

SECTION 1

DESIGN INTENT - LANDSCAPE OF LOSS, MEMORY AND SURVIVAL

The National Holocaust Monument in Canada's Capital must be a place of memory and mourning, honouring and commemorating, a space for questioning and learning and an unforgettable experience. Our proposal is a contemporary Monument designed in the 21st century for generations to come.

This is a fully integrated proposal in which architecture, landscape, art and interpretation communicate the hardship and suffering of the victims while conveying a powerful message of humanity's enduring strength and survival.

Carved from the flat, ground plain of the historic LeBreton Flats, the Monument stands as a silent and dignified space shielded from the highway and road traffic providing controlled vistas toward the Canadian War Museum, the surrounding landscape and the Canadian Parliament. This Monument is a "Landscape of Loss, Memory and Survival" in which a star is created by six triangular volumes at each of its points organized around a large gathering space for ceremonies. Each one of these volumes provides a unique theme and ambiance for interpretation, contemplation and artistic expression.

The star that the Nazis forced millions of Jews to wear throughout Europe, in ghettos and in camps, to exclude them from humanity and to mark them for extermination, remains the visual symbol of the Holocaust. The Nazis and their collaborators also used the triangles that comprise the star to label homosexuals, Roma, Sinti, Jehovah's Witnesses and political and religious prisoners for murder. People with disabilities were the first targets of mass killing. When the Monument is seen from the green roof of the War Museum, the symbol of the star becomes clear.

"The Journey Through the Star" as designed by architect Daniel Libeskind is organized with two physical ground planes: the ascending landscape that points to the future and the descending plane into the Memorial. People enter the Monument from Booth Street and descend between two tilted geometric structures: one polished concrete; the other a mesh screen that references incarceration behind fences of often electrified barbed wire through which a landscape is still visible.

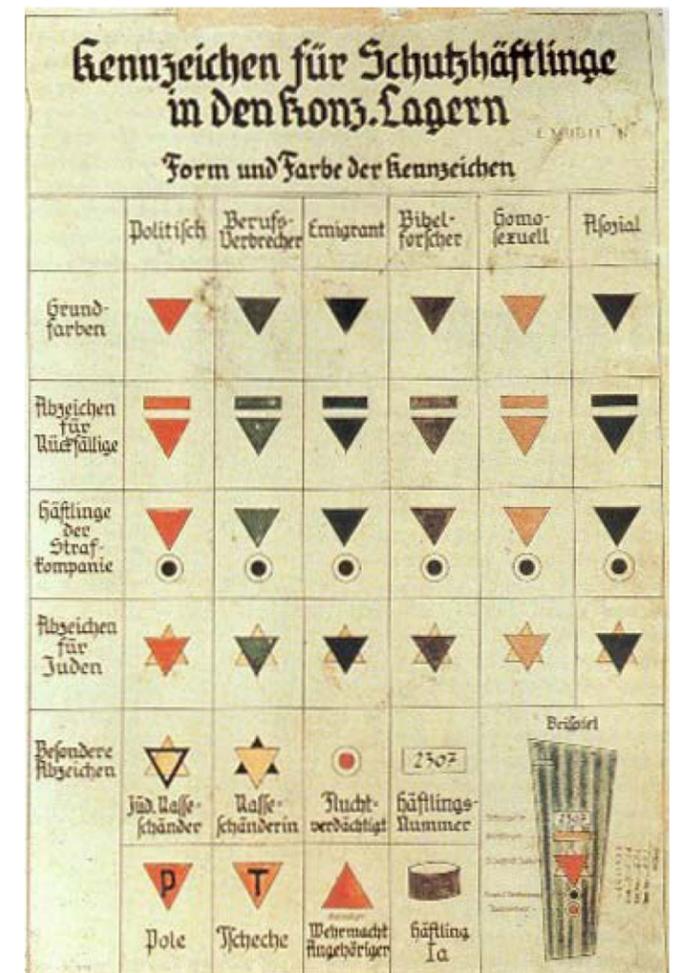
On completing the descent we arrive at the "Gathering Place" which can accommodate up to 1,000 people for events such as National Holocaust Remembrance Day (in April), International Holocaust Remembrance Day (in January) and Human Rights Day (in December). The space is traversed by a railway track embedded in the ground reminding us of the trains that transported people to their death. Surrounding the Gathering Space are tilted geometric concrete and mesh structures that create six triangular thematic spaces for contemplation and reflection.

For many victims and survivors, documenting their experience was an act of courage, love, resilience and resistance. Prisoners risked their lives to hide cameras and even to take photos and preserve the images in the soles of their shoes or buried underground. Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky will set out on a photographic pilgrimage to capture images that convey the thresholds between human life and death in Holocaust sites, from camps to killing fields and forests.

These monochromatic images will be imbedded into the concrete surfaces through the use of a photo-transfer intaglio technique that allows darker aggregate to come forward to the surface of the lighter concrete finish, hence the appearance of a continuous photographic tone will be achieved - with assured permanence and no maintenance - for the life of the Monument. In each of the Monument's triangles, Burtynsky will create and install one major image that evokes the theme. Together, they create a visual narrative throughout the visit to the Monument. These installations will change with the natural light and with the movements of the viewer.

The bunker-like triangle to the south is the Monument's Interpretation Centre, providing 60 square metres of sheltered exhibition space. The adjacent triangle embodies the theme "Dead End, Fence and Corridor of Light" from which there is hope but no escape. The adjoining space recalls the world that closed its doors to Jews and others. Here we see a photo mural of the documents, passes, stamped photos and ghetto ration cards that kept Jews imprisoned. Here the wire mesh surface provides discreet places where visitors can leave messages or small mementos.

To the immediate right of the entrance is the "Gateway" - a threshold of no exit and no return. But also there is the Contemplation Space called "Sky Void," a 14-metre-high triangle with integrated bench seating along the periphery so that people can gaze up at the open sky and the Flame of Remembrance.



Instructional Material for SS Guards, Dachau, 1936

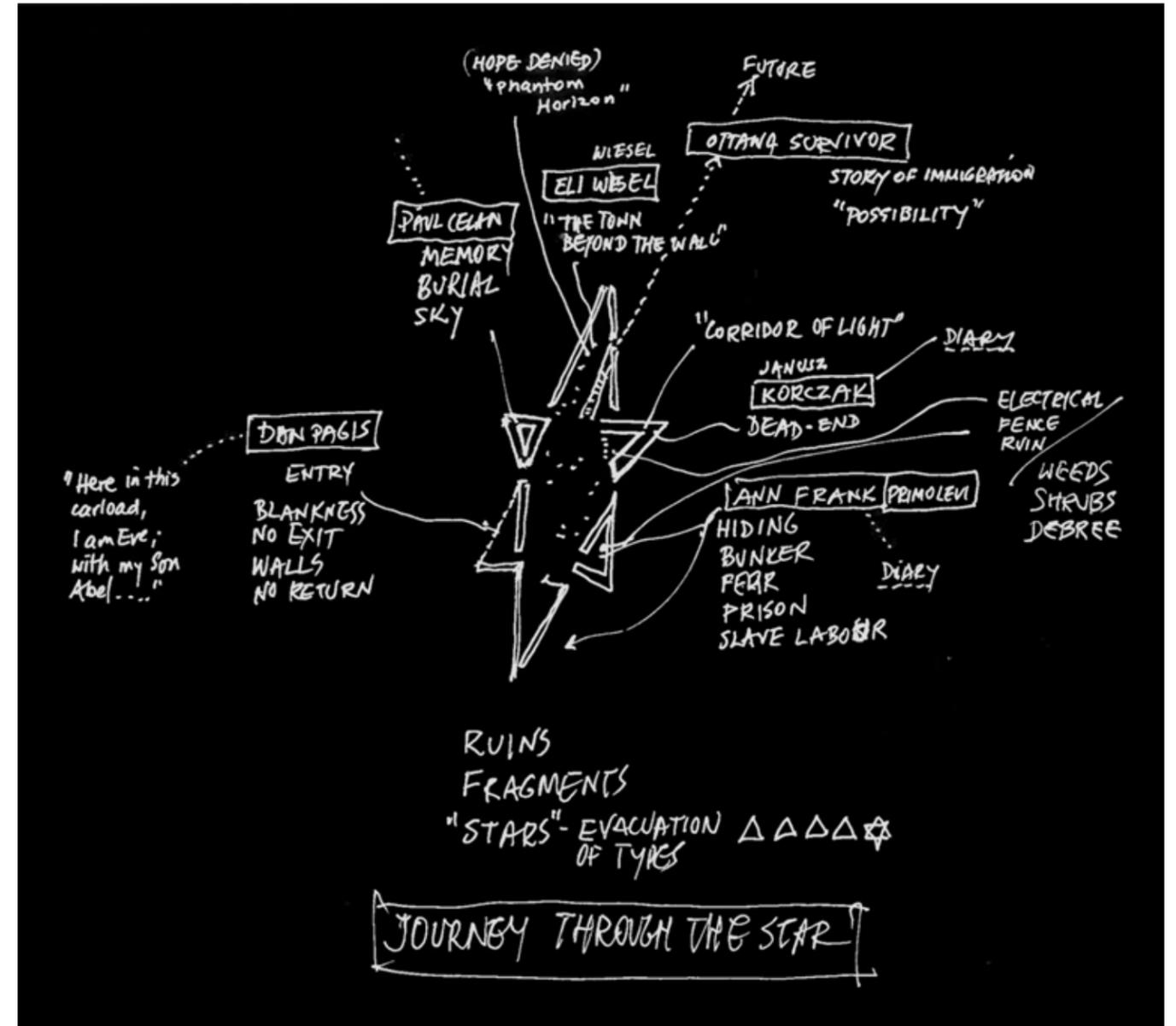
The triangle to the east is dedicated to hope. It is penetrated by a highly visible central stair and accessible lift that lead from the descending to the ascending plane. Alongside the stair is a photo mural of Visas and Passports of Canadian survivors, featuring Canadian documents and "false papers" from occupied countries issued to survivors by diplomats and others who helped Jews escape to settle ultimately in Canada. Approaching the stair offers a dramatic view of the Parliament Buildings.

Quebec-based landscape architect Claude Cormier has created a landscape dedicated to hope and survival surrounding the built form. It is inspired by the image of the northern Boreal forest, a forest composed of small dwarf coniferous trees -- spruce, fir and tamarack -- that cover more than half the area of Canada and reflect our national identity. The strength and adaptability of the conifer tree in the harshest of conditions stand as a powerful symbol of those survivors who were able to come to Canada, to start new lives and to mourn and remember their families murdered in the Holocaust.

The different species of conifer trees are combined in the landscape according to a patterned gradient that transitions from density to sparseness as one moves toward the built forms. This movement engages a leap toward a particular state of mind that is mirrored on the ground surface by a parallel gradient from big to small, round, granite pebbles manifesting varying degrees of physical roughness and instability that is experienced by walking through the Monument outside the edges of the concrete path. By using a mix of tree seedlings of different heights and sizes for the initial planting, we not only create a visually striking forested ground carpet, but also a symbolic planted matrix that will evolve over time in an ever-changing landscape that will stimulate the process of memory here in Canada as an active gesture of engagement.

The National Holocaust Monument will stand as a reminder of the dangers of state-sponsored hatred and anti-Semitism while reaffirming respect for human dignity, courage and resilience.

From the depth of the abyss to the ascending view of Canada's democratic institutions, our journey is structured in light, proportion, texture and material. The experience of the Monument is contemplative and luminous -- creating a space for reflection and commitment to our responsibility as Canadians to create a better future.



Conceptual Sketch, Daniel Libeskind, 2013