

ŠTETL Association Annual Report 2024

Activities

The year 2024 marked the third consecutive year of the Association's regular year-round activity; all activities were conducted in close contractual cooperation with the Association's co-founder, the Jewish Community of Brno.

During the course of the year, the Association organised **163 events for the public, of which 110 were part of the international ŠTETL FEST festival; a further four were part of the Kolnoa Israeli Film Festival.**



The year-round programme included lectures, guided tours, discussions, exhibitions (including exhibition openings and guided tours of exhibitions), authors' readings, book launches, premieres, and subsequent showings of theatrical performances for the public and for school audiences, events associated with Jewish holidays, educational programmes, film screenings, etc. Events designed for parents and children included theatre performances and arts and crafts workshops. A detailed list of events is included in the concluding section of this annual report.



The third annual international ŠTETL FEST festival was the Association's most extensive undertaking in terms of organisation, financial outlays, and audience participation. Taking place from 29 August to 1 September 2024, the festival attracted over 10,000 attendees from the Czech Republic and from abroad (Austria, Slovakia, USA, Germany, Sweden). The event was featured in both regional and national media, as well as internationally, thus solidifying its reputation as the largest festival of its kind in the Czech Republic.



A second large-scale project took place in 2024: an artistic competition for schools and art schools, entitled Black Peter from Theresienstadt. The aim of the competition was to recreate a missing card for a deck of Black Peter cards brought back from Theresienstadt by then six-year-old Brno native Petr Haimann. A total of 600 creatives from 130 schools across the Czech Republic took part in the competition. The subsequent exhibition, featuring the winning entries as well as artworks created by Petr Haimann during his internment in the Theresienstadt ghetto, was a resounding success, as were several guided tours tailored to the needs of school audiences. The winning card complemented the original deck of cards, which the ŠTETL Association subsequently published and put on sale. The finalized deck of cards thus weaves the story of one young boy into the fabric of history, offering a poignant connection between past and present.



In cooperation with Goose on a String Theatre and Villa Löw-Beer, the Association staged two theatre productions throughout the year. *The Story of the Book* tells the story of the family of Cornelius Strach through the fate of a lost and rediscovered prayer book amidst the historical events which tragically affected the life of this Brno Jewish family.

The second production, *Noir Haas*, was produced by the Association specifically for the 2024 edition of the ŠTETL FEST festival. It constitutes an original dialogue with the genre of classical biography, which examines the tragic fate of the talented Haas brothers – composer Pavel and actor Hugo. In 2024, both performances as well as the accompanying introductory lectures were attended by nearly 600 primary and secondary school students from across Moravia.



In 2024, the Association also completed a major undertaking resulting in the launch of the www.kamenyzmizelychbrno.cz website, created in response to numerous inquiries calling for the establishment of a functioning map of the Stones of the Disappeared in Brno. The website provides a map of existing stones while also linking them to the stories of the people they commemorate. It also offers the option of adopting a stone for long-term care. It provides a list of stones which have already found their caretakers and which ones are currently available. It also includes detailed instructions and contact information for those interested in having a stone installed. A Czech version of the site is currently online, and an English version is scheduled for launch in 2025.



In sum, events organized by the Association, including as part of the ŠTETL FEST festival, were attended by over 14,000 people. Theatre performances, concerts, workshops, and guided tours were subject to entrance charges while lectures and other educational programmes remained free of charge.

As of the close of 2024, the Association's Facebook page had amassed 3,400 followers, the Instagram page had garnered 929 followers, and 562 individuals had subscribed to the Association's regular newsletter.



Partners

As in 2023, the Association's most important partner was the Jewish Community of Brno, which is listed as the co-organiser of most of the Association's events on the basis of an existing cooperation agreement. Furthermore, the Association continued to develop collaborations with a range of cultural institutions based in the City of Brno, the South Moravian Region, the Czech Republic, and abroad. The organisation of the festival alone involved 15 contributory and private organisations. Thanks to networks established during the organisation and production of the festival, further opportunities on a European scale continue to open up – both with respect to collaborations relevant to the festival programme, but also with respect to year-round cultural and community programming.

Additional partners in 2024 included: Goose on a String Theatre, Memory of Nations Institute Brno, Brno Museum, Brno City Museum, Brno Philharmonic, City of Brno Tourist Information Centre, National Heritage Institute, etc.

Human Resources

During 2024, the structure of the Association and its permanent collaborators remained the same as in 2023. The Association's members and collaborators continued to engage in the Association's activities in their free time. By the end of the year, in view of the increasing number of events and demands placed on individuals, this state was deemed insufficient and unsatisfactory. As a result, it was decided that the Association would attempt to locate the necessary financial resources for remunerating at least two permanent collaborators. The Association also hired an external accountant.

Financial Resources

In 2024 the Association received financial contributions from the following entities:

Foundation for Holocaust Victims
Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic

South Moravian Region

Private donors:

Kateřina Janků
Placzek Family Foundation
Alexej Zinner

The Association derives additional revenue from admission fees for events and the sale of festival merchandise. The Association does not possess any physical property.

Evaluation of Activities

In our third year, we have attempted to maintain the structure previously established in 2023, both in terms of the quantity and quality of production work necessitated by each of the Association's events. We are pleased with the growing interest on the part of the public as well as with the interest expressed by various Czech and international organisations in cooperating with the Association on individual projects. The option to participate in multi-year European cooperation projects has likewise manifested itself.

The Association's activities, especially thanks to the ŠTETL FEST festival, were very successful in 2024, with very promising prospects for 2025.

Throughout the year, despite the turbulent times, the Association did not experience overt expressions of hatred or anti-Semitism at any events.

Plans and Expected Development in 2025

Given the current demands placed on the quality and professionalism of the work involved in ensuring year-round operation and the increasing complexity of the Association's individual projects, it is necessary to focus on stabilising staffing, professionalising administrative activities, and ensuring financial resources for all components of the Association's activities.

Interest in educational programmes, whether implemented directly in schools or as part of the Association's special programmes, is growing. Theatre performances with introductory lectures, discussions, lectures, as well as artistic and creative competitions have all drawn a great deal of attention. In 2025, the Association intends to expand its focus on school programmes, educational programmes, and informal education, including in collaboration with the Bubny Centre for Remembrance and Dialogue, with which it has established close cooperation. With this new partner, the Association will be able to share programmes, ideas, and dramaturgical concepts, and create content capable of reaching audiences within the Czech Republic as well as beyond.

In addition, in 2025 the Association will also focus on training and expanding the qualification of internal members and other collaborators, especially in areas such as project management and fiscal management.

As of January 2025, the programme for the 2025 edition of the ŠTETL FEST festival as well as the bulk of the Association's activities for the first half of 2025 have already been planned.

30 January 2025, Eva Yildizová, ŠTETL Association chair

Overview of public events organised by the ŠTETL Association in 2024

- 18 January **Israel and Hamas at War**, discussion with Irena Kalhousová, Goose on a String Theatre
- 28 January **Tu BiShvat: New Year of the Trees**, lecture and workshop for parents and children, Villa Löw-Beer
- 14 February **Guided Tour of the Agudas Achim Synagogue** with kosher wine tasting
- 19 February **The Story of the Book** (public performance), Goose on a String Theatre
- 29 February **Jewish Customs and Traditions**, workshop, Memory of Nations Café
- 13 March **The Transformations of Jewish Ghettos in Moravia**, lecture, Villa Löw-Beer (in cooperation with the Brno Museum – Villa Löw-Beer)
- 14 March **Guided Tour of the Jewish Cemetery**
- 18 March **A Jew Belongs in a Café**, lecture, Zeman's Café
- 25 March **Bar Mitzva aka Beers with the Rabbi**, discussion, Goose on a String Theatre
- 4 April **The Work of Jewish Architect Zoltán Egri**, lecture, Memory of Nations Café
- 11 April **Guided Tour of the Agudas Achim Synagogue** with kosher wine tasting
- 11 April **The Story of the Book** (public performance), Villa Löw-Beer
- 18 April **Guided Tour: The Shop Displays of Zoltán Egri**
- 21 April **What Makes this Night Different?** lecture, Villa Löw-Beer
- 30 April **Black Peter from Theresienstadt**, competition announcement
- 5 May **Yom HaShoah Eve**, Righteous Among the Nations (lecture), *The Power of Good – Nicholas Winton* (film screening), Villa Stiassni
- 6 May **Yom HaShoah – public reading of the names of Holocaust victims**
- 18 May **Museum Night in Jewish Square**, lectures
- 30 May **Guided Tour of the Jewish cemetery**
- 2 June **Lag BaOmer, Children's Day at Villa Stiassni**: theatre, archery, lecture, workshop, bonfire
- 10 June **In the Footsteps of Brno's Jewish Community** including a tour of the synagogue
- 25 June **The Story of the Book** (public performance) with introductory lecture, Villa Löw-Beer
- 29 August – 1 September **ŠTETL FEST 2024, international multi-genre festival of Jewish culture: 110 individual events**
- 6 September **Laying of the Stones of the Disappeared for the Löw-Beer, Tugendhat and Hože families** (in cooperation with the Brno City Museum)
- 8 September **Revitalization of Tombstones at the Jewish Cemetery in Židenice** (in cooperation with the Memory of Nations Institute)
- 12 September **Guided Tour of the Exhibition István Sajó: Vision of Life**, Mini Gallery
- 19 September **Guided Tour of the Exhibition Black Peter from Theresienstadt and the Drawings of Petr Haimann**, Memory of Nations Institute Brno
- 29 September **Guided Tour of the Jewish Cemetery**
- 6 October **Jewish Holiday Workshop at the Villa Löw-Beer**
- 11 October **Noir Haas** (school performance), Goose on a String Theatre
- 13 October **Noir Haas** (public performance), Goose on a String Theatre
- 20 October **KOLNOA Israeli Film Festival**, Villa Stiassni
- 27 October **Feasts – Guided Tour of the Exhibition and Workshops for Children**, Villa Arnold
- 9 November **Noir Haas** (public performance), Goose on a String Theatre
- 10 November **...And Then Everything Changed**, anniversary of Kristallnacht, introduction of the new website and guided tour of the Stones of the Disappeared, Memory of Nations Institute Brno
- 10 November **Generations after the Holocaust**, panel discussion, Villa Arnold
- 17 November **Jewish Customs and Traditions**, workshop, Villa Arnold

- 28 November **Guided Tour of the Agudas Achim Synagogue**
3 December ***She Saw Geese Everywhere***, presentation of Anna Štičková's book, Café Pilát
8 December **Hanukkah Tour of Villa Stiassni (2x)**
8 December **Light into Darkness**, Hanukkah afternoon for the whole family
8 December **Talmud in your Pocket – Hanukkah edition with Pavlina Šulcová**, Villa Stiassni
16 December **The Story of the Book**, school performance (2x)
18 December **Guided Tour of the Jewish Cemetery with Eva Yildizová**

In 2024, the ŠTETL Association also staged performances for school audiences, including *The Story of the Book* and *Noir Haas*, and performed *The Story of the Book* at Westminster Synagogue in London.



A total of four exhibitions were created for ŠTETL FEST 2024, with each exhibition remaining open for a period of time after the conclusion of the festival.

Forget the Hours of Suffering (open until November 2024), an exhibition of graphic works by the academic painter and Holocaust survivor Helga Hošková, on the occasion of her 95th birthday.

Feasts (open until 31 October 2024), Josefina Puaš Klimentová's exhibition inspired by Jewish holidays.

Tel Aviv Florentin (open until 30 September 2024), paintings by architect Petr Bureš depicting the specific nature of a single Tel Aviv district.

Jewish Identity in Photography (open until 30 September 2024), an exhibition by three male and one female photographer, whose work focuses on the treatment of Jewish identity in photography. Jindřich Štreit, Jindřich Buxbaum, Hana Němečková, Nachi Weiss.

