

Diaspora by Design; Jewish Refugee Architects and Wellington City

Authors : Daniele Abreu e Lima, Chloe Fitzpatrick

Abstract : During the 1930s, New Zealand received a wave of refugees fleeing from the impending war and atrocities the Nazi regime was imposing on the German people. Among the hundreds of refugees were highly trained artists, architects and musicians who made a huge contribution to Wellington's culture and identity. It is unfeasible to chronicle the impact of every Jewish refugee in the development of New Zealand arts scene. But it is possible to choose a number of them and analyse their contribution to NZ culture. This research aims to bring to light the reception and life of five influential Jewish architects; Helmut Einhorn, Ernst Plischke, Frederick Neumann, Henry Kulka, and Maximillian Rosenfeld. Each had a key role in influencing New Zealand architectural landscape and the modernization of the country. Before coming to New Zealand, these five architects lived different lives working all over Europe, from Paris through to Moscow. In common, apart from their ethnicity, they had led cultured lives where they were culturally and politically active. This research looks at how much their individual contributions helped to transform the architectural scene in New Zealand but also in the amount of cultural and religious renunciation they had to endure to be accepted in the country.

Keywords : Jewish Refugee architects, modern architecture, World War 2, New Zealand

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