



MAJDANEK

MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

A GUIDE

MAJDANEK

MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

A GUIDE



LUBLIN 2014





CONTENTS

- 4 Konzentrationslager Lublin
- 8 The First Martyrdom Museum in the World
- 10 Difficult Beginnings
- 12 The Historical Landscape of Majdanek
- 14 Commemoration

- 22 The Museum Today
- 23 In Storage
- 24 Historical Collections
- 26 Artistic Collections
- 28 The Archives: 180 Meters of Shelves Documenting the Past
- 32 Specialist Library Holdings
- 33 The Museum Exhibition
- 40 Temporary Exhibitions
- 42 The Conservation of Original Camp Objects
- 46 Researching the History of KL Lublin and Museum Practice
- 47 Publishing
- 48 Museum Education
- 52 Majdanek Days – An Annual Encounter with the Past
- 54 Branches of the State Museum at Majdanek

- 60 How to Visit Majdanek
- 61 Guides
- 62 Opening Hours
- 63 Practical Information
- 64 Outline of a Visit



Prisoner field IV, aerial photograph, August 1944

Fencing of the prisoner fields, 1944



KONZENTRATIONSLAGER LUBLIN

The State Museum at Majdanek was created on the grounds of the former German KL Lublin (Konzentrationslager Lublin – Lublin Concentration Camp), which functioned on the outskirts of Lublin from October 1941 to July 1944. Approximately 150,000 people passed through the camp during this period, of whom nearly 80,000 died.

Among the camps operating during World War II in Germany and German-occupied countries, Majdanek was distinctive because of not only its location (along the busy road linking Lublin with Chełm and Zamość), but also its many functions. Majdanek was a reservoir of cheap labor, a concentration camp for prisoners from almost 30 countries, a center for the extermination of Jews, a penal and transit camp for the rural population of the Lublin area, and a place of execution for people brought here from the prison in Lublin Castle.

“Majdanek will be preserved as a museum in memory of human suffering and a visible sign of the crimes the Germans committed . . .”

Andrzej Witos, chairman of the Polish-Soviet Commission for Investigating the German Crimes Committed at Majdanek, September 12, 1944



Zyklon B canister

Warning sign on the inner fence, 1944

The conditions in which the prisoners lived were very primitive. The barracks they lived in gave no effective protection against winter, and had no sanitary facilities for most of the time. Hunger, disease, and backbreaking labor made things worse. The prisoners always felt that their lives were in danger. They died as a result of the deplorable living conditions and diseases; the SS garrison murdered the weak and the sick. Jews had to pass through selection, as a result of which they could be put to death in the gas chambers.

The tragic history of the camp at Majdanek ended on July 22, 1944, when the Germans abandoned it in fear of approaching Soviet troops. Together with the Germans, the last transport of prisoners was sent to Auschwitz. In their hasty escape, the Germans tried to destroy the traces of what they had done. They set fire to the crematorium

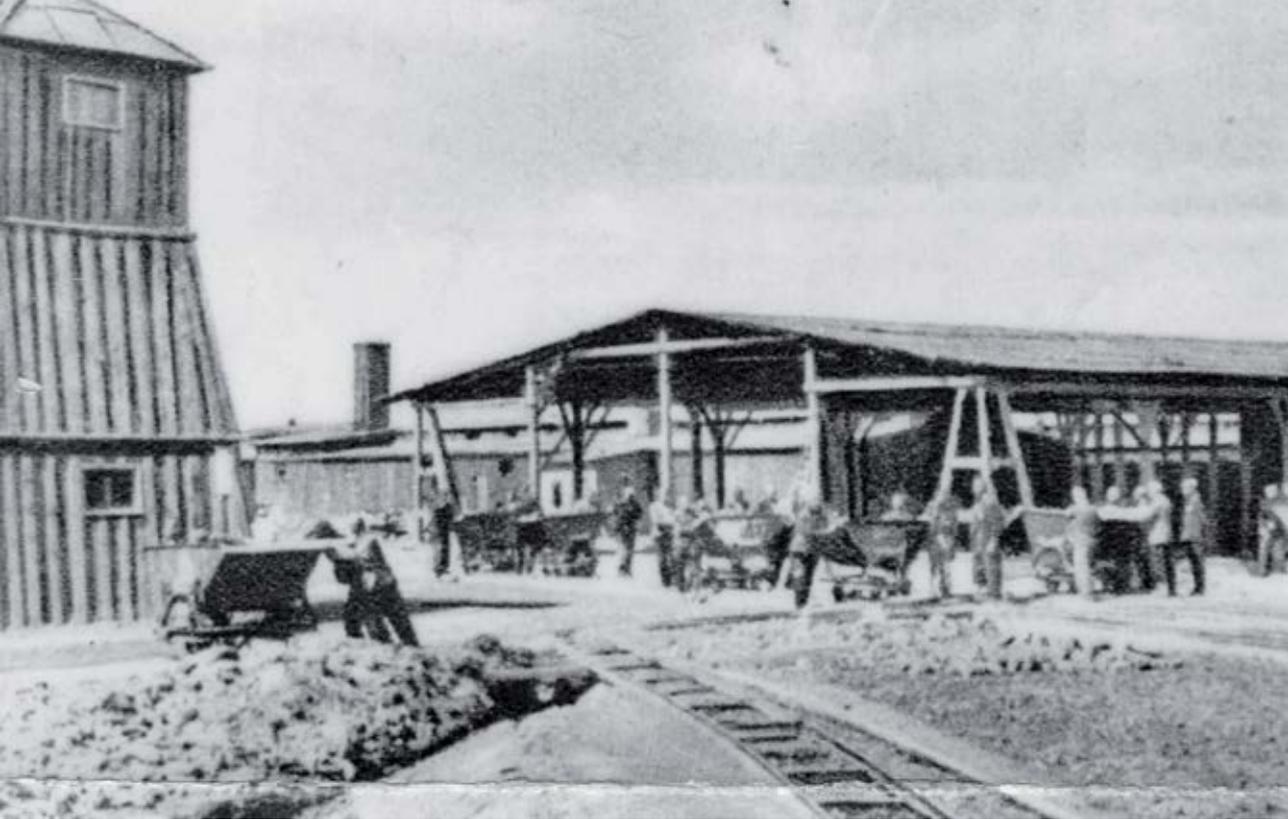
building and buried the records of the camp offices after first trying to burn them. When the Red Army entered the grounds of the camp the following day, they found about a thousand Soviet prisoners of war still there.

In short order, an NKVD prison for soldiers of the Polish Home Army and Peasants' Battalions was set up in the camp barracks. German prisoners were also held here. Some of the area was converted to barracks. By late July and August 1944, crowds of Lublin residents and relatives of murdered people were coming to Majdanek.

The Polish-Soviet Commission for Investigating the German Crimes Committed at Majdanek began working in August 1944.

A transport of deportees from the Zamość region on the way to Majdanek, July 1943





Prisoners laboring at road building, 1943

The guard at the entrance gate, 1943





THE FIRST MARTYRDOM MUSEUM IN THE WORLD

Less than a month after the liquidation of the camp, the idea of creating a museum on its grounds came up in Lublin. The Polish Committee for National Liberation approved the idea and, on October 17, 1944, appointed a special commission responsible for the institutional establishment of the museum, which began functioning in early November that same year. Thus the first memorial museum in the world documenting events connected with World War II arose at Majdanek.

Metal identification tag with camp number, found on the Majdanek grounds



Lublin residents looking around Majdanek. In the foreground is the burned-down crematorium, and the city can be seen in panorama on the horizon, July 1944



DIFFICULT BEGINNINGS

“Article 1. The grounds of the former Nazi concentration camp at Majdanek together with all the buildings and equipment found there shall be preserved in perpetuity as a Monument to the Suffering of the Polish People and Other Peoples.”

Law of July 2, 1947, on Commemorating the Suffering of the Polish People and Other Peoples at Majdanek

Repair of one of the guard towers, 1946



One of the tasks of the State Museum at Majdanek (Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku) was to secure the evidence of the atrocities committed in the camp. When the decision to create the Museum was taken, many of the original buildings had already been destroyed. Establishing the institution did not stop the pillaging on a mass scale by soldiers stationed here, and civilians. Soldiers did the most damage. They tore some wooden buildings down for firewood and sold parts of the camp furnishings for next to nothing. At first, the army controlled the entire grounds of the camp, aside from a single barracks and the crematorium, which the newly formed Museum took over. The majority of the military units left Majdanek in the fall of 1945, but the last of them stayed at the grounds of the original camp construction warehouses until December 14, 1949.

On July 2, 1947, the Polish parliament passed a law giving the Museum legal status. At present, the Museum is a state institution reporting to the Minister of Culture and National Heritage.

Majdanek Week observances, 1948





The first members of the Museum staff. Director Stanisław Brodziak is second from right, 1945

**Staraniem Komitetu Tygodnia dla Uczczenia
Pamięci Pomordowanych na Majdanku
od dnia 1-go do 8-go września
1945 r.**

organizowany zostaje

TYDZIEŃ MAJDANKA

**W ramach tygodnia przeprowadzona zostanie
zbiórka pieniężna na budowę Muzeum.
Pamiętajmy o Majdanku!
Zachowajmy wspólnymi siłami Lubelski Obóz
Śmierci, miejsce kaźni naszych ojców i matek, siostr i braci.
Musimy przekazać potomności wszystkie dowody
zbrodni niemieckich.**

PROGRAM UROCZYSTOŚCI:

12.21 wieczór Capistrak na Placu Litewskim, spotkanie zebrała na Fundus Własności Zbrodni przez Programu miasta, wesele po-
godzi. 20-24

21.1 wieczór Akademię Teatru w Katowicach.
godzi. 8-10
godzi. 10-20 Akademia w Teatrze Wielkim.

22.3 wieczór Działka na Placu Sobieskiego organizacja petycyjnych, obywatelskich, zarobkowych, społecznych, innych węgierskich
godzi. 8-10
godzi. 11-15 Plac Św. Jerzego Akademia: Po odwołaniu i przeniesieniu aktywności uczestników przed budynkiem Muzeum
i wycieczka do miejsc kaźni.

godzi. 10-12 Koncert sportowy w Sali Towarzystwa Muzycznego.

4.5 wieczór „Wiosna Majdanka” w Sali Teatru im. Dmochowskiego.
godzi. 12-14

W ciągu całego tygodnia zbiórka pieniężna w lokalach i na ulicy.

Majdanek Week poster with information about a fundraising drive for the construction of the Museum, September 1945

A group of Polish soldiers on the road between field V and the crematorium, August 1944



THE HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE OF MAJDANEK

“We also went there to check whether those accounts about the monstrosity of putting people to death with gas might not be exaggerated. It turned out that not only were they not exaggerated, but they did not begin to convey the enormity of the horror because the chamber, as big as a factory hall, was capable of putting hundreds of people to death in the course of a few minutes . . . Next to it was a post for an SS man with a peephole making it possible safely to observe the death throes of the naked people herded there. All around were labels from the canisters: *Zyklon, Giftgas! Cyangehalt 1500 gm.*”

Tadeusz Perkowski, eyewitness to the building of Majdanek and its liquidation in 1944

Part of the forested field I (at right) and front of the prisoner camp, mid-1950s



The first concept for setting up the Museum arose in 1949. Prisoner barracks remained only in field III. Bathhouses, gas chambers, and the crematoria were also preserved. Storage and workshop barracks were to serve as exhibition space, and the commandant’s office and SS barracks were designated as the Museum’s office and administrative space. An oak forest, symbolizing a proto-Slavic sacred grove, was planted in the other four prisoner fields. Fulfillment of this plan began in 1949. After more than a decade, however, the growing trees began to eclipse the camp structures and neutralize the emotional impact of the place; the roots of the trees also damaged the barracks floors and sanitary installations.

The Lublin architect Romuald Dylewski prepared a new concept for the spatial utilization of Majdanek in the 1960s. It called for removing the trees and bushes, and preserving the authentic character of the site. The historical buildings underwent thorough conservation and part of the fencing of the prisoner fields was reconstructed. At a later date, a service pavilion for tourists was added, along with an administrative building containing the archives, a library, and storage space for the collections.

To a large degree this concept shaped the contemporary historical landscape of Majdanek. Its central part consists of the remains of the prisoner camp, surrounded by a double barbed-wire fence and guard towers. Wooden barracks in one of the prisoner fields and the warehouses and workshops located at right angles to them recall the tragedy of life in the camp.

A structure of exceptional historical value is the bunker containing the gas chambers. They are among the few facilities of their type in existence in Europe. They are also unique because they were fitted for extermination with the use of either Zyklon B or carbon monoxide.

Another eloquent symbol of Nazi crime is the so-called new crematorium, situated directly adjacent to prisoner field V. In the building, which originally had 12 rooms, remaining equipment includes the crematorium furnaces and the autopsy table used for plundering the corpses. On the grounds of the Museum, in what is known as middle field I (the space between prisoner fields), there also stands the barracks where a crematorium was located earlier.

Beyond prisoner field V, visitors to Majdanek will also catch sight of further evidence of Nazi extermination policies. More than 18,000 Jewish prisoners from Majdanek and labor camps in Lublin were shot in ditches specially dug there on November 3, 1943, in the operation code-named Erntefest [Harvest Festival]. This event was the last chapter of Aktion Reinhardt, which aimed at the extermination of the Jews in the General Government.



Gas chamber bunker



The crematorium beyond field V

Execution ditches



The Three Eagles Column,
July 1944



COMMEMORATION

The Law of July 2, 1947, gave the grounds of the former concentration camp at Majdanek the name “Memorial to the Suffering of the Polish People and Other Peoples.” Memory of the harrowing events connected with its operation, the desire to pay tribute to those who died and were murdered there, and the need for magnifying the meaning of the place led to the appearance of various forms of commemoration in this space over the decades.

THE THREE EAGLES COLUMN

The first commemoration of the victims of KL Lublin dates from when the camp was still operating. In the roll-call square of field III in May 1943, under the pretext of decorating the prisoner fields, Polish political prisoners erected a concrete column topped by three eagles taking flight. They secretly placed the remains of victims inside the base of the column. The camp SS were convinced that the memorial symbolized a Nazi emblem.



“I gave the birds the form of half-doves, half-eagles. The dove is a symbol of the innocent soul, and the eagle of the nation and victory. I linked the birds in a symbol of victory and embodied them as a trio of Man, Woman, and Child, with their feet resting on the globe they are protecting.”

Albin Maria Boniecki, Majdanek prisoner, creator of the Three Eagles Column



THE MOUND WITH REMAINS OF THE MURDERED



Blessing of the mound, 1947

Remains and bones of the murdered were found in many places on the grounds following the liquidation of the camp. In May 1947, volunteers raised a kurhan mound from the human remains. Young people, soldiers, factory workers, and social organizations joined in, and Stefan Wyszyński, bishop of Lublin at the time, urged the faithful to help. Over the course of several months, 1,300 cubic meters of earth mixed with remains were collected. The mound functioned as commemoration of the victims of the camp until the end of the 1960s. At that time, the remains were deposited below the dome of the newly constructed Mausoleum, where they rest to this day.

The mound at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s



THE MONUMENT TO STRUGGLE AND MARTYRDOM

In response to requests from former prisoners, who regarded the existing forms of commemoration as too modest, an “open competition for a monument honoring the victims of the death camp at Majdanek” was announced in 1967. It evoked great interest among artists from all over Poland. The submission by Wiktor Tołkin and Janusz Dembek was chosen for erection. The building of the monument took two years and involved about 200 people. More than a hundred thousand people attended its unveiling, and Polish Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz represented the national authorities.

The Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom is a large-scale monumental composition composed of three elements with multiple symbolic meanings. The Monument-Gate, alluding to the Gates of Hell in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, leads visitors into the world of the camp. The Road of Homage and Remembrance leads away from the Gate. Its initial segment takes the form of a deep ravine, and at its opposite end stands the Mausoleum, in the form of a dome supported by three columns. “Our fate is a warning to you,” a quotation from Franciszek Fenikowski’s poem *Requiem*, is carved on the frieze.

“When we and our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren are no more, when free people live on the soil of Poland, Europe, and the world, noble people, people bonded in the brotherhood of man – may this moment for all time bear witness to the past and constitute a symbol of eternal memory, eternal glory, and homage to those who suffered martyrs’ deaths at the hands of Nazi genocide perpetrators on the ground of the Majdanek camp.”

Excerpt of the act of dedication of the Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom, as read by Danuta Brzosko-Mędryk, Majdanek prisoner

The Mausoleum



Religious and political leaders from all over the world paid tribute to the victims of Majdanek at the Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom.

It is one of the most recognizable parts of any panoramic view of Lublin today, and the Monument–Gate features in the logo that the State Museum at Majdanek has used since 2007.

Wiktor Tolkin signs an album accompanying the exhibition “If People Remain Silent, the Boulders Will Cry Out: A Monument to the Victims of Majdanek,” 2009





THE SHRINE – A MEMORIAL TO THE UNKNOWN VICTIM

“Look at the prisoner fields... in this fresh, lush grass you cannot see the bare camp soil trodden by thousands of feet. . . . You cannot see what we saw – the everyday heroism that overcame terror, that fought to save humaneness. That is why we ask you not only to remember the innocent victims, but also to respect and acknowledge those who were imprisoned here for belonging to the Polish underground and who refused to submit to an armed enemy in the inhuman camp conditions.”

Message from former prisoners on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp at Majdanek, July 23, 2004

In 1999, on the 55th anniversary of the liquidation of the camp, the artistic installation “The Shrine” – an initiative of former Majdanek prisoners – opened in one of the barracks. Combining sculptural, graphic, and visual elements, it pays homage to all the victims of Majdanek. The 52 spheres symbolize the 52 nationalities who died in KL Lublin regardless of their religion. Its author was Tadeusz Mysłowski and the music was arranged by Zbigniew Bargielski.



“The Shrine” artistic installation



THE MUSEUM TODAY

The mission of the Museum is to cultivate remembrance and develop historical education about the German occupation of the Lublin region during World War II.



Storage for the archival holdings

Buildings in prisoner field III – part of the Museum historical exhibition



The Museum covers an area of almost 90 hectares (222 acres). Historical buildings stand there, along with the infrastructure to serve visitors, researchers, and participants in educational projects. Ten departments oversee the development and proper functioning of the institution. The museums at the Aktion Reinhardt extermination centers Bełżec (since 2004) and Sobibór (since 2012) are branches of the State Museum at Majdanek.

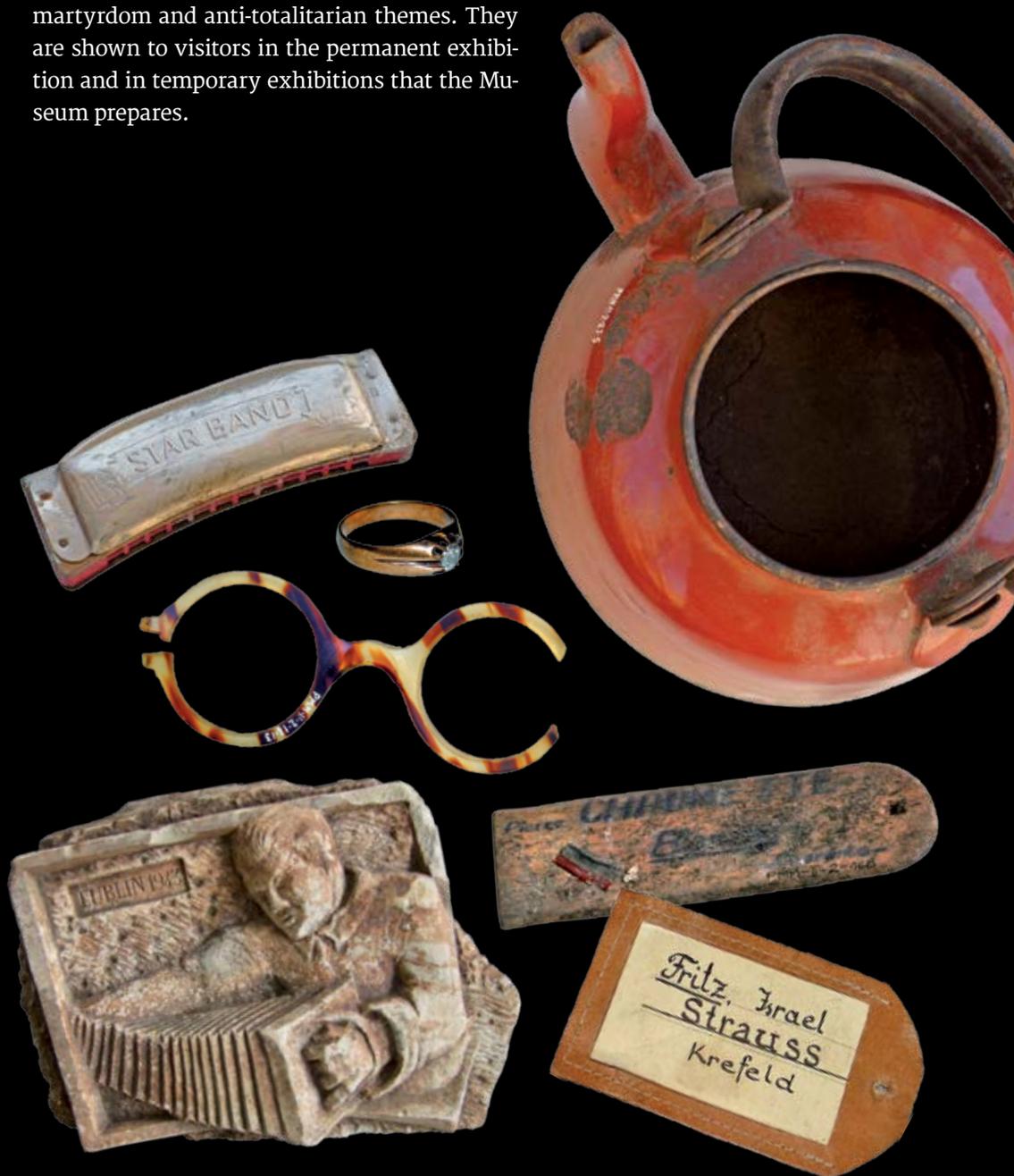
The Museum serves its purpose by commemorating the victims of the German concentration camp at Majdanek and the extermination centers at Bełżec and Sobibór, as well as preserving and providing access to the historical objects.

The collections amassed by the institution represent a base of sources for scholarly research, and are cataloged and made accessible. Other aspects of this access include exhibitions and commemorative observances, publishing, educational projects, and participation in scholarly conferences. The Museum Archives are open to historians, former prisoners and their families, and participants in educational activities organized by the Museum.

IN STORAGE

The Museum collects and stores authentic objects that originated in the concentration camp at Majdanek as well as art works made since 1945 on martyrdom and anti-totalitarian themes. They are shown to visitors in the permanent exhibition and in temporary exhibitions that the Museum prepares.

Objects found on the grounds of the camp



HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

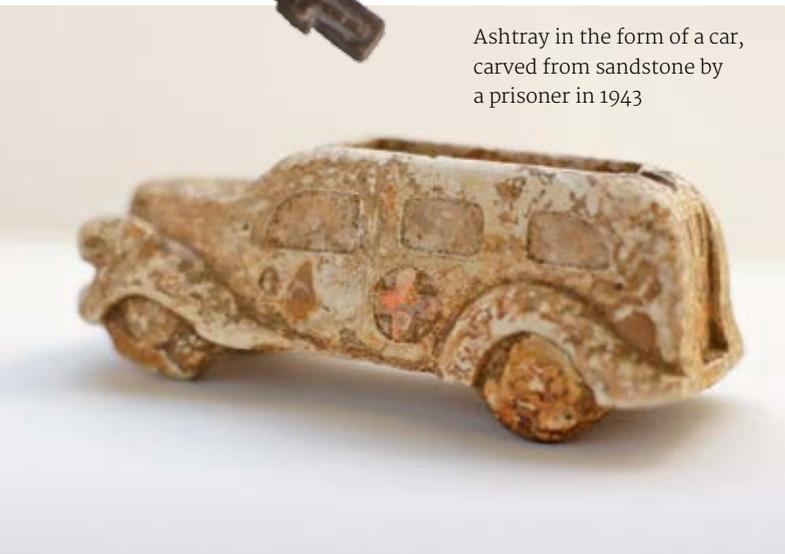
The original objects that the Museum received after the liquidation of the camp, as well as artifacts found on the grounds during construction and archaeological work, possess inestimable documentary value. Among the almost 300,000 exhibits of this type, the overwhelming majority comprise the collection of prisoner footwear. There are

280,000 shoes belonging to victims of Majdanek and the other camps involved in Aktion Reinhardt. This category of the collections includes other personal effects of the prisoners – taken from them upon arrival in the camp – such as toothbrushes, keys, suitcases, eyeglasses, shaving items, prayer books, and toys.



Rosary made of bread

Prisoner cap with the letter M sewn inside



Ashtray in the form of a car, carved from sandstone by a prisoner in 1943



Torah scrolls found on the grounds after liquidation





Doll in Cracow regional dress brought to the camp



Prayer book

The Museum also collects items illustrating everyday life in the camp, including camp garments and footwear, metal tags with numbers, bunks, mugs, bowls, and warning signs. Cigarette boxes, drawings, and jewelry made by prisoners testify to the artistic activities that developed in the camp.

A separate category consists of original items connected with terror and the killing of prisoners – Zyklon B canisters, whips, crematorium furnaces, vehicle chassis – and the exploitation of corpses – urns for remains, hair, and dental prostheses.

The number of exhibits is growing constantly and is enriched by donations from former prisoners and their families.



Metal mug



ART COLLECTIONS

The oldest of the art works amassed at the Museum date from the period when the camp was functioning, and were made by prisoners. These are mostly drawings, watercolors on paper, and sculptures. Their greatest value lies in their authenticity and documentary importance – they present scenes viewed through the eyes of prisoners. They were made hurriedly, often on a scrap of paper, and therefore do not always represent a high artistic standard. Works made after the war, in turn, are completely different in nature.

“Art was self-defense against surrender by unarmed people. Art is a reminder of what requires liberation in ourselves. Art is the changing of life into a painting.”

Józef Szajna – former prisoner of Auschwitz and Birkenau, participant in the International Triennale of Art at Majdanek, author of the work *The Cage* from the cycle *Genetic Engineering IV*, 1991



Epitaph, Tadeusz Banaś, 1986

The open artistic exhibit “Against War,” organized by the Museum in the 1960s, was a stimulus to assembling a collection of contemporary art works on martyrdom and antiwar themes. The most interesting prize-winning works were purchased from the artists or donated to the Museum. The greatest numbers of art works came into the Museum collections within the framework of the International Triennale of Art, which replaced the earlier all-Poland artistic exhibitions in 1985.

Sketch by Karol Linder from 1944, depicting the extermination of prisoners at the Majdanek camp





Let's End Mass Killing by Onisim Colt of Romania, shown at the Sixth "Majdanek" International Triennale of Art, 2000

Today, there are almost 7,000 paintings, graphics, posters, photographs, sculptures, medals, and folk art items in the contemporary art collection. Among them are works by artists known around the world such as Józef Szajna, Tomasz Kawiak, and Leszek Mądzik. Another large part of the collection is commemorative items issued by the Museum in connection with anniversary observances and exhibitions, such as occasional medals.



Grand Prix of the Sixth "Majdanek" International Triennale of Art – *Bunker b II* by Paweł Warchoł, 2000

THE ARCHIVES: 180 METERS OF SHELVES DOCUMENTING THE PAST



One of the most important documents from the period when the camp was in operation is the incomplete register of prisoners who died in 1942, recording about 7,000 names.

Charred or singed and discovered under a layer of soil among the ruins of the barracks or in trash-cans, the remains of the camp commandant's office records were the first documents in the Museum Archives.

Soon they were supplemented by correspondence related to the purchase of Zyklon B and the trade in prisoners' hair. Lublin scholar Roman Szewczyk came across them in a wrecked car on a street in his hometown. Searches of Polish and foreign archives added to the Museum's initially modest holdings. After efforts lasting years, the Museum obtained photocopies of documents that had been taken to the Soviet Union. Former prisoners and their families donated numerous original documents. These are mostly secret messages smuggled out of the camp, notifications of death or release, and receipts for parcels.

The records found in the Museum Archives can be divided into several groups. The most valuable are the camp administration files, which the occupiers managed to destroy in large measure. Some regulations and orders from the commandant's office, personal files on more than a dozen prisoners, lists of commanders and NCOs, and reports on the number of prisoners in the camp are extant.

Material created outside the camp but directly connected to it is also important to research on the history of KL Lublin. These include files from the SS Central Construction Board in Lublin, the Polish



Red Cross, and private papers of the prisoners. Questionnaires, testimonies, and accounts of former prisoners collected in the Archives since 1944 complement them. Great numbers of them arrived in response to memoir contests organized by the Museum. Aside from written accounts, the Archives also hold audio and video recordings. They are not only an aid to researchers, but also an element of many educational projects.

Today, the shelves of the Museum Archives are home to about 180 m of documents, including 18 m of original records from the camp. They are systematically being digitized, which will make them more accessible. There is a studio furnished with up-to-date equipment for digitizing the collections. Aside from archival material on KL Lublin, the Archives also collect records of the Museum's functioning.

The Museum Archives also provide information about former prisoners. An average of 200 such inquiries arrive annually. Interested parties can also use the online "Index of KL Lublin prisoners" at www.majdanek.eu, which contains data on over 56,000 prisoners. Unfortunately, no records remain of many people who were incarcerated in Majdanek.

Identity document of Icek Boksenbaum authorizing him to reside in the ghetto at Majdan Tatarski



The files include almost

270,000

frames of microfilm,

5,500

photographs,

500

audio recordings and the same number in video.



Work on the digitization of the collections

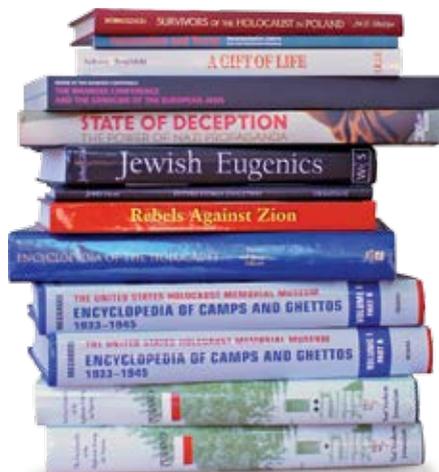
SPECIALIST LIBRARY HOLDINGS

The Museum library possesses a collection of almost 16,000 volumes. It traces its beginnings to Nazi publications propagating the doctrines of national socialism, produced in the Third Reich from 1939–1944 and left behind on the Majdanek grounds by the camp garrison. Specialist journals and books on history, education, and museum practice comprise the majority of the resources.

Works on various concentration, death, POW, and other camps make up a rich subdivision. Among them are systematically acquired publications relevant to the Majdanek camp, beginning with those that appeared while the war was still going on.



The library resources are kept up to date with the latest publications, mostly devoted to war and occupation subjects. An online catalog, available at the Museum website, facilitates the finding of books in the library collection.



THE MUSEUM EXHIBITION

The historical exhibition titled “The Prisoners of Majdanek” is dedicated to the fate of the men, women, and children confined to the concentration camp at Majdanek. It features striped prisoner uniforms, implements of extermination, art works by prisoners, and personal belongings they carried. The exhibition also offers an opportunity to watch and listen to eyewitness accounts by prisoners.

The outdoor exposition complements the historical exhibition. Its central elements are glass display panels with historical commentaries. They are installed inside original camp buildings (the bathhouse, the gas chamber bunker, prisoner barracks in field III, and the crematorium) and along the route visitors follow. These make up a historical trail titled “Konzentrationslager Lublin 1941–1944.” It begins at the foot of the Monument of the Gate and ends at the Mausoleum. It describes the most important buildings and places connected with the history of the camp and presents its appearance when KL Lublin was operating and immediately after its liquidation. Panels with eyewitness accounts by prisoners and members of the SS garrison document important aspects of the functioning of the camp and turning points in the history of Majdanek.



Historical commentaries accompany the original camp items on the exposition.





Das Lager Leben retten
1944-1945



Das Lager Leben retten
1944-1945

Part of the “The Prisoners of Majdanek” exhibition in barracks no. 62



Kochana Matko

ROZBIECIE CZY WSPOLNOTA?
SPLIT OR UNITY?

Text on the white panel, likely describing the historical context or the significance of the sculpture and the title.

ALBION BUNICKI

Text on the red panel, likely providing a biography or details about the individual depicted in the sculpture.





A visualization of the topography of Majdanek can be seen in one of the barracks. Projected archival photographs illustrating its buildings during wartime supplement the three-dimensional model.

Shoes belonging to victims of Aktion Reinhardt, who also died in other camps, are displayed in specially designed cases located in barracks no. 52. The exhibition demonstrates the scale of the atrocities committed in the death camps. The exhibition in the barracks in prisoner field III, in turn, illustrates the conditions in Lublin Concentration Camp. The shoddy construction of the windowless barracks and the bunks with straw mats are a reminder of the primitive conditions in which the prisoners had to exist.









TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS



The grand opening of the exhibition “John Paul II at Majdanek,” marking the 20th anniversary of the pope’s visit to Lublin, 2007



The exhibition “Accusation: Poles Imprisoned at Majdanek in Their Loved Ones’ Letters,” 2011



Opening of the exhibition “Majdanek in Karol Linder’s Drawings,” 2011

The temporary exhibitions presented at the State Museum at Majdanek are documentary and artistic. The purpose of each of them is familiarization with issues of World War II and the occupation of the Lublin region. By showing museum exhibits that are not usually accessible, they supplement the permanent exhibition.

The first exhibition, “Majdanek in the Visual Arts,” dates to as early as November 1944. It consisted of a cycle of drawings presenting various aspects of camp life, made immediately after the liquidation of the camp by the Soviet painter Zinovii Tolkachev.

A special event in the Museum calendar was the holding of the artistic competitions called the “Majdanek” International Triennale of Art. Organized from 1985 to 2004, they included graphics, drawings, photography, and video. Because of the prestige of the exhibition and its international nature, artists and visitors showed great interest in it. Artists from over 70 countries submitted almost 15,000 works to the seven editions of the Triennale.

For several years the Museum has concentrated on temporary exhibitions presenting the historical collections and the activities of the institution. Examples are the exhibitions “Letters from Majdanek: KL Lublin in the Light of Secret Messages” and “Evidence of Crime, Repositories of Memory: The Conservation of Objects and Documents from the Concentration Camp at Majdanek,” or the outdoor exhibition on the origins, construction, and symbolism of the Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom.

Artistic performance by Nobuhiko Utsumi as part of the Sixth “Majdanek” International Triennale of Art, 2000



Special open-air exhibitions devoted to the history of Majdanek and occupation policy are mounted regularly. An example is the 2012 “They Arrived at the Ghetto... And Went into the Unknown...” commemorating the 70th anniversary of Aktion Reinhardt, the extermination of the Jews in German-occupied Poland.





Practical Museum as Museum



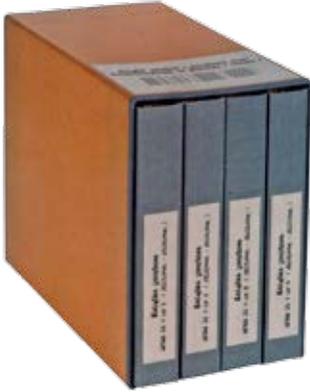
- 1. THE MUSEUM
- 2. THE MUSEUM
- 3. THE MUSEUM
- 4. THE MUSEUM
- 5. THE MUSEUM
- 6. THE MUSEUM
- 7. THE MUSEUM
- 8. THE MUSEUM
- 9. THE MUSEUM
- 10. THE MUSEUM





Part of the “The Displaced from the Zamość Region in the Majdanek Camp” exhibition in barracks no. 62

THE CONSERVATION OF ORIGINAL CAMP OBJECTS



Correspondence books from the Majdanek commandant's office after conservation

Conservation work on the Three Eagles Column. Replica of the original capital was made by Witold Marcewicz



Conservation extends to the monuments located on the Majdanek grounds and buildings belonging to the camp infrastructure. The overwhelming majority are wooden buildings. To this day, 22 residential barracks, 15 barracks that served as warehouses and workshops, 17 guard towers, 2 bathhouse barracks, the female overseers' quarters in the women's camp, the crematorium beyond field V, and the so-called old crematorium are extant.

There are two brick buildings within the Museum boundaries (the gas chamber bunker and the so-called white cottage) as well as almost 90 ruins. Stretches of road and sidewalk also date from when the camp operated.

Archival items are conserved as required. They demand special care because most of them are in no condition to be made accessible. Particularly important documents that have undergone conservation recently are the camp head counts from 1943, the prisoners' cash files, and *Marylka's Diary*, a journal found at Majdanek with entries from March and April 1943, which is one of the few direct eyewitness accounts of the Holocaust.

Books, prayer books and toys carried to the camp, luggage tags, and striped prisoner uniforms have been conserved in the last few years. Almost all the exhibits in the largest category of items – about 266,000 civilian prisoners' shoes – have been disinfected.

-10-

Hiermit ist erwidert, daß die Klage nicht mit Beweisen genügend gestützt ist und daß die dargelegten Tatsachen dem Sachverhalte nicht entsprechen. Die Klage wird abgewiesen. Die Kosten der Klage sind dem Kläger zu Lasten zu setzen. Die Kosten der Klage sind dem Kläger zu Lasten zu setzen.

Am 10. August 1936.

Angeklagter
L. D. ...

Pafawows Muzew
na ...
Wid. ...
Przedsiębiorcy i ...

L. D. ...

-10-

Hiermit ist erwidert, daß die Klage nicht mit Beweisen genügend gestützt ist und daß die dargelegten Tatsachen dem Sachverhalte nicht entsprechen. Die Klage wird abgewiesen. Die Kosten der Klage sind dem Kläger zu Lasten zu setzen. Die Kosten der Klage sind dem Kläger zu Lasten zu setzen.

Am 10. August 1936.

Angeklagter
L. D. ...

Pafawows Muzew
na ...
Wid. ...
Przedsiębiorcy i ...

L. D. ...



RESEARCHING THE HISTORY OF KL LUBLIN AND ISSUES IN MUSEUM PRACTICE

One of the most important findings in recent years is the estimation of the number of victims of the camp on the basis of newly discovered sources. The previously accepted total of human losses was decidedly inflated.

An impressive base of sources for scholarly study has been compiled over the many years the Museum at Majdanek has been in existence. It consists of documents, original camp objects, and library holdings. Numerous searches of archives in Polish and foreign institutions fill in the history of KL Lublin and supplement the store of information.

Research by Museum historians concentrates mostly on subjects connected with the history of the concentration camp at Majdanek, and Nazi policies in occupied Poland and especially the Lublin region, including the history of the extermination centers in Bełżec and Sobibór.

Museum staff also study issues of museum practice, especially educational work.

A great achievement of the Museum is enhanced cooperation with Polish and foreign research institutions. Occasions for this include numerous conferences and meetings, study trips, and international projects that Museum staff take part in. The effects of working together can be seen in Museum publications that print articles by scholars from other centers, and also in publications appearing abroad. Some publications by Museum staff are available online at the Museum website.



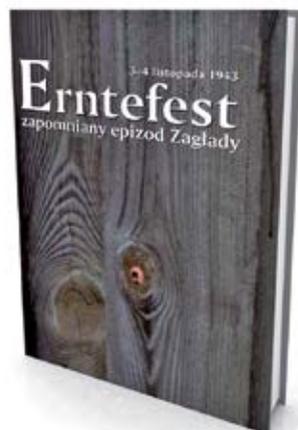
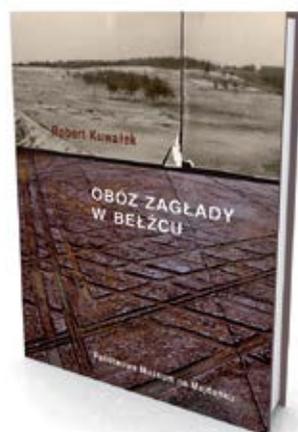
The Museum's stand at the Lublin Book Fair, organized by the Voivodeship Public Library. There is a Book of the Year contest at the Fair. The Museum has won this title twice, in 2010 and 2014.

PUBLISHING

Published since 1965, *Zeszyty Majdanka* [the Majdanek Review] has been the primary medium for results of scholarly research on the history of the concentration camp at Majdanek, the occupation of the Lublin region, and issues in museum and educational practice. It is the only scholarly journal in Poland that covers these fields and is thus a part of the international discourse. The great significance of the journal is also reflected in the fact that renowned foreign historians, whose articles are sometimes groundbreaking, publish there.

Aside from the 26 volumes of *Zeszyty Majdanka* published so far, the Museum brings out many other titles each year. Among them are monographs on previously little-known aspects of the German occupation in the Lublin region, books about historical education at memorial sites, richly illustrated albums about Museum exhibitions, and guide books and booklets. Publications about the Museum collections also enjoy a high priority.

Many recent Museum titles deal with subjects previously treated only sketchily in the literature, such as Robert Kuwałek's monograph on the Bełżec extermination center, a collective study *Erntefest 3-4 listopada 1943 roku – zapomniany epizod Zagłady* [Erntefest of November 3-4, 1943 – a Forgotten Episode in the Holocaust] edited by Wojciech Lenarczyk and Dariusz Libionka, and Tomasz Kranz's books *The Extermination of Jews at Majdanek Concentration Camp* and *Edukacja historyczna w miejscach pamięci* [Historical Education at Memorial Sites].



MUSEUM EDUCATION

“Educational Packet” consisting of the publication *Educational Visits to the State Museum at Majdanek*, a CD with practical tips and materials for working with students, and cards with reproductions of museum exhibits (original camp objects) is an aid to preparing and implementing educational projects.

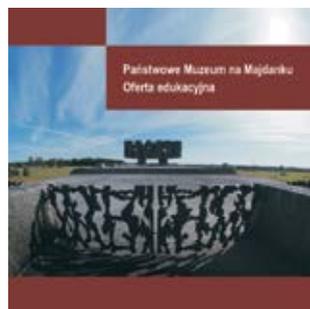


The educational work of the State Museum at Majdanek rests mostly on the concept known as the pedagogy of remembrance. It places special emphasis on the active exploration and learning of history, accompanied by reflection on the events that took place at the concentration camp at Majdanek and other atrocity sites in the Lublin region. Inculcating the proper historical consciousness in participants in educational projects is also important.

Achieving such goals makes it easier to spend time with the original camp material and benefit from the impressive sources in the form of archival holdings and objects from the camp. A very important element of the educational sessions is conversation with eye-witnesses to history – people who were in the concentration camp or ghetto, or who suffered repression during the German occupation in other ways.

The educational offerings of the Museum are not limited to museum lessons that go beyond the traditional guided tours of the permanent exhibition. They also cover such themes as the fate of children in the camp, conditions of life there, or art works by prisoners.

During study days, young people work with source material and independently acquire knowledge on given aspects of the functioning of the camp. During active visits, the participants can also share their new information with their peers. History workshops lasting several days give an even better insight into the history of KL Lublin. They are frequently oriented toward a given end-product of the pupils' work. This might be a brochure, multimedia presentation, or a small exhibition.



Within the framework of intercultural education, the Museum organizes projects with international groups. They often resemble historical workshops or study residencies. Often, however, they take the form of work camps or lessons combined with physical work on the Museum grounds to maintain the camp space and original objects.

It is usually teachers who suggest youth visits to memorial sites. The Museum also directs its offerings to them. Specialist programs acquaint participants with the methods of educational work in institutions of this type. They are often seminars, which are also addressed to university-level students.



The full range of Museum educational offerings is available online at www.majdanek.eu





Young people study profiles of Majdanek perpetrators and inquire into their motives



Presentation of the Museum collections

The Museum also conducts training to prepare students to act as guides to the former concentration camp at Majdanek and the historical exhibition. Sessions prepared by Museum staff members cover issues connected with the German occupation of Poland, the history of KL Lublin, museum didactics, and methods of guiding visitors.

Participants at a work camp help maintain the original remains of the camp





In 2009, the Majdanek Days began with the opening of an exhibition titled “Evidence of Crime, Repositories of Memory: The Conservation of Objects and Documents from the Concentration Camp at Majdanek”



MAJDANEK DAYS – AN ANNUAL ENCOUNTER WITH THE PAST

The Majdanek Days were initiated in 1945 and have been one of the most important fixtures on the Museum calendar ever since. The formula for the Majdanek Days has undergone many changes but the idea remains the same – recalling events connected with the functioning of KL Lublin and commemorating its victims.

Over the course of several days in October, a full schedule of meetings, discussions, films, and exhibition openings offers a chance to learn about the

history of the camp at Majdanek and the work of the Museum. The program of the Days is always sufficiently varied that it attracts interest from school and university-level students, members of the public, and specialists with a scholarly interest in memorial sites.

Free tours of the exhibition with a Museum guide have recently become the final point on the Majdanek Days schedule.





Fragment of the permanent exhibition presenting history of the death camp in Bełżec in comparison with the Nazi extermination policy



Monument in Belzec



MUSEUM OF THE FORMER DEATH CAMP IN SOBIBÓR

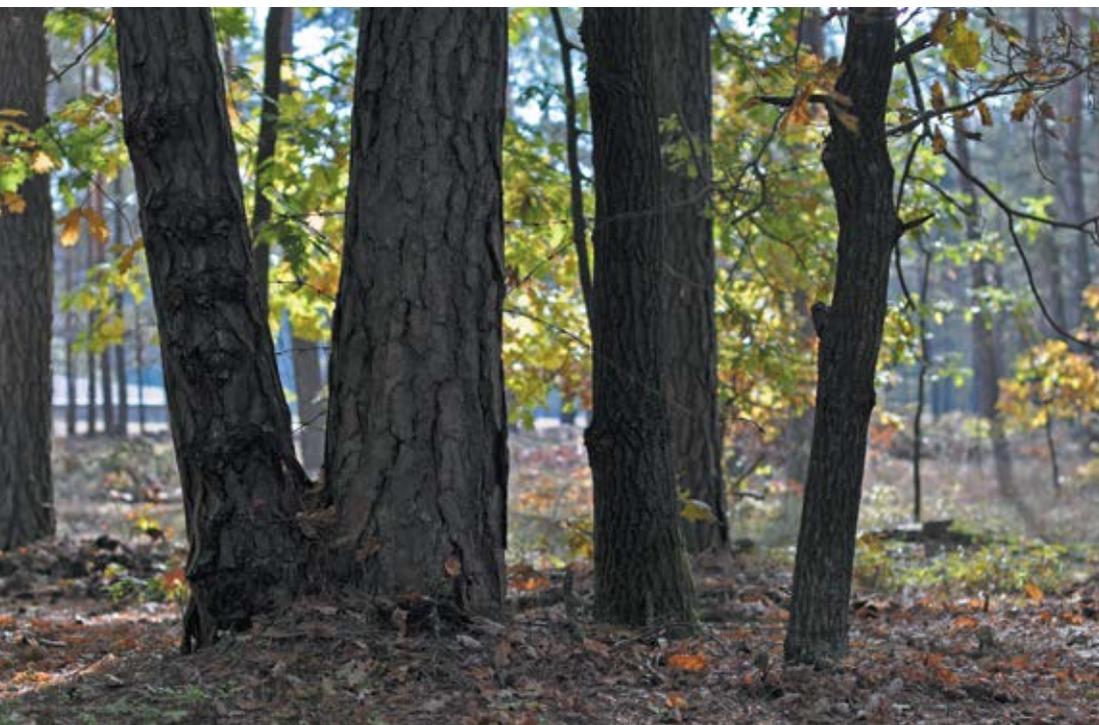


Identification tag of a boy from the Netherlands which was found during an archaeological survey in Sobibór

The Museum is located 100 km northeast of Lublin. It commemorates the 170,000 Jewish women, men, and children murdered in the gas chambers at the Sobibór camp. The victims were mostly Jewish residents of the Lublin region and Jews from Holland, Slovakia, Bohemia, and France. The camp operated from May 1942 to October 1943. An uprising during which some of the prisoners managed to escape was a contributing factor to its liquidation.

An outdoor expositions about the death camp in Sobibór and extermination of Jews in the General Government can be seen at the Museum. Work is currently underway on a new memorial and a museum building containing a permanent exhibition. Artifacts resulting from archaeological research at the site of the camp will be presented there. Among the most important discoveries in recent years are the foundations of the gas chambers.

Vestiges of the barbed wire entanglements





Foundations of the gas chambers uncovered in 2014

HOW TO VISIT MAJDANEK



For the benefit of individual tourists from Poland and abroad, a multimedia info-kiosk has been opened in the Visitor Service Centre. It allows visitors to trace the history of the camp at Majdanek and learn about the occupation period in Lublin and the Lublin region. Archival and contemporary photographs from the Museum collections accompany the texts.

The first visitors appeared at Majdanek immediately after its liquidation. From then on, the need to commemorate the victims and learn about the tragic events that occurred here has drawn large numbers of people to the State Museum at Majdanek. For several years, admissions have remained steady at 120–130,000 people per year. Almost 50% of them are foreign tourists, the greatest numbers of whom come from such countries as Israel, the USA, Germany, the UK, France, and Canada.

Entry to the grounds of the Museum is free. You should first make your way to the Visitor Service Centre, where you can reserve the services of a guide, obtain essential information, and purchase Museum publications. Temporary exhibitions are also presented here.

Bookshop with Museum publications



When visiting the grounds of the former concentration camp at Majdanek, it is worth paying special attention to the following objects:

- the men's bathhouse barracks;
- the gas chamber bunker;
- the barracks with the three-dimensional model of KL Lublin;
- the historical exhibition in the barracks no. 62;
- the exhibition with the shoes of Aktion Reinhardt victims;
- the multimedia exhibition "The Shrine" – a memorial to the unknown victim;
- the buildings in prisoner field III with barracks presenting life in the camp;
- The Three Eagles Column;
- the crematorium;
- the execution ditches where 18,000 Jews were shot during the Erntefest operation;
- The Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom consisting of the Monument-Gate, the Road of Homage and Remembrance, and the Mausoleum.

GUIDES

You can visit the grounds of the State Museum at Majdanek individually or in groups. In either case it is recommended that you take advantage of the services of a guide with a Museum license. This allows visitors to obtain full knowledge about the functioning of KL Lublin and makes it easier to move around the extensive area of the exhibition.

The Museum guides work in Polish, English, German, French, and Italian. A fee is charged for guide services.



Informational panels with maps of the Museum and directional arrows are located along the visiting route. Before setting out on your visit you can purchase Museum information materials and a guide to the historical objects.

You can reserve guide services:

- by email:
centrum@majdanek.eu
- by telephone:
+48 81 710 28 33
(during hours when the Visitor Service Centre is open)
- by fax: **+48 81 710 28 65**
- in person at the Visitor Service Centre

MUSEUM OPENING HOURS



	April to October	November to March
Grounds and historical buildings	9.00–18.00	9.00–16.00
Visitor Service Centre		
Historical exhibition, barracks no. 62	9.00–17.00*	9.00–16.00*
Multimedia exhibition „The Shrine”, barracks no. 47	9.00–17.00*	closed

* Closed on Mondays and public holidays

Note!

Admission ends 30 minutes before closing time.

The Museum Archives, Library, and other departments are open from Monday through Friday (except holidays) from **7.30** to **15.30**.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The time required for visiting depends on the individual interests of the visitors. At least 90 minutes should be reserved for a visit to the Museum. Visiting with a guide takes 2 hours.

The historical route along which the objects are located is about 3 km long.

Photography and filming for touristic purposes is permitted and free of charge, but photographs and films originating in this way may not be published or used for commercial purposes.

Lighting candles in the historical buildings is prohibited. Homage may be paid to the victims by lighting candles or leaving flowers at the foot of the Monument-Gate and under the dome of the Mausoleum.

Because of the historical objects connected with extermination and the content of the exhibitions, children under the age of 14 should not visit the Museum. If they come here, they must be at all times under the protection of an adult who assumes full responsibility for the behavior of the children and any effect that a visit to the former camp may have on them.

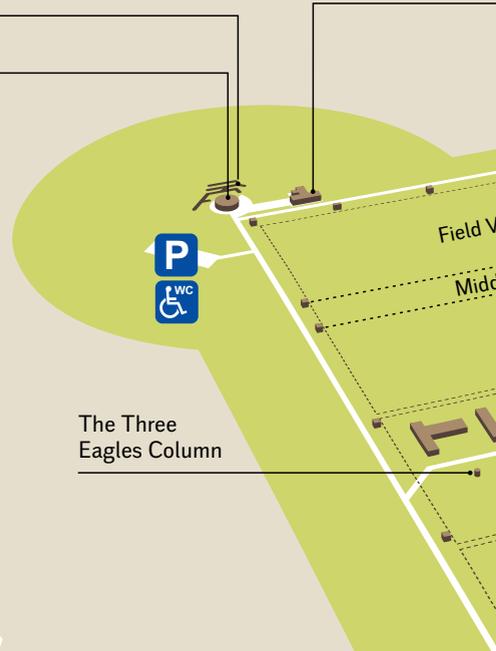
Animals may not be brought onto the Museum grounds, with the exception of guide dogs.



OUTLINE OF A VISIT

Execution ditches

Mausoleum



The Three
Eagles Column



LUBLIN

The State Museum
at Majdanek

Crematorium

"Camp Conditions" exhibition

"The Little Castle"

"Shoes" exhibition (barracks 52)

Historical exhibition (barracks 62)

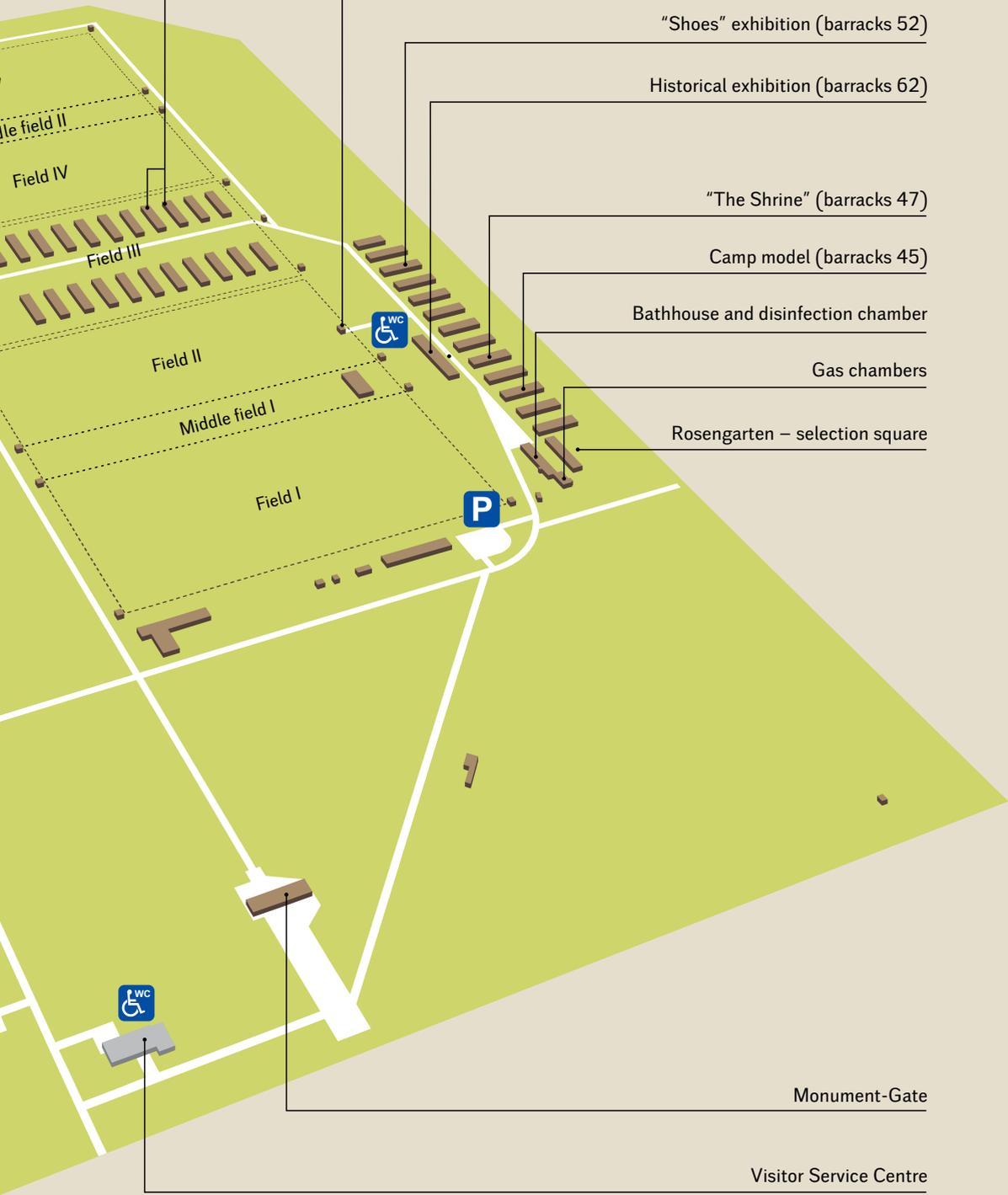
"The Shrine" (barracks 47)

Camp model (barracks 45)

Bathhouse and disinfection chamber

Gas chambers

Rosengarten – selection square



Monument-Gate

Visitor Service Centre

EDITED BY

Agnieszka Kowalczyk-Nowak

TRANSLATED FROM POLISH BY

William Brand

PHOTOGRAPHS

Archives of the State Museum at Majdanek, Ewa Bąbol, Aleksandra Ciesielczyk, Andreas Esters, Edward Hartwig, Katarzyna Jureczko, Krzysztof Kokowicz, Beata Król, Małgorzata Łaniak, Piotr Maciuk, Izabella Małecka, Edyta Nowak, Marcin Opiłowski, Janusz Stasiak, Krzysztof Tarkowski, Izabela Tomasiewicz

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Izabela Tomasiewicz

Second edition, revised

© Copyright by

Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku, Lublin 2014

ISBN 978-83-62816-22-4

PRINTED BY

Drukarnia ALF-GRAF

ul. Abramowicka 6, 20-442 Lublin



THE STATE MUSEUM AT MAJDANEK
ul. Droga Męczenników Majdanka 67, 20-325 Lublin
www.majdanek.eu

Visitor Service Centre
tel.: +48 81 710 28 33
email: centrum@majdanek.eu

Archives
tel.: +48 81 710 28 60
email: archiwum@majdanek.eu

Administrative office
tel.: +48 81 710 28 21 fax: +48 81 710 28 65
email: sekretariat@majdanek.eu

Museum spokesperson
tel.: +48 81 710 28 31
email: rzecznik@majdanek.eu