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Urban Project

Squares and Promenades

ROTTERDAM NEW CENTRAL STATION, SCHIEBLOCK • **LONDON** SQUARES FROM THE INNER RING ROAD TO OUTER LONDON • **COPENHAGEN** IS PLADS • **BUDAPEST** TELEKI SQUARE • **GENEVA** PLAINE DE PLAINPALAIS • **BAYONNE-ANGLET-BIARRITZ** PROMENADE FOR A SURFER SPOT • **PLACE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE** • **VIENNA** MARIAHILFER STREET • **MELBOURNE** DANDENONG CIVIC SQUARE • **PAMPLONA, COLOMBIA** RENOVATED AGUEDA GALLARDO PARK • **RIYADH** URBAN SQUARE OF KING FAHAD NATIONAL LIBRARY





Rusty steel walls with inscriptions are the distinguishing feature at this memorial near the former harbour of the Brickworks sub-camp.

Remembering the Unimaginable: A Memorial for Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp's Brickworks Sub-camp

This place is a graveyard, but hardly anyone who comes to fish in the former harbour or cycle along the part of the Berlin-Copenhagen Bikeway that runs along the opposite bank of the Hohenzollern Canal knows anything about its history. As of 20 April, however, this is no longer the case. A memorial for the Lager Klinkerwerk (Brickworks Camp) designed by Dörte Eggert-Heerdegen and Kamel Louafi was inaugurated in time for the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. Until 1945 thousands were murdered here; were worked to death during the production and shipping of bricks for Hitler's Germania project. "The dead were replaced, as there were lots of replacements", reads one of the inscriptions, which is based on the memories of prisoner Leon Szalet. The quotation has been translated into Polish, German, French

and Russian and stamped into two rusty steel walls that obstruct the view of an otherwise harmless landscape. Another quote picks up on a warning made by Pierre Godefaut: "Forgetting about this place would be a crime". Chairman of the International Committee of Sachsenhausen (ISK) until his death in 2009, he fought a long-running battle to have a memorial built here. The result is a quiet place that draws the observer in and provides information without attempting to transfer the unimaginable cruelty that occurred here into metaphors, thus simply allowing visitors to reflect on what happened. And although Corten steel has been used for other memorials as well, it fits this site perfectly because it is here that cranes were used to load bricks onto ships. It is an elegant detail that both of the heavy steel walls do not rise out of the ground, but from the far side

of the quay wall, as if out of the water. At the jury's suggestion, the sculptural representation of the observation tower in the original design for the competition was omitted. Whether this ominous vertical feature would have given the site more power or not is now a moot point. What was included in the memorial, however, was an object made of bricks constructed by students years ago. The two landscape architects surrounded it with a dedication ring that serves as a place

where a seemingly endless quantity of flowers and wreaths can be laid by survivors every 20 April. This year there were nearly 70 former prisoners and their relatives, who, like Marcel Suillerot, have come every year since 1961, the year the GDR opened the Sachsenhausen National Memorial. He says that he survived imprisonment because all of the prisoners, regardless of their nationality, stood together. And yet, this generation of eyewitnesses will not be able to directly answer to all the questions we have for much longer. Roger Bordage, current president of the ISK and jury member during last year's competition, thus feels that keeping these memories alive is a political necessity: "You have to fight for humanity every day, which is why we want these memorials, for the future – and not because we feel bad or resentful".

Susanne Isabel Yacoub

Landscape architects Dörte Eggert-Heerdegen and Kamel Louafi included an object made of bricks constructed by students years ago into the new memorial. They surrounded it with a dedication ring as a place for flowers and wreaths.

