

**To the members of the evaluation committee for the design of the  
“MONUMENT OF THE JEWISH VICTIMS OF THE  
HOLOCAUST” in Athens**

**Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path**  
Psalms, 119

The construction of a Holocaust monument in Athens covers a huge gap in the Greek capital. The monument is definitely dedicated to the great tragedy of the Greek Jewish community; and yet the monument offers us the possibility to remember how deep the roots of the community reach into Hellenic space, and it is for the above reason that the selection of the specific place the monument is to be erected is so utterly successful. Naturally, the integration of a monument into an environment of intense archeological character presents significant difficulties. The Holocaust monument should have its own absolutely discernible presence and simultaneously it should not be competitive to the surrounding monuments.

According to our concept the monument is vigorous in presence, silently resonant, conquering attention without pompousness. Our approach cannot but be allusive and the Holocaust is not to be exhibited in a direct way in its real dimensions. Claude Lanzmann’s dramatic documentary “Shoah”, (1985) has offered us the inspiration that led us towards that direction.

The monument is comprised by a narrow corridor made of black granite. A black journey in a long narrow cell, with a sole entrance and a sole exit. A chamber, which entraps and leads an anonymous hovering crowd onto a double steel grid. The same corridor then ends in the ground plate on which the text of the attribution of Memory will be inscribed by the community.

The pillars, created by accumulated shoe trees of men, women and children, made by cast metal hang on the main axis of the metallic construction without touching the ground. The shoe trees refer to hovering and denuded presences/absences, almost ghosts. They intensify the industrial elimination. It is a dramatic reference to the Holocaust as an immense loss but also as indisputable memory.

From another perspective, each column forms a spinal cord. The skeleton is one of duration, lasting in time, resisting death even, as a

reminiscence of life and flame. The *Nine pillars* in a series symbolize Menorah (“Chanuliyah”).

The double grid with an opening of 25 millimeters and 8 millimeters thick, apart from the insinuation of entrapment has one more major function as far as the viewing of the monument is concerned. The monument can be only revealed when you are standing and facing it. It leads you towards a position where you can face the Holocaust directly, not indirectly, concentrating on it, not as a passer-by. Under the sunlight and lit at night it provides shades of both plastic as well as conceptual significance. It is a transparent/opaque wall.

A lot of attention has been given to the tenacity and quality of the materials and their easy maintenance. It would be very difficult or even impossible to write on or vandalize in any way. The monument is visible from all sides *except the archaeological space of Keramikos. All the existing trees are to be preserved.* The entrance of the monument descends slightly in order to provide the impression of sinking and also to maintain the height of the monument at 2, 10 m from the natural soil at every point. The placement of the monument on an axis which is perpendicular to Hermou Street where its main entrance is constructed allows for its discreet integration into the surrounding space and on the other hand leaves all the green space free to access and contemplation. The metallic surface covers only 8 square meters and yet its presence is particularly vigorous.

In our study a future access/formulation along the monument is also suggested, on both sides of it with the minimum width of 1, 80 meters with a layer of black rectangular granite blocks with grass on the joints so that it stands in harmony with the surrounding green.

Thanking you,

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