



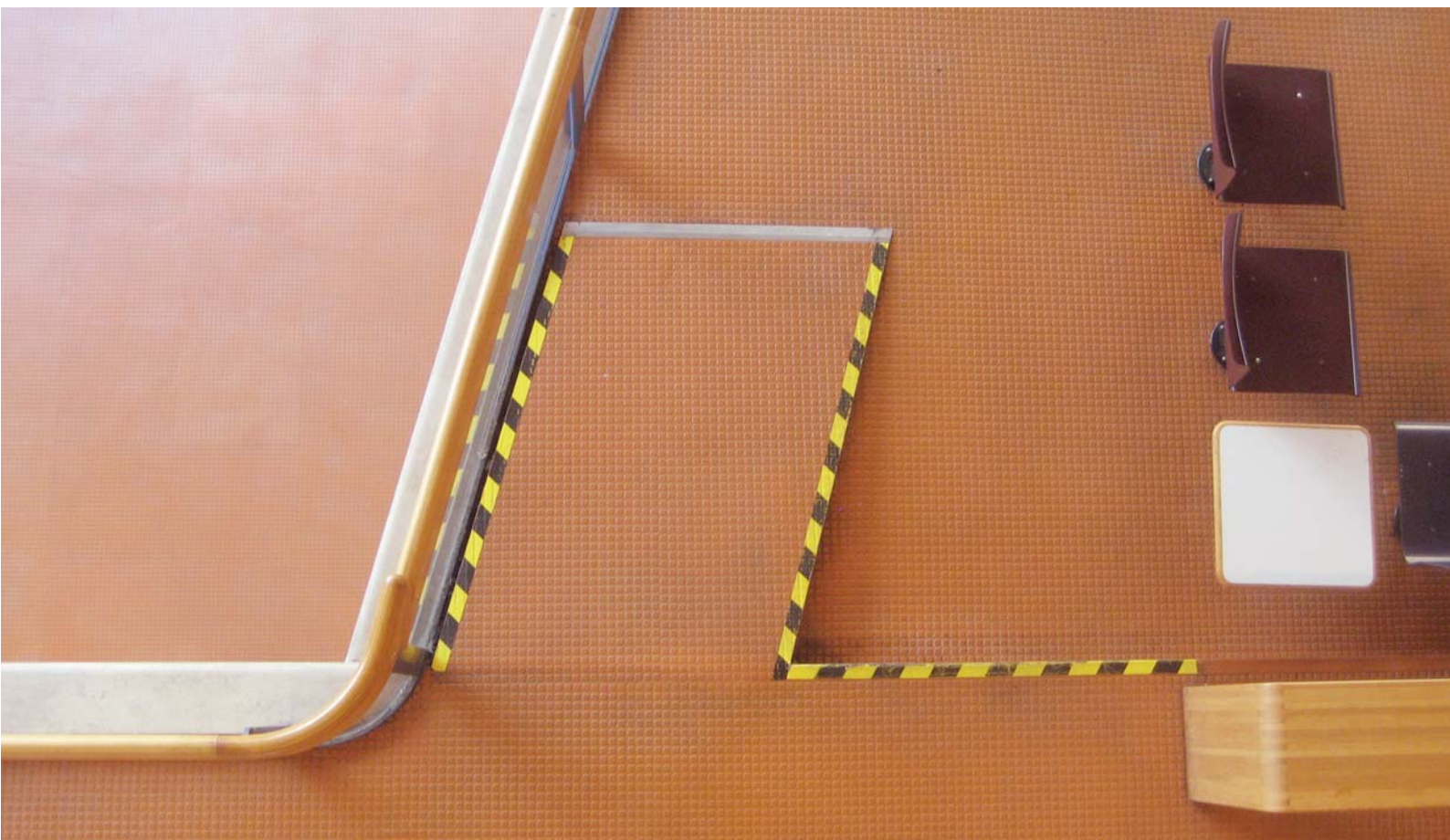
Love History

National Socialism in the Lives of the Descendants of Perpetrators

A documentary film by
Klub Zwei – Simone Bader, Jo Schmeiser
Photography: Sophie Maintigneux
HD CAM, 70 min., German with English subtitles

The film is about women tracing their Nazi family history. They research the historical facts as well as the marks this past has left on their lives: how does this past affect their personal relationships, sexuality, love and political activism?

Translation by Erika Doucette





"UNO-City," 1970s

For years I've been fighting the best I can and with the means I have against anti-Semitism. Yet, it is only now that I realised the enemy also lies within our own roots.

Ingrid Strobl, Anna und das Anderle

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Short description

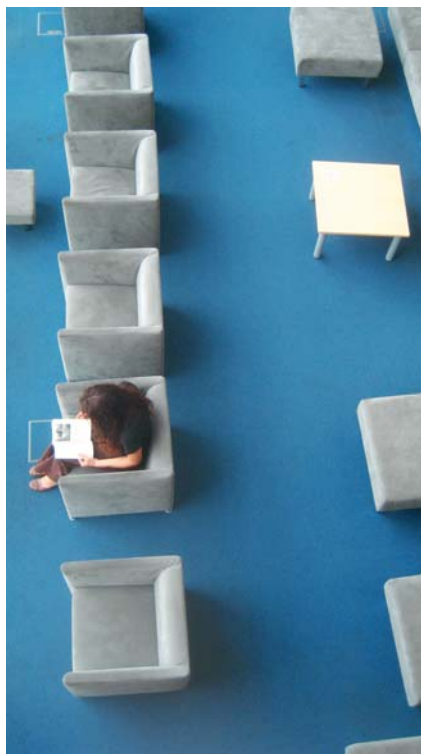
How do women in Austria and Germany deal with their family's National Socialist past? Up until now, descendants of victims and survivors have been the primary researchers of the after-effects of National Socialism and the Shoah. Now, the descendants of the perpetrators are examining the traces of this past in their lives. They are researching their family's National Socialist histories and investigating how this 'negative heritage', as Jean Améry termed it, influences their thoughts and actions as well as their approaches to love and relationships.

In the film, this taboo theme is made explicitly visible by showing the protagonists in public spaces. Architecture from the 1950s, '60s, '70s, '80s, '90s and 2000s in Vienna will be the locations for the film. These structures stand for the way National Socialism was dealt with and reflect the political currents during those eras. The places we chose not only make reference to historical contexts, they are also significant to the protagonists' personal lives. The impacts of their families and society on their lives are carefully considered and tied into the film's visual concept.

The after-effects of National Socialism for the perpetrators' descendants have only rarely been the subject of a film. There is not one single film about the ways that women deal with their charged family history. In contrast, a considerable amount of interest has been expressed internationally, for example there are audiences in England, Israel and the USA that are eager to discover how descendants of the perpetrators are contending with their past. Our film aims to fill this void.



Gänsehäufel, 1950s



Hauptbücherei, 2000s



Helga Hofbauer



Katrin Himmler



Dietlinde Polach and Jeanette Toussaint



Patricia Reschenbach and Klub Zwei (research footage)

Protagonists

Helga Hofbauer, Vienna

born in 1966, musician,
daughter of Franz Karl Hofbauer,
"SS-Unterscharführer" (corporal)

Dietlinde Polach, Vienna

born in 1943, personal secretary of the foreign
correspondents at ORF, Austrian Television
(retired), daughter of Henriette Strecha,
SS-guard at the concentration camp Ravensbrück

Jeanette Toussaint, Potsdam

born in 1964, anthropologist,
daughter of a father who was a member of the
"SS-Gebirgsdivision Nord", rank unknown

Katrin Himmler, Berlin

born in 1967, political scientist,
grandniece of Heinrich Himmler,
"Reichsführer SS"

Patricia Reschenbach, Vienna

born in 1970, art teacher,
daughter of Johann Rzeschabek, presumably
member of a SS-special-unit fighting partisans,
rank unknown

Maria Pohn-Weidinger, Vienna

born in 1977, sociologist, granddaughter of two
Nazi grandmothers and so called "Trümmerfrauen"

Lenka Reschenbach, Vienna

born in 1995, daughter of Patricia Reschenbach

Film idea

Women and their ways of confronting Nazism in the present are the pivotal points in our film. Our protagonists will be depicted in the urban spaces in Vienna. The presence of the public in the images appeals to the protagonists and audience to view their history and stories within a (contemporary) historical context.

Decade shots

The film will be shot on location in Vienna before the backdrop of 1950s, '60s, '70s, '80s, '90s and 2000s architecture in the city. Each site represents a specific decade and reflects the state of public discussions on National Socialism during that era.

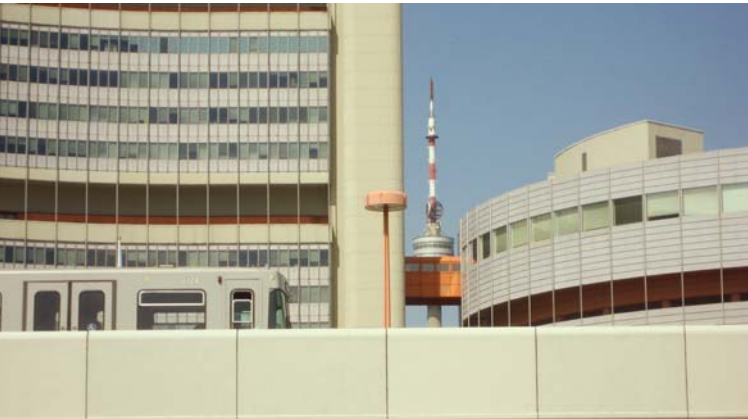
The 'decade shots' are not simply settings for the protagonists. They provide a background, in a dual sense, and convey important historical data: the 1950s was a time of reconstruction, repression and denial of the Nazi crimes committed; it also stands for a reversion to repressive sexual morals. The 1960s was a time when daughters and sons criticized their Nazi parents; it was also a time of sexual liberation concepts, particularly around 1968. The 1970s was a time of international disputes around Bruno Kreisky's policies on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The 1980s stands for a time when the exposure and discussion of Kurt Waldheim's Nazi past effectively dispelled the myth that Austria was Hitler's first victim. The 1990s was a time when Franz Vranitzky was the first chancellor of Austria who went to Israel and officially acknowledged Austria's active participation in National Socialism and the Shoah. And the 2000s was a time starting with people's protests against a government including the right-wing-extremist Freedom Party, a government, however, that also stands for the realisation of the long overdue restitution and compensation for Jewish survivors and their descendants.



Gänsehäufel, 1950s



Juridicum, 1960s



"UNO-City," 1970s

Locations and decades

Gänsehäufel, public pool area :1950s

Juridicum, faculty of law : 1960s

UNO-City, UN Vienna international centre : 1970s

Haas Haus, hotel and bar: 1980s

Museumsquartier, museum area: 1990s

Hauptbücherei, public library: 2000s

Cadrag and Voices

Sophie Maintigneux introduces an almost invisible hand camera for the interview parts. In contrast the architectural shots are steady movements. Their *cadrag* shows the conflict of old versus new architecture in the city of Vienna. The camera movements guide the viewer through the complexity of the buildings. At the same time they serve to introduce each decade with its specific historical data.

The historical information is provided by two off voices. Rainer Egger and Nicola Lauré al-Samarai will be the speakers of the German version. For the English version we attempt to win Cerith W. Evans and Tilda Swinton. Introducing alternately a male and a female voice shall mark each decade as an entity. Additional meaning lies in the accents and colours of the different voices. For example, in a German versus an Austrian accent in the German version of the film.

When you have a background where both parents come from that part of the world where most of their family perished – as in my case – it is necessary to ask questions and look at how that has affected the generation born immediately after those events. It is about creating some kind of a relationship to those events. Through writing, artwork, taking photographs, making a film or a piece of architecture. Regardless in what way, it is about doing it.

Katherine Klinger, Things. Places. Years.

