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PRESS RELEASE

**Zeitorte (Temporal Places)**

An exhibition by Georg Soanca-Pollak to commemorate November 9, 1938, in the foyer of the Jewish Museum Munich

Duration of exhibition: November 6–13, 2012

Opening: November 7, 2012, 7pm

*"I don't have any other picture of Fritz Schaller than this. For me, he is still walking with my mother and aunts along this path. And if someone were to ask me about greater things, about love, kindness and peace, I could only point him to this moment, never having asked who the photographer was."*

From Hanno Loewy, *A Walk*

Since 1995 Georg Soanca-Pollak has taken Jewish life in Germany before 1945 as the focus of his art. While historical, documentary pictorial material initially formed the basis of his work, such as "Bilder der Erinnerung" (Images of Remembrance) for the Stadtarchiv München, he combined his own photos and films with documentary material in his installation "Ich sehe die Lichter der Stadt, ich sehe sie aus" (I see the city lights, I see them off) for the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site.

In his current work "Zeitorte" (Temporal Places) he has used historical material of a very personal nature for the first time. The large-format photo collages (c. 120 x 200 cm) combine photographs of the artist's relatives from before World War II with pictures he has taken of the "Memorial to the Murdered Jews in Europe" in Berlin and the concentration camp in Auschwitz. Many of those pictured were murdered by the Nazis in Auschwitz.

Each photo collage follows a similar fundamental principle. Details of the Berlin memorial are combined with the sky over Auschwitz, as photographed by the artist in 2012, or the sky over the Berlin memorial is combined with details from Auschwitz concentration camp. In the centre of each picture, as if forming a third plane, is a black-and-white photograph of a member of his family. The photos are private shots. They exude a light-heartedness and a zest for life. They show no signs of the brutal ostracism and systematic extermination of Jewish citizens to come. A further plane shows the number 8020. This is the number that was tattooed on the artist's grandmother's arm in Auschwitz concentration camp.

With the help of the different pictorial planes, the artist links the present with the past; various times and places merge into one. The memorial in Berlin was inaugurated in 2005, 50 years after the end of World War II. It is a place of remembrance and commemoration, built on a central, "neutral" site. Auschwitz was the largest German extermination camp of the National Socialist period and the place where many members of the artist's family were murdered. A few survived. The number, 8020, tattooed on his grandmother's forearm, is a representative reminder of the fate of many whose identity was taken, just as her name was replaced by a number. These three pictorial planes form a kind of bridge, bringing the portraits of the deceased and their very personal stories into the present. By giving us an insight into his family's history, the artist allows us to participate in his personal commemorative work. He introduces us to several members of his family as representatives of the millions of other victims, giving a face to the individual stories and enabling the viewer to encounter the past on a personal level.

### Georg Soanca-Pollak

Born in 1967 in Cluj, Romania.

Since 1995 he has been looking into Jewish life in Germany before 1945. He has been carrying out a kind of personal search for evidence using photos of individual people for more than 15 years. His best-known work is "Gang der Erinnerung" (Corridor of Remembrance), created for the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde München und Oberbayern. Other than Jewish culture, that has a particular affinity with writing as a means of cultural commemoration, for Georg Soanca-Pollak it is images that keep memories alive. Instead of abstract information about genocide, he wants to become closer to those who were persecuted and remember them through pictures.

The exhibition has been kindly sponsored by:



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