editorial
displaying violence

Current approaches in critical museology, museum studies, visual studies and post-colonial studies challenge the established ways in which museums, especially those relating to modern or contemporary history, create meaning, narrate the past, and engage their visitors. At least in theory, the single, homogenous, and nationalized historical narrative has lost credibility as the assumed standard of storytelling in historical exhibitions. So have traditional formats of exhibition and display in museums. In practice, however, many museums still narrate history in ways that romanticize the nation, claim to represent the ultimate 'truth', reiterate traditional gender-stereotypes, and/or perpetuate exclusionary cultural and political frameworks – albeit through hypermodern digital and interactive means. Yet many institutions have, indeed, embraced the critical take on homogenizing narratives and embarked on the task of putting into practice the current buzzwords of the 'new museology', such as participation, community engagement, multi-dimensionality, positioning or dialogue, while at the same time committing to the public's expectations regarding education and guidance, so pertinent for museums.[1]

This is particularly the case for the globalizing landscape of museums devoted to multiple legacies of political violence, whose role is to memorialize and educate, but also to critically address and/or denounce such violence in and through display. The need to acknowledge museums' political and ethical responsibilities to the past, to

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1 Marianne Achiam/Michael Haldrup/Kirsten Drotner (eds.), Experimental Museology. Institutions, Representations, Users, London/New York 2021; Henning Mohr/Diana Modarressi-Tehrani (eds.), Museen der Zukunft. Trends und Herausforderungen eines innovationsorientierten Kulturmanagements, Bielefeld 2022.

the actors entangled in historical events, and to their present-day audiences, when exhibiting conflicted or violent histories, has transformed what is considered 'justifiable' and 'admissible' curatorial practice and thus what historical exhibitions should look like.[2] This, in turn, has opened space for analytical engagements with museum spaces that critically interrogate how these considerations shape and reshape contemporary forms of exhibiting.[3] Focusing on questions of the ethics and politics of the display of violence, its various functions and modalities, its direct or latent articulations, this special issue contributes to unfolding debates on museums as spaces of public engagement with past atrocities and their lingering legacies. It takes as a vantage point a broader discussion that cuts across Holocaust studies and postcolonial studies, as well as visual studies and museum studies, seeing museums as deeply entangled in the hegemonic structures of power and knowledge production, and delegitimizes the representation of violence as an 'easy', necessarily successful means of education: inside and outside the museum, the logic of showing violence in order to prevent it has become increasingly contested.[4]

In her 2003 essay *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag already used the example of the photography of violence to summarize how analytical perspectives

2 Paul Williams, Memorial Museums. The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities, Oxford/New York 2007; Amy Sodaro, Exhibiting Atrocity. Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence, London 2018; Arleen Ionescu, The Memorial Ethics of Libeskind's Berlin Jewish Museum, Berlin 2017; Ljiljana Radonić/Heidemarie Uhl (eds.), Das umkämpfte Museum. Zeitgeschichte ausstellen zwischen Dekonstruktion und Sinnstiftung, Bielefeld 2020; schnittpunkt/Joachim Baur (eds.), Das Museum der Zukunft. 43 neue Beiträge zur Diskussion über die Zukunft des Museums, Bielefeld 2020; Vikki McCall/Clive Gray, Museums and the 'New Museology': Theory, Practice and Organisational Change, in: Museum Management and Curatorship 29/1 (2014), 19–35; Roswitha Muttenthaler/Regina Wonisch, Gesten des Zeigens. Zur Repräsentation von Gender und Race in Ausstellungen, Bielefeld 2015.

3 Janet Marstine/Alexander Bauer/Chelsea Haines (eds.), New Directions in Museum Ethics, London/New York 2013; Paul Williams, Memorial Museums and the Objectification of Suffering, in: Janet Marstine (ed.),The Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics, New York 2011; Jörg Echternkamp/Stephan Jaeger (eds.), Views of Violence: Representing the Second World War in German and European Museums and Memorials, NewYork/Oxford 2019; Wulf Kansteiner, Genocide Memory, Digital Cultures, and the Aesthetization of Violence, in: Memory Studies 7/4 (2014), 403–408, doi: 10.1177/1750698014542389.

4 Jay Winter, Museums and the Representation of War, in: Museum and Society 10/3 (2012), 150–163; Wolfgang Muchitsch (ed.), Does War Belong in Museums: The Representation of Violence in Exhibitions, Bielefeld 2013; Gerhard Paul, BilderMACHT. Studien zur Visual History des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts, Göttingen 2013; K. Hannah Holtschneider, The Holocaust and Representations of Jews: History and Identity in the Museum, London 2011; Matthias Heyl, Mit Überwältigendem überwältigen? Emotionalität und Kontroversität in der der Gedenkstättenpädagogik als Teil historisch-politischer Bildung, in: Lernen aus der Geschichte 2012, http://lernen-aus-der-geschichte.de/sites/default/files/attach/10658/heyl-mit-ueberwaeltigendem-ueberwaeltigen.pdf (5 April 2023); Janina Struk, Photographing the Holocaust. Interpretations of the Evidence, London 2011; Cornelia Brink, Vor aller Augen: Fotos-wider-Willen in der Geschichtsschreibung, WerkstattGeschichte 47 (2007), 61–74; Gerhard Paul, Bilder des Krieges. Krieg der Bilder. Die Visualisierung des modernen Krieges, Paderborn 2004.

foster growing moral considerations around "the issues of exploitation of sentiment (pity, compassion, indignation) in war photography and of rote ways of provoking feeling".[5] Others have pointed out that representations of violence can, in fact, lead to its perpetuation.[6] Extending these deliberations to the field of museum practice, both activists and scholars have argued that by displaying relicts or documents of a violent past, especially when connected to colonialism, war, or genocide, museums perpetuate historical semantics of power, reifying the humiliation of victims and leaving frames of violence and power intact.[7] Similarly, museological analysis has shown that the exhibition of political propaganda can contribute to the revival of historical ideology, with museums constituting (or contributing to) the allure of the very violent rhetoric they claim to educate the public about.[8] And while some fear that a reflexive consideration of such questions might force museums to empty their display cases and create gaps in historical narratives – for instance, by erasing the perspectives of the perpetrators and thus the structural conditions of violence –, others have rightly argued that certain narratives and categories of 'objects' (human remains included) do not belong in a museum.[9] Indeed, the debate about whether or not violent representations should be included in museums requires a deeper consideration of what constitutes violence and its various modalities inside and outside museums. This is an opportunity for museums to make their position on the history of oppression they are meant to convey more transparent, and to benefit from a critical rethinking of *why* and *how* to display violence, which has effectively been placed at the centre of reflection on the contemporary institution of the museum.

Responding to this important shift, this special issue brings together analyses of the display of violence in museums that exhibit conflicted or violent histories world-

5 Susan Sontag, Regarding the Pain of Others, New York 2003, 79.

6 Hildegard Frübis/Clara Oberle/Agnieszka Pufelska (eds.), Fotografien aus den Lagern des NS-Regimes. Beweissicherung und ästhetische Praxis, Vienna 2019; Barbie Zelizer, Gender and Atrocity: Women in Holocaust Photographs, in: Barbie Zelizer (ed.), Visual Culture and the Holocaust, London 2001, 247–271; Cornelia Brink/Jonas Wegerer, Wie kommt die Gewalt ins Bild? Über den Zusammenhang von Gewaltakt, fotografischer Aufnahme und Bildwirkung, in: Fotogeschichte 125 (2012), 5–14; Struk, Photographing the Holocaust, 2011; Susan Crane, Choosing Not to Look: Representation, Repatriation, and Holocaust Atrocity Photography, in: History and Theory 47/3 (2008), 309–330; Toby Haggith/Joanna Newman, Holocaust and the Moving Image. Representations in Film and Television Since 1933, London/New York 2005; Bettina Bannasch/Almuth Hammer (eds.), Verbot der Bilder – Gebot der Erinnerung. Mediale Repräsentationen der Shoah, Frankfurt 2004; Sven Kramer (ed.), Die Shoah im Bild, Augsburg 2003.

7 Muttenthaler/Wonisch, Gesten des Zeigens, 2015; Muchitsch, Does War Belong in Museums, 2013; Heyl, Mit Überwältigendem überwältigen?, (2012); Struk, Photographing the Holocaust, 2011.

8 Miriam M. Basilio, Visual Propaganda, Exhibitions, and the Spanish Civil War, Farnham 2013.

9 Ciraj Rassol, Human Remains, the Disciplines of the Dead, and the South African Memorial Complex, in: Derek Peterson/Kodzo Gavua/Ciraj Rassool (eds.), The Politics of Heritage in Africa. Economies, Histories, and Infrastructures, London 2015, 133–156; Dan Hicks, The Brutish Museum. The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution, London 2020.

wide. It traces recent transformations in the way museums deal with the representation of violence: whether they reflect on the standpoint of victims and include their voices; whether they are inclusive of marginalized communities; whether they address long-silenced legacies of violence; or whether they are attentive to the ethical challenges associated with the display of images, objects, and the curation of human remains. Drawing on a wide range of case studies from multiple historical and geographical contexts, this issue is structured around a set of analytical questions: why and how have exhibitions changed recently in the way they display artefacts or visual representations of violence? How does the often used emphasis on individual and victim perspectives relate to questions of the renewal of violence and retraumatization? What positionalities towards displayed violence are museum visitors or participants invited to adopt or perform? What is the role and performance of violence in exhibitions that aim to create emotions and reach broader audiences through the exploitation of shock value, or to justify their institution and mission? Who defines the content of the exhibitions, who is invited to participate in this process who is excluded, and why? And, finally, what omissions and silences cause and perpetuate the display of violence? The examination of culturally and geographically diverse curatorial practices proposed in this issue, therefore, highlights how museums challenge or perpetuate violence and hegemonic structures of power and marginalization, how they represent a multiplicity of voices or homogenized narratives, and how they manage to engage visitors with reflexive meta-questions.

These multifaceted considerations are channelled in this special issue through the eponymous idiom of 'displaying violence', which is intended to foreground a threefold understanding of the entanglement between violence and museums. While, at the most basic level, all papers collected in this issue deal with the multiple and diverse ways in which *museums display political violence*, many also address the question of the *violence of museum display*, and/or of the underlying *structural violence of the museum as an institution*. Although on a practical plane all three aspects are inherently interwoven, their analytical decoupling allows us to shed new light on the complex ramifications and reality effects of manifestations of violence in museums, and to fathom the less visible dynamics behind the museum display and the violence it often objectifies and normalizes. This opens space for in-depth reflection on the power relations established and enacted by museums vis-à-vis a complex set of actors, including the various subjects and their divergent perspectives (re-) presented in museum narratives, the affected communities, memory activists, and museum audiences. The special issue also focuses on the power dynamics established by the museum as an authority of knowledge and recognition that creates inclusion and exclusion, and makes people think and feel in certain ways through curatorial choices, discursive and visual framing, and the images, objects, and narratives

that structure exhibitions. Simultaneously, the invitation to look behind the violence on display and to question the very institution of the museum itself, and the modalities of violence it puts into practice in and through display, allows us to consider the museum as a carrier of less obvious and less discernible forms of violence, both as a disciplinary institution[10] and as an agent of structural, symbolic, and epistemic violence.[11] Addressing the positioning of museums in the field of cultural power dynamics as such, alongside strategies of hegemony, (racialized, classed, gendered etc.) marginalization, and exclusion, this issue focuses on questions of colonial and imperialist violence, the Holocaust, genocide, and more recent instances of political violence and their museal representation, highlighting the centrality of this concern to current public debates and discussions on the identity of the institution.

In its choice of cases, the issue consequently expands the notion of the museum space to include not only institutions established at sites of historical atrocities and off-site museums but also botanical gardens, public spaces, and the Internet. Mirroring the increasingly broadened scope of interest in museology,[12] it traces the logic of museums – as authorities of knowledge, as mechanisms for the reproduction of power, and as disciplinary, narrative, and epistemic spaces – in other material and spatial configurations, including the highly complex urban or natural-cultural environments. It argues, therefore, that adopting a museological perspective and the analytical framework of museum studies can shed new light on the ways in which museum spaces outside the museum perform the past in the present and relate to its violent legacies. At the same time, drawing on recent trends of more inclusionary curatorial and educational practices that encourage institutions to transcend established spatial and structural boundaries, the special issue invites the reader to consider the museum as a transformative and communicative space, as a process rather

10 Eilean Hooper Greenhill, The Museum in the Disciplinary Society, in: Susan Pearce (ed.), Museum Studies in Material Culture, Leicester 1989; Eilean Hooper Greenhill, The Disciplinary Museum. Museums and Shaping of Knowledge, London 1992; Tony Bennett, The Birth of the Museum. History, Politics, Theory, Oxon 1995; Piotr Piotrowski, Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe, London 2012.

11 Shahid Vawda, Museums and Epistemology of Injustice: From Colonialism to Decoloniality, in: Museums International 71/7 (2019), 72–79; Elisabeth Edward/Chris Gosden/Ruth Phillips (eds.), Sensible Objects. Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture, Oxford/New York 2006; Cornelia Kogoj/Christian Kravagna, Das Amerikanische Museum. Sklaverei, Schwarze Geschichte und der Kampf um Gerechtigkeit in Museen der Südstaaten, Berlin 2019; Robin Boast, Neocolonial Collaboration. Museum as Contact Zone Revisited, in: Museum Anthropology 34/1 (2011), 56–70.

12 Mário Moutinho/Judite Santos Primo, Die Soziomuseologie und ihr theoretischer Bezugsrahmen, in: Susanne Gesser/Nina Gorgus/Angela Jannelli, Das subjektive Museum. Partizipative Museumsarbeit zwischen Selbstvergewisserung und gesellschaftspolitischem Engagement, Bielefeld 2022, 27–44, 42; François Mairesse, The Definition of the Museum. History and Issues, in: Museum International 71/1, 2 (2019), 152–159; Sharon Macdonald, Re: Worlding the Museum, in: schnittpunkt/Joachim Baur (eds.), Das Museum der Zukunft. 43 neue Beiträge zur Diskussion über die Zukunft des Museums, Bielefeld 2020, 183–189.

than a product. In doing so, we emphasize that the analysis of representations of violence cannot be dissociated from the surrounding structural (and spatially distributed) power dynamics and the agency of individuals in relation to the institution. All these spaces are shaped by and shape different logics of exclusion/inclusion or accessibility. However, they share the (implicit) societal function of defining who is allowed to speak and who is not, what is representable and what is not.[13]

The special issue presents interdisciplinary perspectives from history, memory studies, Holocaust studies, cultural heritage studies, linguistics, theoretical museology, and other research fields that contribute to advancing debates on the display of violence in museum exhibitions worldwide. It brings together articles by scholars who critically analyse contemporary museum practices and trace the shifting ethical standards of how to represent historical violence in museums – in contexts as disparate as the Inquisition, the Holocaust, state terror in Argentina and Peru, genocide in Cambodia, and colonial violence. The articles combine theoretical considerations with interpretations of specific cases and comparative exhibition analyses. They examine the role of visual material, objects, and narratives in staging and perpetuating violence and the humiliation of victims, and discuss strategies used by cultural institutions to deal with complex material, such as perpetrator-taken, voyeuristic, or graphic photographs, propaganda material, looted art, or human remains. They also engage with broader narratives of violence, their geopolitical dynamics, and question their afterlife in the museum.

The latter is the case, for instance, in James Tyner's text on a museum dedicated to the 1975–1979 genocide in Cambodia. In his article, which historicizes the establishment of the Toul Sleng museum and addresses its political narrative, Tyner presents the memorial museum as a haunted space – haunted by the victims and perpetrators of the genocidal violence it is meant to commemorate, but also by the stories it refuses to tell. Drawing on Derridean hauntology in his interrogation of the epistemology of violence at Toul Sleng, Tyner conjures absent-presences in the state-sanctioned knowledge of Khmer Rouge violence staged at the museum that speak to its unaddressed global entanglements. The eponymous *Nixon's Ghost* conveys a history on the genocide that acknowledges the role of foreign states, particularly the United States, in its unfolding. The hauntology of the museum space in Tyner's article is constructed as an ethically motivated intervention aimed to render the account of the violence complete, beyond the limitations of Toul Sleng or, for that matter, any memorial museum. Another set of ghosts (implicitly) haunts the land-

13 John Byrne et al. (eds.), The Constituent Museum. Constellations of Knowledge, Politics and Mediation, Amsterdam 2018; Nora Sternfeld, Das radikaldemokratische Museum, Berlin/Boston 2018; Johnetta Cole Betsch/Laura Lott (eds.), Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion in Museums, Washington 2019.

scape of museums dedicated to the Holy Inquisition in Italy, which is the subject of Anna Clara Basilicó's contribution. She engages critically with the dominant representations of violence of the Inquisition, which reproduce its power dynamics and, by focusing on descriptions and mechanisms of violence produced by the perpetrators, erase the voices, bodies, and stories of the persecuted. Such museums, argues Basilico, not only fail to critically address the violence on display but also normalize it for the visitors. Basilico approaches this problematic trend through the prism of Tony Bennet's reflection on the museum as a disciplinary institution, coupled with a consideration of the role of neoliberal governance in shaping museums as destinations of dark tourism. In her article, Basilicó also looks at a recent exhibition that reverses this power dynamic. This exhibition centres on the perspectives of those usually excluded from Inquisition museums: the captives, made available through a contextualized display of the graffiti they left on the walls of the Inquisition prison in Palermo's Palazzo Steri.

The question of how the museal display of violence can contribute to its perpetuation through other means – in this case, visual images – is also addressed in the contributions by Ljiljana Radonić and Stefan Benedik. In her article, Radonić discusses the shifting cultural sensitivities surrounding the display of perpetrator, voyeuristic, and/or graphic atrocity photographs in and beyond museums devoted to the Second World War (including its East Asian arena), the Holocaust, and the 1990s genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda. Tracing the question of how to approach historical photographs back to the period immediately after 1945, Radonić shows how the use of images in memorial museums has changed over time – from emotive, symbolic photographs used as wallpaper or room-dividers to images cast as historical documents and a strong focus on private photographs. Radonić emphasizes the ethical problems and representational risks associated with both, the decision to display photographs taken by perpetrators that humiliate the victims or depict sexual violence, and the commitment to exclude atrocity images in memorial museums dealing with genocides and political violence. She also focuses on innovative and reflexive approaches to photography proposed by some recent permanent exhibitions. These issues are also taken up by Stefan Benedik's article on violent imagery in web exhibitions created by three internationally most prominent museums on the Holocaust. Benedik argues that institutions engaged in Holocaust education have been early in exploring the potential of the Internet as a museum space and, in contrast to their material exhibitions, have made surprisingly little use of images of explicit violence, without relying on them to convey their narrative. However, as the article continues to analyse the corresponding violence in the verbal imagery of the online exhibitions, a paradox emerges: while absent on the visual level, linguistic violence still seems to be a pivotal aspect of web exhibitions on the Holocaust, per-

petuating the humiliation of victims and fostering voyeurism, seen as a consequence of the persistent reification of gendered stereotypes of mass violence.

A somewhat different perspective on the museal representation of violence and its situated dynamics informs the article by Fabiola Arellano Cruz. Focusing on the museum commemorating the victims of forced disappearance in Peru, the Place of Memory, Tolerance and Social Inclusion (LUM) in Lima, the article centres on the power relations that shape the museal space as an unevenly fashioned 'contact zone' (James Clifford) of positionalities, interests, and agendas. Tracing the processes that led to the creation of the museum and its representation of the disappeared, Arellano Cruz addresses the tensions between curatorial choices and the wishes of victim groups, casting the museum space as a complex field of negotiation, shaped by victims' claims for recognition and agency. At the same time, she engages with the museal representation of absence left behind by disappearance and the ethical, political, and aesthetic choices that inform it. The consideration of the museum as a space of negotiation, inclusion and exclusion, and unequal distribution of power is also central to the article by Mariana Eva Perez and Ulrike Capdepón. They examine the displays of violence produced by state terrorism in Argentina (1976–1984), seen through the prism of childhood experience. Perez and Capdepón propose a comparative analysis of three exhibitions that approach this topic in very different ways, using stories, objects, and curatorial strategies to either reproduce standard narratives of childhood under state terror or give space to complexity and hitherto excluded nuances. Taking as their point of departure the hegemonic, adult-centred narratives of the museums established in the former clandestine detention, torture and extermination centres, Perez and Capdepón argue that the inclusion of the voices of former child victims can challenge the dominant discourse on state terrorism. But for this change to be truly successful, they claim, museums would need to open up to a narrative that is still conspicuously absent from all three exhibitions, which are structured around the recognition of the agency of children and the affective power that attention to it conveys.

The following two articles explore structural continuities of violence in the institution of the museum, epitomized by divergent policies of curating objects and human remains, both of which date from the Nazi period. Andrea Berger's article is concerned with cultural property looted from Jews that is still exhibited or stored in Austria's federal museums that operated before, during, and after the Second World War. Berger reconstructs the process of appropriation and the (largely unsuccessful) post-war repatriation of stolen works of art and other cultural artefacts in the country. She investigates the role of the museum and its politics around misappropriated objects in the (re)production of hegemonic narratives of Nazi violence. Focusing on significant gaps and silences surrounding this problematic 'legacy' in Austrian

federal institutions until today, Berger takes a critical look at museums as manifestations and carriers of structural violence. A similar consideration informs Zuzanna Dziuban's article on museums and memorial sites established on the sites of former Nazi extermination camps in Poland. Approaching them through the conceptual prism of the *continuum of violence* and drawing on postcolonial studies, Dziuban historicizes and traces the various forms of violence enacted by memorial institutions from the early post-war period to the present day. The violence addressed in Dziuban's contribution concerns the human remains of Holocaust victims still present in the museums and memorial sites analysed. Dziuban considers these memorials as museum-cemeteries, a notion that addresses the specificity of the on-site museum and extends its understanding to the human remains governed within its boundaries and the adjacent landscapes. Dziuban proposes to read the museum-cemetery as a complex and dynamic infrastructure that articulates and perpetuates invisibilized structural violence.

The final two articles in the volume's peer-reviewed section also extend the focus on the conventional exhibition space of indoor museums to spaces that unsettle the understanding of the institution, and look at other arenas that construct and render hegemonic national(-ist) narratives of the colonial past. Sofia Lovegrove takes a critical look at the past and present of the museological reframing of the botanical garden in Lisbon, Portugal. She sees the botanical garden as a living museum, shaped by practices of collecting and displaying of variously constructed alterities: the colonial 'other' and instrumentalized 'nature'. Positioning her reflection within the field of decolonial critique, Lovegrove sees the garden as implicated in intertwined modes of colonial violence, some of which, she argues, are perpetuated in and through the new forms of musealization introduced recently in its landscape. Markus Wurzer's text, on the other hand, focuses on monuments, recent controversies, and debates in Italy in order to examine the reification of memory in material-discursive structures at the intersection of nationalism and imperialism, in this case also linked to the violence of the colonial project. He looks at representations of this violence in the urban space – almost absent (or effectively invisibilized) in the public register of official monuments, it is made discernible through the interventions of local activists. Wurzer traces the potential of the subversive/counter-hegemonic practice and its potential to actively shift the norms of representation. His findings show how violence is represented and how structural violence limits the ways in which history can be displayed in spaces that constitute cultural memory.

While the first section of the special issue brings together peer-reviewed papers, thus providing a scholarly debate, the second part presents reflections from memory and museum practitioners. Focusing on the volume's main topics and highlighting ethical, political, and institutional questions about violence on and of display, this

section takes a closer look at how history is conveyed to a wider public, what is made accessible, and how traces of violent histories are made productive for today's debates. The first paper, by scholar and activist Daphné Budasz, describes a project she and others have developed to critically engage with material traces of colonialism in Italy's contemporary urban landscape. Budasz highlights the role of musealization as a means of making colonial objects visible and, through sensitive contextualization, commentary, and education, transforming it into an activist endeavour deeply concerned with questions of power and visibility. This intervention, realized as a series of walking tours and a website that documents the opaque presence of colonialism in Florence, can be considered innovative and structurally subversive precisely because of its format, in which a 'non-authoritive' grassroots initiative adopted 'standard' museological methods to foster a critical and counter-hegemonic narrative of post-colonial Italy.

The contribution by Louise Beckershaus, Stefan Benedik, Markus Fösl, Laura Langeder, Eva Meran, and Monika Sommer addresses a similar attempt to integrate the seemingly ephemeral and temporary methods of museum education into the institution's fabric. Testifying to the fact that the process of developing museum exhibitions is a transdisciplinary team effort, the article offers an insight into the interdisciplinary debate about how to exhibit material objects from the National Socialist period in a way that involves a broad public in a discussion about whether or not they should be preserved for the future at the Austrian Federal Museum of Contemporary History. Christian Rapp, Andrea Thuile, and Benedikt Vogl also address the question of how and why to present Nazi violence in contemporary museums. The curators of the state history museum in St. Pölten, responsible for the redesign of the permanent exhibition, reflect on changing perspectives and sensibilities, and demonstrate the rapid transformation of discussions on the display of violence and its multifaceted ramifications.

In his contribution, Czech historian and curator Vojtěch Kyncl illustrates the close connection between the display of violence in museums and hegemonic politics of memory. He discusses two memorial museums in the Czech Republic whose engagement with their problematic past – the Czech resistance against, but also complicity in, wartime Nazi crimes – has, on the one hand, become a subject of political contestation and, on the other, has established a new model of integrating critical academic research into the institutional space of a museum. Ursula Mindler-Steiner's essay discusses, in turn, the recent "memory boom" relating to the National Socialist genocide against Roma and Romnija in the Burgenland province in Austria. Based on interviews with two Romani spokespeople and memory activists, the paper sheds light on past and present controversies surrounding memorialisation of this victim group and the ways in which memorials act to empower but

also to silence its perspectives, wishes and experiences. The final article in this section looks at the legacy of the Nazi past in the Natural History Museum in Vienna. Zuzanna Dziuban interviewed Margit Berner, head curator of the institution's Anthropological Department, about her project that critically reappropriated the documentation of Nazi 'racial research' from the Second World War and transformed it into a memorial. In the interview, Dziuban and Berger also discuss (dis)continuities of violence in the institutional context of contemporary anthropological collections. Bringing together perspectives from both established and emerging institutions or grassroots initiatives, this section of the special issue provides an overview of recent curatorial and educational responses that seek to challenge the established perspectives on how to deal with colonialism and its persistent traces, and with the history of National Socialism in museums and other museological spaces.

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