

Film Retrospective

Bilder der Befreiung: Liberation Footage — Atrocity Pictures

May 3–7, 2015
ÖFM
Augustinerstraße 1, 1010 Vienna

Nothing has had a bigger and more enduring impact on the imagination and representation of the Holocaust than film documents from the concentration camps recorded just after liberation: the mountains of shoes, glasses and hair from the victims at Auschwitz, the pieces of tattooed human skin collected from those killed at Buchenwald, the emaciated – bodies of the dead being pushed into mass graves by a bulldozer in Bergen-Belsen.

The key role of these iconic images in the attempt to visualize a crime that a broad consensus agrees to goes beyond the limits of the imaginable and representable is strangely disproportionate to the lack of knowledge about how they were captured and how they have functioned in historical moments in the years since liberation. The film retrospective will project these images within their diverse contexts, in an effort to supplement and contrast the most widely-known images with forgotten and discarded images from classified and failed film productions, as well as with private images from amateur films (e.g. those of U.S. soldiers like Sam Fuller and George Stevens, who worked in Hollywood before and after World War II). This retrospective will thus widen the focus of attention from completed films to include unedited raw material, so-called "footage".

"Bilder der Befreiung" consists of eight programs and about 25 films, most of them to be screened for the first time in Austria – with introductions by Barbara Glück, Marsha Gordon, Toby Haggith, Jeremy Hicks, Stuart Liebman, Drehli Robnik, Leslie Swift, Lindsay Zarwell and Ingo Zechner.

The film retrospective, curated by Ingo Zechner, is a joint event of the Austrian Film Museum and the IFK International Research Center for Cultural Studies, The University of Art and Design Linz, in cooperation with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Austrian Future Fund-project "Ephemeral Films: National Socialism in Austria".

On May 7 and 8 the IFK hosts an international conference about the same topic (www.ifk.ac.at).

In addition, the next chapter of the Film Museum's series "Die Utopie Film" will present four fictional adaptations of the topic, including Sam Fullers late work "The Big Red One".

This film retrospective at the Austrian Film Museum and the IFK_conference on May 7 and 8 are dedicated to Siegfried Mattl (February 26, 1954 – April 25, 2015) who introduced the topic "Liberation Footage" to the academic discourse in Vienna.

18.30

Memory of the Camps

German Concentration Camps Factual Survey (1945/2014)

A film by the British Ministry of Information; Production: Sidney L. Bernstein, Sergei Nolbandov; Editing: Stewart McAllister, Peter Tanner; Script: Colin Wills, Richard Crossman; Consultants: Alfred Hitchcock, Solly Zuckerman; Restoration: Toby Haggith, David Walsh et al. DCP, b/w, 72 min

Engl. OF

Courtesy of Imperial War Museum

To start with a demystification: the project of a joint British-American Holocaust reeducational film was thwarted not by the impossibility of depicting the Holocaust but rather by external circumstances. In 1952 five of six planned reels end up as raw material at the British Imperial War Museum (IWM) where they are rediscovered 30 years later and shown at the 1984 Berlinale under the title "Memory of the Camps". A subject of many myths: the extent of Alfred Hitchcock's involvement. In late 2008, a few months after the film is shown at the Film Museum ("Filmdokumente zur Zeitgeschichte"), a team at the IWM under the leadership of Toby Haggith begins reconstructing the sixth reel from the raw material. The new title is the original one: a prosaic "factual survey". The retrospective as a whole explores the tension between these two titles. (I.Z.)

Introduction Toby Haggith. The Austrian premiere of this reconstructed film will be followed by a Q&A with Toby Haggith.

19.00

Newsreels & Reeducation

U.S. Army Signal Corps Staff Film Report #53 (1945) 35mm, b/w, 20 min Engl. OV*
 Universal Newsreel Nazi Murder Mills (April 26, 1945) 35mm, b/w, 6 min Engl. OV**
 Army Pictorial Center/Hanuš Burger & Billy Wilder Death Mills (1945) 16mm, b/w, 22 min Engl. Version*

*Courtesy of NARA

**Courtesy of NARA and U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

Three films, three formats, three intended audiences. Staff Film Reports (sometimes erroneously called Special Film Reports): secret newsreel productions for the U.S. military leadership. Newsreels: picture and audio newscast directed at the wider public in the time before television. Orientation films: misunderstood as propaganda by those who have lost the ability to differentiate between authoritarian and democratic regimes. Universally explicit in their depiction of the camps' horrors, these types of films differ in what they choose *not* to show. "Death Mills", the English-language version of "Todesmühlen", is not a dubbed version, but an adaption guided by a novel purpose: not *reeducation* but *remotivation* ("why we fought")... (I.Z.)

Introductions Stuart Liebman, Ingo Zechner (with additional film clips)

20.45

Hollywood-Amateurs: George Stevens & Samuel Fuller

George C. Stevens [**Liberation of Dachau**] (May 2–7, 1945) Camera: Ivan Moffat et al. 16mm, color, 32 min*

Samuel Fuller V-E+1 [**Samuel Fuller WWII Footage**] (1945) 16mm, color and b/w, 63 min**

*Preserved by the Library of Congress

Two Hollywood directors at war: one at the first zenith of his career, the other just starting out. George C. Stevens, a major and later a lieutenant colonel in the Signal Corps, served as commander of all Special Coverage Photographic Units, acting on

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special orders from General Eisenhower. In addition to their standard equipment, Stevens and some of his men carry their own personal 16 mm cameras and record the end of the war in color. In the interim: the dead and barely living of Dachau. Samuel Fuller, 1st Infantry Division ("The Big Red One"), a regular soldier from a Jewish family, who would be highly decorated at the end of war but did not rise higher than becoming a corporal. With his private 16 mm camera he films the restitution of human dignity and his own fury at camp Falkenau. Also caught on camera: *Verboten*-signs, declaring certain things off-limits, a severely injured German soldier, and other images that would haunt Fuller's later motion pictures like ghosts. (I.Z.)

Introductions Marsha Gordon, Ingo Zechner. On May 5th at 20.30 the Film Museum is going to screen Samuel Fuller's fictional work based on his own war experiences and the liberation of the camps: "The Big Red One".

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Tue, May 5, 2015

20.30

Die Utopie Film

The Big Red One – Reconstructed (1980/2004)

Director, Writer: Samuel Fuller; Camera: Adam Greenberg; Music: Dana Kaproff;

Cast: Lee Marvin, Mark Hamill, Robert Carradine, Siegfried Rauch, Stéphane Audran

Engl. OV

35mm, color, 162 min

Sheer madness from the youth of Samuel Fuller, who as a GI of the Fighting First – the 1st Infantry Division with the vivid red '1' on their shoulder patch – traveled from northern Africa in 1942 via Sicily, Omaha Beach on D-Day, Belgium, and Germany, to participate in the liberation of the Falkenau subcamp in May 1945. "The Big Red One" is a cinematic incarnation of war as movement and liberation, the ultimate "good war" – and yet there remains a certain distance from the mission and from the experience of heroism: "Surviving is the only glory in war." Among the cast are Mark Hamill, who had recently become famous as Luke Skywalker, and, outstanding and gloomy, Lee Marvin, a veteran of Saipan in 1944 and of Old Hollywood, playing a sergeant who wants only to bring his boys home but is forced to send them to the slaughter. The restored version of the film contains 15 additional scenes: 50 additional minutes of virility and violence beyond all limits of law and morality. "We don't murder, we kill." (D.R.)

Introduction Drehli Robnik

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Wed, May 6, 2015

18.00

U.S. Army Signal Corps

Signal Corps Cameramen, Germany, 111-ADC-4647 (March to April 1945)

Camera: Lt. Byars. 35mm, b/w, 8 min

Signal Corps Cameramen, Germany, 111-ADC-4648 (March to April 1945)

Camera: Lt. Byars, Padilla. 35mm, b/w, 9 min

Concentration Camp – Mauthausen, Austria, 111-ADC-4311 (May 7–8, 1945)

35mm, b/w, 6 min

Concentration and Death Camp – Mauthausen, Austria [Gusen], 111-ADC-4319

(May 11, 1945) 35mm, b/w, 10 min

Concentration Camp – Ebensee, Austria, 111-ADC-4321 (May 8, 1945)

Camera: O'Brien, Urban. 35mm, b/w, 10 min

Courtesy of
NARA

War and cinema: in World War II cinema becomes an instrument of war and the U.S. Army the largest film producer and distributor in the world. Leading its effort: the Signal Corps, which eclipses Hollywood studios by 1942. In the first two examples

listed above, Signal Corps cameramen film themselves in the way they want to be seen by others: in battle. They must then film something for which they are completely unprepared. Mauthausen, Gusen, Ebensee: three encounters with the cosmos of the concentration camps. (I.Z.)

Introductions Barbara Glück, Ingo Zechner

19.30 **U.S. Army Air Forces: Special Film Project 186**

* Courtesy of NARA and U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

Buchenwald camp at liberation – the dead and the living, 18-SFP-9119 (April 15, 1945) Camera: Capt. Ellis Carter, Arthur Mainzer. 16mm, color, 20 min*

Norman Krasna Lest We Forget (1945) Camera: Capt. Ellis Carter, Arthur Mainzer. 16mm, Farbe, 13 min Engl. OV**

U.S. 9th Army Air Forces 4th Combat Camera Unit Wedding Ceremony Sgt. Art Mainzer (30. Juni 1945) 16mm, color, 18 min**

Arthur Zegart [Ebensee Liberation] (May 1945) 16mm, color und b/w, 16 min***

**Courtesy of U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

In February 1945, three months before the end of war, the U.S. Army Air Forces take up one of the enormous, failed, and forgotten projects of film history: the attempt, in equal parts ambitious and lunatic, to record the war once again, only this time in color. Four unusual by-products: 1. unedited footage from Buchenwald; 2. a private documentary produced by a famous Hollywood scriptwriter and producer, created from the same Buchenwald footage and other visual material; 3. the French wedding ceremony of a cameraman shot as a home movie by his buddies with Air Forces equipment; 4. a documentary on Ebensee shot and handed-down privately by a member of the Air Forces and teaching a lesson on postcard idyll and horror, Jewish victims and human respect. (I.Z.)

***Courtesy of Sharon Pucker Rivo and Lisa Rivo, The National Center for Jewish Film located at Brandeis University, Waltham, MA USA

Introductions Leslie Swift, Lindsay Zarwell, Ingo Zechner

21.15 **Amateurs**

Charles H. Horton Belsen (May-June 1945) 16mm, color, 5 min

Major Sydney L. Burr Dachau, Stuttgart – VE Day #4 (April-May 1945) 16mm, b/w, 8 min

Col. Alexander Zabin, MD Dachau, Czech Festival, Rhine Bridge (1945) 16mm, color and b/w, 13 min

Beatrice Wachter World War II #2 (1945) 16mm, color, 16 min [tbc]

Col. Wilbur G. Dockum Dachau, Germany (1945) 16mm, color and b/w, 14 min

*Courtesy of U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

American amateur cameramen in warfare, equipped with private 8 mm and 16 mm cameras and occasionally with Kodak color films. Like their professional colleagues they too encounter the camps. An ambulance driver at Bergen-Belsen, an Air Forces major, a medical doctor and a colonel at Dachau, a nurse at Nordhausen. The Dachau death train and a Czech Folklore festival, sunbathing in the warm grass and digging foxholes appear only a few shots apart. In between: sports and military routines. Before and after: the insight that war consists primarily of waiting and that private films about war are also travel films. The corpses in the trains, in the courtyards and in the buildings of the camps are memories of a far-off country. (I.Z.)

Introductions Leslie Swift, Lindsay Zarwell

18.30

Nuremberg Evidence Films

U.S. Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality/George C. Stevens **Nazi Concentration Camps (1945)** 35mm, b/w, 59 min Engl. OV*

Vladimir Bol'sincov **Kinodokumenty o zverstvach nemecko-fašistskich zachvatčikov (Atrocities by the German Fascist Aggressors in the USSR) (1945/46)** Camera: Roman Karmen et al. 35mm, b/w, 59 min Russ. OVeST**

*Courtesy of Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv und U.S. Embassy Berlin

**Preserved by the Library of Congress

At the International Military Tribunal of the major war criminals: two films that could hardly be more different. The first, Document 2430-PS, exhibit US-79, screens with much effect on November 29th, 1945: a documentation of the concentration camps, not the death camps; of last phase crimes, not the Holocaust. Mass murder: mountains of corpses, both the dead and the survivors remain anonymous. The second film, Document USSR-81, shown on February 19th, 1946, barely registered at the time and today largely forgotten, and yet one of the greatest films of Soviet cinema. A meticulous documentation of the war of annihilation waged by the Wehrmacht and the SS over the long years between 1941 and 1945. The victims have names and people who mourn them. Common to both films: the crimes depicted are infinitely larger than those leveled against the accused. (I.Z.)

Introductions Stuart Liebman, Jeremy Hicks

21.00

Podium Discussion: Film Evidence

With **Toby Haggith, Jeremy Hicks, Stuart Liebman, Michael Loebenstein, Leslie Swift, Ulrike Weckel**

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At the beginning:

British Army Film and Photographic Unit **Belsen Camp Evidence Film (1945)** HD, b/w, 22 min*

*Courtesy of Imperial War Museum

The final event of the retrospective and an interim assessment of the conference taking place at the *IFK International Research Center for Cultural Studies* on May 7th and 8th. Moderated by Michael Loebenstein, five experts debate the double meaning of cinematic evidence: as immediate insight and discursive evidence. Helmut Lethen: "Being evident means that something is manifest because it emanated from its source." ("Evident ist, was einleuchtet, weil es ausstrahlt.") In court the opposite is often true. (I.Z.)

CURATOR

Ingo Zechner (IFK International Research Center for Cultural Studies, Vienna)

INTRODUCTIONS

Barbara Glück (Mauthausen Memorial)

Marsha Gordon (Film Studies, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC)

Toby Haggith (Imperial War Museum, London)

Jeremy Hicks (Department of Russian, Queen Mary University of London)

Stuart Liebman (Department of Media Studies, Queens College, The City University of New York)

Drehli Robnik (Ludwig Boltzmann Institut für Geschichte und Gesellschaft, Wien)

Leslie Swift (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.)

Lindsay Zarwell (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.)

Ingo Zechner (IFK International Research Center for Cultural Studies, Vienna)

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS

Michael Loebenstein (National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra)

Ulrike Weckel (Historisches Institut – Fachjournalistik Geschichte, Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen)

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