

Hadwig Kraeutler (IGRS/Vienna):

Alma S. Wittlin (1899-1992)
Preliminary remarks on the life and scholarship of an Austrian émigré

Wednesday, 6 March 2013, 18.00-20.00

Room G34, Senate House (ground floor)

Nature and scope of the research project

This historical research concerns the life and achievements of a writer, art historian, educationalist and museologist. It addresses issues that are of special significance to Austrian exile studies, to women's history, science education, and the discussion of museums and exhibitions as potentially egalitarian and free learning environments.

Biography, work, and influence of Alma S. Wittlin

Alma S. Wittlin-Frischauer (b. 1899, in Lemberg, Galicia – d. 1992, Palo Alto, CA) studied art history, sociology and philosophy, and gained a doctoral degree in art history from the University of Vienna (1925). Due to her being Jewish, and politically involved (1933, P.E.N. protest against Nazi-terror) Wittlin could not expect a future in the German speaking countries and emigrated in 1937 - first to England, and later to the USA (naturalization in 1959). Until her emigration, she had worked as an art historian and writer. Although a successful author of historical novels, Wittlin did not continue with this. In England, she found work related to museums and learning, fields that also dominated her later years. Wittlin worked at the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, where she carried out educational research (1941 to 1946). This is reflected in Wittlin's book, *The Museum. Its history and its tasks in education* (1949, Routledge & Kegan Paul). A complete chapter of her second museum book, *Museums in Search of a Usable Future* (1970, MIT), "The Twelve-Point Programme for Museums", was reprinted more recently in Gail Anderson's publication, *Reinventing the Museum* (2004, AltaMira Press).

I am carrying out this project as an independent researcher (museologist, art historian), in cooperation with the Institute of Contemporary History, University of Vienna, Austria, and am currently supported by the Nationalfonds der Republik Österreich, and the IGRS (School of Advanced Study, University of London).

Contact

hadwig.kraeutler@chello.at