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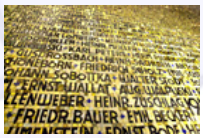
The *Square of the European Promise* by Jochen Gerz in Bochum 2007/2012

Over a period of six years, the *Square of the European Promise* is being created in the city of Bochum in Germany. It is an invitation to the inhabitants of Bochum and the Ruhr area as well as the citizens of Europe to be the authors of a new square. All participants contribute their names, and each name – which will be inscribed on the square – will stand for a promise.

The centre of this artwork by Jochen Gerz is the "Heroes Memorial Hall" dating back to 1931, which is situated in the restored ruin of the tower of the Christ Church in Bochum (Christuskirche). It features a list of the names of citizens of Bochum who died in World War I, as well as a surprising second list: the "enemy states of Germany". Today all of them are Germany`s neighbours and friends. It features Germany's European neighbours. However, not only France, England, Italy, Portugal and the former Czechoslovakia are listed here, but also many other states such as the United States of America and Russia. This prophetic list anticipates World War II and the destruction of Europe.



The *Square of the European Promise* contrasts both these lists with a third one: The names of the living. Their promises stand for a shared future for all European people.

Each person makes a private, unrestricted promise, thus contributing to an invisible manifesto of many voices and cultures – the new Europe of today.

Square of the European Promise 2007/2012

The *Square of the European Promise* has been commissioned by the city of Bochum. It will be handed over to the public in 2012 after additional funding for the inscription of the names of all 15000 participants from Germany, Europe and beyond has been secured.

Jochen Gerz is an internationally recognised German artist. His public works have radically changed the relationship between art and the viewer. His processes create new publics because they require authorship. The individual is no longer part of the audience but rather becomes part of the emerging piece of art. Gerz's art in public spaces becomes the aesthetic of a democracy searching for its cultural dimension.

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