

## The Sigmund Freud Museum – renovated and extended since 2020

Vienna IX, Berggasse 19. Sigmund Freud lived and worked at this address for 47 years before he had to flee from the National Socialists in 1938. Since 1971, the Sigmund Freud Museum has been located here. It was reopened in 2020 after extensive renovation and extension. Three permanent exhibitions in Freud's former living and practice rooms, an art presentation in the Showroom Berggasse 19, and special exhibitions convey Freud's multi-layered cultural legacy: they are dedicated to his life and work, the development of psychoanalysis in theory and practice, and its significance for the fields of society, science, and art. The history of the house at Berggasse 19 and the eventful fates of its residents are also brought into focus.

The multi-layered concept of the architects Hermann Czech, Walter Angonese and ARTEC Architekten uncovers traces of history at the "birthplace of psychoanalysis" in connection with the fulfilment of contemporary museum standards. Thanks to the expansion of the exhibition space, all rooms in which Freud worked and lived with his family are accessible to the visitors: The entire mezzanine – the family's private apartment and the practices of Sigmund and Anna Freud – offers comprehensive information from the historical developments of psychoanalysis to the critical discussion of its current concerns. A newly constructed staircase connecting the museum floors and allowing a tour of all the exhibition rooms focuses on the history of the house and its inhabitants.

The former practice rooms on the upper ground floor serve as a venue for art: the museum's conceptual art collection, initiated by Joseph Kosuth, includes works by John Baldessari, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Susan Hiller, Ilya Kabakov and Franz West, among others, which are shown where Freud once wrote his *Interpretation of Dreams*. In the "Showroom Berggasse 19" on the outside of the building, temporary installations are presented.

The bel étage is entirely dedicated to research: Europe's largest library of psychoanalysis " is equipped with a new reading and lecture room and, together with the museum archive, serves as a research and communication platform.

Since the renovation, the ticket office and museum shop are located in the foyer on the ground floor and no longer in the mezzanine. By separating the commercial museum activities from the historical rooms, the atmosphere of the former family apartment and practice can be experienced without any distractions. The café in the foyer as well as the inner courtyard offer space to relax and, like the shop, can be visited independently of the museum. Already in Freud's time, this spacious room of today's foyer was home to a shop selling food, beverages, and everyday goods. Berggasse 19 – a commemoration site: On the one hand, this world-famous address is the "birthplace of psychoanalysis" where Freud studied the human psyche and the unconscious, and in doing so gave people a new way of looking at themselves that has left its mark on science,

culture, and society to this day. On the other hand, the location functions as a site of commemoration and memorial to the loss of culture and humanity under the National Socialist terror regime: Because of the historical responsibility of Austria and Vienna, Berggasse 19 serves as a commemoration site and memorial to all displaced and murdered Jewish Austrians.

The renovation and restoration project, which cost around 4 million euros, was financed by the city of Vienna, the federal government, private donors, and the Sigmund Freud Foundation, which also operates the museum.

## PERMANENT EXHIBITIONS

### Freud, Berggasse 19

Reorganization of the permanent collection on the life and work of Sigmund Freud

*Concept and design: Atelier Czech /  
Hermann Czech and Gerhard Flora  
Curators: Sigmund Freud Museum /  
Monika Pessler and Daniela Finzi*

If we consider the rooms of Berggasse 19 as exhibits by their very nature that center on their former functions and significances, they are given another layer of information by the presentation curated by Monika Pessler (director) and Daniela Finzi (research director) on the life and work of Sigmund Freud located on the mezzanine level of the building.

According to Monika Pessler in summarizing the basic conceptual idea behind the new museum presentation, “The architecture of this Gründerzeit building not only defined the redesign with regard to space, it also correlates with the significance of subject matter.”

Originally preserved spatial structures reveal an authentic experience of the birthplace of psychoanalysis, and the various exhibits (objects, historical manuscripts, photographs) highlight the professional stations and biographical facets of Freud’s professional and family life. Special printings, rare first editions, offprints, and presentation copies provide insights into the geneses of Freud’s theoretical work. Foreign-language (first) editions in Hungarian, Swedish, Hebrew, or Japanese, furthermore eloquently testify to the extent of the international dissemination of the psychoanalytical movement during Freud’s time.

This layer of information is in many ways closely connected to the history of each respective room: the practice of psychoanalysis and the so-called “talking cure” is addressed with the help of case histories and texts in Freud’s former treatment room. Doing so refers to the former use of the room and brings it into the present. In this vein, the spot where the psychoanalytical couch

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## Sigm. Freud

MUSEUM

once stood remains empty. Monika Pessler explains why the museum deliberately avoided reconstructing the original room: “This void, which has existed in Freud’s treatment room since his flight from the National Socialist regime, clearly represents the dark side of history. To reconstruct a ‘world of yesterday’ (Stefan Zweig) within these rooms – i.e. a world before the March 1938 Anschluss (annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany), as if Freud’s forced exile in London never happened – would be to negate a significant part of Freud’s history and, in doing so, negate ours.”

Anna Freud’s adjacent living and practice rooms are dedicated to her work of combining psychoanalysis and pedagogy, which she performed together with her partner Dorothy Burlingham in Vienna and, after their emigration, in London. Several personal artifacts on display have been loaned from the Freud Museum London including Anna Freud’s *laterna magica* (magic lantern).

Following the exhibition concept, the private rooms of the Freud family are dedicated to Freud’s life as a family father and his career path as a young physician and neurologist. Objects such as hospital documents and medicinal instruments, as well as travel toiletry kits, gifts to his future wife Martha, and other personal objects provide the viewer with information on Freud’s family life, and according to Daniela Finzi, “set into motion imaginations, associations, and narratives.” Texts and manuscripts from the estate of the Freud family will be presented to the public for the first time in these rooms. Freud’s former bedroom is dedicated to the topic of *The Interpretation of Dreams* – listening stations furthermore provide an auditory experience of Sigmund Freud’s dreams. Original pieces of furniture have found their way into the exhibition for the first time including a dresser on permanent loan from the Freud Museum London which, along with its accompanying intarsia table, makes up part of the original, historical ensemble of the *Herrenzimmer* (gentlemen’s salon).

## **Berggasse 19: History and Occupants 1880 – 2020**

A fragmentary timeline of historical events in commemoration of the occupants of Berggasse 19 who fell victim to Nazi terror.

*Concept and design: Atelier Czech /  
Hermann Czech and Gerhard Flora  
Curators: Sigmund Freud Museum /  
Monika Pessler and Daniela Finzi*

Coming from the museum's foyer, that accommodated the Erster Österreichischer Konsumverein (First Austrian Consumers' Cooperative) in Freud's day, one comes to a new staircase. Like the historical stairs, it connects all of the exhibitions and the library, thus enabling visitors to visit all floors of the museum. These stairs are used to display information in order to recount the history of the house and its occupants.

The building itself was built in 1890 from the plans of architect Hermann Stierlin on the site where the house of Victor Adler, the founder of the Social Democratic Workers' Party, had once stood. Excerpts from Freud's personal correspondence and diaries give details of the family's life above all during the First and Second World Wars: for example when Freud, increasingly appalled by the ongoing wartime atrocities, writes to Lou Andreas-Salomé in November 1914: "I do not doubt that mankind will survive even this war . . . I know that science is only apparently dead, but humanity seems to be really dead."

More than twenty years later, Freud noted in his daily records on March 14, 1938: "Hitler in Vienna", followed the next day by "Checks in publishing house and home" and, just one week later, on March 22, "Anna at the Gestapo". Today we suspect that it was only the arrest of his youngest daughter Anna and the long hours of anxiously waiting for her to return unharmed which induced Freud to leave his home country – in order "to die in freedom", as he would later write in the language of exile.

The exhibition also depicts the period following Freud's expulsion, a time fraught with violence when "collecting houses for Jews" were established, with a total of seventy-six people forced to await their final deportation to extermination camps at Berggasse 19. A separate section on the gallery of the foyer, accessed from the new stairs, is dedicated to Freud's successful flight into exile in London with his closest family, to his brother Alexander and the fate of his sisters Rosa, Marie, Pauline and Adolfine, and their murder in the Nazi extermination camps Theresienstadt and Treblinka. The gallery not only features the cabin trunk used to ship the Freud family's possessions into exile but also – from this elevated position – looks down on Berggasse, that Freud left for good on June 4, 1938, after living and working here for forty-seven years.

## Hidden Thoughts of a Visual Nature. An Exhibition of Conceptual Art

Selected works of the Sigmund Freud Museum art collection

*Curator: Sigmund Freud Museum /  
Monika Pessler*

Now as then, the historical staircase, which is an integral part of the new museum concept, connects the living spaces on the mezzanine level with the “doctor’s apartment” on the upper ground floor where Freud had his office from 1896 to 1908: The permanent exhibition “Hidden Thoughts of a Visual Nature” is on show here now – a presentation of selected works from the Sigmund Freud Museum’s collection of conceptual art that was established in 1989 with an installation by American artist Joseph Kosuth.

Today, twelve selected works by John Baldessari, Wolfgang Berkowski, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Jessica Diamond, Georg Herold, Susan Hiller, Ilya Kabakov, Joseph Kosuth, Sherrie Levine, Haim Steinbach, Franz West and Heimo Zobernig are on display in the rooms of Freud’s “first” office.

The works by Joseph Kosuth and Heimo Zobernig are exhibited in the former waiting room, that served as the meeting place for the famed Wednesday Psychological Society from 1902 onwards: Kosuth’s installation encourages the integration of new thoughts into the existing material. Zobernig’s piece also places the structural similarity between vision and reality at the centre of attention once again.

Exhibited on the veranda are works by Wolfgang Berkowski and Sherrie Levine in which found objects and linguistic finds become leading artistic figures. In the treatment room, where analysts, reclining on the couch, developed the “talking cure” method together with Freud, core themes of psychoanalysis are incorporated into the artistic investigations: Georg Herold answers the question “whether our ‘civilized’ sexual morality is worth the sacrifice which it imposes on us” with critical wit. Steinbach draws attention to the possibilities of communication in the course of the psychoanalytic therapy, bringing up the subject of the “talking cure” with an “AHA!” emblazoned on the wall. For John Baldessari, photographic references form the starting point for visualising the affinity and the discrepancy of the un-canny, while Susan Hiller tests the idea of “recognising oneself in others” in her extensive examination of archive material from Sigmund Freud’s estate. Franz West’s “Liège” from 1989 is exhibited at the centre. Where once Freud’s couch is thought to have stood, its crudely welded counterpart now resides on a white plinth; rather than inviting people to rest a while, instead it makes reference to the instrumental nature of the psychoanalytic setting.

In the room in which Freud wrote *The Interpretation of Dreams* we find Jessica Diamond’s self- and other-referential piece “Me Constellation”. Where once Sigmund Freud’s desk is thought to

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## Sigm. Freud

MUSEUM

have stood, today Ilya Kabakov unfolds his specific symbolism with found items of furniture: The artistic arrangement emphasises the room's one-time purpose, adding the autobiographical story "The Man Who Flew Into His Picture".

In the kitchen, through which patients could once leave the office discreetly after finishing their session, Pier Paolo Calzolari presents "Avido" (Engl. "greed"), a piece which highlights the situation of sexual desire.

With its preserved original layout of rooms, not only the "birthplace of psychoanalysis" is clearly defined. Today, the works of conceptual art, on permanent display for the first time, also contribute to those aspects with which Freud once occupied himself here: Some take gender relations as their theme, others the potential discrepancy between experience and memory or between individual and societal (self-)determination. The intimate, mutually conditional relationship between art and its surrounding space is fundamentally different here to the criteria of the neutral "White Cube", as is generally favoured for showcasing contemporary art: in this case the artworks corresponding with Freud's former workplace and all of its historical implications merge with their surroundings at this location to form a unity of effect.

## ARCHITECTURE, DESIGN, AND RENOVATION 2020

The international architecture competition for the museum renovation and expansion was won by a group of architects that consists of Hermann Czech, Walter Angonese, and ARTEC / Bettina Götz and Richard Manahl. With its prudent and careful modernization of the museum, the architectural concept retained the original character of Freud's living and working spaces. Visitors walk through the museum following the layout of the rooms in which they learn about their histories, how they were used, and gain insights into how they used to be furnished. In the new exhibition on the mezzanine level, which includes bespoke display cases, visitors learn about psychoanalysis, how it was developed, as well as about its founder Sigmund Freud and his family. According to Hermann Czech, who was instrumental in the design of this exhibition and the museum's spaces, "These rooms are a museum in their own right. That being the case, there are only structural, partly concealed traces left from their historical usages. These authentic commemoration spaces are the cause for, and central subject of, the architectural intervention, for they are the ambiances of historical personages and not just architectural substance."

In this vein, traces of former usage on the walls were uncovered: original wall paintings, wallpaper, traces of fabrics that were attached to the walls, and even a telephone line in daughter Anna Freud's bedroom. These elements were authenticated by conservators and provide insight into how the rooms were used during Freud's time. A selection of photographs secretly taken of

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## Sigm. Freud

MUSEUM

the interior of Berggasse 19 with remarkable courage and technical know-how by Edmund Engelman in 1938 while the apartment was under surveillance by the Gestapo, show us how the original interior and furnishings of the practice spaces looked prior to Freud's 1938 flight. The architectural interventions therefore demark a separation of service and operative spaces from those of the museum whose function it is to preserve history. Only the necessary accessibility additions, such as the construction of an elevator and fire escape, required the use of historical ancillary rooms.

### **LIBRARY OF PSYCHOANALYSIS**

With its collection of approximately 40,000 books and other media, the Sigmund Freud Museum library is Europe's largest specialized library on psychoanalysis. Formerly located in the Freud family's private rooms, it is now accessible to users one floor higher, on the bel étage. The new reading room, equipped with state-of-the-art technology, can be used as a multipurpose lecture hall for in-house or external events. One of the library rooms is dedicated to psychoanalyst Michael Turnheim, and contains books and furniture from his estate. An additional room can be used as a seminar room. The entire bel étage level of Berggasse 19 is dedicated to research, and together with the Library of Psychoanalysis is also the home to a comprehensive archive as well as workspaces.