



Why this book?

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Residents of a hostel for asylum-seekers in Berlin-Spandau and KUNSTASYL, an initiative by artists, creatives and asylum-seekers, have taken over the exhibition rooms of the Museum Europäischer Kulturen on March 4th, 2016, where they documented the experiences, wishes, perspectives and lifestyles of refugees by artistic means. The presentation *daHEIM: Glances into Fugitive Lives* (until July 2nd, 2017) was thus realized in a workshop-type process that visitors were able to follow and discuss with the protagonists at the museum.

In connection with the personal histories of the current protagonists, biographies from the 19th and 20th century serve to convey that flight-related immigration is not a new phenomenon. It is a form of migration that has always existed. This is one of the things this book is about, without differentiating why people flee or migrate, respectively. They can leave their home and group for various reasons, for example because of a dire economic situation, oppression, natural disasters, war and conquest, expulsion, or on account of political persecution, overpopulation, or for personal reasons. Migrants are always seeking a better life that their families, who mostly remain behind, are meant to share in as well. This is the Earth the German historian Karl Schlögel has referred to as the “planet of nomads”, shaped by migration movements since the dawn of humanity. Overlooking a time span of two million years, people have been less sedentary than on the move. Europe was no exception—particularly the last two centuries have been marked by major internal migrations as a consequence of war or in search of work. Many regions and towns in Europe witnessed emigration to America in the 19th century, mostly due to economic problems, famines and overpopulation. The 20th century was characterized by dictatorships and two world wars, leading to forced migrations such as escapes, deportations and expulsions. This is also what this book is about. The descriptions of the personal experiences of men and women who migrated or fled within, to or from Europe lends a human face to an issue that is so often associated with a “fear of the masses”. The parallels with the experiences of today’s fleeing immigrants are unmistakable.

The *Biographical Fates* section therefore starts with the memories of **Dachil Sado** (KUNSTASYL project team and art student, Berlin, Germany) of his escape route from Iraq to Germany in 2014. His experiences of war, destruction and mortal danger and descriptions of the everyday reality of other protection-seekers serve him to reflect on political decision-making processes, and on how they determine the future plans of individuals.

With his portrayal of the escape and life trajectory of a young woman from Bosnia, **Milan Miletić** (media producer, Berlin) refers us to the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s. They triggered major refugee flows right in the middle of Europe, with consequences that are still evident today, most of all in the former war zones.

The contribution by **Dagmar Neuland-Kitzerow** (Museum Europäischer Kulturen, Berlin) details a student’s escape from Hungary in 1956. Political persecution by the communists caused many regime critics to flee to “western” countries.

The essay by **Elisabeth Fendl** (Institut für Volkskunde der Deutschen des östlichen Europa, Freiburg i. B., Germany) treats of displacements after the Second World War, tracing the repeatedly disrupted life trajectories of a man from Bohemia and his family, embedded in events associated with the political post war orders in Czechoslovakia and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Taking the life of her great-grandmother as an example in her contribution, **Alina Helwig** (Museum Europäischer Kulturen, Berlin) looks at the deportation and migration of Soviet citizens with German backgrounds—and a time span of nearly 100 years.

Helga Neumann (Akademie der Künste, Berlin) describes the experiences of flight and exile triggered by the Second World War as illustrated by the life of a German author who fled to Mexico with her family via France, and dealt with her experiences in her work.

In her essay, Kristina Heizmann (Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin) looks at a migration within Europe that was triggered by the First World War. Taking the escape of a single mother and her two daughters from Belgium to England as an example, she highlights the regimentations the new lives of these women were attended by.

Driven by hunger and poverty, over a million Swedes emigrated to America in the second half of the 19th century. This was one of the largest outflows Sweden had ever witnessed. Many emigrants settled down there and some came back, as described by **Lennart Johansson and Håkan Nordmark** (Kulturparken Småland, Växjö, Sweden) based on the example of a single woman from Småland in southern Sweden.

The introduced essays are all focused on the migration and life experience of individual persons. But although the information is presented against the background of the respective political or economic situation, the interconnections will only become apparent if migration is placed in a *Historical Context*. That and how Europe needs to be seen in a global context to this end is mediated in the essay by **Jochen Oltmer** (Institut für Migrationsforschung und Interkulturelle Studien, Osnabrück, Germany) for this section.

A historic research of migration issues can only be based on *Institutional Remembrances* that are generally provided by museums and archives for information and reflection. How and why institutions deal with the experiences and facts of migration is paradigmatically illustrated by three essays in the last section.

Juliana Monteiro and her colleagues (Museu da Imigração do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil) describe the state-sponsored immigration of Italians in Brazil at the end of the 19th century, and their lives in the new location. The information is based on documents, objects and on interviews they conducted with the migrants' descendants.

A similar function is served by the Association for Researching and Archiving the Armenian Memory in Marseille, whose objectives, activities and proposals are outlined by **Myriame Morel-Deledalle** (Musée des Civilisations de la France

et de la Méditerranée, Marseilles, France). The centenary remembrance of the flight of thousands of Armenians to France from the genocide in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 was also served by exhibitions in the year 2015.

Emigration from Europe to the USA reached its peak between the end of the 19th and middle of the 20th century. Millions of people from various European origins passed through the reception camp on Ellis Island in New York. This has been converted into a museum, and ever since devoted itself to researching and mediating the immigration issue. How it does this is described by **Diana Pardue** (Statue of Liberty NM and Ellis Island, New York, USA).

The commitment to thematizing and remembering migration and its repercussions is also shared by the Museum Europäischer Kulturen. Ever since its inception in 1999, the museum has been dedicating itself to aspects of past and present lifeworlds, and the forms and consequences of cultural encounters in and with Europe, in its exploration of current issues. This is aimed at drawing attention to differences and commonalities in society to engender respect for people from different cultures. The protagonists are meanwhile not only speaking for themselves, but also (co-)deciding about the contents of the exhibition—they participate, while the museum provides the platform—as has already been the case in exhibitions such as *Heimat Berlin?* (2002), *Migration(Hi)story in Berlin* (2003), *Crossing Borders: Migrants in Europe* (2004), *Generation “Adefra”: 20 Years of the Black Women’s Movement in Germany* (2006), *Döner, Delivery and Design, Entrepreneurs in Berlin* (2009/10), or *Realizable Dreams? Italian Women in Berlin* (2016/17). The *European Cultural Days* event series (since 2000) has also returned to the topics of ‘cultural contacts’, ‘social diversity’ and ‘identities’ in Europe again and again. Last but not least *daHEIM: Glances into Fugitive Lives* (2016/2017): In this presentation, the Museum Europäischer Kulturen has taken its participatory bent even one step further. How this came about will be sketched out by the artist **barbara caveng** in the following contribution.

We owe her a particular debt of gratitude because it was she, after all, who initiated and developed the KUNSTASYL project and realized it with the (former) residents of the hostel in Berlin-Spandau and the team at the Museum Europäischer Kulturen. Over and beyond this, our sincerest thanks go to all the authors and everyone who helped bring this book to a successful conclusion.