

Working together for the future of remembrance

The *For real?* project shows in a very special way what innovative cultural and educational work can achieve – and what is possible when strong partners adopt a shared aim. The close collaboration between the Brandenburg Museum for Future, Present and History and the Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF is an outstanding example thereof.

Together we have developed an innovative digital educational vehicle that offers new possibilities and perspectives for a culture of remembrance, and that deeply moves young and older people alike.

The *For real?* virtual-reality application lets users meet five Jewish survivors of National Socialist persecution – Ruth Winkelmann, Kurt Hillmann, Charlotte Knobloch, Inge Auerbacher and Leon Weintraub – in a simulated conversational setting. These VR encounters allow an astonishing sense of connection to arise. In talking about their lives, the survivors create an experience that combines emotional immediacy with historical insight.

The (volumetric) recording of these individual testimonies and their integration into a VR application are a product of the Film University Babelsberg's outstanding expertise. This project is one of numerous successful ventures in a long-running partnership between the Film University and the Brandenburg Museum for Future, Present and History.

The Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF combines first-class artistic quality with rigorous scientific reflection and technical innovation. In establishing an archive of volumetric testimonies, it has made a crucial contribution to preserving the survivors' memories as a moving and immersive experience.

From its base in Potsdam, the Brandenburg Museum for Future, Present and History encourages critical examination of history, cultural heritage and current events throughout the state. As a partner in the *For real?* project, the Brandenburg Museum contributed its extensive experience in historical-political educational and cultural work.

The collaboration was marked by curiosity and openness above and beyond the shared desire to study how a concrete example of remembrance culture can be transposed into the future. For us this form of collaboration sets a precedent. It shows how museum and remembrance work can join with media arts, film and creative industries to create new spaces – of encounter, dialogue and memory.

Not least of all, *For real?* is a model project from Brandenburg that shows how regional initiatives can blaze new trails for all of Germany – with support from the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ) and a network of committed individuals and institutions.

Our special thanks go to all the eyewitnesses who were willing to share their stories and are tireless in their efforts to counter the loss or suppression of memory. In a time of increasing antisemitism and distortions of history, it is all the more important to create spaces for authentic remembrance – which are public, accessible and impressive. Let us work together to ensure that memories do not end – but instead live on, “for real”, in the future!

Katja Melzer, art historian and scholar of culture, studied in Berlin. Multiple leading positions in international culture and education, e.g. Robert Bosch cultural manager in Pécs, director of the *Les HTMIles 11* media arts festival in Montréal, program director at the SAW Video Media Arts Centre in Ottawa and director of the Montréal Goethe-Institut. Since 2021 managing director of the Brandenburg Association for Culture and History and director of the Brandenburg Museum for Future, Present and History.

Prof. Dr. Susanne Stürmer, professor, Dr. rer. pol., economist, studied in Berlin, doctorate from the Freie Universität Berlin in regulatory economics. From 1998 to 2013 leading positions at UFA GmbH in Potsdam, managing director as of 2006. From 2011 to 2013 professor for new media production in the film and television production degree program, since 2013 president of the Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF.