



ein museum der **wien**holding

Media information, November 2024

## Fear

Location	Jewish Museum Vienna, Museum Judenplatz Judenplatz 8, 1010 Vienna
Dates	November 6, 2024 – April 27, 2025
Opening	November 5, 6:30 p.m.
Press preview	November 5, 10:30 a.m.
Opening hours	Jewish Museum Vienna, Museum Judenplatz Sunday - Thursday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Friday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. (winter time), – 5 p.m. (summer time)
Press images	<a href="https://www.jmw.at/en/press">https://www.jmw.at/en/press</a>

The Jewish Museum Vienna is part of Wien Holding.

## Fear

*“One of the most common fears of our time is the fear of uncertainty.  
It is the flip side of our freedom to make mistakes.”*

*Andrea Winklbauer  
Curator at the Jewish Museum Vienna*

As of November 6th, the Jewish Museum Vienna is continuing its exhibition series with *Fear*, which spans the historical period from the medieval synagogue to the memorial for the victims of the Shoah on Judenplatz. The exhibition embarks on a search for Jewish perspectives on the universal feeling of fear and examines its significance for the individual and society. Fear is omnipresent and appears in a wide variety of forms. The fears that plague a society reveal a lot about its condition and its challenges.

## Fear in Historical Transition

The fears of the Jewish population are inextricably linked to those of the respective majority society. Both universal and specifically, Jewish fears are illuminated in the exhibition from a cultural-historical perspective – from the Enlightenment to the present day. The starting point is the religious fear of God and the fear of supernatural powers in Jewish popular belief. With the dawn of the Enlightenment and the rationalization of natural phenomena that had previously been interpreted as divine punishments, the understanding of fear also changed.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, new issues such as “education through fear,” “nightmares,” and the “fear of fear” shaped Western thought and influenced the lives of acculturated Jews as well. Parallel to this, a very specific fear grew in the Jewish population: the increasing antisemitism and the rise of National Socialism ultimately led to the unprecedented horrors of the Holocaust.

## Fear in the Present: Old Patterns, New Threats

In recent history, many of these fears have reared their heads again: the fear of pandemics, terrorist attacks, war, and totalitarian regimes. At the same time, the fear of antisemitic assaults remains a bitter reality. The exhibition approaches the subject of fear through a wide selection of objects that impressively shed light on the religious, cultural, psychological, and political dimensions of this emotion.

The reason why Jews in particular see fear as deeply rooted in their history and present is conveyed using special exhibits. A central element here is Franz Kafka's succinct sentence written in 1920: “After all, you're a Jew and know what fear is.”

Felix Nussbaum's work *Angst* also vividly reflects the artist's personal despair in the face of threatening events. The exhibition additionally addresses the wearing of the Star of David: in view of increasing antisemitic attacks, many Jews today are considering whether to wear visible Jewish symbols in public. The series of images by Israeli photographer Ziv Koren, who documented the terrorist attacks on October 7th in Kibbutz Nir Oz, strikingly illustrates the horror – without showing the dead.

With this exhibition, the Jewish Museum Vienna invites visitors to reflect on the complex phenomenon of fear and to become aware of the relevance of this topic in the context of Jewish history and current challenges.

Curator	Andrea Winklbauer
Exhibition design	Fuhrer, Wien
Catalogue design	Fuhrer, Wien
Production	Cornelia Regehr
Exhibition catalogue	Andrea Winklbauer (Hg.): Angst. Eigenverlag Jüdisches Museum, 6. November 2024 bis 27. April 2025 (119 Seiten, Softcover, Euro 24,90, ISBN: 978-3-903419-13-1)
Admission	Das Ticket ist an den beiden Standorten Jüdisches Museum Wien, Museum Judenplatz und Dorotheergasse gültig.
Visitor service	<a href="mailto:info@jmw.at">info@jmw.at</a> , <a href="https://www.jmw.at/en">https://www.jmw.at/en</a>

#### Queries

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