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A few questions for… Danielle Spera

Danielle Spera was one of Austria's most popular television personalities before becoming director of the Viennese Jewish Museum (JMW, http://www.jmw.at). Read here what Spera thinks about her very special farewell at national broadcaster ORF and if she misses working as anchorwoman.

What was your happiest moment being in charge at the Jewish Museum of Vienna – and what was the hardest?

Luckily there are so many happy moments and very few hard ones. I feel content whenever we are successfully opening a show, which always is a great teamwork. It is a wonderful experience to be able to work with a great group of curators, who support the new positioning of the museum now wholeheartedly. I also was very glad when we managed to get a budget to renovate the Jewish Museum's main building, which was left to me in a devastating state – concerning the technical and logistical equipment and when we reached the goal to open after a very short renovation period. There were very few difficult moments when I started to take over the museum's management, which I consider as good learning experiences.

What did it feel like to lose your voice during your final "Zeit im Bild" appearance?

Unfortunately I had caught a cold right at this very day. To lose the voice is a nightmare for everybody who has to work with it, like singers, actors or newscasters. I was sorry that I could not say good bye to the audience in my regular way after 22 years of being an anchor of the prime time news. But on the other hand it was an unforgettable news-show for the viewers as well as for me. It will always stay in my memory.

Do you miss the journalistic work?

No I don't because I am still working a lot in journalistic terms. I am writing for the Jewish newspaper NU, holding lectures and I am a representative on the board of ORF3 and the European TV channel arte.

What is more stressful – being anchorwoman of the ORF's most important news show or director of a museum located in the heart of Vienna?

It is not a matter of stress, both – my profession as a reporter and newscaster as well as my current position – mean a lot of interesting work which causes a lot of positive energy which is very fulfilling. The Jewish Museum Vienna is one of the most outstanding cultural sights in Vienna and definitely one of the most interesting Jewish Museums in Europe. Therefore it is a pleasure to work here, to prepare exhibitions together with a group of exceptional curators. At the moment we are not only working on our changing shows but first and most important on our new core exhibition which will be the only exhibition in Vienna that also deals with the current Austrian History since 1945.

Apart from the Viennese Jewish Museum, which other Austrian museums and galleries do you like?

Fortunately Vienna offers a broad range of culture, so it is a pleasure to choose among such a great variety. It also depends if I am attending a museum on my own or with my family.

Do you agree with the way the official Austria deals with its dark past (World War Two, anti-Semitism, the Holocaust)? It took a very long time until Austria finally faced its past and many people still have problems in dealing with the history. But it was in fact the so called- Waldheim affair, which made this process possible and a politician like Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, who was the first high ranking

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Austrian politician, who openly acknowledged Austria's role in the holocaust. Since then things are developing in the right direction.

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