

THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE RESTORES MEMORY.

The Great Warsaw Synagogue will symbolically return to the Bankowy Square.

19 th April from 9:00 pm to 11:00 pm CET



Fot. Marta Kuśmierz

The Open Republic Association will commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising with a multimedia event created by the artist Gabi von Seltmann.

On the night of 19th April, of the anniversary of the Uprising, the image of the synagogue rising from the rubble will appear on the wall of the Blue Skyscraper which was constructed on its site. The Great Synagogue, destroyed by the Germans after the fall of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, will be symbolically reconstructed through image, sound and emotion.

The project represents a symbolic "RECONSTRUCTION" of The Great Synagogue, destroyed by the Germans after the fall of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Its site (formerly Tłomackie 7) is currently occupied by the foundation of a glass skyscraper (today Plac Bankowy 2). On the wall from the side of the Bankowy Square, an image of the destroyed Great Synagogue will be projected. It will be animated in such a way that the viewer will have an impression that the building is rising from the ruins. Thanks to the virtual multimedia animation techniques, in the culminating moment of the projection an image of the Great Synagogue from the times of its greatness will appear on the wall of the skyscraper. The projection will be accompanied by a sound collage. We will hear archival recordings of the cantor of the Great Synagogue, Gerson Sirota, who died in the Warsaw Ghetto, and fragments of the poem "Bashert", read by its author, Irena Klepfisz, daughter of Michał, Bund activist and a soldier of the Jewish Combat Association.

The main idea of the second edition of this art project is to recall the history of the place and the inhabitants of the city who used the synagogue from 1878. As Monika Płatek explains: "It was a place of worship and culture at the same time, a symbol of Poland which was a country of openness and a diverse cultural and religious identity. I do not know why we neglected the reconstruction of the Great Synagogue, even though we reconstructed the cathedral at the Old Town. How could it be that in a country which is so sensitive to symbols we allowed such a symbolic triumph of the Nazis?"

The Great Synagogue ceased to exist on 16th May 1943. The blowing up of the 65-year old Warsaw synagogue as a final act of the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was an eruption of hate and was intended as the “end of the Jewish district in Warsaw”. The symbolic return of the Great Synagogue to Tłomackie, on which you will see a big sign love during the projection, defies „the triumph of the Nazis”. The artist intended to show that love overcomes hate and restores the memory of the murdered Jewish population of Warsaw.

To remember the past is important because it allows to build the future with wisdom. This moving performance speaks to us through image, sound and emotion. It bears testimony that remembrance and love have the power to overcome destruction.

This is probably the first initiative which is based on a virtual commemoration. The creators of the “virtual monument” deal with the question of memory of the non-existent city and its inhabitants, as well as the problem of lack of memory in the urban layer of today’s Warsaw.

„May remembrance and ליבע (love) overcome destruction and death”

The performance will last six minutes (the sequence will be repeated from 9:00 to 11:00 pm CET.)

The event will be broadcast live at www.otwarta.org.

Director and concept creator – Gabi von Seltmann

Sound collage – Marcin Lenarczyk

Visual design and animation – Elwira Wojtunik, Popesz Csaba Láng / Elektro Moon Vision

Archival pictures – The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute and The Warsaw Rising Museum

Organizer:

The Open Republic Association Against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia

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