A Postcolonial Condition? Public Program (Hamburg, 22-26 Sep 25)

Warburg-Haus, Heilwigstrasse 116, 20249 Hamburg, Sep 22–26, 2025

Prof. Dr. Petra Lange-Berndt, Universität Hamburg, Kunstgeschichtliches Seminar

Public programme in the context of

A Postcolonial Condition? Art, Literature, Film, and the Everyday in Eastern Europe, 1989–today. Summer school 2025, Warburg-Haus, Heilwigstrasse 116, 20249 Hamburg

Organised by: Dr. Marina Gerber, Prof. Dr. Petra Lange-Berndt, Prof. Dr. Anja Tippner, Eastern European / Slavic Studies and Department of History of Art, Universität Hamburg

Decolonial and postcolonial studies play a major role in Eastern Europe in both theory and aesthetic practices such as art, literature, film, or visual and material culture. Especially since 1989 they establish a change of perspective that has been making peripheral actors and non-hegemonic positions visible. The demand for the examination of imperial structures, site-sensitive theories and a re-examination of Eurocentric points of view have increasingly become the focus of the debate, which has gained urgency at the latest since the Russian attacks on Ukraine. However, the query surfaces whether and how exactly theories of decolonisation, which were developed with other geographies in mind, and Eastern Europe can or should be thought together. This is valid especially considering the diversity of postsocialist spaces, which extend from Central Europe via the Baltic States, Russia and Ukraine to Central Asia.

Therefore, this Summer School will focus on these recent discussions and explore the following questions: Is a description of the conditions in the postsocialist space as postcolonial adequate? If so, what might the decolonisation of Eastern Europe look like? What is the relationship between postcolonial and postsocialist dynamics? What role can the arts play in these processes? Which aesthetic practices can be described as decolonising? How do authors and artists develop alternative modes of situating themselves as Eastern European? How are postcolonial approaches adapted to the cultural and historical experiences and new political conditions in the regions?

Monday, September 22, 2025
18.00–19.30 Evening lecture and in conversation
Coloniality without Colonies. Building the East European Confidence
Joanna Warsza (Stadtkuratorin, Hamburg)

Tuesday, September 23, 2025
18.00–19.30 Evening lecture
“Need I mention every single bird that flies in the face of frontiers”. The German-Polish Border after 1990 in Art, Research and Curatorial Work

Prof. Dr. Burcu Dogramaci (Department of Art History, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich)
The Polish-German border has a turbulent and complicated history that continues to involve artists and exhibitions to this day. The 442-kilometre-long structure was the focus of a research project I conducted together with art historian Marta Smolińska, in which we explored the German-Polish border region as a zone of artistic work, exchange and reflection. We worked with the double meaning of the term 'sharing' (in German 'teilen') as separation and also as shared possession and experience. In this respect, we understand the border and its regions as much more than a political and territorial dividing line. It is noteworthy that the term 'border' is already a shared word formation: the German 'Grenze' is a loanword from Old Polish and comes from 'Granizza' for border or abbreviation. Grenze thus has its etymological origin in the language of the 'others,' beyond today's national borders. The shared word also refers to a common (linguistic) origin. Our research trips along the border finally resulted in a monograph and a travelling exhibition, which was shown at the National Museum in Poznań and the Zentrum für Aktuelle Kunst in Berlin-Spandau. My lecture will introduce the context of our research on German-Polish border art, present case studies and our curatorial concept.

Thursday, September 25, 2025
18.00–19.30 Film screening and talk
Where Russia Ends. Cinematic Essay (2024)
Oleksiy Radynski (Artist, filmmaker, Kyiv), Philipp Goll (Author, critic, Berlin)
In the late 1980s, a team of Ukrainian filmmakers undertook several film expeditions to remote areas of Siberia. Their forgotten film rolls were rediscovered in Kyiv in 2022, during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This fascinating archive is the starting point for a cinematic essay that addresses Russian imperialism, environmental destruction, and the ongoing oppression and extermination of indigenous peoples in the remote areas of Siberia.

Reference:
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