

ERLAUF ERINNERT

Museum der Friedensgemeinde Erlauf

ERLAUF REMEMBERS

Museum of Erlauf, Community of Peace

Opening May 9, 2015

On the occasion of the Erlauf Days of Peace, May 8 – 10, 2015



In commemoration of the end of the Second World War 70 years ago, a new museum will open in Erlauf in 2015: **ERLAUF ERINNERT: Museum der Friedensgemeinde Erlauf** (ERLAUF REMEMBERS: Museum of Erlauf, Community of Peace). Uniting contemporary history, the culture of remembrance, and contemporary art under one roof, this unique museum will not only address the horrors of National Socialism and the war in Austria, but it will also act as a platform for exploring the different ways these events have been (and still are) remembered in Erlauf by displaying these to the public for the first time in connection with artistic works.

A highly symbolic handshake transformed Erlauf in the Lower Austrian municipality of Melk into a unique historic site overnight. The Soviet general Dmitrii Drichkin met the American general Stanley Reinhart here on May 8, 1945. World War II in Europe was over, and when the generals shook hands at midnight, this was the beginning of a special culture of commemoration and remembrance that has continued to grow in Erlauf since the 1960s. No other town of this size in the German-speaking world has addressed the issues of peace, remembrance, and art in such a mindful way and over such a long period of time. Monuments to peace created by Jenny Holzer and Oleg Komov were erected in 1995, and since then many temporary public art projects have been realized in Erlauf, including *Erlauf erinnert sich* (Erlauf Remembers) (2000 and 2002) and the music project *AMF–Allied Musical Forces* (2006) by the composer Konrad Rennert.

The museum ERLAUF ERINNERT is a joint project involving the town of Erlauf and the Department of Art and Culture of Lower Austria. The exhibition will present an overview of important historical events as well as everyday life during the Nazi era, the war, and the war's end. In this respect, the museum was fortunate to have discovered and incorporated remarkable, previously unknown sources. Another segment of the exhibition will be specifically devoted to the culture of remembrance and the question of how history can be approached through art.

All artistic and film projects realized in Erlauf will be accessible in the **art archive** (Archiv der Kunst) and the **film room**. A special exhibition space will be devoted to temporary exhibitions, lectures, readings, film screenings, and educational projects. In another part of the museum, more temporary exhibitions will represent the artistic investigation of this issue, bringing together past and present. The museum's opening will be celebrated with an art project (2015) by **Tatiana Lecomte** that was specially created for this site.

“Peace is not only precious, it is a fragile good that needs to be protected. It’s up to us to learn from history and share our knowledge with younger generations. The new museum ERLAUF ERINNERT (ERLAUF REMEMBERS) is intended as an active, commemorative site that enables all generations to engage with contemporary history and art, as in the **Haus der Geschichte** (House of History), which will open in St. Pölten in 2017,” said **Governor Dr. Erwin Pröll**.

Exhibition Project Team: Dr. Katharina Blaas-Pratscher (project director), Remigio Gazzari (curator), Mag. Johanna Zechner (curator), Mag. Cornelia Offergeld (art curator), Dr. Uli Marchsteiner (exhibition design), Mag. Matthäus Maier (organization)

Landscape Design: Auböck & Kárász

Scholarly Committee at the Museum of Erlauf: Franz Engelmaier (mayor of Erlauf), Univ.-Prof. Dr. Gerhard Jagschitz (University of Vienna), Mag. Wolfgang Kainzner (councilman in Erlauf), Director Dr. Wolfgang Kos (Vienna Museum), Ing. Franz Kuttner (former mayor of Erlauf), Univ. -Doz. Dr. Ernst Langthaler (Institute of Rural History, St. Pölten), Dr. Sabine Oppolzer (Radio Ö1 Kultur), and Mag. Ulrike Vitovec (Advancement of Museums in Lower Austria)

Chair of the Committee: Governor Dr. Erwin Pröll

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