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## Auschwitz exhibit shows horror of Nazi death camp amid rise of anti-Semitism

Opening at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York on May 8: "Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away."



A picture of Anne Frank is part of a new exhibition at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, "Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away." It opens May 8 in New York City. Spencer Platt / Getty Images

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By Adam Reiss

The boxcar stops you in your tracks.

A vintage German rail car used for the mass deportation of men, women and children to the Nazi death camp Auschwitz sits in front of the Museum of Jewish Heritage.

"One hundred fifty people stuffed into that boxcar sometimes for three or four days with one pot of water, you realize the lack of any feeling or emotion, the tragedy as these people were treated

like animals", says Bruce Ratner, chairman of the Museum of Jewish Heritage where the exhibit "Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away." opens on May 8.

It is a solemn memorial in New York City, home to more than a million Jews — as many as were killed in Auschwitz.



Portraits of Holocaust survivors are displayed at the Museum of Jewish Heritage as a vintage German train car, like those used to transport people to Auschwitz and other death camps, is uncovered on tracks outside the museum, in New York on March 31, 2019. Richard Drew / AP

The windowless boxcar is one of more than 700 original objects and 400 photographs from over 20 institutions and museums around the world showing the largest documented mass murder site in human history.

This exhibit comes as Jews are facing greater hostility and danger. Anti-Semitism is up in the United States and around the world, and there were [deadly shootings at synagogues in Pittsburgh](#) last year and [near San Diego last month](#). The Anti-Defamation League reports that assaults against American Jews [more than doubled](#) from 2017 to 2018.

"At a time of hatred and bigotry we find we need to again be vigilant in every kind of way." Ratner said.

The memory of the Holocaust seems to be fading from people's awareness, according to Ronald Lauder, the president of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation.

"Three generations later they don't get it," Lauder said. "Let people see the horror of the Auschwitz. The only way to defeat anti-Semitism is through education."

Auschwitz was not a single entity, but a complex of 48 concentration and extermination camps. The exhibit spans three floors of the museum and includes shoes, clothes, striped uniforms with

the gold Jewish star that prisoners were forced to wear, luggage and even silverware left behind by the victims.



Luggage, taken from Jewish prisoners, is displayed in the new exhibition at the Museum of Jewish Heritage entitled "Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away." on May 2, 2019 in New York. Spencer Platt / Getty Images



A shoe found at Auschwitz, left, and a wheelset from a German freight locomotive are displayed in the "Auschwitz: Not long ago, Not far away" exhibit, at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York on May 2, 2019. Richard Drew / AP



Personal grooming items, taken from Jewish prisoners, are displayed in the new exhibition at the Museum of Jewish Heritage entitled "Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away." on May 2, 2019 in New York. Spencer Platt / Getty Images

The bunk beds where they slept three and four to a bed. The posts that linked the barbed wire that held them in. The canister that held poison gas.

The SS helmet and dagger of Heinrich Himmler, considered to be the main architect of the Holocaust, are on display as well, along with vintage anti-Semitic propaganda that illustrate the brewing hatred that led to the Holocaust.



People look through the new exhibition at the Museum of Jewish Heritage entitled "Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away." on May 2, 2019 in New York. Spencer Platt / Getty Images

The exhibition arrives in New York after its run at Madrid's Arte Canal Exhibition Centre, where it was extended two times, drew more than 600,000 visitors and was one of the most visited exhibitions in Europe last year.

A quote from Primo Levi, the writer and Auschwitz survivor, greets museumgoers as they enter:  
"It happened, therefore it can happen again, it can happen and it can happen everywhere."

May 8, the exhibit opening, is the anniversary of VE Day, 1945, when Nazi Germany surrendered, ending World War II.