

1.	Record Nr.	UNICASPUV0218474
	Titolo	2: Livres 4.-6. / Apulée ; texte établi par D.S. Robertson et traduit par Paul Vallette
	Pubbl/distr/stampa	Paris, : Les Belles Lettres, 1992
	ISBN	2251010106
	Edizione	[7. tirage revu et corrigé avec nouvelle introduction par L. Callebat]
	Descrizione fisica	XIV, 101 p. (6-101 doppie) ; 20 cm.
	Lingua di pubblicazione	Francese Latino
	Formato	Materiale a stampa
	Livello bibliografico	Monografia
2.	Record Nr.	UNINA9910380656303321
	Autore	Jaeger Stephan
	Titolo	The Second World War in the Twenty-First-Century Museum : From Narrative, Memory, and Experience to Experientiality / / Stephan Jaeger
	Pubbl/distr/stampa	Berlin/Boston, : De Gruyter, 2020 Berlin ; ; Boston : , : De Gruyter, , [2020] ©2020
	ISBN	3-11-066133-0 3-11-066441-0
	Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (XIV, 354 p.)
	Collana	Media and Cultural Memory / Medien und kulturelle Erinnerung ; ; 26
	Classificazione	NB 3400
	Soggetti	Holocaust Representation Second World War Memory Second World War Museum Transnational Memory HISTORY / Military / World War II
	Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
	Formato	Materiale a stampa
	Livello bibliografico	Monografia

## Nota di contenuto

Frontmatter -- Acknowledgements -- Contents -- Abbreviations -- List of Illustrations -- Prologue -- Chapter 1: The Second World War in the Twenty-First-Century Museum -- Chapter 2: The Medium of the Museum -- Chapter 3: Restricted Experientiality -- Chapter 4: Primary Experientiality -- Chapter 5: Secondary Experientiality -- Chapter 6: The Transnational -- Chapter 7: The Holocaust and Perpetration in War Museums -- Chapter 8: Total War, Air War, and Suffering -- Chapter 9: Art in Second World War Museums -- Conclusion -- Bibliography -- Index

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## Sommario/riassunto

The Second World War is omnipresent in contemporary memory debates. As the war fades from living memory, this study is the first to systematically analyze how Second World War museums allow prototypical visitors to comprehend and experience the past. It analyzes twelve permanent exhibitions in Europe and North America - including the Bundeswehr Military History Museum in Dresden, the Museum of the Second World War in Gdask, the House of European History in Brussels, the Imperial War Museums in London and Manchester, and the National WWII Museum in New Orleans - in order to show how museums reflect and shape cultural memory, as well as their cognitive, ethical, emotional, and aesthetic potential and effects. This includes a discussion of representations of events such as the Holocaust and air warfare. In relation to narrative, memory, and experience, the study develops the concept of experientiality (on a sliding scale between mimetic and structural forms), which provides a new textual-spatial method for reading exhibitions and understanding the experiences of historical individuals and collectives. It is supplemented by concepts like transnational memory, empathy, and encouraging critical thinking through difficult knowledge.

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