

Seeing Auschwitz

A new exhibition exploring iconic photographs of the Nazi death camp and the meanings behind them



Tuesday, February 11, 2020 - January marked the opening of [Musealia](#)'s new exhibition: [Seeing Auschwitz](#). We've created it in collaboration with the [Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum](#), and in partnership with the [United Nations](#) and [UNESCO](#).

Background

Following on from our major exhibition [Auschwitz. Not Long Ago. Not Far Away](#). — currently in residence at the [Museum of Jewish Heritage](#) in New York — Musealia and the UN began discussions about developing a small-scale pop-up style exhibit to commemorate the **75th anniversary** of the camp's liberation. *Seeing Auschwitz* is the result.

The Photographs

Auschwitz was the largest killing centre in human history. Yet our **mental image** of the camp — how we 'see' Auschwitz — is shaped by the relatively small number of **photographs** that exist. As well as pictures taken after its liberation and aerial reconnaissance shots taken by the Allies, the **sources** include *The Auschwitz Album*, a collection of around 200 images capturing the arrival of transports of Hungarian Jews in 1944; *The Höcker Album* – a series of photos showing the SS relaxing in a resort close to the camp; prisoner mug shots; 4 photographs bravely and secretly taken by prisoners in an attempt to warn the world of the process of mass killing at the gas chambers; and approximately 2,400 family photos found in the plundered possessions of the deported – the majority of whom were murdered.

Speaking at the exhibition launch, Musealia's director **Luis Ferreiro** said: "75 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, genocides, and atrocities

continue to scar our world. If we remain blind to them, can we really say that we have 'seen' Auschwitz at all?"

The Challenge

However, navigating those perspectives is problematic for the viewer. Nazi perpetrators took many of the photos, initially forcing us to see the world through their lens. Curated by a team led by Holocaust education expert, **Paul Salmons**, the exhibition challenges us to look beyond the photographers' intentions to explore what each photograph reveals, not only of the place and time but of the photographers themselves. They also encourage us to reflect on the continued meaning and significance of Auschwitz today. Paul Salmons said, "although photographs of Auschwitz are few in number, the different sources they come from allows the exhibition to explore radically different perspectives and themes."



Exhibition Details and Future Plans

Seeing Auschwitz has opened. Having already completed its short run at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, it continues at the UN Headquarters in New York until 24th Feb. It's planned that in 2021 the UN and UNESCO will offer *Seeing Auschwitz* to their information centres and field offices **around the world** supported by additional educational material produced by Musealia. In parallel, it's our ambition to take the exhibition to museums, cultural and educational institutions.

If you're in New York during this time, we hope you'll take the opportunity to visit; admission is free. If you'd like to find out more, visit our project website: www.seeing-auschwitz.com.





MUSEALIA



