



ein museum der **wienholding**

Media Information, November 2022

100 Misunderstandings about and among Jews

The image of Jewish women and men is shaped by misunderstandings in large sections of the majority society. Starting on November 30, 2022, the Jewish Museum Vienna will investigate these misunderstandings, search for their backgrounds, question and parody them or meet them with a tongue-in-cheek laugh. The exhibition is not about dispelling prejudices against Jews, but about asking about the underlying misconceptions and countering them on different levels – from the historical to the artistic.

100 misunderstandings in seven chapters

In a total of seven chapters, the exhibition “100 Misunderstandings about and among Jews” inquires about stereotypes and clichés associated with the romanticization of Judaism, the notion that everything Jewish is connected with the Shoah, linguistic or moral transgressions, voyeurism towards Jewish women and men or the stereotyping and appropriation of Jewishness. It is the first exhibition to focus on philosemitic prejudices and stereotypes that, unlike antisemitism, have hardly been considered up to now.

Jewish women and men – “foreign,” “different,” “special”?

To this day, Jewish women and men are perceived by many people as “foreign,” “different” or, to positively reframe it, as “special.” Even more than 75 years after the end of the Nazi regime, the term “Jew” or “Jewess” is still associated with shame for many. Constructions such as “Jewish fellow citizens” or “Jewish people” testify to the goodwill to avoid discrimination and othering, but they lead to exactly that: Jewish women and men are still not part of a “we” which does not need an adjective as a modifier. This is based on the misunderstanding that the Jewish population stands apart from an “autochthonous” population of whatever kind, that Jews are a migrant group – albeit an ancient one. What gets overlooked is the fact that all inhabitants of a region came from somewhere at some point and that the concept of “autochthonous” is rooted in the nationalistic ideas of the 19th century.

Just how topical many misconceptions remain was shown not only by the demonstrations against the measures to combat the corona pandemic, when vaccination opponents appropriated a Jewish victim narrative. It also became repeatedly evident in some debates on the culture of remembrance, in which everything actually or only supposedly Jewish is attached with an aura of mourning or romantically idealized. Some misunderstandings are old and some first emerged after the Shoah.

Jewish museums have also contributed in the past and present to reinforcing stereotypical images about Jewish women and men. The exhibition takes a critical look at the museum's own work and asks about the misunderstandings that underlie it.

Misunderstandings do not emanate from the majority society alone but are based on perceptions among Jews as well. A felt obligation to inner-Jewish solidarity or the idea of an all-Jewish history lead to self-images and images of others that often do not stand up to critical scrutiny.

“100 Misunderstandings about and among Jews” can be seen from November 30, 2022 to June 4, 2023 at the Jewish Museum Vienna, a Wien Holding museum. Designed by the curatorial team of the Jewish Museum under the leadership of Director Barbara Staudinger and Chief Curator Hannes Sulzenbacher, the exhibition is accompanied by a self-published German/English catalog that costs € 24.90. The Jewish Museum Vienna, Dorotheergasse 11, 1010 Vienna, is open Sunday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The second location, Museum Judenplatz, Judenplatz 8, 1010 Vienna, is open Sunday to Thursday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (wintertime), respectively 5 p.m. (summertime). Further information can be found at www.jmw.at or info@jmw.at.

Queries

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Photos and press material for the current exhibitions are available on the Jewish Museum Vienna website at www.jmw.at/presse.



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