A Tribute to
Dr. Arthur S. Obermayer
and
Obermayer German Jewish History Awardees
Acknowledgements
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For updates to the book and additional news about the Award Program, please visit the Obermayer Awards web site: www.obermayer.us/award

All information in this publication has been checked with utmost diligence. Nevertheless, mistakes may have occurred. We apologize in advance for such errors.

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"I tried to ‘catch’ a little bit of Mr. Obermayer’s personality to express it in my colours,... for example, the
dark red, a symbol of rule, power and influence, though now his vitality has weakened. This colour has a
special result, and my idea was to express with this colour one aspect: he is a well-known personality based
on the Award and his support to so many other programs...
The bright colours in his face and around - he mostly is smiling and very charming, so this was my intention
to express it with light colours like yellow, bright green...
And the red background symbolizes energy and vitality. On the right margin you will find eight lights in a
row, and one next to it. That means I made this portrait during time of Chanukah."


Introduction

by Karen S. Franklin

The celebration of our awards this year is profoundly diminished by the recent loss of Arthur S. Obermayer, the founder of the awards. Arthur’s initiative in the establishment of the awards is now legendary. We honor him for his passion to bring to light the importance of honoring those individuals who have raised awareness of a once-vibrant Jewish history and culture in their communities. Little could he have known in 2000 that these awards would have a profound impact on the lives of so many. Tonight will mark the 16th year of the awards ceremony, and the third year we are presenting distinguished service awards. We thank Arthur, we honor him, and we remember him with respect and with fondness.

We are deeply moved that Arthur’s children, Joel, Henry (Hank), and Marjorie Raven, and Arthur’s wife Judy, have committed to ensuring the future of the award, and even to strengthening the program. Their decision to advance the work that was so important to Arthur gave him great strength and delight in his final days. The award program will continue as a project of the Obermayer Foundation, with the co-sponsorship of the Berlin Parliament, Leo Baeck Institute, and the German Special Interest Group of JewishGen.

The invitation to former winners to document their work also allowed them to express their thanks to Arthur personally. These letters were read to him (in translation) in his final weeks. They gave him much joy. This compilation of highlights reflects only a small portion of work by the awardees. Still the impact and value of the Obermayer German Jewish History Awards is clearly demonstrated by the breadth of the awardees’ activities and their continuing passion.

A more complete publication with translations will be available online soon at http://obermayer.us/award/.

Karen S. Franklin
Vice President
Obermayer German Jewish History Awards

As the date of the 2016 award ceremony approached, the Obermayer family worked with the Leo Baeck Institute to prepare this book for Arthur, chronicling the accomplishments of the awardees after they received their honors.

Wir sind tief bewegt, dass Arthurs Kinder, Joel, Henry (Hank) und Marjorie Raven, und seine Frau Judy sich dazu verpflichtet haben, die Zukunft der Obermayer Awards zu sichern und das Programm weiter zu stärken. Ihre Entscheidung, eben dieses Werk voranzutreiben, das Arthur so viel bedeute hat, verlieh ihm in seinen letzten Tagen nochmals große Kraft und Freude. Das Award Programm wird als Projekt der Obermayer Foundation fortgeführt, mit Ko-Förderung durch das Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin, das Leo Baeck Institut und die GerSig (German Special Interest Group of JewishGen).


Eine umfassendere Publikation mit Übersetzungen wird in Kürze unter http://obermayer.us/award/ zur Verfügung stehen.

Karen S. Franklin
Vice President
Obermayer German Jewish History Awards
Speech in the Berlin
Parliament, January 2015
by Stefan Goldschmidt

Dear Jörg, Dr. Obermayer, Dr. Wieland, members of the Committee, my dear grandparents (z”l), my dear parents (z”l), ladies and gentlemen.
As you can well imagine, this moment strikes a deep chord inside me. Somehow, we nominators share a feeling that, in a certain way, we are closing a chapter in the histories of our families. We are here, in peace, amongst friends, and look into the future together.

Shalom!
I am a chemical engineer, who has also conducted some research and development. As such, I have spent my life building industries and searching for solutions in places where there was nothing before...

Jörg builds things, where there was nothing left, and he is also a researcher. He has built bridges. Bridges between people... The most difficult to build! Chapeau, Jörg! We know how difficult your task is. Bridges made of steel can be calculated. Bridges between humans cannot be calculated, since relationships between human beings are unpredictable. Bridges between human beings have to be carefully tended to...

But, sometimes, they are stronger than steel. May I tell you all a story about Jörg? On weekends we normally chat over Skype. In one of these conversations, I mentioned that my grandmother was one of ten siblings, out of which only five had died of natural causes. Jörg answered: “No, Stefan. They were eleven. One of them didn’t live long...” Who was right? Jörg, of course!

Ever since Jörg contacted our families five or six years ago, we have been in contact with him, and have gotten to know and appreciate him. If you would ask me what I personally cherish most about Jörg, I would answer: “Jörg is a Mensch”. For us Jews, the expression “Mensch” goes a bit deeper than the same word in the German language. When you say that somebody is a “Mensch” you are probably expressing the greatest admiration for the qualities of a human being, in one single word.

Today’s communications allow us to exchange documents and photos with Jörg, over which we chat afterwards. That is how, one day, I sent him a “family book” (Familienstammbuch) of my grandfather, written in gothic script. Where they had entered his religion, we read: “mosaic”... Mosaic? Of course! To call somebody a Jew was an insult! So, my grandfather was “mosaic”. Unfortunately, the camouflage of expressions has endured up to this day...

These days, the leaders of Iran say that they want to destroy, “Israel“, or “the Zionists”. However, it is totally clear to us that they really mean the Jews, even if they are camouflaging the expression.

History has taught us repeatedly, that we have to take the announcement of plans to eradicate us seriously. Deathly serious!

Stefan Zweig, who committed suicide nine months before I was born, and after whom I was named Stefan, wrote in his immortal novel “The World of Yesterday”:

“It is one of the implacable laws of history, that it inevitably prevents people living during a moment of momentous change, from recognizing that change during its inception”...

My grandfather unfortunately belonged to tho-
se people who totally underestimated Hitler. And then came the “Kristallnacht”... Years afterwards, he used to tell me that in the thirties he had always proclaimed that Hitler would mismanage himself into the ground. Yes. He mismanaged himself into the ground all right, but it cost Germany somewhere between 7 and 9 million dead! The authors of today’s hate speeches, whether they call themselves islamists, ISIS, or Iranian ayatollahs, preach the same ideology! Are we underestimating the danger AGAIN?
Kurt Tucholsky pointedly wrote in „An das Publikum“: “Dear public, are you really that stupid?”
Thank you, Jörg!
Thank you for having researched the history of our ancestors in the region of Arnstadt, with such an amount of effort in terms of your personal time, so painstakingly, and so respectfully...
Thank you for having found out what happened to them, individually. Having done that, you somehow provided us with closure.
Thank you for proving, day after day, that they haven’t been forgotten, and that, both in Arnstadt and in today’s Germany, we have good friends.
Thank you for having rescued the histories of our relatives in Arnstadt from oblivion, and for having made them understandable to those who live around you. All of a sudden they are “real” people, who have regained their identity and a place where they belong!
And, most of all, thank you for looking in the same direction with us, and for having built the bridges that allow us to do so!

Lieber Jörg, sehr geehrte Herren Obermayer und Wieland, Mitglieder des Komitees, meine lieben Grosseltern selig, meine lieben Eltern selig, meine Damen und Herren!
Wie Sie sich vorstellen können, bin ich sehr durch diesen Moment mitgenommen. Irgendwie haben wir alle das Gefühl, dass sich hier ein Kreis in der Geschichte unserer Familien schliesst... Wir sind hier, in Frieden, und spüren, dass wir unter Freunden sind... Wir schauen zusammen in die Zukunft...
Schalom!
Ich bin ein Chemie-Ingenieur, der auch ein bisschen Forschung betrieben hat. Als solcher habe ich mein ganzes Leben Sachen gebaut und Sachen erfunden. Industrien erstellt, wo es nichts gab...
In diesen fünf oder sechs Jahren, seit Jörg mit unseren Familien Kontakt aufgenommen hat, haben wir ihn kennen und schätzen gelernt. Wenn man mich fragen würde, was ich am Meisten an ihm schätze, würde ich zweifelsfrei sagen: „Jörg ist ein Mensch“. Bei uns Juden geht der Ausdruck „Mensch“ etwas tiefer als in der deutschen Sprache. Von jemandem zu behaupten, dass er ein „Mensch“ ist, dürfte wahrscheinlich das größte Lob sein, das man einer Person machen kann.
Die heutigen technischen Kommunikationsmöglichkeiten erlauben mir, Jörg Bilder zu schicken, über die wir uns dann unterhalten können. So habe ich ihm beispielsweise das Familienstammbuch meines Grossvaters ge-
schickt. Da steht „Religion: Mosaisch“. Mosaisch? klar! Jude war ein Schimpfwort, also war mein Grossvater „Mosaisch“. Aber die „Verkleidung der Ausdrücke“ dauert international bis heute an...

Heute sagen führende Männer im Iran, dass sie „Israel“ oder „die Zionisten“ ausrotten wollen. Uns ist natürlich völlig klar, dass sie damit die Juden meinen, auch wenn der Ausdruck „Jude“ verkleidet ist.

Die Geschichte hat uns wiederholt gelehrt, dass wir die Ankündigung von Plänen uns auszurotten ernst nehmen müssen. Todernst!

Stefan Zweig, der sich neun Monate vor meiner Geburt das Leben nahm, und nach dem ich benannt wurde, schrieb in seinem unvergesslichen Buch: „Die Welt von Gestern“: „Es bleibt ein unumstößliches Gesetz der Geschichte, dass sie gerade den Zeitgenossen versagt, die grossen Bewegungen, die ihre Zeit bestimmten, schon in ihren Anfängen zu erkennen“...

Mein Grossvater gehörte zu denen, die Hitler total unterschätzt haben. Und dann kam die Kristallnacht... Er erzählte mir immer, dass er damals sagte: „Der Hitler wird sich schon selber abwirtschaften“... Ja, er hat sich wohl „abgewirtschaftet“, aber die „Abwirtschaftung“ hat Deutschland zwischen 7 und 9 Millionen Tote gekostet... Die Autoren der heutigen Hassbotschaften, ob Islamisten, ISIS oder iranische Ayatollahs, verkünden die gleiche Ideologie... Unterschätzen wir WIEDER die Gefahr? Wie Kurt Tucholsky in „An das Publikum“ schrieb: „O, hochverehrtes Publikum. Sag mal, bist Du wirklich so dumm?“

Danke Jörg!

Danke, dass Du in Arnstadt und Umgebung die Geschichte unserer Vorfahren mit grossem persönlichen Zeitaufwand mühselig und respektvoll nachgeforst hast.

Danke, dass Du für uns Informationen über die individuellen Schicksale unsere Vorfahren ausfindig gemacht hast und uns damit ermöglicht, irgendwie dieses Kapitel zu schliessen.

Danke, dass Du uns tagtäglich beweist, dass man uns nicht vergessen hat und dass wir sowohl in Arnstadt, wie auch allgemein im heutigen Deutschland, gute Freunde haben.

Danke, dass Du die Geschichte unserer Arnstädter Vorfahren aus dem Vergessen gerettet hast und, ganz speziell, dass du sie für die Leute, die um Dich herum leben verständlich machst und sie ihnen nahelegst. Endlich haben die ehemaligen jüdischen Arnstädter Bürger wieder eine Identität und einen Ort, wo sie hingehören!

Und, hauptsächlich, danke, dass wir zusammen im Leben in die gleiche Richtung schauen, und dass Du dafür die Brücken gebaut hast!
The Obermayer German Jewish History Awards Are Conceived

Since my first postwar visit in 1954, I have maintained close ties with Germany, and especially with friends in my native Bavaria. This is because the memory of our family, prior to 1933, was one of happy coexistence and because postwar German governments made a fundamental decision to tie the destiny of Germany to Western values, Western principles, and democratic ideals.

The generation of the Hitler years has been replaced by a younger generation, aware of the moral issues of the period and which, beyond the nexus of guilt and atonement, has a genuine empathy for things Jewish, a genuine feeling for Israel, and admiration for the contribution of Jews to the intellectual flowering of Germany in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The establishment of diplomatic ties between Israel and Germany in 1965 was a turning point of historic proportions and since then, there has been a flowering of relations between the two countries. German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s address to the Knesset in German in March 2008 was a startling turn of events from a time when even a discussion of German reparations could spark a violent attack in the Knesset. Merkel spoke from the parliamentary podium of a nation whose very existence is the repudiation of Hitler’s legacy.

In 1997, Arthur Obermayer, a distant cousin on the Aufhauser-Mannheimer side of the family and a successful entrepreneur in Boston’s high-tech industry, traveled to Germany to trace family roots. In addition to his business interests, Arthur is an officer and board member of the American Jewish Historical Society and a past chair of the Genealogical Task Force of the Center for Jewish History.

He located the buildings in the small southern German town of Creglingen where each of his great-grandparents had lived and other homes that members of his family had owned prior to 1800. Also, Arthur and his wife, Judy, attended Shabbat services at a synagogue in Fürth, near Nuremberg. The synagogue was housed in what used to be a Jewish orphanage – the first in Germany, established in 1762 by one of Arthur’s ancestors. The orphanage cared for Jewish children until 1942, when all the youngsters were deported to extermination camps.

During this trip, Arthur concluded that more than 50 years after World War II, most Germans have taken difficult and painful steps to respond constructively to their country’s horrific past. There were many non-Jewish Germans who were making a voluntary contribution in some way to the preservation of Jewish history and genealogy, even in places where no Jews live today. For the most part, their efforts had never been acknowledged. Following his return to the U.S., Arthur decided to establish the long overdue German Jewish History Awards.

Arthur first discussed the idea of the awards with me in 1999, after both of us had already broached the subject to Karen Franklin, director of the Judaica
WE WERE EUROPEANS

Museum in Riverdale, New York, and of the Family Research Program at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York City. Karen is also former president of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies and past chair of the Council of American Jewish Museums. She is also a distant cousin on the Aufhauser side, through the Gerstles.

Arthur, Karen, and I agreed that something should be done to encourage and reward Germans who did extraordinary work in collecting, organizing, preserving, documenting, and publishing important material relevant to German-Jewish history and genealogy. Karen originally hoped that the Ronald Lauder Foundation would become a sponsor, but that did not materialize. Arthur then proposed the scheme to the American Jewish Committee and its representatives in Berlin, but this too, did not work out.

From the beginning, the idea was to have an annual awards ceremony in Berlin. Arthur generously agreed to underwrite the costs himself. At the same time, he discussed with me the formation of an Awards Selection Committee, and asked that I serve on this panel. Along with Arthur, Karen, and myself, the other members of the jury include:

- **The late Ernst Cramer**, chairman of the Axel Springer Foundation and husband of Marianne Untermayer, a cousin on the Reitlinger-Rosenfelder side of the family. Born in Augsburg in 1913, he managed, after imprisonment in the Buchenwald concentration camp, to emigrate to the U.S. in 1939. He served in the U.S. Army during the war and with the American Military Government in Germany. Since 1958, he held top management and journalist positions in the Axel Springer Publishing Group, Europe’s largest news enterprise. Ernst Cramer passed away in Berlin on January 19, 2010, ten days before his 97th birthday.

- **Ernest Kallmann**, who was born in Mainz and escaped to France in 1933. A telecommunications and computer management consultant, he has been writing family histories within a broader historical perspective, especially with the Cercle de Généalogie Juive in Paris.

- **Walter Momper**, president of the Berlin House of Representatives and historian. Walter Momper has long been active in city politics and was mayor of Berlin when the wall came down in 1989.

- **Sara Nachama**, who was raised in Israel and later moved to Berlin, where she edited documentary films for German television. From 1992 to 1999, she organized the annual Berlin Jewish Cultural Festival (jüdische Kulturtage). She is now the executive director of the Berlin branch of the New York-based Touro College.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO GERMAN-JEWISH HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Along with a few other people who either had family connections to Germany or who were involved in some other way with Jewish genealogy or the present Jewish community in Germany, we began to consider what the purpose of the awards should be and how the recipients should be chosen.

Our principal goal was to pay tribute – usually for the first time – to ordinary Germans who had, in some way, helped to perpetuate the memory of their local Jewish community. All these communities had been totally wiped out by the Nazis and all that remained were abandoned houses, vandalized synagogues, or ruined cemeteries. In setting up the awards, we wanted the honorees, as well as the public at large – both in Germany and around the world – to know that world Jewry appreciated the ongoing
efforts throughout Germany to make amends for the horrors their parents and grandparents had inflicted on the Jews. In one of the award programs, we wrote:

Today, the German government and people are quick to recognize the slippery slope from arrogance to bigotry, intolerance, hatred, repression, dehumanization, and barbarity – and are among the first to say, “never again.”

We decided that awards would be given to people who had devoted themselves to the preservation and documentation of Jewish history and genealogy in Germany for at least 10 years. The awards are publicized in the international media, and letters asking for recommendations of candidates are sent to Jewish communal organizations and museums throughout Germany, and to others who might be able to suggest worthy nominees. Many of the nominations have come from Jewish survivors outside Germany, who want to express their appreciation for the outstanding work done in the towns and villages where their ancestors once lived. Coincidentally, in the first year, all of the nominators of award recipients were survivors.

Over the years, recipients of the German Jewish History Awards represented a cross-section of German society: bankers, stonemasons, letter carriers, mechanics, artists, physicians, teachers, and mayors, ranging in age from 30 to 80. Their work involved renovating synagogues, restoring Jewish cemeteries and mikvaot (ritual baths), creating exhibits on Jewish life, writing books about local Jewish history, and teaching German schoolchildren about the Holocaust.

Many of the honorees use their work as a vehicle for actively fostering German-Jewish reconciliation.

I initially hoped we could involve my cousin, Herbert Loebl, in the project. Herbert had expressed similar ideas, and had organized his own awards for deserving Germans from our hometown of Bamberg and surroundings. Through his efforts, in 1998, the first two Bambergers were honored at the National Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C. Unfortunately, Herbert disagreed with certain details of the award ceremony and procedure; for example, Herbert believed that the awards should be given out only on a local level, in order to generate press coverage in the honoree’s immediate area, whereas Arthur and I thought that it was equally important to provide national and even international recognition to the recipients. In the end, Herbert did not agree to be involved if he could not be the final arbiter. Herbert continued with his own awards until 2002, when the Wiener Library in London withdrew its support.

NOVEMBER 13, 2000: THE FIRST AWARDS

Eventually, Arthur set up the German Jewish Community History Council as part of his U.S.-based Obermayer Foundation, Inc.

Through his foundation, in 1999 Arthur had already created the Creglingen Jewish Museum, in the town where his ancestors had lived beginning in 1618, at the outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War. He bought one of his ancestor’s homes and, with the full cooperation of local townspeople, leaders, and politicians, and the financial support of the city, converted the house into a museum that focuses on the contributions of Jews to the culture and development of Creglingen and on the Jewish customs that were once practiced there. The museum is unique in that it deals primarily with the lives of Jews and what the town lost when it lost its Jews (none live within 30 miles today), rather than emphasizing the death of Jews and the horrors of the Holocaust.

Arthur was joined in the awards by the German Jewish Special Interest Group of JewishGen,
the largest Internet Jewish genealogy group, with 1,400 members.

Pamela and I participated in the first awards ceremony, which was held on November 13, 2000, in conjunction with the yearly Judische Kulturtage, at the “Centrum Judaicum” in Berlin. This is the restored Moorish-style “New Synagogue,” which opened on Oranienburger Strasse in 1866 as a center of liberal Judaism, and is widely known for its 165-foot-high golden dome. The impressive building is a powerful link between historic Jewish Berlin and the present. The facade facing the street has been restored and a permanent display – “Open Ye the Gates” – chronicles the center’s history. But much of the building is a shell that looks out onto an empty lot where the main hall of the synagogue once stood.

We honored five “righteous souls” whom we had chosen out of many candidates, all of whom had worked quietly, modestly, and without remuneration, to restore and preserve the vestiges of Jewish life and heritage across Germany.

Beginning in 2002, the president of the Berlin House of Representatives sponsored the Obermayer Awards ceremony, and the actual presentation ceremony is now held every year in the Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin, the Berlin state legislature (formally the Prussian parliament). The date was changed to around January 27 – the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945, which is today commemorated as German Holocaust Day.

The Obermayer German Jewish History Awards have had a tremendous impact on German-Jewish relations in recent years, and have become well-known and highly respected marks of recognition. Without a doubt, they have influenced German research and scholarship covering the pre-World War II history of German Jewry.

On September 6, 2007, Arthur Obermayer was awarded the Bundesverdienstkreuz (Order of Merit) of the Federal Republic of Germany at a ceremony held at Temple Shalom in Newton, Massachusetts. In his laudatio, as he conferred the award on behalf of Horst Köhler, president of the Federal Republic, German Consul General Dr. Wolfgang Vorwerk emphasized that this was the highest tribute his country can pay to individuals.

This was also Pamela’s and my opportunity to visit the new Jewish Museum, which at the time was directed by former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Michael Blumenthal. The building was created by Daniel Liebeskind, and its design is quite unique and symbolic. Over the years, the Jewish Museum became one of Berlin’s most sought-after attractions; in June 2007, the museum recorded its four millionth visitor (the vast majority of whom were non-Jews)! We also went to the rebuilt Reichstag, where my mother’s brother, Siegfried Aufhäuser, represented the Social Democrats in the 1920s and early 1930s. The shell of the original building has been preserved, but the interior is modernized and there is a glass dome from which one has a fantastic view of the city.

In January 2008, Pamela and I participated in our second award ceremony, and were able to see for ourselves how the event had been elevated to a semi-official and very prestigious ceremony. The proceedings, in the historic plenary chamber of the Berlin State Legislature building, included a major address by Sara Bloomfield, director of the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.; a talk by Charlotte Knobloch, president of the Zentralrat, the highest authority of the German-Jewish community; as well as moving musical interludes, with the participation of a Reform cantor from Philadelphia. The proceedings, as well as the gala reception in another hall of the building, were organized and sponsored by the Berlin government.
Part Three: The Obermayer German Jewish History Awards Are Conceived

Among the five award recipients were Charlotte Mayenberger, from Baden-Württemberg, who photographed and documented all the tombstones in the local Jewish cemetery including the grave of Albert Einstein’s parents; and Fritz Reuter, 78, who distinguished himself by establishing the first Jewish Museum in Germany after World War II, known as the Rashi House, in Worms. He also restored the thousand-year-old cemetery there, the oldest in Europe, and rehabilitated the synagogue, which belonged to the most flourishing Jewish community of the Middle Ages, and which was burned on Kristallnacht.

In his half century of work (which also included a book), Reuter rediscovered the pivotal center of Jewish life that was Worms. As a former director of the City Archives, he became the human face behind the renovated Jewish quarter of Worms, which today is one of the leading attractions for visitors to Jewish Europe.

Bill Clinton visited the Rashi House in 1987 as governor of Arkansas.

Having himself once been a member of the Hitler Youth, Reuter’s work offers living proof of ways in which an individual can try to reconcile with and move beyond the hard truths of the past.

On Friday evening, Pamela and I attended services at Berlin’s Rykestrasse Synagogue, today Germany’s largest Jewish temple, a historic landmark that seats more than 1,200 worshippers, located in what was formerly Communist-dominated East Berlin.

Although Berlin is said to have a Jewish community of 12,000 members, there was barely a minyan (10 worshippers)! Most of Berlin’s Jews today are recent immigrants from Russia, without religious education or Jewish communal background. Groups of bar mitzvah boys and bat mitzvah girls helped to fill some of the rows of seats.

The experience brought home to us the tragedy of German-Jewish history and the devastating transformation from glory to emptiness, from a flourishing liberal Jewish community that was once the center of the Jewish world to a sad, almost insignificant remnant of refugees.
A CASE IN POINT

Inge Franken won the Obermayer award in 2007. Inge grew up with her mother and sister in an atmosphere of pain, stifled silence, not knowing until she read her father's wartime letters, many years later, that both her grandfather and her father, who was killed during the siege of Leningrad, were Nazi sympathizers. As she says, "Nobody in my family talked about the time before. But I knew we belonged to them - to the people who did terrible things."

After retiring as a Berlin schoolteacher in the early 1990s, Inge devoted herself to helping fellow Germans, both young and old, to speak about, learn about, and investigate their own pasts. "You have a big stone on your back and when you say, 'Yes, my parents were the perpetrators,' it becomes so much easier," says Franken, who in 1996 began organizing monthly discussions at One by One, an organization in Berlin that invites relatives of Holocaust victims and perpetrators to share their experiences and stories.

In fact, the community center where Franken organized those meetings had served as a children's home from which dozens of Jewish orphans were deported to their deaths in 1942. Delving into documents about the building's history, Franken tracked down rare photographs of the home's orphans, taken by Jewish photographer Abraham Pisarek. In 2005, Franken published her findings in Gegen das Vergessen: Erinnerungen an das jüdische Kinderheim Fehrwellenerstrasse 92, Berlin Prenzlauer Berg.

Today, Franken is focusing her attention on children, taking her energetic One by One presentations to dozens of schools throughout the country. Accompanied by one of a number of Jewish friends who play her counterpart in the victim-perpetrator dialogue, Franken has reached out to hundreds of German youth in a way that nobody ever did before.

Along the way, in the eastern state of Brandenburg, for example, some students and teachers have shown resistance to Franken's efforts, accusing her of betraying her family and her country. Franken is particularly interested in reaching out to them. "I like to go to the right-wing students because they need it. Maybe in one class, one child will become more open. I try to make individual connections with the students, encouraging them to speak. Our kids must know what happened in their families. If the crimes remain silenced, the children will not have a good ground to start their lives on... The most important thing I tell them is: Ask questions. Ask about your background. What did your parents do? Your grandparents, what is your family's story? Most of them say, 'I don't know.' So, I ask them, 'You have a grandfather? Try to talk to him. Try to find out.'"

Carole Vogel, who nominated Inge, gave us some interesting insight into the effects of the Obermayer Award in this case:

The international recognition of Inge's work, the award ceremony taking place in such a symbol of power, the politicians present, the 1000 Euros, and later, the newspaper article with Inge's photo, changed the way she was regarded by her family.

Suddenly, she wasn't an eccentric, stubborn old woman with a passion for stirring up trouble. Instead, they saw her as a courageous German committed to the truth, a woman who did important work and changed the lives of those she touched. They understood that her work, especially her efforts with German schoolchildren, had value. They were bursting with pride at the award ceremony. Her 18-year-old grandson summarized it best when he said, "Grandma, nothing can ever top this."

At the reception, speeches were made by those closest to Inge and they were
heartfelt and passionate, but the most moving was the one given by her sister. The sister made it clear that she had been an unwilling participant in Inge’s journey, but now recognized the value of Inge’s work and she could finally appreciate what an incredible human being Inge is.

Some of the other recent recipients included:

Gunter Demnig, the artist from Cologne who conceived the idea of the Stolpersteine (stumbling blocks) and since 1993, has placed more than 12,000 of them in 257 cities, towns, and villages throughout Germany. Each stumbling block measures about four inches square and bears a brass plaque inscribed with the simple words “Here lived” and the name, date, and place of death of a victim of Nazism. The blocks, neatly paved into the sidewalk, force passersby to stop and read them — and thus become reminders and voices calling out — in the words of Miriam Gillis-Carlebach, daughter of Hamburg’s last rabbi: “Every human being has a name.” The Stolpersteine bring back the names of Holocaust victims to the places where they lived and remind passersby that the victims were just ordinary people — something no other memorial does.

Upon receiving his award in 2006, Demnig observed, “I know I can’t do six million stones. But if I can inspire a discussion with just one person, something very important has been achieved.”

Den Opfern ein Gesicht geben

GEDECKTEN In Bamberg verlegte der Künstler Gunter Demnig weitere sechs „Stolpersteine gegen das Vergessen“. Zudem verlieh die Willy-Aron-Gesellschaft erstmals ihren Zivilcourage-Preis.


Begonnen hatte man in der Otto-Straße und vor dort aus ging es weiter in die Luitpoldstrasse, wo gleich drei „Stolper-"... Hier beobachten Gunter Demnig bei der Verlegung eines „Stolpersteines" Foto: Hall

The Bamberg daily “Frankischer Tag” reports: Gunter Demnig installed a “Stolperstein” in front of our former house in Luitpoldstrasse 27, to honor my grandmother. Also shown are the girls from Erica’s high school who were the sponsors.
Other Stolpersteine in Bamberg commemorate Count Claus von Stauffenberg; the brave young Jewish lawyer Willy Aron; and Julius Schapiro, our Hebrew teacher and cantor in the Bamberg synagogue, his wife and his younger daughter Ruth, who was 16 at the time of her deportation.

The Stolpersteine memorial project has the enthusiastic support of Bamberg’s Mayor Andreas Starke.

Lars Menk, a letter carrier from Berlin and a self-taught genealogist. When, at the age of 19, he embarked on a search for his own family’s roots in Rhineland-Pfalz, he unexpectedly discovered that one of his great-grandmothers had been Jewish – although he also had a grandfather who joined the SA and became a Nazi. Menk wanted to understand his roots “because that’s what I’m made of – all those influences of the past that came together in my person.” He went on to investigate hundreds, and later thousands of German-Jewish family names. The result was the publication in 2005 of an 800-page Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames, with some 13,000 entries. This reference book has helped thousands of Jews research the origins of their own families.

Cordula Kappner, former director of a county library in Hassfurt, near Bamberg, and the daughter of a Protestant preacher, has spent 20 years exploring the German-Jewish history of her town and the surrounding region. She has staged numerous successful exhibits based on her research, written books and articles for local newspapers, and conducted guided tours. Kappner has recruited local schoolchildren and residents to help her document seven Jewish cemeteries and has made contact with many survivors.

Christiane Walesch-Schneller, from Breisach am Rhein, which only had 250 Jews in 1933, saved the town’s former Jewish community center from impending demolition. Today, the building is home to an educational center on Jews and minorities, and occasional religious services are held for Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union who have settled in the area.
Hans Dieter Arntz (2009)

After receiving the Obermayer Award, Hans Dieter Arntz initially planned to conclude his research. However, he soon recognized the positive impact and meaning of the award, based on the increased traffic on his website, and he was motivated to continue. Thanks to new contacts, he was able to finish his extensive and internationally acclaimed book on Josef Weiss, Der letzte Judenälteste von Bergen-Belsen. Josef Weiss – würdig in einer unwürdigen Umgebung / The Last Jewish Camp Elder of Bergen-Belsen. The book was published in 2012 and was lauded by the German Foreign Minister, Guido Westerwelle, and Federal President Joachim Gauck. Reviews, television reports, and radio show appearances soon followed. On September 16, 2015 Arntz received the Order of Merit from North Rhine-Westphalia and was praised by its Minister President Hannelore Kraft.

Wolfgang Battermann (2012)

In the four years since he was presented with the Obermayer Award, Wolfgang Battermann has noticed an increased interest in his work and a growing awareness of the institution in Petershagen, leading to a steady increase of visitors and more requests for guided tours. By the time of this publication, the organization is counting more than 2,500 visitors per annum and has offered more than seventy guided tours. In addition, several projects evolved through existing contacts in Israel, the United States, the Netherlands, Belgium and Eastern European countries. There have been regular visits, exhibitions, family reunions, travels, concerts, excursions, and events such as talks with Zeitzeugen, contemporary witnesses. In 2012 the group laid 36 Stolpersteine monuments throughout the small town of Petershagen. Battermann and his colleagues also initiated a youth exchange with Israeli, German, Serbian, Belarussian and Polish youths and, since 2013, these adolescents are actively participating at the memorial in Sobibor. With the help of the Leo Baeck Institute, a reference library was established at the Jewish school in Petershagen. Scholars and students are now able to research and prepare their papers at the site. As a direct result of the Obermayer Award, Wolfgang Battermann received a distinction from North Rhine-Westphalia for “his extraordinary achievements in saving and preserving a unique memorial and research site within Germany”.

Klaus Beer (2013)

Even though memorial work and research on Jewish history has been a huge success in Germany, anti-Semitism is still existent. Many German Jews are aware of this and are fearful of what the future might bring. Klaus Beer has chosen not to be a neutral observer and bystander of this development; instead, he has conti-
nued to take a stance and fight against it. For example, in November 2013, Beer held a lecture at the memorial site of the Hailfingen-Tailfingen concentration camp. He also believes that one cannot exclude from the fight against anti-Semitism the anti-democratic and racist acts of the NSU (National Socialist Underground), an extreme-right network that has been responsible for the murder of Muslims in Germany. With this in mind, Beer initiated a conference on the NSU at the State University of Music and the Performing Arts in Stuttgart.

Another surprising outcome was Beer’s friend Helmut Opferkuch’s disclosure that he was the one who arrested Georg Heuser in 1961. Heuser had been charged with more than 30,000 counts of murder during the massacre of Jews in Minsk, among them the Cohen family that Klaus Beer had researched. When he was arrested, Heuser held the position of criminal police chief of the State of Rhineland Palatinate.

Because a local journalist from Hans Eberhard Berkemann’s home region was present in Berlin for the Obermayer Awards, the idea to use the former synagogue in Bad Sobernheim as a memorial site and a public library was readily approved. Building work at the old synagogue started in 2008, and in 2010 the memorial site and library were inaugurated. Twenty-five descendants of local Jewish families were represented at the ceremony.

Today events, concerts and lectures, as well as Jewish prayer services, are held at the restored synagogue, that welcomes more than 10,000 visitors each year. The Jewish heritage of Bad Sobernheim is thus being preserved and remembered.

Johannes Bruno (2007)
When the new synagogue in Speyer was inaugurated on November 9, 2011, Johannes Bruno published *Fates of the Jews of Speyer II*. His first book with the same title had been out of print for many years.

Heike Häußler, the chairwoman of the region’s tourism agency, wrote the preface to the book, and the agency participated in the financing of the printing. The press reported on this event. Because many members of the new Jewish community are migrants and are not always well versed in the German language, they have not been equipped to guide tourists through the synagogue. For this reason, Johannes Bruno took on the task and is now the only non-Jewish citizen in Speyer to possess the key to the synagogue.

In connection with the centenary of the First World War, Johannes Bruno wrote his fifth book, which focuses on 40 Jewish citizens of Speyer who took part in that war. Three of them returned to Germany from New Orleans decades later to fight for the German “Reich”.

One of Bruno’s goals was to counter the common prejudice that “Jews never fought for Germany” with such facts. Unfortunately, the printing of this book is currently delayed.

As Bruno is arranging for his legacy, he plans to bequeath 15 DA4 files to the Speyer archives to ensure that this historical effort will be preserved. It includes material on Jews of Speyer, which he has received from descendants over two and half decades.

Gerhard Buck (2008)
Fifteen years ago Gerhard Buck started copying the Jewish entries from the Civil Vital Registers of the former Duchy of Nassau for the years 1817-1874. So far he has documented the entries of roughly 170 localities, and he has data sets for about 11,000 people. However, further research at the Central State Archive in Wiesbaden will be needed to resolve inconsistencies and the change from patronymics to family names.

Buck’s other activities are closely connected
with local projects in his region; for example, *Stolpersteine*, searching for descendants of former residents, work on a former synagogue, publications on local Jewish history, and writing book reviews.

One advance that Buck has noted is that his work is no longer restricted to the archives of his region. GerSIG (German Special Interest group of JewishGen) and its Internet forum (co-founded by Arthur Obermayer) enable him to share his knowledge with researchers in many parts of the world. A highlight each year is attending the annual conferences on Jewish genealogy (IAJGS) – whether he is a speaker or not.

The greatest honor that Buck has experienced in recent years took place in September 2012. To his delight, the Netherlands Society for Jewish Genealogy invited him to give a talk on the occasion of its 25th anniversary, together with two colleagues from Austria and the Czech Republic. An additional surprise came when one of the GerSIG directors entered with her husband just as he began his lecture.

Lothar Czoßek (2013)

Many residents of Saxony-Anhalt became aware of Lothar Czoßek’s work in Rehmsdorf, because the Obermayer Award ceremony was filmed by the MDR (Central German Broadcasting) and was featured in the TV show Saxony-Anhalt Today.

As a result, Czoßek was invited to speak with the Minister-President and the County Commissioner of the Burgenlandkreis, who congratulated him on the award and his work. They were interested in finding out what had been done so far and, especially, what still needs to be done to expand and enhance research on the “Wille” subcamp.

Recognition and funding for Czoßek’s work was a direct outcome of the Obermayer Award: Political factions visited the ongoing work on-site, and the Rehmsdorf project was supported by the Federal “Promoting Tolerance–Strengthening Competence” program. Participants were motivated to continue their work and realize their ambitious goals over the course of the subsequent years.

Among the accomplishments:

- Clarifying the ownership, establishing a historical trail and restoring the memorial site, the parade ground and the interior of two original prisoner barracks that still remained on the premises of the former camp.
- Development of an educational program to inform regional secondary school teachers and students about future endeavors in Rehmsdorf.
- Restoration work on the memorial site was completed and handed over to the County Commissioner on the occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2014. In 2015, the parade ground was finished. Unfortunately, construction experts discovered defects to the barracks. Fixing them has required more time and money than was originally planned, so this part of the project will not be completed until the end of 2016.

In the meantime, seven panels were created to tell the story of the “Wille” subcamp, with funding from the “Promoting Tolerance – Strengthening Competence” program, and in cooperation with the *Miteinander* (Together) association and students from the Technical University of Merseburg. In addition, a model of the subcamp was built and a bedstead was reconstructed. Both are being shown in one of the barracks to illustrate former living conditions in the camp.

None of this would have been possible, and certainly not in such a short time, without the support of local authorities whom Czoßek encountered after receiving the Obermayer Award.

Klaus Dietermann (2009)

Along with some friends, Klaus Dietermann develops annual exhibitions to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day. These
exhibitions are held at the Active Museum Südwesftalben and feature different topics each year – for example, Stolpersteine in the Siegen-Wittgenstein region, Simon Grünewald: Patriot-Jew-German, Jewish soldiers in WWI, and the Siegen community.

Another very important project was accomplished this year: In conjunction with the archive of the Siegen-Wittgenstein region and the University of Siegen, the virtual memorial book for the victims of National Socialism is now hosted online. It features the names of 1,600 victims who were either murdered in the region or, as citizens of this region, were killed elsewhere. Some of these names are accompanied by biographies, photographs and documents; and visitors of the website are requested to help expand the collection by providing additional information on individuals.

The Active Museum will also expand and gain an additional floor in 2016, to accommodate a seminar room, an archive, and further space for exhibitions. This project was financed by North Rhine-Westphalia, the city of Siegen, and the region. Dietermann and the Active Museum are far from resting on their laurels, though. They will remain busy and engaged in their ongoing work.

Pascale Eberhard (2015)

Since she received the Obermayer Award in January 2015, Pascale Eberhard’s exhibition on the Jewish citizens of Trier and Luxemburg who were deported to the Litzmannstad ghetto has been presented six times.

Her next project is also a direct result of the award, for it was at the award ceremony that Eberhard met painter Marlis Glaser. Although Eberhard had originally planned a lecture with music, she will instead read Jewish poetry, accompanied by music, and surrounded by Glaser’s paintings at the synagogue in Wawern – paintings that give the impression they had been designed for this specific place and purpose.

Pascale Eberhard is extremely grateful to Dr. Obermayer and his team for the personal encounter with Marlis Glaser, as well as the increasing appreciation and acknowledgement of Eberhard’s memorial work by regional institutions and individuals – all made possible by the Obermayer Foundation.

Klaus-Dieter Ehmke (2004)

Klaus-Dieter Ehmke admits that being honored with the Obermayer Award changed his life. As a former citizen of the GDR, he had not seen much of the “big wide world”. Nevertheless he began his work on Jewish history as a schoolboy, and he has continued it.

After receiving the award, Ehmke was invited to give lectures and develop exhibitions. He was asked for a contribution toward rebuilding a synagogue and using the premises for exhibitions. When another synagogue was reconstructed, he was approached once again.

Most likely due to the press coverage Ehmke received, he was contacted when an abandoned Jewish tombstone was found in Western Pomerania. Since the cemetery that it came from had been destroyed in WWII and all of its stones had been removed, it made no sense to return this single gravestone to its previous plot. Therefore, he handed it over to the Pommersches Landesmuseum in Greifswald for an exhibition on the Jewish history of Western Pomerania. The gravestone has remained virtually intact and is particularly interesting because it features inscriptions on both sides.

Through the years, Ehmke has extended his activities as a guide for groups touring Berlin’s cemeteries. He volunteers for the organization Cross Roads, which offers interreligious and intercultural guided tours and publishes a calendar with Jewish, Christian and Muslim holidays.

In 2006 Klaus-Dieter Ehmke invited Judith and Arthur Obermayer to Röbel, where they opened the exhibition on Jewish History in Mecklenburg. According to Ehmke, Arthur
Obermayer’s work and life are captured in a biblical verse once spoken by Rabbi Dr. Leo Trepp in Röbel: “There are places in this world where righteousness and peace have kissed one another.”

Rolf Emmerich (2012)
Receiving the Obermayer Award has definitely motivated Rolf Emmerich to continue his work. Here two new projects can be highlighted:
In 2012 he produced a double compact disc, “Synagogengesänge aus Laupheim” / Synagogue Songs from Laupheim, featuring original recordings from 1922. The accompanying booklet summarizes the challenges that Emmerich faced while retrieving and accessing the raw material to prepare the CDs.
In April 2013 Emmerich finished his book Kehillah. Laupheimer Spuren (“traces”). It contains information on his numerous findings over more than three decades, providing further details on the Jewish schools, synagogue songs, rabbis and Jewish families of Laupheim, as well as mentioning those who tried to help in times of peril.
On February 14, 2016, along with Dr. Yitzhak Steiner, Emmerich will be awarded the outstanding citizen award medal from the city of Laupheim.

Bernhard Gelderblom (2009)
Encouraged by his Obermayer Award, Bernhard Gelderblom decided to focus his research on Jewish life in rural areas, choosing the former region of Amt Lauenstein that today encompasses the villages of Flecken Salzhemmendorf.
In 2009 he reached an agreement with local authorities, notably Clemens Pommering, who was then responsible for cultural activities and now serves as the mayor of the village.
For more than three years, Bernhard Gelderblom researched the history of Jewish life in the villages of the “Synagogenverband Salzhemmendorf”. He was invited by the mayors of the communities and their local historic societies to give lectures in Salzhemmendorf, Wallensen, Hemmendorf, Duingen and Lauenstein. This has allowed him to get in touch with local eyewitnesses.
Many people attended these lectures, which often resulted into fruitful discussions. People have been greatly moved by Gelderblom’s description of discrimination toward and expulsion of Jewish citizens. But he also noticed that the subject was not welcome everywhere and that there was some resistance in the rather conservative local historic associations.
Flecken Salzhemmendorf consented to collect all available biographical data on Jews who had lived in the area from the registry of residents, as well as birth, marriage, and death certificates, and to pay for Gelderblom’s publication.
In 2013 the results were published under the title Die Juden in den Dörfern des Fleckens Salzhemmendorf / Jews in the Villages of the Salzhemmendorf Region. Information plaques were placed at the cemeteries of Hemmendorf and Salzhemmendorf, at the town hall, and at the former synagogue. Additional plaques will be put up in Lauenstein and Wallensen.

Marlis Glaser (2015)
Before receiving the Obermayer Award, Marlis Glaser had decided to curtail an event for the European Day of Jewish Culture (EDJC) that she had held in her exhibition space, because the work load and costs had become an overwhelming burden.
But after receiving the award, she had new strength to continue her cultural activity on German-Jewish history. Thus the award was both encouragement and an impetus to keep up her work.
As a result of the media coverage surrounding the Obermayer Award, Glaser received an artistic commission for a communal institution in a nearby city that until that point had rejected all proposals from her.
For the EDJC 2015, Glaser placed her artistic
focus on the memory of the great German-Jewish writer and religious philosopher Martin Buber.

In addition, she dedicated a large portion of her artistic work to the memory of poet Else Lasker-Schüler. Glaser held 10 exhibitions and participated at numerous events in conjunction with the 70th anniversary of Lasker-Schüler’s death. In all speeches and tributes, the Obermayer German Jewish History Award was addressed.

Barbara Greve (2010)
For Barbara Greve, the Obermayer Award constituted a great honor and important recognition of her work, and it encouraged her to pursue in-depth research on Judaism in Northern Hessa.

A result of that research was her book *A Small Town in Hessia: Neukirchen, the Jews and the Nazi Rule*, published in 2010. In addition to analyzing the behavior of the local community and neighbors, and how residents dealt with local history, Greve undertook the comprehensive task of compiling biographies of Jews buried in the Jewish cemetery at Oberaula and studying the local Jewish funeral culture.

Through her genealogical research Greve got in touch with several descendants of Jewish families from the Northern Hessian region. These contacts inspired her research, and many were possible only with the help of the Obermayer Foundation.

Greve is currently working on the reconstruction of the civil registry of the Jewish community in Jesberg. The registry, as well as several family histories, will be published soon.

This work did not just satisfy intellectual curiosity. For Greve it is a moral obligation with respect to the displaced, murdered and too-often forgotten Jews from the region. She is pleased to give them back their names and assist their descendants in getting to know the history of their ancestors.

Michael Heitz (2011)
After receiving his Obermayer Award, Michael Heitz knew that there was still follow-up research work to do on his subject, Jewish life in Kraichgau, and along with new partners (the society *Jüdisches Leben Kraichgau e.V.* and the Youth Department of the German Football League team TSG 1899 in Hoffenheim) he has since undertaken numerous projects.

He developed *Dem Vergessen entrissen. Jüdisches Leben im Kraichgau / Rescuing It From Oblivion: Jewish Life in Kraichgau*, a travelling
exhibition with 35 panels. It is divided into the three categories of History, Religious Practices and Social Life, and demonstrates how various and rich Jewish life once was in Kraichgau. The exhibition opened in Bruchsal in April 2011 and was subsequently shown in more than fifteen venues, including Heidelberg, Heilbronn, Mannheim and Karlsruhe. A 47-page accompanying booklet was also published.

In 2012, Heitz helped create the eight-kilometer “Menachem & Fred Hiking Trail”. Dr. Menachem Mayer and his brother Fred Raymes grew up in the little village of Sinsheim-Hoffenheim (near Heidelberg). Their relatives in nearby Neidenstein used this trail for their Sunday visits. Both Menachem and Fred were deported to Gurs, France with their parents on October 22, 1940, and they were the only survivors of their family. Youth soccer teams equipped the trail with geocaches, providing travellers with information about the former Jewish life in this region.

Heitz’s book *Jüdische Persönlichkeiten im Kraichgau / Jewish Personalities in Kraichgau* includes more than 60 biographies of Jews who originally had their roots or home in the region. It was published in October 2013 and is still in quite high demand. It is available for readers at universities such as Heidelberg, Frankfurt, Berkeley, Harvard, and Stanford and at institutions like the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC and the National Library of Israel, Jerusalem.

According to Heitz, the Obermayer Award has had numerous positive side-effects. The society and its range of activities have received additional attention, and new partnerships and cooperation with other institutions and societies have been established over the course of recent years.

In November 2011, Chancellor Angela Merkel presented Heitz with the Deutscher Lehrerpreis (German Teacher Award) in Berlin. Edward Serotta, director of Centropa (Vienna, Austria), learned about the Obermayer Award in spring 2011 and invited Michael Heitz to Centropa’s International Summer Academy that was held in Vienna the same year. Heitz participated in other Summer Academies sponsored by Centropa in Berlin, Sarajevo, Krakow and Warsaw, where he shared his experiences, especially how to teach about the former vibrant Jewish life of a certain area and how to carry out pedagogical projects.

**Detlev Herbst (2015)**

Taking part in the Obermayer Award ceremony and the meeting in Berlin has certainly strengthened Detlev Herbst’s ties with his Jewish friends a lot. In the summer Livingstone Treumann visited Berlin once again for additional genealogical research on his ancestors, meeting with Herbst and his family in Uslar. Batya and Amir Tal Or from Israel also visited Herbst last summer in Uslar.

Since receiving the Obermayer Award, Herbst has been contacted by several families to assist them in finding out details about their German ancestors. In addition Herbst was asked to write a biography of Rabbi Dr. Albert Kahlberg, born in Uslar in 1883. The biography was read at a Wroclaw University ceremony commemorating Kahlberg and other victims who had been deprived of their doctorates by the Nazis.

The cemetery project is being continued with students from Herbst’s former school. They visited the Jewish cemetery in Bodenfelde in spring and summer 2015 to tend to the graves and to make the ways passable.

On November 8, 2015 Herbst offered a guided tour to the former houses and shops of Jewish citizens in Uslar, which was attended by approximately thirty people. A leaflet providing further information on the tour will be provided in cooperation with Uslar’s tourist office, to be published early next year.

For January 26, 2016 Herbst is preparing a visit to the Jewish cemetery in Bodenfelde.
Rolf Hofmann (2006)

The Harburg Project was founded in 1986, beginning with cultural activities at the former Harburg Synagogue near Nördlingen in Bavaria.

Since 1992, the focus of Jewish family history was essentially based on the holdings of the Princely Archives at Harburg castle and the holdings of Nördlingen City Archive.

Rolf Hofmann research activities since 2006 dealt with several topics:

Together with Dr. Herbert Immenkoetter (Augsburg), he elaborated upon the grave lists of the Jewish cemeteries in Augsburg and Hainsfarth with details from family histories. These are now accessible at the Alemannia Judaica website.

Sixty family sheets on Jewish families in Pappenheim, based on the documentation of the Jewish cemetery in Pappenheim by Ahron Bruck (Jerusalem), were compiled using historic records and are now featured at Alemannia Judaica. These sheets include some excellent photographs of gravestone inscription. They were taken by Mario Jacoby, who died in December 2015. The Harburg Project acquired his documentation of the Jewish cemetery in Pappenheim in 2014.

Max Koppel & Sons in Nördlingen was one of the most important stonemason companies in Swabish Bavaria, and, at the time, probably the only Jewish one. The company delivered grave stones to Jewish cemeteries in Bavaria as far as Augsburg and Munich. A booklet detailing the company’s activities was published in German and English and can be obtained from the Harburg Project.

In 2010 the exhibition, *Encounter With Remarkable Persons*, was mounted in Nördlingen. It featured 60 short biographies and pictures of Jews who once had lived in the area around Nördlingen and in Stuttgart.

The family history of Aron Friedmann of Hainsfarth, who became a shoe trader in Ingolstadt and published two books on the history of Jews in Ingolstadt and Monheim, will soon be available at the Alemannia Judaica website.

In 2014, the Harburg Project focused on the synagogues of Hainsfarth, Harburg and Nördlingen. The results, including a couple of rare photographs, are presented at Alemannia Judaica.

Also in 2014, roughly 20 gravestones at the Jewish cemetery in Hainsfarth were restored to their original appearance and colour. This activity, sponsored by the Harburg Project, is still unique for Swabish Bavaria. The photographs and a detailed description of the Jewish cemetery of Hainsfarth are on display at Alemannia Judaica.

Jörg Kaps (2015)

Being nominated for the Obermayer Award was a great pleasure and honor for Jörg Kaps. He is indebted to the late Dr. Obermayer for establishing the award, as well as for the annual ceremony, which he considered deeply moving.

Neither Jörg Kaps nor Stefan Goldschmidt of Buenos Aires, one of his nominators, would have imagined that one day they would be addressing the Jewish history of the city of Arnstadt together in Berlin’s House of Representatives. That occasion meant so much to them.

Shortly after the award ceremony, Kaps received messages from all over the world. Those who were not able to come to Berlin participated via live stream in Israel, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In March of 2015 he was awarded with the honorary certificate of the Ilm-region by the county commissioner. In June, more than 100 guests attended the placement of fourteen *Stolpersteine* in Arnstadt, and Kaps was invited to sign the city’s golden book.

During the summer of 2015 he continued his project: *Zeitzeugen*, arranging for contemporary witnesses to share the family histories of victims and perpetrators with classes in secondary
schools. With this project, Kaps has been able to show that history still impacts families today, and it can be used to encourage younger generations to view opinion leaders critically and to decide for themselves what they consider wrong or right. In addition, these family narratives help to connect abstract numbers and unknown victims with real faces, names and histories.

As a part of the 23rd Jewish-Israeli cultural days in the state of Thuringia, Kaps coordinated several events in Arnstadt during which he presented photographs and documents to illustrate the histories and traces of Jewish families. For the future, he plans to continue his research, lay further Stolpersteine, work with school classes, publish a book on Jewish families from Arnstadt, organize an exhibit, arrange meetings with descendants, and promote the development of a documentary on their lives. Jörg Kaps is certain that the Obermayer Award will accompany him on all of his future endeavors as he uncovers and visualizes Arnstadt’s German-Jewish history. It will help him open new doors, for which he is tremendously thankful.

Wolfram Kastner (2005)
In 2008 Wolfram Kastner initiated a project in München-Sendling under the title nach unbekannt abgewandert / Migrated Unknown Destination.
It consisted of sixteen white suitcases, portraits and biographies that were placed in front of four residential buildings, commemorating former neighbors who were persecuted, deported and murdered for being perceived as Jews. This open air installation was accompanied by lectures, guided tours and concerts.

The following year Kastner created Unerhörte Musik / Unheard Music to honor the memory of 106 Jewish musicians and composers in Munich.

His team researched biographies, compositions and publications from the aforementioned artists, developed an exhibition at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich, organized concerts and erected musical steles in public places where works from Jewish composers could be heard.

Unfortunately, the legacies from Herbert Fromm and Heinrich Schalit, two composers who managed to escape to New York, still remain largely unexplored. Documents at the Jewish Theological Seminary constitute a large treasure trove for researchers but so far Kastner has not acquired the necessary funding to undertake this task.

On the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Nazi seizure of power and the 75th anniversary of the Novemberpogrome, the so called Kristallnacht, Kastner designed another project involving white suitcases. Under the title „hier wohnte…“ / Here Lived … he installed suitcases on the pavement in front of five residential buildings in München-Neuhausen.

In cooperation with current residents, school children, church communities, historical societies and interested individuals, Kastner investigated and collected the names, biographies and photographs of former Jewish residents. The suitcases act as a link between the past Jewish inhabitants of the area and contemporary visitors who are confronted with the history of Jewish individuals and families: people who had lived here and suddenly had to reduce all of their belongings to fit into a suitcase, similar to those used in Kastner’s installation.

Wolfram Kastner is currently working on a similar project in Munich-Maxvorstadt.

Fritz Kilthau (2012)
Since 2012 Fritz Kilthau and Heribert Pauly have worked on an exhibition entitled Migration in Southern Hessia - the Mountain Road-Odenwald Region From the 17th Century to 1945.

The goal of this exhibition was to evoke sympathy for migrants, diminish prejudices and foster tolerance by revealing the causes and results of
past migration and flight movements. The exhibition was first shown in Zwingenberg in 2013, and met with great interest and positive response. In 2014 it was shown in the district office of Bernsheim under the patronage of the district administrator Matthias Wilkes, and in 2015 the exhibition was presented at a secondary school in Bernsheim where it was used for educational purposes
Another major focus of Kilthau's work was researching the history of both former synagogues in Zwingenberg. The results were published in 2014 in a brochure. Further details can be found at http://www.arbeitskreis-zwingenberger-synagoge.de/unser-angebot/publikationen/zur-geschichte-der-synagogen-von-zwingenberg.html

Monica Kingreen (2002)
Two of Monica Kingreen's current projects educational center of the Fritz Bauer Institute and the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt on Main are Before the Holocaust: photos of Jewish everyday life in Hessia (www.before-the-holocaust.com or www.vor-dem-holocaust.de) and a memorial website for Jewish children and adolescents who were deported from Hessia. Before the Holocaust includes more than 8,000 photographs depicting various historical scenes from local Jewish everyday life before the Holocaust and during the Nazi-era. These photographs can be accessed via themes (family life, schools, work, sports, religious life, public life, etc.) or geographic coordinates (cities, towns, regions).
The photographs illustrate the complex cultural environment and coexistence between Jews and Gentiles in Hessia that was destroyed by National Socialist persecution. Photographs were provided by Jewish families in the United States, Israel and the United Kingdom whose ancestors lived in Hessia as well as Hessian local historians, national and international archives. The exhibition can be used as an important educational tool.

The memorial website is dedicated to more than 3,500 Jewish children and adolescents from Hessia who were killed in the Holocaust. It consists of photographs illustrating and reconstructing their lives and the discrimination that they suffered. It includes information on each child’s life, persecution, deportation to countries including the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Luxembourg or Yugoslavia and their murder or, in some cases, survival.
It was developed for use in school. In addition Monica Kingreen developed a website with materials for teaching and learning about the holocaust: www.holocaust-unterrichtsmaterialien.de

Ernst and Brigitte Klein (2009)
In 2003 Ernst and Brigitte Klein and their colleagues established a “Memorial Alley” in Sobibor by placing plaques on boulders to remember victims from the region. Additional stones for people from Volkmarsen, Vöhl, Kassel and other regions of northern Hessia followed.
They also developed a German-Polish school project, “Learning together from the past for the future”. Ten 16- and 17-year-old students from Wlodawa visited the Kugelsburgschule in Volksmaren and worked with ten German pupils on a project focusing on local German Jewish history. Their work included visiting the documentation center in Volksmarsen and a newly discovered and preserved mikvah from the 16th century, as well as researching biographies of former Jewish citizens who died in Sobibor.
The group was accompanied by a film crew who documented the project: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lkvfcv3qi0

Hans-Peter Klein (2014)
In 2004 Hans-Peter Klein was approached by Sandy Speier Klein in New York. She hoped he could help her with research into her
father’s life
A few months later Klein asked him for assistance again. She was looking for the whereabouts and fate of her half-brother Manfred Buchaster, whom her mother and her mother’s first husband had given away during the Holocaust in hopes of saving his life.
Although Klein was not able to uncover Buchaster’s fate, he did manage to trace the boy’s path from the time he was taken in by the Italian Giuriola family in 143 until he was arrested by an SS officer in July 144.
Inspired by Klein’s research, in 2008 the municipal authorities of Costa di Rovigo (southwest of Venice) decided to dedicate their public library to Manfred Buchaster. In 2010 Stolpersteine were placed in Leipzig in honor of the Buchaster family and Paula Buchaster’s parents. In January 2015, five additional Stolpersteine were laid in Costa di Rovigo adjacent to the home of the Giuriola family.

Manfred Kluge (2008)
Manfred Kluge received the Obermayer Award together with Helmut Urbschat. They both took it as encouragement to continue researching the Jewish history of Vlotho. Although Urbschat had to resign from his work due to health issues, Kluge’s work continues.
In 2008 Kluge published Gedenkbuch für die Vlothoer Opfer der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung / Memorial Book for the Victims of National Socialist Persecution of Jews in Vlotho at the request of the Mendel Grundmann Society. In the same year he created a documentary play, which was presented with great success.
In 2013, after three years of intensive research, Kluge produced the new edition of Sie Waren Bürger Unserer Stadt - Beiträge zur Geschichte der Juden in Vlotho / They Were Citizens of Our City - Contributions to the History of the Jews in Vlotho. This revised and considerably enlarged version of his 1988 book documents 250 years of Jewish history in Vlotho from its beginning around 1690 until the end marked by the deportation of the Vlotho Jews in 1941/42.
Over the course of several years, Kluge researched the inscriptions in the Jewish cemetery, and in 2014 he published the complete collection of inscriptions on the homepage of the Mendel Grundmann Society (www.mendel-grundmann-gesellschaft.de).
Since 2014 Kluge has established another way to raise public awareness for Jewish history in Vlotho. He decided to rent the window of an empty store in the center of town, where he put the books of the Mendel Grundmann Society and many posters exhibiting Jewish history in Vlotho. Now the history of the Jewish congregation and its members, once citizens of this town, can always be seen by the public.
A new article by Kluge on the history of Jews in Vlotho will be published in the Historisches Jahrbuch für den Kreis Herford 2016 under the title “Vlotho Jews and the First World War”.

Heidemarie Kugler-Weiemann (2010)
Heidemarie Kugler-Weiemann still cherishes the memory of the Obermayer Award ceremony in 2010 and of meeting Arthur Obermayer, his wife, and his assistant, Betty. She will never forget sitting at the large table at the Opernpalais where Obermayer asked everyone to say something about their project and their reason for being invited.
Receiving the Award encouraged Kugler-Weiemann to continue her projects and present them to the public.
In 2013 and 2015, the Stolpersteine initiative organized an annual program in connection with “Zerstörte Vielfalt” (diversity destroyed) that featured events memorializing Lübeck’s persecuted Jews. These included guided tours, concerts, readings, commemoration services, films, and speeches, as well as the laying of 70 more Stolpersteine, all of which inspired great public interest.
With the generous donation from the Obermayer Foundation, a professional designer was employed to handle the design layout of Kugler-Weiemann’s research.

By publishing the biographies and other information on the website (www.stolpersteine-luebeck.de), Kugler-Weiemann was able to contact more relatives of former Lübeck families.

Meeting them, talking about their ancestors, and showing them places that were connected to their family history is still one of the most important aspects of her work, even more so when she can involve other people from Lübeck.

In September 2015 Kugler-Weiemann organized a public reading from the letters of Dora and Bertha Lexandrowitz, the aunts of her patron Riva Oron. The reading took place in an old Lübeck house that was once owned by the Lexandrowitz family and which is now a private home.

The actress Heidi Züger has since been asked to take on the role and read at the Geschwister-Prenski-School and another school in January 2016.

Robert Krais (2005)

Although Robert Krais has suffered from chronic illness, the Obermayer Award still motivated him to continue his work.


After some initial groundwork, Krais was able to convince the municipality of Villingen-Schwenningen to invite the former Jewish citizens of the two towns who were now living in France, Israel and the United States. Three invited guests were able to visit the region in May 2009.

With the intention of laying six Stolpersteine, Krais and other advocates lobbied the authorities until Ettenheim’s local council approved three monuments in 2010, and three more were placed in 2012.

The number of witnesses who are still alive and able to discuss their Holocaust experiences is constantly dwindling. Therefore, the German-Israeli task force of the Southern Upper Rhine (DIA) has taken it upon themselves to capture the stories of these former citizens in writing and on film.

Thus far the following books and films have been published:


Since Robert Kreibig received the Obermayer Award in 2006, Engelscher Hof, the educational and community center for young people, has been in operation at the old synagogue.

Five years ago, Kreibig was approached by the Freudenberg Foundation and asked to lead the restoration work on the synagogue in Stavenhagen in Mecklenburg.

It took some time before he was able to acquire the necessary funding, but finally the work has been completed. Thus there are now two existing examples of half-timbered synagogues – once a common sight in most small towns in Mecklenburg – that have been saved from deterioration.

Among Kreibig’s nominators for the award was the late Peter Hesse of Paris. Unfortunately, Kreibig was not able to help him assert his
claims for restitution. However, Hesse handed over his artistic legacy Kreibig. These works are now on permanent loan to his hometown of Malchow, and they are being exhibited at local galleries.

Like most awardees, Kreibig could not let his work go; tracing biographies, meeting with witnesses and their relatives, recovering personal histories and fates has been an important and highly motivating experience.

At the last award ceremony, Robert Kreibig gave Betty Solbjor a brochure about his work in Röbel so that she could convey it to Dr. Obermayer. The appreciative reply that Kreibig received was a pleasure and honor for him and for all who were involved in preparing the booklet.

**Silvester Lechner (2014)**

Silvester Lechner would never have imagined that he would be honored for his work, so the Obermayer Award left him overjoyed and it greatly encouraged further work.

Lechner helped to launch a *Stolpersteine* initiative in Ulm. The first plaques were laid on February 19, 2014. The ceremony in Ulm was funded by the mayor and orchestrated by 50 volunteers.

In addition to the short biographical data that is usually featured on the brass plaques, the initiative in Ulm also provides information on the individuals’ life circumstances, deaths, and subsequent destinies of their relatives, as far as these details are available. This additional information is printed on leaflets and can be found on the website [www.stolpersteine-fuer-ulm.de](http://www.stolpersteine-fuer-ulm.de). Twenty-four *Stolpersteine* were laid in 2015 and a similar number is planned for 2016.

Since the opening of Ulm’s synagogue in 2012, Lechner has worked closely with the small Jewish community there.

He also assists asylum seekers and others fleeing from wars, who are today arriving by the thousands all over Germany, including in Ulm. Anticipating the annual “Award for German Jewish History” on January 25, 2016, Lechner believes that one cannot be sufficiently grateful to Arthur Obermayer for his ideas and initiatives. Those who give and receive such awards help others recognize and treasure Jewish life in Germany. The awards also highlight the overall moral duty to respect human dignity, democracy, and peace within the contemporary world.

**Dorothee Lottmann-Kaeseler (2004)**

In 2006, Dorothee Lottmann-Kaeseler decided to retire from the local projects in Wiesbaden that she had co-founded in 1988 and to let others take over.

One of these projects is a memorial on the site of the main synagogue in Wiesbaden bearing the names of Shoah victims. It was erected in 2011. The memorial posters that she invented in 2003 are still being placed today.

While Lottmann-Kaeseler is no longer directing the activities in Wiesbaden, the Obermayer Award helped her to widen her scope and to cooperate with scholars on an international scale. She has also increased her documentary film work.

In 2007, Lottmann-Kaeseler decided to document the renovation of the Jewish cemetery in Chrzanow, the only remaining monument of Jewish history in that area. The film was sponsored by a member of the Jewish Community of Wiesbaden who was a native of Chrzanow and who came to Germany as a displaced person. An English version of the film was shown to the Chrzanower Young Men’s Association in New York.

In 2008, a descendant of a family from Gau-Algesheim approached Lottmann-Kaeseler after being shocked by the condition of the local Jewish cemetery, where almost all of the grave stones had disappeared. In November of that year, this gentlemen’s family, relatives and lo-
cal representatives attended a solemn inauguration of a monument that attempted to fill the void. For this, Lottmann-Kaeseler also convinced local politicians to install three explanatory posters on the exterior of the cemetery wall. Lottmann-Kaeseler’s most recent film, completed in October 2015, documents the efforts of a single individual to tackle the neglected Jewish cemetery in the village of Ellar. The closing scene shows that man present as a memorial is being inaugurated next to the cemetery wall.

Charlotte Mayenberger (2008)
The Obermayer Award facilitated Mayenberger’s research and raised awareness for her work. Buchau’s mayor, the district administrator of the Biberach region, and Elisabeth Jeggle, then a Member of the European Parliament, all attended the opening of her exhibition Jews in Buchau.

In 2010, the Arbeitskreis Juden in Buchau (Task Force on Jews in Buchau) was founded, and a memorial room was established in a municipal building. The memorial room features a permanent exhibition designed specifically for the site. Mayenberger also developed special exhibitions dealing with the deportations to Riga in 1941 and to Theresienstadt in 1942. In 2014, the large exhibition 175 Jahre Synagoge Buchau celebrated the 175th anniversary of Buchau’s synagogue and presented its history.

After receiving the award, it became much easier to interview contemporary witnesses, as people began approaching Mayenberger directly and were eager to tell her what they knew about the Jewish community.

On December 8, 2015 the Task Force was presented with an honorary award for extraordinary volunteer work by the district office of Biberach.

Lars Menk (supplemented by Rachel Unkefer) (2007)
Lars Menk’s book *A Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames*, his magnum opus, continues to be an invaluable resource for all researchers of German Jewish genealogy and history. Because his daily work load leaves him little research time these days, his research focus has changed. Lars Menk’s encyclopedic knowledge of German-Jewish genealogy and history and his voluminous record collection have been a boon to major Jewish DNA projects where, according to his project co-coordinators, “the work is useless without a paper trail”. Having Lars as a resource, writes Rachel Unkefer, founder of the Jews of Frankfurt DNA Project, “multiplied my effectiveness as a genealogist and a DNA researcher.”

Lars, whose work differs from other awardees in that his research areas are so geographically wide and comprehensive in scope, continues to respond quickly and thoroughly when being approached by other researchers, usually with genealogy and DNA investigations, often pointing them toward new sources.

Christa Niclasen (2012)
After being honored with the Obermayer Award in January 2013, Christa Niclasen spent a week at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C., with the personal recommendation of Arthur Obermayer.

In cooperation with artists Jana Wolf, Lucas Fritsch and Christoph Gramberg, a new outline was developed for the synagogue that once stood on the present-day site of the Löcknitz-Grundschule, as the basis for a program dealing with the interreligious topic of Noah’s ark. All local children from grades one to six were involved in its creation. This project was financed by the Förderverein (sponsoring association), the town-district, and the Berlin Senate.

In 2013, students in the sixth grade initiated a suitcase project. After being told about a suit-
case in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and State Museum that carried the name of Alfred Israel Berger, who had once lived in the nearby Stübbenstraße 1, the students decided to investigate Alfred Berger’s path up to the time of his transport to Auschwitz.

Through an official deportation letter, the students figured out what Berger was ordered to take along, and they packed an analogous suitcase using objects from their home as well as the school-museum. They walked all the way from Stübbenstraße 1 to Grunewald Station Track 17, which was most likely the station from which Berger was deported. It took them two hours, and one student said, “It was not easy for us to carry the suitcase the whole time, but probably it was a lot harder for Mr. Berger because of his age”. After returning back to school, the students were given the opportunity to talk about the impact that this trip and the Track 17 memorial had upon them.

In 2013 a new sculpture was presented to the area. It was created by Gregorio Ortega Coto together with some of the students as a “Sculpture of Memory” commemorating the deported Jewish families.

Another remarkable experience for the sixth-grade students was a visit, on January 2, 2014, by Karen S. Franklin, vice-president of the Obermayer Awards. They were especially interested in a letter from her father and the original brass doorplate from the home of her great-grandparents, the Placzek family, who lived in Berlin until 1934. They were eager to research the former address of her great-grandparents, which was unknown to her. They discovered that the Placzek family once lived on the second floor at Spenerstrasse 11 - which meant that the hotel Franklin had chosen for her annual visits to Berlin was just five minutes away from her grandparents’ flat. The students were able to identify where the doorplate had originally hung 80 years earlier by old paint shades. When Franklin visited a year later, the area had since been painted over.

In 2014, Niclasen published a brochure about the Muenchener Street synagogue, and in 2015 her school was awarded for keeping a special focus on the Rights of Children. In the coming year Niclasen plans to write a book about the memorial on her school’s property, detailing all the projects that have taken place since 1995.

Heinrich Nuhn (2005)

Since receiving the Obermayer Award in 2005, Heinrich Nuhn managed to turn a small house that once contained a mikvah (ritual bath) into a Jewish museum. Nuhn curated the permanent exhibition at the museum, located at Brauhausstraße 2 in Rotenburg an der Fulda. It features objects and documents that illustrate Jewish life and tradition in Rotenburg and its vicinity over the course of the last six centuries. In addition Nuhn is developing a comprehensive catalogue to go along with the exhibition.

Since its opening, the Jewish museum has become a focal point for the descendants of Jewish families, Jewish guests from all over the world, and the local Christian population interested in acquiring knowledge about the Jewish history of the region.

As it visualizes and remembers the history of Rotenburg’s Jewish community, the museum tries to establish cooperation and mutual understanding between majority and minorities in Germany, and it models acceptance of other cultural forms of life and thought.

Nuhn has also supported the laying of Stolpersteine in Rotenburg and Bad Hersfeld, and he has assembled biographies for 95 people in written and digital form. These can be accessed via two websites: http://stolpersteine.rotenburg.hassia-judaica.de and http://stolpersteine.hersfeld.hassia-judaica.de

Steffen Pross (2014)

At first, Steffen Pross considered the Obermayer Award a successful conclusion of his pre-
vious work. He was already preparing himself to look for new projects. Then the mayor of Freudental and the local council decided to appoint a task force in order to establish a vivid memorial culture and preserve the Jewish heritage of the region. For that, Pross’ experience and advice were needed.

The first project was to develop a commemorative plaque honoring the Jewish soldiers who were killed in WWI but who were not mentioned on the existing memorial. This was unveiled on November 8, 2015.

In addition, the municipality of Freudental sponsored a *Stolperstein* in Mannheim for Frieda Berger, a former citizen of the town who was murdered in Auschwitz.

Next year an “Orchard of Memory” will be planted between the synagogue and the Jewish cemetery. It will be reminiscent of the orchards used by Jewish cattle traders and the garden behind the synagogue, which was once a popular meeting place for the Jewish community.

In 2017, the task force will organize a reunion, inviting all descendants of Jews from Freudental to visit. In addition, in the near future a virtual guided tour through the town’s Jewish history, based on Pross’ “address book”, will be developed in English and German.

When Pross was made aware of the fact that the murder of Adolf Herrmann was never atoned for, he wrote a book depicting Herrmann’s short life, publishing it in 2015 under the title *Adolf: Fragments of a German Youth*.

One of the most important and memorable moments for Steffen Pross was the naturalization of Juan Carlos Andrade Spatz – the first and, until now, the only descendant of a Jew from Freudental who accepted to “return” and receive a German passport. Spatz is now working at a hospital in Berlin while his brother studies in Saarbrücken.

**Johanna Rau (2008)**

When Johanna Rau left Kalbach for Bad Wildungen in 2008, she was concerned that her work in Heubach might not be continued, but this fear was soon allayed.

The society for the promotion of the old synagogue is still active and engages in cultural and educational activities, especially for primary schools, and promotes interreligious cooperation.

Its many events include lectures, readings and exhibitions on Jewish life in Germany in past and present times.

Even those members of the society who no longer live in Heubach continue to support the work by designing leaflets and websites, taking on administrative tasks, attending events, or giving advice regarding future programs.

At this point the old synagogue has become an integral part of the region’s cultural life.

According to Rau, another much-celebrated event at the synagogue is also worth mentioning: After more than 80 years, the first egalitarian minyan was held there, led by Rabbi Elias Klapheck and Cantor Dany Bober.

The memorial work in Bad Wildungen is also in good hands, being carried on by Johannes Grötecke, another awardee.

Rau mainly supports the work in Heubach from afar. She is currently involved in numerous efforts and support measures for refugees, making clear that this work is not about anonymous masses but individual people with distinct names and hopes.

Through her work she has learned that it is important to stay united and to remember the suffering that was inflicted on others. She knows that it is not possible to mend or undo history, but the few things that individual people can do are better than nothing and help to improve the world.

**Christian Repkewitz (2015)**

The Obermayer Award honors research on Jewish life in Germany and has helped to reconstruct Jewish ties to homeland that were severed by expulsion, deprivation of rights, or murder of relatives. It has also established a
new level of interaction between people.
For Repkewitz, receiving the Obermayer Award has significantly increased the public recognition of his scientific work and has facilitated archival inquiries and contacts with other researchers and institutes.
Last November, Repkewitz published a first documentation on Jewish life in Altenburg, which included the fates of 500 individuals.
These are some of his new and recent projects:
• Expanding his research on Jewish life and tragedies in the vicinity of Altenburg and supplementing Altenburg’s existing biographies, working toward publishing a more comprehensive documentation in the future
• A joint artistic project under the working title “Cohn-Bucky-Levy” involves the Altenburg regional theatre, the GML media society mbH, and other partners. The plan is to stage a theatrical play at historical sites in Altenburg in 2017, to publish a book on the path of lives of the Cohn, Bucky and Levy families, and to release a related documentary film and audio-visual city guide. Other potential modules for this project are still being discussed.
• The online city map on Jewish life in Altenburg, which has been available since 2013, is being updated and expanded on a regular basis. Thanks to a visual makeover and integration of an English translation, this map on Repkewitz’ personal website is now accessible by a larger audience.
• In June 2015, twenty-seven additional Stolpersteine were placed in Altenburg in the presence of numerous former citizens of Altenburg and their relatives from Brazil, the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, and Israel. Repkewitz took this group on a guided tour through the city and showed them important landmarks of their lives or the lives of their ancestors.

Gernot Römer (2000)
Gernot Römer’s path to the Obermayer Awards began in his childhood. When he was ten years old, he had an appointment with his pediatrician Dr. Hoffa; but when Gernot and his mother finally arrived, after walking past several demolished shops in Wuppertal, the doctor’s office was closed. It was November 10, 1938. During that same afternoon, the family’s maid, Herta Sälzer, took him to see the burning synagogue, where he watched men in brown SA uniforms loot the sacred site while flames ate away at its roof. He still remembers the maid uttering “What a crime” as she watched this gruesome sight.
Herta’s father, Heinrich Sälzer, was a communist and remained so even during the Third Reich. From him, Römer learned phrases like “Hitler is a criminal” and “This war will lead to a bad end for all of Germany”.
Just a few weeks before the war ended, Römer was enlisted as a soldier – although he was only 15 years old. He was not involved in combat action, but he remembered “uncle ” Heinrich and deserted with a few of his comrades when they were withdrawn from the front. Only a few days later, the Second World War was over.
Later on, Römer became a journalist and chief editor of the Augsburger Allgemeine.
At one point he went to the synagogue in Augsburg and asked members of the Jewish community what had happened to the town’s Jews. When he was told that they did not know, Römer decided to find out.
As of today he has published 15 books on the lives, histories, and deaths of Jews from this area.

Jürgen Sielemann (2004)
This spring the Hamburger Gesellschaft für jüdische Genealogie (Hamburg Jewish Genealogy Association) will celebrate its 20th anniversary.
The society, which was founded by Jürgen Sielemann, offers genealogical research and historical research on Jewish families who once lived in Hamburg. This service is free of charge and is highly popular; around 100 inquiries are...
Sielemann initiated a digitization project at the Hamburg State Archive in order to access Hamburg’s passenger lists. So far, 730,000 entries have been compiled for Russian Jews who emigrated from Hamburg before 1914.

In order to facilitate access to this data at the Hamburg State, Jürgen Sielemann published a book, *Quellen zur jüdischen Familiengeschichtsforschung im Staatsarchiv Hamburg: Ein Wegweiser für die Spurensuche* / *Sources for Jewish Family History Research in the State Archives of Hamburg: A Roadmap for Clues.* This helpful resource is also available online: http://hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/purl/HamburggUP_STAHH_23_Sielemann

Another of Sielemann’s publications, produced in 2005, consists of letters from Regina van Son addressed to her family. *Aber seid alle beruhigt. Briefe von Regina van Son an ihre Familie 1941-1942* – the first part of the title might be translated as “Be reassured” or “All will be well” – has been put online on the official website of the city of Hamburg. It can be read or downloaded as a pdf-file: http://www.hamburg.de/contentblob/1614/data/juergen-sielemann-aber-seid-alle-beruhigt-briefe-von-regina-van-son-an-ihr-familie-1941-1942-lzpb-hamburg-2005.pdf

Sielemann’s work has been featured in several anthologies, encyclopedias and journals. To date he has written 71 articles, mostly focusing on the history of Jews in Hamburg.

Receiving the Obermayer Award was highly motivating and encouraging for Sielemann. It was the first significant recognition of his work. In 2008, Sielemann received the Lappenberg-Medal from the *Verein für Hamburgische Geschichte* for his outstanding achievements in commemorating the lives of Hamburg Jews who were persecuted and murdered.

The Jewish Community of Hamburg honored Sielemann in 2012 with the Herbert-Weichmann-Medal and, in 2013, he was awarded the Order of Merit by the Federal Republic of Germany.

Karl Heinz Stadtler (2006)
Karl Heinz Stadtler and his late friend Kurt-Willi Julius received the Obermayer Award for their work to restore the old synagogue in Vöhl, and for their research on the Jewish history of Vöhl and the Waldeck-Frankenberg region. Together they completed several additional successful projects.

The interior of the synagogue has become an impressive and important event space for the whole region. Lectures and ten to twelve concerts are presented there each year, most of them selling out quickly.

Stadtler and other synagogue supporters have established a network of individuals and organizations that are engaged in research on the region’s Jewish history, cities, and towns, in order to facilitate cooperation on projects.

In 2012 the group held memorial services on the anniversary of the deportations to Sobibor and Majdanek; in the following year, twenty authors published a book on the deportations of Jewish citizens from the region.

The *Förderkreis Synagoge in Vöhl e. V.* has more than 200 supporters and has become the largest society in Vöhl, where it is now well established.

Julius died in 2014, but his work is being carried on by people who worked alongside him, as well as by new supporters.

At present, the attic of the synagogue is being remodeled in order to house an archival room. This should be ready very soon.

The Obermayer Award confirmed for Karl Heinz Stadtler that his work is valuable, and it has increased the respect and acknowledgement received by the society since then.

Wilfried Weinke (2007)
Just a few months after Wilfried Weinke received the Obermayer Award, he curated an exhibition on Arthur Sakheim, which opened at the Hamburg State and University Library Carl von Ossietzky.

This exhibition was the result of a close con-
nection to Arthur Sakheim’s son George, who lives in the United States, and who travelled to Hamburg for the opening of the exhibition on his 85th birthday.

Another exhibition, this one on the writer Rudolf Frank, was also the outcome of a close link to a relative. Vincent C. Frank-Steiner, Rudolf Frank’s son, lives in Basel and helped Weinke develop the exhibition after several months of archival research.

The exhibition was shown at the German National Library in Frankfurt, the Justus-Liebig-University of Gießen, the University Library in Basel, the city hall in Mainz and the Berlin State Library. Alfred Grosser, Guy Stern, and others gave opening addresses.

The most recent exhibition curated by Weinke dealt with book burnings in Hamburg and was presented at the Hamburg State and University Library Carl von Ossietzky. It featured biographies of eighteen Jewish authors who are today nearly forgotten.

In 2015, Weinke finished his Ph. D. thesis on writer and journalist Heinz Liepmann. His latest book, co-edited by his wife Ursula Wamser, was also published in 2015. It honors their long-time friend Lucille Eichengreen, who was deported from Hamburg when she was sixteen. Eichengreen survived the Lodz Ghetto and the Auschwitz, Neuengamme and Bergen-Belsen camps, and she is now living in the United States.

Weinke’s next project will once again be devoted to memory and will focus on the photographer Max Halberstadt. For Weinke, the Obermayer Award was an honorable recognition of his memorial work and also a great incentive to continue his efforts.
Dear Miriam Bistrovic, dear Karen S. Franklin,
gladly, I comply to your request to write a greeting to Arthur Obermayer, as well as a brief report of my work afterwards.

At that time, I was somewhat surprised, when suddenly I had „Arthur Obermayer – Boston“ on the phone and that he wished to speak with me and had received my letter and my package. Moreover: that he had much enjoyed it. I did not have a computer then (not a private one) and no fax machine either. But he wished to invite me to attend the award ceremony at the Berlin House of Representatives where I was to be presented with a certificate for what I had sent in my bulky letter. I was surprised, excited and somewhat proud, I have to admit. I had not yet seen much of the big wide world, being a former citizen of the GDR. I had begun my work on Jewish history as a school boy and continued then as a student - and now this call from America.

This changed my life once more. As I had been told to, I looked around and asked friends to report something about this work. I was a bit embarrassed. But my friend from Brooklyn, who is now professor in Amsterdam, gladly reported and even came to the award ceremony. Another friend of mine, serving in Israel at the time could not make it, but had always taken an active interest in my work. A third friend of my work from Brussels commissioned a TV-Crew of the NDR (North German Broadcasting) to accompany me in my search for the lost grave stones. And a diversity of things followed: I was invited to give lectures; again and again there were exhibitions. An organisation contacted me about a contribution in rebuilding a synagogue and to organize exhibitions there, and so things continued. Another former synagogue followed. Once into this kind of work, it will not let you go. Suddenly, somewhere in Western Pomerania, an abandoned Jewish grave stone was found, and people remembered: There is a man who has done some work about this. And so I could acquire a precious stone from an eradicated graveyard and secure it for an exhibition. Since that grave yard had been left open in World War II, and all the stones displaced, it made no sense taking the stone to its place of origin. I gave it to the Pomeranian State Museum in Greifswald for an exhibition on Jewish history in Pomerania. The stone with its well preserved writing of both sides is a good document.

In Berlin, I have extended my activities as a guide to former places of Jewish life. I guide groups through grave yards. I am a volunteer in the organisation Cross Roads which offers inter-religious and intercultural guided tours and publishes a calendar with Jewish, Christian and Muslim holidays.

In 2006, I was fortunate to be able to invite Judith and Arthur Obermayer to Röbel where they opened the exhibition on Jewish history in Mecklenburg, which was a great honour for us. Those were wonderful moments in a private atmosphere. Every meal together, every muse-
um visit will remain a very special memory of mine.

By your wonderful work and your special life, dear and much honoured Arthur Obermayer, you have enriched my life and helped illuminate some words that Leo Trepp said then in Röbel: that there are places in this world, where "justice and peace kiss". For this I thank you and your family.

Klaus-Dieter Ehmke, Berlin (Awardee 2004)

Sehr geehrte Miriam Bistrovic, sehr geehrte Karen S. Franklin, gern komme ich der Bitte nach, ein Grußwort an Arthur Obermayer zu schreiben und einen kleinen Bericht über die Arbeit danach.


In Berlin habe ich meine Führungstätigkeit zu ehemals Stätten jüdischen Lebens ausgedehnt und führe Gruppen über die Friedhöfe. Wir bieten über Cross Roads interreligiöse und interkulturelle Führungen an und geben weiterhin einen Kalender mit den jüdischen, christlichen und muslimischen Feiertagen heraus.


Durch Ihre wunderbare Arbeit und Ihr besonderes Leben, lieber und verehrter Arthur
Obermayer haben Sie meines bereichert und dazu beigetragen, dass etwas von dem, was Leo Trepp seinerzeit in Röbel gesagt hat, aufleuchtet. Es gibt Orte auf dieser Welt, wo „sich Gerechtigkeit und Frieden küssen“. Dafür mein besonderer Dank an Sie und Ihre Familie.

Klaus-Dieter Ehmke, Berlin (Preisträger 2004)
PREVIOUS AWARD WINNERS
in alphabetical order

Winners of past awards originate from almost all states and from both urban and rural Germany. Ranging in age from their 30s to their 80s, they come from very diverse backgrounds. Yet they have in common a love of history, a great curiosity for what was, and a dedication to tolerance and social justice. All are committed to confrontation with Germany’s past and to preserve the Jewish heritage that was once such an integral part of their country. Most have devoted years of volunteer work to such projects, but few have been recognized for their efforts. The aim of the Obermayer German Jewish History Awards is to honor these unsung heroes.

A
Hans-Dieter Arntz: Euskirchen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2009
Lothar Czoßek: Elsteraue, Sachsen-Anhalt, 2013

B
Wolfgang Batterman: Petershagen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2012
Hans Jürgen Beck: Bad Kissingen, Bayern, 2013
Klaus Beer: Leonberg, Baden-Württemberg, 2013
Lothar Bembenek: Wiesbaden, Hessen, 2004
Gisela Blume: Fürth, Bayern, 2000
Günter Boll: Steinenstadt, Baden-Württemberg, 2002 (deceased)
Angelika Brosig: Schopfloch, Bayern, 2010
Johannes Bruno: Speyer, Rheinland-Pfalz, 2007
Gerhard Buck: Idstein-Walsdorf, Hessen, 2008
Gisela Bunge: Gardelegen, Sachsen-Anhalt, 2002 (deceased)

C
Irene Corbach: Köln, Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2003 (deceased)

D
Gunter Demnig: Köln, Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2005
Klaus Dietermann: Netphen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2009
Heinrich Dittmar: Alsfeld, Hessen, 2003
Olaf Ditzel: Vacha, Thüringen, 2002
Michael Dorhs: Hofgeismar, Hessen, 2009

E
Pascale Eberhard: Wawern, Rheinland-Pfalz, 2015
Klaus-Dieter Ehmke: Berlin, 2004
Rolf Emmerich: Laupheim, Baden-Württemberg, 2012

F
Johann Fleischmann: Mülhausen, Bayern, 2006 (deceased)
Inge Franken: Berlin, 2007 (deceased)

G
Helmut Gabeli: Haigerloch, Baden-Württemberg, 2010
Bernhard Gelderblom: Hameln, Niedersachsen, 2009
Barbara Greve: Gilserberg, Hessen, 2010
Johannes Grötecke: Bad Wildungen, Hessen, 2014

H
Joachim Hahn: Plochingen, Baden-Württemberg, 2000
Günter Heidt: Konz, Rheinland-Pfalz, 2006
Michael Heitz: Eppingen/Kraichgau, Baden-Württemberg, 2011
Detlev Herbst: Uslar, Niedersachsen, 2015
Heinz Högerle: Rexingen, Baden-Württemberg, 2011
Rolf Hofmann: Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, 2006
Frowald Gil Hüttenmeister: Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, 2014

J
Gerhard Jochem: Nürnberg, Bayern, 2003
Kurt-Willi Julius: Vöhl, Hessen, 2006 (deceased)

K
Ottmar Kagerer: Berlin, 2000
Cordula Kappner: Hassfurt, Bayern, 2004
Jörg Kaps: Arnstadt, Thüringen, 2015
Wolfram Kastner: München, Bayern, 2005
Rolf Kilian Kießling: Forchheim, Bayern, 2013
Fritz Kilthau: Zwingenberg, Hessen, 2012
Monica Kingreen: Winnicken, Hessen, 2002
Ernst & Brigitte Klein: Volksmarsen, Hessen, 2009
Hans-Peter Klein: Melsungen, Hessen, 2014
Manfred Kluge: Vlotho, Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2008
Peter Körner: Johannesberg/Aschaffenburg, Bayern, 2011
Robert Krais: Ettenheim, Baden-Württemberg, 2005

Robert Kreibig: Berlin, 2006
Heidemarie Kugler-Weiemann: Lübeck, Schleswig-Holstein, 2010

L
Silvester Lechner: Elchingen, Bayern, 2014
Dorothee Lottmann-Kaeseler: Wiesbaden, Hessen, 2004

M
Charlotte Mayenberger: Bad Buchau, Baden-Württemberg, 2008
Lars Menk: Berlin, 2007
Josef Motschmann: Staffelstein, Bayern, 2002
Hanno Müller: Fernwald-Steinbach, Hessen, 2013

N
Christa Niclasen: Berlin, 2012
Heinrich Nuhn: Rotenburg an der Fulda, Hessen, 2005

O
Walter Ott: Münsingen-Buttenhausen, Baden-Württemberg, 2010 (deceased)

P
Carla Pick: Borken, Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2003
Erika Pick: Borken, Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2003
Steffen Pross: Ludwigsburg, Baden-Württemberg, 2014

R
Johanna Rau: Kalbach, Hessen, 2008
Christian Repkewitz: Altenburg, Thüringen, 2015
Fritz Reuter: Worms, Rheinland-Pfalz, 2008
Susanne Rieger: Nürnberg, Bayern, 2003
Gernot Römer: Augsburg, Bayern, 2000

S
Ernst Schäll: Laupheim, Baden-Württemberg, 2007 (deceased)
Moritz Schmid: Ichenhausen, Bayern, 2000 (deceased)
Heinrich Schreiner: Mainz, Rheinland-Pfalz, 2002 (deceased)
Werner Schubert: Weißwasser, Sachsen, 2012
Jürgen Sielemann: Hamburg, 2004
Karl-Heinz Stadtler: Vöhl, Hessen, 2006
Brigitta Stammer: Göttingen, Niedersachsen, 2011
Barbara Staudacher: Rexingen, Baden-Württemberg, 2011

T
Sibylle Tiedemann: Berlin, 2011

U
Helmut Urbschat: Vlotho, Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2008

V
Ilse Vogel: Üchtelhausen, Bayern, 2005

W
Christiane Walesch-Schneller: Breisach am Rhein, Baden-Württemberg, 2004
Wilfried Weinke: Hamburg, 2007
PREVIOUS AWARD WINNERS

in chronological order

2000
Gisela Blume: Fürth, Bayern
Joachim Hahn: Plochingen, Baden-Württemberg
Ottmar Kagerer: Berlin
Gernot Römer: Augsburg, Bayern
Moritz Schmid: Ichenhausen, Bayern (deceased)

2002
Günter Boll: Steinenstadt, Baden-Württemberg (deceased)
Gisela Bunge: Gardelegen, Sachsen-Anhalt (deceased)
Olaf Ditzel: Vacha, Thüringen
Monica Kingreen: Windecken, Hessen
Josef Motschmann: Staffelstein, Bayern
Heinrich Schreiner: Mainz, Rheinland-Pfalz (deceased)

2003
Hans-Eberhard Berkemann: Bad Sobernheim, Rheinland-Pfalz
Irene Corbach: Köln, Nordrhein-Westfalen (deceased)
Heinrich Dittmar: Alsfeld, Hessen
Gerhard Jochem: Nürnberg, Bayern
Carla Pick: Borken, Nordrhein-Westfalen
Erika Pick: Borken, Nordrhein-Westfalen
Susanne Rieger: Nürnberg, Bayern

2004
Lothar Bembenek: Wiesbaden, Hessen
Klaus-Dieter Ehmke: Berlin
Cordula Kappner: Hassfurt, Bayern
Dorothee Lottmann-Kaeseler: Wiesbaden, Hessen
Jürgen Sielemann: Hamburg
Christiane Walesch-Schneller: Breisach am Rhein, Baden-Württemberg

2005
Gunter Dennig: Köln, Nordrhein-Westfalen
Wolfram Kastner: München, Bayern
Robert Krais: Ettenheim, Baden-Württemberg
Heinrich Nuhn: Rotenburg an der Fulda, Hessen
Ilse Vogel: Üchtelhausen, Bayern

2006
Johann Fleischmann: Mühlhausen, Bayern (deceased)
Günter Heidt: Konz, Rheinland-Pfalz
Rolf Hofmann: Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg
Kurt-Willi Julius: Vöhl, Hessen (deceased)
Robert Kreibig: Berlin
Karl-Heinz Stadler: Vöhl, Hessen

2007
Johannes Bruno: Speyer, Rheinland-Pfalz
Inge Franken: Berlin (deceased)
Lars Menk: Berlin
Ernst Schäll: Laupheim, Baden-Württemberg (deceased)
Wilfried Weinke: Hamburg
2008
Gerhard Buck: Idstein-Walsdorf, Hessen
Manfred Kluge: Vlotho, Nordrhein-Westfalen
Charlotte Mayenberger: Bad Buchau, Baden-Württemberg
Johanna Rau: Kalbach, Hessen
Fritz Reuter: Worms, Rheinland-Pfalz
Helmut Urbschat: Vlotho, Nordrhein-Westfalen

2009
Hans-Dieter Arntz: Euskirchen, Nordrhein-Westfalen
Klaus Dietermann: Netphen, Nordrhein-Westfalen
Michael Dorhs: Hofgeismar, Hessen
Bernhard Gelderblom: Hameln, Niedersachsen
Ernst & Brigitte Klein: Volksmarsen, Hessen

2010
Angelika Brosig: Schopfloch, Bayern
Helmut Gabeli: Haigerloch, Baden-Württemberg
Barbara Greve: Gilserberg, Hessen
Heidemarie Kugler-Weiemann: Lübeck, Schleswig-Holstein
Walter Ott: Münsingen-Buttenhausen, Baden-Württemberg (deceased)

2011
Michael Heitz: Eppingen/Kraichgau, Baden-Württemberg
Heinz Högerle: Rexingen, Baden-Württemberg
Peter Körner: Johannesberg/Aschaffenburg, Bayern
Brigitta Stammer: Göttingen, Niedersachsen
Barbara Staudacher: Rexingen, Baden-Württemberg
Sibylle Tiedemann: Berlin

2012
Rolf Emmerich: Laupheim, Baden-Württemberg

Fritz Kilthau: Zwingenberg, Hessen
Christa Niclasen: Berlin
Werner Schubert: Weißwasser, Sachsen
Wolfgang Batterman: Petershagen, Nordrhein-Westfalen

2013
Hans Jürgen Beck: Bad Kissingen, Bayern
Klaus Beer: Leonberg, Baden-Württemberg
Lothar Czoßek: Elsteraue, Sachsen-Anhalt
Rolf Kilian Kießling: Forchheim, Bayern
Hanno Müller: Fernwald-Steinbach, Hessen

2014
Johannes Grüßecke: Bad Wildungen, Hessen
Frowald Gil Hüttenmeister: Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg
Hans-Peter Klein: Melsungen, Hessen
Silvester Lechner: Elchingen, Bayern
Steffen Pross: Ludwigsburg, Baden-Württemberg

2015
Pascale Eberhard: Wawern, Rheinland-Pfalz
Marlis Glaser: Attenweiler, Baden-Württemberg
Detlev Herbst: Uslar, Niedersachsen
Jörg Kaps: Arnstadt, Thüringen
Christian Repkewitz: Altenburg, Thüringen
Awardees' Portraits
in alphabetical order

(all photos courtesy of the individual awardee)
Christa Niclasen
(Award 2012)
Heinrich Nuhn
(Award 2005)
Johanna Rau
(Award 2008)
Christian Repkewitz
(Award 2015)

Jürgen Sielemann
(Award 2004)
Wilfried Weinke
(Award 2007)
The Distinguished Service Award, initiated in 2014, honors those who do not qualify for our regular awards, but whose contributions to German Jewish history deserve recognition.

Charlotte Knobloch, München, Bayern, 2014
Wolfgang Haney, Berlin, 2015
Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock, Berlin, 2015
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Dedham, MA 02026
Website http://www.obermayer.us/award