

Media Relations

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Authority on Jewish Architecture and Memory of Holocaust Speaks at UNH April 24

DURHAM, N.H – An authority of Jewish architecture and the memory of the Holocaust will deliver the Hans Heilbronner Lecture at the University of New Hampshire Wednesday, April 24, 2013.

Presented by the College of Liberal Arts and the Department of History, the lecture “Jewish Architecture and the Memory of the Holocaust” begins at 5 p.m. in the Murkland Hall Auditorium (Murkland 115). The lecture and following roundtable discussion are free and open to the public and sponsored by the Endowed Fund for Holocaust Education.

The lecture will be delivered by Gavriel Rosenfeld, associate professor of history and director of the undergraduate program in Judaic studies at Fairfield University. Rosenfeld’s area of specialization is the history and memory of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust.

He is the author of several books, including “*Building after Auschwitz: Jewish Architecture and the Memory of the Holocaust*” (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), “*The World Hitler Never Made: Alternate History and the Memory of Nazism*” (Cambridge University Press, 2005), “*Munich and Memory: Architecture, Monuments and the Legacy of the Third Reich*” (Berkeley, 2000), and the co-edited work, “*Beyond Berlin: Twelve German Cities Confront the Nazi Past*” (Ann Arbor, 2008).

According to Rosenfeld, Jewish architecture does not exist in any stylistically recognizable sense. Historically, the divergent experiences of Jews living in the diaspora prevented the emergence of a unified “Jewish style” of building. Still, the buildings built by, and for, Jews over the centuries have exhibited Jewish traits in the myriad ways that they have reflected the historical forces that have shaped Jewish life, including the Holocaust.

“Jews in all fields of creative endeavor have been shaped by the legacy of the Nazi genocide, although not in the same way and certainly not at the same time. While writers, poets, and painters, for example, began to wrestle with the Holocaust’s significance in the early years after 1945, architects by and large refrained from doing so until the 1980s,” Rosenfeld said.

“Thereafter, the Holocaust’s legacy made itself felt in a variety of ways: in the deconstructivist movement, Holocaust museums, and even synagogue design. Overall, Jewish architects, like other creative figures, have struggled with the problem of how to represent the Holocaust in their work. The architectural responses to this aesthetic and ethical challenge have been diverse and they are notable for breaking new ground both in the history of Jewish architecture and western architecture more broadly,” he said.

The Hans Heilbronner Lecture is named in honor of professor emeritus Hans Heilbronner, who taught Russian history at UNH and who served the university with distinction from 1954 until 1991. He was one of the first Jewish faculty members at the university, and his family escaped Nazi Germany after his veteran father was released from a concentration camp. He passed away in June 2011.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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