



Jewish Museum Berlin

2013

Press Information

: The Rafael Roth Learning Center

The Rafael Roth Learning Center is a separate area on the lower level of the Jewish Museum Berlin. It contains seventeen computer stations that offer an interactive multimedia presentation of German Jewish history. Under the headings of "Things", "Stories", and "Faces", visitors can learn about special highlights of the museum's collection, immerse themselves in virtual exhibitions and gain insights into modern Jewish life. The center also features a computer game called "Sansanvi's Park" especially designed for children.

The center was founded in 2001 with a generous donation from Rafael Roth, a Berlin businessman. Today about one-third of the roughly 722.000 people who visit the museum each year (as of 2011) use the center to expand their knowledge of Jewish history and contemporary Judaism.

A multimedia presentation of "Things", Stories« and Faces«

"Things", which was unveiled in October 2011, is the latest audiovisual format to be offered by the Rafael Roth Learning Center. It presents objects from the Jewish Museum's collection and places them in their historical and contemporary contexts using supplementary images, documents, interviews, original audio passages and interactive elements. How did the objects end up in our museum? Who were the previous owners? How were they used? Exploring these and similar questions, visitors are given insight into the objects and their significance. Curators and conservers describe their daily routines and donors provide information about the motives that led them to place family possessions in the museum's care. The objects are often linked to particular events that are recalled and discussed by historical witnesses such as W. Michael Blumenthal, Marcel Reich-Ranicki and Daniel Cohn-Bendit.



The **“Stories”** format features eighteen virtual exhibitions about individual people and topics that are rich in detail and make use of a wide variety of materials. Visitors learn about the lives of Albert Einstein, Heinrich Heine and Else Ury, who wrote the *Nesthäkchen* books. They can also immerse themselves in the history of Beiersdorf, the Nivea producer. Additional stories focus on Eastern European immigrants on their journey westwards and show how the longing for Zion is reflected in the festivals of the Jewish calendar.

The third multimedia format, **“Faces”**, is devoted to individual Jewish lives in present-day Germany and presents video-clips in which people of different ages, backgrounds and religious denominations answer questions on a variety of topics. The first interview series, entitled “What does kosher mean to you?”, was unveiled in March 2011. The practices associated with Jewish dietary law provide a framework for discussions of religion and tradition, family and friends, inclusion and exclusion. The interviews document the continuance of traditions, the interpretation of religious law and the formation of Jewish identity in the midst of a non-Jewish culture.

Activities for children

Playing the computer game Sansanvi’s Park, children age six and older embark on a virtual journey of discovery. In 2006 the game won the “digita” educational media award. In a highly entertaining way, Sansanvi’s Park teaches kids what a synagogue looks like, how the Jewish New Year’s festival is celebrated, and what is necessary to make a snack kosher.

A space for learning and relaxing

The rooms of the Rafael Roth Learning Center provide a counterpoint to Daniel Libeskind’s famous architecture. The interior design by Michael Rubin Architects, New York, is characterized by warm wood tones. Partitioned computer stations promote concentration. Over the past few years the rooms have been carefully supplemented with seating by Raumwerk Berlin and a light installation by autokolor/Timm Ringewaldt.



At its opening in 2001, the Rafael Roth Learning Center was not only unique in Germany but a source of fascination for many visitors—and this at a time when not everyone was using the Internet and bandwidths were too small for larger images and films. Today the Rafael Roth Learning Center provides the Jewish Museum with a specially designed framework for presenting content that for legal or technical reasons cannot automatically be shown on the Internet.

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