students learn about history through lectures, workshops and site visits. After formal study, they work with artists who lead rap and poetry and vocal and choreography workshops to express their emotions about the history of the memorial site in a final performance.

The 'Sound in the Silence' project in the years 2022–23 was organised as a consortium of seven institutions. The educational programme took place in four countries: Lithuania (Kaunas) and Austria (Mauthausen and Gusen) in 2022 and Germany (Wannsee) and Croatia (Jasenovac) in 2023.

The institutions involved in the creation of the 2022–23 editions of the 'Sound in the Silence' project:

European Network Remembrance and Solidarity, Poland (Head of the Consortium)

Motte Cultural Center, Germany

Kaunas Ninth Fort Museum, Lithuania

Jasenovac Memorial Site, Croatia

Documenta – Centre for Dealing with the Past, Croatia

Memorial and Educational Site House of the Wannsee Conference, Germany

Mauthausen Memorial, Austria

what's the
point of history
if we never
learn?





history of the memorial site

Jasenovac concentration camp, with several subcamps, including Stara Gradiška subcamp, was the biggest camp system established on the territory of the Independent State of Croatia in 1941 during the Second World War. The camp was run by local Ustasha military units who committed mass killings of Serbs, Jews, Roma and political prisoners. After the war, the camp was mined, burned and destroyed by Ustasha, and over the following years the camp became completely overgrown with weeds and undergrowth. In 1960 the Central Committee of the Federation of War Veterans' Organisations of Yugoslavia invited architects to present proposals for commemorating the Jasenovac concentration camp. The Flower Memorial was designed by architect Bogdan Bogdanović and officially unveiled on 4 July 1966. Its lotus flower was a 'sign of eternal renewal'. The camp's numerous mass graves were marked in the 1970s.

The modern settlement of **Stara Gradiška** was established at the beginning of the 18th century, after the border between the Habsburg monarchy and Ottoman Empire was established in the area according to the Treaty of Karlowitz, 1699.

With the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918 (in 1929 the country's name was changed to Yugoslavia), the fortress in Stara Gradiška was transformed into a prison. During the

Second World War, the site became part of the Jasenovac camp where prisoners were deported. In the summer of 1942, after a military offensive by Nazi and Ustasha units on the mountain of Kozara, a large number of Serb civilians were deported to the camp. During this period, children were separated from their parents, who were deported as forced labour for the needs of the German military industry. Thousands of children suffered and died owing to the appallingly unhygienic conditions.

In this period, Diana Budisavljević organised help to save the children from the Stara Gradiška camp. Thanks to her and the efforts of her associates, more than 7,000 children were taken out of the camp by a rescue mission.

After the end of Second World War, the site of former Stara Gradiška fortress became a prison again in socialist Yugoslavia, up until 1989.

In period 1991–95, during the Croatian War of Independence, military battles were fought in the area which left buildings of the former camp and prison damaged and in a poor condition. During this period buildings of the former fortress were used as a jail and camp for prisoners of war again by the local rebel Serb authorities.

Today occasional commemorative and educational programmes take place at the Stara Gradiška site in remembrance of the Holocaust and genocide victims.



cre _ _ ative writing

WORKSHOP BY DAN WOLF

The aim of the workshop was to introduce the participants to the artists they were working with, the various creative methodologies, thinking frameworks and the guiding principles that power the project, and the big questions and themes that were explored together. During this particular edition, participants were asked to consider that poetry is both a form (the way it looks on the page) and a concept (the way we find poetry in the world). The workshop was used as a way to reflect on the historical site visits and workshops in a deeply personal manner. The participants were asked to make lists of five to ten single words or strong images that came to mind as a reflection of their days at Jasenovac, Uštica and Stara Gradiška. They wrote haiku poems as a way to distill their ideas into a potent, concentrated

format. They were asked to write a 'I come from ...' poem using their five senses to express their unique, individual humanity. Finally, participants wrote a 'Telephone Poem', a poem that uses a restricted number of words for each line, based on the question 'If the erosion of memory is the act of forgetting, and the rebirth of memory is the act of remembering, where are you right now?' This large, abstract question was meant to inspire them to explore the concepts of erosion, forgetting, oblivion and remembering, and used the image of the lotus flower (represented in the Flower Memorial at Jasenovac) as a way to express the complexity of issues affecting local history.



DAN WOLF

PROJECT ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS

Dan is an actor, rapper, playwright, director, producer and educator from the United States. Dan's work crosses artistic and cultural boundaries to combine conventional theatre styles with themes, language, music, history and aesthetics of the hip-hop generation. Dan is a founding member of the critically acclaimed hip-hop music and theatre collective Felonious. He is a resident playwright at the Playwright Foundation in San Francisco and is the co-founder of the Bay Area Theatre Cypher.





rap and poetry

WORKSHOP BY DAN WOLF

During the rap and poetry workshop participants worked on the basics of writing and performing rap, including understanding rhyming patterns, beats and bars. Each participant took their turn writing raps either on their own or in pairs. They translated their haikus from English into their native languages. To counteract the brutality of the history of Stara Gradiška, the participants wrote poems about kindness. On day three, the workshop turned into an acting class and the kindness poems were rehearsed as if they were monologues. One participant's kindness poem was constructed as a three-act play and was broken up into character parts and rehearsed as if it were a short play. On the final day students with the workshop leader created chords and a bassline to go with the rhythm that the vocal workshop had created for the rap. The raps were edited and arranged, and a chorus was written for a song called 'Tomorrow Today'.





KATARINA RAMPÁČKOVÁ

DANCE WORKSHOPS

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



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WORKSHOP BY
KATARINA RAMPÁČKOVÁ

This choreography workshop was created for everybody and was facilitated in the way that everyone could follow. In the workshop the principles of somatic work and improvisation to sensibilise consciousness of the body were used. The location was very inspiring, which gave power to the group. The starting points for the creation of the movement's material were: location (bus stop, tunnel), haikus written by them during the creative writing workshop (reflection on the place), statues (body formations based on the emotion they had in the location), poems with writers (supporting the poem written by the rap group), lotus (as a symbol of hope and new beginning: the flower in the lake of memorial site of Jasenovac). Students learned how to create a movement map that leads them towards their own short choreography. The students made a huge personal step forwards, developing confidence in their movements and by the end of the workshop they understood the power of abstract expression in the complexity of the whole performance.



vo _ cal

WORKSHOP BY SEAN PALMER

During the vocal workshop students worked with various exercises and singing techniques including classical, body percussion, beatbox, screaming, growling, whispering and vocal improvisation.

The Stara Gradiška camp today is in a complete state of dilapidation, bearing the scars of time. Nature has been slowly eating away and covering the past. This led the group to the first key to the performance: 'Erosion is nature's form of forgetting.' Now the site of the Jasenovac camp, which was

once notorious for its brutal executions, stands as a vast tranquil expanse of pasture. In the centre is an enormous, concrete monument which is said to have been a lotus flower – the symbol of rebirth. Here the artists discovered the second part of the key for the performance: 'Rebirth is nature's form of remembering.' Participants also worked with the notion of kindness – the opposite of what this location has been remembered for.

The songs were based on the participant's raps and haikus and were woven into the final performance to complement the work of the other groups.



SEAN PALMER

VOCAL WORKSHOPS

Sean is a singer, an active creator, collaborator and educator, who trained in theatre and visual arts at the Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. He has been a part of the Warsaw theatre and performance scene since 2000, traversing multiple forms of music and theatre from experimental fringe to pop radio broadcasts. Currently (2022–24) he is co-running MONT – a youth orchestra in Warsaw, leading a course called multi-voice at the University of Warsaw and collaborating with the Museum of Contemporary Art, directing short choral projects. Since 2015 he has been the front man of a band, the White Kites, and jazz trio, William's Things.



CRISTINA

group — dynamic

WORKSHOPS BY TETIANA KRIUKOVSKA

During the programme participants were under the supervision of the moderator Tetiana Kriukovska, who organised different daily activities for a better group dynamic.

The journey from the hotel (Kutina) to the historical site (Stara Gradiška) took about 50 minutes each day. This time was used to create a group dynamic: the facilitator formed different tandem partners for each person to communicate with during every bus ride. This helped to create space for getting to know each other better and did not interfere with the programme.

The facilitator helped students who wanted to share their feelings but were not confident enough to do so in front of the whole group. Over time, after several one-to-one sessions and working in smaller groups during the artistic workshops, the young people were able to build a relationship that allowed them to openly share their thoughts and feelings. Thanks to so-called 'opening and closing circles', participants learned more about each other in a fun way; they discussed the upcoming activities and possible challenges. The meeting with the child survivor Zivko Zelenbrz also had a significant impact on the participants. The survivor was very charismatic and his personal storytelling made the process of learning history more emotionally engaging.

All the participants had the support of Vladyslava Kovbasa, the project's intern, who was an observer and student of the facilitator's work.



TETIANA KRIUKOVSKA

FACILITATOR OF GROUP DYNAMICS

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



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ers**WORKSHOP BY ALEKSANDRA
KALINOWSKA, ENRS**

The workshops were open both to the teachers who came with students as well as to local teachers interested in the topic.

The workshop focused on educational materials. During the workshop teachers learned about the free educational resources available on the 'Hi-story Lessons' platform, including infographics, lesson plans, animations and an educational kit about disinformation and memory conflicts. Participants considered how to use the resources in their teaching. Teachers also learned about how to use visual language in educational projects as a means of tackling challenging historical topics and processing them in a way that suits each student's individual sensibilities.

**WORKSHOP BY MAJA STURM, ART
AND GERMAN TEACHER AT A HIGH
SCHOOL IN OSNABRÜCK, GERMANY**

The block of workshops focused on alternative methods, in particular aesthetic research and artistic approaches to the Holocaust. The participants became acquainted with a variety of very different graphic novels through excerpts and were given suggestions of how to use them in the classroom. At the same time they benefitted from the intercultural exchange in a multinational group of teachers. One focal point was on the graphic novel anthology *But I Live*.

This was followed by interactive and hands-on activities dealing with the location and its abstract history, both alone and/or in teams. With the help of a variety of expressive means (creative writing, collage, photography and designing own short comic sequences), the participants could choose what suited them best and what they could use for teaching in class. Older and newer artistic approaches (from painting to conceptual artwork etc.) on the subject of the Holocaust, guilt, commemoration and remembrance were also presented and discussed in a final session.

**WORKSHOP BY SUNČICA NAGRADIĆ
HABUS, ROBERT KORENIĆ, CROATIAN
ROMANI UNION KALI SARA**

The workshop focused on the context of the Roma genocide (Samudaripen), especially in Croatia, Germany, Poland and Romania. The status of the Roma in those four countries before the Second World War and what happened to them during the war was described through a comparative approach. The historical and systemic aspects of discrimination and genocide were explained in depth.

Guided by the 2018 manual 'Roma in the Second World War in the Independent State of Croatia 1941–45' and the guidelines of the Croatian Ministry of Science and Education and the Council of Europe for teaching about the Holocaust and genocide of the Roma, different ways of teaching the topic were presented through activities such as setting up temporary school exhibitions, field trips, class workshops based on newspaper articles before and during the Second World War and testimonies of Roma and non-Roma about the suffering of Roma in the Independent State of Croatia.

**WORKSHOP BY NIKOLA PUHARIĆ,
SERB NATIONAL COUNCIL**

This workshop was about the culture of remembrance and involved a few examples of the very important work of the Serb National Council. The programme of the culture of memory arose from the need to interpret the traumatic history of the 20th century through various models of commemorative, artistic and activist practices targeting both the Serb minority and Croatian majority. In addition to the commemorations at the memorial sites, the Cultural Section – in cooperation with similar organisations – experts and directly interested individuals, conceives and prepares other public events, campaigns and initiatives aimed at drawing attention within Croatian society to the dangers of offensive interpretations of history and historical denial, as well as to the issues of the Serb minority's experience in the fields of education and culture.



final perform ance

The final performance began shortly after 6pm, after the project organisers, partners and artistic director welcomed the large audience. Among the invited guests – Stara Gradiška residents, diplomats and representatives of the educational community – was **the guest of honour too: the child survivor of the Stara Gradiška camp, Zivko Zelenbrz.**



The haikus in five languages (English and the participants' native languages), the kindness poems, a short play inspired by the story of Cain and Abel and rap acted as the backbone and dramaturgical line for the final performance.

The final performance was a promenade performance that started in front of the entrance to the cultural centre's building and, after leading the audience through the grounds of the fort of Stara Gradiška, ended with the singing of the final song in front of the entrance to the fort's ruins.

The route for the performance was based on the artists' desire to share the emotions they had experienced after knowing the history of the place and the traumatic story of the survivors.

Stops along the route were punctuated by micro performances based on creative writers reading their poems, supported by the dance and vocal groups.





The performers illuminated their faces and the route of the show using the torches on their mobile phones. **The audience was asked to light up the performance too.** This performance walk took place in an uplifting atmosphere.



The audience was engaged and followed with full attention the next stops where the students rapped, performed and sang the final song with the chorus:

**Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow NO
Today is the day to let the world KNOW
This generation will break the silence
Destroy never-ending cycles of violence**

and the whole performance was rewarded with a long ovation.



Talking to other people, knowing each other. We're from different countries and we can get along! So the language is not like a big wall that separates us but we can be united. Everyone here is just so nice to everyone. We actually learn about each other's cultures.

ZOSIA
STUDENT FROM POLAND



It was really amazing to just learn something and do something and combine it all into this beautiful performance. And just seeing everyone come together, it's really amazing. It really makes you feel special.

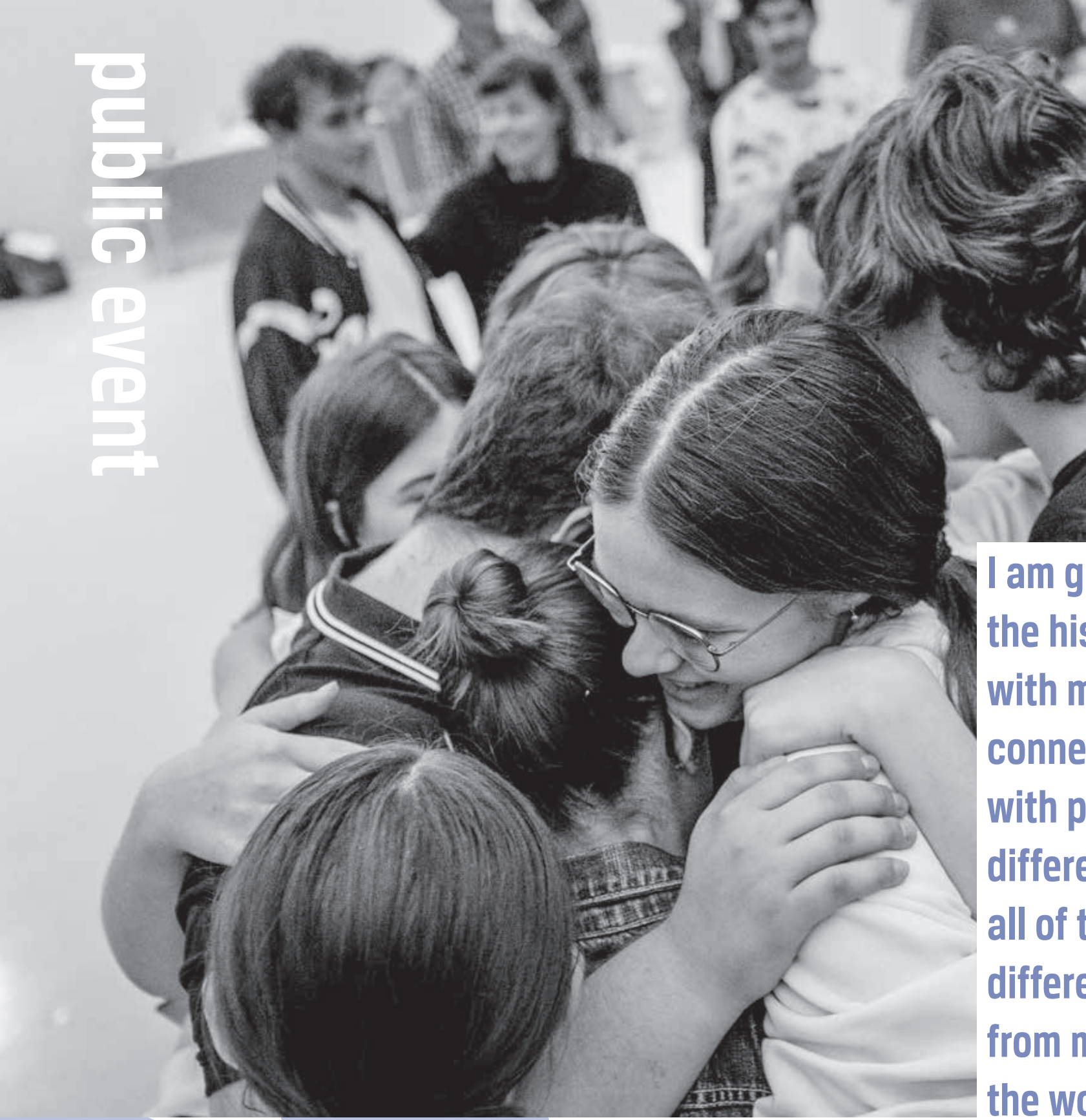
PAULA
STUDENT FROM CROATIA



It makes you understand what actually happened or makes you understand deeper what happened and that's maybe what's missing at school. It's like actually seeing the place where the crimes happened, something different than just being told and seeing pictures of it.

SAMUEL
STUDENT FROM GERMANY





I am going to take all of the history knowledge with me, all of the connections I've made with people from different countries, all of the culture from different countries, from my country, from the workshops, the experience of working in an international team, the experience of working with professionals and seeing how it could help me become the person that I want to be.



The performance (that took place during the first, second and third editions) was wrapped up by a **debate with students, educators, teachers, artists, guests and the audience** who discussed the artistic act and alternative methods of historical education. The discussion also considered how to preserve the memory of historical sites such as this and how to protect the historical heritage and memorials of the eventful history of the 20th century. The discussion was held in English with consecutive interpretation into Croatian.

TEO STUDENT FROM CROATIA

PARTICIPANTS: STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Gymnasium Lucijan Vranjanin, Zagreb, Croatia

- TEACHER: Helena Strugar
- Zvonimir Balic
- Tara Baricevac
- Nera Hasan
- Paola Horvat
- Teo Marjanović
- Chiara Merory
- Paula Tolic

European School Munich, Munich, Germany

- TEACHER: Christine Riesenhuber
- Filip Bakstein
- Samuel Cumani
- Michael Meimarakis
- Frederick Menescal Heath
- Benedikt Rucha
- Erik Täll
- Valeria Werner

Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Komisji Edukacji Narodowej, Przasnysz, Poland

- TEACHER: Olga Mikulska
- Wiktorja Chrzanowska
- Ewa Gałązka
- Alicja Goś
- Martyna Makowska
- Katarzyna Mordwa
- Zofia Pędrak
- Dominika Soból

Colegiul Economic Gheorghe Chițu, Craiova, Romania

- TEACHER: Christian Stancu-Filipescu
- Cătălin Rabete
- Andrei Cepoi
- Adrian Ciucă
- Cristina Mincan
- David Oprea
- Theea Popescu
- Selena Stănescu

ORGANISER



The European Network Remembrance and Solidarity is an international initiative established in 2005 by the Ministers of Culture of four European countries (Poland, Germany, Hungary and Slovakia) to conduct research, document and disseminate knowledge about Europe's 20th-century history and ways in which it is commemorated. Currently, the network members include Poland, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, while its advisory assemblies also involve representatives of the observer countries: Albania, Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania and Latvia.

Envisaged as an ever-developing project, the network's activities reach beyond the member states, expanding the area of dialogue about 20th-century history to other European countries that have experienced a difficult and turbulent past. So far, we have run 225 projects in 30 countries, engaging with over 500 partner institutions from over 40 states. The ENRS is also supported by the European Commission through an operating grant, in recognition of our activities that bring Europeans together and contribute to fostering a better understanding among individuals and societies.

sound in the silence

history through art

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<https://enrs.eu/sound-in-the-silence>

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