# Holocaust Memory and Visuality in the Age of Social Media

by

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## Abstract

Everyday people make use of Instagram to visually share their experiences encountering Holocaust memory. Whether individuals are sharing their photos from Auschwitz, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, or of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, this dissertation uncovers the impetus to capture and share these images by the thousands. Using visuality as a framework for analyzing how the Holocaust has been seen, photographed, and communicated historically, this dissertation argues that these individual digital images function as objects of postmemory, contributing to and cultivating an accessible visual and digital archive. Sharing these images on Instagram results in a visual, grassroots archival space where networked Holocaust visuality and memory can flourish.

The Holocaust looms large in public memory. Drawing from Holocaust studies, public history, photography theory, and new media studies, this dissertation argues that the amateur Instagram image is far from static. Existing spaces of Holocaust memory create preconditions for everyday publics to share their encounters with the Holocaust on their own terms. Thus, the final networked Instagram image is the product of a series of author interventions, carefully wrought from competing narratives and Holocaust representations. The choice to photograph, edit, post, and hashtag one's photo forges a public method for collaborating with hegemonic memory institutions. This work brings together seemingly disparate sources to find commonality between Instagram images, museum guestbook entries, online reviews, former concentration camps, and major Holocaust memorials and museums.

This research, one of the first studies of Holocaust visual culture on Instagram, underscores the fluidity of Holocaust memory in the twenty-first century. While amateur photography at solemn sites has sparked concern, this dissertation demonstrates that though the number of Holocaust survivors become fewer in number, the act of remembering the genocide can be coded into the everyday behaviour of the amateur photographers featured in this work. This work not only shares authority with everyday publics in their efforts to remember and memorialize the Holocaust but reminds us that seemingly small and individual acts of remembrance can coalesce, contributing to a fluid and accessible archive of visual memory.

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## List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| GFHM | Ghetto Fighters' House Museum (North Galilee, Israel) |
| JMB | Jewish Museum Berlin |
| USHMM | United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC) |
| YVHHM | Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum (Jerusalem, Israel) |

## Introduction

Images shared on social media platforms are shifting the way everyday people encounter the Holocaust. Shortly after the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) lifted its ban on photography in 2015 I began conducting walkthroughs of their permanent exhibition space, looking for opportunities to photograph my own experience. My intention was to use this walkthrough to spatially conceptualize the integration of authentic artefacts and educational content and the visual interplay that exists between the visitor and the presentation of Holocaust history. I paused to take a photo of the stone flooring lining the third floor of the exhibition (see figure 1.1), cobblestones removed from the Warsaw Ghetto, which serves as an introduction to the material history of ghetto life before deportation. My attempt to photograph myself in this space was interrupted by another visitor; I was told that I should be ashamed for trying to photograph a space which serves to remind us of the suffering of others. I explained to them my intention and my research, but they remained unimpressed and wandered away to engage with the rest of the exhibition space.

*Figure 0.1 Top-down photo of the cobblestones from Warsaw used to pave the floor of the third floor of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's permanent exhibition. Image copyright Instagram user @aprillynn43, October 2018.*

This was not the first time I have been chided by others while attempting to photograph sites of Holocaust memory; it happened frequently, and I had grown to expect these encounters while conducting my research. These interactions allowed me to think about how Holocaust memory - and public concern over it - remains fraught, sacred, and individualized. This encounter also points to key problems in thinking about Holocaust memory in the social media age: that Holocaust memory should only be encountered in specific ways; that there is a protocol for engaging with dark histories which many believe has been abandoned by social media use; and that while many people contribute to a growing social media Holocaust memory, their choices to do so are still very strictly governed by the behaviour of others. I am not a proponent of irreverence, nor do I encourage inappropriate or distasteful behaviour in solemn places. However, it is unavoidable that technology changes how we can view the world. Platforms like Instagram reinforce alternative perspectives and frame everyday actions in new ways,

providing a space for the everyday person to visualize their place in the world. These actions are not entirely new; they also replicate other, older practices and visualities, and for every new perspective there is an older trace, or echo. As we find ourselves amidst an ongoing media revolution, its lasting effects on social interactions remain to be seen. Instagram's popularity allows for an opportunity to think about digital tourist photography and Holocaust memorial practices to better understand how everyday people are engaging with the history of the Holocaust.

Some scholars remain wary of a social media Holocaust memory. Gavriel D. Rosenfeld argues that Internet culture has allowed for the normalization of the Nazi past in our contemporary age. Rosenfeld maintains that contemporary culture (and Internet culture specifically), alongside a fading sense of exceptionality about the scope of Nazi crimes leads to the historical and memorial acceptance of this past.[1] The use of the umbrella of "Internet" as a space for historical practice and memory has "nurtured the tendency to view the Nazi era from a comic perspective," thus removing Hitler from any sort of moral or historical perspective in the realm of contemporary culture.[2] While I agree with Rosenfeld's assertions that the Internet has fostered new ways of thinking, seeing, reading, and remembering, arguably granting "unprecedented attention to the sensational and the trivial," I do not agree with his argument that online representations

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[1] Gavriel D. Rosenfeld. *Hi Hitler! How the Nazi Past is being Normalized in Contemporary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 9. There is an important distinction to be made here – while the increased use of social media has undoubtedly led to a society immersed in connectivity and characterized by youth (as a category of analysis, even) I would disagree that Nazis have been normalized in all corners of the Internet; indeed, social media networks have led to an increase in hate groups, and online platforms have resulted in greater connectivity between *all* sectors of society – the far right included. It is challenging here to draw a direct linear connection between the mobility of meme culture, Nazis, and the increase in online hate, because so many casual Internet users are subject to ambient engagement. Ambient engagement serves as a form of casual engagement – one which web 2.0 users might not actively register.
[2] Ibid. 28.

of Nazism have *wholly* fostered a "shift away from moralism to normality."[3] If anything, the photos in this dissertation demonstrate that the opposite is true, that image makers take extensive measures, albeit conflicted ones, against the normalization of a Nazi past, enabling a working through of public and individual encounters with the Holocaust.

Significant scholarly work in the fields of cultural studies, media and communication studies, and art history has demonstrated that the intersection of amateur photography and social media is one that requires significant analysis and consideration. More people are digitally sharing their experiences visually, through photography, than ever before, and these sources offer important insights into everyday life. What is more, digital image sharing platforms help us understand how historical traces and memory can be interwoven with performances and representations of the self. In the context of Holocaust tourism, the embedded "everyday-ness" of Instagram provides unique access to the touristic desires of the individual.[4] What people photograph, how people photograph, and where they share such images are always connected to the fashioning of their own sense of self.[5] This dissertation embeds Instagram photography in the historical act of looking at the Holocaust, whether at Auschwitz, Holocaust museums, memorials, or through Instagram itself to explore how these actions help to revivify Holocaust consciousness in the visual realm.

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[3] Ibid. 293.
[4] Christine Hine, *Ethnography for the Internet: Embedded, Embodied, and Everyday* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).
[5] See Lev Manovich, "Selfiecity: Exploring Photography and Self-Fashioning in Social Media," in David M. Berry and Michael Dieter, eds. *Postdigital Aesthetics: Art, Computation and Design* (Palgrave Macmillan: 2015), 109-122.

Tourist photography at Holocaust museums and sites of memory as ways in which Holocaust memory is an act of postmemory in an era where survivors are few in number, and familial connections to victims are themselves a part of the advance of history.[6] Photography is one method tourists make use of to connect with some vestige of this past. It is both a re-staging of established Holocaust memorial tropes, and also something new: a highly personal visual narrative of the Holocaust as experience. Tourists take photos because they wish to collect, capture, or remember their experiences at Holocaust sites, and many have shown that the act of photography is a mnemonic device which helps people to recall experiences clearly.[7] Unlike a visitor feedback survey or memory book, the Instagram photograph feels natural and unprompted. While certain restrictions always apply to photography, individuals frame their experiences with Holocaust sites of their own volition and in their own fashion. The result is a mosaic of new visual geographies of the Holocaust, intrinsically linked to the historical past and the personal everyday.

As demonstrated by my own encounter with visitors to the USHMM, this form of memory-making is fraught. This dissertation makes this problem of the sacred central to its analysis about ways of seeing the Holocaust, and the ways in which Instagram itself allows visitors to Holocaust memory sites interpret and shape their own encounters with genocide. It emphasizes conflicts of visitor engagement, place making, and appropriate and inappropriate ways of "looking" at the Holocaust, and analyzes how these conflicts

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[6] Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

[7] See W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); see Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and Historical Imagination, 1885-1918* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012) for an excellent discussion of embodied knowledge and amateur photography. For more on tourism and photography, Mike Robinson and David Picard's edited volume, *The Framed World: Tourism, Tourists, and Photography* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2009).

function in the digital sphere. Fundamentally, it embeds Holocaust representation in social media in relation to other historical ways of seeing, photographing, and circulating the imagery of the Holocaust. To get at this, each chapter explores a different mode of Instagram-led Holocaust representation in the long, visual trajectory of representing the Holocaust. Whether the visitor's photography focuses on communicating the immensity of the genocide, mass killing, architectural representations in Holocaust museums, or the self-staging of the body in spaces of genocide, each chapter explores a distinct part of the whole. This structure highlights the ways in which the already multifaceted nature of visually representing the Holocaust is still deeply connected to *public* visual interpretations of the genocide.

First and foremost, many of the visitor photographs in this dissertation are products of pilgrimage and tourism.[8] As such, the visitor to a Holocaust memorial, museum, or concentration camp carries certain expectations for what they hope and expect to encounter at these sites. Frequently, these expectations conflict with the design of the space, or even the experience of the visitor themselves. TripAdvisor reviews, visitor photographs, guestbook entries, and visitor feedback attest to the complicated nature of Holocaust postmemory, rendered a commodity of consumption in the age of tourism. Apart from highlighting the wide range of visitor responses to Holocaust memory sites, these sources demonstrate the limits that contemporary tourism places on Holocaust memory and representation. Considering these sources amidst the myriad accepted forms of Holocaust representation – museums, memorials, and film, being but a

[8] Harold Marcuse has discussed this concept at length in his work *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For a discussion of how Auschwitz is marketed as a commercial entity, see Tim Cole's *Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler, How History is Bought, Packaged, and Sold* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

few examples – allows the historian to uncover the individual's own personal methods for memorializing the Holocaust in a sea of hegemonic representation.

**Context and Literature**

At its core, this dissertation analyzes how the Holocaust is visualized in the context of twenty-first century media formations. It builds on visual analyses of former concentration camps, museum spaces, memorial spaces, and applies some of these ideas to remediated digital images circulating on the social media platform, Instagram. I argue that we need to find interpretive models for thinking about how digital memory-making practices relates to the literature on Holocaust history and global forms of memorialization as little research has been done on the actual interplay between visitor, museum, and the photographic documentation of visitor experience in Holocaust museums and memorial spaces.

First and foremost, this dissertation is a reflexive public history project. It explores tensions that emerge with representations of the past in the present, and it grapples with how contemporary encounters with these memorialized pasts come into being in collaboration with various publics. This project seeks to uncover how visitor experience and social media usage rubs up against more hegemonic Holocaust narratives in museums or memorial spaces. Informed by a variety of scholars who engage with photography, visual culture, architectural design, and the history of the Holocaust, it explores how representations of Holocaust history shift when captured through the lens of visitor photography and social media usage. Instagram photography is not an affront to reverence and solemnity. Rather, it is an instrument which allows publics to enact and

perform rituals of memory transmission in the modern age. Not only does Instagram photography have the power to reinforce and reshape the Holocaust's standard narratives, but it also makes the framework of visuality – seeing, relating to seeing, and reinterpreting that sight for others – more visible, transparent, and recognizable.[9] The visibility of these images is only increased by the hashtag around which they are organized. Operating as a social tool for organization on a variety of social media platforms, the hashtag makes the act of framing, photographing, and sharing the Holocaust even more discoverable by thousands of other Instagram users.

This dissertation relies on the groundwork laid by numerous scholars who have explored the role of the Holocaust museum in shaping public memory of the Holocaust whether through the lens of history, architecture, art history, or museum studies. The literature on representations of the Holocaust in museum and memorial spaces is substantive. In their ideal form, museums and memorials serve as spaces of encounter for reflection, dialogue, and discussion of Holocaust histories.[10] James E. Young's *the Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, as well as some parts of *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* echo this sentiment, exploring how the construction of Holocaust memorials and memorial spaces impact memory-making processes in the late twentieth century.

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[9] My analysis of visuality relies on visual culture theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff's work on the framework. Characterized as a methodological and theoretical road map for understanding how visual cultures are constructed, encountered, and interpreted, Mirzoeff has argued that visuality cannot be distilled into the final visual product, but rather incapsulates the process of being immersed in a visual world. See Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999), *The Visual Culture Reader* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), and *How to See the World: An Introduction to Images, from Self-Portraits to Selfies, Maps to Movies, and More* (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

[10] James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (1993), as well as some parts of *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (2000).

Importantly, Young's top-down approach unpacks the physicality and visuality (ways of seeing and also emplotting a vision) of Holocaust memory through an architectural and cultural lens, and thus provides the most well-known points of departure for my research. More recently, I have drawn from Young's work on memory arcs. Explored in *Stages of Memory: Reflections on Memorial Art, Loss, and the Spaces Between*, Young argues for reconstituted spaces of memory, connected by temporal arcs of visuality in our contemporary memory culture.[11] In this way, the development of memorial culture over the course of eighty years as have flowed from their predecessors in a discernable arc through time.[12] The death camp, Holocaust memorial, and museum are separated by geographical space, yet tethered to one another through an arc of memory. Young asserts that such memory arcs can evolving into living, breathing influencers of memory and choice: "the forms this demand for the monumental now takes, and to what self-abnegating ends, throw the presumptive link between monuments and memory into fascinating relief."[13] Following this, this dissertation suggests that visitors are often caught in the midst of the memory arc; the photos they take and the encounters they experience are the product of an individual attempt to work through the monumental global memory of the Holocaust.

Attempts to work though Holocaust memory no longer only occur at the physical site where memory is invoked; not all members of the public are able to visit Auschwitz, Yad Vashem, or the USHMM, nor are they able to engage with these sites in the expected ways. Amateur photographs of Auschwitz featuring the hashtag #holocaustmemorial can

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[11] James E. Young, *Stages of Memory: Reflections on Memorial Art, Loss, and the Spaces Between* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016).
[12] Ibid., 2.
[13] Ibid. 13.

make these spaces more accessible to the average person. The shared Instagram image makes the act of remembering the Holocaust mobile, and builds a network which is easily engaged with through one's own smartphone. While the visibility of these spaces has increased, it does not mean that traditional memory work is being diminished. There are many aspects of the Holocaust's visual geographies we, as researchers, are still not privy to, such as silent or private moments felt and experienced at Auschwitz or the USHMM which are not shared on Instagram. Social media has not changed this fact. This dissertation reflects on the use of stages of encounter and considers the function of Instagram as a tool for displaying and interpreting spaces of memory, both old and new. Whether as a space for the confronting Holocaust's memorial landscapes or reimagining the history of this dark past, Instagram has the power to pull together disparate ways of looking at the Holocaust, making Young's memory arcs even more visible.

The museum is only one space where visitors can encounter Holocaust memory, and therefore the architecture of the Holocaust museum constitutes but a single space on the trajectory of Young's memory arcs. For this reason, I draw on works that consider not only the space of the museum, but also how the Holocaust museum constitutes a shifting symbol, making the Holocaust more publicly visible. When it comes to conceptualizing and understanding the Holocaust museum as a space of memory, I have integrated histories of Holocaust architecture with public histories which engage with the transmission of Holocaust symbols in a variety of memorial spaces. My analysis of the Holocaust museum as a symbol and space draws on works which sit at the intersection of the museum and contemporary memory formations. Michael Berenbaum and Edward T. Linenthal's works lay the groundwork for the construction of the USHMM, presenting a

well-rounded analysis of the challenges of building America's first Holocaust museum.[14] Tim Cole a top-down analysis is balanced with a first-person analysis of the complex relationship between the Holocaust and its monetization, whether through the USHMM, tours of Auschwitz, or the Hollywood film industry. His work is essential to my understanding of the tension embedded in the industry of dark tourism, especially when discussing popular tourist destinations.[15] Similarly, Alison Landsberg has demonstrated how the memory-making process can shift in the age of mass media, allowing for new ways of memory production which remain intertwined with Western modes of consumption.[16] While the works of Berenbaum and Linenthal are important to any historiography of Holocaust museums and representations, Michael Bernard-Donals and Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich more readily involve the perspective of the visitor, actively questioning the space of the museum itself and how it impacts the visitor's understanding of the Holocaust.[17] Oren Baruch Stier's close reading of Holocaust symbols and their transmission within and beyond the spaces of the USHMM is also particularly important – a poignant reminder that history is always communicated to publics in myriad contexts and forms.[18] Altogether, their analysis demonstrates that representation and interpretation

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[14] Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Viking, 1997) and Michael Berenbaum, *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (Boston, Toronto, London: Little, Brown and Company, 1993).
[15] Tim Cole, *Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler, How History is Bought, Packaged, and Sold* (New York: Routledge, 2000).
[16] Alison Landsberg, *Engaging the Past: Mass Culture and the Production of Historical Knowledge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015) and *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).
[17] Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2014) and Michael Bernard-Donals, *Figures of Memory: The Rhetoric of Displacement at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2016).
[18] Oren Baruch Stier, *Holocaust Icons: Symbolizing the Shoah in History and Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015).

are a dual process; any analysis of the impact of Holocaust representation must consider the active and ambient participation of the visitor or viewer.

This is the chief reason that I use a comparative lens when exploring architectural and museum representations of the Holocaust, drawing connections between the major Holocaust museums and memorial sites covered in this dissertation. A comparative approach makes plain connections not only between institutions and other spaces of memory, but between visual themes and styles of representation which echo across visitor photographs and the physical boundaries of each independent museum. Moreover, these works have provided me with a substantial base for understanding how Holocaust symbolism is communicated through architecture, display, and design; my analysis of Holocaust museums presupposes that the museum is perhaps the most hegemonic form of the Holocaust memory site in our contemporary age. What is more, unpacking the towering authority of the museum space vis-à-vis the precedent set by the aforementioned scholars has allowed me a space to consider how visitor encounters with the Holocaust can be formed as part of a dialogue with the museum itself.

The visitor experience at Holocaust museums and memorials is governed by more than the pathways and objects on display. Architectural Holocaust representations remain essential to my exploration of Holocaust visual culture in the twenty-first century. While the field is wide, Gavriel D. Rosenfeld's, Eran Neuman's, Stephanie Shosh Rotem's work on the architectural narratives of Holocaust museums are important to my analysis of the USHMM, Jewish Museum Berlin (JMB), and Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum

(YVHHM).[19] Their work establishes both an etymology and hegemony for Holocaust museum architecture, as well as a method for understanding the relationship between visitor, architectural space, and the visual experience. Museum-goers are not passive, nor should their photographic journeys be construed as such. Moving through an exhibit is performative and active, and visitors are bombarded with behavioural codes which are compounded with the museum's mandate to not forget what one is about to see.[20] It is important to remember that visitors are actors in a space who can express agency in particular environments, albeit under the regulatory power of the exhibitionary space. If the physical pathways of the museum serve as a stage for the experience of the visitor/photographer, Instagram is a spotlight, able to frame the Holocaust spaces which visitors engage with in distinct ways.[21]

My evaluation of Holocaust memorials and museum spaces is coupled with my reading of Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. A staple in the study of museums, Bennett argues that the advent of the museum in the nineteenth century was governed by a colonial and civilizing impulse, intended to exert control over the movement of bodies and educational processes among lower classes; the progression of visitors through early anthropological museum spaces was and still is intended to reconstruct a linear narrative which places the museum visitor at the zenith of civilization

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[19] See Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, *Building After Auschwitz: Jewish Architecture and the Memory of the Holocaust* (Yale University Press, 2011); Eran Neuman, *Shoah Presence: Architectural Representations of the Holocaust* (Oxford and Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2014); and Stephanie Shosh Rotem, *Constructing Memory: Architectural Narratives of Holocaust Museums* (New York: Peter Lang, 2013).
[20] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "About the Museum: A *Living* Memorial to the Holocaust," URL: https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum (accessed 21 December 2018).
[21] Stephanie Shosh Rotem, *Constructing Memory: Architectural Narratives of Holocaust Museums* (New York: Peter Lang, 2013), 15.

and social organization.[22] Bennett's study of museological power structures is central to my dissertation. Oddly, Bennett neglects the perspective of the visitor and the active role they play in their movements through the museum. Though many museums are still organized in a way that forces the movement of the visitor through a particular narratological organization, it is important to consider the active role of the participant as a performer within the spaces of the museum; while the museum intends to communicate a particular message, the visitor's engagement with and absorption of that message hinges on active forms of participation within that space.[23] Amy Sodaro's recent volume calls for a deeper understanding of the construction of the *memorial* museum, and how such spaces may or may not function differently than the traditional historical or anthropological museum.[24] While literature exploring the relationship between social media use and museum studies is beginning to emerge, overall the field lacks an evaluation of the role of the social mediascape in visitor participation and in the memorialization of the past. In recent years, a discussion of how the public deals with and works through painful histories like the history of the Holocaust continues to fade. This dissertation connects the two, considering the visitor body and the invocation of the survivor body as geographies of Holocaust memory.

The history of Holocaust photography is less immense than the fields mentioned above. The historical trajectory of Holocaust visuality rests on an understanding of journalistic photography immediately after the Holocaust. Here, the work of Janina Struk

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[22] Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1995).
[23] Rotem, 15.
[24] Amy Sodaro, *Exhibiting Atrocity: Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2018).

and Barbie Zelizer on the history and reception of Holocaust photographs is of the utmost importance. My analysis of the circulation of the Holocaust image on Instagram is informed by Zelizer's assessment of the "saturation point" of Holocaust imagery, and Struk's ethical framework for the re-use of photographs of victims in Holocaust museums.[25] I am interested in both methods of Holocaust memory interpretation, and specifically in the spaces where such concerns meet; my analysis of social media and Holocaust visuality in the twenty-first century harnesses the very ubiquity of photography highlighted by Zelizer to lend credence to the remediation of the Holocaust through social media usage.[26] In this way, I question the notion of Zelizer's saturation point; while the photographs which circulated after the liberation of the camps are indeed infamous, I aim to unpack whether individual photographed encounters with the history of the Holocaust, whether through visiting Auschwitz for the first time or walking through the USHMM, does not serve as a different form of encounter for the visitor. As well, understanding the visual impact of Holocaust photographs would be difficult to do without the work of Georges Didi-Huberman's remarkable close reading of the *Sonderkommando* photos.[27] Didi-Huberman's work questions whether the photographic image serves as a horrific depiction of reality (as in the case of the *Sonderkommando*

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[25] See Hirsch and Spitzer (2009): their analysis of vernacular images of Jews in Cernăuţi, Romania at the USHMM, and how what they show and do not show contribute to a reaffirmation of the "before, during, and after" periodization of Holocaust history, rather than the continuities and considerations of everyday life. See "Incongruous Images: 'Before, During, and After' the Holocaust," *History and Theory* 48 (2009): 9-25. As well, I am reminded of Hirsch's *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), and the ways in which traumatic memory is transferred and remediated via visual culture and literature as it moves between generations.

[26] Janina Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust: Interpretations of the Evidence* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005). Struk raises important questions about the ownership of images and memory, and the intersection of the two. She notes "the photographs and their interpretations may not always give us a better understanding of the historical event we call the Holocaust; rather, they remind us how the world has been ordered since then. The present always has its own agenda for reconstructing the past," 15.

[27] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images In Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz*, trans. Shane B. Lillis (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

photos), or a break from the reality of the everyday for those in the role of liberator or witness; therefore, Didi-Huberman's work serves as a point of departure in thinking about the contested nature of the photograph and the direction of the photographer's gaze.

In any discussion of Holocaust photography or visuality, the photographer's gaze is deeply connected to an ethics of photography. Both Marianne Hirsch and Struk have argued that the museum visitor and Nazi photographer occupy the same space: gazing at the other through a lens or temporal barrier.[28] Therefore, any Holocaust encounter in a contemporary context also raises important concerns about the ethics of photography, and here Jennifer Evans', Paul Betts', and Stefan Ludwig-Hoffman's recent collected volume *The Ethics of Seeing: Photography and Twentieth Century German History* probes the ethics of image creation and circulation in historical contexts.[29] This dissertation takes up the conversation of photographic ethics in the context of Instagram's digital programming, questioning how our concerns over the ethics of photography have (or have not) shifted in the age of social media. Photographic ethics, image reproduction and circulation, and the question of appropriate behaviour at sites of solemnity raise important questions for historians about how to understand Holocaust engagement online.

The early impact of the digital turn on the study of the Holocaust has been dominated by anxiety, especially in instances where the public plays a vital role; this is compounded by the fact that we live in an era when the number of first-hand survivors is

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[28] See Marianne Hirsch, "Nazi Photographs in Post-Holocaust Art: Gender as an Idiom of Memorialization," in Alex Hughes and Andrea Noble, eds. *Phototextualities: Intersections of Photography and Narrative* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 19-20.
[29] Jennifer Evans, Paul Betts, Stefan Ludwig-Hoffman, *The Ethics of Seeing: Photography and Twentieth Century German History* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2018).

decreasing.[30] Claudio Fogu, Wulf Kansteiner, and Todd Presner explored the impact of digitality on Holocaust memory in their work, *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture*, while Kansteiner evaluated the impact of the digital age on Holocaust studies, arguing that its accompanying anxieties are themselves a product of transnational memory production.[31] While concerns over the intersection of digital culture and Holocaust memory continue to be expressed, and some work has been conducted on the impact of the digital turn on our understanding of Holocaust history, there remains no effort to evaluate the impact of social media usage on the evolution of Holocaust visual culture. Social media usage and engagement has become one of the modern museum's largest contemporary concerns.[32]

**Theory and Methodology**

The theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this dissertation are rooted in shifting notions of authority, and the ways in which social media platforms can disrupt traditional memory work in the digital age. Social media publics and audiences are ever-evolving; in each chapter, architects, curators, and visitors are all agents which engage with different levels of authority as related to Holocaust memory. The authority to narrate the past at USHMM is not the same authority at Auschwitz, and this sense of authority

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[30] Xanthi Tsiftsi has aptly described our current era as residing "between memory and postmemory." "Libeskind and the Holocaust Metanarrative; from Discourse to Architecture," *Open Cultural Studies* 1, no. 1 (2017): 291.

[31] See Fogu, Kansteiner, and Presner, eds. *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016); and Wulf Kansteiner, "The Holocaust in the 21st Century: Digital Anxiety, Transnational Cosmopolitanism, and Never Again Genocide without Memory," in *Digital Memory Studies: Media Pasts in Transition*, ed. Andrew Hoskins (Routledge, 2017), 110-140.

[32] See Susana Smith Bautista, *Museums in the Digital Age: Changing Meanings of Place, Community, and Culture* (Plymouth, England: Altamira Press, 2014); and Adam Brown and Deb Waterhouse-Watson, "The Future of the Past: Digital Media in Holocaust Museums." *Holocaust Studies* 20, no. 3 (2014): 1-32.

shifts again when considering the differences and likenesses between the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and the *Stolpersteine* project which peppers the streets of many German cities and communities with commemorative stones.[33] In many cases, it is arguable that visitor photography can occupy the space of authority, as it serves as the subjective embodiment of the photographer's own experiences.[34] And yet, while these images are captured instances of space, landscape, or memorial, they might also be read as emblems of affect, bodily experience, knowledge, and choice. The Instagram image serves as a place for the visitor to work through their own thoughts and relationships with Holocaust memory through its visual emplotment.

Research on the emergence of Holocaust memory in the digital mediascape is only now being conducted. Surprisingly few historians have contributed to the conversation. Critics of self-photography at concentration camps, on the other hand, have been quick to condemn the mixing of social media and Holocaust memory. As such, multidirectional exchanges of knowledge, tensions of authority, and intergenerational forms of and responsibility for the narration and representation of the Holocaust characterize the field of social media and Holocaust memory.[35] Fogu, Kansteiner, and

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[33] The *Stolpersteine* – conceived by Gunter Demnig - are bronze-plated concrete cubes, measuring ten by ten centimeters, typically embedded directly into the sidewalk in front of homes and spaces where Holocaust victims previously lived. The inscriptions are simple; they read "*Hier wohnte*," and featuring the names, birth dates, and dates of death or disappearance of the victims. Sometimes, the Stolpersteine appear in large clusters, or are sometimes alone. There are currently over 1,000 cities featuring *Stolpersteine* worldwide, with over 67,000 individual cubes. This has made the *Stolpersteine* the world's largest decentralized memorial. See Christine Whitehouse, "*Stolpersteine*: Re-placing German Memory Culture through Local Commemorative Practices," (MA Thesis, Carleton University, 2011), Matthew Cook and Micheline van Riemsdijk, "Agents of Memorialization: Gunter Demnig's *Stolpersteine* and the Individual (Re-)Creation of a Holocaust Landscape in Berlin," *Journal of Historical Geography* 43 (2014): 138-147.
[34] For more on photography and embodied knowledge, see Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and the Historical Imagination, 1885-1918*, and "Anthropology and Photography: A Long History of Knowledge and Affect," *Photographies* 8, no. 3 (2015): 235-252.
[35] Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009).

Presner explain that "digital Holocaust culture is at odds with popular digital culture whose users are driven by the ability to shape content in the process of consumption."[36] Museums, memorials, and monuments have eagerly integrated social media usage into their frameworks for education and outreach. Initially, hegemonic institutions made use of the advent of the Internet and the call to digitize to reach wider audiences. In the early days of this phenomenon, the field lay at the intersection of Holocaust memory studies and the emerging field of digital history, where the focus rested on trying to make content accessible beyond the spaces of the museum, research institution, or archive.[37] When it comes to networked digital memory, it is important not to forget that digital practices do not fall outside the purview of memory. This dissertation follows new media and digital photography scholar José van Dijck's assertion that "memory is not eradicated from digital multipurpose tools. Instead, the function of memory reappears in the networked, distributed nature of digital photographs, as most images are sent over the Internet and stored in virtual space."[38] Therefore, we should not forget the networked, ephemeral space of the social media platform as a holding pen for contemporary visual memory.

The digital age is not without its challenges; with the advent of new technologies, it is easy to consider the way new media impacts our lives as discrete and episodic, rather than continuous. While Instagram photography has been romanticized as a break with

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[36] Wulf Kansteiner and Todd Presner, "Introduction: The Field of Holocaust Studies and the Global Emergence of Holocaust Culture," in *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture*, Claudio Fogu, Wulf Kansteiner, and Todd Presner, eds. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), 33-34.
[37] Eva Pfanzelter, "At the Crossroads with Public History: Mediating the Holocaust on the Internet," *Holocaust Studies* 21, no. 4 (2015): 250-271.
[38] José Van Dijck, "Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory," *Visual Communication* 7, no. 1 (2008): 60.

former photographic methods, it is important not to overlook important continuities as well as disruptions. Karen Becker has argued that:

> Digital photography is often laden with a third assumption, namely that its technologies have broken with previous applications and practices, transforming everyday photography into a new phenomenon, barely recognizable within the old frameworks of photography as a medium.[39]

For this reason, wherever possible, I have highlighted the continuities of Holocaust visuality which are not confined solely to social image sharing or Instagram. Photographing the Holocaust or engaging with the Holocaust through other visual means is not new, and photo sharing practices developed alongside photography as a professional art and leisurely act.

One of significant differences of the digital public sphere is the sheer number of images circulating in our personal and public collections. While the Holocaust is a visual historical event, and a highly photographed one, the plethora of social media images gives one pause. A simple hashtag search illustrates this most dramatically. On the day of retrieval, keying in #holocaust yielded 379,031 image results on Instagram; #holocaustmuseum yielded 71,100, and #holocaustmemorial yielded 71,812; #shoah alone provided 40,380.[40] These results include photos of visitor experiences at the USHMM, tours of Auschwitz, archival images shared on International Holocaust World Remembrance Day, and Anne Frank fan art. On its own, the hashtag has the capacity to pull together a wealth of information from a variety of platforms, but can also yield different results; these images, videos, tweets are all singular, sometimes fragmented

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[39] Karin Becker, "Variance in Everyday Photography," in Edgar Gómez Cruz; Asko Lehmuskallio, eds. *Digital Photography and Everyday Life* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 98.
[40] As of May 2017.

representations of the visitor experience. They are created separately, distinctly, and share different messages with a wider audience. Together, they create an immense visual archive, driven by affect and existing methods for seeing the Holocaust.[41]

While many museums and memorial spaces acknowledge the importance of collaboration with their audiences and rely on input from the public, many institutions continue to offer top-down approaches to representing past; often, visitors know what to expect in a museum encounter. Zineb Ayaadi, Social Media Manager at the Jewish Museum Berlin, notes that the behaviour of their visitors reflects the spaces of the Museum's intent,

> […] they're expecting to get in contact with the Holocaust, to get in contact with German Jewish history, so I think they come here with a certain attitude and they respect the whole exhibition and the issue from the beginning. And so, at the Holocaust memorial, you have a lot of people who don't even know what this is - they think it's like an art exhibition […] so that sometimes this feeling missing, and here [at JMB] you know how to tune in and say "okay it's about Holocaust, maybe you should think about it."[42]

Has tourist photography become a behaviour which has simply been integrated into this tourist journey? If this is indeed the case, these visual sources should be considered as cultural artefacts produced by the performance of Holocaust memory in the twenty-first century.[43] For this reason, now more than ever before we need cultural analyses of social

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[41] There is a fair amount of discussion surrounding the hashtag in media studies, but *The Sage Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* provides the most succinct and accessible explanation of the importance of the hashtag to Instagram's programming. See Linnea Laestadius, "Instagram," in *The Sage Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2016), 573-592.
[42] Interview with Zineb Ayaadi, Jewish Museum Berlin, 25 July 2016.
[43] There has been some work done on the impact of the digital turn on Holocaust memory – specifically relating to social media use at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. See Til Hilmar, "Storyboards of Remembrance: Representations of the Past in Visitors' Photography at Auschwitz," *Memory Studies* 9, no. 4 (2016): 455-470 and Imogen Dalziel, "Romantic Auschwitz: Examples and Perceptions of Contemporary Visitor Photography at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum," *Holocaust Studies* 22, no. 2-3 (2016): 185-207. For more on the impact of the digital age on Holocaust studies (and its accompanying anxieties), see Wulf Kansteiner, "The Holocaust in the 21st Century: Digital Anxiety, Transnational Cosmopolitanism,

media and digital connectivity, to help think through how this has come to be and what forms it takes. Comparative media scholars José van Dijck, Jean Burgess, Lev Manovich, and Joshua Green, and Nathan Jurgenson are excellent guides into to an evaluation of Instagram as a space for connection, engagement, and memory formation, each emphasizing, in different ways, the importance of the network in this constellation .[44] Approached a different way, Angelina Russo, Jerry Watkins, and Susan Groundwater-Smith have argued that social media usage in informal environments such as museums, galleries, and libraries "offers young people agency previously unavailable in informal learning environments in order to explore complex responses to and participation with cultural content."[45] There are also important differences between platforms. Katrin Weller and Jean Burgess *et al.* have characterized Twitter as both a space for mundane social interactivity as well as real-time news and event tracking,[46] while José van Dijck and Lev Manovich have defended the importance of Instagram as a compendium of stylized life imagery and documentation.[47] Certainly, some would not characterize a Holocaust museum or Auschwitz as informal environments, and the scholarship on issues of Holocaust and social media representation is still emerging. For the historian, social

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and Never Again Genocide without Memory," in *Digital Memory Studies: Media Pasts in Transition*, ed. Andrew Hoskins (Routledge, 2017), 110-140; and Claudio Fogu, Wulf Kansteiner, and Todd Presner, eds., *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016).

[44] José van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green, *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), and Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009).

[45] Angelina Russo, Jerry Watkins, and Susan Groundwater-Smith, "The Impact of Social Media on Informal Learning in Museums," *Educational Media International* 46, no. 2 (2009): 153-166.

[46] Katrin Weller, Axel Bruns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt, & Cornelius Puschmann, "Twitter and Society: An Introduction," *Twitter and Society*, Katrin Weller, Axel Bruns, Jean Burgess, Merja Mahrt, & Cornelius Puschmann, eds. (New York: Peter Lang, 2014).

[47] Lev Manovich, "Subjects and Styles in Instagram Photography, Part I." URL: http://manovich.net/index.php/projects/subjects-and-styles-in-instagram-photography-part-1.

media is an archive and a database made coherent through hashtags – sources from the everyday experiences of billions of people.[48] If there is anything to learn from communication scholars, it is that this archive is mediated and networked and this holds tremendous import for how we should analyze it historically.

In popular and visitor photography, a "like" tends to reproduce a "like;" what can the historian glean from image authority, taste, and remediation? How does the interplay between the visitor and the museum's hegemonic organization of space, visuality, movement, and power play out on Instagram, and in the eyes and camera phones of the visitor? Many of these interactions are governed by tension between the visitor and the museum. Historian Wulf Kansteiner notes, "the lack of control over structure and content will pose a problem in the long run since the generations of digital natives move in a different digital culture. They are used to shaping their everyday digital environments in the process of communication and consumption."[49] Though a visit to a former concentration camp or Holocaust memorial might not fall within the purview of the history of the "everyday," it allows us to consider the ways in which tourism, individuality, and agency blend together to complicate our understanding of "Holocaust tourism" in public life, perhaps contributing to the integration of postmemory in the age of social media.[50] Thus, I place the authority of user and single platform photography at

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[48] Instagram currently has over one billion monthly active users, with over 500 million daily active users. "Our Story," *Instagram Info Centre*. URL: https://instagram-press.com/our-story/. Accessed 10 October 2018.

[49] Wulf Kansteiner, "Genocide Memory, Digital Cultures, and the Aestheticization of Violence," *Memory Studies* 7, no. 4 (2014): 405.

[50] Marianne Hirsch's theory of postmemory is explored the most thoroughly in *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013). Hirsch's exploration of this concept is defined by the relationship second generation survivors share with the personal and cultural trauma of a generation before. This relationship is comprised mainly of the stories, images, and behaviours of those they grew up around, as well as a propensity for the memory of a cultural trauma they did not directly experience.

the center of an academic discussion about the needs and directions of Holocaust memory in our current digital age; such an approach embeds amateur digital photography within a long discussion of the Holocaust and its representability.

My methodology is rooted in an adherence to the digital as a method of image production as well as an environment for image sharing. Van Dijck has argued that "pictures become more like spoken language as photographs are turning into the new currency for social interaction. Pixelated images, like spoken words, circulate between individuals and groups to establish and reconfirm bonds."[51] To this end, I have elected to consider the digital image as the product of a communicative process embedded in networks of visuality and memory. However, there are tensions between the digital and the physical - the pixelated medium and the spatial site of consumption and display. While I was working through my digital sources, I found myself consistently trying to validate their existence and worth as sources through the existence and relationship to physical remnants of museum visitors from the days before social media. This tension highlights a remaining hesitance to accept a reading of the digital as a source of contemporary historical thought.

For this reason, my choice to rely on visitor photography as my primary focus places the public in the center of my understanding of Holocaust memory formation in the twenty-first century. My narrative draws attention to the tensions that exist within my own consideration of public sources as an academic public historian. This work problematizes the notion of "sharing authority" that has come to dominate aspects of collaboration with the public. I argue through this dissertation that many academic public

[51] Van Dijck, "Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory," 60.

historians need to extend the practice of sharing authority a few steps further, placing the public and its thoughts and feelings about the past into the history of the everyday. In the words of oral historian Michael Frisch, "a commitment to sharing authority is a beginning, not a destination—and the beginning of a necessarily complex, demanding process of social and self-discovery. There are no easy answers or formulas and no simple lessons."[52] Lending members of the public power to interpret their own spaces and share their experiences on their own terms allows the latent discourses embedded in these spaces to be carefully considered by the very people for whom they are built. This work does not trouble itself with publics "doing history wrong"; rather, I actively confront my privilege to share authority, highlighting the ways in which the policing of visitor photography often results in the policing of memory.[53] I attempt to do so without pushing the authors of my sources to the side.

The politics of meaning-making lies at the heart of my theoretical framework and methodology. In any medium, there are many ways to discern the construction of meaning. I choose to acknowledge the entirety of the Instagram post, including the network in which it circulates, as a multi-layered interactive source. On Instagram captions, framing, filters, and hashtags link together to form a surface-level veneer,

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[52] Michael Frisch, "Sharing Authority: Oral History and the Collaborative Process," *Oral History Review* 30, no. 1 (2003): 112.

[53] Discussed by Michael Frisch in his work *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), sharing authority has become central to the field of public history. Though initially intended to be limited to history-making between the interviewer and interviewee during the creation of oral histories, it has grown to encompass history-making and memory-making outside of the oral tradition. As such, sharing authority lends agency to publics who are not academically trained historians. It presupposes that memory can function as a multidirectional framework for representing the past and allows various stakeholders to be involved in the process of public representation of the past. It is unsurprising that sharing authority is central to oral histories of the Holocaust. For recent works on sharing authority and oral history, see Anna Sheftel and Stacy Zembrzycki's edited volume *Oral History off the Record: Toward an Ethnography of Practice* (New York: Palgrave, 2013) and Steven A. High's edited volume, *Beyond Testimony and Trauma: Oral History in the Aftermath of Mass Violence* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015).

enticing the viewer to engage with the ethics and ways of seeing which govern our lives on the screens. However, breaking through the veneer of surface-level visual "meaning" remains difficult. In their brief evaluation of social media and meaning-making, communications scholar Stine Lomborg notes:

> […] the concept of meaning invites us to analyze the implied conventions, relevance structures, and individual and mutual orientations displayed in users' actual engagement with social media: their communicative practices on the screen as well as searching, selecting, and reading in front of the screen.[54]

To create and post an image on Instagram requires the taking, editing, captioning, hashtagging, and sharing of a photograph, typically within a brief window of time. By considering the myriad ways in which Instagram requires its photographers to engage the object of their photographic efforts, I was led to visual culture theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff's work on visuality. According to Mirzoeff, visuality encapsulates the process and performance of engaging in the visual, as well as the shifting interactions between the viewer and what is viewed. He states "the constituent parts of visual culture are, then, not defined by medium so much as by the interaction between viewer and viewed, which may be termed the visual event […] By visual event, I mean an interaction of the visual sign, the technology that enables and sustains that sign, and the viewer."[55] By embedding the visitor photograph within a historical trajectory of looking at the Holocaust, I am able to consider the ways in which individual photographs of Auschwitz or the USHMM rely on an accepted visual code for the representation of the Holocaust with a long history.

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[54] Stine Lomborg, "'Meaning' in Social Media," *Social Media + Society* (2015): 1-2.
[55] Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), 13.

This method of seeing the Holocaust has extended to my own image and data collection. In December 2017, Instagram launched a new feature which allowed individual users to follow hashtags.[56] Up until this point, there were only two ways to interact with the hashtag through the Instagram app. One could click through a hashtag attached to a post, or search for a specific hashtag through the app's explore tab. The ability to follow the hashtags embedded ways of seeing the Holocaust through social media in my personal Instagram feed, allowing me to save images as I discovered them during my day to day activities. In this way, my dissertation's method remained active and embedded in my everyday life, actualizing Hine's earlier call for an embedded and everyday multimodal analysis of how the digital informs our lives.[57] From a methodological standpoint, this simple act has allowed me to engage differently with my archive, shaping the ways in which I encounter my own sources.

The use and analysis of social media sources is a multi-step and multi-tool process, which includes the collection, extraction, and analysis of large corpuses of images. All images in this dissertation have been gathered through hashtag search. I made use of popular language used in public discussions and discourses of the Holocaust, including hashtags such as (but not limited to) #holocaust, #holocaustmuseum, #neverforget, #auschwitz, #holocaustmemorial, and #yadvashem. Where appropriate, these large hashtag archives have been supplemented with smaller archives particular to the museum or memorial space (hashtags such as #JMB, #USHMM, or #stolpersteine

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[56] Ben Popper, "Instagram Gets More #Interesting," *The Verge*, 12 December 2017. URL: https://www.theverge.com/2017/12/12/16763502/instagram-hashtag-follow-new-feature-announced. Accessed 15 October 2018.
[57] Christine Hine, *Ethnography for the Internet: Embedded, Embodied, and Everyday* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

serve as examples). Mulpix was used to uncover cross-listed hashtags.[58] Image acquisition was conducted with 4K Stogram, a free platform which allows the user to search via Instagram username, hashtag, or location to export large groups of images from Instagram. When extracting large image-driven datasets, nearly all metadata is separated from the image once downloaded outside the program. Therefore, the visualization programs used only include the image, and none of the usernames or other profile data associated with the images themselves. When embedded individually, the chosen images include the username, caption, number of likes, date, and comments; this choice highlights the ways in which Instagram images remain intertextual sources, deriving and communicating meaning in all stages of their production and circulation.

**Organization**

Initially, this dissertation was organized according to space and place, with separate and distinct chapters for museums, memorials, former camps, guestbooks, and Instagram archives. However, the work is about the possibilities of Instagram as a method for seeing, interpreting, and engaging with the visual history of the Holocaust and its representation; categorizing experiences based solely on space resulted a lack of interactivity between the spaces. Thus, this work is organized to showcase what Instagram can do for Holocaust memory, and how it underscores varying aspects of user-based contemporary Holocaust interpretation. Here, user photographs intermingle with official, historic images, museum curators, social media influencers, digital and visual

[58] Mulpix is an advanced Instagram search engine, which allows for its user to cross-reference hashtags. Currently, the Instagram platform only allows you to search for single hashtags, rather than multiple tags. This allows the user to ascertain the hashtags an image has in common, rather than tracing a single hashtag through Instagram's platform. Mulpix. URL: https://mulpix.com/. Accessed 30 April 2019.

artists, and physical spaces of Holocaust memory. I argue that the presence of visitor photography places the concept of mnemonic authority in question. I have opted to consider this questioning as a form of collaboration, calling attention to the tensions and limits in form that many representations hold. How does the museum stand in the face of the twenty-first century user? What can Holocaust memory mean if social media footprint and the reach of the museum is dependent on the acquisition of followers and the use of hashtags? How does the everyday individual, when confronted with the atrocities of the past, use the tools at their disposal for active learning and engagement?

No single image signifies just one thing, place, person, or idea, and as evidenced by the ability to follow hashtags, Instagram is not a linear platform. With multiple ways to access images – through hashtag search, timeline, grid, web browser, or smart phone, the structure of this dissertation argues for the ways in which some images are repeated, unseen, highly circulated, or unavailable for public viewing. The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (Berlin) can be interpreted through the lens of space and place, but also through a framework of aesthetics, or through bodily engagement. Similarly, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, D.C.) is not just a pathway nor museum. Rather, it functions as fluid and shifting memorial space for education and engagement. In placing photos of Auschwitz alongside Yad Vashem, *Stolpersteine*, and digital memorial art, this dissertation delineates the "museum," "memorial," and "camp" images which have dominated recent discussions of visual culture, social media, and the Holocaust.[59] Placing these images directly in conversation with one another allows us to

[59] While the significant differences in geographical location, space, and place are important to the interpretation of Holocaust imagery (and significantly affect accessibility and public interpretation), this dissertation concerns itself with how Instagram serves as a stage for performed Holocaust memorialization,

understand the impact of "Instagrammism" on contemporary Holocaust memory culture.[60]

Each chapter establishes historical and visual context for the Instagram images and trends explored, before moving on to discuss the ways in which the images function as different aspects of a globalized Holocaust visuality and memory. The first chapter considers the historical trajectory of a Holocaust visuality, heavily engaging with the concept and defining its parameters. Relying on Nicholas Mirzoeff, Marianne Hirsch, Janina Struk, Barbie Zelizer, and Georges Didi-Huberman, I argue that the concept of visuality serves as the underlying and overlying interpretive framework for this dissertation. As explained above, visuality does not simply refer to that which is seen (or depicted visually). Rather, a framework of visuality incorporates the act of looking, being seen, picturing, framing, and capturing the aspects of one's experiences, whether historical or contemporary. The first chapter constructs a historical timeline for the history of seeing and witnessing the Holocaust, embedded in a discussion of the visual culture, visual history, and visual interpretation of the event in our contemporary world. It lays the groundwork for ways of seeing the Holocaust that are expanded upon in later chapters of the dissertation.

The interpretation of the Holocaust as a historical event and a cautionary tale against forgetting relies on space and place. The ghetto, mobile execution units, cattle

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rather than how place-based memory impacts photography – though the first chapter will explore varying aspects of the interactions between space, place, and visual culture.

[60] The term "Instagrammism" has been used by visual culture and technology scholar Lev Manovich, most notably in his work *Instagram and the Contemporary Image* (2016). Instagrammism is explained by Manovich as encapsulating a particular visual style unique to Instagram and its visual cultures. For more, see "Notes on Instagrammism and Mechanisms of Contemporary Cultural Identity," URL: http://manovich.net/content/04-projects/094-notes-on-instagrammism-and-mechanisms-of-contemporary-cultural-identity/notes-on-instagrammism.pdf

cars, selection ramp, gas chambers, bunkhouses, centres of administration and government, crematoria, and countless known and unknown mass graves, sites of death marches, and spaces of resistance – all are tethered to a spatial understanding of the genocide. The photography of such spaces serves as the basis for much contemporary Holocaust memorial photography. For this reason, chapter two focuses on place-based user photography, exploring the influence of Holocaust landscapes and pathways on Instagram. Taking up Cole's argument that "[Auschwitz] has become a staple of the 'Holocaust myth,'"[61] chapter two focuses specifically on amateur and tourist photography at Auschwitz, highlighting that social media imagery is still deeply connected to place-based visitor experiences. Through the use of the smartphone, visitors continually re-affirm Auschwitz as a space and symbol of the Holocaust, demonstrating that Auschwitz's visuality remains integral to the historical reality of the Holocaust for many visitors.

As Auschwitz functions as a spatial and symbolic tether between USHMM, Yad Vashem, and many other Holocaust museums, it is easy to understand why Auschwitz features so heavily in Instagram photography. Chapter three shifts the place-based focus of the dissertation from the iconic camp to amateur architectural photography in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), Jewish Museum Berlin (JMB), and Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum (YVHHM). This chapter responds to the arguments of Cole and Gary Weissman regarding the "pathways of tourists" and "fantasies of witnessing," arguing instead that the architectural character of each distinct Holocaust museum requires different levels of memory work on the part of the visitor,

[61] Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, 98.

with the Instagram photograph functioning as part of that labour of memory. This chapter questions how shifts in architectural and spatial representations of the Holocaust – in spaces where the Holocaust didn't necessarily *take place* – impacts the visitor's understanding of Holocaust memory in the age of social media.

Building on the physical and memorial landscapes of the Holocaust explored in chapters two and three, chapter four considers the intersection of photography and Holocaust material culture through the framing of Holocaust objects on Instagram. Bridging between the railway car, shoes and other victims' former belongings, these objects serve as an affective material link between the visitor and the history of the Holocaust, extending from the geospatial authenticity of the Holocaust explored in the second chapter. Characterized as "icons of memory" by Oren Baruch Stier, these items serve as symbols of the Holocaust, and "span a range of overlapping cultural representations in material, linguistic, literary, photographic/cinematic, and numeric terms."[62] Drawing from Stier's analysis, the visitor photograph of a Holocaust object functions both individually and collectively as a Holocaust synecdoche: a carefully selected image which stands in for the whole of Holocaust representation from the perspective of the visitor. By overwhelming the frame in the composition of their photo, the visitor makes a conscious interpretive decision that combines a public understanding of Holocaust visuality with efforts to communicate the immense scale of the genocide on a personal and individual level.

[62] Oren Baruch Stier, *Holocaust Icons: Symbolizing the Shoah in History and Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 2.

Contemporary Holocaust interpretation and display techniques group large numbers of objects and belongings together for a particular reason; the piles of objects serve the function of forced confrontation with the scale of the genocide – as Instagram user @jannyniwayan states, "Each element of this giant pile [of glasses] used to belong to one person."[63] Chapter five takes up this sentiment, engaging with visual concepts of bodily presence and absence. Beginning with a discussion of the body of the victim and the survivor and their relationship to Holocaust aesthetics, I demonstrate the ways in which the victim and survivor's bodies are remediated in the digital sphere. Considering the infamous Auschwitz selfie and the online shaming of amateur photographs which showcase the visitor body at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, I consider the ways in which the visitor body is placed under surveillance through digital visual acts. Through an analysis of the aforementioned selfies, the Tower of Faces at USHMM, and the presence of the survivor and victim body on Instagram, I argue that invoking the visitor body in Holocaust photography positions the visitor/photographer as a receiver of memory in certain contexts. Extending the discussion about spatial authenticity from the second chapter, attention is paid to the ethics of photography alongside the presence of bodily sensations on Instagram.

Bringing these chapters together, chapter six engages with the Instagram image as embedded within a wider visual Holocaust archive and considers its impact as a virtual community of remembrance. Underscoring Instagram as a photographic archive of memory, I argue that while the images explored in the previous four chapters can all be

[63] Instagram caption by @jannyniwayan, 18 January 2018, https://www.instagram.com/p/BeFVizDnmfS/ (accessed 17 May 2018).

considered closely and individually, they all belong to a wider affectual archive – one built on the photographic impulse, performed through the visitor body, and organized via hashtag. As well, chapter six considers the visuality of the Holocaust in conjunction with wider photographic trends on Instagram – described above as "cultures of Instagrammism," by visual culture scholar Lev Manovich. Cultures of "Instagrammism" highlight the permeable boundaries between self-fashioning, communication, and visuality in the digital age. What is more, it argues that these activities need not remain severed from active Holocaust memorialization. The dissertation concludes by arguing that Instagram has equipped publics to transform ubiquitous photography into opportunities for continued memory work in the digital sphere.

**Conclusion**

In recent years, the history's phenomenological turn has left historians questioning whether the affective gains of historical consciousness must rely solely on the first-hand experiences of the aforementioned history outsiders.[64] While it is true that traditional historical analysis would request that we sever affect from historical consciousness and understanding, many Holocaust scholars and historians of the Third Reich would argue that the Holocaust and its memory has never been divorced from affect. Holocaust historian Saul Friedländer, in *The Years of Extermination*, argues against objectivity:

[64] Vanessa Agnew, "History's Affective Turn: Historical Re-enactment and its Work in the Present," *Rethinking History* 11, no. 3 (2007): 299-312. Agnew describes the "affective turn" as "historical representation characterized by conjectural interpretations of the past, the collapsing of temporalities and an emphasis on affect, individual experience and daily life rather than historical events, structures and processes," 301. As well, Alison Landsberg has an excellent summary of the current debates on affect and experiential histories in her book *Engaging the Past: Mass Culture and the Production of Historical Knowledge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

> By its very nature, by dint of its humanness and freedom, an individual voice suddenly arising in the course of an ordinary historical narrative of events such as those presented here can tear through seamless interpretation and piece the (mostly involuntary) smugness of scholarly detachment and "objectivity." Such a disruptive function […] is essential to the historical representation of mass extermination and other sequences of mass suffering that "business as usual historiography" necessary domesticates and "flattens."[65]

Apart from adding to the visual culture of the Holocaust, and of its representation within the public sphere, visitor photography can provide insight to how individuals are navigating the physical aspects of the Holocaust's memorial landscape. Through Instagram photography, historians can explore the continuing affectual impact of the genocide, more than seventy-five years after its end. Such a goal has always remained a central tenet of Holocaust scholarship – and remains integral to understanding how Holocaust memory and transmission will be shaped in the future.

While undoubtedly the age of social media provides historians with a challenge, this contemporary Holocaust visuality also provides a performative understanding of how the photographer/subject approaches and interacts with the distinct built environments of memorial spaces. It is in this way that our understanding of the visual plane of Holocaust memory in collides with the physicality of its built environment. By focusing on this active visual representation of Holocaust remembrance, this dissertation keeps the performative elements of the photography of the public at the forefront. While evaluations of memorial spaces remain important to the practice of public history, it is important to extend that conversation to include the movement of publics through and beyond those spaces, even if that engagement is extended to the realm of Web 2.0.[66] In addition to considering the new ways in which publics are

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[65] Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination*, vol. 2 of *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), xxv-xxvi.

[66] Web 2.0 has remained difficult to define. Most commonly, Web 2.0 refers to ta significant shift in the way that the Internet is used – especially in every day life. This shift was defined by a movement away

interacting with memorial landscapes it is become important to reconsider everyday acts in and around these spaces. The ways in which contemporary publics are navigating memorial spaces, building relationships, and drawing connections between their own circumstances and the built terrain of the urban landscape are becoming more crucial to our understanding of how the public, the past, and the present overlap. The conscious effort to share Holocaust memory on Instagram suggests that the individual amateur photographer believes in the transmission of Holocaust memory. Remembering this as historians is integral to our understanding of how the public encounters the past.

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from static webpages to the social and interactive web that we know today. For more on the nature of Web 2.0, see Daniel Nations recent piece "What Does Web 2.0 Even Mean?" *Lifewire*, 23 January 2019. URL: https://www.lifewire.com/what-is-web-2-0-p2-3486624 (accessed 2 May 2019).

# Chapter 1

# Holocaust Visualities

What comprises a "Holocaust visuality?" Visuality refers to how the Holocaust is witnessed and seen by a variety of publics; culturally-bound, it changes over time. This dissertation explores how the public sees and relates to the Holocaust visually, and how this relates to how it is remembered and memorialized today. My evaluation of Holocaust visuality works alongside a touristic and photographic impulse, the growth of the dark tourism industry, and the prevalence of social media in our contemporary world. I argue that visuality is key to understanding the transmission of Holocaust memory – across geographical distances, and temporal ones as well. While I rely on photographs as my chief vehicles for engaging with and experiencing Holocaust memory and its construction, my argument echoes Holocaust scholars James E. Young's sentiment that memory formation is not discrete, nor untethered to affect and experience.[67] While, on a simplistic level, Instagram photography is a rendering of physical spaces in which we find ourselves, the ways in which visitors choose to frame, edit, caption, and share their images are embedded in a long genealogy of visual representations of the Holocaust – alongside the photographer's personal experiences and previous encounters with that history.

[67] James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (Yale University Press, 1994), 2. Young is foundational in the field of Holocaust representation.

This chapter is grounded first and foremost in Holocaust history and historiography. It demonstrates that how people look at the Holocaust itself has a history and questions the extent to which looking has been acknowledged as a legitimate point of entry for the Holocaust as an event. Photographs, like oral testimony, have a had a tough time gaining acceptance by scholars of genocide.[68] What is more, the early debates over the Holocaust remained mired in whether the Holocaust was truly representable; however, quite famously, Holocaust historian Saul Friedländer consistently argued that though the Holocaust remained at the limits of representation, representation was necessary for memory.[69] This chapter draws attention to the historical development of looking at the Holocaust. Historian Alvin H. Rosenfeld's assertion that "we say 'Holocaust' as if there were an established consensus on the full range of historical meanings and associations that this term is meant to designate. In fact, no such consensus exists."[70] Following Rosenfeld's argument, this chapter explores the historical trajectory of engaging with the Holocaust through visual media. Beginning with the pre-war period, I take up the claim of Marianne Hirsch that the photograph of the young Jewish boy in the Warsaw ghetto cemented the visual future of the Holocaust.[71] I build on the argument that the visibility of the event which would eventually be known as the Holocaust extends further back than the photography of the camps after liberation. These optics of genocide are important; apart from the heavy exploration of the Holocaust as a paradigm for

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[68] Raul Hilberg famously dismissed oral testimony for its historical inaccuracies. See Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of European Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).
[69] See Saul Friedländer, "Introduction," in *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the Final Solution* ed. Saul Friedländer (Berkeley: Harvard University Press, 1992).
[70] Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *The End of the Holocaust* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011), 14.
[71] Marianne Hirsch, "Nazi Photographs in Post-Holocaust Art: Gender as an Idiom of Memorialization," in Alex Hughes and Andrea Noble, eds. *Phototextualities: Intersections of Photography and Narrative* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 19-20.

representing genocide, publics of today continually rely on visual representations of the Holocaust to identify similar acts of hatred or genocide taking place today.[72]

The liberation-era photograph is essential in understanding how people continue to look at the Holocaust today. As an event and a set of aesthetic tropes, Janina Struk and Barbie Zelizer have investigated the origins of the ubiquitous Holocaust image.[73] Arguably, future representations of the Holocaust emanate from the photographs taken after the liberation of the camps. While these images framed the places, objects, and people which would come to characterize a collective sense of seeing the Holocaust, it is important to invoke Jeffrey Shandler's analysis: that this is the era in which the viewer was created.[74] Shandler argues against overlooking early American telecasts which presented the Nazi genocide, explaining these early televised events paved the way for an American Holocaust consciousness, created in collaboration with the average American viewer. Here, Shandler and Zelizer's work find common ground. Both agree that the cameraman and photographer served as professional witnesses to the Nazi genocide, "standing in for the witnessing activity of the general public."[75] Thus, the creation of the

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[72] A significant field, there are a wealth of texts available which consider the question of "uniqueness" and the Holocaust in the context of comparative genocide studies. Recently, see Rebecca Jinks, *Representing Genocide: The Holocaust as Paradigm?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), Alan S. Rosenbaum, ed., *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, 3rd edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009), Omer Bartov, Anita Grossmann, and Mary Nolan, eds. *Crimes of War: Guilt and Denial in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New Press, 2002), and Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (Newhaven and London: Yale University Press, 2001).
[73] Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), and Janina Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust: Interpretations of the Evidence* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005).
[74] See Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1.
[75] Zelizer, quoted in Shandler, *While America Watches*, 7.

viewer remains central to understanding Holocaust visuality in the decades after the genocide itself.

As the generation of victims ages and passes on, we are left with little more than representation and what Marianne Hirsch as called postmemory, that is the recollections of subsequent generations, one or two steps removed from the actual event. Today, Holocaust consciousness is increasingly defined by individual connection to the sites and spaces of Holocaust memory, whether through visits to concentration camps or memorial museums, and contemporary individual connection is often negotiated through social media. In the age of the selfie, sorting out how the Holocaust is represented, witnessed, and seen, becomes even more complex. The visitor photography, image alteration, and digital art in the age of Instagram is demonstrative of the ways in which structures of postmemory and Holocaust visuality are actively being communicated to publics. The visitor's own Holocaust encounter motivates them to photograph these spaces and experiences and share them online in a cycle of the dissemination and perpetuation of Holocaust postmemory. Beginning with a working definition of "Holocaust visuality," this chapter historicizes the aesthetics of the Holocaust over several different periods: prior to 1945; photography from the liberation of the camps in 1945; during the memory boom of the 1980s and 1990s; and in the age of social media – the years in which the number of Holocaust survivors is already beginning to dwindle.

Before we can assess the value of Instagram to postmemory practices, it is important to understand how the early Holocaust visuality evolved into an aesthetic of postmemory. It is perhaps unsurprising that contemporary visuality rests on the aesthetic development of Holocaust film, museums, and memorials from the Holocaust memory

boom of the 1980s and 1990s. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, increasing public consciousness about the Holocaust paved the way for opening the world's largest Holocaust memorial – the multimillion-dollar US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Postmemory, a term coined by Hirsch,

> […] describes the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before – experiences they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up […] Postmemory's connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation.[76]

While Hirsch's analysis focuses on the qualities, symptoms, and after-effects of first-generational trauma, this study is concerned with the communication of that trauma to mass public audiences via mass public audiences. Hirsch asks, "what do we owe the victims? How can we best carry their stories forward, without appropriating them, without unduly calling attention to ourselves, and without, in turn, having our own stories displaced by them?"[77] Indeed, there is much at stake; Rosenfeld's warning against the role of the Internet and globalized digital media in the normalization of Nazism (both past and present) is not unfounded, and it is difficult to consider that social media does *not* place oneself at the focal point of everyday memory-work. However, this does not mean that these forms of Holocaust memorialization – the Instagram photo, the YouTube video, or the tweet, for example – should be disregarded entirely, nor are their content creators not conducting the difficult memory work of investigating the photographic impulse animating their actions.

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[76] Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 5.
[77] Ibid.

While Hirsch's turn to memory studies offered a means to uncover and restore life stories that otherwise remained outside the historical archive, what she called "a means to account for the power structures animating forgetting, oblivion, and erasure," the Instagram image signifies the acceptance and power of memory work by the public and in public, in conjunction with and sometimes in opposition to the hegemonic memory and power structures which govern the official memory of the Holocaust.[78] On Instagram, everyday people share their images of Holocaust memorial sites and museums as visual evidence of their authentic encounters with the Holocaust. They Instagram Auschwitz because for a moment, they experienced the same limit which Susan Sontag famously reached, despite the ubiquity of Holocaust imagery in everyday life.[79] Understanding the history of Holocaust symbols and visual culture is therefore paramount when grounding these individual acts of postmemory in the long trajectory of the Holocaust's visual history.[80]

**When is the Holocaust Image? Pre-War Holocaust Visualities**

The first visual encounters with the Holocaust did not happen after the war, with the liberation of the camps. Rather, visual encounters with the Holocaust extended, temporally, to the period before the war; seen in the ways in which Jews and other victims were made visually identifiable to Nazi society. In other words, the trajectory of

[78] Ibid.
[79] See Sontag's oft-cited discussion of her first glimpse of liberation photos from Bergen-Belsen, a staple in the study of photography and Holocaust visual culture. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1971), 15.
[80] For an close reading of Holocaust symbols, their history, and evolution, see Oren Baruch Stier's volume, *Holocaust Icons: Symbolizing the Shoah in History and in Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015.

"seeing" the Holocaust extends to the capacity of Nazi society to imagine a world without Jews.[81] Before a world without Jews could be realized, however, Nazis had to make them more visible through the implementation of numerous political and social programs. In part, the increased visibility of Jewishness is owed to the visual and material objects used, created, or remediated to denote one's identity as either German or Jewish.[82] Through the possession, or lack of possession, of these visual signifiers, one was deemed either welcome or unwelcome amidst one's fellow German citizens. For example, in the prewar period, Jews were commonly ostracized through the installation of signs which read "*Juden unerwünscht*" ("No Jews allowed") or "*Nur für Juden*" ("Jews only") at shops, theatres, restaurants, pharmacies or on benches, respectively. The requirement that Jews wear the yellow Star of David, for example, demonstrates that symbols were claimed and employed by the Nazis as a means of visual categorization. This visualization of persecuted peoples is also frequently adopted by Holocaust museum and exhibit programming, cementing the notion that there is a way to visually "identify" the Holocaust within a historical timeline.[83] This has become an expected way to begin most conversations about the Holocaust as a historical event, setting a visual precedent for the trajectory of the genocide. Therefore, the optics of persecution operated as a form of Holocaust visuality long before the postwar era.[84]

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[81] See Alon Confino, *A World Without Jews: The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide* (Yale University Press, 2015).

[82] After the implementation of the Nuremberg Race Laws (1935), seven documents were required to prove German (as versus Jewish) descent: a birth or baptismal certificate, certificates for both parents, and certificates for all four grandparents. Michael Berenbaum. *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (Boston, Toronto, and London: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 35.

[83] The permanent exhibitions at the USHMM and Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum (YVHHM) both begin with discussions regarding the ways in which Jews were made more visible by the Nazis.

[84] While visually, the Holocaust can be seen before the advent of the death camps and their liberation, it is important to remember how the public engages with notions of what the Holocaust "looks like." In 2018,

The presence of the Holocaust and the origins of "seeing the Holocaust" also inherently tied to geographical knowledge of the atrocity. Though concentration camps were established in the early pre-war days of the Nazi regime, killing centers were constructed much later. Even though most of the Jews were released after a short time in the camps after the November pogrom, *Kristallnacht* served as the first large-scale and state-sponsored instance in which Jewish people were imprisoned in in these spaces. The optics are impossible to ignore, as "*Kristallnacht* was a very public and visible pogrom […] The presence of Jews on the high streets and main squares of German towns and cities was punished through attack and erased through destruction."[85] However, the Holocaust image existed long before the advent of digitality and embedding the Holocaust image in an understanding of networked visual culture in the twenty-first century requires a consideration of what, precisely, the "Holocaust image" is.

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for example, the forcible separation if immigrant children from their families at the border between Mexico and the United States sparked a plethora of media responses comparing Donald Trump's recent (2018) immigration policies – and the detainment of immigrants at the border – to the visual optics of the Holocaust as a historical event. Some historians have argued against this comparison, noting that the camp universe most well-known to the public was several steps advanced into the event of the Holocaust itself. In some ways, pre-war Holocaust aesthetics are not as "visible" in the memories of the contemporary public. There was a substantial public debate in the media; see Deborah Lipstadt, "It's Not the Holocaust," *The Atlantic,* 22 June 2018. URL: https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/06/holocaust-family-separation/563480/, accessed 27 October 2018; Sylvia Taschka, "Trump-Hitler comparisons too easy and ignore murderous history," *The Conversation*, 21 March 2018, URL: http://theconversation.com/trump-hitler-comparisons-too-easy-and-ignore-the-murderous-history-92394, accessed 2 November 2018. For more on the Holocaust, contemporary relevance, and Holocaust museums, see Leah Angell Sievers, "Genocide and Relevance: Current Trends in Holocaust Museums," *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust* 30, no. 3 (2016): 282-295.

It should also be noted that while much of the documentation of the Holocaust as an event – visual and otherwise – is from the perspective of the perpetrator, museum programming and display does not uncritically adopt the gaze of the perpetrator. Rather, much of the display and interpretation depends on the availability of historical documentation, and many Holocaust museums take care to demonstrate this. Take, for example, the pairing of the visitor with a victim's identification card at the USHMM, to allow the visitor to engage with the Holocaust from the perspective of those persecuted.

[85] Tim Cole's analysis of Jewish experiences during *Kristallnacht* before the beginning of World War II fits nicely into this discussion of what constitutes a Holocaust "image" or a Holocaust "space," arguing that the shifting experiences of victims and perpetrators define spatial encounters differently in different personal contexts. See *Holocaust Landscapes*, 2016.

Understanding the emergence of a Holocaust visuality and the mapping of visual geographies of the Holocaust is inherently tied to the historical development of the genocide itself, and the ways in which the camera produced modern bodies, the discrimination against those bodies, and the visuality of victimization in the years leading up to the eventual years of execution.

The creation of a Jewish other in the years leading up to the Holocaust is an integral part of the history of the Holocaust. The victim and survivor remain in this role because so few of the Holocaust's surviving images were captured by persecuted peoples. The Nazis were, as Hirsch describes, "masterful at recording visually their own rise to power as well as the atrocities they committed, immortalizing both victims and perpetrators."[86] It is for this reason that Frances Guerin claims that there is "no such thing as a neutral position from which to see the Holocaust or the war carried out in the East."[87] The act of looking at Holocaust images, and seeing the Holocaust, always implicates the viewer – even if they do not act on their photographic impulses. Even before the Holocaust the dichotomy of victim/onlooker remains central to the performative act of "seeing" the Holocaust after the liberation of the concentration camps.[88]

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[86] Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*, 106.
[87] Frances Guerin, *Through Amateur Eyes: Film and Photography in Nazi Germany* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 13. Guerin's work on amateur photography in Nazi Germany is important to understanding the ways in which everyday Nazi soldiers made use of photography and film to capture their own experiences. Guerin's work adds to the growing field of the history of photography, exploring the relationship between photography, genocide, and everyday experiences.
[88] Here, I use the word performative to highlight the ways in which the actions of the viewer/onlooker are impacted by the environment: museum goers perform as "visitors" in exhibition spaces, as argued by Bennett in *The Birth of the Museum* (1995) and reinforced by Rotem in *Constructing Memory: Architectural Narratives of Holocaust Museums* (New York: Peter Lang, 2013).

**Postwar Holocaust Photography**

Immediately after the Holocaust, its visuality was defined solely by the photographic evidence of the Nazi concentration camps, death camps, and killing centers, constructed chiefly through photos taken by American and Soviet soldiers who liberated the concentration and death camps after the retreat of the Nazi forces in the spring of 1945.[89] This period arguably has had the largest impact on how the history of the Holocaust is remembered; even before emerging from the elevator on the fourth floor of the USHMM, the visitor is told "you can't imagine it. You, you just … things like that don't happen," accompanied by documentary footage of the liberation of Buchenwald and Mauthausen.[90] This visual trajectory has explored and historicized by both Barbie Zelizer and Janina Struk and is integral to understanding the lasting impact of the "Holocaust image" in the age of photography itself. Zelizer and Struk both demonstrate that these initial photos defined the media coverage of the Holocaust, its representation in global media, and also the ways in which future media would engage with other genocides and atrocities.[91] As argued by Zelizer, Holocaust images "stabilize and anchor collective memory's transient and fluctuating nature in art, cinema, television, and photography, aiding recall to the extent that images often become an event's primary markers."[92] These images defined the

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[89] Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: Rutgers University Press, 1998) and Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust: Interpretations of the Evidence* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004). For more information on the liberation of the death camps and concentration camps, see the United States Holocaust Museum's encyclopedia entry, "The Liberation of Nazi Camps," *The Holocaust Encyclopedia*, URL: https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/liberation-of-nazi-camps (accessed 30 April 2019).
[90] Cited in Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: 1997), 167.
[91] This is a growing area in comparative genocide studies and has links to the debate over the uniqueness of the Holocaust. For more, see David B. MacDonald, *Identity Politics in the Age of Genocide: The Holocaust and Historical Representation* (London: Routledge, 2007) and Rebecca Jinks, *Representing Genocide: The Holocaust as Paradigm?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).
[92] Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*, 6.

ways in which the Holocaust would be represented, whether through photography, film, or museological representation.

It should be noted that the emergence of the ubiquitous Holocaust image after the War did not always correspond with the reception of survivor testimony by the public. Despite the memory work being done to record and share survivor testimony, these stories did not always receive the same attention that photographs did. Some have argued that this choice to *not* to look at the Holocaust defined the early trajectory of Holocaust memory.[93] Memory scholar Aleida Assmann has argued that "[…] Holocaust survivors who were intent on acting as witnesses or wanted to talk about their past found themselves cut off from the societies in which they lived."[94] This form of silencing, compounded with the emergence of a journalistic photographic image of the Holocaust continues to contribute to the implication of the viewer throughout the postwar period. The horrific images served as the first Holocaust encounters for the rest of the world, while the scenes they depicted were the reality of everyday existence for many camp survivors. In this way, postwar Holocaust photography remains embedded in a crisis of division: the viewer, for whom Holocaust imagery shattered the notion of the photograph as a "literal" depiction of reality was juxtaposed with the survivor's own perception of reality, laid bare through the photographic method.

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[93] Saul Friedländer, 663. Many have argued that this silence is the result of a number of things. According to Shandler, in America it was the result of needing to contextualize the Holocaust within the context of the American war effort after the end of World War II, as well as the assertion that the images and films shared with the American public were unable to properly convey the horror of the genocide, thus "testing the limits of credulity." See *While America Watches*, 14.

[94] Aleida Assmann, "Transformations of Holocaust Memory: Frames of Transmission and Mediation," in Oleksandr Kobrynskyy and Gerd Bayer, eds. *Holocaust Cinema in the Twenty-first Century: Memory, Images, and the Ethics of Representation* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2015), 25.

The history of looking at the Holocaust emerged from the very historic events which created those images; therefore, the journalistic and voyeuristic style invoked by many tourist images at Holocaust memorial sites stem from a historical visual mode of representation, embedded in attempts to make the Holocaust "seen". However, as Georges Didi-Huberman demonstrates, the "desire to *snatch an image*" materialized before the wider world "knew" of the reality of the Holocaust.[95] Thus, the proliferation and circulation of Holocaust photographs coincided with a re-evaluation of the power of the photograph as a mirrored depiction of reality and a curious relationship between the image, the viewer, the victim, and the survivor. Didi-Huberman asserts that "photography, from this angle, shows a particular ability […] to curb the fiercest will to obliterate."[96] Despite the fact that the *Sonderkommando* photos which Didi-Huberman analyses are perhaps some of the only photos (out of millions) captured by victims of the genocidal violence itself during the Holocaust, the photograph's ability to depict reality as a series of temporal snapshots was questioned with the emergence of Holocaust imagery after the liberation of the camps, at least by those "on the outside."[97] However, in the post-liberation period "those on the outside" were not necessarily a uniform group. The visibility of Nazi atrocities immediately after the War was highly dependent on which Allied army liberated particular camps. In the words of Cole, "because Auschwitz was liberated […] by the Red Army, not the Western Allies, Auschwitz remained effectively unknown in the West. Within a divided Europe, a divided memory of Nazi

[95] Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images In Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz*, trans. Shane B. Lillis, (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 6.
[96] Ibid. 23.
[97] Ibid. 6.

atrocity emerged."[98] The "unbelievability" of Holocaust images after liberation coupled with the knowledge (or lack) of Nazi atrocities demonstrate the varied viewer perspectives Holocaust visibility faced in the postwar era.[99] Both examples of Holocaust visuality and its interpretation demonstrate that the acts of seeing and interpreting remain dependent on individual spatial and historical circumstance.

Moving beyond the initial emergence of Holocaust imagery after World War II allows us to investigate the role of the photographer in the act of photography. Initially, as previously mentioned, Holocaust photography as a genre emerged at the hands of the Nazis and the allies, constructing a strict division between the "us" of the perpetrators, liberators, visitors, and the "them" of the victims and survivors.[100] Struk argues, regarding the place of photographs of Holocaust victims in the Holocaust museum:

> The majority of the photographs displayed as evidence of the Holocaust were made by the Nazis as proof of their power […] If there were no pictures, what would the public memory of the Holocaust be, and how would the plethora of museums and exhibitions represent it? […] If the Nazis' intention to memorialize the destruction of European Jewry in a museum in Prague had been realized, what would their exhibition have looked like? Their narrative would undoubtedly have used some of the same photographs of the ghettos, public hangings and mass executions of those produced by the *Erkennungsdienst* photographers at the camp. Same photographs, different story.[101]

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[98] Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, 98-99.
[99] Didi-Huberman also discusses the nature of circulated Holocaust photography prior to the four images which serve as acts of resistance from the *Sonderkommando* inside Auschwitz. He explains "The ruse of the image versus reason in history: photographs circulated everywhere - those *images in spite of all* - for the best and the worst reasons. They began with the ghastly shots of the massacres committed by the Einsatzgruppen, photographs generally taken by the murderers themselves." See *Images In Spite of All*, 24.
[100] Hirsch also describes instances in which, at the liberation of the camps, Allies photographed and filmed the opening of the camps, and how postwar interrogations and trials were meticulously documented by prosecutors – and not victims. *The Generation of Postmemory*, 106.
[101] Struk, 214-15.

The focus of much Holocaust visuality in the postwar period relies on the visual exploitation of the victims.[102] Thus, Struk highlights the important matter of the ethics of photography in the evolution and circulation of Holocaust photography. Thus, the early decades after the Holocaust were defined by silence, driving a silent stake between the survivor and the onlooker and, eventually, viewer. In spite of all, the *Sonderkommando* images and photos from the liberation of the camps accompanied a stunned public. Hundreds of thousands of survivors eventually left Europe; some stayed, but most emigrated to the United States or Israel.[103]

**The Issue of Representation and the Era of Postmemory**

In the decades after, the limits of Holocaust representation were tested, leading to lengthy debates on the nature and value of the representation of an event such as the Holocaust. Film scholar Joshua Hirsch claims that the first question of the limits of representation on film came after the public broadcasting of the 1978 miniseries *Holocaust*, which launched a significant public discussion about the nature of representation and history.[104] Though hundreds of Holocaust films have been made, at the time popular film was criticized for its inability to properly represent traumatic events. While *Holocaust* was certainly not the Academy Award-winning *Schindler's List* (1993), nor *Son of Saul* (2016), early filmic representations provided publics with a framework to comprehend an

[102] Ibid., 216.
[103] The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia, "The Aftermath of the Holocaust." URL: https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-aftermath-of-the-holocaust?series=48246 (accessed 30 April 2019).
[104] Joshua Hirsch, *After Images: Film, Trauma, and the Holocaust* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 4. Elie Wiesel criticized the miniseries for its "indecent tendency" to show what he argued could not, should not, and cannot be shown.

event like the Holocaust. What is more, these films made *seeing* the Holocaust a more accessible act of memory work, increasing the visibility of Holocaust visuality for a great many people.

I agree with Hirsch's argument, which has been argued before by Hayden White and others, that "[…] no historical representation gives access to essential truth […] All historical representation is, rather, limited in at least three ways: by signification, by documentation, and by discourse."[105] This point is essential when considering the trajectory of Holocaust visuality, because it demonstrates the fluidity of visual culture; for the most part, though museums and memorials are prized spaces of representation, much of the public learns how to see or view an event such as the Holocaust through film and other popular media. Before *Holocaust*, the televised trial of Adolf Eichmann allowed for individuals all over the world to engage with the optics of the banality of evil in their own living rooms. Before *Schindler's List* was released in 1993, Holocaust documentaries like *Night & Fog* (1954), and certainly Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985) paved the way for the development of a public Holocaust consciousness.[106] What is more, Assman argues, the wake of the memory of the Holocaust allowed for other traumatic memories relating to genocide or crimes against humanity. This memory action allowed

[105] Hirsch, *After Images*, 5.
[106] Holocaust films warrant an entire discussion on their own. The aforementioned Joshua Hirsch's *After Images: Film, Trauma, and the Holocaust* offers an excellent analysis of both *Night & Fog* and *Shoah*. For a more recent evaluation of *Shoah*, see Oleksandrk Kobrynskyy and Gerd Bayer's edited volume, *Holocaust Cinema in the Twenty-First Century: Memory, Images, and the Ethics of Representation* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2015), in which Sue Vice supplements a reading of *Shoah* with Lanzmann's *Karski Report* and *The Last of the Unjust*.

for the retelling of histories of slavery and colonialism from the victims' perspectives.[107] A new dedication to human rights policy also emerged at this time.[108]

If the postwar decades were characterized by the individual memory of victims that emerged in a culture of forgetting, the 1980s ushered in an era of Holocaust representation was defined by a crisis of representation, but also an emerging sense of postmemory.[109] A term that has been used heavily to explore the implications of second-generation Holocaust memory, and engagement with the history of the Holocaust beyond the scope of first-hand experience, postmemory, best defines the emergence of Holocaust visual culture and its interpretation in the 1980s and 1990s. There is some speculation over when, exactly, the era of postmemory began, though I argue that any form of Holocaust memory transmitted by a second-generation survivor, or individuals even *further* removed from the event constitutes an act of postmemory. In other words, generational engagement with the Holocaust through images represents a new Holocaust visuality, one that differs from the perpetrator documentary versions that came before. It is not surprising that these new ways of representing the Holocaust ushered for the discussions over appropriate methods for memory preservation for the future.[110] It was in

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[107] Assman, 27.
[108] See Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, trans. Assenka Oksiloff (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001) and *Human Rights and Memory* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010).
[109] Ibid. 23.
[110] See Michael Berenbaum, *The World Must Know: The history of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (Boston, Toronto & London: Little, Brown and Company, 1993). The dedication reads "in honour of the men and women who created the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and thus made remembrance of the past a legacy for the American future." See also Edward Linenthal's *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), and Dorit Harel, *Facts and Feelings: Dilemmas in Designing the Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum* (2013). It is also worth invoking George Santayana's "those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it," – featured in the main exhibition of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum, and popularly quoted in the captions of Instagram images. See George Santayana, *Reason in Common Sense* (1905), 284.

this context that the Holocaust museum and Holocaust memorial was born: built structures which seek to preserve Holocaust memory for future generations.[111] Unlike earlier concerns with whether the Holocaust could be represented at all, the "memory boom" of the 1980s and 1990s provided ample opportunity for the public to encounter the Holocaust.

Apart from giving Holocaust memory architectural form, the example of the Holocaust museum typically communicates the history of the Holocaust through visual media. At the USHMM, visitors are accompanied by the face of a Holocaust victim or survivor; as they make their way through the multi-floor exhibit, visitors can flip through individual identification cards – real people who died during the Holocaust or lived to survive it – to find out the fate of their companion by the end of their exhibit tour.[112] All Holocaust museums offer visitors the chance to be physically near physical and visual artifacts: train cars, victims' belongings, images of survivors' tattoos. As visitors walk through the Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum, the written explanations decrease, as the historical images increase in size. In some instances, individual photographs cover an entire wall of the exhibit space. This curatorial tactic requires the individual visitor to confront the immensity of any one atrocity image, reminding them that the Holocaust was, indeed, a visual event. The Jewish Museum Berlin serves as an excellent example of the inescapable nature of a Holocaust visuality. Even though the JMB extension was

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[111] It is important to note here that, while the USHMM opened its doors in 1993, the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum opened as a kibbutz museum maintained by survivors in 1956, while Yad Vashem had existed in some form since 1953. Arguably, the GFHM and YVHHM existed as survivor-led spaces, while the USHMM was intended to be a dual memorial and space of education for those further removed from the Shoah.

[112] See more on the Identification Cards on the USHMM website – visitors can now browse thousands of the ID cards, which have been digitized. URL: https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/landing/en/id-cards (accessed 4 January 2019).

conceptualized as a museum for Jewish history and culture in Berlin, Daniel Libeskind's architectural design functions as a Holocaust memorial, highlighting the void left by the murder of Berlin's Jews.[113] The Holocaust museum is but one form of Holocaust memory, but most important relies on visual modes of storytelling to communicate the impact of the Holocaust to the public. It is therefore unsurprising that individual visitors have become increasingly interested in photographing their experiences, hoping to share this visual mode of communication with others.

**The Holocaust Tourist in the Modern Age**

The global Holocaust memorial landscape developed during the age of curious dark tourism. Explored heavily by J. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, dark tourism is a label given to tourism associated with sites of "death, disaster, and depravity."[114] In the case of the Holocaust museum, there is a legitimate anxiety that the attraction to sites of dark tourism only falls under the purview of irreverent voyeurism; Gary Weissman has argued against a "post-Holocaust generation," arguing that the post-Holocaust generation experiences nothing more than a "fantasy of witnessing" when it comes to Holocaust memory culture.[115] While it these concerns are not unfounded, and looking at the Holocaust will always feature an element of voyeurism, it is important to consider the

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[113] This is covered in-depth in chapter three.
[114] J. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley, "Interpretation of the Unimaginable: The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., and 'Dark Tourism,'" *Journal of Travel Research* 38 (1999): 46. J. John Lennon and Malcolm Foley have become the authorities on the influence and development of dark tourism. See their formative work, *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster* (United Kingdom: Cengage Learning, 2010).
[115] Gary Weissman, *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

fact that the motivations and desires of tourists may not be so separate and distinct. For sure, the touristic impulse and the photographic impulse are closely aligned, but in many instances visitors to Holocaust memorial spaces have their own reasons for visiting, whether they have a personal connection to the Holocaust or not. There is no "ideal visitor," of course – and as Young has noted, memory is not shaped in a vacuum; it is not the within the purview of the historian to judge the ways in which the public encounters history.[116]

Since the advent of the Holocaust museum and the age of dark tourism, visitors have found ways to mark their encounters with the Holocaust. Prior to the ubiquity of smartphones and Instagram, tourist photography was an integral part of the tourist experience. "To be a tourist, it would seem," argue tourism scholars Mike Robin and David Picard, "involves taking photographs."[117] Indeed, most Holocaust images on Instagram are taken while travelling. This is because, when separated from one's spaces of everyday life, the tourist connects to a sense of the "other," providing opportunities for the tourist to consider and confront themselves through use of a camera or smartphone.[118] A photograph from a visit to Auschwitz, YVHHM, or the USHMM is a visual confirmation of the visit itself. Considering this, the act of engaging in Holocaust tourism has been described as a form of ritual behaviour by Oren Baruch Stier.[119] In this way, the

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[116] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 2.
[117] Mike Robinson and David Picard, "Moments, Magic, and Memories: Photographing Tourists, Tourist Photographs and Making Worlds, in Mike Robinson and David Picard, eds. *The Framed World: Tourism, Tourists, and Photography* (England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2009), 1.
[118] Ibid., 10.
[119] Jack Kugelmass' assessment of the Auschwitz visit as a secular ritual is also incorporated in Stier's assessment of tourism and ritual. See Jack Kugelmass, "Why We Go to Poland: Holocaust Tourism as Secular Ritual," in *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, ed. James E. Young (New York: Prestel, 1994) 175-183; and Oren Baruch Stier, *Committed to Memory: Cultural Mediations of the Holocaust* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015).

visitor's pilgrimage to a site of Holocaust memory can be re-transmitted as a visual event. Through amateur photography, visitors who remain only tangentially connected to the history of the space can produce an act of postmemory.

Prior to smartphone technology, there were other ways in which tourists engaged with Holocaust visuality, such as the traditional photograph, video recorder, and museum guestbook. You would be hard-pressed to find a museum which does not feature a guestbook as one of the early main outlets for visitor expression and experience within the museum space. Though the visitor experience has been made newly accessible to researchers through social media, the guestbook remains a visually- and materially-driven networked space for visitor engagement and experience. The Jewish Museum Berlin's collection of visitor guestbooks remains an early visual archive of visitor encounters with Holocaust architecture in a pre-social media, Holocaust post-memory world. The JMB houses over three hundred visitor guestbooks, from its opening in September 2001 to present day. An analysis of these guestbooks reveals that prior to the Instagram image visitors to the museum were already engaging in a form of networked visuality in relation to Holocaust memory. Chaim Noy has argued that signing the guestbook be considered within the purview of the tourist's performance "while on tour."[120] Because can flip backwards to see earlier entries and compose their own after considering what they observe there, they are an analog example of a network of visitor with the Holocaust. Can these images be understood as an articulation of Holocaust visuality? These images are first-hand material objects and are results of processes of visuality experienced and

[120] Chaim Noy, "Pages as Stages: A Performance Approach to Visitor Books," *Annals of Tourism Research* 35, no. 2 (2008): 526.

engaged with by visitors to the JMB. Certainly, the guestbooks are not hashtagged, and circulate in a closed network rather than an open and digital one. However, one cannot deny the similarity between flipping through hundreds of pages of analog visitor experiences and scrolling through hundreds of thousands of photos which capture the same experiences – albeit in different ways. In this way, the visitor guestbook entry remains an important act of marking individual encounters with the Holocaust on the eve of the twenty-first century.

Social media usage has only made Holocaust memorial spaces more visible and accessible. This is in part due to the increasing accessibility of smartphones and digital photography since the early to mid-2000's, and in other part due to the consolidation of an online identity for Holocaust museums and memory institutions. Whether anticipated or not, Web 2.0 has become another method for seeing the Holocaust, contributing to the circulation of image and information at a new and unprecedented rate. Media scholars Adam Brown and Deb Waterhouse-Watson underscore this point, arguing:

> Digital Holocaust texts, with their positive and negative consequences, will unquestionably play a major role in the future remembrance of this traumatic past, and therefore need to be understood by scholars, museum curators and technology developers alike if digital media is to be harnessed in the most productive and constructive ways possible.[121]

While historians should be cautious about the impact of digital connectivity platforms, social media and web communication have made it easier to develop Holocaust memory in the era of globalization.

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[121] Adam Brown and Deb Waterhouse-Watson, "The Future of the Past: Digital Media in Holocaust Museums," *Holocaust Studies* 20, no. 3 (2014): 7.

Holocaust memorialization is no longer confined to geography; arguably, the wave of Holocaust memorialization of the 1980s and 1990s was diasporic, characterized more by the places in which people *remember* the Holocaust, rather than the spatial specifics of where it occurred. Memorials invoke Holocaust visuality to stir memory, regardless of their location.[122] However, the meaning of the contemporary Holocaust memorial has shifted in the age of social photo sharing, as the spatial qualities of our contemporary world collapse with the use of digital tools. While it is true that Holocaust memorials are often characterized as spaces and places, on Instagram they cannot always be defined as such, shifting to be defined as a locative practice, rather than solely as a specific site.[123] The use of hashtags serves as an entry-point for understanding the relationship between memorial practices, place, photography, and material history. Digital media scholar Nancy K. Baym has explained that, in the context of Instagram, community, practice, and shared senses of space and identity are most relevant to understanding hashtags on Instagram.[124] For this reason, the thousands of Instagram

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[122] There is something to be said for the global nature of Holocaust memory as a reflection of Jewish diaspora in the postwar era. While there are many North American spaces which memorialize the Holocaust and are *spatially* removed from the actual sites of genocide, the globalization of Holocaust memory has sparked important discussions about historical anti-Semitism and the lack of moral responsibility shown by allied nations before, during, and after World War II. See Jason Chalmers, "Canadianising the Holocaust: Debating Canada's National Holocaust Monument," *Canadian Jewish Studies* 24 (2016): 149-165.

The Canadian National Holocaust Monument is an excellent example of a place where the Holocaust did not occur, but is still memorialized nonetheless. The construction of the Monument sparked debate in Canada, a nation responsible for the cultural genocide of its Indigenous population. Some have argued that the construction of a Holocaust monument in Ottawa assumes a *terra nullius* interpretation of Canadian land, memorializing the genocide of European ancestors while ignoring the nation's responsibility to reconciliation with its Indigenous peoples. See Rebecca Clare Dolgoy and Jerzy Elzanowski, "Working through the Limits of Multidirectional Memory: Ottawa's Memorial to the Victims of Communism and National Holocaust Monument," *Citizenship Studies* 22, no. 4 (2018): 433-451. As well, the Canadian Government was responsible for turning away Jewish refugees who fled the Nazis in the years leading up to World War II.

[123] For more on locative media in the digital age, Dale Hudson and Patricia R. Zimmerman, *Thinking Through Digital Media: Transnational Environments and Locative Places* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015).

[124] Nancy K. Baym, *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*, 2nd Edition (New York: Polity Press, 2015).

images organized under the hashtag #holocaustmemorial extend the geographic footprint of the Holocaust memorial in the digital age.

The hashtag is a fluid organizational tool and discursive method of representation. What is more, the hashtag can collapse geographical distance and make Holocaust visuality immediately consumable, placing photos from sites all over the world next to one another on a single smartphone screen.[125] New media scholar Nadav Hochman has argued:

> Through the lens of the multitude of visual and textual hyper-local activities, a physical site is no longer viewed as a fixed spatial entity (noun/object) but rather as a set of immaterial or informational 'verbs' or processes which move through it […] it is in this sense that we can think of the hyper-local as an *amplification* of former site-specific relations.[126]

In this way, Holocaust memory on social media occupies a liminal space. Sometimes tethered to physical spaces of memory, and sometimes remediating such spaces to communicate memory outside of a spatial and temporal framework, the Instagram hashtag groups most of the popular forms of Holocaust visuality together under a single framework. Holocaust film, museums, memorials, art, poetry, and literature find new life under #holocaust. It is not uncommon to find quotes from Holocaust survivors paired

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[125] Daniel Palmer provides an in-depth analysis of the ways in which the iPhone camera interface integrates the mobility of the image in its own software, arguing that through "From […] a series of listed options: 'Email photo, SMS , Assign to Contact, Use as Wallpaper, Tweet, Print,' There is a strong sense in all of this that the world is readily available for visual consumption. See "iPhone Photography: Mediating Visions of Social Space," in Ingrid Richardson, Jean Burgess, and Larissa Hjorth, eds. *Studying Mobile Media: Cultural Technologies, Mobile Communication, and the iPhone* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 87.
[126] Nadav Hochman, "From Site-Specificity to Hyper-Locality: Performances of Place in Social Media," in Luke Sloan and Anabel Quan-Hasse, *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* (SAGE Publications, 2017), 372-373. Since the advent of the smartphone, discussions of place-making and social media have developed substantially. For an in-depth discussion of the hyper-local and its role in placemaking in social media, see also Rowan Wilken and Gerard Goggin, eds. *Mobile Technology and Place* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

with Anne Frank fan art or personal interpretations of Holocaust memorial sites, nor visitor images from Auschwitz alongside photos of the memorials at the Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Centre.[127]

**Demonstrating Holocaust Visuality: Image Study**

Our visual understanding of what the Holocaust is emerges as a product deeply informed by both the conscious and unconscious recognition of signs and symbols. As memory scholar Marianne Hirsch argues, "we do not have to look at the images […] Now, after nearly seven decades later, they have become all too familiar."[128] These images have become embedded in a global collective memory of genocide, injustice, discrimination, and more. These methods for visually representing the Holocaust covered in the preceding pages are the visual codes that taught the generations of postmemory how to look at, see, and represent the Holocaust. This understanding of the Holocaust and visual culture extends beyond a discussion of the photographic impulse of visitors to dark tourist sites, however important this aspect is to the tourist experience. Exploring Holocaust representations and their various forms of memory construction on Instagram requires an understanding of a "Holocaust visuality" as more than just constituent parts of visual culture.

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[127] See #holocaust (a collection of roughly 600,000 photos) or #holocaustmemorial (featuring over 111,000 images) on Instagram. Though many invoke the hashtag in a literal sense, it is easy to see how particular sentiments and visual codes are woven throughout the categorization of images on Instagram. URL: https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/holocaust/ and https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/holocaustmemorial/ (accessed 10 January 2019).
[128] Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory*, 105.

Rather than arguing that the public's understanding of the Holocaust's semiotics has finite and discrete origins, I contend that the remediation of Holocaust imagery on Instagram extends from a public understanding of numerous collective visual representations of the Holocaust that have emerged over the past few decades, in different visual media. The Holocaust, as understood by the public, is not only a timeline of events, but a network of visual symbols – which includes objects, colours, shading, saturation, places, or even sentiments. A framework of visuality depends on the individual attempting to see, interpret, capture, and produce an image. Instagram photography functions as part of a wider "Holocaust visuality." Visuality here does not refer to simply the visual trappings of a photograph – digital, analog, nor material. Visuality involves the process of engaging with the visual. This includes the shifting relationship between the viewer, the act of viewing, and the finalized product that emerges through viewing. [129] Therefore, a Holocaust visuality is necessary to understanding the processes through which visitors understand spaces, objects, ephemera, and sentiments essential to Holocaust memory, and visually represent that understanding as a personal method for working through the Holocaust. Investigating and the connections between the performance of photography and the "process" of visuality mimics the work which visitors put into the creation of their images, and this work sheds new light on the processes of Holocaust memory transmission in an age where concerns over social media's communicative dominance abound, and when the number of survivors has begun to dwindle.

[129] Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, 13.

This sentiment is better explained through images. Take figure 2.1, for example. The image frames the main guard tower of Auschwitz-Birkenau in the background, blurred; the entire image is black and white, and its focus is obscured, with the exception of a single red rose, nearly centered in the image, laid on the train rails.[130] One can hardly tell – given how blurry the background of the image is – that the rose is at Auschwitz, except that the combination of the rose, railway tracks, and the tall guard tower in the background, together compose an image that relies almost entirely on the viewer's cultural, historical, and literary understanding of Auschwitz as a symbol of the Holocaust.[131]

*Figure 0.1. A rose at Auschwitz. Image copyright Instagram user @fabriziodellacorte, 2 October 2018.*

[130] The caption of the image (translated from Italian) is an excerpt from Primo Levi's preface to Léon Poliakov's *Auschwitz* (1968) and reads as such: "Auschwitz is outside of us, but it is all around us, in the air. The plague has died away, but the infection still lingers and it would be foolish to deny it. […] rejection of human solidarity, obtuse and cynical indifference to the suffering of others, abdication of the intellect and of moral sense to the principle of authority, and above all, at the root of everything, a sweeping tide of cowardice, a colossal cowardice which masks itself as warring virtue, love of country and faith in an idea." Collected in Primo Levi, *The Black Hole of Auschwitz*, ed. Marco Belpoliti, trans. Sharon Wood (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 28.

[131] Here, I say literary, for the photographer has also engaged with the works of Primo Levi – as translated above.

The single splash of red at Auschwitz has become an extremely popular editing technique among visitors. The use of red (in a world of black, white, and greyscale) is borrowed from Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993).[132] Upon viewing the image (and several hundred others like it), it seems simple to understand why the visual impact of *Schindler's List* has been continually rendered in public visual representations of the Holocaust. *Schindler's List*. As an Academy Award-winning Hollywood film, is relatively accessible, and one would be hard-pressed to find someone who has not seen it. Contemporary and media historian Christoph Classen argues:

> The hybrid amalgamation of history and memory, and of the imaginary and the real, as well as the combination of dramaturgies of popular culture with an instinct for what can (not) be shown – all of these factors have helped *Schindler's List* to render a representation of the founding Holocaust myth in Western societies that can be sensually experienced while being emotionally impressive at the same time.[133]

While the debate over the validity of *Schindler's List* as a tenet of Holocaust memory continues in scholarship on Holocaust representation, to the public, *Schindler's List* remains central to an understanding of visual representations of the Holocaust and is a

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[132] The impact of *Schindler's List*, its value, and its merit as a historical text has been heavily debated in Holocaust studies, film and media studies, and works on the Holocaust and visual culture. The film was adapted by Spielberg from Thomas Keneally's book about Oskar Schindler in 1993. *Schindler's List* remains one of the primary examples of the Holocaust's representation in film, and its visual impact remains integral to the public's understanding of the history of the Holocaust. The significance of the colour red is drawn from the colour palette of the film itself – which runs entirely in black and white, with the exception of the coat of a young girl. This is used to visually distinguish the young girl during the liquidation of the Kraków Ghetto. For a brief list of titles which explore the relationship between Holocaust memory and *Schindler's List* – see Yosefa Loshitzky, ed., *Spielberg's Holocaust: Critical Perspectives on Schindler's List* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); for more on the use of melodrama as a method for historical representation, see Jeremy Maron, "Affective Historiography: *Schindler's List*, Melodrama and Historical Representation," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 27, no. 4 (2009): 65-94; see also Christoph Classin's assessment, "Balanced Truth: Stephen Spielberg's *Schindler's List* among History, Memory, and Popular Culture," *History & Memory* 47 (2009): 77-102. Countless more titles exist.

[133] Christoph Classin, "Balanced Truth: Stephen Spielberg's *Schindler's List* among History, Memory, and Popular Culture," *History & Theory* 47 (2009): 77.

visual style which continues to be emulated, almost unthinkingly.[134] Figure 2.1 demonstrates the ways in which the public pull visual styles from all fields of Holocaust representation – in this case, film and geography – building an image of what the Holocaust "should" look like, and then weaving that expectation through photography.

The visuality of *Schindler's List* is not a matter of the confluence of physical *spaces* where the Holocaust occurred and the Holocaust and filmic memory which represents it – for Oskar Schindler's encounter with the girl in red happens during the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto. It is the combination of a Holocaust visuality with a culturally-rooted memorialization of the Holocaust that gives this image and its framing meaning. Figure 2.2 demonstrates this more effectively. The photo is a contemporary image, captured by a photographer at Peter Eisenmann's Memorial to the Murdered Jews if Europe in Berlin (hereafter referred to as the "Berlin Memorial.") Featuring a child running in between the *Stellae* that comprise the memorial, the photographer has opted to edit the image to feature only the colour of the child's clothing, including a red coat.

[134] Alison Landsberg has argued that watching a film constitutes as an experiential encounter. She proposes that "even within a narrative film there can be powerful moments of interruption that break the illusion of connection with a character or a sense of understanding exactly what their experience was like, thus prompting questions and critiques and compelling self-evaluation. I see the potential for the production of critical thought and meaning making following from these moments of interruption, moments in which an encounter occurs between viewer and film." Following Landsberg, it is understandable that, in some ways, the public has experienced an encounter with the Holocaust prior to their visit to Auschwitz – through film or other vehicles of memory. See Alison Landsberg, *Engaging the Past: Mass Culture and the Production of Historical Knowledge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 36. For more on the development of early American Holocaust "films," see Lawrence Baron, "The First Wave of American Holocaust 'Films,' 1945-1959," *The American Historical Review* 115, no. 1 (2010): 90-114.

*Figure 0.2. "Shot this back in 2009 at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin." Image copyright @havecamerawillshoot, 14 June 2018.*

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 demonstrate how individuals on Instagram incorporate several different visual layers of the Holocaust into a photo's staging, signifying a visual memory-making process interpolating between filmic memory and photography. Figure 2.2 highlights a number of these visual associations, chiefly the Berlin Memorial and visual architecture of *Schindler's List*. Finally, the heavy use of black and white in figures 2.1 and 2.2 relates to an even earlier archival Holocaust visuality characterized by the non-colorized photos taken by perpetrators, bystanders, and the liberators of the death camps.

*Figure 0.3. A red thread on the barbed wire at Auschwitz. Image copyright @lauria7, 27 January 2018.*

Figure 2.3 incorporates the *Schindler's List* trope another way still, through the photographer's attention to small details on the grounds of the former death camp. Looking closely, one cannot help but see that this image does not assume a palette of black and white, instead was taken in the winter; however, the photographer has chosen to filter the image in such a way that it washes out the background, throwing the foreground of barbed wire and red thread into stark realization. The red thread – a snagged jacket from a former visitor, mostly likely, draws the eye to the right-hand frame of the image, resting on the periphery of the viewer's vision, giving the viewer the sense that though the red stands out boldly against the washed-out background, it could have been easy to miss had they not been looking closely. Once the viewer catches sight of the thread, however, it stands out against the washed-out background of the image; to compare this visualization to *Schindler's List*, it is the colour of the red coat which catches the eye of Liam Neeson's Oskar Schindler at the last minute. This same red coat

serves as an eventual symbol for the death of the young girl after the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto, and once re-noticed by Schindler, spurs him to action.[135]

The above images indicate the ways in which tourist images incorporate multivariant visual codes, whether the photographer has directly or indirectly encountered these narratives. Visitors to Auschwitz, the Berlin Holocaust Memorial, or the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum are typically not professional historians, nor are they experts in Holocaust representations or historiography. Yet, through the historical development of a Holocaust visuality, tourist photographers rely on a visual code for understanding and replicating what the Holocaust *looks* like. It is for this reason that categorizing and subcategorizing Holocaust tourist images has become problematic, and difficult; as the spatial component is so closely connected to the symbols of the Holocaust, with Auschwitz-Birkenau serving as the chief example. When the spaces of the Holocaust are synonymous with the symbols of the Holocaust, it remains difficult to separate space and symbol from memory. Figure 2.4 is an excellent case in point. Instagram user @alanmalo's image features the guard tower of Auschwitz, populated with tourists, layered over a sky of discarded victims' shoes.[136]

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[135] Steven Spielberg, *Schindler's List*, (1993; Universal Studios, 1993).
[136] Michael Bernard-Donals has written about the function of the shoes in the context of the USHMM. The shoes are intended by curators to make accessible an inaccessible past through the familiarity of everyday objects. Though this was the early intention, Bernard-Donals has found that rather than serving as a metonym (one small story in the context of a larger whole), they function as a synecdoche, an single symbol which stands in for the whole of Holocaust history. See "Synecdochic Memory at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum," *Urbana* 74 no. 5 (2012): 417-436.

*Figure 0.4. "El Horror." Image copyright @alanmalo, 3 December 2017.*

There are several ways to read this image. The backdrop of shoes serves as an important and indeed ubiquitous visual signifier of the immensity of mass death, and the layering of a present-day Auschwitz overtop of the landscape of victims' shoes splices two images, each serving as a separate synecdoche for the Holocaust on their own. The shoes are photographed from overhead, and the black and white filter makes it difficult to discern whether @alanmalo took a photo of the shoes himself or borrowed from archival photos; the black and white of the backdrop, juxtaposed with the color of present-day highlights the specter of the past – ever present – while visitors explore the grounds of the former death camp. Or, perhaps, it was a sunny day at Auschwitz and @alanmalo felt the weather did not match the anticipated and expected aura of the photo itself. The framing of the photo pulls the eye toward the vanishing point of the tracks and to the tourists, still surrounded above, below, and behind, by shoes, signifying the overwhelming aura of death at the former camp. This reinforces the notion that the shoes are, as Jeffrey

Feldman argues, "not about representation so much as an aid to help us pay attention."[137] The image brings together several visual themes at the forefront of public knowledge about the Holocaust, such as the precarity of historical distance, always just below the surface of the present, and the difficult relationship between the Holocaust victim and fascination tourists have with spaces of disease, death, and depravity.

This is Holocaust visuality – the complicated, interconnected ways of seeing that the public harnesses to access a closer connection to a past tragedy. For Mirzoeff, "seeing is not believing, but interpreting. Visual images succeed or fail according to the extent that we can interpret them successfully."[138] Holocaust visuality brings the many iconic symbols of the Holocaust into the frame, exploring the ways in which the public engage with and represent these symbols in cohesive expressions of their encounters with the Holocaust. Beyond the scope of the Holocaust, the framework of "visuality" has become central to modern life and should extend to a strategic understanding of "the history of modern visual media understood collectively, rather than fragmented into disciplinary units such as film, television, art, and video."[139] Similarly, media scholar Irit Rogoff argues that an understanding of the field of visual culture is concerned with three different components:

> […] the images that come into being and are claimed by various, and often contested histories. […] there are the viewing apparatuses that we have at our disposal that are guided by cultural models such as narrative or technology. […] there are the subjectivities of identification or desire or abjection from which we view and by which we inform what we view.[140]

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[137] Jeffrey Feldman, "Untying Memory: Shoes as Holocaust Memorial Experience," in Edna Nashon, ed. *Jews and Shoes* (New York and Oxford: Berg, 2008), 129.
[138] Mirzoeff, *Introduction to Visual Culture*, 13.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Irit Rogoff, "Studying Visual Culture," in *The Visual Culture Reader*, 2nd edition, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 28.

Mirzoeff and Rogoff support what is now being termed the iconic or pictorial turn. Digital media scholars Dale Hudson and Patricia R. Zimmerman argue that this is indicative of a shift from "*interpretations of representation* toward *encounters with presentation*."[141] This shift is what I am concerned with in working through the history of how the Holocaust has been represented visually, because increasingly this sentiment is being echoed in Holocaust studies and the ways in which we look at the Holocaust.[142] While the field on the Holocaust and visual culture is growing in a variety of disciplines, pulling these disciplines together to understand Holocaust visuality and how publics relate to that visuality remains an ongoing process. It is for this reason that this dissertation brings together the tenets of Holocaust visual culture into a single conversation. Drawing on photography, architecture, and museum studies, and even art history, we will explore how Holocaust visuality is constituted as a framework for understanding the transmission of Holocaust-related imagery. Visuality thus demonstrates the ways in which everyday people see, emplot, and reinterpret genocidal violence they have no personal relationship with.

It is imperative to understand how Holocaust images on Instagram function as part of a wider Holocaust visuality. The visitor's relationship to the creation and display of these images requires contextualizing them within the history of photo sharing and its affective workings, which often extend beyond the lifespan of Instagram and other digital photo sharing platforms. Instagram should be viewed as embedded within a history of

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[141] Original emphasis. See Hudson and Zimmerman, 3.
[142] See Imogen Dalziel, "Romantic Auschwitz: Examples and Perceptions of Contemporary Visitor Photography at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum" *Holocaust Studies* 22, no. 2-3 (2016): 185-207 and Daniel Reynolds, "Consumers or Witnesses? Holocaust Tourists and the Problem of Authenticity," *Journal of Consumer Culture* 16, no. 2 (2016): 334-353.

photo sharing – a practice that emerged alongside photography itself. Echoing Hirsch once more, much is at stake here: "not only a personal/familial/generation sense of ownership and protectiveness, but an evolving ethical and theoretical discussion about the workings of trauma, memory, and intergenerational acts of transfer."[143] In this instance, the Instagram photograph serves as a trace of this intergenerational act of transfer; considering Holocaust tourist photography on Instagram as embedded in the context of a wider Holocaust visuality demonstrates the ways in which seeing the Holocaust in a contemporary setting is the product of a historical trajectory.

On the one hand, photographs are a force of denotation, pictorially representing "what is there;" through processes of indexicality and referentiality, photographs appear to capture moments in time, exactly as they are.[144] What cannot be forgotten, however, is the power of connotation which suggests that images caught on camera draw upon symbolism and notions of universality and are embedded within a semiotic web which lends meaning to the visual representation within the frame. Roland Barthes argues, "photographs have been thought to work by twinning denotation and connotation, matching the ability to depict the world 'as it is' with the ability to couch what is depicted

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[143] Hirsch*, The Generation of Postmemory*, 2.

[144] Famously, Roland Barthes has written about the nature and meaning of the photograph as both a pictorial trace of "what is there," and the photograph's "aura," which complicates the visual referent, imbuing the photo with more meaning than that of a typical material object. See *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: 1981). Theories of photography and the meaning of images have been expanded upon by W.J.T. Mitchell in his work *Picture Theory* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1994). For more on theories of photography in historical contexts, see visual anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards' work with Janice Hart, *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (London & New York: Routledge, 2004), and Edwards' single-authored works "Photography and the Material Performance of the Past," *History and Theory* 48, no. 4 (2009): 130-150 and *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and Historical Imagination, 1885-1918* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2012).

in a symbolic frame consonant with broader understandings of the world."[145] In the context of Holocaust tourist photography, the "ideal visitor" does not exist – all visitors carry their own interpretations of the past, present, and future, as well as their own ideas concerning the representability of the Holocaust. What is more, Instagram allows for the manipulation of photographs in nearly the same instant in which they are captured; this gives the photography creative freedom over many aspects of the creation of the image. Therefore, the "reading" of these photographs, relies on an interpretive framework which cannot effectively be captured discursively, highlighting the tension that exists between visuality and language.

Thus, my discussion of images shared on Instagram finds new ground in this conversation and reconsiders visual culture in the context of Holocaust memorial practices in the social mediascape. Historian Eva Pfanzelter has argued that "the involvement with the online dimension of the Holocaust by now is a decisive aspect of the culture of remembrance."[146] Photographs taken at the Holocaust museums, memorials, and spaces, and then shared on Instagram demonstrate many things on behalf of the visitor. It is for this reason that Alan Radley argues: "Photographs are not just pictures of the world (as it is) but are also resources for communicating how it might have been and what it could be in the future. As such, pictures are more than representations, because they are also resources, mediators that, along with words, give shape to ideas."[147] And yet, visitor photographs are not without their limitations; like any source, they serve as a visual indicator of possibility, created in a lucky combination of

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[145] Roland Barthes, quoted in Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*, 3.
[146] Eva Pfanzelter, "At the Crossroads with Public History: Mediating the Holocaust on the Internet," *Holocaust Studies* 21, no. 4 (2015): 265.
[147] Alan Radley, "What People Do with Pictures," *Visual Studies* 25 (2010): 268. (268-279)

space, place, and agency. While there are thousands of Instagram images captured in Holocaust spaces and then shared on the mobile platform, a close reading of these images readily presents the constraints of the platform itself and the possibilities and challenges posed by photography in both physical and digital Holocaust geographies.

**Conclusion: "Outsider Photography" and How the Holocaust *Should* Look**

The production and replication of iconic Holocaust imagery stems from a rooted cultural understanding of what the Holocaust "should" look like – from the documentary coverage from the liberation of various concentration camps, to the circulation and recirculation of these images in archives, documentaries, and Hollywood cinema. These visual referents are easy to identify in most cursory searches within this archive, and there are many motivations which serve the act of replicating this imagery.[148] Here I would like to invoke Young's memory arc, connecting it with Roland Barthes' well-known work on photography. The memory arc, which Young characterizes as the ephemeral force which demands monumentalization, functions as an impulse to remember and give memory form. It is felt by individuals who visit memorial spaces every day and does not necessarily differ from Barthes' discussion of the photographic referent. The photographic referent is, at its basis, an incomplete process for recognizing the link between the contemporary viewing body, and an inaccessible past and space.[149] This process will never be completed, because its existence depends on the gaze of the viewer. Young argues similarly about the process of memorialization:

[148] Dalziel, 188.
[149] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 76-81.

> […] the best way to save the monument, if it worth saving at all, is to enlarge its life and texture to include its genesis in historical time […] Memory as represented in the monument might also be regarded as a never-to-be-completed process, animated by the forces of history bringing it into being.[150]

Though not a process of monumentalization, the digital and visual Holocaust archive should be thought of as the never-to-be-completed process described above. Considering the shifting role and aesthetics of Holocaust memory in the age of social media is a process emblematic of memory growth in an era of postmemory. Conceptually, it would benefit the historian to think of the ways in which Instagram and other social media platforms serve as spaces to give publics voice; the replicating imagery, invocation of space and place, and the manner in which the public grapples with Holocaust representation remains entrenched in a historical and visual arc of looking at and remembering the Holocaust.

I agree with Wulf Kansteiner's argument that in museums, visitors have little control over the aesthetic arrangement of the pasts they are warned against forgetting. Luckily, through the advent of social media, visitors are still able to "craft the images and stories with which they identify, enjoying a considerable sense of cultural power linked to the circumstance that the figures and words on the screen follow commands within split-seconds."[151] The use of framing, filters, and arrangement within their own Instagram feeds, coinciding with thoughtful consideration of the Holocaust's representation in museums allow the visitor/photographer to connect a sense of individual aesthetic self-fashioning to a wider visual and digital Holocaust narrative. Just as visitors connect their experiences with wider social structures, the individual tourism photo centers on the

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[150] Young, *The Stages of Memory*, 16.
[151] Kansteiner, 405.

perceptions of the tourist body, focusing on the power of the individual visitor in relation to the structure of the hegemonic museum. Though tourist photos have different filters, or borders, and some visitors take numerous photos, choosing to create a collage or capture aspects from as many different angles as they can. These micro-interventions are efforts to curate singular encounters with the museum, often within the confined space of the frame itself. What is more, the mode through which we view these images changes their meaning, and their intent. While not all images taken in Holocaust spaces share in the reverent behaviour espoused by the images in this chapter, these photographic acts demonstrate a consideration for these spaces as container for the history and memory of the Holocaust. Through this tension, we can note the ways in which visitors to Holocaust spaces do not disregard the authority of memory, but rather that visitors recognize the importance of memory and collaborate with the institutions, memorials, and spaces in which they find themselves – by sharing in the publicly networked act of digitized witnessing.

"Outsider" photography best describes the efforts of the public to photograph their encounters with the Holocaust. It borrows from the phrase "historical outsider," explored in depth by public historian Benjamin Filene – who defines the term as such:

> They aren't consciously defining themselves in opposition to universities, museums, and historic sites. In some ways, the truth is more disquieting: instead of defying museums and universities, the outsiders mostly don't think about them at all. It's worse to be ignored than disdained. The outsiders are just pursuing history that means something to them as directly as possible. Above all, that involves establishing emotional connections to the past.[152]

[152] Benjamin Filene, "Passionate Histories: 'Outsider' History-Makers and What They Teach Us," *The Public Historian* 34, no. 1 (2011): 14.

Importantly – though the historical outsider does not find themselves actively thinking about the past in an ongoing manner like historians in museums, the academy, or at historic sites, this does not mean that they do not recognize the power of the pursuit of history. They pursue the past for reasons which are *sometimes* different than that of the historian. *Sometimes* is an important distinction, because I believe it would be difficult to find a historian that, in some way, does not establish their work on a foundation of their own emotional connections to the past.

The tourist and their photos provide a thriving emotional archive, an exceptional database for understanding how the public continues to engage with the Holocaust in the era of postmemory. The trajectory of earlier Holocaust visuality continues, though the debate over its representation has shifted slightly. As explored above, the concerns over visitor photography as an extension of dark tourism remains mired in questions of appropriate behaviour. The emergence of the "selfies in inappropriate places" debate has caused public outcry many times over, often concluding with the proclamation that the age of social media will lead to the destruction of reverence, rather than the production of memory in a new age.[153] While it is certainly fair to evaluate social media sources with a note of caution, this dissertation demonstrates the ways in which Instagram, "outsider" photographs are key sources for understanding how visual representations of the Holocaust evolve over time while continuing to circulate in our digital and interconnected world. Historicizing Instagram as creating new narrative and memorial opportunities allows us to see networked photography as part of the process of memory formation in a postmemory moment.

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[153] See Bernard E. Harcourt, *Exposed: Desire and Disobedience in the Digital Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015).

## Chapter 2

## Affirming Auschwitz

As demonstrated in the first chapter, there is a significant literature dedicated to the media memory of the Holocaust in literature, film, art, architecture, and the history of photography. However, little scholarly attention has been paid to how amateur photographic practices remain embedded in the ways we picture the Holocaust, with even less focus on these photographs as networked digital images. I use the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum as a case study, investigating the ways in which the it has cultivated an online authority in collaboration with its millions of yearly visitors. My analysis begins with the museum's official Instagram account (@auschwitzmemorial). In doing so, I explore the ways in which the social media team reinforces their role as an authority on the Holocaust through Instagram. The need for @auschwitzmemorial to establish itself as an authority is indicative of the ways in which social media has changed the landscape of Holocaust memory and education. Through Instagram, visitors to Auschwitz and other concentration camps affirm the reality of Holocaust landscapes as spaces of postmemory encounters, engaging in a dialogue with the museum staff on Instagram.

While the former concentration camp is required to maintain the fine line between tourist destination and place of memory, many visitors to Auschwitz take seriously their charge to uphold the lessons of the past. Holocaust and German memory scholar Daniel Reynolds asks whether, in this vein, we might "consider Holocaust tourists as active producers of collective memory, historical knowledge, and ethical reflection, who are

able to distinguish between the authentic and inauthentic dimensions of their experiences?" This dissertation answers, resoundingly, yes, although not always in the ways we expect.[154] By sharing their images of their journey to and through Auschwitz on Instagram, visitors/photographers transport the visuality of the Holocaust to the digital mediasphere; the images are made mobile through the networks of hashtags and geotags, making images readily available and easy to find through one's smartphone. Beyond the mobility of these images, they serve as tourist interventions in the visuality of the Holocaust. These images demonstrate how visitors frame, capture, and conceptualize their encounters with Auschwitz as a space and as a symbol. This chapter argues that the image of Auschwitz on Instagram is the product of a multi-step process of postmemory, one taken very seriously by visitors to the former death camp.

Visually and chronologically, Auschwitz is a natural starting point. It is impossible to imagine a Holocaust visuality without the camp universe and its imprint upon public memory. Much of the existing literature on tourist photography at Holocaust memory sites remains preoccupied with the question of "why" tourists photograph Auschwitz. This chapter interrogates the performance and emplacement of visual geographies of the Holocaust in the age of social media. The visitor to Auschwitz uses a smartphone and Instagram as platforms which give voice to their act of witnessing. Although the images themselves are site-specific, Auschwitz's iconic symbolism is made mobile through the circulation of tourist photography, which gives life to, enacts, and

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[154] Daniel Reynolds, "Consumers or Witnesses? Holocaust Tourists and the Problem of Authenticity," *Journal of Consumer Culture* 16, no. 2 (2016): 335. (334-353). Arthur Chapman and Rebecca Hale's piece on the methodological and theoretical challenges presented by youth education and the Holocaust is also useful here. See Chapman and Hale, "Understanding what young people know: Methodological and theoretical challenges in researching young people's knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust," *Holocaust Studies* 23, no. 3 (2017): 289-313.

reenacts the tourist performance of memory formation. To access these sentiments, I explore singular visitor photographs and the official Instagram account of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum. By examining the interactions between these individuals and the official Instagram account, I demonstrate that Holocaust landscapes are the stage for networked acts of postmemory that gain meaning from and simultaneously transcend the space of origins. To trace this out, this chapter will focus on several things: the ways in which Holocaust memorial sites embed and exert historical and memorial authority on social media, how visitor photographs take up these injunctions, and how their photos challenge and possibly even extend institutional ways of seeing the Holocaust.

**The Authority of @auschwitzmemorial on Instagram**

On June 17, 2017, The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum's official Instagram profile made a request of the platform:

> Dear @instagram, over 25,000 people already follow the official account of the Auschwitz Memorial here on #instagram. We try to show that images can be a very powerful tool of remembering history. Perhaps it's time to verify this account. Thank you.[155]

The verification of the account on Instagram would grant the @auschwitzmemorial account an "official" status, allowing it to function as an authoritative site of memory on Instagram. This post was met with slight resistance – not from Instagram, but from their

[155] Auschwitz Memorial and Museum (Instagram user @auschwitzmemorial), 17 June 2017. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BVcugThltRe/. Accessed 17 January 2017.

own virtual community of remembrance. After a discussion over the use of the term "official", one user commented on the post (responding to another user):

> […] The museum represent [sic] the museum grounds sure, but that is only a small fraction of Auschwitz. I think its morally unacceptable to expect to be an official account for Auschwitz. An official account for a museum should have been the correct words. You certainly do not represent the Auschwitz my family suffered in on this Instagram [sic] page, not in all of your posts so far.[156]

@craigcohenhistory's assertion that the Auschwitz that occupies his family's memory has not been represented or included in the "official" visual representation of Auschwitz on Instagram is not uncommon. There is hardly a consensus on how the Holocaust should represented. It is also understandable that the immensity of the genocide and the wide range of victim experiences during the Holocaust cannot be encapsulated in grainy, filtered photos of barbed wire fencing or frost-ridden grounds.[157] This has somewhat to do with the difficulties of encapsulating all memorialized aspects of the victim experience through photography. But mostly, it has to do with presenting the Auschwitz the public expects to millions of Instagram followers.

@auschwitzmemorial navigates these waters successfully by engaging with their various publics and involving them in the Holocaust's remembrance. This point has been expertly argued by Gemma Commane and Rebekah Potton, who state that "Instagram offers a space where the Holocaust and its victims can be remembered in the digital age via a medium that is accessible, open, and interactive."[158] By encouraging their visitors

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[156] User @craigcohenhistory in response to user @unmanageablehairdontcare, 17 June 2017. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BVcugThltRe/.

[157] See Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, "Incongruous Images: Before, During, and After the Holocaust," *History and Theory* 48, no. 4 (2009): 9-25.

[158] Gemma Commane and Rebekah Potton, "Instagram and Auschwitz: a critical assessment of the impact social media has on Holocaust representation," *Holocaust Studies* (2018): 20.

and followers to share their own experiences at Auschwitz on Instagram, @auschwitzmemorial can demonstrate to larger numbers of people that Holocaust memory can be collaborative, and that individual encounters with the Holocaust are worth sharing with the world. Increased visibility requires the staff at Auschwitz to maintain the vision of the of the "imagined Auschwitz" on Instagram. This means that the @auschwitzmemorial attempts maintain a recognizable visual framework, highlighting the former camp's status as a "place everyone should see." This can be complicated, for the social media management team must balance the expectations of followers who have visited the museum, those who have not, and their own educational mandate. Most frequently, @auschwitzmemorial posts photos which depict the history of the camp as visually as possible. These photos are varied, often showcasing parts of the site that are not as well known, or photos that shift the ambiance of the site, communicate visual symbolism, or engage with the spatiality of the history of Auschwitz and the history of the Holocaust itself. What is more, the Auschwitz social media team actively shares authority with their audience by engaging directly with them on Instagram, re-sharing and fully crediting their visitors' photography, and attempting to leave virtually no aspect or perspective of Auschwitz's space un-represented on social media.

Instagram is not the only digital space where the Auschwitz Memorial Museum crafts and exerts its authority. The Museum has an active Pinterest presence (figure 3.1), making use of the platform's cataloguing and organizational capabilities to showcase aspects of the museum's display and artefact collections not typically seen on Instagram.[159] They are also active on YouTube, using the platform to share videos of

[159] Pinterest: Auschwitz Memorial and Museum, https://pl.pinterest.com/auschwitzmuseum/boards/ (accessed 17 October 2018).

events, interviews, and archival film.[160] Space does not allow for an in-depth exploration of both Pinterest and YouTube as platforms, but instead demonstrate how the Auschwitz Memorial Museum has embraced social media programming to engage with their visitors, audiences, and cultivate a digital authority which matches the authority beyond the digital sphere.

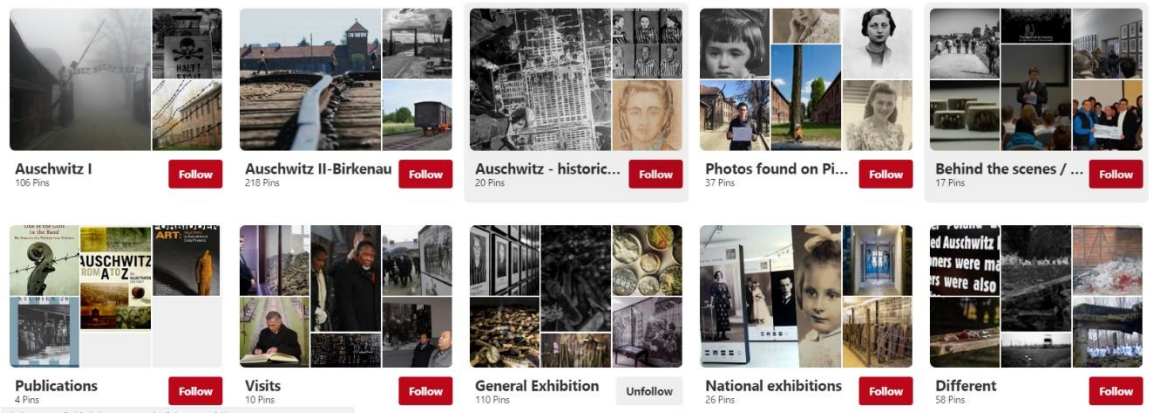


*Figure 2.1. Screen grab of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum's Pinterest boards. Image by Meghan Lundrigan, October 2018.*

It is important here to differentiate between the authority of place and the authority of expertise. While the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial museum certainly has a claim to both, its authority as a place operates differently from the authority of the USHMM or YVHHM. This is primarily because the grounds of the former death camp assert a particular spatial and symbolic authority, as the actual site on which Nazi killings were carried out. For this reason, Auschwitz occupies a space in the public's imagination of what the Holocaust was, both as an event and as a symbol of a hate-fueled ideology. Moreover, in the vernacular, Auschwitz has taken on iconic status, as representative of all camps and facilities, despite the fact that it was not the only site where Nazi killings were

[160] YouTube: Auschwitz Memorial Museum, https://www.youtube.com/user/AuschwitzMemorial/featured (accessed 13 November 2018).

carried out. It is the symbol of the Holocaust tout court. When various publics picture the Holocaust, they picture Auschwitz: barbed wire fences, crematoria, and gas chambers.[161] This is due to the widespread availability of Holocaust images which enlist the depiction of this particular camp, its iron gate, and the railroad leading into the facility, cementing the visual codes of Auschwitz in public memory.[162] To reinforce this notion, I draw on media scholar Marita Sturken, who argues that icon photographs lodge in people's memories. They come to "us not from our individual experience but from our mediated experience of photographs, documentaries and popular culture."[163] The museum employees in charge of the Auschwitz Memorial and Museum's social media projects certainly understand this, claiming responsibility for photographic representations of the visitor experience shared on Instagram. The @auschwitzmemorial says of their Instagram strategy (in response to @craigcohenhistory): "Yet here we decided to mainly focus on showing other people photography of the Memorial as we feel there is a need to promote respectful photography as a way of commemoration."[164] Through image and history, raising awareness about the Holocaust on Instagram upholds the founding tenets of Auschwitz as a memorial and a museum. As a "Truth Site," Auschwitz "is a legible, unambiguous symbol that touches the fullness of human sensitivity."[165] Though @auschwitzmemorial delineates between their own work on social media and the work

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[161] This is easy to see with a quick hashtag search on Instagram. URL: https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/auschwitz/. Accessed 14 November 2018.
[162] Cornelia Brink, "Secular Icons: Looking at Photographs from Nazi Concentration Camps," *History & Memory* 12, no. 1 (2000): 136.
[163] Marita Sturken, "Memory, Consumerism and Media: Reflections on the Emergence of the Field," *Memory Studies* 1, no. 1 (2008): 75.
[164] Auschwitz Memorial and Museum (Instagram user @auschwitzmemorial), 17 June 2017. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BVcugThltRe/.
[165] Auschwitz Birkenau Memorial 2007 Annual Report, 7. For a complete list of museum reports, see Auschwitz Birkenau Museum and Memorial, "Museum Reports," http://auschwitz.org/en/museum/museum-reports/ (accessed 12 May 2018).

of Holocaust historians at Auschwitz, they demonstrate the weight of the multifaceted nature of Holocaust memorialization on Instagram: to impact publics through photography, and to stand at the forefront of historical truth and representation in the face of globalization.

Thus, the sharing of Auschwitz photos is tied to the physical reconstruction of Auschwitz as a site of authenticity, horror, and possible reconciliation. The Auschwitz Memorial and Museum foregrounds this representation, noting:

> […] we are left with the authenticity of the Memorial. Today, this authenticity must bear witness and speak to us so that, in the background, we can almost hear the voices of those who have fallen silent. We must all take care of this place where things happened that left an everlasting mark on our European civilization, and all human civilization. […] Caring for this place is not exclusively an obligation to past generations, to the victims and the survivors. To a large degree, it is also an obligation towards the generations to come.[166]

According to the Museum itself, Auschwitz remains as one of the lasting, physical artefacts of the Holocaust. It is Auschwitz's undeniability as a place, and as a beacon of the authentic sublime which has helped the social media team to construct an online visual identity for the former death camp. By positioning themselves on the front lines of historical truth and reality while also encouraging visitors to engage in contemporary behaviours, @auschwitzmemorial functions as a space for education and dialogue. In this way, @auschwitzmemorial has recruited thousands of Instagram followers for the work of preserving the visual memory of the Holocaust using the tools and technologies available to the public.

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[166] Piotr M.A. Cywiński, *Auschwitz Birkenau Memorial 2009 Annual Report* (Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau w Oświęcimiu, 2010) 5.

**Tourist Anxieties: Performance at Auschwitz**

How might photography be used as an entry-point into the movements of tourists at Auschwitz? Holocaust performance scholar Samantha Mitschke has argued that the journey to Auschwitz and the visitor's subsequent tour of the grounds constitutes an act of site-specific performance. She argues that at Auschwitz in particular, "the performance itself is both inspired by and responsive to the environment in which it takes place."[167] It is helpful that Mitschke delineates distinct aspects of tourist performance, highlighting the role that the profane plays when considering the impact of smartphone and social media usage on Holocaust memory today.[168] The act of taking a tourist photo at Auschwitz is a confirmation of dominant act of memory making, but it is also a method for confronting the traditional expectations of tourist behavior and experience. Geographer Jonas Larsen has argued that "contemporary tourism is intrinsically constructed culturally, socially, and materially through images and performances of photography, and vice versa."[169] If we consider the landscapes and pathways of contemporary Holocaust memorial sites to be connected to the public's understanding of the Holocaust, then photos taken of the Holocaust memorial landscape are an essential starting point for an analysis of the role Instagram plays in the production of certain types of images. It helps showcase, stage, and give voice to Auschwitz's emplotment as a place and as a symbol. By taking photos at Auschwitz, the visitor learns how to represent the

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[167] Samantha Mitschke, "Sacred, the Profane, and the Space In Between: Site-Specific Performance at Auschwitz," *Holocaust Studies* 22, no. 2-3 (2016): 229-230.
[168] Ibid. 230.
[169] Jonas Larsen, "Geographies of Tourist Photography: Choreographies and Performances," in *Geographies of Communication: The Spatial Turn in Media Studies*, Jesper Falkheimer and André Jansson, eds. (Sweden: Nordicom, 2006), 243.

Holocaust on camera and then on Instagram. Thus, in the age of social media, Instagram photography is both a product and performance of tourism and Holocaust postmemory. Visitor photography at Auschwitz has the power to extend and challenge established forms of Holocaust visuality.

A substantial tourist attraction, Cole has argued that Auschwitz is "the symbol of the murder of all six million Jews […]"[170] In 2014 roughly 1.53 million people visited Auschwitz, tripling the number of visitors in 2001.[171] The site has over 12,000 reviews on TripAdvisor, and organized group tours are widely advertised and available for private groups.[172] Apart from highlighting questions of preservation, finances, and tourist behaviours, tension between the role of the individual as "tourist" at sites of dark memory has been explored in depth by scholars of dark tourism.[173] Perhaps unsurprisingly, the transformation of Auschwitz into a museum and site of memory for tourists was plagued by concerns over the visitor. While many agreed that Auschwitz should be preserved as a memory site for future generations, the International Auschwitz Committee (IAC) was deeply anxious about the potential behavior of tourists.[174] Today, visitors are required to take a guided tour, though time is incorporated for brief breaks typically before moving

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[170] Tim Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, 110. This point is frequently reinforced by the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum. They note, "Auschwitz symbolizes the entire history of the Shoah and the whole system of concentration camps. Auschwitz symbolizes the unprecedented high-water mark of evil." Bartosz Bartyzel, Jarosław Mensfelt, and Paweł Sawicki, eds. *Auschwitz-Birkenau Report 2009*.
[171] Piotr M.A. Cywiński, *Auschwitz-Birkenau Annual 2014 Report* (Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau w Oświęcimiu, 2015), 5.
[172] Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum on TripAdvisor. URL: http://bit.ly/TA-Auschwitz (accessed 13 November 2018).
[173] John Lennon and Malcolm Foley provide a cursory overview of the challenges faced by the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum in their work *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster* (Hampshire: Cengage Learning, 2010), but James E. Young provides a more in-depth analysis of these tensions in *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).
[174] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 153.

on from Auschwitz I to Auschwitz II-Birkenau. Groups of more than ten are required to use audio headsets, and photography is allowed, with the exception of the hall which features victims' hair and the basements of Block 11.[175] Despite the rules surrounding where one can take photos at Auschwitz, many visitors still attempt to photograph these places illicitly; pictures of the gas chambers and halls of victims' hair appear on Instagram rather frequently.[176]

Concern over the potentially inappropriate actions of tourists is not the product of social media; it is a common misconception that social media usage will breed irreverence. In fact, many visitors to Auschwitz deeply consider the question of "how to act," when facing up to physical spaces of the Holocaust. From the perspective of the visitor, this might have less to do with questions that have been raised about the moral implications of transforming a death camp into a tourist site, and more to do with the personal expectations visitors have for an encounter with the Holocaust.[177] For many visitors to Auschwitz, the intentional visit is very important to them. They carry their own touristic expectations, and I agree with Zoe Waxman's sentiment that "the camp may be the site of pilgrimage. Some visitors may view the displays in the museum as something

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[175] Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, "Visiting: Basic Information," 2018. URL: http://auschwitz.org/en/visiting/basic-information/ (accessed 13 November 2018).
[176] See @thelittlebrowngirlshow's photo of the gas chamber on Instagram, captioned "This is one of the gas chambers at #auschwitz it's blurry because I wasn't allowed to take a picture and also because I wanted to get out as fast as possible […] This will haunt me for a long time." https://www.instagram.com/p/Bp_XIdTnXcV/ (accessed 13 November 2018).
[177] Philip R. Stone, "Dark Tourism: Morality and New Moral Spaces," in Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone, eds. *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism* (Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Channel View Publications, 2009), 58.

rather like relics."[178] It is not uncommon for Instagram users to share their concerns about appropriate behavior on Instagram. @kedge85's expresses this sentiment, noting:

> I wasn't sure about posting pictures about Auschwitz until the guide made a good point at the end of the tour. There's less than 300 known survivors of these camps, that's 300 of well over 1,000,000 people, soon it will be our duty as a generation to make sure people know this really did happen! There is no way a picture or words can describe the scale of what happened, or simply just the size of the Birkenau camp, […] Most people didn't even survive more than a couple of hours after passing through the gates of the camp! […][179]

Having been granted the authority of memory transmission from their guide at Auschwitz, @kedge85 felt more comfortable using this newfound responsibility to post images captured at the camp on Instagram. Reynolds has argued that the spatial context of the site is part of the experience of photographing one's visit, arguing "the setting is so loaded with significance that something as common as taking a picture can engender introspection, if not in the tourist with the camera, then in other tourists observing the scene."[180] It is the very act of remembering where one is standing that causes the visitor to gaze inward, considering their own behavior as a visitor and witness; in the eyes of the museum's mandate, this contextual awareness underscores the dual role of the visitor as tourist and witness to Auschwitz. They assert "we cannot understand ourselves without understanding Auschwitz."[181]

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[178] Zoë Waxman, "Testimonies as Sacred Texts: The Sanctification of Holocaust Writing," *Past and Present* 206, no. 5 (2010): 321. (321-341). This has also been argued by Oren Baruch Stier and Jack Kugelmass has also described the act of visiting Auschwitz serves as a secular ritual, which reinforces Mitschke's argument that movement through Auschwitz as a tourist constitutes a specific type of performance. See "Why We Go to Poland: Holocaust Tourism as a Secular Ritual," in *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, ed. James E. Young (New York: Jewish Museum with Prestel-Verlag, 1994), 175–83.
[179] Figure 1. Image and caption copyright Instagram user @kedge85, 1 June 2015.
[180] Reynolds, 339.
[181] Piotr M.A. Cywiński, *Auschwitz Birkenau Memorial 2009 Annual Report* (Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau w Oświęcimiu, 2010), 5.

Anxiety over the photography and tourist etiquette at Auschwitz underscores additional aspects of the tourist experience in the age of social media: that they face the same crises of interpretation and representation which were common before and during the memory boom of the 1980s and 1990s. At stated above by @kedge85, "there is no way a picture or words can describe the scale of what happened […]"[182] In the eyes of the tourist, the photograph is an insufficient method for representing the Holocaust, functioning only as an extension of the tourist's own experience of having visited Auschwitz first-hand. Many of the images shared are products of the visitor's inability to grasp the reality of the Holocaust; they are unsure of how to react or absorb what they have seen, so they take a photo. This is ironic, given that anxieties over the Holocaust as a heavily photographed event have saturated our digital media.[183] For these visitors, the photograph is the confirming act; it functions as an accurate depiction of the reality of the camp universe, akin to the images captured in the wake of the liberation of the camps. In many ways, visitors to Auschwitz in the age of social media face two dilemmas of performance: whether to photograph, and whether to share. As explored in the previous chapter, concern over visitor photography at Auschwitz also underscores the problematic aspects of the visitor gaze. Struk has argued that the visitor occupies the same space as the Nazi officials that photographed and documented the Holocaust as it occurred, and it remains difficult for visitors to separate themselves from their knowledge of the space they occupy.[184] Often, this anxiety is harnessed to transform the visitor from onlooker

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[182] Image caption copyright Instagram user @kedge85, 1 June 2015. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/3Z0e7hyPbG/ (accessed 10 November 2018).
[183] Barbie Zelizer discusses the saturation point of Holocaust imagery at length in *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
[184] Struk, 214-15.

into visitor through historical distance. The knowledge attained through a visit to Auschwitz provides the visitor with the confidence and authority to visually document the former camp as a warning against future genocide and state-sponsored violence, allowing them to draw comparisons between their own experiences in our contemporary world

These varied tourist anxieties are present in framing and captioning of Instagram images. Often, the hesitance to photograph and share their images of their visit to Auschwitz triggers a crisis of representation, leaving the visitor/photographer questioning how a photo of Auschwitz should look, and whether they can appropriately represent it. @shreyajha notes, "I wondered if the picture misrepresented what the place stands for. Then I decided to go ahead and post it here."[185] Seemingly, @shreyajha's decision to share the image on Instagram placed her in a position of authority to demonstrate to their followers that though Auschwitz remains the horrific icon that people have heard about, "the beautiful sunset sky and the yellow flowers honour the 1.1 million who were murdered here."[186] In the moment between acknowledging Auschwitz as a place and representing it as a symbol, @shreyajha asserts their authority as witness of postmemory. Their acknowledgement that a beautiful photo of Auschwitz can create dissonance in the mind of the viewer is an extension of her own imagined knowledge of the true history of the camp, which she experienced for herself as a tourist.[187]

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[185] Caption by Instagram user @shreyajha, 13 November 2018. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BqHvT5XAsqv/ (accessed 14 November 2018).
[186] Ibid.
[187] It is important to distinguish a key difference here: the viewer *imagines* the true history of Auschwitz, based on what they have experienced as a tourist; I do not suggest that the modern tourist experiences the history of Auschwitz herself.

This complex set of behaviours learned and performed by amateur photographers at Auschwitz can be understood as confirming the spatial/memorial aspect of the Holocaust. This sense of affirmation comes from the first-hand experience of the tourist. Most of the images viewed on Instagram are the product of the visitor's first time at Auschwitz. In this way, tourist photography has a geographical function and a temporal one; the act of taking a photo embeds the "place that everyone should see" in the life-course and memory of the visitor, while also cementing the Holocaust within Instagram's nebulous platform. The spatial elements of the Holocaust remain integral to our understanding of the Holocaust and its representation, including where it happened and where it is remembered.

The shift in authority seen in @shreyaja's act of visiting, capturing, and sharing a photo of Auschwitz is represented in many other ways on Instagram. For other visitors, the tourist performance at Auschwitz is defined by tracing the same steps that victims took through the camp, and by physical being in a place where historic tragedy occurred. Some feel that until they begin their visit, they cannot adequately draw comparisons between what they currently see and the experiences of victims and survivors of the Holocaust. @natalie2012raynor confirms how this sense of movement intermingles with the memory of the path that the Holocaust victims took: "Making our way into Auschwitz on Saturday was a real eye opener especially when the train tracks came into view! As soon as I saw them I said to myself "this is the journey those innocent people would of [sic] taken the day the [sic] were taken to this horrible place."[188] By re-enacting the

[188] Caption from video by @natalie2012raynor, 12 November 2018. https://www.instagram.com/p/BqGSut_ALQ1/ (accessed 13 November 2018).

journey made by millions of victims, visitors are imbued with authority through performance. @hannahmossdavies (Figure 3.2) explains in the caption of their image: "Auschwitz-Birkenau. The last walk thousands made before experiencing the worst of humanity #auschwitz [sic]."[189] Their photograph of the guard tower is both an iconic image and an invocation of place, and links the public's spatial understanding of the Holocaust with the looming immensity of the genocide itself. The combination of the image, the caption, and the #Auschwitz hashtag relies on the authority of the image and place to fashion an "imagined Auschwitz" for viewers who never visit the camp itself. The Instagram image demonstrates how present-day geography, Holocaust symbolism, and visitor interpretation continuously intermingle. It is in this way that the Auschwitz Instagram image can conflate the space of the former death camp with symbols of the Holocaust. This method of looking at Auschwitz remains embedded in many of the photographic behaviours found on Instagram.

[189] Instagram user @hannahmossdavies, 4 June 2017. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BU7HpjmDnst/?tagged=auschwitz (accessed 17 October 2018).

*Figure 2.2. "Auschwitz-Birkenau. The last walk thousands made before experiencing the worst of humanity." Image copyright @hannahmossdavies, June 2017.*

The iconic depictions of Auschwitz emerge from the early days of liberation, and it is important here to connect the intent of visitor photography to those early days of representation. It is not so simple to criticize the visitor gaze as motivated by voyeurism, and instead we should consider that the photographic impulse in this context be connected explicitly to the use of the photographic image to understand both the historical and contemporary contexts of Auschwitz. Consider how photography functioned during and immediately after the liberation of the camps: it was used to document, understand, and communicate the extent of the Nazi genocide against the Jewish people and other unfavourable groups. While the contemporary visitor occupies the spaces of, in the words of @hannahmossdavies, "the last walk thousands made," the smartphone camera remains a device for documentation and interpretation, helping the visitor to understand the magnitude of the Holocaust as tied to space and place. The fact that many visitors to Auschwitz walk the fine line between horror and photographic impulse lends further credence to Didi-Huberman's close reading of Holocaust

photography. He argues that, "to prohibit [the photo] was to want to stop an epidemic of images that had already begun and that could not stop. Its movement seems as sovereign as that of an unconscious desire."[190] A photo of a space where thousands of people took their last steps can also work inversely. Even though the visitor stands in the same space occupied by victims, intent on memorializing their oppression, the division between the victim and the onlooker still exists in the form of a lens. It appears that, almost eighty years later, Holocaust photography will always be a visuality that operates in the context this division, always in heavy circulation.

For many visitors to Auschwitz, the act of visiting is a confirmation of what they have already learned about the Holocaust. However, after their visit, they find what they have seen is markedly different than what they had learned in school. Instagram user @raissaucabrera explains that, "Yes, we learned it in school. We learned what happened during the Nazi regime. But seeing it first-hand here in Auschwitz is a whole different experience."[191] @raissaucabrera describes what she saw at Auschwitz in her caption:

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[190] Didi-Huberman, 23-24. Here, Didi-Huberman speaks of the state ban on photographing the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen*, the notices posted around the walls of the camps forbidding photography, and the circulation of the *Sonderkommando* photos all in the same phrase. His invocation of an "unconscious desire" to circulate and photograph connects well with attempts to repress the photographic impulse in contemporary settings and, most importantly, is not dissimilar to visitor photography at former concentration camps.

[191] Caption for Figure 3.3. @raissaucabrera's image of the entrance of Auschwitz. 16 September 2018. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BnyAGBClRjE/. Accessed 4 November 2018. The entire caption reads: "Arbeit macht frei [sic] = 'Work sets you free.' This sign appears in the entrance of Auschwitz and other Nazi concentration camps. From 1940-1945 over 1.3 million people (mostly Jews) were slaughtered in this concentration camp. People where enslaved and worked to their death. Shot because they were too weak to walk. Hanged because they helped fellow prisoners. Gassed because they were Jews. Yes, we learned it in school. We learned what happened during the Nazi regime. But seeing it first-hand here in Auschwitz is a whole different experience. We saw a mountain of shoes owned by the victims -men, women, children of different social status; a mountain of bags and luggages [sic] with their names written on it (they were told that they were going on a vacation); and a mountain of hair. Real human hair. These people were stripped of their clothes and hair. They were forced to get naked in a room full of people they don't know. They were promised a good, warm shower after a long voyage. Little did they know, they would be exterminated a few seconds later. These innocent people committed no crimes and violated no laws. They were slaughtered all because of their ethnicity. This memorial was built to commemorate the

piles of human hair, luggage, and shoes; however, @raissaucabrera (figure 3.3) chose not to include an image of these items, instead opting to share a photograph of the oft-circulated front gate of Auschwitz, featuring the infamous phrase "*Arbeit macht Frei*." In this instance, the front gate of Auschwitz is reaffirmed as a symbol for what the viewer already knows lies beyond the gate. @raissaucabrera's caption signals a confluence of photo and symbol. This remains one of the most effective methods of amateur Holocaust representation on Instagram. Historian Cornelia Brink argues that:

> The […] element that icons and photography have in common is the similarity with the original: their reality as symbol […] [Photographs] create an immediate and effortless connection to particularly significant historical moments and open up spaces which would otherwise remain inaccessible.[192]

@raissaucabrera's image and caption communicate conflicting ideas, however. The evidentiary nature of their photograph is coupled with her inability to communicate her actual experience touring the grounds of Auschwitz. This happens often on Instagram; despite the invocation of iconic Holocaust symbols, the captions are characterized by an affective gulf. This is accompanied by the sentiment that explaining one's visit to Auschwitz cannot be fully grasped unless the other person has visited the place themselves.

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victims of the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime. To make sure that history shall never be revised. And to serve as a reminder that this horrific crime against humanity should never happen again."

[192] Brink, 141.

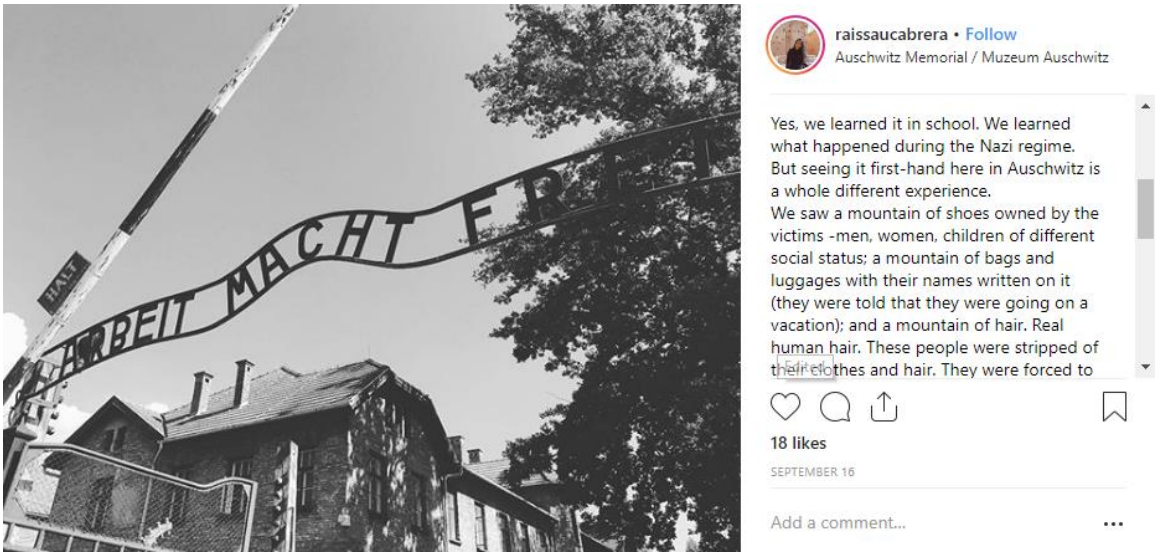


*Figure 2.3. "Yes, we learned it in school." Image copyright @raissaucabrera, 16 September 2018.*

Iconic Auschwitz images which feature the entrances to Auschwitz and the guard tower are some of the most readily available tourist images on Instagram. Hirsch notes the importance of the gate in Holocaust photography, explaining that "the two gates are the thresholds that represent the difficult access to the narratives of dehumanization and extermination."[193] Apart from circulating as pictorial objects emblematic of Auschwitz, capturing the two gates on Instagram are demonstrative of the visitor's attempt to represent the gulf that now exists between the non-visitor and the visitor, emblematic of the knowledge of the extermination that the photographer now possesses. One visitor comments, "it struck me how easily we entered and exited the gates in contrast with the thousands who must have looked through them every moment of every day with an intense longing for freedom."[194] In this way, the image is not just a gate, and it never will be; the image separates the photo's viewer from the witness who visited Auschwitz,

[193] Marianne Hirsch, "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory," in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Barbie Zelizer (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 227.
[194] Caption by @ivcsfkinner, 5 November 2018. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BpzjjnTlhs3/ (accessed 10 November 2018).

communicating a notion of the sublime which is inaccessible to all those who have not visited the "place which is impossible to ignore."[195] Thus, photographing the gate invokes the symbolism if the phrase "*Arbeit macht Frei.*" Stier has argued that the phrase's symbolism "marks a threshold, not so much separating the world of the camps from the world outside, but rather positioned at the flexible and very artificial line between history and memory."[196] The Instagram of the gate establishes this division in the digitally networked world.

Despite the wealth of historical information about the Holocaust that is available today, many visitors claim that no amount of knowledge can prepare them for the feeling of walking through the gates of Auschwitz. As Instagram user @luceee.x shares explains, "I've read books and I've watched documentaries, but nothing could've prepared me for how this place made me feel today. Hauntingly surreal."[197] @luceee.x's caption, coupled with their image of the main gate of Auschwitz, demonstrates the affective gap between expectations for visiting Auschwitz and their own experiences visiting the camp. However, because Auschwitz is marketed as both a site of memory and a symbol of the sublime, it remains challenging for the non-visitor to grasp the feelings described by the visitor photograph of Auschwitz. Because the tourist photo of Auschwitz-as-symbol is often associated with the notion of the sublime, the experience of the visitor remains inaccessible to the non-visitor. This is primarily because the authentic sublime of

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[195] This phrase appeared in the 2013 annual report of the Auschwitz Birkenau Museum. Oren Baruch Stier's *Holocaust Icons: Symbolizing the Shoah in History and Memory* features a wonderfully developed analysis of the phrase "Arbeit macht Frei" and the ways in which Holocaust symbolism is invoked through the object of the gate and the linguistic phrase.
[196] Stier, *Holocaust Icons*, 94.
[197] Figure 2. Comment by Instagram user @luceee.x, 21 December 2017. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BeqVVBpnhPX/ (accessed 15 July 2018).

Auschwitz is inherently connected to opportunities for individual encounters with the Holocaust.[198] Publics and Holocaust scholars alike know what Auschwitz should mean, and what it should represent, but the embodiment of the tourist experience at Auschwitz will always depend on a personal interaction with Auschwitz as a place. Symbolically, this affective gap separates the person who has visited Auschwitz and the person who has not; this message is heavily coded through Instagram images of the gates of Auschwitz.

If images of the gates convey a division between those who have experienced the space of Auschwitz and those who have not, how do visitors to the camp attempt to capture and communicate unity or connection? Though many visitors claim that a photo will never capture the feeling of physically moving through Auschwitz, Instagram users rely on a variety of tools to try to convey physical and affective sensations. These tools signify attempts to transform their images into sensory experiences that all audiences can understand. The visitor assumes the mantle of photographer to bridge the gulf of time and space, arguing against the dangers of forgetting. In this way, lighting, framing, captions, hashtags, and filters serve as micro-interventions, employed to enhance representation.

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[198] Immanuel Kant arguably provides the earliest discussion of the sublime, in his 1764 work *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*. His work was heavily explored by Jean-François Lyotard, who argued the more well-known interpretation that the sublime challenges the edges of human reason and interpretation, in his work *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994). Frank R. Ankersmit provides the most *recent* well-known analysis of the sublime in encounters with the past. See *Sublime Historical Experience* (Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 2005). For an engagement with the sublime in the context of the Holocaust which draws on Emmanuel Kant, see John Sanbonmatsu, "The Holocaust Sublime: Singularity, Representation, and the Violence of Everyday Life," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 68, no. 1 (2009): 101-126; Zachary Braiterman critiques the notion of the Holocaust sublime in "Against Holocaust-Sublime: Naïve Reference and the Generation of Memory," *History & Memory* 12, no. 2 (2000): 7-28, while Andrew S. Gross evaluates the impact of the sublime on the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. "Holocaust tourism in Berlin: Global Memory, Trauma and the 'Negative Sublime'" *Journeys* 7, no. 2 (2006): 73-100. In the context of visual culture, Nicholas Mirzoeff has argued that the sublime is the "surplus of experience that moves the different components of the visual sign or semiotic circuit into relation with each other." *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), 15-16.

Beyond the confirmation of Auschwitz as a physical space and a symbol of the Holocaust, @auschwitzmemorial has also encouraged visitors to think about Auschwitz as a space for reflection.[199] This is one of the many ways in which the legacy of Auschwitz is communicated for present and future audiences, with an eye toward preventing future injustices, and it is easy to see how @auschwitzmemorial uses Instagram to confirm, reaffirm, and share the meaning of Auschwitz with a social media public. I suggest that the amateur Auschwitz photographer affirms the power of authority through the act of captioning their Instagram image. In this instance, the caption becomes a space for active reflection and interpretation. In the case of Instagram user @lucydollyc, visiting the "place which is impossible to ignore" required confronting the difficult questions which have characterized much of the historical study of the Holocaust as an event. She explains here how her visit to Auschwitz was characterized by the concept of "how?"

> I found myself constantly asking myself 'how' today. How could anyone have so much hate for another person and race to execute a mass genocide on innocents? How could people just stand there and do nothing about it? How do all those imprisoned have the will to keep living and surviving if they did survive? How can we learn from our past to make sure this never happens again because it is still happening in certain parts of the world? Such intense hatred has no place in this world.[200]

This packed question is continually asked by Holocaust memorials, museums, and other objects of remembrance across the global memoryscape. @lucydollyc's caption is

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[199] "Auschwitz is an extremely important place where we learn what hatred, antisemitism and contempt for a fellow man and his rights resulted in decades ago. Auschwitz is a place where we can reflect on our individual and collective responsibility." Comment on Instagram user @alanmalo's image, URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BYtqOpEl4r0/?taken-by=alanmalo. Taken 6 September 2017. Accessed 10 October 2018.

[200] Caption by Instagram user @lucydollyc, 7 July 2018. https://www.instagram.com/p/Bk9ByG_gIlL/ (accessed 13 November 2018).

particularly striking, in that they draw direct connections between the Holocaust and the violence present in our contemporary world. While many Instagram images rely on the #neveragain hashtag to communicate that Holocaust memory is important to preventing future atrocity, many images cement the Holocaust firmly in the past. I will now turn my attention to a few examples of how the Holocaust remains an object of history through photography.

**Auschwitz and the Present Past**

Roland Barthes has argued that the photographic trace will always place the photograph firmly in the past; despite the photograph's function as present proof of "having-been-there," the image always exists in the past tense.[201] Yet visual anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards argues that photographs serve not *only* as forensic historical items or semiotically-charged representations of that history, but as "material performances that enact a complex range of historiographical desires."[202] Edwards' analysis underscores an important performative element of photography which is essential to understanding amateur photography at Auschwitz. How might photography's spatial, performative function further cement Auschwitz as a remnant of the past, in the present?

Visitor photographs of Auschwitz affirm the former death camp as a space, grounded in the physical landscape of the Holocaust, "in spite of all," as Didi-Huberman has argued.[203] However, these amateur photos are also interpretations of memory, and

[201] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 76.
[202] Edwards, "Photography and the Material Performance of the Past," 130-131.
[203] Didi-Huberman, 23.

can be considered sources for the history of memory, marked by the interpretation of space, objects, and meaning and communicated through framing, filter, and hashtag. These interventions, small yet meaningful, help lend form and structure to the visitor's learned behavioural norms, as explored earlier in this chapter. As Reynolds puts it, the "knowledge of *rules in dealing with* the past becomes knowledge of representing the past appropriately."[204] In taking photos at Auschwitz, visitors are contributing to the maintenance of a space tied explicitly to history; it is not until the visitor experiences Auschwitz as a place firsthand that they feel they can carry the memory of the Holocaust forward to the future. What is more, the Museum's investment in Instagram supports their dedication to the promotion and curation of a virtual community of remembrance, which straddles ethnographer Christine Hine's conceptualized permeable border of tourist behaviour in the physical and digital worlds. Hine's multimodal approach for an embedded, embodied, and everyday framework reinforces our connections to both the past and present within the same temporal and spatial landscape.[205]

For visitors to Auschwitz, this is achieved through colour, framing, and captioning. In this instance, the visitor/photographer produces their own historical documentation of their encounter with the Holocaust.

[204] Reynolds, 458.
[205] Hine, 53.

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mediacondigital Disorientated, exhausted and torn apart. Present past.
•
•
•
#auschwitzbirkenau #holocaust #poland #holocaustmuseum #blackandwhitephotography copyright @mediacondigital @primotravel

20 likes

OCTOBER 6

Add a comment...

*Figure 2.4. "Disoriented, exhausted and torn apart. Present past." Image copyright @mediacondigital, 6 October 2018.*

It is easy to see how the past is put on display in the present in figure 3.4. The black and white photo is captioned "Disoriented, exhausted and torn apart. Present past." The snow and gloomy ambiance depicted in the photograph perfectly accompany the photographer's explanation for how you should feel while looking at this image. It may seem obvious, but it is worth noting that heavy use of black and white in tourist photography at Auschwitz is indicative of presence of the historical/archival image of the Holocaust. While the use of filters has been characterized as part of the banal, everyday, digital media scholar Nathan Jurgenson has argued that "the faux-vintage photo […] is merely an illustrative example of a larger trend whereby social media increasingly force us to view our present as always a potential documented past."[206] The use of filters and framing are integral to Instagram's programming, but are also serve as important didactic interventions on the part of the photographer and the viewer. Beyond the active use of

[206] Nathan Jurgenson, "The Faux-Vintage Photo," *The Society Pages: Cyborgology*. 14 May 2011. URL: https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2011/05/14/the-faux-vintage-photo-full-essay-parts-i-ii-and-iii/. Date accessed: 10 October 2018.

captioning, choosing a filter on Instagram allows the photographer to create historical distance where it does not always exist.

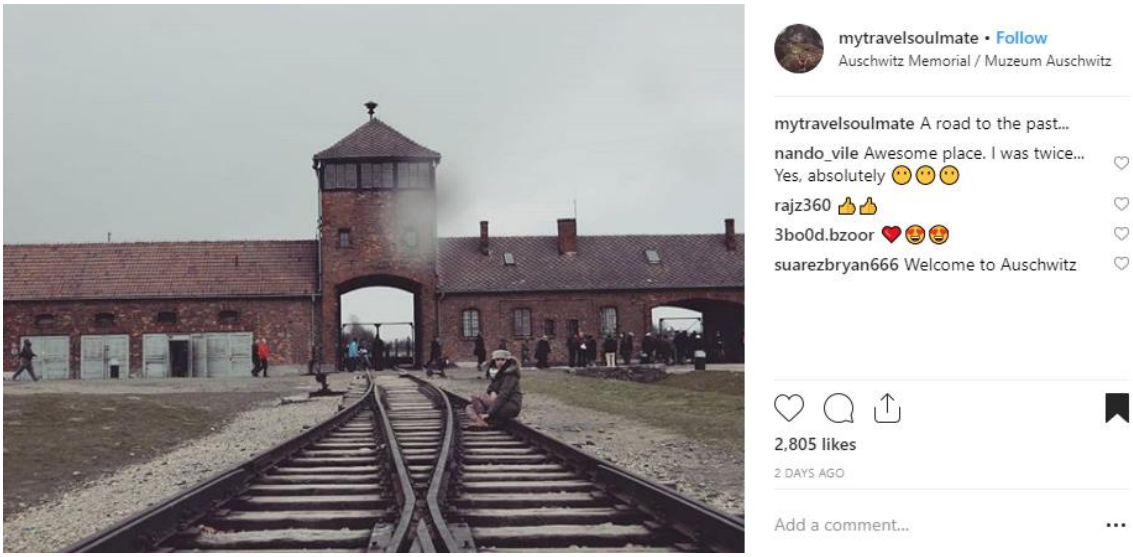


*Figure 2.5. "A road to the past…" Image copyright @mytravelsoulmate, 11 November 2018.*

The visitor's conflation of the Holocaust with History is not an incorrect one, but it remains present in amateur representations of the genocide on Instagram. While the Holocaust is not in danger of being forgotten soon, the younger visitors to Auschwitz remain further in the distant past the event feels. This is communicated very well in figure 3.5. The use of the filter signals that the image could very well be a vintage photograph, despite being taken in the very recent past. It features tourists milling about the guard tower and an individual sitting on the train tracks, the caption reads "a road to the past…" Rain obscures the lens slightly, giving the image a slightly ethereal quality. The characterization of the Holocaust remaining firmly rooted in the past is made more alarming juxtaposed with the slightly inappropriate comment, which reads "Welcome to Auschwitz." Perhaps only comment on the suggestive body language of the person in the photograph, the comment underscores growing concern that reverent memory for the

Holocaust continues to fade in the twenty-first century. In this way, the act of commemorating the Shoah through Instagram transcends the perpetrator and photojournalistic visual registers of past generations, while simultaneously harkening forward to a new, though unique recasting of the Holocaust as event.

**Conclusion**

I chose to begin my discussion of pathways with Auschwitz because it is perceived as a standalone evidentiary space of Holocaust memory, despite the many complications that are present in maintaining the camp as a tourist and memorial site. It is important to delineate between Auschwitz as an artefact of the Holocaust, and the Holocaust museum which seeks to invoke the camp and other Holocaust symbols in its own representations of the event. This chapter has been the first step in understanding how social media, Holocaust memory, and tourism intermingle in the digital age. In some instances, Instagram photography complicates the role of the visitor in Holocaust spaces, and many contemporary tourists remain uncomfortable with the concept of photographing one's encounter with the Holocaust. On the other hand, Instagram is a space in which the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum can reassert accepted modes of Holocaust interpretation and representation. By extending their authority to the realm of social media, @auschwitzmemorial can model appropriate engagement for future visitors to Auschwitz. As well, they have positioned themselves well in welcoming Holocaust memory on Instagram. And yet, although taking up the charge, many visitors also transcend past iterative modes. In assuming the role of witness and historian, they find new ways to visualize the Holocaust with the means available to them.

The tourist replication of iconic Auschwitz images cements photography as a space and experience-affirming act, providing a mnemonic framework for individual memory-making in relation to the Holocaust. Conversely, the ability to capture images in Auschwitz-Birkenau forces visitors to replicate the photographic behavior of those before them: the act of photography mimics the behavior of the perpetrator.[207] If we make explicit how the gaze of the tourist intersects with and builds from pre-existing visual codes, we are better able to interrogate precisely *whose* space the visitor is re-affirming in this visual re-creation of the iconic image – the space of perpetrator, liberator, or witness? While it is true that not all photography at sites of Holocaust memory are tastefully captured or engaged with, and anxiety over the production of "Holocaust kitsch" remains.[208] The voyeurism which accompanies the tourist gaze shifts depending on its locale. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is not Auschwitz, nor is Auschwitz the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. Photography functions as a mode for replicating space and experience, and Instagram serves as a performed memory process which communicates the experience of Holocaust memory transfer. The embodiment of the tourist experience at sites of Holocaust memory is *not* the embodied

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[207] With the exception of those who surreptitiously photographed life in the ghettos – such as Henryk Ross' Łodz Ghetto photographs (Art Gallery of Ontario: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross, URL: http://agolodzghetto.com/) or even the unknown 1944 *Sonderkommando* photographers from Auschwitz-Birkenau (Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, URL: http://auschwitz.org/en/gallery/historical-pictures-and-documents/extermination,11.html). For more on the images of the *Sonderkommando*, see Georges Didi-Hubermann, "Four Pieces of Film Snatched from Hell," in *Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz*, trans. Shane B. Lillis (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

[208] Saul Friedlander, "Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death," trans. Thomas Weyr (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993), Lisa Saltzman, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch Revisited", in *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art*, ed. Norman Kleeblatt (New York and New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 53-64 and Imre Kertész and John MacKay, "Who Owns Auschwitz?" *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 14, no. 1 (2001): 267-72. For more on Post-Holocaust Kitsch, see Robert Eaglestone, *The Broken Voice: Reading Post Holocaust Literature* (London: Oxford University Press, 2017).

experience of the victim; historians would be hard-pressed to find a visitor who would claim such a thing. Rather, the embodied tourist experience at former concentration camps is informed by the victims' traces, which remind the visitor of the people that were once present.

## Chapter 3

## Amateur Photography as Memory Work in Holocaust Museums

Holocaust museums remain one of the most prominent spaces for public encounters with the Holocaust. As argued previously, Holocaust memorial practices are inherently connected to a sense of place. Whether considering where the Holocaust happened, or where it is remembered, encounters with the Holocaust will always depend on the places in which the visitor experiences that encounter. But how are visitor experiences at Holocaust museums different from those at Auschwitz, and how do visitors photograph these experiences? I have decided to divide my analysis of the former concentration camp and the museum between two chapters because both spaces constitute very different encounters with the Holocaust, and this, I will argue here, structures different ways of capturing those sentiments in digital photography. The ways in which Holocaust museums invoke symbols of the genocide through architecture, artefact display, visitor movement, and memorial practices reveals a great deal about Holocaust postmemory in the age of social media.

Beyond the thread of Holocaust history which links the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) Jewish Museum Berlin (JMB), and Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum (YVHHM), the visual narratives of all three institutions hinge on the relationship between visitor, museum, and the visual. Each section begins with an analysis of three different pathways in Holocaust museums: the simulacric path of the USHMM; the path of relocation and survival at YVHHM; and the voided path at the JMB. I investigate the ways in which these preset museum pathways allow for

visitors to engage with accepted architectural Holocaust representations, following Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich's argument that "evocative visual forms and spaces express the epistemological rupture between 'knowing' in a factual sense and 'experiencing' as a witness."[209] Building on this point of a developed Holocaust visuality, communicated through architecture, pathways, and material histories, I explore how they create spaces which help visitors to attain the role of witness. I have relied on visitor feedback from the USHMM and online reviews of each museum space as discursive methods for understanding the visitor experience. I then investigate the ways in which the Holocaust encounter at a museum can be expressed differently through photography. In doing so, I consider the rupture highlighted by Hansen-Glucklich in the context of the three separate museums and examine how visitors grapple with these architectural forms of postmemory before rendering them in photography. By placing all three institutions in conversation with each other, I will highlight popular visual themes which draw both the visitors' eyes and lenses. Holocaust memory scholars Michael Bernard-Donals and Richard Glejzer have argued that the difference between Holocaust museums "reside[s] in the ways they construct the museum visitor."[210] This chapter places the visitor at the center of my analysis, unpacking the process of visitor memory construction at the USHMM, JMB, and YVHHM. Through the physical encounter and photo-sharing, I explore the diverse ways visitors confront distinct architectural and how this then structures their own curatorial methods for representing the Holocaust.

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[209] Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich, "Evoking the Sacred: Visual Holocaust Narratives in National Museums," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 9, no. 2 (2010): 210.
[210] Michael Bernard-Donals and Richard Glejzer, *Between Witness and Testimony: The Holocaust and the Limits of Representation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), 132.

**The Memory Work of Holocaust Museums**

It is hard to argue with the authority of the museum in our current age, and the Holocaust museum is no exception.[211] While an accepted form of contemporary memory-work today, Holocaust memorial museums were not always as prevalent as they are now. For this reason, it is worth exploring the role of memorial museums, characterized by museums scholar Amy Sodaro as a "new 'hybrid' cultural form of commemoration […]" that moves away from the celebratory 19th century model based on triumphalism to something more reflective "of an effort to come to terms with the negative legacy of the past."[212] Above all else, the Holocaust museum serves a didactic function; in the eyes of the public, it operates as the distillation of scholarly inquiry, espousing the authority necessary to confront difficult questions about the history of the Holocaust and the nature of our contemporary world. The shift underscored by Sodaro is important, in that it reveals the complications faced by design teams trying to build the USHMM – one of the first memorial museums of its kind. Described as an exemplar of this new cultural form

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[211] There is already a significant field on the authority of the museum and its role in public life, which spans several disciplines. For a foundational text on the authority of the museum as a civilizing tool, see Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (1995) and *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism,* and more recently, Claire J. Farago and Donald Preziosi, *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum* (2004). In *The Birth of the Museum*, Bennett argued that the museum was a temporal organizer, marked by its ability to arrange a number of different times and places in chronological order, so that the museum visitor could explore them on an evolutionary pathway in the course of an afternoon (179). In this way, the nineteenth-century museum functioned as a civilizing space, dependent on the ordering of the bodies of the public once within its walls. The field of museum studies also features the development of literature which focuses on the museum in the digital age. See Susana Smith Bautista, *Museums in the Digital Age: Changing Meanings of Place, Community, and Culture* (2014). For the purposes of this dissertation, I rely specifically on foundational texts which characterize the museum visitor as collaborative agents within the museum space. For these purposes, Paul Williams' *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008) and Amy Soldaro's *Exhibiting Atrocity* (New Brunswick, NJ: 2018) are excellent guides to understanding the role of the museum visitor in the context of the memorial museum.

[212] Amy Sodaro, *Exhibiting Atrocity: Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence* (New Brunswick, NJ: 2018), 4.

of commemoration, the USHMM set the standard for the other memorial museums which followed, despite the fact that the YVHHM remains the oldest Holocaust museums in the world, having been established by the State of Israel in 1953.[213] The visitor experience is defined by balancing the weight of both the museum and the memorial, and the institutions dual imperative that the visitor learn so that they can never forget. The process of transforming a visitor into a witness is achieved in several ways: through architecture, exhibit design, and the objects on display. Perhaps obvious, the experience of the visitor as witness-participant has much to do with the constructed museum narrative of each institution. The Holocaust simulacrum at USHMM moves visitors chronologically through the experience of the victim, while Yad Vashem leads the visitor through varying degrees of darkness and light, presenting the conclusion of the Holocaust narrative as the arrival in Israel, viewed upon exiting the permanent exhibit and taking in

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[213] Sodaro, 31. The literature on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and other Holocaust museums is broad and these particular works are the foundation for this chapter. See James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995=7); Tim Cole, *Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler, How the History is Bought, Packaged, and Sold* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2014); Oren Baruch Stier, *Holocaust Icons: Symbolizing the Shoah in History and Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015); Michael Bernard-Donals, *Figures of Memory: The Rhetoric of Displacement at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2016). For more on the architecture of Holocaust museums, see Stephanie Shosh Rotem, *Constructing Memory: Architectural Narratives of Holocaust Museums* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2013) and Eran Neuman, *Shoah Presence: Architectural Representations of the Holocaust* (Surrey & Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2014).

The USHMM maintains its status as *the* Holocaust memorial museum due to the changes sustained by the YVHHM since its opening. Though Yad Vashem was established in 1953, it did not exist as a memorial museum as we think of it in our contemporary age. Though visitor attendance increased steadily over the years, warranting several periods of renovation at the YVHHM, it was not until 2005 that the current incarnation of the YVHHM was unveiled, establishing it as a contemporary and modern memorial museum akin to its American counterpart. See Rotem, 31.

the view of the Jerusalem Forest beyond the doors.[214] The YVHHM and USHMM are rigid examples of the visitor pathway; for example, it is very difficult to move through the exhibits backwards, to take in the exhibit out of order, or to bypass the physical barriers which divide up the main exhibition halls. While these spaces function as history museums, they also serve a memorial function. They warn people against the dangers of forgetting, confronting difficult pasts through architecture, display, material history, and memorialization.

Holocaust museums conduct memory work different to Auschwitz and other former concentration camps-turned-memory-sites. While Auschwitz is both a space and a symbol, the Holocaust museums discussed in this chapter rely on the visual codes wrought from the memory boom beginning in the 1980s and 1990s, the effects of which are still being carried out today. Intended as educational and memorial spaces for the public, the Holocaust museum provides the visitor with the opportunity to engage with the history of the Holocaust in a space trusted as a historical authority and impacts the ways we perceive and remember the Holocaust. Hansen-Glucklich argues "[…] Holocaust museums and exhibits do not simply illustrate the story being told; rather, they *are* the story, and they largely determine how to remember the past and, therefore, how we understand the present."[215] The Holocaust museum is steeped in authority through its

[214] This is not dissimilar to the layout of the USHMM, which ends its pathway through the permanent exhibition with the in-house Holocaust memorial, the Hall of Remembrance. However, rather than having the land function as a living memorial to the victims of Holocaust as in Israel, the USHMM mimics this pathway to achieve the same effect, relying only on the physical space of the museum's footprint to communicate its memorial function. For more on the Hall of Remembrance, see United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "The Hall of Remembrance," URL: https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum/architecture-and-art/hall-of-remembrance (accessed 11 January 2019).
[215] Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2014), 3.

conceptualization and physicality, often imbuing such structures with influence in more immediate ways than other mediums. As argued by architect Eran Neuman, this is because "architecture is present in reality in a concrete way; it defines the space in which we live; it exists through the material specificity; and it uses visual representation."[216] In this way, the architecture of Holocaust museums has led to the development of an architectural subset of Holocaust visuality in its own right, especially in North America. James Ingo Freed's iconic architecture has been emulated in subsequent American Holocaust museums, while the architectural styles captured by visitors both communicate and preserve the Holocaust architectural aesthetic.[217] These standard visual styles demonstrate that the authority of the museum is still conveyed through space, design, and content. While there has also been a significant discussion of the evolution of a Jewish architecture in the wake of the Holocaust, the construction of the Holocaust museum constitutes a separate discussion.

Involving the visitor's perspective in my analysis of Holocaust museum narrative and space builds on developing perspectives in the academic study of museums. Museums scholar Jenny Kidd has argued for the inclusion of visitor participation and narrative production as embedded within the institutionalized mission of the museum. She argues, "the museum – physically, architecturally and institutionally – has a story to tell. Only recently has there been such an acknowledgement of multiple viewpoints, understandings and 'truths' in the ways that such narratives unfold on site, and an interest

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[216] Eran Neuman, *Shoah Presence: Architectural Representations of the Holocaust* (Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), 10.
[217] Stephanie Shosh Rotem, *Constructing Memory: Architectural Narratives of Holocaust Museums* (Peter Lang, 2013), 105.

in working with the subjectivity inherent in visitor response."[218] I would like to reinforce Kidd's point that visitor response through reviews and photography provide spaces for which the Holocaust museum visitor can work through the immensity of Holocaust visuality which the museum has presented them with. Drawing from architecture scholar Stephanie Shosh Rotem's argument that "we should understand that this 'package' is loaded with social, cultural, and political messages that critically construct the museum's narrative […],"[219] my analysis presupposes that the museum's architecture serves as the stage in the theatrical setting, where visitors serve as actors and agents.

Holocaust museums have relied on digital technologies for outreach since the early 2000s – making use of websites, and eventually social media platforms to advertise and communicate the goals and mandates of their institutions. The USHMM, JMB, and YVHHM all manage Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Tumblr accounts, and readily engage with visitors across a multitude of platforms. Social media presence has become integral to maintaining an identity in our globalized and increasingly digitized world. Museums are no longer solely responsible for curating only exhibits, material collections, and archives; museum outreach on social media has become an increasingly important aspect of the Holocaust museum's mandate. This was realized by the USHMM in 2015, when they lifted their ban on photography in the exhibition space in January of that year. The USHMM implored visitors to share and tag their photos, noting that "we would love to see what resonates with you during your visit."[220] Like the Auschwitz-Birkenau

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[218] Jenny Kidd, "The Museum as Narrative Witness: Heritage Performance and the Production of Narrative Space," in Suzanne MacLeod, Laura Hourston Hanks, and Jonathan Hale, eds. *Museum Making: Narratives, Architecture, Exhibitions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 81.
[219] Rotem, 186.
[220] @holocaustmuseum, 2 January 2015, https://www.instagram.com/p/xW5zrUyHhf/ (accessed 10 November 2018).

Memorial Museum, the USHMM recognized the importance of engaging with its publics through platforms available to them. In January 2015, they invited social media influencers to an exclusive museum walkthrough to promote their new visual social media marketing strategy.

**Never Stop Asking Why: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

Since the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) opened its doors in 1993, the museum has welcomed more than 40 million visitors.[221] The USHMM stands as much more than a memorial to the Holocaust, serving primarily as a challenge to the responsibility of individuals in any free society when human freedoms are placed at risk.[222] Located on the National Mall, adjacent to the Washington Monument, the USHMM's massive building moves visitors from the convening Hall of Witness into elevators which bring visitors up to the fourth floor of the museum where the permanent exhibition begins. Chronologically, the museum traces the narrative of the history of the Holocaust down two more floors of the museum, beginning with Jewish life in Germany before World War II and the rise of National Socialism. The fourth floor culminates with the history of *Kristallnacht* and includes the stories of many Jews who attempted to emigrate. The third floor explores the process of ghettoization, deportation, and the camp universe, traversing the final stages of Holocaust before the exhibition ends, and the visitor emerges from the proscriptive pathway atop a large staircase, overlooking the Hall of Witness once more (figure 4.1). From their place atop the staircase, visitors-turned-

[221] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "About the Museum: A *Living* Memorial to the Holocaust," URL: https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum.
[222] Berenbaum, 233. Apart from being a Holocaust scholar, Berenbaum also served as Project Director of the USHMM from 1993-1998, and the Director of the USHMM's Holocaust Research Institute from 1993-1997, playing a central role in the creation of the museum and the development of its permanent exhibition.

witnesses can see the crowds of new visitors, waiting to board the elevators and embark on the same journey they have just completed. Atop this staircase, the role of the witness is two-fold: the visitor assumes the knowledge of experience inherited from the exhibition, and in a more immediate sense, is also able to witness new visitors beginning the narrative cycle over again.

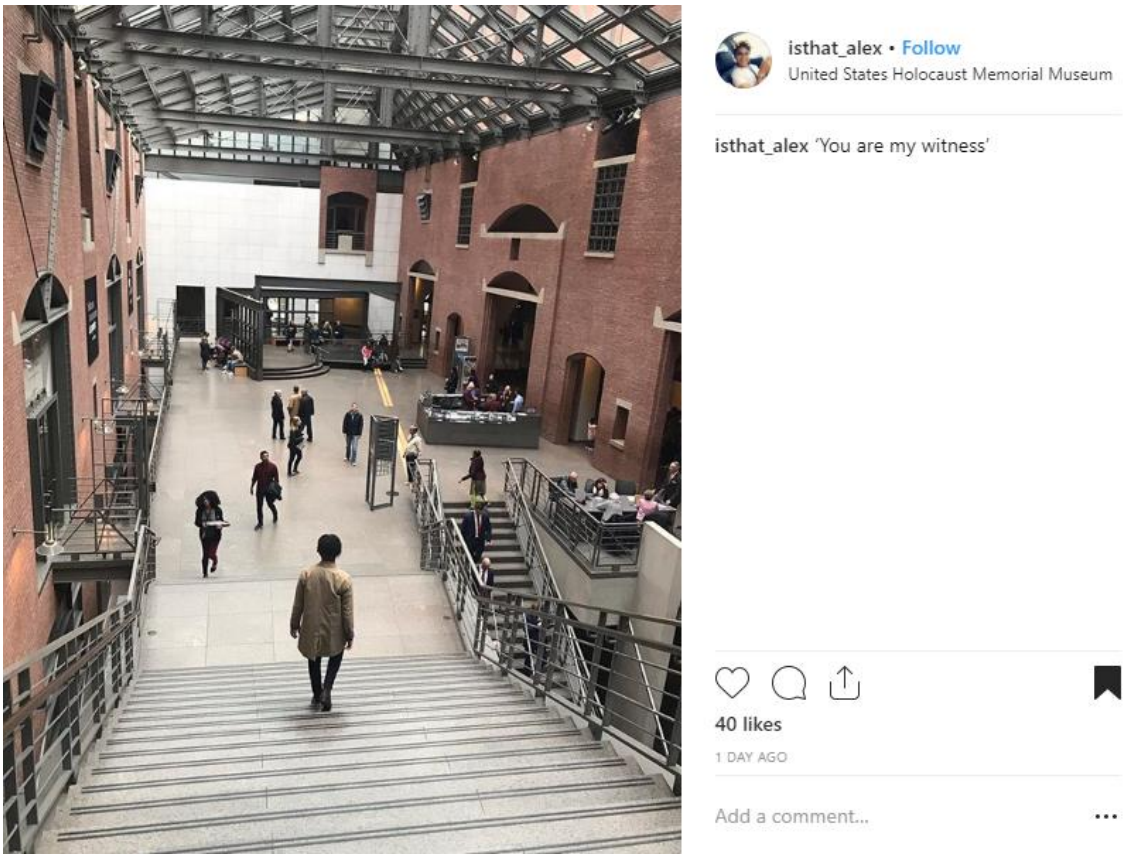


*Figure 0.1. "You are my witness" Image copyright @isthat_alex, 18 November 2018.*

The pathway is cyclical, transforming even the casual museum-goer into a witness. The USHMM achieves this transformation by mimicking the pathways of Holocaust victims.[223] By moving through constructed Holocaust geographies in the

[223] Tim Cole, *Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler, How History is Bought, Packaged, and Sold* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

museum space, visitors are encouraged to connect with the Holocaust victim while on their own journey to be made witness to the Holocaust. Though spatially removed from the physical landscapes of the Holocaust, the USHMM invokes the visuality of Auschwitz to convey the reality of the Holocaust to an American audience. Michael Berenbaum, the Project Director of USHMM during its construction, argues that "the building itself serves as an introduction to the Holocaust 'universe,'" with the central Hall of Witness being visually defined by its distortions.[224] This feeling has been confirmed by many visitors in the twenty-five years of the museum, underscored by the comments of one visitor: "the feeling I got from just entering the building was amazingly powerful. I think this could be the most meaningful experience of my life. Keep up the amazing quality of this powerful building."[225] The Holocaust as an event is preceded by the architecture of the USHMM, impacting the visitor before they even make their way to the upper floors of the permanent exhibition. The USHMM's architecture is intended to create a sense of distortion, imbalance, and rupture which sets the stage of memory for the exhibitions housed by the museum.[226]

Before visitors encounter objects of the Holocaust, they face the nature of the USHMM's design, allowing them to consider how the Holocaust can be visually represented through architecture.[227] Coupled with the USHMM's active social media

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[224] Berenbaum, 234.
[225] Visitor comments from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 3 December 2006.
[226] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Architecture and Art: Hall of Witness," URL: https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum/architecture-and-art/hall-of-witness..
[227] James Ingo Freed has written at length about the ways in which the Hall of Witness should function as a reception area for the preparation of memory. In this instance, the museum's interior design prepares the visitor for their transformation into witness. "About the Museum: Architecture and Art," *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. URL: https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum/architecture-and-art.

presence, visitor photography helps the visitor to confront the questions asked by the museum's architecture. USHMM is deeply aware of the cultural and visual impact of their architecture; for example, USHMM has dedicated portions of its social media outreach to architectural meetups within the exhibit space.[228] Both the architecture of the USHMM and its social media profile function as placeholders for memory, warning against a future in which the Holocaust is forgotten. Perhaps unsurprising, one of the central tenets of their social media strategy rests on asking the same questions that the physical museum is meant to ask. This sentiment inspired a new social media campaign, which began in January 2018. Aptly titled "Never Stop Asking Why," the USHMM uses Instagram and other social media platforms as spaces for discussing and representing the lessons and legacies of the Holocaust, almost eighty years after *Kristallnacht*.[229] In this way, the USHMM's contemporary mandate continues to develop in digital spaces, beyond the walls of the museum. The "Never Stop Asking Why" campaign extends the sentiment that the physical museum is a question. The responsibility of the museum visitor beyond their immediate presence in the exhibit itself, requiring them to remember their visit to the USHMM and actively evaluate their contemporary world.

Many visitors celebrate the pathways of the USHMM, lauding the architecture and display for making it feel like "actually being there."[230] This is reinforced by a

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[228] For example, In April 2017 USHMM hosted #USHMMRemembers – a social media architecture tour for Holocaust remembrance. The event was intended "to draw attention to the unique and sometimes unnoticed symbolism in the Museum's architecture" and to kick off Days of Remembrance, the United States' annual commemoration of the Holocaust. "DC influencers visit U.S. Holocaust Museum for Days of Remembrance," United States Memorial Holocaust Museum (@HolocaustMuseum) on Twitter, 23 April 2017. URL: https://twitter.com/i/moments/856210851501682691.
[229] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Museum Launches Never Stop Asking Why Initiative," 22 January 2018, https://www.ushmm.org/information/press/press-releases/museum-launches-never-stop-asking-why-initiative (accessed 17 November 2018).
[230] Visitor comments from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 3 May 2006.

visitor's comment, who notes "the architecture speaks of the heaviness and hopelessness of this time/these people. the building is a monument to those lost; a vessel of their journey of suffering."[231] In this way, visitors photograph the USHMM's architecture to communicate the power of the museum space as a vessel for memory. However, in some instances, the USHMM's iconic architecture can complicate the Instagram image as a performance of postmemory.

The USHMM's architecture allows the museum space to function as a placeholder for memory, especially for those visitors that find themselves unsure of how to complete their role as museum visitor when confronted with the content of the museum itself. This is the result of the space of the museum itself; separate and distinct from the typical museum experience, the USHMM is intended to make the visitor feel unstable and evokes something "other" than what they typically experience at a museum, even before embarking on their journey through the exhibition. The visual culture of the USHMM relies on narratives of confinement, displacement, and witnessing, and visitors appreciate the way in which the USHMM's architecture transports them to a reality that cannot be experienced.[232] The following caption summarizes this feeling:

> The moment you begin walking through the National Holocaust Museum, you fall silent. All the while grief screams and shrieks through your mind. This path is a replica of the stone path at Nazi concentration camps. The path was made from crushed tombstones of Jewish cemeteries. You can see remnants of the engravings on some of the stones. Every piece of the museum stops you dead in your tracks. Holding you in a deafening silence.[233]

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[231] Visitor comments from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 6 July 2002.
[232] Bernard-Donals and Glejzer, 149.
[233] Caption by @georgiosupremo, 1 February 2015, https://www.instagram.com/p/ykgcC0nwJo/ (accessed 10 November 2018).

This response is striking; the USHMM itself is already an architectural product of the act of memory-making, and interpretively speaking it is several steps removed from the Auschwitz explored in the previous chapter. James Ingo Freed visited several concentration camps and Holocaust sites when developing his design for the USHMM. Incorporating the Holocaust visuality of the postwar period, wrought from camps and ghettoes, Freed developed an open-concept design so that the space could operate as a "resonator of memory."[234]

The museum's architecture asks a question, and the USHMM's architectural space implores its visitors to find an impossible answer, even if that was never the original intention of the architect. These visual tropes can be identified in the photography shared on Instagram as visitors continue to share this question with the world. Rotem argues that the architecture of American Holocaust museums is compelling, "even to the extent of overshadowing the museums' displays and becoming itself the central experience of the museum visit."[235] By understanding the importance of the space as a "resonator for the memories of others," the attempts to engage with the architecture of the museum can be viewed as independent interpretation on behalf of the visitor.[236] This interpretation stems from the museum's ability to create a space of reality which pushes against its immediate contemporary context: it urges its visitors to remember the pasts of others, in the context of their own present experiences. A visitor notes, "I'm too overwhelmed to comment on the content of the museum. What could one

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[234] James Ingo Freed, quoted in "About the Museum: Architecture and Art," the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2018, https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum/architecture-and-art (accessed 1 November 2018).
[235] Rotem, 91.
[236] James Ingo Freed, "The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum," *Assemblage* 9 (1989): 64.

say? I will say, however, the architecture of the building is fantastic."[237] A similar sentiment is expressed by Instagram user @halijisand (Figure 4.2), through their photograph. While the museum's architecture is intended to set the stage for the process of encountering the Holocaust in the mail exhibit, in both instances the architecture creates the conditions for the subtle communication of Holocaust visuality through photography. The architecture of the USHMM supports the visitor's every interaction with the exhibit itself, and this is increasingly apparent when the photographer wishes to share their museum experience but feel they cannot comment on or photograph aspects of the permanent exhibition. The architecture of the USHMM functions as a ready-made example of Holocaust visuality; its subtle architectural symbolism is always accessible for the visitor still working through their museum encounter. In this way, it is unsurprising that the Instagram image operates as a metonym – one part of a larger whole, signifying a slice of the sublime taken from the architecture of the USHMM itself.

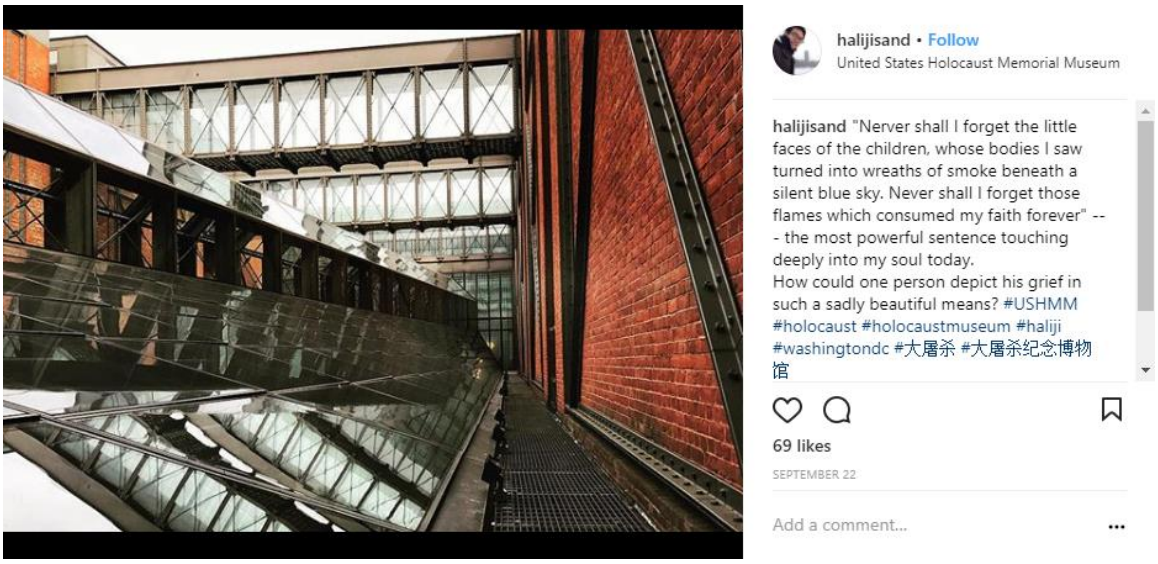


*Figure 0.2. Image copyright Instagram user @halijisand, 22 September 2017*

[237] Visitor comments from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 25 January 2003.

At first, the architectural image of USHMM can be read as pure appreciation for the design. However, the visitor is aware that the building is meant to tell a story. A visitor notes, "the light/dark, the architecture, the art…the silence… even without words this place tells their story [...]"[238] The brightness created by the skylights in the top third of figure 4.2 and the applied Instagram filter both create additional contrast, emphasizing Freed's experimentation with light and shadow; the framing of the image and the alignment of the horizonal, vertical, and diagonal elements of the architecture demonstrates an attempt to impose regulation and order over an already meticulous and industrial space. By juxtaposing the orderly lines of the architecture with the chaos of his caption, @halijisand demonstrates the meaning of the USHMM's architecture to their audience.[239] The rest of @kalijisand's caption, "how could one person depict his grief in such a [sic] sadly beautiful means?" denotes many things. First and foremost, it refers to a particular line of text from Elie Wiesel's *Night*. The caption also links the prose of *Night* to Freed's architecture and the visitor's own photograph of the built space of the USHMM.[240] @halijisand literally relies on the structures of the USHMM to communicate his own grief in such "beautiful means." This is but one of the methods the visitor uses to share the labour of memory conducted by the museum. By using the USHMM's carefully crafted architectural space, the visitor can communicate a sense of affect they may have trouble describing or representing on their own. The prefabricated space of memory has already completed the work of Holocaust representation; it is up to the visitor to continue

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[238] Visitor comments from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 7 November 2008.
[239] The caption reads, ""Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever." Elie Wiesel, *Night,* trans. Marion Wiesel (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 34.
[240] Instagram user @halijisand, 22 September 2017.

the trajectory of Holocaust postmemory through their own experiences within the museum itself.

It is precisely because the USHMM – and Holocaust museums more generally – rely on the continued motion of memory creation in their visitors that I am not convinced that the architecture and space of the USHMM operates as a *resonator* of memory. Instead, it is more of a vessel or placeholder for memory of visitors who feel they cannot confront the memory work required of them within the confines of the museum space. This is primarily because the work of memory evolves over time. Bernard-Donals has argued that the visitor's claim that they are incapable of understanding what they have seen or felt in the museum is indicative of the ways in which the museum is "a virtual kairotic, and liminal [space] that casts them into an uncertain ethical and political future."[241] The cyclical visitor pathway of the USHMM constantly turns out new witnesses, some equipped to consider what they have just seen, and some not. The Hall of Witness resembles a train station in more ways than one; besides drawing its inspiration for its design from the concentration camps and ghettoes of Europe, the Hall is a fixed node in the memory journey of the USHMM's visitors. Some visitors photograph this moment of uncertainty, allowing the image to function as a placeholder for the sublime before they can carry out the museum's mission to "never stop asking why."

The memory work of the USHMM asks a lot of its visitors, especially in the context of its "Never Stop Asking Why" social media campaign. Coupled with the immediacy of social media and the imperative to share one's experiences instantly, it is

[241] Michael Bernard-Donals, *Figures of Memory*, 153.

arguable that through the visual and interpretive overload which characterizes the USHMM-as-question does not always serve as a productive engagement with the Holocaust. Further to this point, Bernard-Donals and Glejzer have argued that the USHMM instead "Others" the Holocaust-as-event, rather than just the victim. They explain:

> It is the event-as-other, held at the crux of the material content and the truth content of the artifacts found in the Museum – the abyss between sign and sign in metonym – this is called up in the hallway in the USHMM, and that is mistaken for empathy or recognition by viewers and by us.[242]

This can be seen through amateur photography and visitor guestbook entries in which the visitor makes questions of "why?" and "how?" focal points of their experience at the USHMM. Highlighting Bernard-Donals' and Glejzer's argument that the USHMM obfuscates rather than reveals contemporary acts of memory, I question whether, in some instances, the photographing of Holocaust architecture diverges from the forms postmemory takes in the previous chapter.[243] While the encouragement to "Never stop asking why" is indeed the mandate of the USHMM, it does not necessarily always allow for the visitor the necessary time to draw connections between the chronological development of the Holocaust and its similarities to our contemporary world.

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[242] Bernard-Donals and Glejzer, 149.

[243] Bernard-Donals and Glejzer, "Museums and the Imperative of Memory: History, Sublimity, and the Divine," in *Between Witness and Testimony: The Holocaust and the Limits of Representation*, 131-155. This chapter alongside Bernard-Donals other work, *Figures of Memory*, argues that by "Othering" the historical narrative of the Holocaust in the USHMM, visitors experience difficulty in truly connecting with the reality of the victims' existence. This is also expressed in Cole, *Selling Auschwitz*.

**Questioning the Void: The Jewish Museum Berlin**

Despite Michael Blumenthal's assertion that "[JMB is] not a Holocaust museum … It was never intended as a Holocaust museum," it is interpreted as such by its visitors.[244] The exhibition and thousands of beautiful historical objects will only ever serve as secondary to the most important object – the building itself. Much of the reason for this is architect Daniel Libeskind's design of the new wing of the museum – an addition to the existing Baroque building - which opened to the public in 2001. The history of the Jewish Museum Berlin makes this museum a complicated structure which straddles the spaces between memorial museum, memorial, and museum. Unlike the USHMM and the Yad Vashem campus, the JMB was intended to function as a history museum, showcasing 2,000 years of Jewish history in Berlin, rather than memorializing the Holocaust. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Libeskind's design undermines the ideology of the JMB's founders, who intended for the museum to be about life, rather than death. Despite the intentions of the founders, the JMB is continually interpreted by visitors inversely, functioning as a museum exhibit housed within a memorial. The conflict of design shaped the early years of the museum's build and has resulted in visitors questioning how the JMB fits into an international Holocaust memory. While scholars like Rotem have argued that the museum's architecture, which "intentionally elicits moral questions about the Holocaust and the destruction of Jewish life in Berlin, that has elevated the museum to the status of a public memorial."[245]

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[244] J. Barak, "To Learn from the Mistakes of the Past," *Jerusalem Post,* 9 September 2001, p. 15.
[245] Rotem, 141.

After the Libeskind extension was completed, the team of curators experienced numerous challenges in trying to design a permanent exhibition which fit the space, and this challenge undeniably plays out in the museum space to this day.[246] The permanent exhibition's focus is two millennia of German Jewish history, and its narrative arc is grounded in in continuities. Understandably, housing the exhibit in a memorial space which deals in voids, impossibilities, ruptures, and loss presented many challenges. It remains difficult for visitors to Libeskind noted three basic ideas in the formation of the JMB design:

> First, the impossibility of understanding the history of Berlin without understanding the enormous intellectual, economic, and cultural contribution made by its Jewish citizens. Second, the necessity to integrate physically and spiritually the meaning of the Holocaust into the consciousness and memory of the city of Berlin. Third, that only through the acknowledgement and incorporation of this erasure and void of Jewish life in Berlin, can the history of Berlin and Europe have a human future.[247]

The exhibition and thousands of beautiful historical objects will only ever serve as secondary to the most important object – the building itself. Through the memory void and the use of light and dark throughout the JMB's permanent exhibition, themes of rupture and loss remain woven into the fabric of the museum.[248]

This is precisely why, according to Rotem, the Jewish Museum Berlin remains a complex place to encounter the Holocaust in a museum setting. On the one hand, the iconic Libeskind architecture features heavily in visitor photography; but on the other,

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[246] Ibid., 142.
[247] Daniel Libeskind, *Between the Lines: Extension to the Berlin Museum and the Jewish Museum* (Amsterdam: Jewish Historical Museum, 1991), 23.
[248] Elke Heckner, "Whose trauma is it? Identification and Secondary Witnessing in the Age of Postmemory," in David Bathrick, Brad Prager, and Michael David Richardson, eds. *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory (*Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2008), 62-86.

visitors are left feeling confused, unsure as to why the museum does not explore the history of the Holocaust in a manner as in depth as the architectural foregrounding of the building itself. This sentiment is highlighted by the following review:

> I can see mixed reviews about this museum. Personally when we first walked in it was not what was expected, we felt it was more about the architect than the actual Jewish Heritage. However as walking through reading and listening it was very moving reading and looking at belongings that had been found for several Jewish families and what their fate was.[249]

The empty museum was arguably more effective as a lasting Holocaust memorial or monument before the fully stocked exhibition opened in 2001; the museum space devoid of any artefacts left a lasting impression on the 350,000 visitors that experienced the voided space in those early years.[250] However, many visitors have claimed that they are moved by the memory labour which the Libeskind space requires them to carry out. The foregrounding of the Libeskind extension forces visitors to choose a path and to actively consider what the death of millions meant.[251] This labour of memory is underscored by NorthWestUK1's review of the museum:

> This museum puts some of the work onto the visitor to "feel" and "experience" their way through some areas. You will find some exhibits such as spotlights (replicating those experienced by inmates) and the area where you walk (crunch) down a concreted tunnel with iron faces beneath your feet. In this regard, it's an innovative way to organize [sic] a museum, one that requires visitors to do a little more work than usual.[252]

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[249] TripAdvisor Review by Kelly_Richo, October 2018. URL: http://bit.ly/expected-2018 (accessed 1 November 2018)
[250] Rotem, 141.
[251] Libeskind, "1995 Raoul Wallenberg Lecture," 33.
[252] NorthWestUK1, "Intellectually challenging, a museum that makes you work for empathy and understanding," TripAdvisor Review of the Jewish Museum Berlin, 15 August 2018. URL: http://bit.ly/intellectual-challenge (accessed 1 November 2018).

The intellectual work highlighted by NorthWestUK1 is the work of memory performance. It is through this performance that visitors to JMB experience the legacy of the Holocaust, placing the responsibility of understanding the JMB's dual identity. The memory work of photography at the JMB signals an engagement with Libeskind's language of bearing witness.[253] By giving physical meaning to absence, Libeskind's Holocaust visuality invites the visitor to engage in visual methods for conducting the labour of memory necessary for comprehending the space of the extension.

Thus, by invitation of Libeskind's physical representation of the void, many visitors rely on photography to explore the memory work they are required to do in the Libeskind extension. Through the lenses of their smartphones, they photograph the three axes, conceptualized underground before gaining access to the museum's main exhibitions. The Axis of the Holocaust, the Axis of Exile, and the Axis of Continuity present visitors with three different narratives outcomes to engage with (figure 4.3). These paths are not as exploratory as they initially appear, with two ending in the "dead" ends of the empty Holocaust Tower and the Garden of Exile, but, as argued by Kevin K, "the building is the true exhibit – the experience generator."[254] He expands upon his points:

> The symbolism is hard to explain, but once you experience it first-hand you will understand. Standing in the 'Holocaust Tower' on the Lower Level is an overwhelming experience with nothing inside; just a shaft and a sliver of natural light – true space for forced internal reflection. On the Ground Level, the 'Memory Void' is an eerie experience that has to be witnessed first-hand. The sounds of people walking on the steel-plates are something which will forever be

[253] Xanthi Tsiftsi, "Libeskind and the Holocaust Metanarrative; from Discourse to Architecture," *Open Cultural Studies* 1 (2017): 299.
[254] Kevin K, "Architecturally-Biased Review," TripAdvisor review of the Jewish Museum Berlin, 14 July 2018. URL: http://bit.ly/architecture-bias.

burned into my memory.[255]

In this way, Libeskind positions his extension of the JMB as the ultimate object of Holocaust postmemory, synonymous with a movement toward an ethical architecture for the twenty-first century.[256]

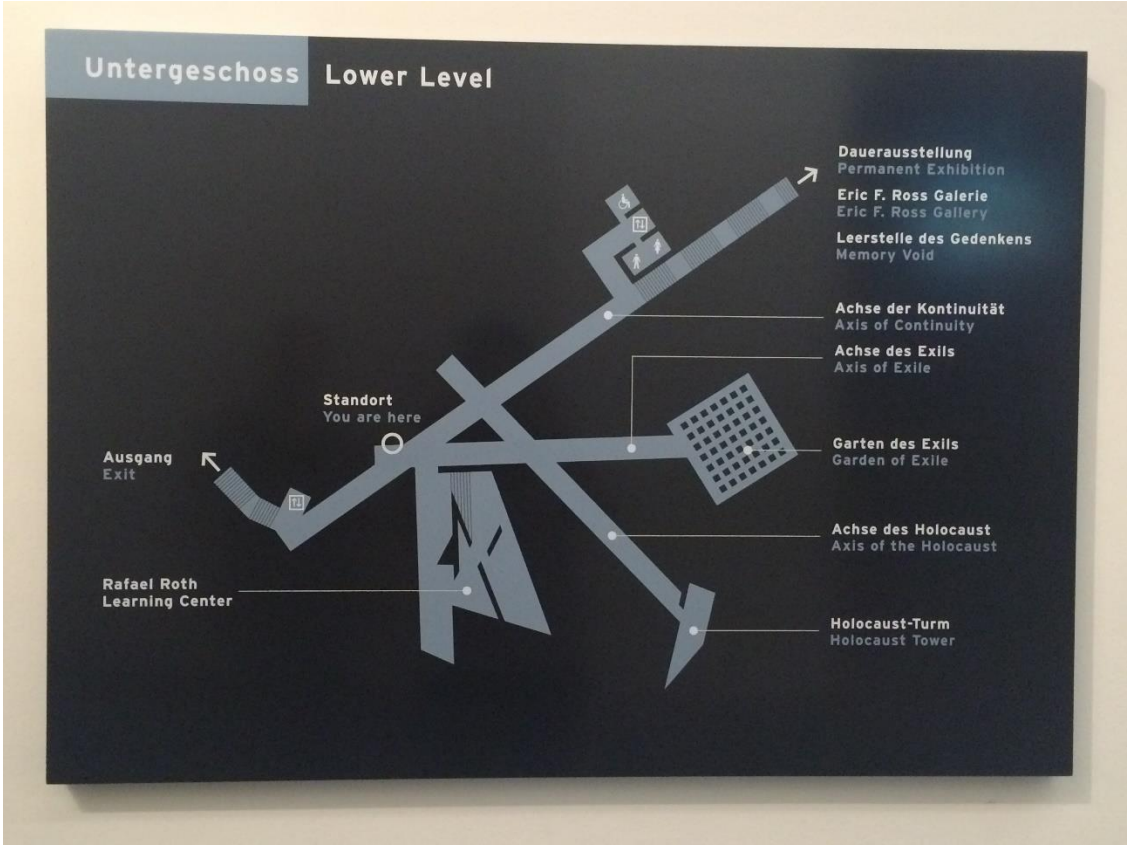


*Figure 0.3. Museum guide to the lower level of the Jewish Museum Berlin, indicating the three axes conceptualized by Daniel Libeskind. Photo by Meghan Lundrigan, July 2016.*

Unfortunately, the ethical architecture places the building at the center of the visitor's field of view, superseding the role of the objects inside the museum's permanent exhibitions. Thus, the Libeskind extension embodies the physical tensions between

[255] Ibid.
[256] Daniel Libeskind, "1995 Raoul Wallenberg Lecture," College of Architecture and Urban Planning (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan, 1995), 42.

architecture, exhibition design, and museum objects. Visitor Instagram images re-affirm the importance of the structure within the continuum of Holocaust memory, with most of the images online capturing the building's façade, architecture, and constructed memory voids inside the permanent extension.[257] This is because, according to Young, "[…] it is not the building itself which constitutes [Libeskind's] architecture, but the spaces inside the building, the voids and absence embodied by empty spaces: that which is constituted by those spaces between the lines of his drawings."[258] The spaces in which the visitor must do their own memory work occupy the eye, lens, and mission of the visitor. It is, as Libeskind has noted, easy enough to indicate the space of the void on architectural plans, but when one attempts to photograph the void, they are left with an image of nothing.[259] Therefore, the attempted Instagram photo of Libeskind's "Voided Void" (figure 4.4) indicates a visitor's need to photograph the feeling wrought by "spaces between the lines of Libeskind's drawings," focusing on a confrontation with the Void in the context of the JMB.

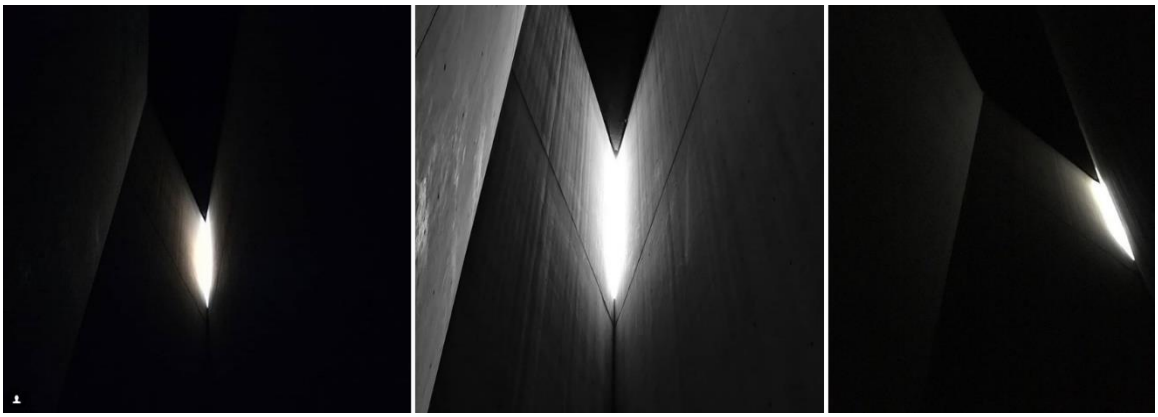

*Figure 0.4. Photos from inside Libeskind's Holocaust Tower / "Voided Void", 2018.*

[257] Explore tags: #jewishmuseumberlin, https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/jewishmuseumberlin/ (accessed 19 November 2018).
[258] Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 165.
[259] Libeskind, "1995 Raoul Wallenberg Lecture," 38.

This remains entirely the point; the message found "between the lines" of Libeskind's design echoes through photographs of the museum space, communicating the immensity of the void wrought by the loss of Europe's Jews. However, the required memory-work is not always accepted by the visitor, sometimes resulting in a confrontation with Berlin's history, and the idea of whether a museum should function as a resonator of memory – like the work of the USHMM. This confrontation develops through the visitor's personal interpretation of the Libeskind extension, and its meaning in the wider context of Holocaust history. A visitor from 2002 challenges the responsibility for the void, writing:

> The building evokes a sense of what (and whom) is missing. It doesn't tell the history of how and why the void came to exist. Are the German people still not able to stand in front of their history and acknowledge that a machine of their culture was the instrument of a peoples' destruction? In comparison to the Holocaust museum in Washington, D.C., this is very delicate – it leaps over the driving questions of HOW and WHY. Perhaps in its intent to be a monument memorializing those killed it chooses to steer clear of politics. Ok [sic], but where in Berlin, in Germany, do we have the consciousness of this history opened up for a society's self examination [sic]?[260]

This encounter highlights the ways in which Libeskind's foregrounded architecture can be challenged by the visitor. The pathways forged by Libeskind are not as historically proscriptive as the Holocaust simulacrum at USHMM, giving visitors the choice to explore the different axes of history at their leisure. The images captured at JMB's extension signify both an erasure of the traditional museum space and how visitors accept the responsibility of working-through-memory; focusing mostly on the extension and the separation between the new building and the old, Instagram photography at JMB remains inseparable from the dual nature of the museum itself. Perhaps demonstrative of an

[260] Visitor entry, 18 September 2002. Gästebuch 12 vom 29.08.2002 – 20.09.2002, *Besuchervorschung, Stiftung Jüdisches Museum Berlin*. Original emphasis.

attempt to hold onto Holocaust memory and its postmemorial visual culture in the face of typical museum narratives, the performed memory-work required of the visitor remains the focal point on Instagram.

**Jerusalem as Living Artefact: The Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum**

The new Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum (YVHHM) was inaugurated in 2005. While only one part of the larger campus of the Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Centre, the updated space was meant to add a new exhibition space to allow Yad Vashem to update and replace its old exhibition on the history of the Holocaust.[261] However, photography is not allowed inside the museum itself – unlike JMB and USHMM. Obviously, this does not mean that people refrain from taking and sharing photographs, and museum shares photos of the architecture and exhibit space widely on their own Instagram account. The visitor experience at the YVHHM remains different from that of the experience at USHMM and JMB. While photos of the USHMM are metonymic attempts to answer a seemingly impossible question and images of the JMB are objects created through the memory work of its visitors, the YVHHM relies on its own place-making to derive a unique Holocaust encounter out of the landscape of Israel itself. Rather than placing the memory work on the shoulders of the visitor, they are implored to listen and accept the narrative and experiences placed in front of them.

This is an important divergence, because architecturally the YVHMM's new design is not distinct from that of the visual character of the USHMM, JMB, nor the

[261] Neuman, 67.

brushed-concrete aesthetic we have come to recognize in other notable Holocaust memorials.[262] Moshe Safdie's architectural design for the Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum cuts through Mount Herzl, and from the entrance it stretches over 4,200 square meters, opening and widening toward the light at the end of the exhibition.[263] Safdie explains the Holocaust through steeply sloping stone walls, shadows and light. There are several physical barricades or impediments which prevent the visitor from taking shortcuts to the end; one must weave through cramped, shadowed spaces in which the history of the Holocaust unfolds. Dorit Harel, the Chief Designer for the YVHHM, argues "visitors should experience every part of the exhibition, without short cuts or abridgements. I felt therefore that the movement pattern would have to be closed and prescribed."[264] The YVHHM's permanent exhibit is highly visual, relying far more on photography and video to communicate history than its American counterpart. As one progresses through the exhibit, the physical size and number of images increases. Immense panels featuring anti-Semitic propaganda impede the visitor's path at many turns, and piles of belongings divide the exhibit, zig-zagging through the narrow space. Portraits of victims and atrocity images cover the walls – some ten to twenty feet high – toward the end of the exhibit, becoming visually more overwhelming as one progresses through the space. The physicality of the exhibit overpowers the visitor in a way that is

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[262] The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin as well as the National Holocaust Monument in Ottawa, Canada, share this aesthetic. See "The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe," URL: https://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/en/memorials/the-memorial-to-the-murdered-jews-of-europe.html (accessed 16 November 2018) and "The National Holocaust Monument | Le Monument National de Holocauste," URL: http://holocaustmonument.ca/ (accessed 16 November 2018).
[263] "Architecture," Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Centre. URL: https://www.yadvashem.org/museum/holocaust-history-museum/architecture.html (accessed 1 November 2018).
[264] Dorit Harel, *Facts and Feelings: Dilemmas in Designing the Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum* (Dorit Harel Designers, 2013), 25.

different from the overwhelming amount of material evidence present at the USHMM. The YVHHM relies on the visual to represent the genocide; the exhibit highlights that through the destruction of places, objects, and people, ways of seeing the genocide is the lasting remnant of the Holocaust.

One of the most photographed spaces at Yad Vashem is the balcony at the end of the permanent exhibit. After exiting the Hall of Names, one finds themselves gazing over the scrubby beauty of the Jerusalem Forest from the top of Mount Herzl. This image is heavily featured on Instagram for a number of reasons: the balcony is the first aspect of the exhibit "space" that the visitor is allowed to photograph; the valley of the Jerusalem Forest provides a stunning backdrop for a photo opportunity; and, the widening opening and balcony of Safdie's building at the conclusion of the exhibition hall is the space where the architecture of the building asserts its own authority over Holocaust memory (figure 4.5).[265] After emerging from the History Museum, the visitor faces several options: to carry on to the bookshop, a small gallery which houses an exhibit on art and the Holocaust, and to explore the rest of the memorial campus. The campus houses several other Holocaust memorials, including the Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations, the Valley of the Destroyed Communities, a Cattle Car Memorial to the Deportees (possibly the second-most photographed space on campus), a children's memorial, a monument to World War II soldiers, and more.

[265] Neuman, 68.

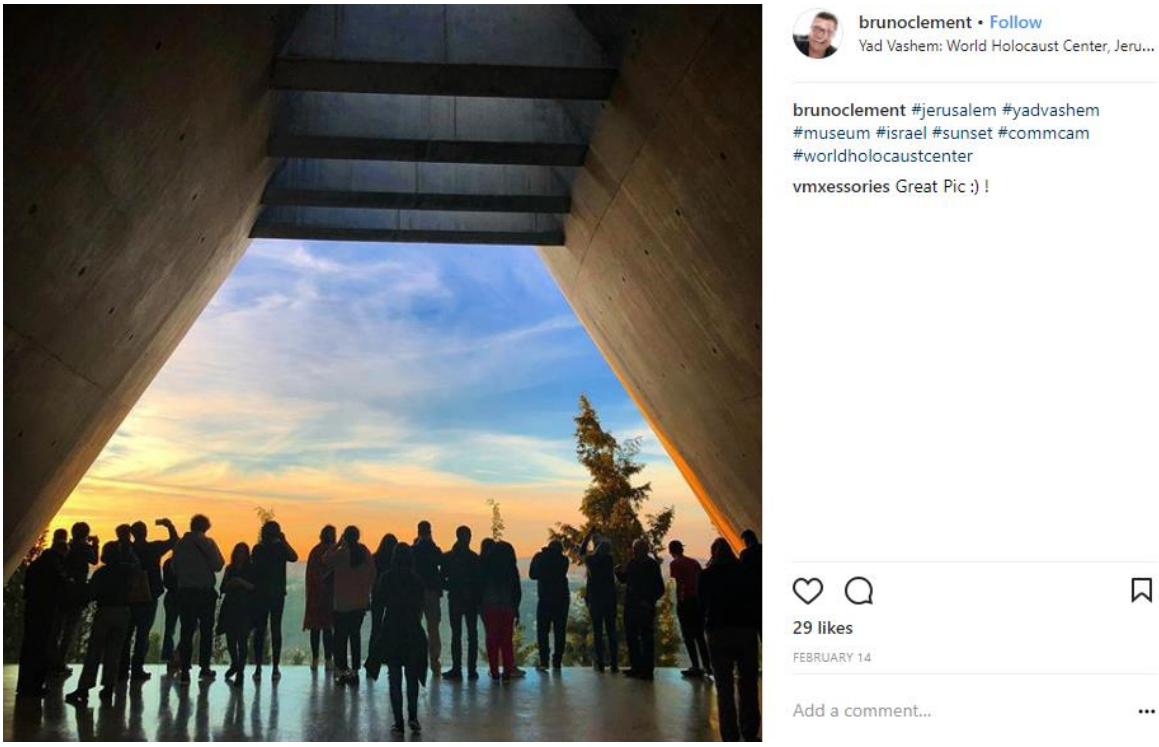


*Figure 0.5. Balcony at Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Centre. Image copyright @brunoclement, 14 February 2018.*

At Yad Vashem, the landscape of Jerusalem is the star living artefact, functioning as a symbol of triumph and hope for the future; as argued by architect Neuman, "at this point, the landscape is appropriated, objectified and turned into another exhibit in the history museum; wat began with the display of the events in Europe ends in the Jerusalem landscape."[266] The view from the balcony showcases the garden of the Righteous among the Nations, affirming that the memory of the Holocaust must be preserved beyond the walls of museums and historical institutions, encouraging visitors to bring the memory of what they have seen with them. While Yad Vashem may not rely on thousands of visitor photos inside the exhibit itself, its authority as a memory-making institution lies in its research capabilities and its embedded physicality within Israel's

[266] Ibid.

landscape. It encourages networks of Holocaust remembrance: fixtures in landscape and architecture, and the diaspora and movement of visitors and witnesses, carrying the memory of the Holocaust to their homes and to the future. Instagram user @nmadrid confirms this last aspect, noting:

> For me, walking through all those terrible images...I felt so many emotions. Walking out onto the balcony, I felt a peaceful breeze and heard nothing but the leave rustling. As far as my eyes could see, I saw trees dedicated to the righteous. In that time of atrocities and betrayals so many chose to stand against evil. They are the true heroes! #neveragain.[267]

@nmadrid highlights the evocative Zionist journey taken by the visitor, through the dark prism of the history of the Holocaust to their arrival in Jerusalem.[268] In the embedded prism of the museum within Mount Herzl (which is also the home of Israel's national cemetery), those without physical remains are offered a final resting place. Thus, according to Bernard-Donals and Glejzer, "Yad Vashem ties together the imperative of speaking with place markers that represent the horrors of bodies never to be found, the never to be completely signified."[269] The marker for the bodies never found rests in the Hall of Names – a conical chamber, lined with books filled with pages of testimony. The Hall of Names at Yad Vashem remains the space in which each Jew murdered during the Holocaust can be commemorated for generations to come.[270]

Placing Yad Vashem next to the USHMM and the JMB reinforces Hansen-Glucklich's assertion that the architecture and narrative aspects of Holocaust museums

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[267] Instagram user @nmadrid comment on @yadvashem's image, 7 January 2018. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BdovmB6gyKx/?taken-by=yadvashem. Accessed 30 January 2018.
[268] Neuman, 68.
[269] Bernard-Donals and Glejzer, 134-135.
[270] "Hall of Names," Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Centre, URL: https://www.yadvashem.org/archive/hall-of-names.html. (accessed 15 November 2018).

are shaped by their cultural contexts and national locations. Israeli Holocaust historian Hanna Yoblanka grounds this sentiment, noting:

> This museum, in the heart of Jerusalem, the capital of sovereign Israel, on the Mount of Remembrance, is a corrective experience for the Jewish people, who first and foremost perpetuates its own victims, who formed the collective soul of the people, and awards them the right to speak. The museum's universal message is obviously secondary.[271]

Architecture and location remain important indicators for the ways in which spatial differences at Holocaust museums form the first layer of encounter for visitors, shaping what they will see, and what they can see, before they even think to take a picture. Yad Vashem differs from USHMM in that the Americanized USHMM serves as a central building block of evidence that the Holocaust *happened*.[272] The YVHHM does not need the incontrovertible proof that serves as the foundation of the American Holocaust museum, a whole ocean away. The proof of Yad Vashem is in the visitors that filter through the exhibit and memorial campus, and the mountain on which it sits. Craig M. underscores this point, explaining, "I have been to and have seen Holocaust Memorials in many cities. The focus has always been this is what happened to the Jews under Hitler. Yad Vashem is very different because the focus is, 'this is what happened to us.'"[273] This narrative, hinging on an Israeli embodiment of the history of the Holocaust might be communicable through the camera's lens, but the unplugged space of the YVHHM makes this space even more effective.

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[271] Hanna Yoblanka, "First Person Plural," in Dorit Harel, *Facts and Feelings: Dilemmas in Designing the Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum* (Dorit Harel Designers, 2013), 100-101.
[272] Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, 160.
[273] Craig M., "Poignant and Moving," TripAdvisor Review of Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum, 27 September 2018. URL: http://bit.ly/poignant-moving.

For visitors to Holocaust museums, there may be no distinction between history, architecture, and memory; the categories remain fluid, continually informing and re-informing one another in a spectrum of experience for the visitor. Linda McDermott, a visitor to Yad Vashem, confirms this notion: "From architecture to interior design & displays, this is undoubtedly one of the best museums I've seen globally. I really don't have the words to describe its beauty. The essence of memory is indelibly written on my heart."[274] The architecture of the YVHHM remains both the first and last thing that visitors see, its outward façade and inward design inscribing Holocaust memory in the visitor's mind through brushed concrete and the interplay between shadow and light.[275] In this way, the YVHHM differs from the USHMM, using architecture, pathways, and the balcony exit as a demonstrative tool to explain the experience of the Holocaust, rather than reinforce the historical narrative through a proscriptive pathway of victimhood.[276]

One of the few negative reviews Yad Vashem has received on TripAdvisor notes, "Photography is forbidden in the museum without any reason being given - much of what is there is available online or on TV and if we don't share, how will people know what went on?"[277] This visitor makes a strong case for the importance of photography within the tourism industry, and for Holocaust memory itself. Photography at Holocaust museums is a vehicle for the circulation of Holocaust visual culture and memory in the

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[274] Linda McDermott, Yad Vashem Trip Advisor review, 25 February 2018.
[275] YVHHM visitor Aparchuk states, "Everything here is symbolic of the plight of the jewish [sic] peoples, from the shape of the building to the layout of the displays," in "An Experience you will never forget," TripAdvisor Review of the Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum. 3 April 2017. URL: http://bit.ly/life-changingYV.
[276] James E. Young has argued that Yad Vashem's narrative pathways take the visitor "from Gentile to Jewish heroism," *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 250-251.
[277] Review by mightyshepherd, Yad Vashem TripAdvisor review, 6 November 2017.

public sphere, and a practical way to extend the influence of that memory beyond the walls of the physical museum. However, at Yad Vashem, it is possible that the strong connection to the land as host and purveyor of memory is but one reason that social media usage is not strongly encouraged as part of the museum's memorial imperative. The connection between architecture, landscape, photography, and memory is explicit at the Yad Vashem campus; architecture and landscape present the possibilities of embedding Holocaust memory in the landscape, and photography presents an opportunity to transform the experience of seeing into an experience of participation. The additional act of sharing one's photos invites others to participate in the circulation of Holocaust memory. The social media exchange and the journey of visitor inclusion also benefits the institution, and it is therefore important to think of social media programming at Holocaust museums as a form of exchange, contestation, or collaboration. Nonetheless, the YVHHM and the performance of present-ness does call into question the necessity of photography in processes of memory-making.

## Conclusion: Undeniable Spaces

*Figure 0.6. Inside a #traincar of the #holocaust. Image copyright @shadow_rayne, 11 July 2018.*

The visual tropes which inspire the architecture of the USHMM, the JMB, and the YVHHM are inspired by the very objects and spaces which communicate the Holocaust's history. Figure 4.6 is a photo taken by a visitor inside the cattle car on the third floor of the permanent exhibition at the USHMM. The beams of light which Libeskind left embedded in his "Voided Void" and extension, and the use of natural light at the YVHHM invoke the same visuality present in figure 4.6: the single ray of light, an important symbol and reminder for the visitor. Instagram user @carnillionaire succinctly explains: "Light. If you were a holocaust victim, this would be the only you'd see. You

and many others packed solid into a car meant for cattle."[278] Visitors have the option to pass through the car before entering the portion of the exhibition dedicated to the camp universe, or they can bypass the experience entirely. It is a difficult space to photograph. The car is almost entirely dark, and the only light appears through the small window, as pictured. Visitors feel uncomfortable lingering longer than necessary, even though the freight car works as the lynchpin between physical space and postmemory: the USHMM was built entirely around the *Karlsruhe*-series freight car, drawing attention to the relationship between space and object in the context of the Holocaust museum.[279] The freight car remains the flagship item of the USHMM, operating as both an undeniable space and a material building-block of memory, though it is not photographed nearly as much as the architecture of the USHMM.

What can be made of the Holocaust museum visitor photograph? This chapter has grappled with the commonalities and differences in three major Holocaust museums through the eyes of the visitor. Whether the visitor experience is framed as part of a collaborative visual conversation with the museum itself, all photographs and experiences are dictated by space, and the guided visitor path through the exhibit. Indeed, there are finite ways visitors photograph the museum's architecture, as a stand-in for their memorial function. In this way, visitor responses to Holocaust museums are extremely varied. What Instagram images do indicate is an adherence to the museum space as being a vessel for memory, living Holocaust artefact, or a postmodern voided history. The

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[278] Caption by Instagram user @carnillionaire. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/yms7Ovt_1f/ (accessed 2 February 2019).
[279] Caption by @holocaustmuseum. The entire caption reads: "Did you know our entire #museum is built around the rail car? This Karlsruhe-series freight car, displayed on the third floor of the Permanent Exhibition, is of the type that was used for the deportation of Jews in Eastern Europe," 25 March 2015. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/0pvuL6SHgo/ (accessed 1 November 2018).

physicality of the museum space reinforces the production of similar image types, such as the Hall of Witness (USHMM), the balcony at YVHHM, or Daniel Libeskind's Memory Voids (JMB). In this way, the visitor image is a condensed architectural Holocaust representation, not wholly dissimilar from the spatial affirmations of Auschwitz, but one step removed.

Like visitor photos of Auschwitz, the photograph of the USHMM, the JMB, and the YVHMM are all the products of Holocaust postmemory, indicating an impulse on the part of the visitor to participate in their own experience as witness. As demonstrated, however, this is where the similarities end; depending on the institution, visitor photographs communicate very different experiences with Holocaust memory. No longer directly related to the physical history of the Holocaust, Holocaust museums are already built spaces of postmemory, inspired by the memory boom of the 1980s and 1990s. In different ways, the Holocaust museums in this chapter implore their visitors to participate in the memory-work of the institution. The visitor becomes a collaborative individual, active in the museum space, and communicating the memory of the Holocaust to the wider digital mediasphere. While the arrangement and interpretation of Holocaust history is still wholly in the hands of the museum, visitors still attempt to govern their own encounters through photography. The Instagram photos taken at the USHMM, the JMB, and YVHHM serve as an indicator of spatial and memorial tensions. What is more, the visitor photograph does not always clarify the visitor experience; at the USHMM, the visitor photograph is an attempt to capture share architecture of postmemory with the hope of answering the impossible questions posed the museum. The USHMM, as the premier example of the memorial museum indicates the pressures placed on the visitor to

carry out the memory-work of the institution, signaling that the act of postmemory is an ongoing, performative effort, which continues to be communicated in many ways. The value of digital spaces to engage in performances of postmemory indicates the Holocaust museums' commitment to an ongoing, performance of Holocaust memory in all its forms.

# Chapter 4

## Holocaust Landscapes, Material Objects, and Affect on Instagram

The second floor of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum features an expansive exhibit on the universe of the concentration camp. After moving through a section which explores the history of ghettoization, the visitor is encouraged to move through an authentic cattle car, where they emerge on the other side of the car and face a wrought-iron entrance sign that reads "*Arbeit macht Frei*." On one of my walks through the permanent exhibit I witnessed a mother encouraging her son to pose for a photograph beneath the sign, which marks the entrance to a hall which houses authentic bunkhouses from Auschwitz-Birkenau II. The young boy seemed obviously uncomfortable, yet his mother was insistent that taking a photograph was important to their memory of their family trip to USHMM and Washington, D.C. I continued to watch, reading some of the nearby panels as the mother finished snapping her picture of the boy underneath the gate, now an iconic synecdoche for the Holocaust.

This experience is indicative of many interconnected and sometimes conflicting concepts which I have discussed in previous chapters. In chapters two and three, I explained how the visitor's photographic impulse is primarily inspired and governed by a need to document one's experiences, as well as conduct site-specific memory work in the age of postmemory. I argued that space, place, and architecture serve as the groundwork for the performance of visitor photography, while Instagram photographs of Auschwitz and Holocaust museums function as devices which emplot the visitor in these spaces and cement Holocaust memory in the geographic imagination. Holocaust museum

architecture functions as evidence of the shared memory work conducted between the institution and the individual visitor. This museum encounter between the mother and her son indicates that understanding the overlapping authority of space (the museum), Holocaust symbols (the gate), and efforts to share their experience (photography) amounts to more than what is displayed in the photo. The sign they were photographing is a copy of the original, not even the "real thing."[280] However, the aesthetics of the object and its spatial connection to the authentic actuality of the camp universe is what inspired the photographic impulse. It is this intersection between space, the invocation of place, Holocaust symbols, and the photographic impulse to which I now turn.

As explored in the previous chapters, placemaking and space are but one of the ways the Instagram image functions in relation to Holocaust memory. For many members of the public, the pilgrimage to Auschwitz – "the place everyone must see," is a performative statement about witnessing and remembrance. In spaces like Auschwitz, the USHMM, or the YVHHM, photography serves as an extension of that performance, functioning as a staging of place and memory through the lens of a smartphone. Visitors rely on the built space of the museum as a vessel for their memory work and performance. This chapter extends that sentiment, drawing attention to material Holocaust symbols and memorial landscapes, demonstrating the ways in which placemaking, material culture, and memory intersect in the context of memorial landscapes and material history. Placing Holocaust memorials within the purview of a material history of Holocaust postmemory, I argue that material culture is not only the

[280] Stier has explored the mobile symbolism of the phrase "Arbeit macht Frei," demonstrating that while the gate at Auschwitz remains the most well known, many other camps made use of the phrase – particularly on their gates. See *Holocaust Icons: Symbolizing the Shoah in History and Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015).

focus of many visitor images, but also functions as an additional method which visitors use to unpack and display their own experiences with the history of the Holocaust.

However, this chapter departs from a pattern of exploring Instagram images as emblematic of Holocaust spaces, considering photographic methodologies that dominate tourist image types on Instagram. The photos in this chapter, while certainly tethered to and evocative of the spaces and places in which they were taken, focus instead on how the objects, spaces, and image-fashioning of the visitor push against the constraints of the Instagram image. Therefore, this chapter considers the limits of photography and the photographer in the context of contemporary Holocaust memory-making. Here, I primarily invoke the use of the "frame" – the borders which contain the Instagram image; I consider images of both objects and memorial landscapes which overwhelm Instagram's minimalist framing device. I demonstrate that Holocaust objects, memorial landscapes, and the use of Instagram for the display of these images are explicit manifestations of attempts to share something *more* than what rests inside the frame. Though digital images do not function materially the same way that analog photos do, through Instagram the photographer distills their Holocaust encounters into digital objects of Holocaust postmemory.

Consider the way in which individual material artifacts are displayed in a museum. Often, the artifacts serve as evidence of an experienced past and as didactic objects to communicate the reality of a past event, experienced by other people. This is not dissimilar to the display of amateur images from Holocaust museums and memorials; displayed as a grid or single feed, the images collectively form a narrative of Holocaust memory work in the age of post memory. This narrative can change depending on the

display options, but all visitor photos share in narratives of affect. Previous chapters have engaged with the singular Instagram image, exploring the ways in which photography works as an emplotment device and a method through working through Holocaust memory in its current forms. This chapter considers the presence of the Holocaust object on Instagram, housed within the Holocaust museum alongside the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (Berlin) and *Stolpersteine*. Much like the mobility of Holocaust objects and their presence in museums - geographically removed from the stories they tell, the Instagram image appears in multiple contexts on Instagram, and is thus made mobile through a discursive network of hashtags. By drawing direct comparisons between the movement and life of the Instagram image and the movement of Holocaust objects and spaces, I underscore the narrative function of both photographs and objects.[281] The construction of a Holocaust narrative depends on the placement and story-telling potential of material objects, placed in context with other artefacts. This is achieved in many ways: though architecture, display, and story-telling. Undoubtedly, architecture connects these concepts, but the display and story-telling function of Holocaust objects contribute to the construction of a Holocaust landscape.[282]

**Overwhelming the Frame: Photographing Holocaust Artefacts**

Object-based history, material culture, and authenticity heavily intersect in this chapter; because Holocaust museums rely on material traces to confirm the history of the

[281] Van Dijck, among many others, has argued for the discursive and story-telling function of photographs in the context of digital media. See "Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory," *Visual Communication* 7, no. 1 (2008): 57-76.
[282] Brett Ashley Kaplan, *Holocaust Landscapes of Postmemory* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

Holocaust, visitor engagement in the Holocaust museum hinges on the authority of the Holocaust object. Struk has questioned the necessity of the Holocaust object to the Holocaust museum, in relation to mobility and historical authenticity. She states:

> Is it time to ask what purpose is served by moving the belongings of those who died in the camps in Poland to museums in Europe and the USA? What can we learn from looking at the shoes of those who died at Majdanek in London, or from walking on cobblestones from the Warsaw ghetto in Washington, D.C.? What difference does it make to our understanding of history whether or not a tea-strainer we are looking at really belonged to a prisoner?[283]

To address Struk's inquiry: for the visitor, it makes a great deal of difference. Bonita R's negative review of the USHMM states, "I was disappointed. Too much reading and not enough seeing items."[284] Holocaust objects are already tied to the living memory of the genocide, and the times and places in which it occurred. Despite the relocation of these objects, the artifacts still carry an aura and a trace of the people to whom they once belonged. By making these material objects mobile, museums ensure that the communication of the past through material culture is more widely available to more visitors, thus contributing to the mobilization of Holocaust memory. Publics are not historians; encounters with the Holocaust need to be grounded in more than knowledge of the event. Thus, the presence of these objects in Holocaust museums and around the world contributed to the development of a mobile and globalized Holocaust memory, long before the age of social media. Ensuring that publics in London, Washington, D.C., Winnipeg, can access physical remnants of the Holocaust is not dissimilar to accessing

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[283] Struk, 193.
[284] One-star review of USHMM by Bonita R. URL: https://www.tripadvisor.ca/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d103441-r576637256-United_States_Holocaust_Memorial_Museum-Washington_DC_District_of_Columbia.html.

hundreds of thousands of photos of Auschwitz or the Berlin Holocaust Memorial on one's personal smartphone. The display and organization of Holocaust objects contributes to the authority of the museum and the visitor's ability to conceptualize and then represent the Holocaust on their own terms. Visitors continue to draw on a variety of Holocaust landscapes to contribute to an online and digitized Holocaust visuality, with Holocaust material objects as one part of a larger mosaic.

What is the relationship between Holocaust objects and photography, and how do Holocaust objects rely on representational frameworks that invoke a sense of immeasurability? Extending Holocaust memory scholar Oren Baruch Stier's process by which Holocaust objects are typified and symbolized is useful for the way it helps us understand how photographs of shoes and victims' belongings communicate the Holocaust through numbers. It is unsurprising that Instagram images of Holocaust objects are very common. Typical of any history museum, the exhibitionary narrative must hinge on material evidence of the past – and the Holocaust museum is no exception; collections of artefacts and material objects are central to the museum's message and its function as both a placeholder for memory and building block of evidence.[285] This has much to do with the signifying power of the Holocaust object, which functions as both a material trace of the genocide and a symbol for human experiences. Holocaust memory scholar Oren Baruch Stier argues that, "in general, material artifacts of the Holocaust are among the most powerful signifiers of that era, because they carry and convey the material trace of authentic experience."[286] The most photographed objects or "things" within the

[285] Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, 160.
[286] Stier, *Holocaust Icons,* 35.

USHMM's space are the very items which contribute to the evidentiary nature of the Holocaust museum, such as the wooden barracks from Auschwitz-Birkenau-II, piles of shoes from Majdanek, and sometimes the *Karlsruhe* freight car on rails from Treblinka.

While the narrative of the Holocaust museum is not wholly dependent on the Holocaust object, but the material traces of the Holocaust frame the authority of the museum as an institution through the workings of authenticity. For individuals who cannot visit the former sites of the Holocaust in Europe, the invocation of the Holocaust as a *real* event must always be tied to its physical remnants. Ulrike Kistner reinforces this notion, noting "[…] While death renders humans indifferent from and to lifeless things, apparently lifeless things retain a trace of life, past and present."[287] It is this trace of life and the lasting legacy of death – the materiality of the Holocaust is emblematic of both – which inspires photography as a form of remembrance within the exhibit space.[288] Photos of these objects are staged, captured, and shared in a performed way which emulates the Holocaust's visual legacy.[289] Thus, taking photos of objects situates the material remnants of the Holocaust as another focal point of the visitor experience, and the images serve as an accessible entryway to the empathetic framework on which many visitors rely.

Typically, Holocaust artifacts fall into three interrelated categories: remnants from the human experience of the period, such as eyeglasses, shoes, and suitcases; the relic, characterized by items that point more singularly to the reality of mass death, like piles of

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[287] Ulrike Kistner, "What Remains – Genocide and Things," in *Representing Auschwitz: At the Margins of Testimony*, Nicholas Chare and Dominic Williams, eds. (Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 120.
[288] This is akin to Roland Barthes' assertion that "photography has something to do with resurrection." *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: 1981), 80-81.
[289] Ibid.

hair or teeth; and lastly, items connected more tangentially to human experiences of the period, such as desecrated Torah scrolls. Stier notes "[…] Holocaust artifacts also bear within themselves a sacred aura, which contributes to their symbolic weight and communicative impact and, especially their iconic value."[290] What is more, the categorization of Holocaust objects and artifacts remains fluid, with the material trace of the genocide falling into categories which exhibit the typicality of everyday life during the Holocaust – such as eyeglasses or shoes – while also fit into the category of the exceptional trace because they were recovered from a concentration camp. Hansen-Glucklich reinforces this notion, arguing "Discovered at the actual sites where key events of the Holocaust took place […] otherwise quotidian objects like bowls or spoons acquire an aura of fatefulness because they seem to bear the very traces of the Holocaust itself; they possess, in short, a unique and powerful presence."[291]

While visitor photography functions as a mode of emplotment, helping the visitor/photographer to place themselves within a space, photographing objects in Holocaust museums serves as an attempt to collapse geographic and temporal distance.[292] For example, the framing technique employed in figure 0.1 connects the visual memory contained at USHMM to that of other Holocaust museums, Auschwitz, and other former concentration camps. By photographing the victims' shoes from above, eliminating the constructed aspects of the exhibit and not including exhibition information in the caption makes this image of a pile of shoes indistinguishable from another. Though the shoes at USHMM are on loan from Majdanek, the lack of other identifying factors places the

[290] Stier, *Holocaust Icons*, 35.
[291] Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed*, 119.
[292] Ibid.

image in conversation with other Holocaust geographies, thus denying the photo viewer access to the simulacric environment of the Holocaust museum in Washington, D.C. Without hashtags, geotags, or captions, the viewer of this photo on Instagram would be unable to differentiate between these spaces or installations.

*Figure 4.1. A common visual trope in Holocaust tourist photography. Copyright Instagram user @christafer_, 9 May 2017.*

The shoes in figure 5.1 fill the frame; the visitor's internalized understanding of these heaps of personal objects manifests in the structure of their image. Piles of shoes stretch beyond the frame of the image, overwhelming the frame, the visitor, and the viewer. Relying on the finite parameters of the frame of the Instagram image to communicate the immense number of material Holocaust artefacts is an impactful way that visitors/photographers attempt to communicate the scale of the Holocaust to their viewers and themselves. Apart from serving as important evidentiary building blocks,

immense installations which include thousands of individual material artefacts are resonate with visitors because they represent the impact of the Holocaust through its numbers. Yoblanka explains, "the staggering variety of the items displayed to visitors tests the ability to absorb it all."[293] The visitor accepts this test, relying on the photographic impulse to work through the absorption of the material reality of the Holocaust. Thus, methodologically, it is through overwhelming the frame of the image with Holocaust objects that the visitor communicates their confrontation with the physical and visual reality of genocide.

Understanding the impact of "six million" remains central to interpreting and representing the Holocaust.[294] The design and construction of Daniel Libeskind's Memory Voids sought to communicate the immense chasms left by the murder of millions of Jews, and filling it with ten thousand iron faces designed by Menashe Kadishman continues to communicate the essence of the void through numbers.[295] Heaps of victims' belongings communicate this concept in a material way. A visitor to USHMM notes, "we read *The Diary of Anne Frank* every year in my 8th grade class. One of the things the kids have a problem with is understanding how many six million people really were. Your museum helps with that."[296] Photographing piles of objects which formerly

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[293] Yoblanka, "First Person Plural," in *Facts and Feelings*, 102.
[294] For more scholarship on the meaning of "six million" in Holocaust representation and memorialization, see Daniel H. Magilow, "Counting to Six Million: Collecting Projects and Holocaust Memorialization," *Jewish Social Studies* 41, no. 1 (2007): 23-29 and Ann Rigney, "Scales of Postmemory: Six of Six Million," in Fogu, Kansteiner, and Presner, eds. *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture* (Harvard University Press, 2016), 113-128, which explores the impact of numerical scales on Mendelsohn's *The Lost*, in particular. Stier has also dedicated an entire chapter of *Holocaust Icons* to contextualizing the symbolism of six million.
[295] Jewish Museum Berlin, "*Shalekhet* – Fallen Leaves: An Installation by Menashe Kadishman," Libeskind Building, ground level, https://www.jmberlin.de/en/shalekhet-fallen-leaves (accessed 1 December 2018).
[296] Visitor comments from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 9 July 2002.

belonged to Holocaust victims helps visitors communicate the legacy of the Holocaust through numbers, and the numbers are unavoidable. A visitor to USHMM explains: "The shoes are very poignant. Photographs contribute to mental overload, but shoes you cannot ignore."[297] The presence of the shoes offers a space for forced confrontation with the impact of the Holocaust, communicating, as succinctly explained by Instagram user @jannyniwayan, "each element of this giant pile used to belong to one person […] and to make this huge of a collection you need thousands of them. And that's just a small percentage of all the victims of the Nazi regime."[298]

It is also worth noting that through Instagram these individual photos function as fragments of a larger whole, operating as a visual synecdoche within the canon of Holocaust visual culture. Each overhead image of piles of shoes or eyeglasses functions as the visitor's attempt to symbolize the Holocaust with a single image; by photographing the shoes from above (figure 5.1), and assuredly extending their smartphone over the glass barriers which form a pathway through the piles of shoes, the visitor intends to overwhelm the viewer with an image macro entirely consumed by the shoes of Holocaust victims, which extends beyond the frame of the image and, as we know, spilling beyond the scenes of capturable imagery. When viewed as a collective under the #holocaustmuseum hashtag on Instagram, the thousands of objects in the images bleed past the frame of a single image, though never truly encroaching on the image next to it. The photographer literally uses the frame of the image to contest the boundaries of

[297] Visitor comments from United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 10 June 2006.
[298] Instagram caption by @jannyniwayan, 18 January 2018, https://www.instagram.com/p/BeFVizDnmfS/ (accessed 17 May 2018).

representation, visually signifying the ways in which the Holocaust can still strain against the limits of representation.

This composition demonstrates visitor's understanding of the immensity and immeasurability of the Holocaust – an attempt to understand the implications of millions; this serves as a visual effort to communicate shock, horror, sadness, or anger through an affectual framework. The visitor overwhelms the frame because they describe themselves as overwhelmed by emotion. In some instances, this encounter might be a last-ditch attempt to photograph anything in which the visitor finds meaning before visitors pass through to the end of the exhibition. As said aptly by Bernal-Donals:

> […] of the objects collected for display by the designers of USHMM, [the shoes] are among the most powerful icons of the destruction commemorated by the museum, and they were chosen specifically to provide museum visitors the opportunity to identify those who were destroyed, and to learn something about the events of the Holocaust, events that for most visitors, occurred before they were born.[299]

Thus, the shoes of Majdanek present another interpretive opportunity for the museum visitor to emulate a learned Holocaust aesthetic. At the USHMM, the installation of shoes is accompanied by a few lines of Moses Schulstein's poetry, which reads:

> We are the shoes, we are the last witnesses.
> We are shoes from grandchildren and grandfathers
> from Prague, Paris, and Amsterdam,
> and because we are only made of fabric and leather
> and not of blood and flesh, each one of us avoided the hellfire.[300]

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[299] Bernal-Donals, "Synecdochic Memory at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum," 417.
[300] Moses Schulstein, "I Saw a Mountain." These lines of poetry from Moses Schulstein were written about the shoes of Majdanek. Michael Berenbaum, "Op-Ed: The Shoes of Majdanek," 26 August 2010, https://www.jta.org/2010/08/26/news-opinion/opinion/op-ed-the-shoes-of-majdanek (accessed 23 October 2018).

This passage, and its inclusion in the display of shoes at the USHMM reveals the collaborative relationship between the museum and the visitor. Moving through the piles of shoes from Majdanek allows the visitor to assume the role of witness continually upheld by the Holocaust's material objects.

Thus, in the eyes of the visitor, each individual material trace represents one victim of the Holocaust. While Bernard-Donals has argued that the material importance of the shoes

> […] doesn't derive from their being *shoes* - but from their existence as a mass, from being *a pile of shoes*, and that they are evidence not of the individuals who wore them before they were forced to remove them, but of the crimes that were committed, the crimes that created the pile.[301]

While I partially agree with this, I do not think it is wholly representative of how visitors perceive the piles of shoes. From a narrative standpoint, the visitors have already moved through the portions of the exhibit which engage with the final solution. What is more, the shoe installation precedes the final level of the Tower of Faces, allowing the visitor to draw direct connections between the shoes as objects, and victims as people.[302] Though perhaps obvious, the shoes are not shoes, in this instance, but are personified by the visitor as "shoes that remember."[303] The shoes are witnesses, and through interaction with these material witnesses the visitor is encouraged to carry the memory of the Holocaust forward and beyond the walls of the museum.

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[301] Bernard-Donals, *Figures of Memory*, 78-79.
[302] The "Tower of Faces" slices vertically through three floors of the permanent exhibition at USHMM. It is devoted to the Jewish community of the Lithuanian town of Eisiskes, which was massacred in two days of mass shootings on September 25-26, 1941. See "Visitors in the Tower of Faces," Photograph Number N08900, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum photo archive, https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1138417 (accessed 30 November 2018).
[303] Instagram image caption by @damun_ph, shared by @auschwitzmemorial, 9 February 2016, https://www.instagram.com/p/BBjglBbGXBO/ (accessed 5 December 2018).

The materiality of the Holocaust has contributed to its visual cultural legacy in our contemporary world. In this way, the method of overwhelming the frame with material is a remediation of a Holocaust visuality and existed long before the Instagram image and is tied to the interpretation of the evidence of Nazi crimes after the war. By piling the shoes on the floor, requiring visitors to encounter them and look down on the thousands—only a small fraction of the millions that perished—museum planners and curators sought to communicate the same visual codes encountered by liberators.[304] The materiality of the Holocaust, when communicated through artefacts and presented within the museum or former concentration camp, forms a behavioural dichotomy: visitors are intended to engage and interact with their surroundings, but they shall not touch artefacts or experience the physicality of the Holocaust's material history through touch. Thus, to photograph is to physically interact with these remnants of atrocity; to photograph and share images on Instagram is to carry out the mandate of the shoes by making Holocaust memory visual and mobile in the contemporary and digital worlds. In this manner, taking a photo constitutes a physical act which replicates the evidentiary nature of the museum itself, helping visitors through their journey of witnessing.[305]

The journey of witnessing at the Holocaust museum, and the personification of objects as the "last witnesses" to Nazi atrocities is a concept that has been developed by Hansen-Glucklich, who argues that "objects act as witnesses and bear testimony in the sense that they testify to the time and place whence they came."[306] It is unsurprising that

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[304] The display which houses the shoes at the USHMM features a placard and archival photo of the mountains of shoes uncovered at Majdanek, allowing the visitor to see how the museum's display technique mimics that of the original circumstances in which they were found.
[305] For more on tourism and materiality, see Michael Haldrup, "Material Cultures of Tourism," *Leisure Studies* 25, no.3 (2006): 275-289.
[306] Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed,* 119.

in attempts to represent the Holocaust through numbers that visitors allow material Holocaust objects to stand in for the bodies of victims. At Yad Vashem, the concept of object-as-memory and object-as-body collide in the Hall of Names. The main circular hall houses the museum's collection of over two million "Pages of Testimony" – brief biographies of identified Holocaust victims. They circle the outer edges of the hall, surrounding the visitor and the rest of the memorial. Though only two million pages have been collected, the shelves have room for six million.[307] The ceiling is a ten-metre high cone, displaying six hundred photographs and pieces of Pages of Testimony, meant to represent "a fraction of the murdered six million men, women and children from the diverse Jewish world destroyed by the Nazis and their accomplices."[308] The portraits of the victims reflect in a pool of water below the upper cone, visible from the raised viewing platform.[309]

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[307] Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Centre, "Hall of Names," URL: http://www.yadvashem.org/museum/holocaust-history-museum/hall-of-names.html. Accessed 24 February 2018.
[308] Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed,* 119.
[309] Photo of the Hall of Names courtesy of @yadvashem, 17 October 2017. https://www.instagram.com/p/BaVf5iUAB9a/ (accessed 1 December 2018).

*Figure 4.2. The Hall of Names at the Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum." Image copyright @yadvashem and @arch_photos, 17 October 2017.*

What happens when we turn our attention to a unique instance of Holocaust representation through numbers and spectral bodily presence, namely the Hall of Names at the Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum (figure 5.2)? While not material Holocaust artifacts, the pages of testimony resist classification, functioning as traces of the Holocaust and objects of postmemory.[310] Family members and individuals can contribute pages of testimony in memory of relatives who were murdered during the Holocaust. The page is a physical trace of a life taken by the Nazi regime, despite the date of its creation being cemented in the generations after the Shoah. Though the Hall has the room to house six million pages of testimony, it feels overwhelmingly full at just

[310] Family members can contribute pages of testimony in memory of relatives who were murdered during the Holocaust. "Hall of Names," Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center, https://www.yadvashem.org/museum/holocaust-history-museum/hall-of-names.html (accessed 15 November 2018).

two million pages. The circular display surrounds the visitor, occupying the entire space of their vision, both an archive and a memorial.[311] An especially sacred place, it also functions as the final resting place for so many victims of the Shoah who would otherwise not have one.

The Hall of Names, though relying on display techniques similar to so many Holocaust installations which focus on the relationship between numbers of victims and individual identities, does not settle into a state of acceptance. This is to say that the Hall of Names, though always surrounding the visitor and pushing at the frame of the visitor's photograph, functions *because* it is an incomplete memorial. The ten-meter vertical cone features only six hundred individual photos and fragments of testimony – a very small percentage of the two million pages of testimony which line the walls.[312] The space invites the visitor to be surrounded and overwhelmed by the numbers, but also to be reminded that there is still memory work that needs doing. The Hall of Names communicates to its visitors and now-witnesses the complexities that accompany representing the Holocaust through numbers: that numbers can only tell us so much, and that the memory of the victim continues to resist classification as simply one in six million. It is this tension between the number and the individual that overwhelms the frame of the visitor photo. The tension between the one and the six million in the context of an incomplete memorial archive gives the Hall of Names a spectral quality. This spectral presence requires the visitor to remember that Holocaust memorialization and

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[311] Quote by Moshe Safdie, included in @yadvashem's image of the Hall of Names, 25 April 2018, https://www.instagram.com/p/Bh-uUEEAzgi/ (accessed 20 July 2018).
[312] "Hall of Names," Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center, https://www.yadvashem.org/museum/holocaust-history-museum/hall-of-names.html (accessed 20 November 2018).

representation is not only a process of considering the millions, but also the process of considering the single victim simultaneously because people are not shoes, eyeglasses, nor single pages – they are people. The incomplete nature of the Hall of Names is not defined *only* by the continual acquisition of pages of testimony, but by the notion that an object-as-person will *always* be an incomplete memorial form. It is this sense of the overwhelming-yet-incomplete relationship between the spectral presence of the Holocaust victim and the visitor which characterizes photos of the space and visitor engagement in the Hall of Names.

**De-Centralized Space: Holocaust Memorial Landscapes on Instagram**

*Figure 4.3. One of the glass pedways at USHMM. Image copyright @saraslifeinphotos, 25 February 2018.*

There are many ways that museum display and interpretation decentralize places and spaces related to the Holocaust. The pedways at the USHMM are one such representation. They connect the four floors of the permanent exhibition, carrying the visitor from one section of the USHMM exhibition to the next. The pedway in figure 5.3

is engraved with the names of the communities that victims of the Holocaust were from, operating as a textual, geospatial reminder of the impact of Nazi atrocities on Europe's landscape and population. Figure 5.3 is a partial image of one of the pedways, featuring James Ingo Freed's iconic architectural design in the background. The glass pedway and visitor photos of it are demonstrative of efforts to continually represent the Holocaust through numbers and space and has become integral to exhibitionary practice in Holocaust museums and wider contemporary memorial design.[313]

On Instagram, architecture does more than cement the parameters of physical space; at USHMM, the building extends beyond its own physical reality, mapping the geographies of the Holocaust into its own construction. The glass pedways are but one instance where architecture, physicality, and spatial geography coalesce. These images are just one way that visitors confront intersection between feeling overwhelmed by the immensity of the Holocaust and feeling connecting to individual victims. These glass walkways are not maps, nor do they function the same way. The list of names does not constitute a site-specific memory act; the long lists of place names, measuring spaces, towns, cities, and countries destroyed by Nazi violence relies primarily on numbers as representational frameworks. The etched pedways surround the visitor – not unlike the Hall of Names at Yad Vashem. On the same note, there is no possible way that every

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[313] Stier, *Holocaust Icons*. This listing of places and names has also become a larger trend in Holocaust memorialization, and can be seen at the New England Holocaust Memorial (Boston) and the Valley of the Communities at the Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Centre. Rather than place names or the names of individuals, the New England Holocaust Memorial hast etched millions of numbers into the class – evocative of the infamous tattoos inflicted on many of its victims. The Valley of the Communities, on the other hand, has etched the names of communities into the walls of a maze to communicate the impact of Nazi Germany's violence on Jewish communities across Europe. For the New England Holocaust Memorial, see "Design of the Memorial," New England Holocaust Memorial, https://www.nehm.org/the-memorial/design-of-the-memorial/ (accessed 30 November 2018). For an image of the Valley of the Communities, see @taylroarishere's Instagram images, from 3 November 2018, https://www.instagram.com/p/BpuSclSl49j/ (accessed 5 November 2018).

place name can be included in a visitor photograph, as the names of places will always bleed past the frame of the photo. Photographing the pedways and sharing them on Instagram are visitor behaviours which cement the texts, architecture, geographies of Holocaust memory within the frame on Instagram.

How does this concept extend to memorial spaces outside the museum? As plentiful as the museum and concentration camp images are, Holocaust visuality on Instagram constitutes more than the geographical traces of the genocide and the halls of the memorial museum. Brett Ashley Kaplan has argued for the inclusion of "other" Holocaust spaces in the visual and spatial canon of Holocaust memorialization.[314] Understanding how landscapes of postmemory invoke a Holocaust visuality – particularly in geographic spaces removed from the killing itself – contributes to a broader understanding of the Holocaust as a historic and place-making event. Expanding on this notion, I argue that this concept extends to the spaces in which the Holocaust is memorialized and is remade through the memory-making actions of visitors and photographers. We see this in Holocaust memorial landscapes, and the ways in which shared photography contributes to interpretive shifts in the geographic character of two specific Holocaust memorials: The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (Berlin), and the *Stolpersteine*, as they are scattered across the globe.

In the age of postmemory Holocaust memorial spaces have been subject to overwhelming scholarly discussion. Holocaust landscapes and their postmemorial function draws on the work of landscape photography, and the complexities caused by

[314] Brett Ashley Kaplan, *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

attempts to capture the entirety of a landscape.[315] While the visual character of both the Berlin Memorial and the *Stolpersteine* project extend from the development of the Holocaust memorial as a deconstructed space or anti-monument, the memorial's message is only maintained on Instagram under particular circumstances.[316] Both the Berlin Holocaust memorial and Gunter Demnig's *Stolpersteine* demonstrate how Instagram has the power to transport the seeing, photographing, and sharing of Holocaust memorials, filtered through the interpretive authority of the photographer, beyond the geographical footprint of the memorial itself. Drawing on examples which specifically invoke affect at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, I will demonstrate the ways in which, in the words of Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, "[…] visitors were personally responsible for drawing their own mnemonic lessons from the memorial," thus presenting unique and personal opportunities for the visitor to internalize the memory of the Holocaust.[317] Following tourism scholar Mike Robinson, who argues "that the emotions are necessary, and in many ways inevitable for engaging with the world. The tourist part is not detached from it, and is engaged in processes of ordering knowledge of the world […],"[318] I argue that the photographic process is an extension of the affective face of memory work conducted by visitors to memorial sites.

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[315] I am thinking specifically of Ryan R. James and Joan M. Schwartz's edited volume *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (I.B. Tauris, 2003). David E. Nye's contribution "Visualizing Eternity: Photographic Depictions of the Grand Canyon," provides an analysis of the challenges presented by the limits of landscape photography. For a more recent work, Elizabeth Edwards' *The Camera as Historian* offers an excellent argument for the ways in which landscape photography has the ability to evoke identity, community, and nationhood through the staging of the photographer (2012). See also Ulrich Baer's *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2002) for an analysis of the act of photographing the natural landscapes of Holocaust sites.
[316] Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, "Deconstructivism and the Holocaust: Peter Eisenman's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe," in Fogu, Kansteiner, and Presner, eds. *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture*.
[317] Rosenfeld, "Deconstructivism and the Holocaust," 290-291.
[318] Mike Robinson, "The Emotional Tourist," in David Picard and Mike Robinson, eds. *Emotion in Motion: Tourism, Affect and Transformation* (Surrey & Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), 22. [21-46].

Artist Gunter Demnig's *Stolpersteine* project is an excellent example of the ways in which space, place, and material culture intersect.[319] As of 2017, Demnig had placed more than 70,000 small, bronze-cast stones across Europe – with one in Argentina, marking the spaces where victims of the Holocaust previously lived. The small bronze stones are traditionally embedded within the sidewalk outside former places of residence, so that they can be "stumbled upon" in the context of the everyday. *Detusche Welle* reports:

> If you bow down to read the inscription of a *Stolperstein*, you quickly start thinking: That person was my age when he was murdered or the age of my daughter, or born the same year as my grandmother. You start to reflect, you start to wonder what would have happened to you, what would you have done if you had noticed that the family in the opposite flat had disappeared in the middle of the night. What would you do today if your neighbors disappeared? They are a way of making unfathomable figures fathomable, they are a way of making cold facts personal.[320]

The *Stolpersteine* have become the largest decentralized memorial in the world, networked and governed by site-specific histories.[321] Encountering a single *Stolperstein* places the experience of the individual victim within an immense decentralized map of victimhood which stretches beyond the borders of Germany and even Europe.[322] It

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[319] See the website for the *Stolpersteine* project, http://www.stolpersteine.eu/en/ (accessed 14 November 2018).
[320] *Deutsche Welle*, "20 Years of Stolpersteine," n.d. https://www.dw.com/en/20-years-of-stolpersteine/a-19252785 (accessed 23 November 2018).
[321] See Matthew Cook and Micheline van Riemsdijk, "Agents of memorialization: Gunter Demnig's *Stolpersteine* and the Individual (Re-)Creation of a Holocaust Landscape in Berlin," *Journal of Historical Geography* 43 (2014): 138-147 and Christine Whitehouse, "*Stolpersteine*: Re-Placing German Memory Culture through Local Commemorative Practices," MA Thesis (2011), Department of History, Carleton University.
[322] Currently, one *Stolperschwelle* ("stumbling threshold") as been laid in Argentina, with plans to lay twenty-five more in 2019. The *Stolpersteine* project website reads "There are certain cases when hundreds or thousands of Stolpersteine would have to be laid in a single place. This being almost impossible, Gunter Demnig has come up with an alternative, the STOLPERSCHWELLE [...] A STOLPERSCHWELLE can record the fate of a group of victims in a few lines." http://www.stolpersteine.eu/en/technical-aspects/, (accessed 1 December 2018).

requires the viewer to consider the personal nature of the genocide, and the spaces where persecution occurred beyond the scope of the death camp.

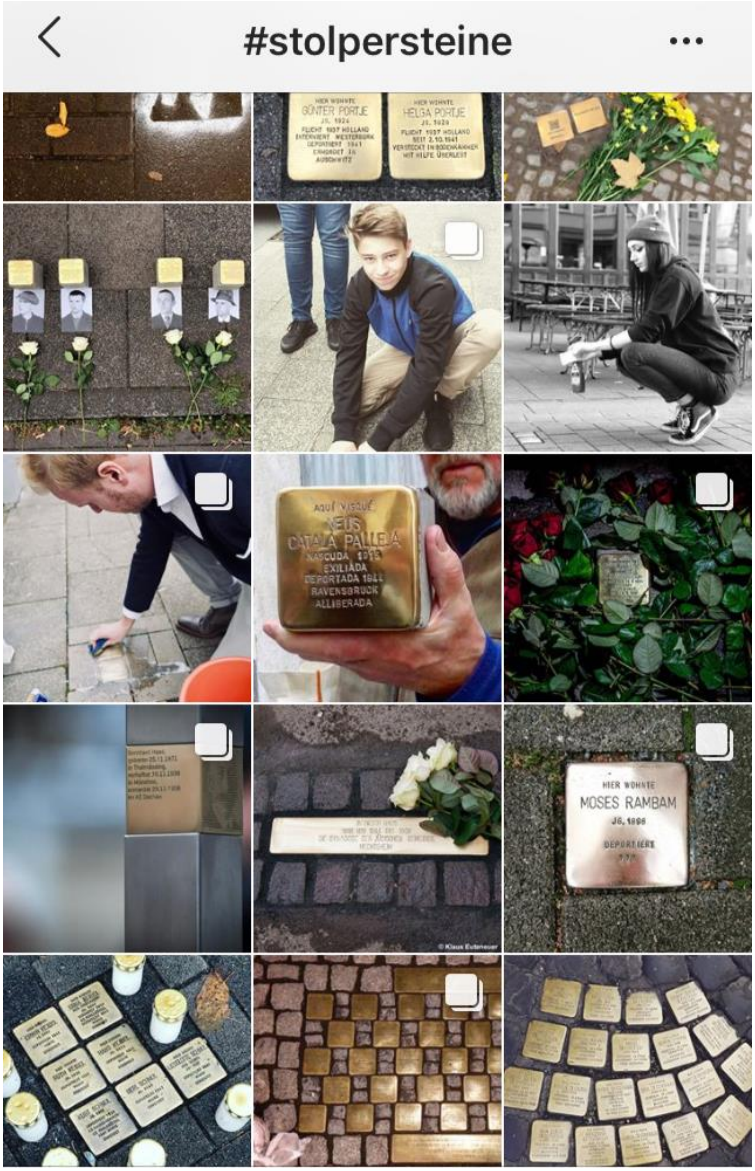


*Figure 4.4. View of #Stolpersteine through Instagram's explore/search function. Image capture by Meghan Lundrigan, 29 November 2018.*

How then, does photographing the Stolperstein shift or confirm its function as an agent of Holocaust memory? The image of the *Stolperstein* on Instagram supports the

decentralization of the memorial work, but also operates as a synecdoche not dissimilar to the images of victims' belongings previously discussed in the context of the museum. When viewed in the singular, the Instagram image of the *Stolperstein* makes places the individual at the forefront; however, when viewed as a collective under #Stolpersteine (figure 5.4), the plethora of stumbling stones take on a different meaning, underscoring the immensity of the genocide through numbers once more; by grouping the individual image of the *Stolperstein* together through the use of a hashtag, the ubiquity which defines the site-specific memorial is diminished. This is important, because it demonstrates that Instagram's viewing and image consumption capabilities of affect the viewer's ability to interpret and engage with digitized Holocaust memorial landscapes. The fluidity of the Instagram memorial is always inherently tied to concerns of perspective; the multiple viewing options on Instagram impact the ways Holocaust memorial landscapes are perceived once separated from their geographic moor. Just as large groups of images of Holocaust artifacts contribute to standard Holocaust visualization techniques, this can work inversely for an already decentralized memorial. The photograph of the *Stolperstein*, in some contexts, relegates the individual and personalized Holocaust memorial to the iconic representation-through-numbers. The *Stolpersteine* operate differently than the Berlin memorial. Depending on whether the photographer geotags their image, the locality of the memorial becomes compromised. In the instance of Demnig's *Stolpersteine*, by keeping the view of the stone tight, the photographer manages to untether each site-specific memorial, leaving it unmoored to the places in which victims previously lived. Therefore, what exists beyond the frame of the image is the site-specific performance of postmemory.

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, when photographed and shared on Instagram, conducts the work of memory differently than the decentralized and re-centralized *Stolpersteine*. While the *Stolpersteine* invoke the intersection of place and materiality to mark a life ended by Nazi brutality in the spaces which served as former homes for Holocaust victims, the Berlin memorial is much more abstract. Eisenman's somewhat oblique and elusive design – not unlike many of the installations in Libeskind's extension for the JMB – relies on the knowledge of its visitors, and the memorial practices they imbue the memorial space with. Where the *Stolpersteine* are proscriptive, the Berlin Holocaust Memorial is interpretive. It is for this, among many other reasons that, as Rosenfeld has argued, "[…] the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe resists easy classification, straddling the fields of sculpture and architecture."[323] Instagram images of the memorial uphold the interdisciplinary and interpretive nature of the memorial, providing space for the photographer to engage bodily with the space and share their own thoughts and feelings about the Holocaust's representation in Berlin.

Therefore, deconstructive design of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe has left it open to the memory work of the visitor. @thisisobj describes their experiences exploring the memorial:

> An extremely moving memorial. Interestingly everyone on the tour had a different interpretation of what it said to them. Some spoke about a light at the end of a tunnel, others felt like they were wandering through a cemetery. Either way everyone seemed to come out with a certain degree of uneasiness. There's certainly no forgetting it.[324]

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[323] Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, "Deconstructivism and the Holocaust: Peter Eisenman's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe," in *Probing the Ethics of Holocaust Culture*, 286.
[324] Caption courtesy of @thisisobj, 11 November 2018, https://www.instagram.com/p/BqC1xPZgapE/ (accessed 29 November 2018).

While it has been argued by many scholars and cultural critics that inappropriate behavior in the memorial landscape of the Berlin Holocaust memorial still remains unthinkable, social media manager Zineb Ayaadi has argued that the Berlin memorial requires that the visitor possess enough cultural capital to understand the intent of the space.[325] Given its size, it is difficult to stumble upon the Berlin Holocaust Memorial; nonetheless, the active decision to visit the JMB as a *museum* differentiates it from the Berlin Holocaust Memorial. Some visitors encounter the memorial because other popular tourist destinations are nearby, and most do not visit the museum below it.

**The Aesthetics and Affect of the Holocaust Memorial Image on Instagram**

Beyond pushing against the visual constraints of the frame of the image, the visitor photograph pushes against the traditional aesthetic nature of Instagram. Another way that visitors "overwhelm the frame" when conducting Holocaust memory work through photography is by confronting the nature of beauty and aesthetics as presented by Instagram's platform. Lev Manovich has argued that Instagram's programming hinges on its ability to showcase human experience through the development of an aesthetic character.[326] In the context of dark tourism, many visitors have difficulty deciding not if, but *how* their images should be aestheticized. The question of whether an image of a Holocaust memorial, museum, or concentration camp should be beautiful stems from earlier discussions of the Holocaust as a representable historical event. Brett Ashley Kaplan has explored how underlying fear of Fascist monumentalism influenced the work

[325] Interview with Zineb Ayaadi, Social Media Programmer for the Jewish Museum Berlin, 28 July 2016.
[326] Lev Manovich, "Subjects and Styles in Instagram Photography, Part 1," *Instagram and Contemporary Image* (2016), 11. http://manovich.net/index.php/projects/instagram-and-contemporary-image (accessed 16 September 2018).

of Peter Eisenmann and James Ingo Freed when designing the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and the USHMM, respectively.[327] "By implementing counter- or anti-monumental forms that utilize fresh aesthetic choices," Kaplan argues that memorial architects do so "at the cost of [the memorial's] larger cultural function of encouraging remembering."[328] After the unveiling of the Berlin memorial in 2005, journalist Heinrich Wefing asked:

> Is a Holocaust memorial allowed to be attractive? Is it allowed, when the light plays on the sharp-edged blocks, when the sun hatches the slate gray of the concrete, when rain and dust leave fine streaks upon them, then is it allowed -- one is almost afraid to say it -- is it allowed to be beautiful?[329]

The answer to Heinrich Weifang's question is that, quite frankly, it depends almost entirely on what the photographer wants the memorial to stand for in their photograph. The visitor to a Holocaust memorial landscape struggles with this notion less than if they were photographing the grounds of Auschwitz first-hand. I would argue that while the construction of Holocaust memorials and memorial landscapes are concerned with the aesthetic pollution of National Socialism, visitor photography at the Berlin Holocaust memorial relies on aesthetic pleasure to communicate empathy or sorrow. Architect Peter Eisenman argues that:

> The enormity and scale of the horror of the Holocaust is such that any attempt to represent it by traditional means is inevitably inadequate […] Our memorial attempts to present a new idea of memory as distinct from nostalgia […] We can

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[327] Brett Ashley Kaplan, *Unwanted Beauty: Aesthetic Pleasure in Holocaust Representation* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007).
[328] Kaplan, *Unwanted Beauty*, 152.
[329] Heinrich Wefing, "The Holocaust Memorial: Against All Expectations," *PBS: Frontline,* 4 May 2005. Accessed 10 April 2014. URL: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/germans/memorial/wefing.html.

only know the past today through a manifestation in the present.[330]

If the enormity and scale of the Holocaust cannot be adequately represented in physical monumental form, then it follows that the visitor would have to rely on communicative methods that extend beyond the frame of the image. It is for this reason that both affect and aesthetics remain integral to the sharing and display of the visitor photo; the photo is not only an image of the Berlin Holocaust Memorial or a *Stolperstein*. The photos are objects of postmemory, produced by photographers that continue to grapple with the perceived immeasurability and irrepresentability of the Holocaust itself. Despite the memorial landscape requiring the visitor's personal interpretive intervention, its minimalist character inspires visitor engagement based on the grounds of aesthetics. For this reason, it is perhaps unsurprising that the urban memorial space has been integrated into the expansive memory landscape of the city of Berlin. [331]

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[330] Peter Eisenman, quoted on the website Stiftung-Denkmal für die emordeten Jüden Europa. "Field of Stelae," https://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/en/memorials/the-memorial-to-the-murdered-jews-of-europe/field-of-stelae.html (accessed 30 November 2018).
[331] Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

*Figure 4.5. "Tears of the Fallen." Image copyright Instagram user @yjarvie, 5 October 2017.*

If some Instagram images can be conceptualized as objects of postmemory and extensions of the photographer's empathy and affective relationship with the Holocaust, it is important to consider how the photographer relies on concepts of beauty and aesthetic character to evoke affectual responses to work towards catharsis. Julia Adeney Thomas has argued that, through aesthetic convention "[…] the viewer attends to the image with patient connoisseurship, noting the way the photographer has framed the objects of interest to construct relationships within the image and beyond."[332] This may be seen in figure 5.5, captioned "Tears of the fallen." Rather than focusing on the pathways of the memorial, as is typical of many photos of the space, @yjaryje has chosen

[332] Julia Adeney Thomas, "Hope Flies; Death Dances: Towards an Ethics of Seeing," in Jennifer Evans, Paul Betts, and Stefan Ludwig-Hoffman, *The Ethics of Seeing: Photography and Twentieth-Century German History* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books), 278.

to tightly frame the image, focusing primarily on one of the 2,711 *Stellae* that comprise the memorial. Images of the memorial after rainfall are common and transfer the embodiment of grief to the memorial itself.[333] Note how this works inversely from the shoes of Majdanek at the USHMM; while the shoes are personified as witnesses, engaged in a process of memory transfer to the generation of postmemory, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe functions as a vessel for affect, assuming the role of remembrance from the visitor.

**Conclusion**

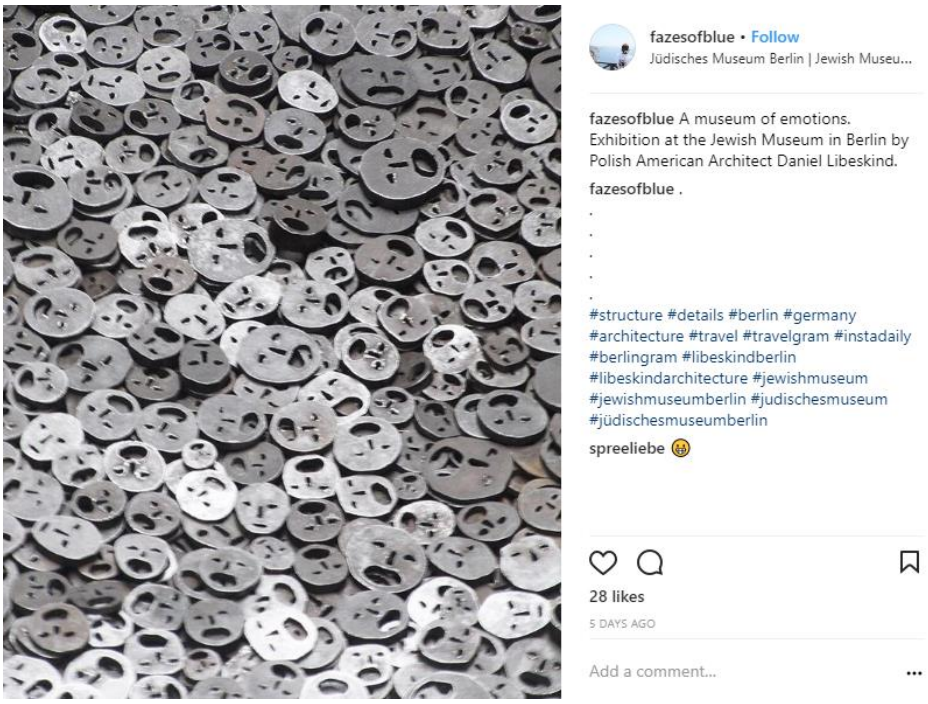


*Figure 4.6. "A museum of emotions." Image copyright Instagram user @fazesofblue, 3 January 2018.*

[333] This can be seen in other instances as well. Instagram user @thatsmrryantoyou describes this process, explaining "the evening before Holocaust Remembrance Day, we went to the memorial site. It had snowed the night before and rain melted it all away. As the temperature dropped again, the melting snow on top of the monuments refroze, leaving what looked like tears running down the side. It was incredibly powerful and moving." URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BtNZeN0gtsc/ (accessed 29 January 2019). See also @chocherojas's "Memory Drops." URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BsHD9MEHGFn/ (accessed 1 January 2019), and @julie.sophie.ie's "Drops of history." URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/Bsp0DMjB6Yv/ (accessed 15 January 2019).

Though compelling warnings have been given against "falsely placed empathy," removing affective factors from the tourist image in spaces of Holocaust memory would be a disservice to the source.[334] Affect and catharsis are conditions which remain central to contemporary Holocaust photography and its display on Instagram. The experiencing of the encounter, the capturing of the photograph, and the sharing of the image online are part of a mnemonic process for the visitor/photographer. Using affective reasoning to fuel their understanding of the Holocaust remains central to visitor engagement with Holocaust history and visuality – as can be seen in Figure 5.6, which overwhelms the frame with Kadishman's individual memorial objects *Shalekhet* labels the Jewish Museum Berlin a "museum of emotions."[335] Visitors and photographers remain unable to separate their representations of the Holocaust from their emotional encounters with its history; they overwhelm the frame of the image, pushing at the representational abilities of the photograph in an effort to communicate their own emotional response to the Holocaust. Instagram images can therefore be viewed as affectual sources, which seek to communicate deeply personal reactions to past atrocity.

Affect and catharsis remain embodied sensations that the visitor/photographer cannot always ignore; arguably, photography or a photograph is an object of manifested affect, and the visitor's method for the extraction of the feelings inflicted by the museum or memorial site. It is the extraction of this empathy, the result of staging affect through Instagram, which memory and media scholar Alison Landsberg maintains is integral to the transfer of memory in our contemporary age. She notes, "the movement between the

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[334] Susan A. Crane analysis in "Choosing not to look: Representation, Repatriation, and Holocaust Atrocity Photography," *History and Theory* 47 (2009): 315-16, is an excellent resource in the dangers of false empathy in the context of Holocaust education and memorialization.
[335] Figure 5.6.

authentic survivor and the actor […] the transferring of authentic living memory from the body of a survivor to an individual who has no 'authentic' link to this particular historical past," signals the emergence of a prosthetic memory.[336] Landsberg's prosthetic memory manifests in ways directly related to the body of the individual who has no authentic link to the Holocaust.[337] The visitor photo as considered here, through interpretive attempts to overwhelm the frame, can arguably function as an extension of the visitor body as a physical manifestation of the visitor's empathetic engagement with the Holocaust. While Susan Sontag famously argued that looking at images has the potential to anesthetize, I wonder if the act of taking photos achieves the inverse.[338]

I would like to return for a moment to the memory of the mother and her son, photographing their experiences near the cast of the gate of Auschwitz at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. While that encounter underscores the complex relationship between space, object, and framing in attempts to produce affectual objects of postmemory, in that instance the final product is different from the others explored in this chapter: it features the presence of the human body within the frame. Reproduced images function as objects of memory as is, but it is important to remember that the function of the museum, memorial or past concentration camp cannot entirely be carried out without the visitor or tourist body. The "thingness" and spatial qualities of the memorial sites are wholly dependent on the physical presence of the body of the tourist. Through framing, filtering, and sharing, visitors to Holocaust museums and memorial

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[336] Alison Landsberg, "America, the Holocaust, and the Mass Culture of Memory: Toward a Radical Politics of Empathy," *New German Critique* 71 (1997): 63-64.
[337] Alison Landsberg develops her concept of prosthetic memory in an American context more extensively in her work *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Memory in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).
[338] Sontag, 19.

landscapes push against the constraints of Instagram's programming. By overwhelming the frame with material Holocaust objects, Holocaust landscapes, and affect, the image is transformed into a digital object in its own right – an external manifestation of the visitor's emotions. The affective nature of the images interrogated in this chapter call into question the power of the tourist's presence, which is the focus of my next chapter.

# Chapter 5

## The Tourist Body and Holocaust Photography on Instagram

One of the biggest concerns over Holocaust memory culture through the tourist's lens remains that of the tourist body, and its appropriate placement within the Holocaust image. Indeed, the act of self-photography (or "taking a selfie") has garnered much consideration and criticism in our contemporary age.[339] A visitor to Auschwitz argues, "The only criticism is not even the fault of the people running the [Auschwitz] museum, but it's the people who take selfies, it's really not the place for that."[340] The "Auschwitz selfie" could be considered what Holocaust and performance scholar Samantha Mitschke has characterized as profane performance, working against the sacred memory performances of the guided tours.[341] Certainly, appropriate behaviour, bodily display, and the sharing of images on Instagram are informed by the complex politics of representation already explored in this dissertation. However, perhaps it warrants mentioning that memory functions as an embodied act; the need to preserve the Holocaust for future generations depends on the body of the postmemory witness.

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[339] Self-photography, at its most basic level, is the act of capturing oneself on camera. Typically, these photos are taken alone, at arms-length. Selfies can be group efforts, but the act of taking a photo always lies in the hands of one person. The selfie always features some part of the human body of the person who has snapped the photo, and preferably include partial or full pictures of the individual's face. Due to the proximity of the camera to the face of the individual, their facial features are always the predominant subject within the frame. Selfies have received a great deal of scholarly and popular attention. See Lev Manovich, "Selfiecity: Exploring Photography and Self-Fashioning in Social Media," in David M. Berry and Michael Dieter, eds. *Postdigital Aesthetics: Art, Computation and Design* (Palgrave Macmillan: 2015), 109-122.

[340] maskellharry's review of Auschwitz-Birkenau on TripAdvisor, 28 October 2018. URL: http://bit.ly/maskellharry (accessed 30 October 2018).

[341] Samantha Mitschke, "Sacred, the Profane, and the Space In Between: Site-Specific Performance at Auschwitz." *Holocaust Studies* 22, no. 2-3 (2016): 228-243.

Therefore, the policing and surveillance of the tourist body in relation to Holocaust memory-work requires further investigation.

On the one hand, the bodily presence of the victim within photographs contemporary to the Holocaust do provide incontrovertible truth of the victimization of many millions of people; over time, increasingly, the human body has emerged as a controversial site of visual representation and Holocaust memory, with the presence of the visitor/photographer body complicating the *memory* of the body of the Holocaust victim. The body of the victim and/or survivor have been argued to be the first sites of Holocaust memory, established and existing before the preservation of the former concentration camps, or the building of memorials and museums, and, arguably, Holocaust "memory" itself.[342] In the words of art historian Dora Apel, "those blue numbers, now fading, have come to mark those who bear them as history's witnesses."[343] Holocaust scholar Nicholas Chare concurs that "the number, a postmark, pinpoints a moment of arrival and indicates a period of survival […] here the tattoo, the crude hypostatization of a bureaucratic process, is power."[344] The indelible visual marking of Jewish bodies transformed those individuals into embodied sites of historicity, having borne firsthand witness to the events of the Holocaust.[345]

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[342] The United States Holocaust Memorial Digital Encyclopedia features an entire media essay on the process of receiving a tattoo at Auschwitz. "Receiving Tattoos at Auschwitz," *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Digital Encyclopedia*. URL: https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/gallery/receiving-tattoos-at-auschwitz (accessed 16 December 2018).
[343] Dora Apel, "The Tattooed Jew," in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Barbie Zelizer (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 302.
[344] Nicholas Chare, *Auschwitz and Afterimages: Abjection, Witnessing and Representation* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 93.
[345] This can also be linked to a consideration of the yellow Star of David, as well as other visual markings (though not irreversible) which victims of the Holocaust were forced to wear as identifying visual aids. When considering these early visual signifiers of the Holocaust experience, the politics of gaze must also be investigated. For more on the gaze of the victim/perpetrator, see Janina Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust: Interpretations of Evidence* (London and New York: IB Tauris, 2004) and Marianne Hirsch, "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory," in *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*, ed. Barbie Zelizer (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutger's University Press, 2000), and Susan

The faded blue numbers have neither escaped iconicization nor representation; they function primarily as a method for invoking the embodiment of Holocaust memory.[346] Cole reinforces this notion as having evolved from the media's canonization of the Holocaust and the development of its memory in relation to commercialization. He notes,

> The image of tattooed numbers has become one of several which have come to represent the 'Holocaust'. It is an image which appears not only in the movies, but also towards the end of the permanent exhibition in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum […] Here, opposite a pile of shoes, hangs a number of photographs of tattooed arms […][347]

The tattoo has become synonymous with victimhood, survival, and the Holocaust. Consider Figure 6.1, where @jolynjanis describes their image of the grid of tattooed arms as "pictures of Holocaust survivors." While a portion of the survivor body is certainly depicted, the caption here equates the survivor body with the tattoo, which functions as a remnant of embodied Holocaust memory. Here, the tattoo is the object of the gaze, resulting in the reduction of the survivor's body to a single visual trait. @auschwitzmemorial's reminder that "behind every number there is a face, a person, a story," falls short in this image.[348] Removed from its immediate context of the USHMM, near the display of thousands of shoes from Majdanek, the viewer must rely on their own

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A. Crane, "Choosing not to look: Representation, Repatriation, and Holocaust Atrocity Photography," *History and Theory* 47 (2009): 315-16.

[346] The act of receiving a tattoo as an embodiment of postmemory has become popular and not uncommon amongst third-generation Israeli Holocaust survivors. See Jodi Rudoren, "Proudly bearing elders' scars, their skin says 'Never Forget,'" *The New York Times*, 30 September 2012. URL: https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/01/world/middleeast/with-tattoos-young-israelis-bear-holocaust-scars-of-relatives.html (accessed 16 December 2018).

[347] Tim Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, 3.

[348] @auschwitzmemorial, 8 October 2017, URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BZ-yBkLFhW7/ (accessed 16 December 2018).

knowledge of this symbolism; in this case, the survivors in the image are seen only as representative of the Holocaust, rather than survivors of the event itself.[349]

*Figure 5.1. "Pictures of Holocaust survivors," by Instagram user @jolynjanis, 25 October 2016.*

To understand the ways in which modern bodies are created and consumed through photography, all actors involved in the taking of a photograph must be considered and their choices of emplotment, framing, and unintended interventions historicized. Before the photography that followed the liberation of the camps, the cameras had already been turned toward victims as photography was used by Nazi officials as a form of documentation and identification. As we saw in the first chapter, the Nazis were very skilled at documenting their own rise to power, their reign, and the persecution and victimization of millions; the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum features over 40,000 surviving photographs of prisoners that were taken during

[349] @auschwitzmemorial, 8 October 2017, URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BZ-yBkLFhW7/ (accessed 16 December 2018).

processing alone.[350] Considering the intersection of the dearth of Holocaust atrocity images and efforts to memorialize the Holocaust visually has made the ethics of seeing the Holocaust fraught. The display of photographs which include the unidentified bodies of Holocaust victims at memorial museums has been problematized by Janina Struk, who questions why the suffering of victims through photography must exist in perpetuity in memorial museums. She notes, "they had no choice but to be photographed. Now they have no choice but to be viewed by posterity. Didn't they suffer enough the first time around?"[351] This, as argued by Susan A. Crane, is why understanding the photographic gaze is integral to Holocaust photography and visuality.[352] The prying eyes of the tourist, emblematic of attempts to "experience" the Holocaust, are not free from personally selfish attempts to witness one of modernity's darkest periods.

While the motivations of the photographer are not always clear, it is important to distinguish between the voyeuristic tendencies of tourism and attempts to visually represent the Holocaust through photography and social media usage. Following Julia Adeney Thomas' argument that the ethics of seeing is an ethics in *motion*, I consider the position of the visitor/photographer's body as an ethical interrogation of the body's image in the context of Holocaust visuality. Thomas argues that "the photographs are merely stills; their ethical energy depends on us."[353] How can we understand the tourist body, in its myriad forms, within the historical trajectory of Holocaust visuality? How does it complicate our understanding that, while the Holocaust has multiple spatial components,

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[350] Auschwitz Memorial and Museum, "Prisoners Photos," URL: http://auschwitz.org/en/museum/about-the-available-data/prisoners-photos (accessed 30 April 2019).
[351] Struk, 216.
[352] Susan A. Crane, "Choosing Not to Look: Representation, Repatriation, and Holocaust Atrocity Photography," *History and Theory* 47 (2008): 309-330.
[353] Thomas, 276.

the acts of violence were committed against people, whose bodies – both absent and present – remain the initial sites of Holocaust memory. Where the previous chapter explored photographic methods for communicating the Holocaust by pushing against the photographic frame, this chapter engages with the presence of the body in relation to Holocaust postmemory photography. Using the case of the selfie at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe as an entry point, I evaluate how the selfie as a photographic form has been trivialized; by embedding the selfie and the tourist body in other forms in a conversation about the presence of *all* bodies in Instagram Holocaust images, I reinforce Kate Douglas' argument that placing the visitor/photographer body within the frame of the image constitutes an act of witnessing. Douglas explains:

> These [selfie] controversies offer a neat summary of some of the core tensions affecting the auto/biographical representations of, and by, youth: the limits of self-representation and the role of new technologies and media in enabling young people's second-person trauma witnessing and in enabling new modes of witnessing.[354]

While the selfie does not always function in tandem with traditional behavioural practices associated with witnessing, the age of new media has made it possible for millions of people to explore embodied memory-making through the lens of the smartphone. This shift in authority, according to Douglas, requires us to consider and accept new forms of witnessing into memory culture, especially if such modes of witnessing are practiced by younger generations, the very individuals we wish to stand on the receiving end of this transfer of postmemory.[355] While, arguably, the "Holocaust selfie" remains at the limits of postmemory Holocaust representation, it is important to consider how its presence –

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[354] Kate Douglas, "Youth, Trauma, and Memorialisation: The Selfie as Witnessing," *Memory Studies* (2017): 3.
[355] Ibid., 4.

and indeed, its controversy – is informed by and against traditional memorial practices in the digital age.

The presence of the body in Holocaust visuality, whether the tourist body in landscapes of postmemory, victims' bodies in evidentiary photographs, or survivor bodies, is connected to the very act of photographing, placing the body at the center of the memory-making process. Nicholas Mirzoeff has argued that self-photography remains important to the history of seeing, in that "the selfie depicts the drama of our own daily performance of ourselves in tension with our own inner emotions that may or may not be expressed as we wish."[356] Placing the body in the frame of the photograph allows for the dual performance of seeing ourselves, and also being seen. Here, art historian Hans Belting's anthropological theorization of memory as an embodied process and its connection to photography as a medium is useful.[357] Belting has placed the human body at the intersection of the image and memory, arguing that there can be no image without the support of a vessel.[358] "Images are neither on the wall (or on the screen) nor in the head alone," he argues, "they do not *exist* by themselves, but they *happen*; they *take place* whether they are moving images (where this is so obvious) or not. They happen via transmission and perception."[359] Therefore, in the words of Elisa Serafinelli,

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[356] Nicholas Mirzoeff, *How to See the World: An Introduction to Images, from Self-Portraits to Selfies, Maps to Movies, and More* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 30.
[357] Elisa Serafinelli's discussion of Belting's work is also particularly useful here. Serafinelli extends Belting's analysis to argue for a networked memory in the age of digital media. See Serafinelli, *Digital Life on Instagram: New Social Communication of Photography* (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018), 26-27.
[358] Hans Belting, "Image, Medium, Body: A New Approach to Iconology," *Critical Inquiry* 31, no. 2 (2005): 302-318; see also Hans Belting and Thomas Dunlap, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).
[359] Belting, "Image, Medium, Body: A New Approach to Iconology," 302-303.

"the human body sets itself as fundamental anthropological prototype to comprehend the relationship between images and media."[360]

If we consider the body to be a medium for the transmission of images vis-a-vis processes of memory, then it is important to consider what the presence of the visitor body in Holocaust postmemory images means in such contexts. It is necessary to remember that self-photography also signals shifting power differentials in our modern world; historically, the production of the self-portrait has operated at the intersection of class and privilege.[361] The emergence of the ubiquitous selfie demonstrates an effort on behalf of the tourist to see oneself, and to be seen in perpetuity on Instagram. Though this is closely related to the oft-argued point that to be a tourist or a visitor is to photograph, the act of inserting the tourist body pictorially within a landscape of Holocaust memory visually positions the tourist body as a receiver of memory.

**Seeing and Being Seen: Selfies in Holocaust Spaces**

Cultural critics have argued that the narcissistic selfie takes center stage in the frame of the image, blocking out anything important which remains in the background. Holocaust memorial scholar Irit Dekel's ethnographic analysis of observation, play, and mediation at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe firmly grounds photographic practice at

[360] Serafinelli, 26.

[361] Visual anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards considers the intersection of class and gender as they relate to amateur survey photography in Great Britain at the turn of the twentieth century. See *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and the Historical Imagination, 1885-1918* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2012). Mirzoeff also traces the history of the self-portrait in the context of visual culture and visuality in *How to See the World*, 29-69.

the memorial as a form of individualized transfer of postmemory.[362] Arguably, amateur photography makes bodily presence in acts of Holocaust postmemory more visible. Dekel explains, "[Visitors] direct [their] interpretation and construct its materiality and legitimacy, chafing with formal visions of what it ought to do to them and in communication with the guides at the memorial."[363] However, bodily presence in sites of solemnity highlights the complex relationship between memory, landscape, space, and contemporary tourist behaviour. It is therefore unsurprising that Instagram photography, the selfie, and Holocaust postmemory often find themselves at cross-purposes. Here, it is important to consider self-photography at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe as a visual act which confirms "seeing" landscapes of the Holocaust, as well as being "seen" as an integrated part of the process of postmemory.

Selfies at memorial sites further complicate the relationship between space and memorial; functioning as additional physical layers of the urban landscape, memorial landscapes embody opportunity, serving as the stage for an encounter with a memorialized past.[364] The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (hereafter referred

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[362] See Irit Dekel, *Mediation at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), "Jews and Other Others at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin," *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 23, no. 2 (2014): 71-84, and "Ways of Looking: Observation and Transformation at the Holocaust Memorial, Berlin," *Memory Studies* 2, no. 1 (2009): 71-86.
[363] Dekel, "Ways of Looking," 72.
[364] The relationship between memorials, the body, and historical memory transference constitutes an entire field. Many scholars trace their analysis of memory to Plato, Aristotle, Halbwachs, Descartes, Derrida, and Kant. For a time, many scholars relied on an analysis of Pierre Nora's *Lieux de mémoire* to best explain the relationship between history, memory, and memorialization. However, in recent years, historians and memory scholars have moved away from Nora, re-considering the transmission of memory in contexts beyond that of the historical monument. Here, it is important to mention Paul Ricouer 's landmark contribution, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). For a historical overview of the philosophical understanding of memory, see Dmitri Nikulin, *Memory: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); I am partial to Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz's edited volume, *Memory: Histories, Theories, and Debates* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), as it provides an excellent cross-section of theoretical debates and practical contemporary applications in the fields of both history and philosophy.

to as the "Berlin Memorial") remains no exception; since its unveiling in 2005, it has been a space of encounter, reflection, violence, and rejection. The memorials in this chapter are also stages and spaces where everyday people shape their own encounters with violence, genocide, and historical memory. As with the chapters which precede this one – though the bones of the encounter remain in the ownership of the memorial, its architects, and those who maintain its spaces, the body of the memorial's meaning is controlled and curated by those who interact with it – and in whichever way they interact with it.

There are many ways to read the behaviors in these photographs, all entirely dependent on how the subject fashions themselves in relation to how they perceive they should be acting in such a space. This self-reflexivity ties into early anxieties over appropriate behavior within the deconstructivist memorial space. In the words of journalist Peter Rigny,

> What is allowed and not allowed at such a memorial? Is having lunch on a pillar OK? What about smoking a cigarette? When photos began appearing after the memorial's unveiling showing kids jumping from pillar to pillar, the consensus was that this was not acceptable. Such activity was seen as a desecration to such a solemn site of Holocaust memory.[365]

In 2005, Rigny's concerns were compounded with a hesitance to accept the new Berlin Holocaust Memorial in an already over-saturated memorial landscape.[366] Concerns regarding tourist behaviour has also been extended to cultures of photography in the age of social media. The act of taking a selfie relies on the subject's knowledge of the space and its meaning; the subject/photographer actively chooses to represent themselves as thoughtful, playful, nervous, or

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[365] Peter Rigny, "A Visit to the Memorial," *PBS: Frontline,* 31 May 2005. Accessed 10 April 2014. URL: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/germans/memorial/visit.html.
[366] James E. Young expands on this sentiment in *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

however they may be feeling at that point – and these self-representations are present in the thousands of tourist images from the Berlin Holocaust Memorial. Similarly, their choice of photo-editing in the "post-production stage" of photo-sharing is the result of the relationship between their emotive response to the experience they are having, while also embedded in their immediate spatial context. Selfies are certainly more than what they appear; while they can be a product of an instantaneous action to share an experience, they are deceiving – duplicitous, even. This makes them no less powerful, however. The power of self-photography at the Holocaust memorial is derived from a disjunction between our perception of Holocaust imagery – that is, what we "expect to see" in imagery depicting memorialization of the Holocaust, and the reality of the image we are viewing.

If we accept that placing oneself within the frame constitutes a specific type of performance in which the photographer actively engages with the space around them, then the Holocaust image of postmemory is about being seen. In the landscape images discussed in the previous chapter, the overwhelming expansive space of the memorial was the central visual subject. By pushing against the frame of the Instagram image, memorial landscapes and their meaning are communicated through affect, catharsis, and the Holocaust as an event which overwhelms historical representation. Taking a selfie draws attention to the photographer's own presence within the frame; it draws attention away from the landscape, making the tourist/photographer's body the focus of the image. The nature of seeing and being seen in urban memorial spaces fits extremely well with the use of Instagram as a platform for self-expression; the photographer's attempts to perform bodily presence are also carried out for their digital, ephemeral Instagram audiences. The photographer wants to be viewed as present within that landscape, wishing to communicate their "there-ness" to their followers. It is perhaps

unsurprising that the integration of Instagram in most aspects of everyday life has aroused concerns over the presence of the social surveillance state. However, the act of surveillance remains a double-edged sword. Mirzoeff argues that the act of surveillance is product of a "new mantra of visual subjectivity: I am seen and I see that I am seen.'"[367]

*Figure 5.2. A photographer takes a photo of children playing at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin. Image by Meghan Lundrigan, July 2016.*

Figure 6.2 is an excellent example of the dual nature of surveillance on Instagram, demonstrating the ways in which the Berlin Holocaust Memorial continues to function as a memorial landscape that visitors can see and, in turn, be seen. Photography at the Berlin Holocaust Memorial has become a mainstay in Berlin's urban landscape. For all the reasons

[367] Nicholas Mirzoeff in Jeanette Vigliotti, "The Double Sighted: Visibility, Identity, and Photographs on Facebook" (Master's Thesis, University of North Florida, 2014), 6

explored in the previous chapter, the Berlin Holocaust Memorial is as visual as it is physical; while the memorial is intended to invoke instability, loss, and loneliness when walking through the space itself, the thousands of photos which capture the space indicate that the memorial has become as much a visual symbol as a physical one. The movement of human bodies through the narrow pathways is an affective performance, meant to elicit an emotional response. Dekel argues that this forms the first contact phase of mediation at the memorial. She explains:

> The first challenge in visiting the memorial is its newness as means of engagement with the German past. Therefore, most critical looks at the site start with *what it is not*: it is not located in an 'authentic' site such as a former concentration camp or transportation place; it does not offer a figurative representation for what it stands for. What it stands for is at the same time clear – it is the memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe – and unclear: Who murdered them? When? Is it dedicated to them? Given to them? What does this confusion teach us about what happens there?[368]

The visitor body within the frame populates the memorial site, demonstrating active engagement with the Holocaust memorial landscape; but the effect is also complex, drawing attention to absence through presence. In this way, the presence of the visitor's body can draw specific attention to those who are not present – the victims for whom the memorial was constructed.

Thus, the selfie remains a complex networked visual product. One not need look further than the example of Breanna Mitchell's 2014 "Auschwitz Selfie," which she tweeted after photographing herself in front of the barracks at Auschwitz.[369] Mitchell defended the selfie, explaining that she was inspired to take the photo because she had

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[368] Dekel, "Ways of Looking," 72-73.

[369] The selfie received a great deal of media attention after it went viral in June 2014. The controversy prompted a number of public debates over the appropriate forms of behaviour at solemn sites. I am partial to Caitlin Dewey's analysis of the selfie's context and Breanna's personal motivations. See Caitlin Dewey, "The Other Side of the Infamous 'Auschwitz Selfie," *The Washington Post*, 22 July 2014. URL: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/07/22/the-other-side-of-the-infamous-auschwitz-selfie/ (accessed 10 December 2018).

studied history with her father, who had passed away one year prior to the day. While taking a selfie at Auschwitz is not always the choice method for communicating acts of remembrance, what should have been a productive discussion regarding the fact that, in Dewey's words, "many, many people take selfies in self-evidently inappropriate places, […] and what it means," mostly manifested as a form of the active online shaming of a teenage girl.[370]

Certainly, Auschwitz is not the Berlin Holocaust Memorial, nor is it the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which has also frequently cautioned its visitors to act appropriately in the museum space. One of the complexities that digitally networked images face is that their contexts are continually shifting; what is more, the meaning of Holocaust memory transfer is still tied to the physical locations of Holocaust spaces. While the framing and taking of the photo links it physically to the context of the built memorial landscape in Berlin, to a concentration camp in Eastern Europe, or the Holocaust museum in Israel, the use of hashtags and sharing of the image on Instagram makes the image's context less firm.[371] What becomes of the Instagram image and its continual circulation and recirculation in a digital sphere? Recent debates over the impact of social media on Holocaust imagery and memory has been preoccupied with the misuse and misrepresentation of memory. These are indeed pressing concerns. How, exactly, is the networked image influenced by its context, and how can we parse individual inspiration for re-contextualizing Holocaust visuality? What makes the space Memorial

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[370] Dewey, "The Other Side of the Infamous 'Auschwitz Selfie.'"
[371] Here, I mean specifically the use of multiple hashtags. Some Instagram images use only a single hashtag, but if an image bears several tags it will be even more visible in different image feeds. For example, many images at the Holocaust memorial in Berlin feature the tags #holocaust, #holocaustmemorial, #history, and sometimes even #auschwitz – long-considered the ultimate symbol of the Holocaust in the age of postmemory.

to the Murdered Jews of Europe active is its reliance on human interaction and engagement to communicate its message of loss, disorientation, and introspection.

Berlin-based Israeli satirist Shahak Shapira's 2017 project, YOLOCAUST, showcases how contemporary tourist bodies are re-localized, changing the nature of the site-specific performance of photography at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and embedding tourist visualities in archival Holocaust images. Shapira launched his project's website in February 2017 by lifting selfies from a variety of social media platforms without permission.[372] All images repurposed by Shapira were selfies that were taken at Eisenman's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin. They featured smiling faces and silly, playful behaviour – all acts which remain lightning-rods for controversy, even almost fifteen years after the unveiling of the memorial. Shapira added a new dimension to these images by splicing them together with archival photos from the Holocaust. The disturbing archival imagery always featured victims' bodies; when the viewer rolled their cursor over the images, the setting behind the subject would disappear, now replaced with archival footage. The photographs were no longer just selfies, or evidence of a person's time spent in Berlin; they had become examples of a complicated form of online policing, and a marker of expectation for how people are meant to behave in public spaces of solemnity.

YOLOCAUST provided a forum to question the ethics of photography, performances of Holocaust memory, and the use of archival imagery in a manner that was ethically questionable at best. Not were the visitors' photos collected from Instagram, Facebook, and other platforms without permission, but it transformed archival

[372] Shahak Shapira, "YOLOCAUST," https://yolocaust.de/ (accessed 30 September 2018).

Holocaust imagery into spectacle in its attempt to shame the behaviour of visitors to the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. It is important here to remember Hirsch's argument about the objectifying Nazi gaze when considering archival Holocaust imagery: "The subjects looking at the camera are also victims looking at soldiers whose guns helped herd them off to trains and concentration camps. As they face the camera, they are shot before they are shot."[373] Is taking a selfie at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, a deconstructivist urban space which the architect believed should be encountered as the individual saw fit, the same as taking a selfie in front of Holocaust victims? The ethical argument that can be made about whether you should take a selfie at Auschwitz also applies to whether you should use archival imagery from a genocide in combination with personal (albeit public) photos to shame someone in a public forum for not experiencing a space in the same way you would.

Online responses to selfies in solemn places must also be considered critically; these perspectives form two sides of the same argument and demonstrate how complex the contemporary stakes of Holocaust memory have become in the digital age.[374] The photographs shared on social media can help us to investigate whether public engagement with Holocaust memory has changed over time; these photographs can also help us confront more uncomfortable aspects of the conversation about Holocaust memorialization, such as the rise of selfie culture in Holocaust tourism. Most importantly, Shapira's argument is tied to a deep and complex understanding of the

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[373] Marianne Hirsch, "Nazi Photographs in Post-Holocaust Art: Gender as an Idiom of Memorialization," in *Phototextualities: Intersections of Photography and Narrative*, Alex Hughes and Andrea Noble, eds. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003) 26.
[374] See "Selfies at Serious Places," *Tumblr*, URL: http://selfiesatseriousplaces.tumblr.com/ (accessed 30 August 2018).

geographies and spatial considerations of the Holocaust, but also of genocide as a visual event. I anticipate that Shapira wishes that all visitors to the Berlin Memorial spent their time reflecting on the graphic history of Nazi crimes, but rarely is memory work so linear and unobstructed. By linking tourist photography to archival images, Shapira suggests that visitors should think before they pose. However, the memorial was intended to be an urban memorial, constructed to be integrated into the cityscape of Berlin and supporting the continuation of city life in tandem with remembrance.[375] The space is meant to work with human interaction - in whatever form that engagement assumes. It is worth considering the words of the memorial's architect, Peter Eisenman, in his recent response to Shapira's work: "there are no dead people under my memorial."[376] Shapira's criticism and public shaming of particular modes of behaviour is an attempt to invoke specific aspects of Holocaust visuality and memory in a space where that concentration camp imagery is not present.[377] Shapira's perception of Holocaust memory and memorialization is deeply tied to the visceral reaction one is expected to have while remembering the true and authentic imagery of the Holocaust.

Debates over Shapira's use of archival images, and the act of splicing contemporary social media images with photographs of victims evoke the history of

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[375] For more on the ways in which cities are reconstituted through social media photography, see Jon D. Boy and Justus Uitermark, "Reassembling the City through Instagram," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 42 (2017): 612–624.

[376] On the contrary: underneath the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe there is a well-developed museum and interpretation centre to help visitors understand the history of the Holocaust and its visual representation. See "Information Centre under the Field of Stelae," URL: https://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/en/exhibitions/information-centre.html. Eisenman's words are from Joel Gunter's "How should you behave at a Holocaust memorial?" *BBC News* 20 January 2017. URL: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38675835.

[377] It is worth clarifying that archival Holocaust imagery isn't accessible at the street level of the Berlin memorial, though you can choose to visit the exhibit below the memorial. That being said, aside from minimal signage, not everyone who visits the memorial is aware of the exhibit space below.

seeing the Holocaust in a proper way. These debates beg the question of where the Holocaust took place and what the spatial component of Holocaust memory means to contemporary conversations about geographies of the Holocaust. While there are certainly no dead people under Eisenman's memorial, the memorial was constructed at the administrative center of the Nazi genocide; the *Stolpersteine* are scattered across Europe, marking spaces of life which were wiped away by perpetrators, collaborators, and even bystanders; and the Canadian Holocaust Monument, constructed in 2017 and the yet-to-be-built British example sit in spaces not questionably marred by their complicity in anti-Semitic acts of the 1930s and 1940s, but also complicit in other genocidal crimes.[378] *Where* can we say the Holocaust happened, if we wish to memorialize it in the spaces with the greatest geographical impact? What can we say the impact of the Holocaust imaginary is on the global community, of other wrongs remain forgotten? This complication sits on the same mirror's edge as Shapira's YOLOCAUST, questioning how behaviours in public and urban memorial spaces can be so policed when the landscape the memorials rest on remain ambiguous at best.

These images complicate our understanding of the memorial landscape of the Holocaust, forcing us to rethink the ways in which the public interacts with memorial spaces, and the way they are *expected* to act; the difference between the two creates interpretive dissonance. It is important to highlight the ways in which the photographer/subject chooses to represent themselves within the frame and within the

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[378] For more on the construction of recent Holocaust memorials, see Erin Donnelly, "The Tricky Business of Designing a Holocaust Memorial in 2017," *Azure Magazine*, 15 February 2017. URL: http://www.azuremagazine.com/article/challenges-of-designing-a-holocaust-memorial-in-2017/ (accessed 4 May 2017). See Rebecca Clare Dolgoy and Jerzy Elzanowski, "Working through the Limits of Multidirectional Memory: Ottawa's Memorial to the Victims of Communism and National Holocaust Monument," *Citizenship Studies* 22, no. 4 (2018): 433-451.

memorial space is entirely dependent on their awareness of the space's provenance. The connection between the Holocaust, bodies, and death is central to the Holocaust visuality that emerged after the liberation of the camps. The aims of Shapira's project were to have visitors to Holocaust memorials imagine the bodies, destruction, and severe loss of life invoked by the memorial space in conjunction with modern attempts to access and understand the sublime in the context of Holocaust memorialization. This project rested on its ability to present the imaginable in a space where visitors are encouraged to consider the nature of the unimaginable. In this way, visitor body is embedded in the history of representing the Holocaust, bringing to light interpretive issues which have been present in Holocaust studies for decades. The sharing of the image online via Instagram is then used in an online dialogue of visual memory, eventually making up a collective. I do not believe that the act of taking a selfie at the memorial changes the meaning of the built memorial; instead, the selfie allows for individual engagement and interpretation on a very personal and singular level and carries on the conversation in a digital forum.

**"Just like all of us:" Blurring Photographer and Victim Bodies**

Placing the body in Holocaust visuality amounts to more than the consideration of selfies in solemn places, particularly in our highly visual, networked age. The selfie is but one representation of the visitor body on Instagram. The use of framing, filters, and arrangement within their own Instagram feeds, coinciding with thoughtful consideration of the Holocaust's representation in museums allow the visitor/photographer to connect an individual aesthetic to a wider visual and digital Holocaust narrative. While not all

images which feature the visitor/photographer's own self are beacons of appropriate behaviour, these photographic acts demonstrate a consideration for the memorial space as containers and purveyors of the history and memory of the Holocaust. In many instances, through this tension, we can note the ways in which visitors to the museum and audience do not disregard its authority. Indeed, visitors recognize its importance and seek to collaborate with the institution itself by sharing in the publicly networked act of digitized witnessing. Through the following photographs, the visitor exercises their own autonomy, placing their bodies as receivers of memory in various memory landscapes in Berlin, the United States, and Poland.

The presence of the visitor body is invoked in images that do not even visually *feature* an image of the photographer. It is not uncommon for visitors to Auschwitz, the USHMM, YVHHM, or JMB to use the caption to explain the physical sensations they experienced while touring these landscapes of memory and postmemory. This is an interesting distinction; the caption of the image operates as a verbal link between what is pictured, and what is felt by the photographer. Without the caption, many photos could simply depict the grounds of the camp; the addition of the photographer's perceptions, sensations, and thoughts signals to the viewer that this is not just simply a photo of Holocaust memory, but the remnant of a tourist's physical experience. These images employ Instagram as a space for describing the physical, bodily sensations felt as the visitor/photographer tours the grounds of Holocaust memorial landscapes. This type of image evokes Marianne Hirsch's argument that "[Photographs] produce affect in the viewer, speaking from the body's sensations, rather than speaking of, or representing the

past."[379] The photographs which focus only on the descriptions of sensation and the physical landscapes of Holocaust memory and postmemory call into question the role of the tourist gaze in the act of taking a photo.

Instagram photographers at Auschwitz also attempt to convey embodied sensations which accompany their journey through Auschwitz, allowing their physical bodies to serve as evidence of history and memory within the space of Auschwitz. Instagram user @leeannelouise notes "#auschwitz #concentrationcamp #holocaust #rememberthem Learnt [sic] about it in school, read about it and seen [sic] it on TV but seeing their belongings #shoes brushes and their hair that had been shaved off ... gives shivers."[380] In this instance, @leeannelouise expresses bodily discomfort in experiencing the physical remnants of the camp itself, a reaction related solely to communicating the tricky aspects of "presence" to an audience that may never experience this space. Attempts to communicate the experience of visiting Auschwitz rely on a sense of place-making connected to an "imagined Auschwitz." Instagram user @lorajayne15 echoes this sentiment, noting "Such a harrowing experience walking through the Auschwitz camp. We don't realise how lucky we are #auschwitz #horrific #poland."[381]

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[379] Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997), 15.
[380] Instagram user @leeannelouise, 4 June 2017, URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BU7cL0jFQyz/ (accessed 1 December 2018).
[381] Instagram user @lorajayne15, 4 June 2017, URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BU7OYrQD9XH/ (accessed 1 December 2018).

*Figure 6.3. "If the #stolpersteine made by #gunterdemnig came to life..." Image by artist @raisa.galofre, 20 June 2016.*

I discovered Raisa Galofre's photography while conducting research at the Jewish Museum Berlin. A Berlin-based, Colombian-Caribbean artist, I noticed Galofre's images while scrolling through the *Stolpersteine* hashtag on Instagram, a testament to the networked Holocaust image. The first images I found featured a pair of feet, painted bronze, to match the *Stolpersteine,* standing outside a home (see figure 6.3). Galofre's caption, "What if the *Stolpersteine* came to life?" belies the motivation for the photographs. Included as part of her photo collection *Heimat*, Galofre's first work explores the intersections of homeland, Germanness, and memory, all from the perspective of an immigrant. Galofre's goal when creating the work were inspired by her first few months in Germany and the things that she noticed as being integral to this Germanness.[382] The images embody magical realism and communicate the purpose of the *Stolpersteine* more plainly through the human body. Galofre's

[382] Interview with Raisa Galofre, 25 July 2016, Berlin, Germany.

work reimbues the bronze stones with life taken from the victims, whose homes they now memorialize. By focusing on the feet, the photographer's gaze mimics that of a tourist or visitor discovering a *Stolperstein* for the first time. It forces the viewer to consider that the presence of a bronze cube is meant to invoke the absence of a person.

Building on the growing trend of photographing one's feet to capture the places they find themselves standing, the photographer's feet and a downward gaze are becoming more common in photographs of tourist sites. Instagram user @rotemzo's image complicates the tourist gaze; featuring Moshe Kadishman's *Shalekhet*, it could be considered an attempt to overwhelm the frame with representation as explored in the previous chapter.[383] However, the inclusion of the photographer's feet catches the visitor in action, actively stepping on the representative faces of roughly ten thousand victims. The exhibition is designed so that the metal of the ten thousand faces emits sound when the visitor crosses the void, embedding the cacophony in the memory of the visitor. Relying on sound and metaphor to communicate the memory of the Holocaust makes the visitor experience hard to forget, and this is communicated by @rotemzo in their image. What is more, the top-down framing which continually implicates the photographer; this framing asks a simple question of the viewer, requiring them to occupy the space of the photographer atop the many faces represented by Kadishman. This is compounded, as described by @meetmelbee, with the need to take stock of a space and consider its history. They note, in the caption of their top-down image at the USHMM: "Every once in a while my traveling toes need to stop and take in the history and emotion of a place. That is how I felt on the cobblestones from

[383] Instagram image by @rotemzo, 10 July 2017. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BWXVtyxn8ss/ (accessed 1 September 2018).

Chlodna Street in the Warsaw Ghetto."[384] For this visitor, the act of including oneself in the frame has very little to do with vanity and narcissism, and much to do with considering their own place in relation to the past and its memory.

*Figure 6.4. "#thenexttimeyouseeinjustice #thinkaboutwhatyousaw #ushmm" Copyright Instagram user @danadumulescu, 20 November 2017.*

The portraits which line the Tower of Faces – a three-floor installation at the USHMM devoted to the victims of the Jewish community of Eisiskes, Lithuania – also feature prominently in Instagram's visual landscapes (figure 6.4). The Tower of Faces extends through three floors of the museum, and visitors pass through the last third of the

[384] Instagram image by @meetmelbee, 12 December 2018. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BrTiPNOHZSZ/ (accessed 12 December 2018).

installation after exiting the pathway through the shoes of victims. A visitor comments: "A short walk away from the collection of shoes is the photo gallery. Above walk living, breathing people, whose shadows and shoes pass soundlessly and unknowingly [...]"[385] Here, the visitor's focus remains on the body of the tourist, rather than the body of the victim; the shadowy presence of the museum visitor and their journey from fantasies of witnessing to witness govern museum interactions.[386]

The interpretive strands of the faces of Eisiskes, the material holdings of the permanent exhibition, and the space and architecture of the USHMM are intertwined. The Tower of Faces demonstrates a combination of themes already explored in this work, such as the ways in which visitors seek to combine an affectual human connection with the material history of the Holocaust and the spatial universe of the museum itself.[387] Tourist photographs taken of or in the Tower of Faces echo this sentiment, and attempt to recreate the bodily sensations experienced when confronted by such an immense number of physical photographs. The hundreds of images rise to dizzying heights, surrounding the visitor on a narrow walkway; the tight quarters, number of other visitors, and vertical lines of this installation require that users photograph in one of three ways: with a close focus on the faces of the victims; a wide focus on the immensity of the number of

[385] Visitor comments from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Institutional Fonds, 29 July 2015.
[386] "What you do matters: The choices we as individuals make are critical to making a more just and humane world," caption by @caitcomber, 24 April 2017. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BTRMiixD78q/ (accessed 15 May 2018).
[387] See chapter three.

victims, sometimes gazing upwards; and a close focus on the visitor engaging with the Tower, surrounded by the images of the victims of Eisiskes, as seen in figure 6.4.[388]

In the latter images, the tourist body is the focal point. Each visitor is in the center of the frame, with each image capturing the active engagement with the Tower of Faces. In images featuring the tourist body, the faces are either hidden or turned away from the camera in a performance of solemnity – gazing beyond the frame, onwards to something in the distance. While these photos can range from posed to candid, even the most casual photos are unintentionally staged, because the visitor/photographer is always searching for a visual moment which best expresses their experiences within the space of the museum. The memorial image is not about the victim and is no longer *entirely* about the space. Images which place the visitor body among victims of the Holocaust serve an integrative function. By featuring the tourist body or face against a surrounding tower of nameless faces, the tourist body is flattened against and into the memory pastiche that surrounds them. Certainly, this does not place the tourist body within the realm of victimhood – this much is clear, for the tourist body remains as the focal point for the viewer, the person upon whom the viewer can cast their gaze. A visitor notes, "I saw my loved ones in all the faces."[389] The presence of an identifiable person among the hundreds

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[388] Instagram photos of the Tower of Faces fittingly demonstrate the life cycle of a photograph. The Tower features around 1,000 reproductions of images of Jewish life in the town, collected from over one hundred families by Dr. Yaffa Eliach. Beginning their lives as physical photographs, captured by Yitzhak Uri Katz, along with his wife, Alte Katz, and their assistant Ben-Zion Szrejder and Rephael Lejbowicz. The images experienced a shift in space and engagement with their reproduction for the exhibit itself – transforming them from objects with a material history in their own right to replications intended for a particular, though very different, context. Lastly, these images experience re-replication as either the sole subject or in the background of other peoples' images. This instance is one of many in which the material objects of the museum fade, settling into the background or flattening into two-dimensional images, synecdochal of the journeyed tourist experience.

[389] Visitor comments from the United States Memorial Holocaust Museum, Institutional Fonds, 11 September 2003.

of unnamed victims of Eisiskes reminds the visitor, the photographer, and the viewer of what was lost: millions of identifiable people, millions of names, millions of lives lost.

The photographer positions the visitor body to be a receiver of memory, considering ethical modes of engagement with the exhibit space, the victims of Eisiskes, and visual Holocaust memory. The staging of these images reflects on the presentation of the exhibit, and the meaning of this installation within the broader museum itself. A visitor explains, "When I looked at you as you stood in line, I searched its length amongst the many faces like mine."[390] In this way, the visitor and the victim can be placed along the same organizational plane; the victim is equivocated with the visitor as anyone, a loved one, and a person, all the same.[391] In these instances, the focal point of the image is not whether the body in the frame is the body of the victim or the visitor, but rather that the image features a body at all. For many visitors to a Holocaust museum, memorial, or concentration camp, the presence of other visitor bodies or their own bodies only draws attention to the non-presence of the victim body. Visitors and photographers place their own bodies in an attempt to use empathy and historical understanding to bridge between their present circumstances and the past. Instagram user @gresaismaili explains in their caption of their images from Auschwitz, "There are no graves, no stones but ashes of million people."[392] The bodies of the victims are not present at these memorial sites, yet they are always present and are consistently invoked in visitor photographs on Instagram.

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[390] Visitor comments from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Institutional Fonds, 2 October 2002.

[391] Sometimes, the presence of the victim's body or face is certainly more personal for the visitor. A visitor commented, "When I was [at Auschwitz] I saw a woman crying in the hallway... She had found her Grandma's pic [sic] on the wall [of prisoners]." Comment by @alanbcourt on @auschwitzmemorial's image, 8 October 2017. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BZ-yBkLFhW7/ (accessed 16 December 2018).

[392] Instagram image by @gresaismaili, 16 December 2018. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BrdWZJXnHfX/ (accessed 16 December 2018).

*Figure 5.5. Selfie shared by @courtney_dunbar_84, 3 June 2018.*

Figure 6.5 places the visitor's body in the space left behind by the victim's body. Instagram user @courtney_dunbar_84 shared this image, sent to her by her daughter, on Instagram in June 2018. Taken at Dachau Concentration Camp, the selfie combines the bodily presence of the visitor with the spectral presence of the victim. The reflection of the visitor in the glass assumes a ghostly quality, revealing a body that is present, but not from all angles. @courtney_dunbar_84 notes:

> […] do you see how she fades in and melds to this prisoner's uniform? The person who wore this uniform was human . . . just like Addison. This person had a family, friends, and a purpose for being … just like all of us. This person, and the millions subject to the tyranny and barbarism of the Nazis were people just like us.[393]

[393] Caption copyright @courtney_dunbar_84, 3 June 2018. The entire caption reads: "I have been compelled to understand the Holocaust for much of my life. I've read countless books, watched countless documentaries, and still cannot accept a peace in understanding why this horrific genocide occurred. While going through the trip pictures Addison sent home today, I immediately landed on this picture. It was imperative to me that she truly absorb their visit to Dachau today. Albeit a reflection, do you see how she fades in and melds to this prisoner's uniform? The person who wore this uniform was human . . . just like Addison. This person had family, friends, and a purpose for being . . . just like all of us. This person, and

These are the ways in which the presence of the visitor body operates as a productive form of ethical visitor photography. The images which force the visitor to consider the absence of the people for whom these spaces are memorialized demonstrate how the body continues to function as a site of memory as time continues to pass. The image of Addison (figure 6.5) in the blurry and faded reflection of the prisoner uniform has the same effect as the image of the visitor against the backdrop of victim portraits at the USHMM, as well as the image of the *Stolpersteine's* feet in Galofre's work. Each of these images visually reflect @courtney_dunbar_84s admonition that "this person had a family, friends, and a purpose for being … just like all of us." This is the same call to action espoused by the USHMM: to remember the victims of the Holocaust in relation to ourselves, to prevent future atrocity and injustice.

**Conclusion**

If the ethics of seeing are an ethics in motion, the Instagram image is a gateway for understanding the effects of ethics in motion through social media. As demonstrated by Shapira's YOLOCAUST, the presence of the visitor's body at Holocaust memorial sites, and spatial considerations for *where* the Holocaust happened suggest Instagram images are at the mercy of myriad shifting contexts. Though the images explored in this chapter appear static, they are not. The Instagram image in the context of Holocaust memory is made powerful through the motion of *action* which Thomas highlights in her assessment

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the millions subject to the tyranny and barbarism of the Nazis were people just like us. I am thankful for this photographic gift from my child today. It's been of such importance to me over the years that she understand why I've spent so many hours learning what I can about Nazi genocide and the persecution of the Jews, specifically. I know that, today, she witnessed and felt what I so hoped she would… #neverforget #holocaust #dachauconcentrationcamp"

of the ethics of seeing.[394] For Thomas, the action is the product of using what we see (and in many instances, *how* we see), to conduct the difficult and complicated memory work of reconciling with the past as depicted through photography.[395] In this chapter, the images are an extension of working through this history, and arguably, the ethics of seeing in the age of social media may well find root in the ethics of *sharing* particular images. In many of the images in this chapter, ethics, photography, and seeing are not diachronous. Just as visitors connect their experiences with wider social structures, the individual tourist photo centers on the perceptions of the tourist body, focusing on the power of the individual visitor in relation to the structure of the hegemonic museum or memorial.

Beyond the mobility of ethics, it is important to remember that photography itself constitutes an action.[396] As has been argued throughout this dissertation, the conscious and unconscious decisions which are made in the crafting of an image for Instagram are informed by the perspectives and understanding of the visitor, in collaboration with what they have learned about the past. This hardly makes these images static; despite the seemingly stationary quality of the image, the networked digital image is made continually mobile through the hashtag. The mobile networked image is made and remade, circulated and recirculated in new, different, and sometimes interrelated contexts. In my next and final chapter, I will address the mobile nature of the hashtag as a method for increasing the visibility of the Holocaust in the age of social media.

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[394] Thomas, 274.
[395] Ibid.
[396] Ibid.

# Chapter 6

## Virtual Communities of Remembrance

Consider the nine photos from the personal feed of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum. The caption of this post, a collage of their nine most "favorited" images in 2016, reads: "Thank you for creating our virtual community of remembrance. Thank you for showing us that photography can also be used to commemorate the tragic history of Auschwitz."[397] As explored in chapter two, the public's responsibility for memory-making and memory-circulation is encouraged and promoted by the social media team at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, and contributes to the affirmation of space and place at the former death camp. Continually, the museum's Instagram account makes use of the museum's authority within the digital sphere to make the images of visitors more accessible to wider audiences, more effectively communicating the experiences of their visitors and followers through a lens other than their own. Their Instagram feed features 1,032 posts, over 43,600 followers, and an open and accessible message portal.[398] In 2016, they shared 247 images, and their followers liked their shared images 213,312 times.[399] What is more, the majority of @auschwitzmemorial's images are photographs that have been captured and shared with them by visitors to the camp; full credit is always paid to the photographer visitor, and this sharing is demonstrative of a fully committed conversation about the Holocaust, memory, and how it can be

[397] On the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum's Instagram profile (@auschwitzmemorial), a "like = remember." URL: http://www.instagram.com/auschwitzmemorial. The Neuengamme Holocaust Memorial also has a very active social media presence – especially on Instagram.
[398] As of December 2018. @auschwitzmemorial on Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/auschwitzmemorial/?hl=en (accessed 1 December 2018).
[399] @auschwitzmemorial, 30 December 2016, https://www.instagram.com/p/BOpAQ6qgIqR/, accessed 30 July 2018.

visualized in the twenty-first century. This exchange is demonstrative of the ways in which Holocaust memory institutions can use their online identities to empower visitors and those who encounter the Holocaust to share their experiences in a global context.

The Instagram archive is an ever-evolving, always incomplete living archive of everyday life. Does the digital image function in the same way, once networked with Instagram visualities? What of the life cycle of the image, and the ethics of reproducing spaces of suffering, rooted in the gaze of the perpetrator? The intersection of these concerns in a digital environment helps to problematize the modern and digital body, and its place within visual Holocaust geographies and landscapes of postmemory. The Instagram archive is the extension of embodied and visual experiences in spaces of Holocaust memory. The Instagram Holocaust archive functions as an open source pastiche in flux, allowing for the inclusion and integration of photos from a variety of spaces and perspectives. Media scholar Yiannis Mylonas' analysis of social media archives as public spheres uses the examples of photography oriented Facebook and YouTube pages entitled "Old Photographs of Thessaloniki."[400] Making use of new media sociology and drawing on and eventually departing from Walter Benjamin's discussions of modernity, Mylonas argues that the construction of and participation in "old photographs of Thessaloniki" allows for the creation of a peer-produced archive and public sphere in its own right. Instagram works in ways similar to what Mylonas examines. The evolving nature of the visual Holocaust archive on Instagram demonstrates that, though invoking the physical geographies of Holocaust memory, the

[400] Yiannis Mylonas, "Witnessing Absences: Social Media as Archives and Public Spheres," *Social Identities* 23 no. 3 (2017): 271-288.

Holocaust's visual memory has moved beyond its own physical landscapes, to virtual communities of remembrance.

Thus far, this dissertation has explored the ways in which tourist photographs function as extensions of postmemory and symbols of Holocaust encounters in the twenty-first century. By relying on particular examples to showcase how visitor photos function in separate and distinct context, a close reading of these images has underscored how visitor photography is a performative method for encountering and engaging with the Holocaust. This chapter broadens its focus and highlights how Holocaust visuality on Instagram – wrought from the practices explored in prior chapters – contributes to the development of a digital and public affective repository. For the most part, many of these examples function both inside and outside of the digital framework in which they are embedded. This chapter extends the analysis of the previous chapters to the digital realm, considering the impact of this affectual archive in the context of the digital mediasphere.

This chapter places the affective Instagram Holocaust archive in the context of other digital archives. It considers the ways in which the digital mediasphere has contributed to the proliferation of Holocaust postmemory and engages with the Instagram image in the context of the personal feed and the collective hashtagged feed. It evaluates the visitor-categorized postmemory image alongside the newly revamped digital encyclopedia of the USHMM and the USC Shoah Foundation visual archive.[401] Placing the social media archive in all its various forms in conversation with the official digital narratives espoused by many of the museums and institutions explored in this

[401] University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, https://sfi.usc.edu/vha (accessed 26 November 2018). Hundreds of survivor testimonies are also available on their YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/user/USCShoahFoundation (accessed 12 February 2019).

dissertation, I demonstrate the ways in which postmemory formation is a collaborative effort, realized on a variety of platforms and in conversation with one another. What remains remarkable about Instagram is its function as a crowdsourced visual archive which showcases the history of the everyday. Users' ability to archive their own images contributes to a greater understanding of how Holocaust memory becomes embedded in visitors' online lives.

As demonstrated, the history of seeing and looking at the Holocaust has been developed over time, through various cycles of memory and postmemory. The images in this dissertation are networked social media images, making methods for looking at and seeing the Holocaust even more visible in the digital age. Instagram eradicates distance, allowing people who will never visit Auschwitz, the USHMM, or the Holocaust memorial on the shores of the Danube to engage with Holocaust visuality through smartphones or laptops, half a world away; in this way, the archive of Holocaust encounters housed in Instagram conducts similar memorial work as the USC Shoah Foundation's visual archive, showcasing the visual memory of the Holocaust on a readily accessible platform. This digital form of memory work has made visual Holocaust memory more mobile than ever before, and the increased use of social media as a platform for cataloguing one's own experiences shifts the authority of maintaining the Holocaust's memory from the academic, curator, and historian, to the layperson. While we continue to move into an age of total postmemory, individuals continue to explain and share their experiences at Auschwitz, Holocaust museums, and memorial sites through accessible platforms like Instagram. They also continue to do so with interpretive methods learned from a history of Holocaust visuality.

Borrowing from an understanding of a cohesive Holocaust visuality, visitors to Auschwitz-Birkenau, USHMM, the city of Berlin, or the Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Centre frame, capture, and share images in an online and networked community. Previous chapters have demonstrated the ways in which individual images contribute to a holistic visual framework for understanding and interpreting the Holocaust; this chapter pulls away from a close reading to argue that these networked images form larger "virtual communities of remembrance."[402] Thus, an important distinction between the Instagram archive and the VHA or USHMM digital archives remains: both the VHA and the USHMM digital archive function as top-down, hegemonic archives, with their contents decided on by the archivists and academics which govern their organization, while Instagram provides a platform which facilitates the multidirectional memory witnessed, experienced, captured, and shared by members of the public.

**Social Sharing, Self-Fashioning, and Holocaust Visuality**

Unpacking Instagram's myriad viewing options will make the image's fluidity on the platform easier to parse. Jenny L. Davis has argued that identity-fashioning is central to representations of the self on social media, characterizing these behaviours as acts of productive online curation.[403] In the context of a personal Instagram feed, the Instagram image is one snapshot of a larger individually lived experience, and the product of a

[402] Caption by @auschwitzmemorial, 30 December 2016, https://www.instagram.com/p/BOpAQ6qgIqR/, (accessed 30 July 2018).
[403] Jenny L. Davis, "Curation: A Theoretical Treatment," *Information, Communication & Society* 20, no. 5 (2017): 770-783.

series of aesthetic choices that the photographer has made in the interest of shaping their digital identity.[404] The taking and sharing of a photo at any of the Holocaust memory sites interrogated in this work integrates the memory of the Holocaust into the individual stream of one's own Instagram images, and allowing space for the authority of visitor within this digital narrative.[405] Through individualized meaning-making, the personal Instagram image becomes networked within a wider community of Holocaust remembrance, without replacing the individual life experiences of those who continue to remember. Gunnþórunn Guðmundsdóttir explains:

> Photography is the medium which most obviously displays our presence in the world. As such and because of its intimate relationship with memory and record keeping it has become an inseparable part of autobiographical expression. […] The message is clear; taking a photo is only worthwhile if it is then shared with others.[406]

It is perhaps unsurprising that the Instagram image is a social object, intended to convey brief messages, experiences, or to show affect.[407]

Apart from the ways in which the image functions as an object of remembrance, as explored in the earlier chapters of this dissertation, the photograph has become inherently social and important to the curation of the online self, lending to the increased visibility of the everyday individual and their experiences, reminding digital publics that

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[404] Katharina Lobinger, "Photographs as Things – Photographs of Things. A Texto-Material Perspective on Photo-Sharing Practices," *Information, Communication & Society* 19, no. 4 (2016): 475-488. Lobinger argues that, even in the digital age, photos function as both objects and texts, demonstrating the active qualities of the photograph as an object embedded in online sharing practices.
[405] José van Dijck refers to photo sharing as part of narrative building in relation to the self in "Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory," *Visual Communication* 7, no. 1 (2008): 57-76.
[406] Gunnþórunn Guðmundsdóttir, "The Online Self: Memory and Forgetting in the Digital Age," *European Journal of Life Writing* 3 (2014): 50.
[407] José van Dijck, "Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory," *Visual Communication* 7, no. 1 (2008): 61-62.

"I was here," through the language of online belonging. Davis argues that these "are selections of ourselves, selections of others, and selections of the social world."[408] Therefore, visitor experiences at Holocaust memory sites should also be considered as part of the history of how the Holocaust is visualized, viewed, and ultimately consumed. The photographer's conscious contribution to this trajectory (through the sharing of their image) combines their own personal social media history, with their encounters with the Holocaust, because in the words of Davis, "the selves that users project, the manner in which they do so, and the ways in which they distribute self-relevant content across their networks, reflect curatorial decisions."[409] The Instagram feed is as much a source for contemporary Holocaust memory as it is for understanding the geospatial relationships that individuals form through the use of a smartphone – and how they use these images to shape their identities online. As photography theorist Lev Manovich argues, "[…] photography today – and the Instagram platform in particular – gives young people at least as much power in crafting unique identities as music. And in comparison to writing music, Instagram is much easier to use."[410] Through these images historians are able to examine the permeable boundaries between the online and the offline worlds.

The "show and tell behavior" of Instagram is not necessarily new, just re-mediated. Since the arrival of scrapbooks, family albums, and travel slides, photography has functioned as a medium which visually communicates experience; in the case of physical photographs, the

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[408] Davis, 771.
[409] Ibid. 772.
[410] Lev Manovich, "Instagrammism and Mechanisms of Contemporary Cultural Identity," URL: http://manovich.net/content/04-projects/094-notes-on-instagrammism-and-mechanisms-of-contemporary-cultural-identity/notes-on-instagrammism.pdf, 19.

photographer captures a moment in the present, with eyes of the future. One gazes upon a snapshot of the past with eyes of the present. Platforms such as Instagram collapse this temporal plane, reinforcing a sense of urgency reminiscent of the Polaroid or instamatic. The addition of web 2.0 opens the taking of photographs up to wider public conversations. Communications and media scholar José van Dijck notes:

> As web activities such as blogging become a major way of sharing pictures, these come to constitute another kind of oral performance that makes sense of and signifies photographs. […] In addition they have affected photography's traditional commemorative function by distributing personal pictorial memories all over the web and allowing them to emerge in various unforeseen and public contexts.[411]

Van Dijck suggests that while the singular and personal performative act of orality which is often inspired by the family photo album may be lost, the sharing of photos online in social spaces opens this activity up to a wider audience. Placing the Instagram image, album, and feed in the context of van Dijck's analysis indicates that the standard oral performance which accompanies the sharing of a physical photo-album remains, but has shifted to include digital discursive methods, such as the hashtag.

[411] Van Dijck, "Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory," 8. This sentiment is elaborated upon in Dong-Hoo Lee "Digital Cameras, Personal Photography and the Reconfiguration of Spatial Experiences," *The Information Society* 26, no. 4 (2010): 266-275.

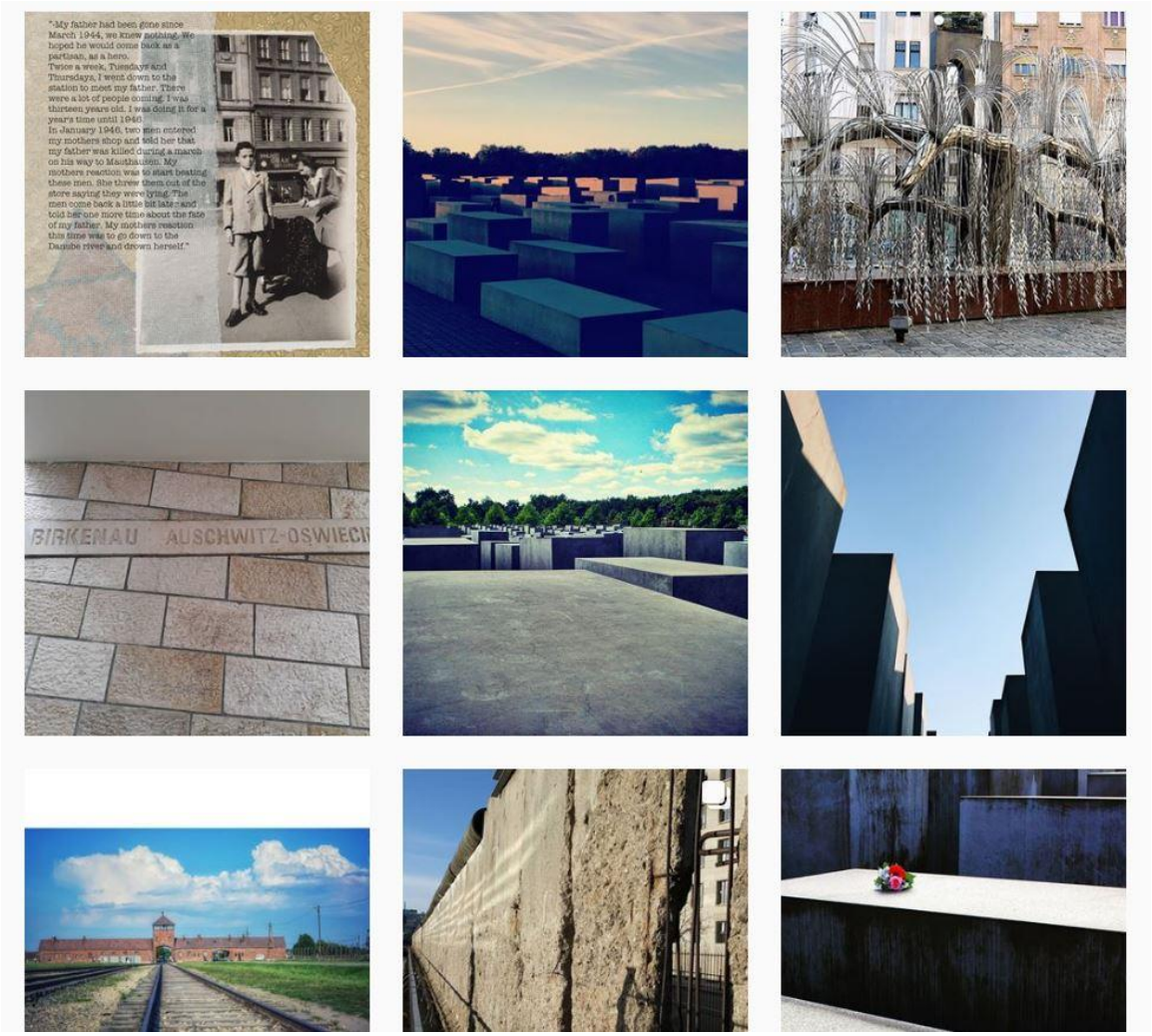


*Figure 7.1. View of #holocaustmemorial on Instagram. Captured by Meghan Lundrigan, 7 December 2018.*

The hashtag (#) has become a common method for discursive expression and categorization on social media.[412] Figure 7.1 is an excellent example of the organizational qualities of the hashtag on Instagram, pulling together 108,655 Instagram images that share the tag.[413] The small symbols communicate emotion, situational context, place, and

[412] Fabio Giglietto and Yenn Lee, "A Hashtag Worth a Thousand Words: Discursive Strategies Around #JeNeSuisPasCharlie After the 2015 Charlie Hebdo Shooting," *Social Media + Society* (January-March 2017): 1-15.
[413] As of 7 December 2018. #holocaustmemorial on Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/holocaustmemorial/ (accessed 7 December 2018).

also function as tools for organization on Instagram, grouping like with like.[414] Like all archives, and technologies which harness archiving capabilities, the hashtag requires critical evaluation. Hashtags can be messy; apart from simple typos, the use of an incorrect hashtag can place content in the unintended place. Multiple hashtags for the same content also create complications, and it is easy to witness the misuses of archival practice when the content has been widely crowdsourced. For example, you will find photos from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum under hashtags #holocaustmuseum, #holocaustmemorial, #USHMM, #holocaust, and others. Not unlike other, traditional archives, the hashtagged Instagram archive is also the product of power relations. There are many ways that individual users can run interference on the organization of their images – whether intentionally or not. Content can be intentionally mislabeled, and it is not uncommon that offensive, disrespectful, or unrelated images are categorized alongside the archive discussed in this dissertation. Much like the traditional hegemonic archive, the choices for organization and categorization is dependent on the collecting body. The Instagram archive, therefore, functions alongside a dichotomy of inclusion and exclusion; the hashtag signifies that dichotomy.

The hashtag is a powerful tool, with the ability to organize, collect, and amplify the visuality of thousands of images. Thus, hashtag usage sits at the intersection of

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[414] There is a fair amount of discussion surrounding the hashtag in media studies, but *The Sage Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* provides the most succinct and accessible explanation of the importance of the hashtag to Instagram's programming. See Linnea Laestadius, "Instagram," in *The Sage Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2016), 573-592. For specific examples of the hashtag at work, see Martin Gibbs, James Meese, Michael Arnold, Bjorn Nansen & Marcus Carter, "#Funeral and Instagram: Death, Social Media, and Platform Vernacular," *Communication & Society* 18, no. 3 (2015): 255-268; Andrea LaMarre and Carla Rice, "Hashtag Recovery: #Eating Disorder Recover on Instagram," *Social Sciences* 6, no. 68 (2017): 1-15; and Derek Moscato, "Media Portrayals of Hashtag Activism: A Framing Analysis of Canada's #Idlenomore Movement," *Media and Communication* 4, no. 2 (2016): 3-12.

language and knowledge. Without the hashtag, access to critical information is missing. Put simply, if visitors to Auschwitz want their images to be more visible, a hashtag will group their image alongside other images with the same hashtag. Tagging images also makes photographs more readily discoverable. It is through the hashtag that I discovered artist Raisa Galofre's photography, part of the large visual archive of *Stolpersteine* on Instagram.[415] The hashtag makes the image mobile, granting it the ability to be categorized, discovered, and rediscovered in other contexts. This underscores a triangulation of mediation-mobility-visuality, which characterizes the creation and movement of images in the digital age.[416] Media and communications scholar Elisa Serafinelli explains,

> Images reveal themselves through the aestheticization of the world that erodes their traditional boundaries through the mediation of social media platforms and smart mobile technologies. Moving the attention onto the processes of visual representation and visual communication, the mediation of social media platforms and new mobile technologies becomes the determining factor of the way people experience visualities.[417]

Therefore, the Instagram image is not static, and the Holocaust Instagram photo remains consistently integrated into an ever-growing, ever-changing crowd-sourced visitor experience archive. While the thousands of photos of Holocaust museums, memorial sites, and visitors to those sites on Instagram have contributed to the increased visibility of experiences at these sites, other visualities can remain excluded. Hashtag "search-ability" and "find-ability" are qualities unique to the content creator and the content

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[415] See my discussion of Raisa's photography in chapter five.
[416] Elisa Serafinelli, *Digital Life on Instagram: New Social Communication of Photography* (Bingley: Emerald, 2018), 26.
[417] Ibid.

consumer. However, the hashtag also disrupts, simultaneously grounding and displacing images in and from their original settings and contexts.[418]

As is the case with any archive, the Instagram's visual archive of experience is not without its faults.[419] Apart from displacing images in and from their original contexts, the hashtagged archive can never be a complete archive. The Instagram user has complete control over their own account, and their own images; images disappear from Instagram all the time. Building on Manovich's analysis of visual tropes and styles on Instagram, the platform remains just as susceptible to duplication, replication, and the over-production of similar images due to the ways in which what the viewer sees is always governed by what they have discovered and liked before.[420] When the individual is placed at the center of the Instagram archive, it draws attention to the complicated nature of archive-building. However, in the words of archivist Terry Cook:

> Archives as concept, as practice, as institution, and as profession may be transformed to flourish in our digital era, especially one where citizens have a new agency and a new voice, and where they leave through digital social media all kinds of new and potentially exciting, and potentially archival, traces of human

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[418] Jeanette Vigliotti, "The Currency of Visibility: Visual Subjectivity and Memory on Instagram," *Communicazioni sociali* 1 (2016): 65.

[419] The study of the power and authority of archives constitutes a field in its own right – across many disciplines. Many have argued that despite the public believe that the archive and museum are neutral, they are always governed by power structures, with some of these power structures and relationships more visible than others. The term "archive" is heavily discussed. In *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) Jacques Derrida famously problematized the archive, arguing that archives denote both authority and origin, underscoring the deep connection between state power and constructed histories. Despite the dearth of academic discussion concerning the archive, conversation has only recently expanded to include contemporary social media practice. In the introduction to Wolfgang Ernst's *Digital Memory and the Archive* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), Jussi Parikka argues that in the age of social media, "we are miniarchivists ourselves in this information society, which could be more aptly called an information *management* society," 2.

[420] It should be said that though the ability to archive and categorize one's photos on Instagram lies in the hands of the individual, Instagram is owned by Facebook and still falls in the realm of modern digital corporate interests. As such, it is important to remember that though the Instagram archive is not necessarily organized by federal governments, power politics and authority still play a role in the platform's construction.

life, of what it means to be human.[421]

Thus, the Instagram archive hinges entirely on the perspectives and experiences of the individual. While the way we engage with Twitter makes that platform feel more like a collective experience, the collective Instagram experience reflects a pastiche of experience, rather than a sum of its parts. This distinction is important. The hashtag is sometimes compared across social media platforms, but it is a tool which functions very differently depending on the platform. Arguably, Twitter is a platform for *vocalizing*, whereas Instagram continues to function as a platform for *visualizing*. In this way, the hashtag on Twitter is a tool for being heard, whereas on Instagram it is a tool for being *seen*.

How do these concepts and distinctions apply to memory formation on Instagram? The Instagram archive of the Holocaust is a shifting visual archive; it is also an archive of visitor response, experience, and interpretation, providing the wider Instagram public and Holocaust museums and memorial sites with a rich compendium of feedback and visitor engagement, shedding light on the nature of Holocaust tourist culture in our contemporary age. However, it is always growing, and continually replicating; many of the images analyzed in this dissertation share a visual profile with hundreds of other images, if not thousands. What is more, the Instagram Holocaust archive complicates our understanding of Holocaust spaces. While the Instagram Holocaust archive reflects multiple spaces and places of Holocaust memory, the geotagged layer of the Instagram photo is only accessible through a close view of the

[421] Terry Cook, "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: four shifting archival paradigms," *Archival Science* 13, no. 2 (2013): 97.

image; when viewed collectively, the thousands of photos categorized under #holocaust or #holocaustmemorial have the ability to erase some sense of place and time.[422] Media scholar Jeanette Vigliotti reinforces this notion, arguing that:

> We can conceive of the personal Instagram profile as a modern heterotopic museum in a non-place and non-time. Through photographs' heterotopic nature, with their amnesia of time and space, not only do we archive ourselves, but we also enter the archive of culture via hashtags.[423]

The Holocaust Instagram archive is thus achieved through a collaborative relationship between cultures of remembrance and individuals. This is how the Instagram Holocaust archive achieves its participatory status. The responsibility of building an online digital and visual presence is shared with individual content creators who help to move and remediate the Holocaust and its memory in new digital spaces. Sharing a photo is not an unconscious or simply whimsical act; many of these images are thoughtfully and carefully composed, blurring the lines between firsthand experiences and historical memory.[424]

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[422] This is not always the case, however. While looking at a large corpus of Instagram images organized by hashtag has the ability to eliminate a sense of place and time, the use of place-oriented hashtags can regroup images in a similar fashion. What remains central to understanding a sense of "place" in a large image corpus is the manner in which hashtags can create community spaces. Shawn Graham's work on mapping the sale of human remains on Instagram via hashtag reuse touches on this. See "Text Re-Use in Instagram posts selling human remains," *Electric Archaeology* 16 January 2017. URL: https://electricarchaeology.ca/2017/01/16/text-reuse-in-instagram-posts-selling-human-remains/ (accessed 31 January 2019). See a longer explanation of Graham's collaborative digital humanities project on tracking the sale of human remains on social media from Nick Ward's recent interview, "Skulls for Sale: An Interview with History's Professor Shawn Graham." URL: https://carleton.ca/fass/story/innovative-historian-studies-the-sale-of-human-remains-on-the-internet/ (accessed 1 February 2019). Understanding place and time through large Instagram image corpuses remains an ongoing study.

[423] Vigliotti, 64.

[424] Joanne Garde-Hansen's argument about archive fever and digital archivization practices is especially pertinent here. See "MyMemories? Personal Digital Archive Fever and Facebook," in Joanne Garde-Hansen, Andrew Hoskins, and Anna Reading, Eds. *Save As…Digital Memories* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009) 135-50.

Therefore, Holocaust memory on Instagram is tethered to self-perception and the performance of the self, as well as the devices which give connective memory shape. The phrase "connective memory" is borrowed from Van Dijck, who argues that "the continuous presence of the network – both in its human-centered sociological and historical meaning and in terms of its technological apparatus – substantially changes the definition of what counts as memory and experience."[425] The memory of the Holocaust becomes embedded in the daily life of the photographer. Some would argue that this cements Holocaust visuality in the banality of the photography of everyday life, but I disagree. The use of the hashtag makes the image more visible; grouped with other images under the same categories, the thousands of images form a visual pastiche of Holocaust memory, drawn from the "souvenirs of daily life."[426] Vigliotti explains:

> On Instagram, we use photographs to trade for social recognition, hoping these posts collectively constitute a digital self, and through the hashtag (#), allow users visibility within certain social groups. The social network's insistence on self-reported images becomes something like a panoptic impulse on identity, one that is bound in the visual subject's desire for visibility within imagined communities.[427]

In the context of Holocaust memory, this digital act of visualization and memory transference signifies a contemporary and simultaneous investment in Holocaust landscapes of postmemory. Simultaneously, the sharing of the image online allows the photographer to project their interpretation of the memorial space within the digital sphere. Media scholar Ron Burnett explains:

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[425] José van Dijck, "Flickr and the Culture of Connectivity: Sharing Views, Experiences, Memories," *Memory Studies* 4, no. 4 (2010): 403-404. See also Andrew Hoskin's discussion of connective memory in "The Mediatization of Memory," in Joanne Garde-Hansen, Andrew Hoskins, and Anna Reading, Eds. *Save As … Digital Memories* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 661-679.
[426] Sontag, 3.
[427] Vigliotti, 65.

> The shift to the digital has shown that photographs are simply raw material for an endless series of digressions […] as images, photographs encourage viewers to move beyond the physical world even as they assert the value of memory, place, and original moments.[428]

In this instance, the sharing of visual media in online spaces presents and represents the value of the "original moment" as the ultimate experience. Therefore, an individual encounter with the Holocaust's memorial landscape captured on camera and shared online serves as a unique representation and expression of that singular experience.

Vigliotti has succinctly argued that the creation and sharing of digital memory objects is encouraged by a relational identity. She argues, "as a networked space, Instagram […] photographs are a user's souvenirs, waiting for narrative re-inscription."[429] Consider the two images below, each captured from an individual's two separate personal Instagram feeds. The first is a research account which was set up primarily for tracking and understanding Holocaust visuality on Instagram. The first image, though from a personal feed, is an example of remediated Holocaust visuality already present on Instagram. The images are re-shared images, featuring landscapes and objects from other Instagram users; there is an affinity to black and white filters, and the feed has a cohesive visual theme.

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[428] Ron Burnett, *How Images Think* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 28.
[429] Vigliotti, 65.

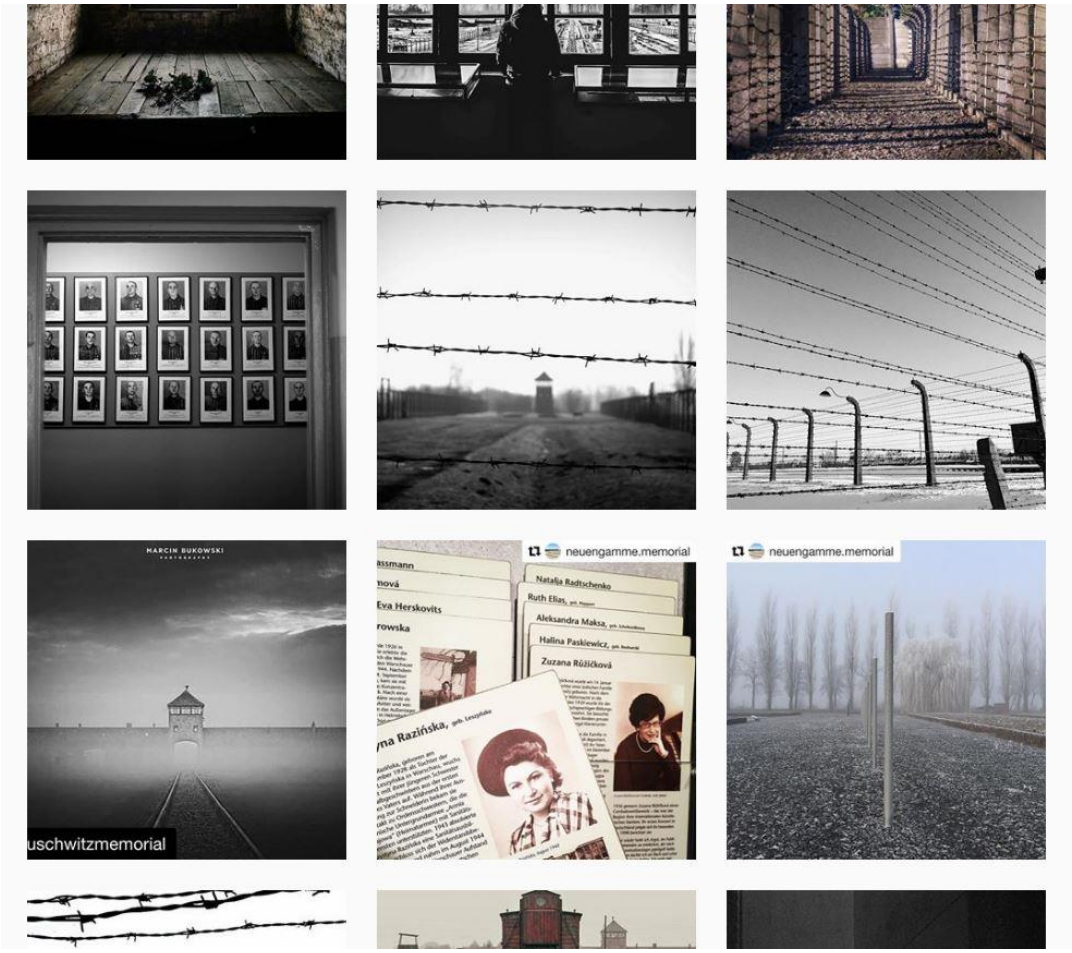


*Figure 7.2. Screen capture from @mlundrigan's Instagram feed, 1 December 2018.*

The second screen capture is different (figure 7.2). Pulled from the personal Instagram feed, it features personal photographs from a research trip in Berlin, embedding Holocaust visuality in the photographer's digital representation of the self. Libeskind's Holocaust Tower (top right) and Kadishman's *Shalekhet* (middle left) are sandwiched between selfies, cups of coffee, photos from archival research, and other trivial and banal images. In the context of a personal Instagram feed, the memory of the Holocaust is stationed amidst a personal and living photo archive.

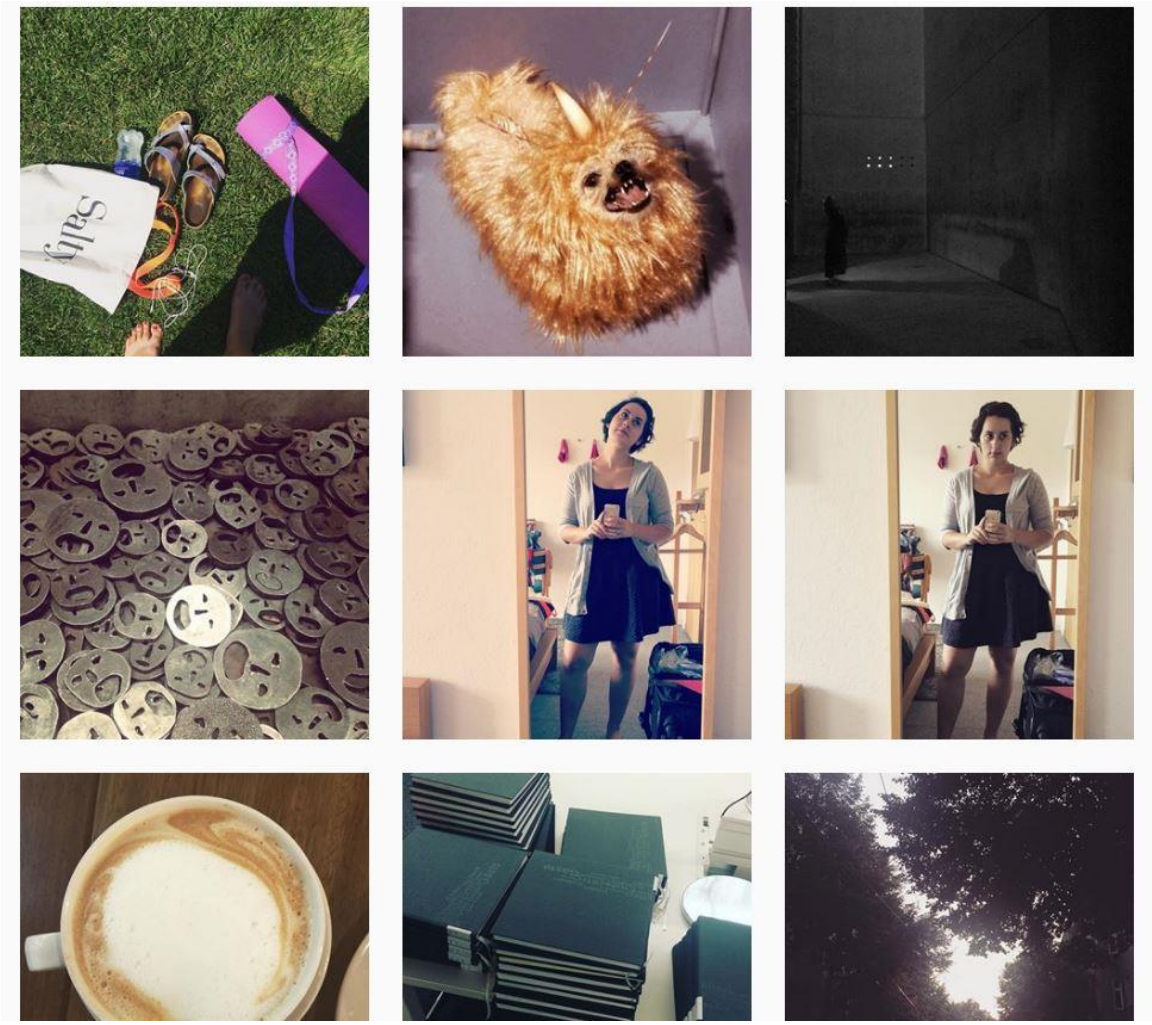

*Figure 7.3. Screen capture from @schmegainer's Instagram feed, 6 December 2018.*

The Holocaust images in figure 7.2 are hashtagged; the images in figure 7.3 are not. The different ways in which these images are able to be seen reflects decisions made by the photographer to showcase their digital photos in different contexts. In each distinct context, the Holocaust images connect to different narratives; figure 7.2's placement indicates an effort to explore Holocaust visualities in the context of a wider, networked archive. Figure 7.3, on the other hand, considers how the Holocaust memorial image functions in the context of the everyday, individual lives of those who capture them. It is important to reiterate: neither framing exemplifies a banalization of the image.

**Digital Communities of Holocaust Memory**

How then, can the relationship between individual, platform, hashtag, and virtual communities of remembrance be parsed? Digital methods for displaying and seeing the Holocaust are not entirely new, nor limited only to social media representation. While Instagram must be considered within the representational limits, it should also be evaluated alongside other digital representations of the Holocaust, which have been in development for some time. For example, the project that would become the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive (VHA) was initiated in 1994 – only one year after the USHMM opened its doors to visitors. The current incarnation of the VHA brings together the possibilities of the digital age and video recordings of survivor testimony, which are a mainstay in how the Nazi genocide is documented, studied, and memorialized.[430] In 2014, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum unveiled their new 360-degree virtual tour of the former camp grounds, allowing visitors to tour the space of the death camp though a computer screen.[431] How, then, does the Instagram archive differ from the official archives of the USC Shoah Foundation?

The difference between traditional archives and the Instagram archive is one of ever-present memory, and the way that the digital nature of an object shapes its consumption. Media scholar Andrew Hoskins explains, noting:

> Memory is readily and dynamically configured through our digital practices and the connectivity of our network […] The increasingly digital networking of

[430] Jeffrey Shandler, *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age: Survivors' Stories and New Media Practices* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017), 2. See also Paul Frosh, "The Mouse, the Screen, and the Holocaust Witness: Interface Aesthetics and Moral Response," *New Media & Society* 20, no. 1 (2018): 351-368. Frosh argues that interface experiences inform contemporary users' engagements with survivor testimonies on the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive.
[431] Auschwitz-Birkenau Virtual Tour: Visual Sightseeing of Former Nazi Concentration Camp, http://panorama.auschwitz.org/ (accessed 21 September 2018).

> memory not only functions in a continuous present but is also a distinctive shaper of a new mediatized age of memory.[432]

In the context of Instagram, the image and its corresponding caption and hashtag are discursive, ephemeral memory objects. These additional features remediate the optics of the Holocaust that have evolved over the course of the past several decades. The act of seeing the Holocaust, photographing, and sharing it on Instagram is an excellent example of Hoskin's argument for the way that individual perspectives continually reshape mediatized memory in our contemporary age. This dissertation has demonstrated the ways in which a Holocaust Instagram visuality is continually reshaped, not only through visual representations of the Holocaust which already exist, but also in the ways that the Holocaust tourist image becomes typified by the photos taken by *other* Instagrammers. This has much to do with what Vigliotti argues is the proper way to categorize and tag one's own photos. She notes, "users must shop their own digital photographs for an image congruent with the particular social identity presented not only on the uploader's profile, but also within the archive of the #."[433]

Perhaps it is more helpful to think of the Instagram archive as constantly in conversation with its other collective parts, rather than as the digital presentation of a collective Holocaust memory.[434] Overall, the processes of seeing the Holocaust on Instagram are not exceptionally different than the spatial encounters explored in the previous chapters. The main difference remains that through digital media, Holocaust

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[432] Andrew Hoskins, "Digital Networked Memory," in Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, eds. *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 96.
[433] Vigliotti, 65.
[434] Dijck's problematization of "collective memory" is useful here, demonstrating that the myriad perspectives of individuals who contribute to visual connective cultures is more collaborative than collective. "Flickr and the Culture of Connectivity," 402-404.

memory and its myriad forms are now connected by more than space, place, and first-hand experience; the use of Instagram and other social media platforms has connected the visuality of the Holocaust through hashtag, which plainly demonstrates the amalgamative possibilities of a Holocaust visuality on social media. I would like to return to the Instagram feed of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum to underscore the ways in which Instagram functions in the context of what media scholar José van Dijck has characterized as "cultures of connectivity."[435]

**Connective Holocaust Memory Work on Instagram**

"The museum is covered with snow today," reads the caption of the first image that the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum shared on Instagram.[436] The quiet image and simple caption (devoid of any hashtags, as many early Instagram images were) began the museum's engaged and collaborative work on Instagram; the post sets the stage for the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum as a geospatial Holocaust authority on Instagram. An involved social media presence is not new terrain for Holocaust memorial or museum staff – both the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Centre both rely on several social media accounts to communicate programming, special events, educational initiatives, promote important dates and ceremonies, and showcase the architecture and exhibit halls. They

[435] José van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[436] Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum (@auschwitzmemorial), December 5, 2012. URL: http://www.instagram.com/auschwitzmemorial.

even make use of their own hashtags, #USHMM and #yadvashem, to ensure that all museum correspondence is easy to locate in the digital mediasphere.[437]

The value of Instagram to global Holocaust memory is complex and multifaceted. Instagram's ability to raise consciousness, increase the visibility and iconic identity of the camp, as well as present different versions of Auschwitz's aesthetic, is not unnoticed nor unappreciated, by the museum, its colleagues, and their followers. The Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial (Instagram user @neuengamme.memorial) praises the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum: "thank you for commemorating and remembering also in Social Media. Thank you for going on telling stories and helping not forgetting." Instagram user @lordwilliamoftabunut expresses their thanks for "helping us not to forget it & allowing those that aren't able to experience it in person the opportunity to see it in such detail."[438] Their succinct observation underscores the importance accessible memory. Many followers will never be able to physically visit Auschwitz for many reasons, but the construction of Auschwitz's digitized "place-ness" on Instagram collapses this distance. @auschwitzmemorial's cultivation of an online community of remembrance allows for publics from all over the world to engage with the visuality of the Holocaust through their browsers or smartphones.

As demonstrated in chapter two, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum relies on educational frameworks to guide visitor interpretation through Instagram in appropriate ways. Such guidelines include encouraging visitors to share images which

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[437] See the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (@holocaustmuseum) on Instagram and Twitter. URL: http://www.instagram.com/holocaustmuseum.
[438] Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum (@auschwitzmemorial), December 2016. URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BOpAQ6qgIqR/?taken-by=auschwitzmemorial.

will be respectful to the history, and which are not upsetting to others.[439] The historian's interpretation of the Auschwitz Instagram photograph as both an object and a performative act, in which the photographer balances multiple authorities, expectations, and existing visual typologies without ignoring their own exploration of their visit to Auschwitz. These numerous expectations can be seen in @auschwitzmemorial's request that visitors perform as both witnesses and messengers:

> It is said that "A picture is worth a thousand words." However, we ask you to share your pictures with others and tell them about your experience of the visit. By taking and sharing pictures you became messengers who should tell others about the history of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp and its victims. #auschwitzmemorial #auschwitz #photography #memory #instagram.[440]

Additionally, @auschwitzmemorial's caption demonstrates that photography, hashtags, and instant photo sharing serve as indicators of presence, memory, and education. While @auschwitzmemorial urges visitors to share their images, with proper hashtags and all, the memorial does not request that the content creator ignore their own deeply personal interpretation of Auschwitz. An Instagram user captioned their image (Figure 7.4) stating "Don't think I will take a more meaningful picture. #Auschwitz #Birkenau #ConcentrationCamp #Jew #NoFilter." Figure 7.4's Instagram image from Auschwitz is hardly typical; beyond the Star of David and the lack of filter, the image does not reflect the spatial aspects of Auschwitz like most images on Instagram. The meaning of the

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[439] There is room for debate here over what constitutes an image which is "upsetting to others." In the discipline of Holocaust studies, the recirculation of camp imagery (as visual and physical remnants of the atrocity image) is not always encouraged. Because so much of the Instagram experience is dependent on the gaze of the follower – as well as the gaze of the photographer – it is arguable that the sharing of camp imagery on Instagram contributes to the consumption of others' suffering for profit within the tourism industry. For more see Susan A. Crane, "Choosing Not to Look: Representation, Repatriation, and Holocaust Atrocity Photography," *History and Theory* 47, no. 3 (2009): 309-330.
[440] Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum (@auschwitzmemorial). URL: https://www.instagram.com/p/BU7VXssF2JO/?taken-by=auschwitzmemorial.

image to the individual visitor supersedes the iconic visuality which other visitors seek to capture. Notice as well, how the Instagram user in figure 7.4 makes use of hashtags to denote place as well as visual fashioning; through the use of #NoFilter, they are also able to embed this image in visual feeds separate from those of Holocaust memory. Though at first glance this image is not as immediately as evocative as the other visual types on Instagram, its subtle visuality – of meaning made visual – remains embedded in the Holocaust Instagram archive, nonetheless.

*Figure 7.4. "Don't think I will take a more meaningful picture." 23 March 2015.*

Figure 7.4 is one of the instances in which we can trace the trajectory of a Holocaust visuality across the history of Holocaust memory. Chapter one featured a discussion on *when* Holocaust visuality was formed, touching on visual signifiers, such as the use of signage to demarcate Jewish and non-Jewish spaces, as well as the use of the Star of David to make Jewishness more visible day to day. These visual signifiers were

used to make the Jews more visible to their Nazi persecutors in the years leading up to the genocide. Of course, the Star of David denotes far more than the persecution of Jews during the Nazi period; figure 7.4 captures the fluidity of this symbol, carved and seemingly fixed, across time. Contextually, we may never know who or why this Star of David was carved into the barracks at Auschwitz. Whether as a symbol of defiance or identity expression, its hidden visual story inspired this amateur photographer to share it with the wider world.

Thus, Auschwitz and Instagram provide visitors with spaces to fashion the memory of the Holocaust into visual objects which provide meaning for them, preserving the event on a personal and individual level, but communicated *en masse*. It is embedded in this virtual community of remembrance that visitor photography preserves the memory of the Holocaust through social media engagement. Instagram photography allows the visitor to see, witness, and create new objects of postmemory, embedding them in a fluid and living archive. The personal Holocaust image on Instagram is an important entryway to understanding how digital and ephemeral expressions of memory are bonded to the individual. It is the mobility of the image and is transference from physical environment to the digital realm, facilitated by the eye of the photographer, which cements the experience in the mind of the photographer. Serafinelli explains,

> In the digitality, whether considering the ephemeral nature of images, the facility through which they move from the body of the individual (the mind) to other external media, such as contemporary mobile devices, the intangible nature of the images figures as bonding instance between the individual and the device.[441]

[441] Serafinelli, 26.

The use of the smartphone then, and the sharing of the image on Instagram allows the individual visitor/photographer to form a mnemonic link with the memory of the Holocaust, also allowing the visitor/photographer to connect to the affective aspects of their own memory-production. With the guiding hand of historical Holocaust visualities and the memory institutions which uphold them, the visitor/photographer has space to give pause, considering new Holocaust visualities in the making of new affective artifacts of postmemory. In this way, Instagram is an affective repository – a holding-pen where visitors can heave off the weight of witnessing, downloading the embodiment of memory into a digital ether. Even if the visitor/photographer never goes back to look at the images they have captured, the tagging of the image makes their photo available for future engagement and consumption.

Instagram is also something more; a historical archive of visitor engagement, as well as an ever-incomplete visual memory arc, constantly in flux, and constantly in development. To understand the importance of Instagram within historical practice, we must consider the photographs shared on Instagram as created cultural artifacts, which contribute to a keen understanding of time, place, space, and contemporary behaviours.[442] Dan Gillmor argues:

> Our cultural heritage isn't just the books, magazines and newspapers we read, nor the movies and TV we watch or the radio we listen to. More and more of our culture takes the form of digital media - and more and more of that is what we create, not just what we consume.[443]

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[442] Lev Manovich, *Instagram and the Contemporary Image* (2016): URL: http://manovich.net/content/04-projects/145-instagram-and-contemporary-image/instagram_book_manovich.pdf. Accessed 20 November 2017.
[443] Dan Gillmor, "Archiving Ourselves," Salon.com, 5 November 2010, https://www.salon.com/2010/11/05/archiving_ourselves/ (accessed 3 December 2018).

The “archive of our selves” is made up of more than static final products, especially where the memory of the Holocaust is concerned. The Instagram archive’s ability to collapse and condense space, place, and time work well in conjunction with the futurist characteristics of memory – and Holocaust memory more specifically. It is unsurprising that #neveragain and #neverforget are some of the most frequently used hashtags on photos from Holocaust memorial spaces, communicating the ever-present requirement for witnessing and atrocity prevention in our current age.

*Figure 7.5. Copyright Instagram user @keriannecdotes, 19 May 2017.*

In this way, Instagram allows spaces for the work of memory to be carried out in the present, and for the future – made more visible by the hashtag. The act of photographing, sharing, and tagging one’s photos constitutes an active attempt to “think

about what [one] saw" in the various halls of Holocaust memory. What is more, the continually circulated image urges others to think about what they have seen as well. Visitor @keriannecdotes explains in her caption (figure 7.5):

> What an unbelievable reminder that this kind of hate still exists in the world. It blows my mind that someone could refer to all the photos, video footage, and artifacts I saw -which disturbed me to the point of nausea - as a hoax […] I told myself I wanted to leave the Museum thinking specifically about one thing I saw that's relevant to us in 2017. Well, this was it. #whatyoudomatters #neveragainstartswithyou #thinkaboutwhatyousaw #holocaustmuseum.[444]

@kerriannecdotes' impassioned caption against inaction and the dangers of forgetting was inspired by the plaque she noticed while leaving the museum, dedicated to museum security guard Stephen Tyrone Johns who was killed during a shooting at the USHMM in 2009.[445] She included President Barack Obama's address in her caption, noting: "A place that stimulates visitors to confront hatred and promotes peace and human dignity, the Holocaust museum…became the scene of everything that was opposite […] This outrageous act reminds us that we must remain vigilant against anti-Semitism and prejudice in all its forms."[446] @kerriannecdotes encouraged her Instagram followers to read the news story, and to "think about what they saw." Her personalized memory act against complacency demonstrates the ways in which the Holocaust continues to function as a lesson for the future, in a variety of contexts.

The USHMM is not the only Holocaust memory space which urges visitors both physically and digitally to "reflect upon the moral and spiritual questions raised by the

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[444] Caption by @keriannecdotes, 19 May 2017. https://www.instagram.com/p/BUTF45Zgj4w/ (accessed 3 December 2018).
[445] CNN.com "Guard killed in shooting at Holocaust museum," http://www.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/06/10/museum.shooting/ (accessed 3 December 2018).
[446] Barack Obama, quoted in CNN.com "Guard killed in shooting at Holocaust museum," http://www.cnn.com/2009/CRIME/06/10/museum.shooting/.

events of the Holocaust as well as upon their own responsibilities as global citizens."[447] While the development of social media policies began in efforts to targets youth engagement, USHMM's early digital presence has expanded into a thriving social and digital network for Holocaust education and human rights activism in the age of digital media.[448] For many visitors, a trip to a Holocaust museum is the closest they will get, spatially, to the materiality of the Holocaust, the closest they will get to the objects housed by museum collections, and one of the more effective methods of learning about and attempting to understand the history of the Holocaust. Visitors seek to convey the "authentic evidence of the historicity of the Holocaust," through their experiences in Holocaust museums, and through their images.[449] Obviously, the museum is acutely aware of this, for their media campaign urges visitors to "think about what they saw," intending for the museum visitors to carry the lessons of the museum beyond its walls. With this in mind, Instagram photography seems an obvious link between Holocaust representation and individual incentive to serve as a purveyor of memory in the digital age. This form of productive memory, exemplified here by the USHMM, communicates to visitors to Holocaust memorial sites the importance of their journey from non-witness to witness; the number of photographs which capture this simple poster outside the museum's doors indicate a form of cooperation between the visitor and the museum itself. It is important to think of the Instagram image in the context of a campaign which aims to bring the lessons of the Holocaust outside of the museum and traditional ways in

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[447] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, URL: http://www.ushmm.org/information/connect-with-the-museum. Accessed October 2017.
[448] "Holocaust Education in the Digital Age" *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. 19 April 2017. URL: https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum/museum-publications/memory-and-action/holocaust-education-in-the-digital-age.
[449] Cole, *Selling the Holocaust*, 159.

which it has been represented up until now. The memory campaigns of Auschwitz and the USHMM demonstrate that memory is not tethered to place; if it is, it is increasingly invoked on digital platforms with varying life cycles.

**Conclusion**

In *What Do Pictures Want?* Visual culture and media scholar W.J.T. Mitchell explored "the tendency to both over- and underestimate images, making them into 'everything' and 'nothing,' sometimes in the same breath."[450] Mitchell's comment says much about the complex nature of the networked image and its function as a Holocaust memory object. Indeed, at face value my argument requires the Instagram image to do a great deal of heavy lifting. It must understand the experience of the visitor, as seen through their camera, and conjure the difficulties of navigating the physical space of Holocaust memory. I also ask that these images help us to evaluate which histories and memories are at stake when interpretive interventions are shared on the part of the visitor. I have argued that the Instagram image allows us to turn the lens back upon ourselves and the values of our contemporary memory culture. In this formulation, the question is not "what do pictures want?" but rather, "what do we want from pictures?"

The simple answer to this question is that we all want different things. The Instagram image as a memory object thus always returns to a tension between the individual, and the processes which shape what they see in front of them.[451] Anxiety over Holocaust memory on social media contributes directly to conflicts over the "proper"

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[450] W.J.T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 3.
[451] Nicholas Mirzoeff, *How to See the World: An Introduction to Images, from Self-Portraits to Selfies, Maps to Movies, and More* (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

way to engage with histories of trauma, even if only in small part.[452] The concern over whether visitors should take photos at Auschwitz or create Anne Frank fan art and share these images on Instagram extends from conversations about Holocaust representation, its connection to the sublime, and questions over who should have the authority to represent the Holocaust, and in what way. Instagram presents an incredible opportunity to understand how Holocaust visuality is perpetuated through photography, how its interpretation and display has shifted, and, quite simply, how memory continues to function as we move further away from the Holocaust in time. The presence of Holocaust memorial images on Instagram is evidence that the work of postmemory is being conducted in many ways. The social media campaigns for future justice, developed and carried out by institutions like the USHMM and the YVHHM, are helping visitors to move the message of the museums beyond the physical spaces which house the memory of the Holocaust. This presents a unique opportunity to understand and shape Holocaust memory in the twenty-first century, engaging with individuals who continue conduct memory work with the tools available to them.

[452] Michael Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

## Conclusion

A 2018 survey conducted and released by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany found that there was a significant lack of knowledge about the Holocaust in the United States, with 58% of Americans polled claiming that something like the Holocaust could happen again.[453] The survey polled Americans on a number of different topics, including whether they "knew what Auschwitz was" or could identify Auschwitz, and numbers of perceived neo-Nazis in the United States; the survey also noted that 81% of all Americans had never visited a Holocaust museum.[454] Since the report was released to the public (with a similar report released in Canada in early 2019), media outlets have featured many active discussions about what the results of this study can tell us about the future of Holocaust memory.

In some instances, the results of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims' survey are related to issues of accessibility. In many cases, not everyone will have the means to visit a Holocaust museum. Despite this, throughout this dissertation I have argued that the use of Instagram and other social media platforms present substantial opportunities to increase Holocaust awareness, especially at the hands of the public. There are many ways to remember the Holocaust, and shared amateur photography on Instagram has quickly become an important avenue for remembrance. As demonstrated

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[453] The Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany, "Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Study," *Schoen Consulting* February 23-27, 2018. URL: http://www.claimscon.org/study/. Accessed 30 September 2018. For a concise summary of the findings of the study, see *Schoen Consulting*, "Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Study," 18 April 2019, URL: http://www.claimscon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Holocaust-Knowledge-Awareness-Study_Executive-Summary-2018.pdf (accessed 25 January 2019).

[454] *Schoen Consulting* "Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Study: Executive Summary," 7. URL: http://www.claimscon.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Holocaust-Knowledge-Awareness-Study_Executive-Summary-2018.pdf (accessed 25 January 2019).

by the USHMM's 2018 Days of Remembrance Program, "Days of Remembrance programs take many forms. Choose your own way to be a part of this nationwide effort, and help us spread the word about the importance of Holocaust remembrance."[455] The USHMM's list of what counts as an act of remembrance includes, but is not limited to organizing a book or film series, creating a display, engaging one's community, and using one's social network.[456] The USHMM encourages its audience to follow the USHMM on Instagram and like their Facebook page, and take photos of remembrance events (tagging them with #daysofremembrance). Undoubtedly, Holocaust memory in the age of social media is not without its problems. Memory remains a complex concept, and this is not necessarily mitigated by the fluid social media platforms of today. Nonetheless, social media remains a performative space for self-fashioning, and extends beyond the screens of one's smartphone or web browser. Just as Holocaust memory institutions have grappled with their own web integration, the primary concern over Holocaust visuality on Instagram involves the standard politics of memory: can the Holocaust be represented on Instagram and, if so, should it be?

Though the nature of the platform is remediated, the nature of the question echoes concerns over Holocaust representation that have been present since after the end of the war. Anxiety over should, whether, and even how the Holocaust be represented in new and diverse media continues to dominate the memory of the event roughly eighty years after its beginning. As public Holocaust representation becomes more commonplace, addressing whether people represent the Holocaust within specific parameters is more

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[455] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Days of Remembrance: More Ways to Remember," URL: https://www.ushmm.org/remember/days-of-remembrance/more (accessed 21 January 2019).
[456] Ibid.

valuable than whether it is remembered at all is imperative. While social media platforms will always feature tasteless representations, Instagram and other social media platforms have become important digital spaces where the public can share their experiences with Holocaust memory with the rest of the world. Instagram makes Holocaust memory mobile through its accessibility on one's smartphone and the use of the hashtag by its users.

The intersection of social media and tourist photography functions as a space for the transmission of Holocaust memory in the twenty-first century. Through encountering and staging place, historical narratives, aesthetics, and affect, the Instagram image remains a fluid and networked source which contributes to the development of a digital and social visual archive of Holocaust postmemory in our contemporary world. Holocaust memory currently exists in a liminal space between first-hand, experiential memory, and postmemory.[457] Apart from the overwhelming number of Holocaust tourist images on Instagram, the repeated use of the platform and its provision of space for those wishing to engage in the act of Holocaust memorialization makes plain the public's interest in the Holocaust as a historical event. What is more, Instagrammers actively connect the memory of the Holocaust as a *historical* event to current conflicts and events. This dissertation has explored the myriad ways in which the public chooses to carry the visual legacy of the Holocaust forward and considers how the individual photographer has the potential to deviate from hegemonic narratives. By exploring intersections of

[457] See Michael Bernard-Donals, *Figures of Memory: The Rhetoric of Displacement at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2016).

space, aesthetics, affect, and institutionalized historical narratives, it remains evident that the public remains invested in memory of the genocide.

This dissertation has shown that there is a precedent for the representations of the Holocaust that we encounter on social media. As seen in the first chapter, the Holocaust has never *not* been represented.[458] The Holocaust has always been an event grounded in visibility. Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer have demonstrated through their work on incongruent images that even the way academics, museums, and publics *picture* the victims and perpetrators of the Holocaust is grounded in our understanding of how the Holocaust was initially visualized after the genocide itself.[459] Certainly, the postwar period delivered the most recognizable form of Holocaust visuality through the photos captured during the liberation of the camps. These atrocity images paved the way for how the public would continue to understand and visualize future genocide and mass violence.[460]

Visual Holocaust representations were further cemented in the proliferation of films, exhibits, museums, memorials, and other visual media in the 1980s and 1990s. At this point, despite much hand-wringing about the "un-representability" of the Holocaust, these considerations wound their way into official representations. The museums, memorials, and films developed and released in this period taught publics how to understand and recognize the Holocaust we see visually represented today. Films like

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[458] Sarah Harmer, "Going Visual: Holocaust Representation and Historical Method," *The American Historical Review* 115, no. 1 (2010): 115-122.
[459] Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, "Incongruous Images 'Before, During, and After' the Holocaust." *History and Theory* 48 (2009): 9-25.
[460] See Rebecca Jinks, *Representing Genocide: The Holocaust as Paradigm?* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

*Schindler's List* (1993) demonstrated to publics that, though visual representations of the event itself can be fraught, they can be carried out with care in the correct contexts.

Much of how the Holocaust continues to be visualized remains tethered to an understanding of place; primarily, publics are interested in understanding *where* the Holocaust happened, sometimes at the behest of grasping *how* it happened. Chapter two outlined the ways in which the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum remains the focal point of Holocaust visuality on Instagram. This is due to the early optics and representations of the genocide, and results in an overlapping relationship between memory, iconicization, and place which cements Auschwitz firmly in the minds of the public as an emblem of the Holocaust. In these instances, visitors to Auschwitz are granted the authority of Auschwitz as a space; many visitors feel more comfortable photographing and sharing images of Auschwitz after having physically interacted with a space where the Holocaust was carried out.

Holocaust museum imagery on Instagram complicates our understanding of place-based engagements with the history of the Holocaust. Chapter three explored the ways in which Holocaust museums – built, architectural structures – function as exceptional spaces which frame the limits of Holocaust photography on Instagram, connecting the function of the museum as a storehouse for memory to the landscapes of the Holocaust in Europe. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jewish Museum Berlin, and Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum each espouse distinct Holocaust narratives wholly dependent on the nations in which they were built; the images shared on Instagram contribute to the multiple official Holocaust narratives that are common in Holocaust representation and emerged after the 1980s and 1990s in the

Holocaust memory boom. In the case of the JMB, Libeskind's hollow and interpretive memory voids invite the visitor to collaborate in the work of carrying on the memory of the Holocaust with them through the rest of the permanent exhibit. The distinct narratives of these three institutions highlight that the presence of multiple narratives should not be equivocated with *competing* narratives. There are spaces for nuances in architectural Holocaust representations; the memory work carried out by the architectural structures of these museums is both mimicked and completed by museum visitors.

While the first part of the dissertation demonstrated the lasting importance of place to Holocaust memory in the age of social media, Holocaust memory cannot be solely defined by these elements. The ongoing efforts of the USHMM and YVHHM signify that while the Holocaust can be communicated as a series of historical and localized events, modern Holocaust memory requires the removal of space and place, indicating that an event like the Holocaust can happen again, regardless of time and place.[461] Framing and affect are central components to visitor Holocaust photography on Instagram. Rather than focusing on the question of *where* the Holocaust was perpetrated or is memorialized, these images work to showcase the immense material traces left by an event like the Holocaust. These photos have many forms. Some are photos of piles of victims' belongings, demonstrating the impact of the Holocaust through physical symbols and numbers. These images communicate the visitor's understanding of the number of victims' lives claimed by the Nazi regime. While these photos of objects and traces feature heavily on Instagram, the use of affect as a framing device creates powerful

[461] Leah Angell Sievers, "Genocide and Relevance: Current Trends in Holocaust Museums," *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust* 30, no. 3 (2016): 282-295.

networked photos, extending the impact of the Holocaust on human life beyond the purview of what is left behind. These images indicate that something exists beyond the physical reminders of the Holocaust, operating as a unique effort to communicate the subliminal through the material aspects of memorialization and the digital tools at our fingertips.

Though often at the center of any controversy involving public Holocaust representations, the placement of the visitor body is essential to understanding the future of Holocaust memory in the age of social media. While socially shared images are often criticized as working *against* memory, chapter five demonstrated the ways in which the visitor body can be a powerful device, framing the visitor as an active receiver of memory and an agent of postmemory in the age of social media. There is more work to be done in understanding how the body operates as a vehicle for Holocaust memory – especially on social media. Exploring the placement of the visitor body in landscapes of Holocaust memory can help to further define this phenomenon; what is more, it will help with ongoing discussions surrounding the ethics of Holocaust representation at a time when most social media platforms focus on the curation of the self and the individual.

Though Instagram hinges on notions if *self*-representation – which remains difficult to parse in the context of Holocaust memorialization - the age of social media has demonstrated a capacity for human connection that many would argue is unprecedented. Social media platforms continue to shape the way we see and interact with the world around us, and the ways in which we remain connected to other people. As evidenced by this dissertation, the looming notion of the network, and human connection, fall under the purview of affective vehicles for the presentation of memory.

In whatever ways visitors to the USHMM or Auschwitz frame, capture, and caption their images, this dissertation has shown that overwhelmingly most visitors do so as agents against forgetting. Visitors continue to rely on the familiar (Instagram) to communicate complex ideas to publics; the process of photography is an important tool for seeing, visualizing, and communicating the complexities of memory-formation.

While many social media platforms, including Instagram, are remediated analog technologies, their availability and ubiquity have made the stakes of memory even more present in our contemporary age. As demonstrated in chapter six, social sharing through various platforms opens the visitor/photographer up to surveillance by their peers and other online groups. While not always necessarily nefarious, Shahak Shapira's YOLOCAUST made it evident that matters of place, memory, and appropriate engagement with that memory are part of an ongoing concern over how the Holocaust should be remembered as we grow more distant from the event itself.[462] As the online shaming of Breanna Mitchell demonstrated, behavior at dark memory sites is not always pre-vetted by the individual and is often inspired by their own personal histories; it needs mentioning that only one of the images Shapira selected to display on his site featured an anti-Semitic caption.[463] Needless to say, it remains alarming that visitors to the Memorial

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[462] Shahak Shapira, YOLOCAUST, URL: https://yolocaust.de/ (accessed 1 December 2018).

[463] Breanna Mitchell defended her selfie at Auschwitz, claiming that she was smiling in memory of her father who had passed away in the preceding year. Mitchell claimed that she and her father had always shared a love of history and had always planned to visit the former death camp together. This is indicative of the ways in which personal and historical memory can conflict with one another. See chapter five for a more in-depth discussion of Mitchell's selfie. See Caitlin Dewey, "The Other Side of the Infamous 'Auschwitz Selfie." *The Washington Post*, 22 July 2014. URL: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2014/07/22/the-other-side-of-the-infamous-auschwitz-selfie/ (accessed 10 December 2018).

to the Murdered Jews of Europe are shamed online for their (sometimes, albeit questionable) individual activities at the memorial site, while the misuse of Holocaust memory by deniers and the alt-right is not often granted the same criticism on Instagram, YouTube, or Reddit.

In this way, making the Holocaust visible for future generations is just as important as it was in the past. The protection of memory through the visibility of the Holocaust makes mass violence and injustice more visible to the individual, and therefore more recognizable in the future. It is important to view the publics who take photos at former concentration camps, Holocaust museums, and memorials as allies to Holocaust memory. These individuals lay their interpretations of past injustices bare, opening avenues for the continual development of Holocaust memorialization in our increasingly digital world. Just as the alt-right has seized social media platforms to gain traction online, publics are taking important action against such developments through the hundreds of thousands of memorial images made visible on Instagram.

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@photogs_USHMM. Official photography team for USHMM, URL: https://www.instagram.com/photogs_ushmm/.

@neuengamme.memorial, The Neuengamme Memorial Instagram account, URL: https://www.instagram.com/neuengamme.memorial/.

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#holocaustmuseum. URL: https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/holocaustmuseum/.

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#holocaustremembranceday. URL: https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/holocaustremembranceday/.

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# Appendix – Ethics Clearance

Carleton UNIVERSITY
Canada's Capital University

Office of Research Ethics
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Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6
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**CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS CLEARANCE**

The Carleton University Research Ethics Board-A (CUREB-A) at Carleton University has renewed ethics approval for the research project detailed below. CUREB-A is constituted and operates in compliance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS2).

**Title:** Holocaust Memory and Visuality in the Age of Social Media [Meghan Lundrigan]

**Protocol #:** 104285

**Project Team Members: Dr. Jennifer Evans (Primary Investigator)**
Meghan Lundrigan (Student Research: Ph.D. Student)

**Department and Institution**: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences\History (Department of), Carleton University

**Funding Source** (If applicable):

Effective: **September 25, 2018** Expires: **September 30, 2019**.

**Please ensure the study clearance number is prominently placed in all recruitment and consent materials: CUREB-A Clearance # 104285.**

***Restrictions:***

This certification is subject to the following conditions:

1. Clearance is granted only for the research and purposes described in the application.

2. Any modification to the approved research must be submitted to CUREB-A. All changes must be approved prior to the continuance of the research.

3. An Annual Application for the renewal of ethics clearance must be submitted and cleared by the above date. Failure to submit the Annual Status Report will result in the closure of the file. If funding is associated, funds will be frozen.

4. A closure request must be sent to CUREB-A when the research is complete or terminated.

**5.** Should any participant suffer adversely from their participation in the project you are required to report the matter to CUREB-A.

6. It is the responsibility of the student to notify their supervisor of any adverse events, changes to their application, or requests to renew/close the protocol.

7. Failure to conduct the research in accordance with the principles of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans 2nd edition* and the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research* may result in the suspension or termination of the research project.

Upon reasonable request, it is the policy of CUREB, for cleared protocols, to release the name of the PI, the title of the project, and the date of clearance and any renewal(s).

Please email the Research Compliance Coordinators at ethics@carleton.ca if you have any questions.

**CLEARED BY:** **Date: September 25, 2018**

Bernadette Campbell, PhD, Chair, CUREB-A

Natasha Artemeva, PhD, Vice-Chair, CUREB-A