

Museum of the History of Polish Jews

JEWISH Cultural Heritage

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES MARCH 2020-FEBRUARY 2022

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POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews

Joint institution of culture



Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland



CITY OF WARSAW



ASSOCIATION OF THE JEWISH HISTORICAL INSTITUTE OF POLAND

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Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland



Working together for a green, competitive and inclusive Europe

Partners of the "Jewish Cultural Heritage" Project:











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INTRODUCTION

Ladies and Gentlemen!

We present to you a report summing up the first two of the four years of the "Jewish Cultural Heritage" project, realised thanks to the grant of 10 million Euro from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway as part of the EEA Fund, and to the state budget.

> It is one of the most vital projects run by PO-LIN Museum together with the Norwegian partners, and a major undertaking related to the protection of both tangible and non-tangible heritage of Polish Jews in the modern history of Poland. Its significance for the Museum is linked to the fact that the acronym JCH [ŻDK in Polish] indeed stands for almost the entire programme activity of our institution. We must emphasise that in a broader, national context it is one of the most elaborate educational-cultural projects-multi--threaded and addressed to a diverse group of recipients, at the centre of which are Polish Jews and the shared Polish-Jewish history. Moreover, the JCH project enables us to convey a great ethical message and to teach about tolerance and diversity, about peaceful coexistence of people and nations. Today, in these turbulent, pandemic times, when the tension in our part of Europe is rapidly growing, these values seem to be of particular importance.

I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to all our partners with whom we have been running the "Jewish Cultural Heritage" project for the past two years. I wish to thank the governments and the representatives of grant donors for their trust, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage—the grant supervisor for the support and for a donation from the state budget. This grand undertaking is indeed a collaborative effort.

Zygmunt Stępiński **Director of POLIN Museum of the History** of Polish Jews



Zygmunt Stępiński

POLIN Museum Director





Łucja Koch

Head of Education Department, **POLIN Museum**

"JEWISH **CULTURAL** HERITAGE" 2020-2024

"Jewish Cultural Heritage" is a project run by **POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews** from March 2020 through April 2024 in partnership with Norwegian institutions: the Norwegian Centre for Holocaust and Minority Studies, the European Wergeland Centre, the Falstad Centre and the Jewish Museums in Oslo and Trondheim, as well as the Emanuel **Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw,** Poland. The project aims to protect and popularise the heritage of Polish Jews through the implementation of educational and cultural programmes.

The first activities carried out as part of the JCH project coincided with the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which posed many unexpected challenges to us and to our partners. Without losing much time, we transferred the majority of our activities online, which allowed us to reach audiences all across the globe. It offered us an opportunity to expand the scope of the project and thus to reach new groups of recipients, including those with limited access to culture and education. We continue to work both online and on-site, adjusting the on-site offer to the current pandemic situation while remaining present in the Internet.

Throughout 50 months of the JCH project duration, together with our partners, we have planned to realise close to 5,200 events for slightly more than one million participants in both Poland and Norway. Today, half-way through the project, we have already conducted ca 4,500 events for over 1.7 million participants. Nonetheless, we do not cease in our endeavours-we keep looking for creative ideas and forms of activity which would engage new groups of recipients.

Łucja Koch Head of Education Department **POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews**







"They Fill No Space" exhibition on display on Bulwary Wiślane in Warsaw

BILATERAL ACTIVITIES WITH THE NORWEGIAN **PARTNERS**

Despite difficulties in travelling and organising on-site events, we carried out intensve activities in collaboration with our Norwegian partners. Together with the Jewish Museums in Oslo and Trondheim, we organised, among others, eight international educational online meetings for museum employees. We presented the exhibition titled "They Fill No Space", produced in cooperation with the Norwegian Centre for Holocaust and Minority Studies, in five Polish cities. In 2021, the exhibition, accompanied by local educational programmes, was viewed by ca 140,000 people.

The European Wergeland Centre was our partner in a series of workshops for pupils and teachers from Poland and Norway titled "Combating Xenophobia, Racism and Antisemitism. Today!." We organised the international conference "Emotions and History. How to Discuss Difficult Subjects" together with the Falstad Centre; it attracted 743 viewers. The Falstad Centre was also a co-organizer of an international seminar dedicated to digitisation addressed to over 1,700 people, or of an educational programme on working with migrants.



Participants of partner workshops with the European Wergeland Centre









The Falstad Centre and POLIN Museum during the seminar



Presentation during the seminar on digitization titled: "Digitizing Memory"

NPS: 82

the recommendation rate for events dedicated to teachers

> NPS (or Net Promoter Score) is a widely used market research metric which measures tendency to recommend. It ranges from -100 to +100. Positive NPS values are considered good results, and values above 50 are considered excellent. The average NPS score for cultural events in Poland is 36 (2016)

43% of the teachers surveyed

had never used any museum educational offer for schools

98% of teachers

are satisfied with their participation in the POLIN online classes

PROGRAMMES FOR STUDENTS

Mere dozen or so days after the Museum had closed its door due to the pandemic, we launched online educational workshops for pupils, run within a curriculum programme via Zoom platform. This form of activity identified the problems encountered by schools during the first confrontation with the pandemic reality. It also enabled those students who would otherwise be excluded due to their place of residence or economic conditions to attend. After the restrictions had been lifted, the workshops continued in both online and on-site form. In total, the record number of almost 50,000 pupils participated in circa 3,000 classes in the years 2020-2021.





<u>"Museum in a Box"</u> is a novel narrative game with a map, archival photos and replicas of objects from the POLIN collection. Thanks to this tool developed within the JCH project, teachers can conduct interesting classes and children learn through play about Jewish culture and tradition. To date, we have distributed 60 files with Museum in a Box to schools. We also ran sixty accompanying workshops for 1070 pupils and sixty hours of training sessions for 180 teachers. POLIN educational programmes also offer the youth ideas on how to spend their free time. In the course of creative workshops held in the summer and autumn 2020, young people -together with the instructors-designed and produced a <u>mural dedicated to the memory</u> of Bolesław Leśmian, a famous Polish poet of Jewish origin. They also learned how to tell a story using photographs.





Elements of the narrative game "Museum in a Box" during workshops Mural painted by young people in front of POLIN Museum



During the "Inspired by the Legacy" project, young people—under the supervision of Mikołaj Grynberg—wrote literary texts inspired by the biographies of individuals who feature in the Legacy gallery, a new gallery of the POLIN core exhibition. During a workshop with Marta Frej, the texts were illustrated by the artist / Marta Frej, Helena Deutsch



OFFER FOR TEACHERS

According the latest report

93% of teachers, participants of our programs

declare that their knowledge on the history and culture of Polish Jews have broadened

> From February 2021, we held meetings at the POLIN Museum Education Centre Facebook profile under the name "Tuesdays for Teachers". Over the past 24 months, 17 lectures and discussions on all sorts of issues and challenges faced by education, also remote education, were held. They were attended by 36,299 people. The offer for teachers was enriched by an online course titled "POLIN Film Society for Teachers" devoted to the possibilities in using feature and documentary films in school education.

As part of our teacher development programme, we organised two educational conferences. The first one, titled "Emotions and History. How to Discuss Difficult Subjects at School" and organised jointly with the Falstad Centre, was attended by participants from Poland, Norway, the USA and other countries. A year later, the conference titled "The Power of Biographies. How to Use Personal Stories in Education?" attracted almost 400 registered users and over 30,000 people online. We shared the recorded lectures and debates held as part of the conference on the Internet.



Ambassadors during a visit to the Museum in 2021





Educational conference "The Power of Biographies"



Ambassadors during a visit to the Museum in 2021

We offered tools based on film also by presenting the "Personal Stories" series addressed to pupils from 7-8 grades of primary schools and from high schools. The animations with attractive graphic design tell a story of figures important to Polish-Jewish history and culture. Numerous materials developed by educators and teacher-ambassadors cooperating with POLIN Museum have been made available in the form of an educational database available under the link.

Teachers and educators could also take advantage of our online course offer during summer holidays. Meetings for teachers during the summer are devoted to the history and culture of Polish Jews and to the teaching methods that employ contemporary art and oral history.

Our "POLIN Museum Ambassadors" programme is addressed to teachers and educationalists. It aims to build a nationwide network of experts on education on Jewish culture and history, to support their development and activities that they carry out within their local communities.



"Personal Stories", a film about Julian Tuwim and Zuzanna Ginczanka









Solutions for the visually impaired



Modernisation of the auditorium to enable a wheelchair user to take a seat

ACCESSIBILITY **TO PEOPLE** WITH DISABILITIES

We wish to be accessible to all. Over the course of the two years of the JCH project, POLIN Museum has become one of the best adapted cultural spaces for people with disabilities in Poland.

The funds amounting to more than PLN 350,000 enabled us to introduce solutions that made it possible to activate people excluded from social life and were a necessary condition of their participation in culture. Among other things, we introduced a number of improvements for people with motor disabilities, we installed induction loops for people with hearing impairment and we developed an application and a new system of signposting the space for the blind and visually impaired.

POLIN Museum is the first institution of culture in Poland to offer concerts addressed to families with children with special sensory needs. We organised several events dedicated to groups with various disabilities, sensory walks in Muranów and "Morning Birds"-an event for children on the autism spectrum.

Our exhibition spaces have been designed with people with disabilities in mind, and our guides offer tours of the exhibitions addressed to the disabled using specially developed tools.



Guiding with educational material for exhibitions: tactile graphics









Information and guidebooks to exhibitions that use the sign language



"Clarinet and Friends" – an event in the series of "Sensory-friendly concerts"



Offer for families with children with disabilities: art workshop



The offer for people with disabilities is also about integration. Part of our activities for young people was creating a mural dedicated to Fania Lewando—author of Europe's first cookbook for vegetarians. Mikołaj was one of the participants—he is now too "grown-up" to take part in our activities for families with children with disabilities. As he was eager to participate in the events organised by our Museum, we offered him an opportunity to take part in a workshop for teenagers with the help of a peer volunteer.

Here is what Mikołaj himself had to say after the workshop: "For me, it was most important that I was able to realise my artistic passions—I painted on a wall for the first time in my life! I'm most happy to have participated in the creation of something that is going to LAST FOREVER!"



Tour of Sasnal's exhibition guided by Dr Krzysztof Gil



OFFER FOR MINORITY GROUP

Together with the Falstad Centre, we invited activists and educators to participate in a Polish-Norwegian educational programme titled "Working with Migrants and Minorities in Poland and Norway". The joint reflection concerned the challenges of working with marginalized groups, discussing the current situation of migrants and minorities in both countries, as well as developing intercultural competences.

> In the autumn of 2021, together with the European Wergeland Centre, we launched a Polish-Norwegian programme titled "Combating Xenophobia, Racism and Antisemitism. Today!." addressed to high schools. During classes with young people, we focused on building their competences of critical thinking, and on recognising and responding to hate speech.

Within the programme accompanying the "Such a Landscape" exhibition of paintings by Wilhelm Sasnal, we organised tours guided by personalities from the world of art and culture, and by representatives of minority groups and immigrants. In total, 42,000 people participated in the programme accompanying the exhibition within the JCH project, both on-site and online. "Such a Landscape" exposition and the discussion on Polish-Jewish relations inspired us to engage in the activities on the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. In August 2021, we organised meetings and lectures on the Roma Holocaust, and on contemporary art created by people of the Romani origin.

At the beginning of the year 2022, we invited teachers to take part in the course titled: "To Stay or To Leave? Causes and Effects of Migrations". Workshop on migration and refugees was run by the activists from organisations that offer support to migrants.

Educational course: "Roma Holocaust. A Landscape of Memory and Silence"

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"DAFFODILS" Social-Educational Campaign

We organised two editions of the "Daffodils" social-educational campaign commemorating the anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising on 19 April 1943 within the JCH project.

> In 2020, the campaign was held online. People could participate in it in many different ways: by attaching a virtual daffodil, by using special hashtags on their social media accounts, by watching video-walks of the memorial sites of the former ghetto, or by listening to lectures and excerpts from books read by the campaign's Ambassadors or to a concert.

> 934 schools, libraries and other educational institutions all across Poland joined the campaign. Local partners declared participation of over 92,000 people. 622 teachers and 2,835 volunteers confirmed their participation.

> <u>The following year, the "Daffodils" campaign</u> was held both on-site and online. The 2021 edition was dedicated to women and the role they had played in the Uprising. <u>The online commemorative programme</u> included, among others, video walk of the memorial

sites of the former ghetto area, discussions and a concert. Overall, it attracted 57,186 people to their computer screens. Film and literary premieres were held and new educational packs were launched. We painted a mural in the centre of Warsaw depicting nine female Jewish ghetto fighters.

A record number of 4,362 schools, libraries and other educational institutions joined the campaign. They declared as many as 455,566 online participants, including pupils of grades 1-3. The campaign boasted a record reach—special hashtags were used 1.7 million times, and polin.pl website noted 85,000 sessions. Over 2,000 publications in the media were noted; they reached over 60 million recipients.

Our volunteers distributed

27,000 paper daffodils

symbols of remembrance of the Warsaw ghetto fighters, in the streets of Warsaw



Using the so-called commemorative pillars, we safely distribute

10,000 paper flowers

121,900 sets of stickers

with symbolic daffodils were distributed with traditional press

Mural created for the 2021 "Daffodils" campaign



A volunteer distributing paper daffodils



A commemorative pillar in Warsaw



Teachers were most enthusiastic about our educational materials:

"We have been watching all today's premieres with you. Our students are in awe of your ideas. Thank you!"



SUPPORTING Local initiatives

The 7th edition of the POLIN Award in 2021 was also held as part of the JCH project. The Award went to Dariusz Popiela, author of the "People Not Numbers" project which commemorates Holocaust victims. The competition jury granted honourable mentions to Urszula Antosz-Rekucka from Mszana Dolna, Urszula Rybicka from Wrocław and Inga Marczyńska who is active in the Małopolska and Podkarpacie regions. Marek Chmielewski from Orla and Józef Gucwa from Bobowa were also shortlisted to the competition finale.

In 2021, five towns in the Podlasie and Mazowsze region were included in the programme of marking Jewish cemeteries which we run together with the National Heritage Institute. The ceremonies of unveiling special plaques with the QR codes pointing to the description of objects and the accompanying educational programme addressed to the local community were organised within the JCH project.



Dariusz Popiela, 2021 POLIN Award laureate



<u>Ceremony at the cemetery in Orla</u>. In the years 2021-2023 we will hold ceremonies and accompanying workshops in the regions all across of Poland—in 16 localities in total





In 2020, the POLIN Prize awarded by the Museum to individuals or organisations actively involved in the preservation of the memory of the history of Polish Jews was presented for the sixth time. The winner was Paweł Kulig, who has been taking care of the New Jewish Cemetery in Łódź for eight years now. Honourable mentions were awarded to Justyna Biernat from Tomaszów Mazowiecki and the Krotochwile Association which is active in the Wielkopolska region. The competition finale was held in the Museum's social media.

2020 POLIN Award Gala

As part of the "Collections on Wheels" programme, we strive to pay more attention to local judaica, artworks, historic and archival objects, personal keepsakes and archaeological objects. Within the programme, we support our partners: local museum workers and private collectors in the digitization process, sharing and promoting their collections.

In the years 2020-21, we digitized 209 museum and archival objects from the collections of: District Museum in Leszno, Podlaskie Museum in Białystok, branch in Tykocin and Regional Museum in Pińczów. We also conducted four training sessions on processing and preserving collections.

In 2021, two publications came out: "Practical Recommendations and Good Practices in the Preservation of Historic Objects in Institutions of Culture" and "Recommendations and Good Practices in Managing Collections in Institutions of Culture." They are addressed to museum employees and aim to make it easier for them to look after their collections in the context of preventive conservation and protection, as well as of professional management of the collections.



Judaica photographed within the "Collections on Wheels" programme



Digitization of judaica within the "Collections on Wheels" programme



In the autumn of 2021, we launched an offer of study visits aimed to boost local activities related to the history and culture of Jews. We invited representatives of the local government and local leaders to join our initiative. To date, we hosted representatives of five towns with a population of up to 50,000; we visited three of these towns.

Participants of the study visit for multipliers from the Podlasie region

INTERNET PORTALS AND ORAL HISTORY

Within the framework of the JCH project, the "Virtual Shtetl" portal collects and makes available information on Jewish communities living in within the pre-WW2 Polish borders. It also documents events from the contemporary Polish Jewish world and concerning Polish collective memory of Jews. In 2020-2021, the portal has advanced within the prestigious group of the world's largest sites dedicated to Jewish history and genealogy.

> <u>"The Polish Righteous"</u> portal contains over 1,000 stories about more than 5,000 people—the Righteous and the Survivors. It does not shy away from difficult questions and discussions. We continue to develop its digital collection within the JCH project, focusing on the accounts related to the history of the Jewish community in Poland.



A special four-part programme to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the death of Mieczysław Fogg, a Righteous Among the Nations, was produced with the resources of the "Polish Righteous" portal within the JCH project

> Over the course of the first two years of the JCH project, both of our portals recorded a total of 3.3 million hits—the "Virtual Shtetl" over 2.3 million, and the "Polish Righteous" nearly 1 million. Since December 2020, our "Oral History/POLIN Museum Collection" YouTube channel has been in operation, presenting interviews with witnesses of history and biographical narratives about the fate of Polish Jews. Until February 2022, the channel recorded over 45,000 views.









Photo from the shoot of an interview with Alina Allerhand



NAHARIJJA

Ja się obracałam w kręgu młodzieży żydowskiej. Mira Ludevig o przyjaźniach okresu dorastania

Interview with Mira Ludevig conducted within the JCH project and shared on the POLIN "Oral History" channel



Library employees touring the POLIN Core Exhibition

PROGRAMMES For occupational Groups

The POLIN Museum wants to actively engage in creating an equality discourse. Within the framework of the JCH project, we have invited representatives of occupational groups to cooperate with us in order to create a platform for an exchange of opinions and joint reflection on everyday challenges related to the implementation of equality rules in a professional environment. We offered our groups an opportunity to expand their knowledge on legal aspects related to the protection of minorities, as well as to jointly develop recommendations for specific equality measures. Between 2020 and 2021, we conducted seventy-one training courses and workshops for the police, libraries and tour guides.

Meetings of members of the <u>"Museum Think-Tank"</u>—an informal network of museum professionals and museologists also offer an opportunity to engage in expert discussions. The 2021 edition of the "Museum Think-Tank" conducted within the framework of the JCH project focused on discussing post-growth postulates—including the reduction of production and consumption, fair sharing and resource management—as well as the possibilities of their adaptation in the museum world.



Participants of the "Museum Think-Tank" touring "Here Is Muranów" exhibition





The "Peter Pan" play directed by Łukasz Kos -the first online performance for children in Poland with the dialogue translated into the Polish Sign Language by two people

CULTURAL PROGRAMMES

Our programmes for adults are as popular as always: "Jewish ABC" series of meetings with Judaism, online walks, lectures, discussions, literary events or Jewish cuisine workshops.

> In 2020, we celebrated with the Museum's youngest audience by bringing the International Children's Day to the virtual land of King Matt the First. We shared plenty of games, quizzes and fun activities in the Internet. There was also a concert aired on Radio POLIN, a joint reading of books written by Janusz Korczak and the premiere of the play based on "Peter Pan". The events attracted an audience of over 16,000 people from all over Poland in front of the computer screens.

As part of the "Leśmian's Meadow" we organised, among other things, film screenings, a series of stand-up performances, family literary meetings, yoga classes, exercises for seniors, mindfulness sessions, gardening workshops and online concerts

"Leśmian's Meadow", an installation in front of the Museum building organised twice within the framework of the JCH project, is POLIN Museum's unique offer. The 2020 edition, transferred partly to the Internet, attracted almost 56,000 people in front of their computer screens and in the open air. Between 26 June to 10 August 2021, thirty-one events took place as part of the "Leśmian's Meadow": twenty-six outdoors and five online, for a total of nearly 50,000 visitors.







The past year's Night of Museums took place on 15 May 2021. During the "Pollywood at POLIN" events, Museum visitors had a chance to learn more about Polish Jews' contribution to building the film industry in Hollywood. Urban walks, guided tours of pre-war Warsaw in film, discussions on Pollywood movies and a special quiz attracted a total of ca. 4,800 people, also online.

The International Children's Day in 2021 was celebrated under the slogan "Interesting tales abound, why don't you come around." We met with our audience both online and in the urban space of Muranów-the district where the Museum is located. As part of an audio-visual online game and a special concert, we immersed ourselves in the Jewish "Tales from Chernivtsi" written over 100 years ago. Both online events were attended by 15,596 people.







During the 2021 International Children's Day, children aged 4 to 10 years together with their guardians were invited to play a field game for 600 families—nearly 2,000 people!



In 2020, on the occasion of the joyful and full of light Hanukkah festival, we prepared numerous attractions for our youngest audience, among others: culinary and musical events, illumination of the Museum building, a series of films presenting holiday customs and traditions, a theatre premiere and a concert for people on the autism spectrum or with hearing oversensitivity. During Hanukkah, we gathered over 44,000 visitors from all over Poland in front of their computer screens. A total reach of the event exceeded 135,000 viewers.

A year later we met the residents of Warsaw on the route of our family Hanukkahbus. We brought sweet treats, decorations to be assembled together with our guests, and traditional Christmas songs. The tour was accompanied by workshops for children and adults, as well as online events: a Hanukkah concert and the "Eight Flames" performance. A total of 8,290 people took part in the festive events.

The majority of events organised as 2020 Hanukkah celebrations were translated into the Polish Sign Language



Still from the movie "I Shall Write" awarded a distinction at the 2021 EDUKINO Educational Film Festival, dir. Hi-Story

AWARDS

The activities run by POLIN Museum within the framework of the JCH project have been recognised with numerous awards and distinctions.

> Our summer "Leśmian's Meadow" programme was awarded third place in the category "Best Open Project" in the Wierzba Mazovian Museum Events competition. The jury's distinction in the "Music" category was granted in the Słoneczniki Initiatives for Children competition for a series of sensory-friendly concerts.

> The "Theatre is a Verb" educational project and the Polish-Ukrainian course titled "Urban Multicultural Tales" was granted the First and Second Prizes at the 2021 Warsaw Cultural Education Award competition; the "I Shall Write" film production for schools was granted a distinction at the 12th EDUKINO Educational Film Festival in 2021.



Sonia Ruszkowska, Małgorzata Waszczuk and Anna Czerwińska are presented with the 2021 Warsaw Cultural Education Award



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ACTIVITIES OF THE JEWISH HISTORICAL INSTITUTE

The activities carried out within the framework of the "Jewish Cultural Heritage" project are also being implemented by our Polish partner, the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute. Since March 2020, within the framework of the JCH project, the Jewish Historical Institute's **Digitization Department has scanned and made** available online, among others, 300 accounts provided by Holocaust survivors, as well as 119 photographs by Willy Georg taken in the Warsaw ghetto and 90 photographs from the so-called Joint album, part of the Jewish Historical Institute's collection.

> From August through October 2020, the Institute presented a temporary exhibition devoted to the work of Symcha Trachter, a painter linked to Lublin, an outstanding artist of the interwar period and a prisoner of the Warsaw Ghetto who perished at the Treblinka extermination camp. The exhibition was accompanied by an interactive online workshop.

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Fragment of the witness account of Marek Beźnicki on underground teaching in the Warsaw ghetto / JHI





Participants of the JHI Winter Academy during classes / JHI

Two editions of the March of Remembrance, dedicated to the memory of Warsaw Jews deported to Treblinka in the summer of 1942, were important events held as part of the JCH project. In 2021, the March was accompanied by an artistic installation titled "Benches", designed by architect Jakub Szczęsny, aimed to commemorate Jewish male and female teachers from the ghetto. The installation's modules next found their way to schools and institutions where, in line with the architect's idea, they were granted a new utility function.



Participants of the <u>March of Remembrance</u> during a concert on Stare Nalewki Street in 2021 / JHI





Fragment of the "Benches" installation inside the Jewish Historical Institute bookstore / JHI





LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!





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