

WANNSEE
2023



sound — in the — silence

history through
art

history through — art

'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.

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 background, etc.). Addressing them on a local and community level aims to create a link between global and local histories.

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

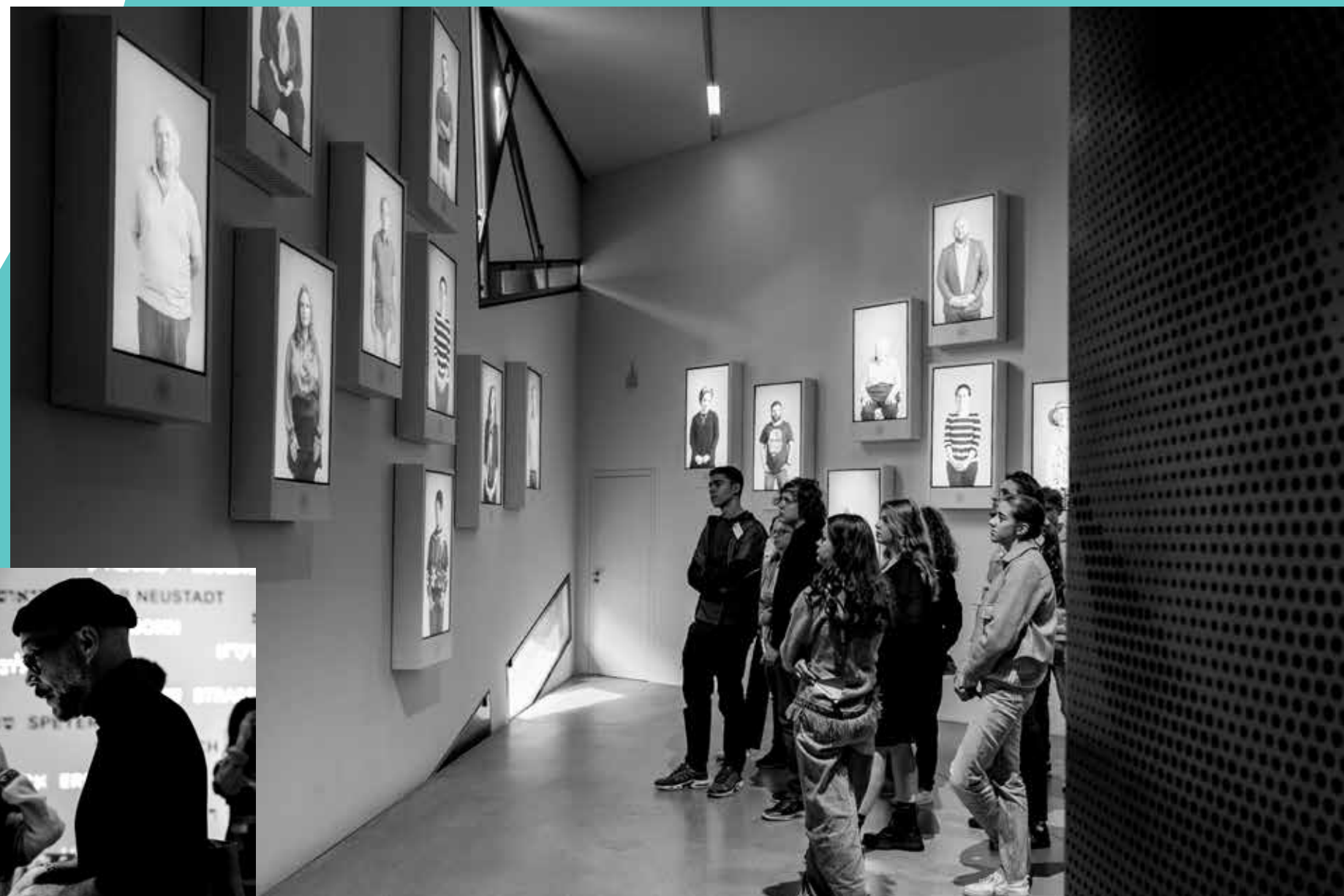
Kaunas Ninth Fort Museum, Lithuania

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?



This edition of the 'Sound in the Silence' project took place in the **House of the Wannsee Conference in Berlin** (Germany) from 2 to 10 October 2023. Students from Croatia, Germany, Poland and Romania made use of this historical site to gain impressions of history through guided tours in the city of Berlin, site visits, educational workshops, including one in the Jewish Museum Berlin, and historical studies before working with artists to connect those impressions of the past to their thoughts and feelings of the present moment.

After learning about the history of the location through guided tours, workshops and discussions, each student participated in a creative writing workshop, undertaking creative writing exercises to create a personal connection to history and to form the foundation for the final performance.

history of the memorial site

On 20 January 1942, in a villa at Am Großen Wannsee no. 56–58 in a picturesque and wealthy suburb of Berlin, 15 leading representatives of the German Nazi state administration met to discuss the implementation of the Final Solution of the Jewish Question. During the 90-minute meeting, convened by Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Security Police and SD, they divided responsibilities and provided the coordination necessary to extend the genocide to the whole of Europe. This resulted in the death of about six million European Jews.

In 1945 Joseph Wulf, a historian and Auschwitz survivor, embarked on what became his life's mission. Until his death in 1974, he published 18 books on the history of the Third Reich and the crimes committed by the Nazi regime, while stressing the fact that the perpetrators had not yet been tried and convicted. Wulf strove to make the role of the perpetrators of the Holocaust to be an integral part of the collective memory of the Germans.

Shortly after the war, the villa was used as accommodation for the Allies and from 1947 to 1952 as the Social Democratic Civic Centre. However, its longest period of use was as a country hostel for school groups until 1988.

It was not until 1992 that the House of the Wannsee Conference became a memorial and educational site – 18 years after Wulf's death.



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 they were to explore together. 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 freewrite about their impressions of Wannsee, a technique that allows them to turn off the need to be right or wrong and just put their impressions onto the paper without judgement. Words, phrases and images were collected for the entire group to respond to. Finally, participants wrote a 'Telephone Poem', which uses a restricted number of words for each line, based on the question 'Is the perpetrator the one with the gun or the one with a pen?' The writing from this workshop became the basis for all the artistic workshops and for the final performance.

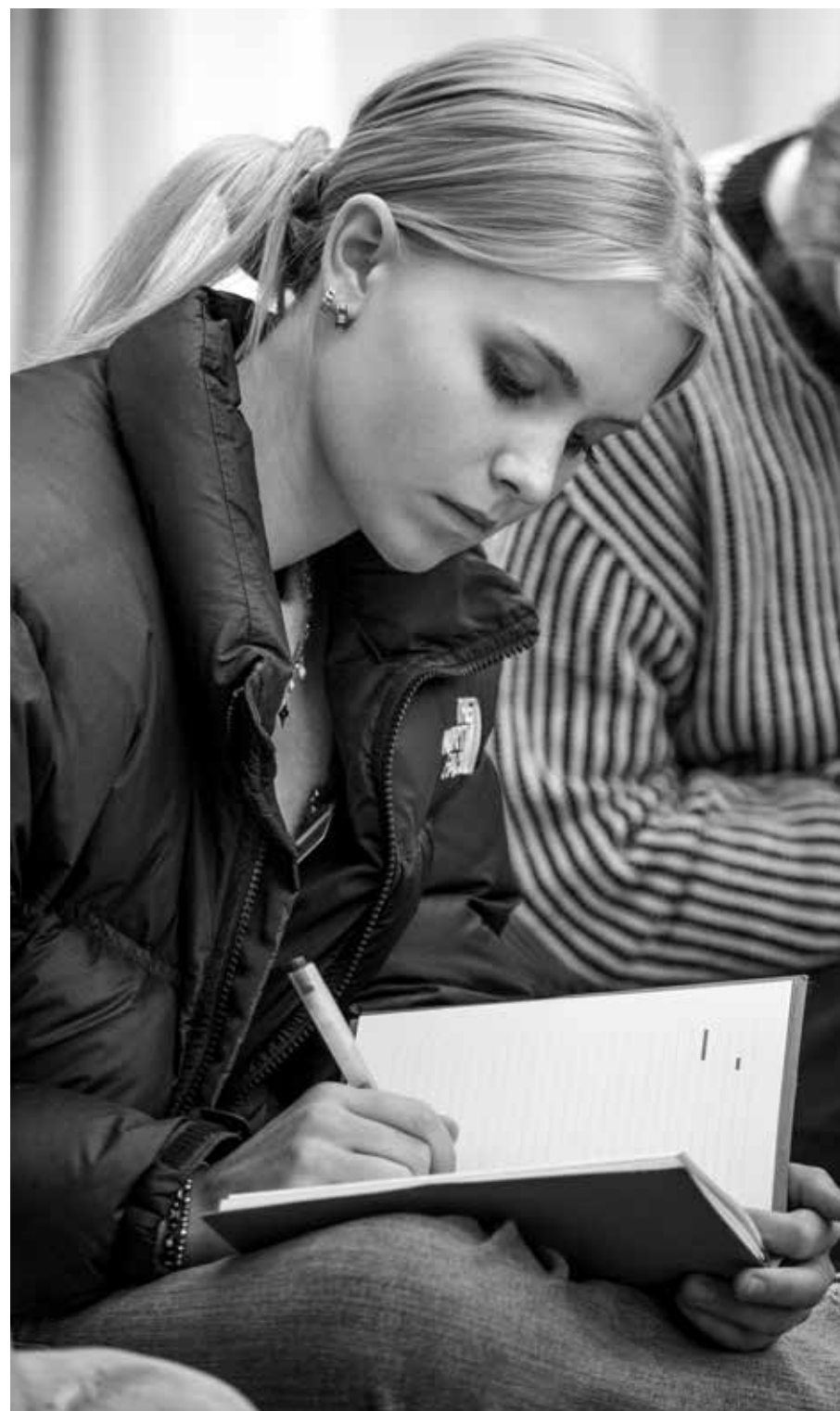


DAN WOLF

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

During the rap and poetry workshop participants worked on the basics of writing and performing rap, including understanding rhyming patterns, beats and bars. They worked on group poems (three participants per group) that explored themes that the participants were interested in writing about, including the Jewish, LGBTQ and disabled communities. The students, led by a workshop leader, explored the diversity of the group by asking them to use their five senses to write about who they are in an honest and direct way. They were also asked the question **'What is not here?'** to explore the void of people and objects at Wannsee and the elimination of groups from German society. Finally the group's rap was written and performed as a kind of prayer from the perspective of a victim of Nazism in the moments before their death. The 'Telephone Poems' from the creative writing workshop, the group poems and the rap formed the backbone and dramaturgical line of the final performance.

WORKSHOP BY DAN WOLF



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.



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 sensiblise consciousness of the body were used. The workshop had a very fluent and natural development. Students were open to new experiences and they felt confident enough to suggest changes to the choreography. The group was quite balanced so they grew together as they expressed themselves through movement. The starting points for the creation of the movement's material were: voids (inspiration from the Jewish Museum in Berlin), poems written during the creative writing workshop (reflection on the place), emptiness (the feeling that was very present in the location), the location in itself (garden, bench) and poems with writers (supporting the poem written by the rap group). The participants learned how to create a movement map that could lead them towards their own choreography. Students developed confidence about their movements and by the end of the workshop, they understood the power of abstract expression in the complexity of the whole performance.

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WORKSHOP BY
KATARINA RAMPÁČKOVÁ



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WORKSHOP BY SEAN PALMER

The vocal workshop, for singers and non-singers alike, allowed students to take part in creating a choir. They worked with various exercises and singing techniques including classical, body percussion, beatbox, screaming, growling, whispering and vocal improvisation. The songs with no words reflected the location and how the participants had experienced it. The songs were based on the participant's graphic scores (similar to musical notation, but without notes) inspired by writing from the creative writing workshop. It was as unique and emotional as our individual experiences of the historical site were different. The songs with no words 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, leading short choral projects. Since 2015 he has been the front man of a band, the White Kites, and jazz trio, William's Things.





group — dynamic

WORKSHOPS BY **TETIANA KRIUKOVSKA**



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.



During the programme in Wannsee, participants were under the supervision of the moderator Tetiana Kriukovska, who organised different daily activities for a better group dynamic. The facilitator also 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. Those slots helped them to develop better relationships within the group and establish stronger, more cooperative bonds with all participants.

WORKSHOP FOR TEACHERS

WITH **URSZULA BIJOŚ** (ENRS) AND **MADLEN SEIDEL** (HOUSE OF THE WANNSEE CONFERENCE)

The workshop was open both to the teachers who came with students as well as to local teachers interested in the topic. The first session focused on educational materials. During the workshop teachers learned about the free educational resources available on the 'Hi-story Lessons'

platform created by the ENRS, including infographics, lesson plans, animations and an educational kit about disinformation and memory conflicts. Participants considered how to use the resources in their teaching.

During the second session teachers learned about the interactive infographic within the project 'Statistics and Catastrophe: Questioning Eichmann's Numbers' held by the House of the Wannsee Conference and the ENRS. They discussed methods and activities that might help to address the history

of the Wannsee Conference within the classroom. The last part of the workshop focused on alternative techniques, in particular aesthetic-research and artistic approaches to the Holocaust. The participants first became acquainted with a variety of very different graphic novels through excerpts and received suggestions of how to use them in the classroom. At the same time they benefitted from the intercultural exchange within a multinational group of teachers.



final performance

What is not here? was a promenade performance that started at the villa's main entrance, and ended on the rear terrace, with the audience turning their back on the villa and looking out over the gardens and lake. The route for the performance was based on the artist's desire to share the stark contrast between the manicured beauty of the location and the villa's dark history.

what is not here?



Stops along the route were punctuated by micro performances based on the creative writers reading their poems, prose and letters, supported by the dance and vocal groups. Audience members moved from stop to stop, aided by the performers and organisers.



When the performance went outside, it was almost dark. Performers used the torches on their mobile phones to illuminate the faces of those speaking; dancers held their torches which twinkled and lit up their movements and the vocal group illuminated their lips while singing. The effect was captivating.



The audience was given the **chance to experience** what the participants had learned, rather than just watch a presentation of their findings. The group started to feel what the combination of artistic disciplines offers a viewer, and they themselves had an artistic experience of the location.

I would say this is way more important than just learning dry facts, because if you learn something and it's filled with emotion, it's easier for you to remember and you might use it in the future.

JACEK
STUDENT FROM POLAND



I think that the best part of the project was meeting new people and not only learning new things about history but learning them from another perspective and understanding them. I think it's way deeper, like it's on another level. It's not just facts, it's only how we understand them through our emotions.

ADRIANA-ELISABETA
STUDENT FROM ROMANIA



I think the best part was the opportunity that I have to stay in this city, this big city and to meet new people – people who enrich my understanding of everything, of the events, of me, of the abilities and skills that I have.

CRINA-EVELINA
STUDENT FROM ROMANIA





The time where we learn stuff is very short compared to what we do with it after that because we process it very differently with moving our body and expressing ourselves. And it's not just history what we do here, it's also grabbing a part of ourselves and putting it into the work. So that's a lot different from school.

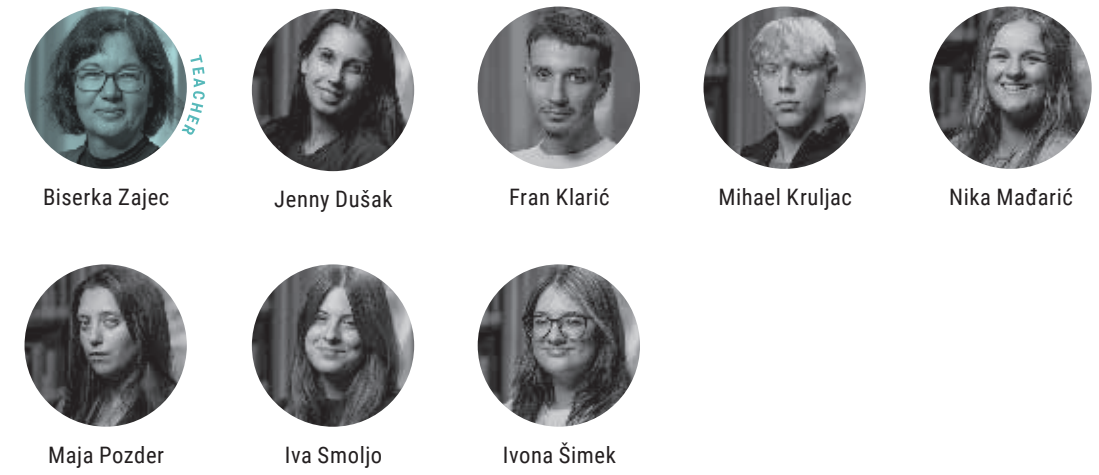


MAGDALENA
STUDENT FROM GERMANY

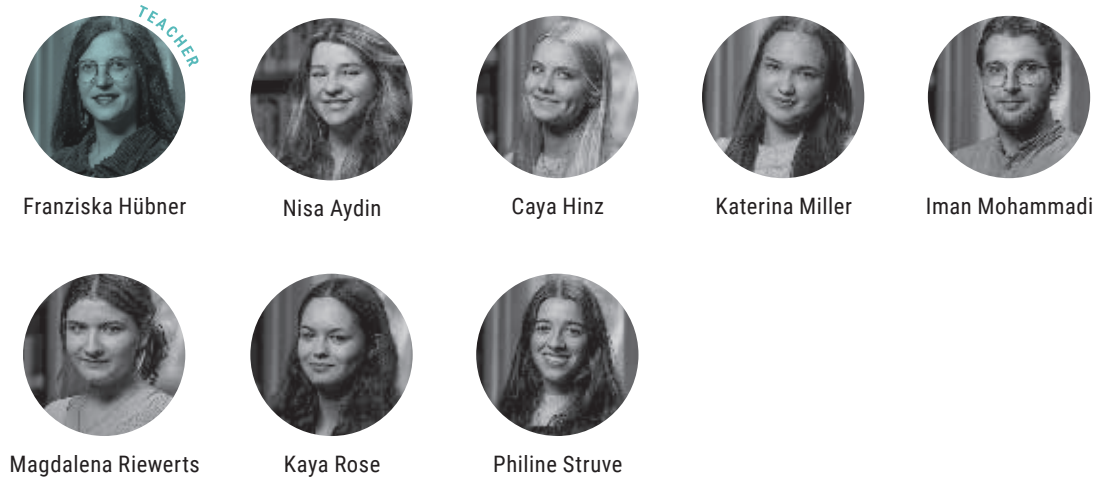
The performance (that took place during the first and second editions) was wrapped up by a discussion with students, educators, artists and the audience who discussed the artistic act and the alternative methods of historical education. The moderator of the discussion was Dr Tomasz Kurianowicz, the editor-in-chief of the *Berliner Zeitung*.

PARTICIPANTS: STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

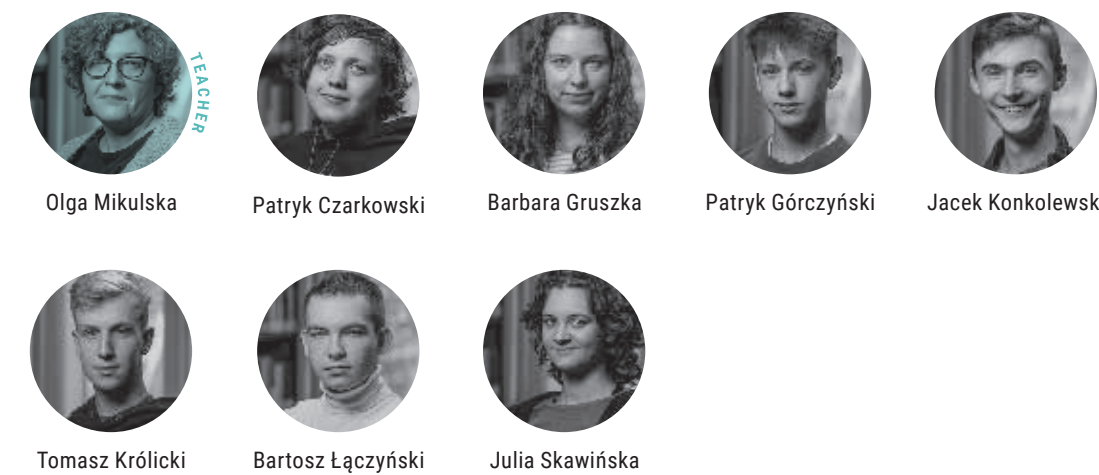
Secondary Vocational School of Economics, Varaždin, Croatia



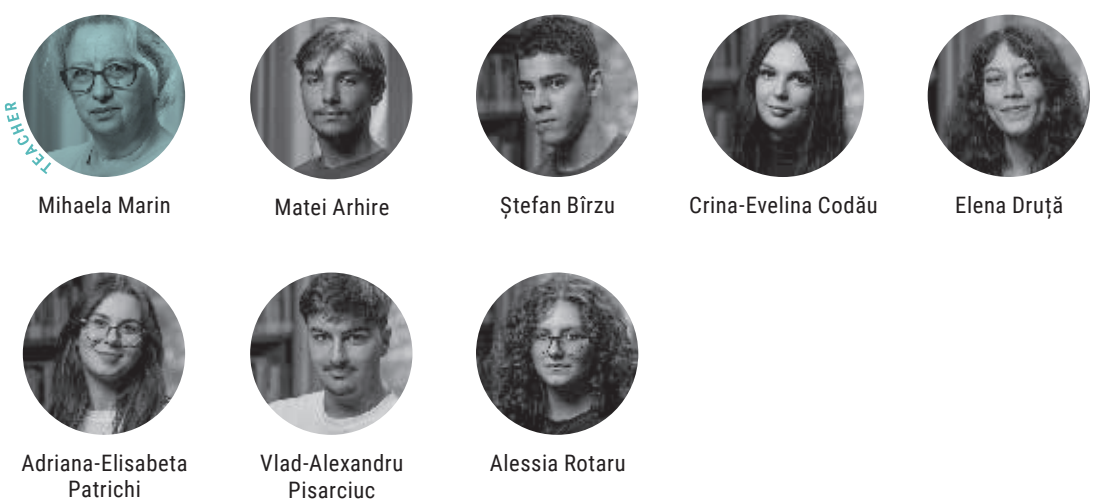
Irena-Sendler-Schule, Hamburg, Germany



Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Komisji Edukacji Narodowej, Przasnysz, Poland



Spiru Haret National College, Tecuci, Romania



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

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FUNDING



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

