

## News Release

Press Office

T 212.423.3271

F 212.423.3232

# U.S. Premiere of Israeli Artist Dani Gal's New Video Installation

## Co-Produced by the Jewish Museum, Gal's Work Explores Relationship of Simon Wiesenthal and Albert Speer

New York, NY – The Jewish Museum will present the U.S. premiere of Israeli artist Dani Gal's *As from Afar* from September 12, 2014 – February 1, 2015. Co-produced by the Jewish Museum, Gal's new installation examines the relationship between Simon Wiesenthal, an architect and Holocaust survivor who devoted his life to hunting Nazi criminals, and Albert Speer, Hitler's chief architect and close confidant. Speer initiated a correspondence with Wiesenthal in 1974 in an effort to accept responsibility for his war crimes.

Based on letters the two men exchanged in the late 1970s, *As from Afar* illustrates Gal's use of documentary materials to reconstruct or create historical narratives through cinematic imagery. The work also reflects Gal's ongoing interest in the relationship between memory and history as well as perceptions and interpretations of the past. Although each scene is a fictionalized account of their meetings, much of the story and dialogue are pulled directly from Speer and Wiesenthal's letters.

*As from Afar* consists of a 26-minute film and a scale model of the gates of the Mauthausen concentration camp, one of the sites of Wiesenthal's imprisonment during World War II. Upon entering the gallery, visitors will encounter the model, which is also shown in the opening scene of the film. The model, described in the film as having been built for an American movie set, includes invented features such as railroad tracks and dramatically enhanced, imposing towers. It is included in the exhibition to demonstrate Gal's main thesis: that a gap exists between historical reality and the way it is interpreted and represented.

Presented in three acts, Gal's video work is set in Vienna and opens with Speer and Wiesenthal visiting a model builder working on the model of the Mauthausen concentration camp gates. The central portion of the film is set in a coffee shop, where Speer and Wiesenthal first trade casual dialogue about publishing their books and later engage in a more direct conversation about the war. *As from Afar* opens and closes with references to Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's theories on memory. The opening monologue is based on his concept of the memory image and ends with Speer and Wiesenthal, both architects, visiting Wittgenstein's modernist home.

Born in Jerusalem, artist Dani Gal (b. 1975) currently lives and works in Berlin. He studied at the Bezalel Academy for Art and Design, Jerusalem; Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste Städelschule, Frankfurt; and the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, New York. His previous film, *Nacht und Nebel (Night and Fog)*, based on the covert dispersal of Adolf Eichmann's ashes in international waters, was exhibited at the 54<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale (2011).

The Jewish Museum  
1109 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10128  
[TheJewishMuseum.org](http://TheJewishMuseum.org)

Under the auspices of  
The Jewish Theological Seminary

Jewish Museum

Co-produced by the Jewish Museum and the Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen in Switzerland, *Dani Gal: As from Afar* is organized by Jens Hoffmann, Deputy Director, Exhibitions and Public Programs, and Joanna Montoya Robotham, Neubauer Family Foundation Assistant Curator.

### **Support**

*Dani Gal: As From Afar* is made possible by the Melva Bucksbaum Fund for Contemporary Art and the Grunebaum Memorial Foundation.

### **About the Jewish Museum**

Located on Museum Mile at Fifth Avenue and 92nd Street, the Jewish Museum is one of the world's preeminent institutions devoted to exploring art and Jewish culture from ancient to contemporary, offering intellectually engaging, educational, and provocative exhibitions and programs for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Museum was established in 1904, when Judge Mayer Sulzberger donated 26 ceremonial objects to The Jewish Theological Seminary as the core of a museum collection. Today, the Museum maintains a collection of over 30,000 works of art, artifacts, and broadcast media reflecting global Jewish identity, and presents a diverse schedule of internationally acclaimed temporary exhibitions.

The Jewish Museum is located at 1109 Fifth Avenue at 92nd Street, New York City. Museum hours are Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, 11am to 5:45pm; Thursday, 11am to 8pm; and Friday, 11am to 4pm. Museum admission is \$15.00 for adults, \$12.00 for senior citizens, \$7.50 for students, free for visitors 18 and under and Jewish Museum members. Admission is Pay What You Wish on Thursdays from 5pm to 8pm and free on Saturdays. For information on the Jewish Museum, the public may call 212.423.3200 or visit the website at [TheJewishMuseum.org](http://TheJewishMuseum.org).

# # #

8/21/14

Press contacts:

Anne Scher, Molly Kurzius, or Alex Wittenberg  
The Jewish Museum  
212.423.3271 or [pressoffice@thejm.org](mailto:pressoffice@thejm.org)

