

Dienstag, 18. November 2025, 18.00 Uhr: Gastvortrag

Dr. Zuzanna Dziuban (ÖAW/Wien)

**Body Scooping:
Instrumentalization and Material Dispersal of Incinerated Human Remains
from the Holocaust**

The talk presents research into institutionalized practice of “handing over” of incinerated human remains by major museums established at the sites of former Nazi concentration and extermination camps in Poland. In the decades following the establishment of those museums, incinerated human remains of mostly Jewish victims of the camps were collected by museum employees and other actors, packed into boxes, bags, or urns and given to variety of (memorial) institutions and private individuals in Poland and worldwide. The documents gathered at the archives of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek, indeed, give voice to a deeply institutionalized if not normalized phenomenon. The donations of ashes were made by the museums in order for them to be buried elsewhere, incorporated into memorials or exhibited at local Polish schools and other institutions, including factories and community centers, exposed in museums in the country and abroad, embedded into buildings used for religious (mostly Christian) worship all over the world. In the talk I will retrace trajectories of several urns with ashes from the Holocaust, and propose a critical consideration of the practice taking into account, on the one hand, the sensitivities of Jewish religious law pertaining to human remains and, on the other, a reflection on the politics of dead bodies and the violence against human remains entailed in the practice.

*Zuzanna Dziuban holds a PhD in cultural studies. She is a senior postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Culture Studies of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. She is the author of *Foreignness, Homelessness, Loss: Dimensions of Atopia of the Contemporary Cultural Experience* (2009, in Polish), the editor of *The ‘Spectral Turn’: Jewish Ghosts in the Polish Post-Holocaust Imaginaire* (2019), of *The ‘Forensic Turn’: Engaging Materialities of Mass Death in Holocaust Studies and Beyond* (2017), and co-editor of several special issues: *Forensik in Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* (2019, with Gudrun Rath and Kirsten Mahlke), *The Surviving Thing: Personal Objects in the Aftermath of Violence in the Journal of Material Culture* (2020, with Ewa Stańczyk), *Accessing Campscapes: Critical Approaches and Inclusive Strategies for European Conflicted Pasts in Heritage, Memory and Conflict* (2023, with Rob van der Laarse), and *Displaying Violence in the Austrian Journal of Historical Studies* (2023, with Stefan Benedik and Ljiljana Radonic). Her research focuses on the material, affective and political afterlives of the Holocaust and other instances of political violence, and the politics of dead bodies.*

**Ort: Universität Innsbruck, Innrain 52A / Ágnes-Heller-Haus, 6020 Innsbruck
4. OG, Seminarraum 04M100**

Livestream: <https://webconference.uibk.ac.at/rooms/bar-yun-mfb-bu8>