

Theresienstadt Toys:

Creating Custom Housing for Concentration Camp Items

Maren Rozumalski

Gladys Brooks Conservation Fellow, Hesburgh Libraries, University of Notre Dame



Housing Goals

1. Protect toys during storage and transportation.
2. Facilitate safe handling.
3. Honor the spirit of the toys and children who played with them in horrific circumstances.

Context

Camp location:

- Terezín, Bohemia
 - present-day Czech Republic
- Two purposes
 1. As a “holding” camp, en route to extermination camps
 2. As a propaganda camp/ “retirement settlement” for prominent Jews

Years active:

24 Nov 1941 – 8 May 1945

Human cost:

- Total inmates = approx. 154,000
- Western Jews—majority from:
 - Prague
 - Vienna
 - Berlin
 - Brno
 - Frankfurt
- 33,000 died on site
- 88,000 deported to death camps
- Approx. 15,000 children passes through
- 132 known survivors



Doll

Boxing style:
Corrugated clamshell

Challenges:

- Delicate condition
- Deteriorating silk headscarf
- Flaking painted face
- Thinning trouser fabric
- Torso significantly thicker than head and legs

Solution:

- Contoured, hinging foam support
- Doll fully supported when lifted from enclosure
- Minimizes need for direct handling



Sliding Tray & Contoured Bed



Prop System & Chair



Materials

- Tyvek wrapped foam
- Custom made tape
 - 0.5 mil polyester film
 - 3M 465 adhesive transfer tape
- PETG
- Corrugated board
- 40 point board
- Tyvek Tape

Wooden Cart

Boxing Style:
Bankers box with lid

Challenges:

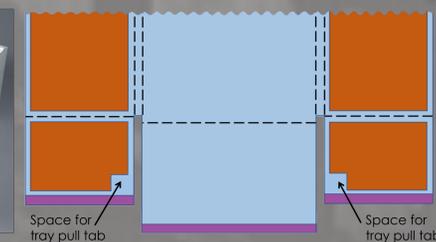
- Dry wood
- Shrunk
- Nail holes expanded with age
- Small, rusting nails
- Could break under weight of cart when lifted

Solutions:

- Sliding tray and foldout wall
- No lifting in/out = no strain on joints
- Wheels stay stationary = reduced strain on axles



Fold-out Wall



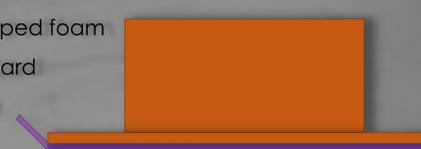
Materials

- Corrugated board
- Tyvek wrapped foam
- Tyvek tape

Sliding Tray

Materials

- Tyvek wrapped foam
- 40 point board
- Tyvek tape



“Driving” Safely Out

