

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

Press Release

Three Doors.

**Forensic Architecture / Forensis,
Initiative 19. Februar Hanau,
Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh**
March 16 – September 1, 2024

Press conference: Friday, March 15, 2024, 11 a.m.



Three Doors

**In Erinnerung an / In memory
of Gökhan Gültekin, Sedat
Gürbüz, Said Nesar Hashemi,
Mercedes Kierpacz, Hamza
Kurtoxić, Vili-Viorel Păun,
Fatih Saraçoğlu, Ferhat Unvar,
Kaloyan Velkov, Oury Jalloh**
— und alle Opfer rassistischer
Gewalt / and of all victims
of racist violence

**Forensic Architecture /
Forensis, Initiative 19. Februar
Hanau, Initiative in Gedenken
an Oury Jalloh**

16.3. — 1.9. 2024

**Württembergischer
Kunstverein
Stuttgart**

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FRANKFURTER KUNSTVEREIN

Introduction

The project *Three Doors* was developed in 2022 by the multidisciplinary research group Forensic Architecture and its Berlin-based sister organization Forensis, together with the affected families, survivors, and their supporters, the Initiative 19. Februar Hanau, and the Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh. The exhibition is dedicated to two cases of fatal racist violence in Germany: the 2020 attack in Hanau, in which Gökhan Gültekin, Sedat Gürbüz, Said Nesar Hashemi, Mercedes Kierpacz, Hamza Kurtović, Vili-Viorel Păun, Fatih Saraçoğlu, Ferhat Unvar and Kaloyan Velkov were killed, and the murder of Oury Jalloh in 2005 in a prison cell in Dessau. Despite overwhelming evidence, the fight for judicial recognition of this murder goes on.

Using the latest technologies in spatial and architectural analysis as well as innovative visual science and journalistic methods, Forensic Architecture/Forensis reconstructed and examined the crime scenes and events in Hanau and Dessau in detail. The testimonies of the victims' relatives and the survivors play a central role. Based on civil-society, scientific, and artistic research, *Three Doors* creates space for a counter-narrative to the state's official portrayal of the events.

The project focuses on three doors that were locked when they should have been open, and vice versa. Specifically, these are the locked emergency exit in the Arena Bar, one of the crime scenes in Hanau; the door of the perpetrator's house, which was left unguarded for a long time during the night of the Hanau crime; and the door of the prison cell in Dessau where Jalloh was burned to death.

The results of Forensic Architecture/Forensis's research have been presented not only in exhibitions, but also in court and as part of investigative committees. In the exhibition, they can be experienced in the form of videos, audio works, wall graphics, 3D animations, and architectural reconstructions. New findings and aspects that have emerged in the course of recent research and developments have been integrated into the existing exhibition.

The terror attack in Hanau and the murder of Oury Jalloh in Dessau are treated in the exhibition as specific and at the same time exemplary incidents of structural racist and right-wing extremist violence in Germany and are thus also addressed, for example, in connection with the neo-Nazi terrorist organization NSU, especially the murder of Halit Yozgat in Kassel.

The exhibition was conceived as a place of remembrance, education, and resistance as well as a platform for a multifaceted program of events, which is being developed with the close involvement of the relatives of those murdered and their supporters as well as other groups and initiatives. The aim is to create an open place of learning that opposes racist and right-wing extremist forces in Germany and promotes solidarity with those affected by them.

Following the successful launch of the exhibition at the Frankfurter Kunstverein (2022), the project has so far been shown at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin (2022) and, in part, at the Neustädter Rathaus in Hanau (2023). In 2024, in addition to the Württembergischer Kunstverein, it will also be presented at the Museum im Kulturspeicher Würzburg.

Admission to the exhibition is free or on a voluntary basis.

The Murders of February 19 in Hanau

On February 19, 2020, motivated by racism and right-wing extremism, a neo-Nazi shot in less than six minutes nine people dead at various locations in Hanau, including the La Votre Bar and the Midnight Shisha Bar on Heumarkt as well as the Arena Bar and the kiosk directly adjacent to this bar in Hanau-Kesselstadt. One of the victims, Vili-Viorel Păun, had pursued the perpetrator and tried three times in vain to call the police emergency services, which were understaffed that night. He was killed in his own car.

After the attack, the murderer returned to the house where he lived with his parents, also in Hanau-Kesselstadt. The police only arrived there forty-five minutes later, and it would take another four hours for them to storm the house. During this time, the murderer killed his mother and himself with three shots. The police officers in charge of the SEK (SWAT team) claimed not to have heard these shots. It later emerged that thirteen officers from this SEK were part of a right-wing extremist chat group.

Thanks to ongoing efforts by the relatives of the murder victims, survivors of the attack, and many supporters, who joined together in the Initiative 19. Februar Hanau, among others, the many unanswered questions about this attack and its racist context continue to be investigated until today. In the summer of 2021 the initiative turned to Forensic Architecture/Forensis.

The reconstructions, analyses and experiments carried out by Forensic Architecture/Forensis on the attack in Hanau are based on the latest audiovisual technologies. They revealed, among other things, that two victims of the attack could have survived if the emergency exit in the Arena Bar had been open, and if the victims had known this and used it. But regular police checks and raids on this bar and the pressure placed on the manager, had long since made it common practice to lock the emergency exit, a fact known to most guests.

Forensic Architecture/Forensis's research also shows that the door of the perpetrator's house was not adequately secured by the police for a long time on the night of the attack, so that Rathjen could have easily left the house at any time and continued to murder.

A police helicopter that was deployed could only circle aimlessly over the area, as the pilots were not informed of the perpetrator's address.

Together with acoustics experts, Forensic Architecture/Forensis furthermore examined and questioned the police's claims that they had not heard the shots fired by the perpetrator at his mother and himself.

In addition to various audiovisual 3D animations of Forensic Architecture/Forensis's experiments on Hanau, the exhibition also features two large-format wall diagrams. One contains a meticulous chronological reconstruction of the events on the night of the attack, the other a timeline of the activities of various groups, bodies and authorities that have been involved in the case since then. They are grouped according to the areas of justice, politics, civil society, culture and the media. At the center are furthermore ten videos in which the relatives of the victims and the survivors of the attack talk.

Initiative 19. Februar Hanau

<https://19feb-hanau.org>

Forensic Architecture

<https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/racist-terror-attack-in-hanau-the-police-operation>

<https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/hanau-the-arena-bar>

“Oury Jalloh: It was Murder”

Born in Conakry, Guinea in 1969, Oury Jalloh, who had sought asylum in Germany, was illegally arrested and imprisoned in Dessau on January 7, 2005. A few hours later, a fire broke out in his cell, and he was burnt beyond recognition. The police’s claims that Jalloh, who was lying on a fireproof mattress with his hands and feet bound, set himself alight with a lighter smuggled into the cell, are unfounded, as various studies carried out on behalf of the Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh show. It is much more likely that Jalloh, whose body showed severe bone fractures according to an autopsy report, was killed in police custody and the fire was intended to eradicate the traces. Jalloh is the third person to have died in custody at the Dessau police station.

Here, too, it is thanks to the commitment of relatives and supporters such as the Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh that the case continues to be investigated. With the help of fire expert Maksim Smirnou, for example, a simulation of the fire was carried out for the first time in 2013. In 2021, under the scientific direction of renowned fire expert Iain Peck, a project by the artist Mario Pfeifer was realized, which recreated the situation in the cell. These two scientific experiments demonstrated that the blaze must have been intensified by a fire accelerant.

The 1:1 scale reconstruction of the cell and the surrounding corridor developed by Forensic Architecture/Forensis and shown in the exhibition bears traces of smoke on the walls and doors, just as can be seen in the surveillance camera footage of the crime scene. These indicate that, contrary to the police’s account, the cell door was open at the time of the fire, as the so-called smoke horizons of the cell and corridor are almost identical.

In addition to this reconstruction and various documents, the exhibition shows a video documentary by the Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh about seventeen years of self-organized investigation into the Oury Jalloh case.

Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh

<https://initiativeouryjalloh.wordpress.com>

Forensic Architecture

Forensic Architecture is a multidisciplinary research group founded in 2010 by Israeli architect Eyal Weizman and based at Goldsmiths, University of London. The group investigates cases of human rights violations worldwide, including violence perpetrated by states, police forces, the military, and corporations. The teams of architects, scientists, artists, filmmakers, software developers, investigative journalists, archaeologists, and lawyers carry out their investigations on behalf of civil-society groups, organizations, and individuals. In their work, they use state-of-the-art technologies of spatial and architectural analysis, open-source applications, and digital modeling as well as advanced methods of documentary research and situational interviews. The Forensic Architecture teams work with the utmost transparency and present their research findings in court, as part of parliamentary investigations, in United Nations (UN) assemblies, in citizens' tribunals and truth commissions, as well as in artistic and academic contexts. Since its participation in documenta 14 in 2017 at the latest, Forensic Architecture has become a major presence in the international art world.

Forensis

Forensis, the Berlin-based sister organization of Forensic Architecture, is coordinated by the Greek architect Dimitra Andritsou and the British journalist and researcher Robert Trafford.

Text by Forensic Architecture/Forensis, Initiative February 19 Hanau, Initiative in memory of Oury Jalloh

Separating and connecting different domains—state, public, and private—doors are physical objects but also social contracts. Closed when they needed to be broken through, open when they needed to be shut, and locked when they needed to be unlocked, these doors embody a failure of the social order. To understand how, the investigations reconstruct the larger context around them, illuminating longstanding and troubling relationships between racist perpetrators and state agencies in Germany.

The **first door** is the emergency exit of the Arena Bar in Hanau-Kesselstadt, where six people were murdered on 19 February 2020. Survivors say they didn't try to escape through the bar's emergency exit because they knew it was locked; we showed that if it had been open, more people could have survived. Witnesses suggested that the police had previously pressured the bar owner to lock the emergency exit so that customers could not escape their frequent raids on the premises—exemplifying the systemic over-policing of racialized communities in Germany.

The **second door** is the front door of the perpetrator's house, where he returned after the attack. Police failed to secure the house and did not break through the door for five hours after the attack; our investigation revealed damning new evidence about a string of police failures that speak to the German police's well-documented complicity when pursuing perpetrators of racist violence.

The **third door** is that of the police custody cell in which Oury Jalloh, an asylum seeker from Sierra Leone, burnt to death in Dessau in 2005. Analysis of smoke traces left on the door of the cell prove that it was open for all or most of the fire's duration. This suggests in turn that Oury was murdered by the very police officers that held him in custody.

Racist terror in Hanau, Dessau, and beyond, must be seen against the deep-rooted, structural racism latent in German state institutions and society. The pain and consequences of these murders will resonate over generations; the pursuit of accountability has already endured for many years.

Since its first presentation at the Frankfurter Kunstverein in 2022, and subsequently at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, *Three Doors* has influenced ongoing responses to the Hanau terror attack and Oury Jalloh's murder in politics, society and the media, giving visibility to their continuing struggle, and shedding light on deeply entrenched racist structures within Germany.

Works and objects in the exhibition (selection)

CONTEXT HANAU 19 FEBRUARY

Texts (if not mentioned otherwise): Forensic Architecture/Forensis and Initiative 19. Februar Hanau

In the days and months following the attack in Hanau, a solidarity movement grew to support the bereaved families and survivors. By May 2020, the Initiative 19. Februar Hanau—a self-organized community of bereaved families and activists—had opened its social center on Heumarkt, directly opposite the first attack site. In the summer of 2021, the Initiative, together with the victims' families, commissioned Forensic Architecture (FA) and Forensis to examine some important open questions regarding the attack and the police operation that followed. The works displayed in the first part of this exhibition speak to the impact of the attack on the lives of those closest to the victims and to their ongoing struggle for remembrance, clarification, justice, and accountability.

Testimonies of the Relatives and Survivors about the Night of the Crime in Hanau and its Consequences, 2022

Series of 10 videos

Realization: Initiative 19. Februar Hanau

Narrator: Muhammed Beyazkendir, Çetin Gültekin (26:13 min.), Emiş Gürbüz (29:15 min.), Said Etris Hashemi (13:22 min.), Valentino Juliano und Sofia Kierpacz (8:56 Min.), Armin Kurtović (49:43 Min.), Piter Minnemann (3:20 Min.), Niculescu Păun (45:15 min.), Hayrettin Saraçoğlu (16:39 min.), Kim Selina Schröder (12 min.), Serpil Temiz Unvar (6:31 min.), Vaska Zlateva (25:10 min.)

Produced by the Frankfurter Kunstverein with the support of the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung and the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin.



F.l.t.r.: Armin Kurtović, Emiş Gürbüz, Vaska Zlateva

In ten videos, the Initiative 19. Februar Hanau documented the testimonies of the relatives and survivors given to the investigative committee of the Hessian State Parliament. As early as the summer of 2020, the families and their supporters demanded a parliamentary committee of inquiry. At the time, even well-meaning party representatives were sceptical about the campaign's chances of success, because there was too little evidence of failure on the part of the authorities. Continuous demands, public pressure, and persistent protests on the part of the families led, one year later on 7

July 2021 in Wiesbaden, to all parliamentary groups except for the AfD voting for the establishment of the Hanau investigation committee (UNA). Interior Minister Beuth also had to pledge his support. The ten central issues for the UNA were worked out by the Hessian SPD in close consultation with the families of victims, lawyers, and Initiative 19. Februar Hanau. Despite resistance from the government coalition, the relatives were the first to be heard—unprecedented in the history of investigative committees. At the first four public hearings in 2021, on 3 December, 17 December, and 20 December, and on 21 January 2022, Vaska Zlateva, Hayrettin Saraçoğlu, Emiř Gürbüz, Niculescu Păun, Said Etris Hashemi, Armin Kurtović, Çetin Gültekin, Kim Selina Schröder, and Serpil Temiz Unvar (among others) gave their testimonies. Their accounts, as well as those of Valentino Iuliano Kierpacz, the son of Mercedes Kierpacz, and the survivors Piter Minnemann and Muhammed Beyazkendir, were recorded by the Initiative 19 Februar Hanau in May at its premises in Krämerstrasse in Hanau. Now accessible to the general public, the statements gathered for the exhibition *Three Doors* provide both a comprehensive and harrowing picture of the failure of the authorities and police before, during, and after the night of the crime on 19 February 2020 in Hanau. The families, survivors, and supporters see these documented testimonies as a further contribution to their ongoing struggle to achieve an appropriate sense of remembrance, justice, truth, and consequences. Their efforts and commitment are dedicated to the nine victims: Ferhat Unvar, Hamza Kurtović, Said Nesar Hashemi, Vili-Viorel Păun, Mercedes Kierpacz, Kaloyan Velkov, Fatih Saraçoğlu, Sedat Gürbüz, Gökhan Gültekin. And that no one should ever have to experience the like again. No more forgetting, no more concealment, no more fear! To remember means to change.

Simply Silent. The Emergency Call Disaster of Hanau, 2022

Video triptych, 8:12 minutes

Realization: Pola Sell, Katharina Pelosi, Dimitros Drikos, Marcin Wierzchowski

Support: Forensic Architecture/Forensis

Produced by Initiative 19. Februar Hanau with the support of Frankfurter Kunstverein



Vili-Viorel Păun is the only victim of Hanau not to die randomly. He lost his life because, in a remarkable act of civil courage, he attempted to stop the racist murderer. Through his efforts, Vili likely prevented further murders at the first crime scene. After his car was shot at on Heumarkt by the perpetrator, Vili took pursuit and drove after the offender. For a short time, he managed to block the gunman's car whilst he repeatedly tried to alert the police via the emergency number 110. But he could not get through. He himself could have survived—if he could have reached the police. The video triptych *Simply Silent* tells the story of Vili, and of how the emergency hotline failed on the night of the crime. Three times he was unable to reach the police emergency number. In the parking lot in front

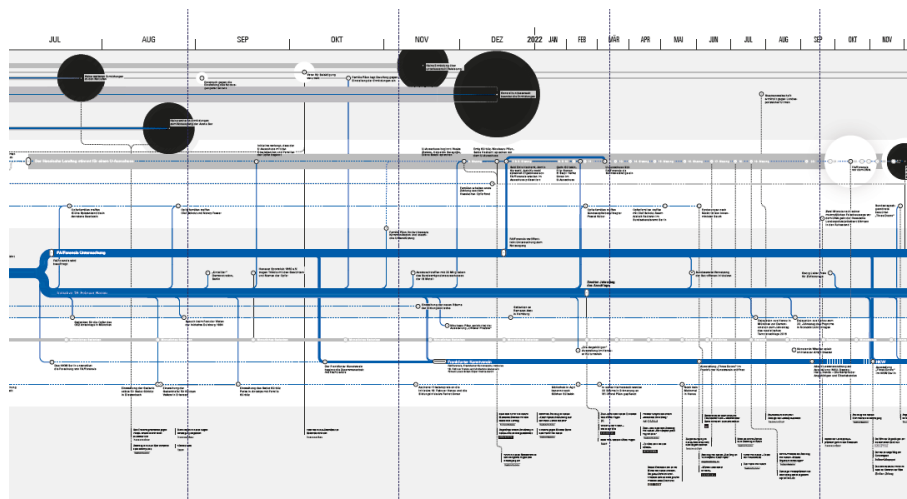
of the Arena Bar, the second crime scene, Vili-Viorel Păun was shot dead in his car by the perpetrator. As only later became clear through investigations by the relatives and the Initiative 19. Februar Hanau, the Hanau emergency call center was not equipped to forward calls; moreover, it was understaffed. Other callers did not get through to 110 that night either: the line remained—as the public prosecutor’s office stated—“simply silent.” The videos show how events unfolded on the night of the crime and reconstruct the failure of the police emergency call system. At the same time, they recreate the long struggle on the part of Niculescu and Iulia Păun, the victim’s parents, for an explanation of what happened and, equally important, for an acknowledgement of the authorities’ culpability in the events of that night.

A Timeline of Collective Action, 2022–2024

Wall diagram

© Initiative 19. Februar Hanau, Forensic Architecture/Forensis

Co-produced with the Frankfurter Kunstverein and the Württembergischer Kunstverein



Excerpt

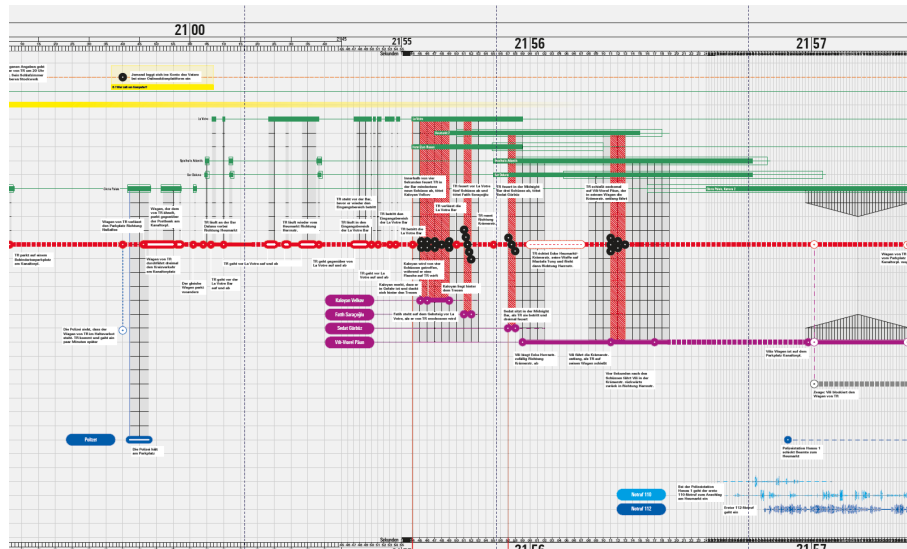
This mural tells the story of four nearly three years of struggle for remembrance, clarification, justice, and consequences by the families of the victims, the survivors of the attack, and their allies and supporters in the Initiative 19. Februar Hanau and elsewhere. Commonly, when a crime is committed, police secure the crime scene and control the investigation. Such is the process of state forensics. But when the state or the police becomes entangled with a criminal act, or fail to prevent it, this process is disrupted, and as a result, justice for the victims is often not delivered. In such cases, it becomes necessary for civil society to “take over the means of evidence production,” to conduct independent investigations, and utilize its own resources and opportunities to apply pressure. This mural records how the victims’ families and the Initiative engaged new partners and asserted their demands across multiple forums: legal, political, and cultural spaces, civil society, and the media. This response by civil society—of which this exhibition is a part—is open-ended, incomplete, and ever-evolving. It seeks to bring new publics into conversation with the situated experience, embodied knowledge, commitment, and perseverance of racialized communities, and to put innovative investigative techniques in the hands of those communities and their supporters. We call this process “counter-forensics.”

Ereignisse und Ungewissheiten, 2022–2024

Wall diagram

© Forensic Architecture/Forensics, 2022

Co-produced with the Initiative 19. Februar Hanau and the Württembergischer Kunstverein



Excerpt

The attack, which left nine people dead in two locations, lasted a little over five minutes. The police response on the night lasted more than five hours. To support the bereaved families and the Initiative in their pursuit of accountability, FA/Forensics produced a timeline of known events throughout the night, based on information in the case files and new data discovered through our research. Despite being the most comprehensive account to date of the sequence of events, the night of 19 February 2020 remains full of unknowns. A digital version of this timeline was shared with members of the Hanau-UNA in June 2022.

Die Lücke von Hanau (The Void of Hanau), 2022

SWR2 feature series in 6 parts

Die Lücke von Hanau (1/6) – Deutschland, aber normal (Germany, but normal)

Die Lücke von Hanau (2/6) – Paranoia des sozialen Abstiegs (Paranoia about social decline)

Die Lücke von Hanau (3/6) – Radikalisierung mit Bildungshintergrund (Well-educated and radicalized)

Die Lücke von Hanau (4/6) – Vorbild NSU (The example of the NSU)

Die Lücke von Hanau (5/6) – Der nicht erreichbare Notruf (The unavailable emergency call line)

Die Lücke von Hanau (6/6) – Der verschlossene Notausgang (The locked emergency exit)

Author: Dietrich Brants

Editor: Walter Filz, Sound: Andreas Völzing, Production: SWR

(Text: Dietrich Brants)

Nine people were murdered by a “43-year-old German,” as he is called in almost all media reports, because he did not see them as belonging in Germany. The feature series investigates the gaps in the investigation of the murders and in German society’s understanding of right-wing terror—which created a “gap” between “migrantized” people, and the German authorities. Nearly three years after

the crime, there are still many “gaps,” both in the understanding of the murders by German society and in the explanations of legal and political processes—for example, in the investigation of the locked emergency exit of the Arena Bar and in the racist actions of police officers on the night of the crime. Each gap is a failure of responsibility, especially where authorities disregarded the concerns of relatives, such as in their failure to pass information to the victims’ families. In such cases, a gap quickly becomes an abyss, especially when the victims of the attack are all assigned a so-called “migration background” by some police forces and in media reports. Thus, these empty spaces during or after the night of the crime are in fact about a gap between people who are labeled as “migrants” and German authorities, whom they increasingly distrust. In all six episodes, the feature series “The Void of Hanau” works with documents that are publicly available—that is, already published and freely available to all, such as press releases from the public prosecutor’s office—as well as information that has been made accessible to media representatives. Statements of survivors, neighbors, relatives, friends, and colleagues of the perpetrator (all male), as well as of police officers and other officials, all come together to describe the “Void of Hanau.” Some of this has received little attention so far: the middle-class origin of the perpetrator (episodes 1 to 3), for example, and the fact that the NSU murderers were apparently his role models (episode 4). By meticulously comparing and contrasting different sources, actions by the state are revealed that in many cases are clearly directed against the interests of relatives and survivors (episodes 4 and 5). This SWR2 Feature series also outlines where a counter-narrative to the state’s assessment of the right-wing terror of Hanau might begin.

DOOR I: THE EMERGENCY EXIT

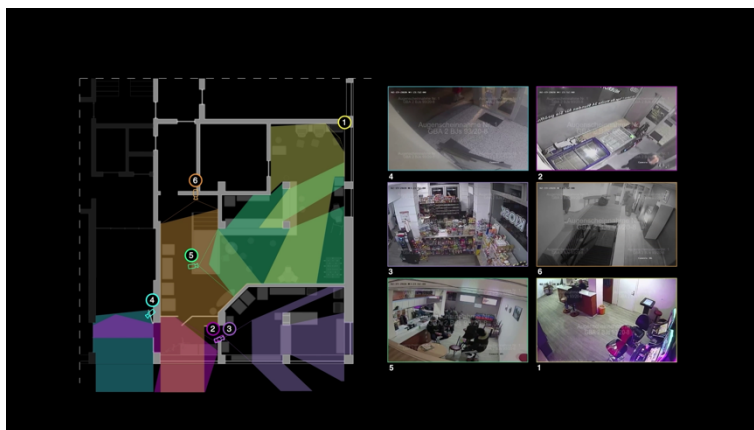
Racist Terror Attack in Hanau: The Arena Bar, 2021

Video, 10:54 minutes

© Forensic Architecture/Forensis, 2021

Video production: Lola Conte; Sound design: Emil Olsen

Co-produced with the Initiative 19. Februar Hanau and the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin



The Arena Bar and Kiosk in Hanau-Kesselstadt was a regular hangout for young locals, many from migrant backgrounds. The bar and its guests had suffered years of heavy-handed policing and surveillance, including frequent police raids. Witnesses have suggested that the police pressured the bar owner to lock the emergency exit to prevent people from escaping those raids. As a result, on the night of the attack, a group of people in the bar, including Hamza Kurtović and Said Nesar Hashemi, did not try to escape through it. Survivors claimed they knew the door was locked that night, and the first police officers to try to open the door after the attack reported the same. The bereaved families and the Initiative 19. Februar Hanau have since publicly demanded answers concerning the connection

between the Arena Bar's history of over-policing, the locked emergency exit, and the murders. Nevertheless, the public prosecutor declined to investigate, saying that it was not possible to establish that the door was locked or that the victims could have reached the exit in time. Our investigation challenges these two claims. Analysis of the bar's CCTV footage shows that the group had enough time to make it to the exit—thus, two lives could have been saved. Meanwhile, this footage, in combination with the testimony of six witnesses, including two police officers, suggests that the door was indeed locked on the night. FA/Forensis presented their findings on the Arena Bar to the Hanau-UNA in June 2022. By the conclusion of the UNA in late 2023, it was generally agreed by all parties that the emergency exit was locked on the night of the attack. However, the parties still cannot agree about who was responsible. Despite the conclusions of the UNA and overwhelming evidence, a second criminal complaint filed by the Kurtović family in October 2023 was again rejected by the Hanau prosecutor.

DOOR II: THE PERPETRATOR'S HOUSE

Racist Terror Attack in Hanau: The Police Operation, 2022

Video, 33:10 minutes

© Forensic Architecture/Forensis,

Video production: Cynthia-ël Hasbani, Camera: Marcin Wierzchowski, Peter Peiker, Laura Gist, Pola Sell, Sound design: Emil Olsen

Co-produced with the Initiative 19. Februar Hanau, the Frankfurter Kunstverein and the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin



After murdering nine people, the perpetrator fled to his house in the Kesselstadt neighborhood of Hanau. Though police were immediately alerted, they only arrived around an hour later, and they did not break through the front door to enter the house for another four hours. During that time, the perpetrator murdered his mother then killed himself, foreclosing the possibility of a trial. Our investigation examined documents from the case files, including statements by witnesses and police, plans and reports, as well as police helicopter footage, revealing that the perpetrator's house was not properly secured or surveilled for much of the night.

The police officers stationed around the house claimed not to have heard gunshots. In 2021, efforts by the families and the Initiative 19. Februar Hanau revealed that thirteen of these officers had been part of far-right group chats. The perpetrator's father, who is known to share the racist views of his son, insisted he only heard shots coming from outside the house.

This investigation therefore included a sound experiment to examine the claims made by the father and the police. The results contradict the father's testimony. They also show that if the perpetrator killed his mother at the time claimed by the official investigation, either the police must have heard the shots, or they were not close enough, leaving the house unmonitored and unsecured.

FA/Forensis presented their findings on the police operation to the Hanau-UNA in May 2023, despite attempts by the conservative CDU and FDP parties to exclude their video evidence. At the same hearing, a member of the helicopter crew confirmed that they were not given instructions during the night.

CONTEXT OURY JALLOH

Texts (if not mentioned otherwise): Forensic Architecture/Forensis and Initiative in memory of Oury Jalloh

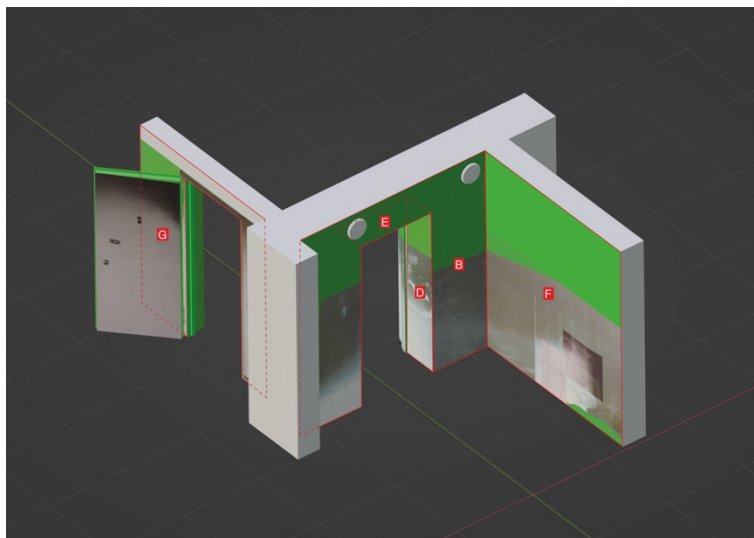
Shortly after midday on 7 January 2005, firefighters extinguished a fire in cell 5 of Dessau police station in Saxony-Anhalt. The burned body of Oury Jalloh, an asylum seeker from Sierra Leone, was found amid the smoke. Oury had been arrested earlier that morning. After being strip-searched and having had his possessions taken away, he was escorted to a basement cell where he was lain on a mattress, his hands and feet tied to the wall and floor. Hours later, a fire started in cell 5. According to official reports, Oury intentionally set fire to the mattress using a lighter that the police claimed he had smuggled into the cell. This would have been an improbable feat, as Oury's hands and feet were tied fast to the cell's wall and floor. Even more improbably, it took three days for police to "discover" the lighter that Oury had supposedly used. Oury's family and supporters long claimed it was the police that murdered him and started the fire. In 2019, a new report found that Oury had suffered bone fractures to his head and torso, suggesting that his body may have been burned by police to cover up his murder. Oury was the third person to have died in the custody of the Dessau police; the second in this very cell. Working together with the Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh, FA/Forensis examined smoke traces left on the door and walls of the cell, as well as in the neighboring corridors. These traces strongly suggest that the door to the cell was open for most or all of the fire's duration, suggesting somebody other than Oury ignited it and contradicting the police officers' account of how Oury died. This work builds upon research previously conducted by forensic fire investigator Dr. Iain Peck and the artist Mario Pfeifer.

DOOR III: CELL 5, DESSAU POLICE STATION

Oury Jalloh's Cell: Smoke Traces, 2022

Installation, architectural reconstruction of cell 5 of the Dessau police station, scale 1:1; video and slide projections

© Forensic Architecture/Forensis and Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh



The question of whether Oury Jalloh was murdered hangs upon whether the door to his cell was open or closed when the fire began. If it was open when the fire began, the police must have set fire to Oury's body. You are standing in front of a 1:1 scale physical model of cell 5. Projected onto the walls

are photographs and video footage taken by police just a few hours after the fire was extinguished. These images capture the traces of smoke left on the doors, doorframes, and walls of the cell and the adjacent corridor. Careful reading of these images confirms that the door was open for most, if not all, of the fire's duration. This supports the claims of Oury's family, and of the Initiative, that the fire was started by police to murder Oury or to cover up his murder. Walk around the wall to your left to step into cell 5. The fire began on the mattress. As you move from the cell into the corridors, pay attention to the annotations, which reveal how the smoke traces can become evidence for Oury's murder.

17 Years of Self-Organized Investigation into the Oury Jalloh Case, 2022

Video, 14:19 min.

© Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh, Leftside Media, 2022

Co-produced with Frankfurter Kunstverein



(Text: Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh)

Published in 2022, the film *17 Years of Self-Organized Investigation into the Oury Jalloh Case* shows the timeline of continual work undertaken by the Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh, which, as part of the Break the Silence campaign, has fought for clarification and justice alongside the victim's family in Guinea, Africa. Besides many years of protests made to the relevant state prosecutors and judiciary, the campaign, which is self-organized and independent of the authorities, consists above all of the action group's efforts to seek out answers. Since 2013, activists have been continually carrying out research, seeking out international forensics specialists, and applying enormous pressure on the authorities concerned, backed up by critical public scrutiny. Moreover the action group has brought together various activists, scientists, and legal experts, to form a representative and high-quality knowledge base: The International Independent Commission for Establishing the Truth concerning the Death of Oury Jalloh. The collaboration with Forensic Architecture/Forensis is part of this independent investigative work, in which communal efforts by civil society activists to uncover state-condoned crime is driven forward in a systematic and innovative way.

Three Doors.

Forensic Architecture / Forensis,

Initiative 19. Februar Hanau,

Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh

March 16 – September 1, 2024

PRESS

PRESS TOUR

Friday, March 15, 2024, 11 a.m.

- **Ajla Kurtović, Emiș Gürbüz, Niculescu Păun, Said Etris Hashemi**, Initiative February 19 Hanau
- **Saliou Diallo, Nadine Saeed**, Initiative in memory of Oury Jalloh
- **Robert Trafford, Dimitra Andritsou**, Forensic Architecture / Forensis
- **Aida Begović**, Consultant, Coordination Office for the Culture of Remembrance, City of Stuttgart

Press contact

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Press dossier and images

<https://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/en/press>

DATES

Friday, March 15, 2024

OPENING

from 6:30 p.m. on: Admission / Buffet (sandwiches & soup)

7:30 p.m.:

Greetings

- **Iris Dressler, Hans D. Christ**, Directors, Württembergischer Kunstverein
- **Marc Gegenfurtner**, Head of the Cultural Department, Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart

Speeches by

- **Emiș Gürbüz, Ajla Kurtović, Niculescu Păun, Said Etris Hashemi**, Initiative 19. Februar Hanau
- **Saliou Diallo, Nadine Saeed**, Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh
- **Robert Trafford, Dimitra Andritsou**, Forensic Architecture/Forensis
- **Aida Begović**, Advisor, Coordination office for remembrance culture, Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart

Saturday, March 16, 2024, 1–4 p.m.

EXHIBITION TOUR

with **Saliou Diallo, Luke Harrow, Nadine Saeed**, Initiative in Gedenken an Oury Jalloh, **Emiș Gürbüz, Ajla Kurtović, Niculescu Păun, Vaska Zlateva**, Initiative 19. Februar Hanau, **Robert Trafford, Dimitra Andritsou**, Forensic Architecture/Forensis

Sunday, March 17, 2024, 1–3 p.m.

EXHIBITION TOUR

with **Newroz Duman, and others**, Initiative 19. Februar Hanau

CREDITS

An exhibition by

Württembergischen Kunstvereins Stuttgart

in collaboration with the

Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart

The exhibition was co-produced with

Frankfurter Kunstverein

Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin

Funded by

Kulturamt der Stadt Stuttgart

Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst des Landes Baden-Württemberg

ProLab

DATES

Opening

Friday, March 15, 2024, 7 p.m.

Program of events and guided tours with the art mediators, curators, relatives of the victims and their supporters

continuously updated at

www.wkv-stuttgart.de

ACCESS

Opening hours

Tue, Thu-Sun: 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Wed: 11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Admission

on voluntary basis

Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

Schlossplatz 2

Eingang Stauffenbergstraße

70173 Stuttgart

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Building

Barrier-free access. Portable folding chairs, wheelchairs, wheelchair-accessible toilet, changing table, Wifi, self-service bar