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ZPRÁVY/NEWS

THE SOCIETY OF BRNO MUSEOLOGISTS – REFLECTION OF THE WORLD WAR II AFFAIRS IN CONTEMPORARY METHODS OF PRESENTATION PROJECT

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The newly established student society at the Department of Archaeology and Museology in Brno started the second semester of its existence by the implementation of the project *Reflection of The World War II Affairs in Contemporary Methods of Presentation*. The aim of this project was to mediate good examples of practice dealing with difficult historical events.

During April 2018, three chosen contemporary projects were presented or visited. The participation in the events was open to all interested students from the Faculty of Arts and two of the events were also open to public.

The first event within the project took place in Lidice. On the 6th of April, a group of 25 students visited very well known Czech village which was exterminated by the Nazis in 1942 as a respond to the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich. The excursion started in permanent museum exhibition *And Those Innocent Were Guilty...* and continued with a commented tour through the reverential area.¹

The exhibition is based on a confrontation of particular areas with light scenes and pictures with usage of projections. The lack of

¹ Museum. In *Památník Lidice/Lidice Memorial* [online]. [accessed 2018-08-28]. Available from www: <<http://www.lidice-memorial.cz/en/memorial/museum/>>.



Fig. 1: The screening of the film *On the Edge* (photo: Magdaléna Trčálková, 2018).



Fig. 2: Commented tour through the reverential area of Lidice (photo: Magdaléna Trčálková, 2018).

objects that survived in contrast to plenty of authentic archival materials, like photographs and films, is an example of a very impressively designed, emotional exhibition which terrifies and commands respect at the same time. Very similar feelings can

arise on the reverential area fields where nearly nothing was left and the suffering of villagers is emphasized by the dominant sculpture of children who never returned, created by the Czech sculptor Marie Uchytilová.

The second part of the excursion continued in Lidice Gallery² which is situated in the heart of the new Lidice village. The modern gallery is famous for its permanent exhibition of the Lidice Collection made up of gifts to Lidice from artists from all over the world. Ms. Martina Lehmannová, the head of the gallery, personally guided the group and presented all parts of the exhibition: “Remember Lidice”, “Building New Lidice”, “Rose Garden” etc.

On the 11th of April, the project continued in Brno by the screening of the film *On the Edge* (in original *Kroky na hrane*) by the Slovak director Viliam Bendík.³ The film captures the act of six friends who decided to revive an authentic story of the World War II – they ran 170 km from Auschwitz to Žilina to commemorate the great escape of two Auschwitz prisoners. In April 1944 two Slovaks, Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler, escaped from the hell of the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau in occupied Poland. They brought important information about the massive industrial murdering. During their hard escape through the hostile territory, ordinary people selflessly helped them, risking their own lives. They were among the first to report the real purpose of the concentration camps. In 2017, the film received the Audience Award and the Grand Prix Award in the HoryZonty festival in Trenčín.

The screening took place in the University Cinema Scala (Masaryk University)⁴ and with

² Gallery. In *Památník Lidice/Lidice Memorial* [online]. [accessed 2018-08-28]. Available from [www: <http://www.lidice-memorial.cz/en/memorial/gallery/>](http://www.lidice-memorial.cz/en/memorial/gallery/).

³ *On the Edge* (2017). In *IMDb* [online]. [accessed 2018-08-28]. Available from [www: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8446598/>](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8446598/); official website (with trailer and teaser): *Kroky na hrane*. In *Bendík Films* [online]. [accessed 2018-08-28]. Available from [www: <https://bendikfilms.com/index.php/film-detail/kroky-na-hrane/>](https://bendikfilms.com/index.php/film-detail/kroky-na-hrane/).

⁴ *University Cinema Scala* [online]. [accessed 2018-08-28]. Available from [www: <https://www.kinoscala.cz/en/>](https://www.kinoscala.cz/en/).



Fig 3: The lecture about Post Bellum by Mikuláš Kroupa (photo: Magdaléna Trčálková, 2018).



Fig. 4: Mikuláš Kroupa, the founder of Post Bellum (photo: Matej Bášti, 2018).

the contribution of the Society of Brno Museologists it became the Czech premiere. Very interesting discussion with the director Viliam Bendík and the film protagonists followed after the screening. Questions came not only from the historians but also from the running community visitors. Interesting fact is that the purpose of the film is not only to demonstrate the touching story of braveness but also to educate. The aim of the director and the protagonists is to use the film as a tool for educational school programmes, which are now being in progress.

The last part of the project took place on the 17th of April at the Faculty of Arts, History library where Mr. Mikuláš Kroupa presented the Post Bellum

organisation.⁵ Post Bellum is a non-governmental non-profit organisation which documents the memories of those who witnessed important historical phenomena of the 20th century and which tries to communicate these stories to wider public. It was founded in 2001. Post Bellum is one of the most important contemporary organisations which are systematically working on the preservation of memories. Mr. Kroupa presented the history of the organisation, the methods of memories collecting and the importance and ways of working with such an archive. He also presented his intention to establish a new branch in Brno which is an excellent opportunity for students of the Department of Archaeology and Museology and related fields.

The whole project was funded by a Faculty of Arts grant. More information (in Czech only) can be found on the Society’s Facebook page *Spolek brněnských muzeologů* or on the website www.muzeospolek.com.

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⁵ *Post Bellum* [online]. [accessed 2018-08-28]. Available from [www: <https://www.postbellum.cz/english/>](https://www.postbellum.cz/english/).