



Rereference points

changing the landscape of memory

Individual, collective and mass graves of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust often remain invisible among fields and forests in Southern and Eastern Poland, along roads and sometimes even in public spaces. The Zapomniane Foundation deals with finding, studying, marking and commemorating these places.

As part of cooperation with The Matzevah Foundation in September 2017, the Foundation has marked thirty such locations, that they had already researched. The Foundation created simple wooden markers in a form of a matzevah, that were hand-made for the purpose of this project. The markers referred to the tradition of wooden matzevot that could be encountered before the war in the Jewish cemeteries of Eastern

See some of the places
we have found at:

www.zapomniane.org

Poland. The action was aimed as an intervention in the landscape of these places, which would remind about what remains invisible, even if present in the memory of local communities. The modesty of this gesture was intentional. Being only a temporary commemoration, wooden matzevot invite local communities to discuss and take action, to discover the places, and perhaps to start their own memory practice related to them or to permanently commemorate them.



We used larch and pine wood, typical for the regions of Southern and Eastern Poland, as material for making wooden matzevot. We engraved them with inscriptions in Polish and five Hebrew letters TNCBN, which means "May his/her soul be bound up in the bond of life". In the inscriptions, we used a font created by young Polish designer, inspired by pre-war Jewish signboards and Warsaw plaques commemorating the Second World War.

Returning to these places in the following year, we observed that almost all matzevot remained intact. Only one of them was moved, in consultation with the Foundation, to protect, as it was places too close to the road. Some - as in Karmanowice and Rogalów - were turned into actual memorials, in cooperation with the local authorities. Another - like the one in Brzesko - now has a plaque bearing the name of the victims, added by local activists. Flowers and candles were found under some of them, while others were taken care for in many subtle ways. We believe that this proves that these modest interventions have the power to transform the local memory culture.

