

Stefanie Endlich for ICOM conference Milano July 6, 2016

Memory and Witnesses (abstract)

The importance of survivors as “witnesses” of the Nazi terror has increased, especially regarding their presence in mass media and in public commemoration activities. Even the term “witness” has changed profoundly in connection with the public memorial debates. What, however, is the role of witnesses in the process of planning and implementing monuments and memorials in the public space? We know about the key role of survivors and their organizations in the postwar period especially when concentration camp memorial museums were established. Today, with new approaches of younger artists in public space, and with the old age of those survivors who are still alive, memorial art comes to terms with the experiences of witnesses in a very different, sometimes quite productive and impressive way. The presentation for the ICOM congress focusses these aspects, exemplified by some recent examples of memorial art in public space.