

Jewish filmmaker

“The Walk”: Adam Fried explores Regensburg’s Nazi past in an award-winning documentary

Beautiful Regensburg with its ugly history is the focus of Fried's short film

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editor



The Colosseum concentration camp subcamp, stumbling blocks, Nazi parades, destroyed Jewish shops on Kristallnacht - that's what filmmaker Adam Fried sees when he walks through Regensburg - and shows it in "The Walk". Photos: Baumgartner/Bösl

Adam Fried was able to enjoy the beauty of Regensburg for a few months. Unbiased. Until he was walking through Stadtamhof with his then wife, she pointed to the Colosseum and remarked: “Oh, by the way, that used to be a concentration camp.” Fried is stunned, he begins to research the concentration camp subcamp, wanting to find out everything about the history of Regensburg of the Nazi era. He is now using the result in his award-winning short film “The Walk”.



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Adam Fried sheds light on the Holocaust in Regensburg in his short film. The American with Jewish roots made a film about the Colosseum in Regensburg. In "The Walk" he describes his morning walk through the city, which leads him on Nazi trails.

Fried takes the Mittelbayerische Zeitung on a walk through his Regensburg. From Arnulfplatz Fried steps onto Ludwigstrasse. On the left, shops owned by Jews destroyed on Kristallnacht, on the right, stumbling blocks - "I can't forget that, I can't unsee that," says Fried, he can't forget, he can't unsee what he knows about the history of the houses and places experienced the old town.

Fried moved to Regensburg from the USA a good five years ago. He and his wife, who comes from here, were expecting a child; it would be born in their homeland. The marriage breaks up, but Fried wants to be a father, wants to be present. He walks through the streets with his dog Hamilton every morning. He is tied to Regensburg through his daughter - but can he live happily here, with the city as a daily reminder of the horrors of National Socialism? "I have to reconcile what I have seen and learned here in my head," he says after a moment's reflection. "Yes, I like living here. The people I meet here didn't do this."

He wants to initiate exchange

He doesn't want to accuse with his documentation, he wants to initiate a conversation. And impart knowledge. "In the United States, nobody knows about concentration camp subcamps, nobody knows about stumbling blocks," says the 53-year-old. The individual fates are also unknown to most Regensburg residents.

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Fried takes a detour to the alley Am Römling for two [stumbling blocks](#). The memorial stones of Berta and Edith Schild, mother and 14-year-old daughter, are placed here between his favorite wine and cheese shop and a friend's pub. No father, that makes Fried suspicious. He investigates. Berthold was a butcher, his shop was destroyed during the pogrom night and he was transported to the Dachau concentration camp. They released him in return for selling his business. He emigrated to New York to prepare a new life for his family when war broke out. He was never able to bring his wife and daughter back; they died in the Piaski concentration camp. Fried tells stories like these. He breathes life into the stumbling blocks.

Hitler was cheered at the Old Town Hall

Fried continues across Haidplatz to the Old Town Hall. Where Regensburgers think of civil weddings or the Perpetual Reichstag, Fried says: "Hitler drove along here in a parade. That's what I see here." In his documentary, the director and producer cuts current footage of the city against historical images. Under a bay window at the Old Town Hall, Fried points to a gravestone from the old Jewish cemetery that was built here. It refers to a buried wife in Hebrew characters.

Children play at the [monument to the medieval synagogue](#) on Neupfarrplatz. "I like that," says Fried. He often jumps over the stones with his daughter. "Disgusting" is disgusting, but it is when the memorial is smeared. When Fried sees a police officer guarding the current synagogue for the first time, he is shocked that such a thing is necessary. "As a Jew, I feel safer in Germany than in the USA," says Fried. He was born in Chicago in 1970, 25 years after the end of the Second World War. To this day, many American Jews would never consider traveling to Germany, says Fried.

Horror beneath the surface

He now makes his way through the streets of the old town alone; Hamilton died in September. He walks past Oskar Schindler's former home to the Stone Bridge. Fried also sees the ghosts of the past in Regensburg's landmarks. And hears them. 400 prisoners from the Colosseum subcamp marching across the Stone Bridge in wooden shoes. How must that have sounded? What did the residents think? These are the questions that concern Fried on the way to the Wednesday market in Stadtamhof.

As people with packed bags march past him, Fried looks at the Colosseum sign. His ex-wife lived as a student in the house where over 400 concentration camp prisoners were penned in 1945. "Never forget, never again", with these words "The Walk" ends. In times of the Hamas attack on Israel and the renewed [escalation of the Middle East conflict](#), this message is particularly urgent, says Fried. It is on the information boards about the Colosseum. Dozens of red houses mark the subcamps of the Flossenbürg concentration camp. This morning, his walk in the footsteps of the Nazis ends here, where his fascination with Jewish history began.

“The Walk” in Regensburg:

Premiere: “The Walk” will be shown in Germany for the first time on November 26th. The premiere takes place at 5 p.m. in the Andreasstadel. After the film there will be an exchange with director and producer Adam Fried.

US tour: Fried performed his award-winning short film five times in Chicago, Ohio, New York and Los Angeles, and the film was shown in festival programs.

Projects: “Everything's Kosher” will be published in spring 2024 about Fried's family history and the attempt to open a Jewish delicatessen in Regensburg. “Ebensee” will be a short documentary about the Austrian concentration camp subcamp of the same name.

URL: <https://www.mittelbayerische.de/lokales/stadt-regensburg/der-juedische-filmmacher-adam-fried-verarbeitet-filmisch-sein-leben-umgehen-von-ns-relikten-in-regensburg-14829660>

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