

05 Permanent Exhibition "Fascination and Terror"

The title sums up the most important elements of the permanent exhibition which focuses mainly on the Nazi Party Rallies, the annual propaganda mass events held by the National Socialists every September between 1933 and 1938. But "Fascination and Terror" was not only to document the Nuremberg Nazi Party Rallies, but was to go beyond by exposing their function within the National Socialist system. A further task was to show Nuremberg as a starting point and to demonstrate the terrible consequences of National Socialist megalomania – including its millions of victims. On the one hand, the exhibition therefore takes a "microscopic" glance at Nuremberg's history in order to show the local conditions for the city's role as "City of the Party Rallies". The effects these major events had on the city of Nuremberg are shown in great detail – including their influence on the everyday life of ordinary citizens. One core task of the exhibition consists of providing an explanation for the fascination the Party Rallies held for hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people who joined in enthusiastically, while juxtaposing this myth with a raw view of the brutal violence immanent in the Nazi system, as it was also manifested in the Nuremberg events

The start is an introductory film ("Fascination and Terror" – 8 minutes), showing present day use of the remains of the Nazi Party Rally Grounds, for example as a leisure and recreational area . The film deliberately forges a link between the past and the leisure habits of predominantly young visitors, whose main interest in coming here is not out of historical curiosity. A couple of young skateboarders act as "guides" through the film. They turn up with their skateboards near various buildings from the Nazi era which are then linked with first film clips from the past.

Rooms 1 –5 deal with the causes, the course and the repercussions of the National Socialist rise to power. The exhibition's main section in the larger rooms (topics 6 – 17) is concerned with the Nazi Party Rallies themselves, pointing out developments which led straight to World War II and the Holocaust. The historic narrative ends in rooms 18 and 19, with the Nuremberg Trials and the use of the Party Rally Grounds after 1945.

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The "narrative flow" is mainly chronological – starting in the 1920s and ending shortly after World War II. The audioguides – available in seven languages and supplied to all visitors at no extra charge – play an outstanding role in this context, supplementing the large photographs and large-format video presentations. Apart from offering an ideal possibility for foreign language presentation, these audioguides give a compact introduction to each of the 19 exhibition topics. In addition visitors can also listen to the panel texts. This especially caters for younger visitors, who, as experience has shown, tend to be less text-oriented than their elders. The audio system also incorporates a glossary giving short characteristics of important NS institutions and organisations.

Newly developed video presentations as an integral part of the tour of the exhibition constitute a special feature of the exhibition concept. They deal with the following concepts:

- "Vision and Reality" - Building history (11 minutes)
The plans devised by the National Socialists are shown in a computer simulation. Documentary film material is included, giving an impression of the course of construction which ceased when war broke out.
- "Mobilising People and Emotions" (7 minutes)
The presentation uses mainly historic amateur films and original TV footage from the 1936 Party Rally. This material documents the enormous organisational challenge presented by these major events. The film also very clearly shows the pseudo-religious aspects employed by the National Socialists in their stage-management for the party rallies aiming directly at peoples' emotions.
- "Triumph des Willens" [Triumph of Will] (12 minutes)
A documentary about Leni Riefenstahl's infamous film of 1934 exposes to what extent Riefenstahl's film was a stage-managed production of a stage-managed event rather than a "true documentary report".
- "Nuremberg Trials" (8 minutes)
Using original film footage, this film documents the course of the trial against the main war criminals.

Presentation

The concept for the exhibition's presentation was devised by design office Müller+Müller-Rieger, who in their choice of material (glass and steel) were inspired by Günther Domenig's architecture. The design concept deliberately rejected "classic" exhibition elements. Instead it is centred around the historical document which is employed as the "main player" in a didactic hierarchy of exhibition resources.



Apart from a few technical changes, the permanent exhibition did not interfere with the structure of the listed historical building. The exhibition rooms remained in the unfinished state of 1939 when building stopped after the beginning of the war. In no way this exhibition wanted to “finish off” what the National Socialist builders had started and never completed. Rather the bare, unfinished brick construction is intended to demonstrate – beyond the mythology and glorification – the banality of Nazi megalomania.

The rooms with their mix of megalomania and their rudimentary unfinished state, have a strong impact on visitors. The designers juxtaposed the massive unfinished structures of the building with clear shapes and materials. The **design's leitmotifs** include:

Form elements made from rough iron slabs

In the first rooms, the form elements quote the architecture, but as the exhibition tour continues, they take on more and more threatening forms. The iron slabs closing off rooms from the outside world are used by the designers to demonstrate the National Socialists' self-centred "bunker mentality", their attempt to cut themselves off from unwelcome and unwanted influences and news "from outside".

Picture and text elements

The picture and text elements are room-high, back-lit glass elements, bright elements shedding light into the darkness of history. They lean towards the visitors, threatening them and confronting them with the topic. Graphic elements, with purposeful selection of pictorial material and stark contrasts, intensify the impact of the overall presentation.

Large format photographs

The topic of each room is stated with a large format photograph. The image chosen as well as its position within the room seem to open up the architecture and generate an imaginary scenery. Thus even during a fleeting visit, visitors will be guided through the exhibition in an impressive and meaningful way..

Lighting

The exhibition lighting is based on a purposeful overall concept. Light adds dramatic effect to the rooms and guides visitors' attention through the exhibition. The rooms are not lit in a traditional way. Rather light is used to render visible the historical facts presented.

Munich design office Müller-Rieger (until 2003: Müller+Müller-Rieger) have been designing exhibitions and museums for many years. Numerous projects include exhibitions in the Deutsches Museum München [Technical and Science Museum], exhibition for the German Museum of Hygiene in Dresden, projects for industrial companies, for the Oberhausen gasometer as well as numerous exhibitions on social and cultural history in the Municipal Museum of Munich, and the Munich Jewish Museum.



This folder also includes the following information texts about the Documentation Centre:

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For further information, please contact the office of the Documentation Centre Former Nazi Party Rally Grounds, Tel. +49-(0)911-408 70 292.



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