



## Open Church St. Elisabeth + The Cast Whale Project by Gil Shachar

The life-size 14 m long whale by the German-based Israeli artist Gil Shachar will ‚strand‘ in the St. Elisabeth church in Berlin Mitte from April 22nd to May 14th. Daily from 11 am to 8 pm. The exhibition was curated and organized by Semjon Contemporary and supported by friends of the gallery.

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Gil Shachar, gallery artist of Semjon Contemporary Berlin, obtained a permit to cast a stranded humpback whale in South Africa after extended negotiations with the South African Ministry of Environmental Affairs. For this purpose, he set up a standby team on site, which would immediately start securing and molding the dead whale, once stranded, after the artist's „go“.

Finally, after two years of waiting, in August 2018 a whale suitable for casting washed up, lying on its back, in Lambert's Bay on the west coast, north of Cape Town. The artist flew over from Germany the next day to join the team in taking a mold off the whale, an operation which took three days. Shortly afterwards the whale was drawn back into the ocean by the tide. The whale sculpture was accomplished later on during three months of concentrated work in Cape Town and was thereafter shipped to Germany.

Last year, despite Corona, many people were able to see the whale-sculpture at the Bochum Art Museum. Visitors to the presentation of the whale-sculpture are fascinated and touched by Gil's project. The encounter with this huge work leaves its mark.

The Schinkel Church of St. Elisabeth on Invalidenstrasse is the ideal venue for such a presentation. Not only do its architectural proportions match the whale perfectly - also its tragic history and its hopeful new beginning after the war and after reunification, through countless cultural events, admirably reflect the ‚resurrection‘ of the whale, its new life as art.

That this sacred location is an open house during this Covid 19 pandemic turns out to be great luck.

The sculpture becomes an ambassador for the tortured creature and a reminder of how we deal with our planet. Likewise, the many myths that evolved around whales among all cultures are imprinted in our collective memory. The whale is both a fascinating - apparently realistic - sculpture, and an abstract one.

Semjon H. N. Semjon, March 2021

You may support the project with your donation at [www.betterplace.me/wal-von-gil-shachar-in-st-elisabeth](http://www.betterplace.me/wal-von-gil-shachar-in-st-elisabeth)

More informations, also on the artist at [www.semjoncontemporary.com](http://www.semjoncontemporary.com)

Hygiene advice: <https://www.elisabeth.berlin/de/kulturkalender/offene-kirche-cast-whale-project-gilshachar>  
At Villa Elisabeth (buidling next door) you may do a free Covid 19 test with or without digital registration.

On [www.semjoncontemporary](http://www.semjoncontemporary) more works and exhibitions by Gils Shachar are published.