

The aim of the project is analysis and interpretation of artistic and curatorial activities developed with respect to the Polish-German border in the 1989-2019 period. The studies will be conducted in the context of so-called border art (contemporary art which thematises borderland areas) and in relation to Poland's and Germany's mutual cultural policy in the above period. The underlying objective of the project is, then, the creation of a database of artistic and curatorial activities taking place at and vis-à-vis the Polish-German border in the 1989-2019 period. [e.g. "Dialog Loci" (2004): art project on the premises of former Kostrzyn stronghold. The exhibition addressed the ever-topical question about national identity and the symbolism of the border. Artists: Mirosław Filonik (PL), Bernardo Giorgi (I), Krescenty Głazik (PL), Elżbieta Jabłońska (PL), Grzegorz Klaman (PL), Michael Kurzwelley (D), Hester Oerlemans (NL), Arturas Raila (LT), Carina Randlov (DK), Susken Rosenthal (D), Jadwiga Sawicka (PL), Roland Schefferski (D), Zbigniew Sejwa (PL), Urban Art - Peschken/Pisarsky (D), HS Winkler (D), Georg Winter (D), Markus Wirthmann (D), and Julita Wójcik (PL)]. A second objective of the project is answering the question of what image of Polish-German relations is transmitted by artists and curators. A third objective is the development of a new research methodology to be used for analysis of artistic and curatorial projects in borderland areas worldwide. The principal characteristic of this methodology is taking advantage of tools not only from art history, but also from various scholarly disciplines, e.g. sociology, philosophy and cultural anthropology. Art which thematises the borderland is engaged art, strongly entwined in political, social and historical contexts.

The borderland is treated as an area of dynamic transformations (*borderland as transition space*) and a litmus paper of Polish-German relations. The border is seen as an artificial political construct rather than a natural division. Since 1989, there have been many interesting artistic and curatorial initiatives taking place on both sides of the German-Polish border, addressing the border itself. To date, however, they have neither been analysed within the framework of German or Polish art history. In 1990 the German-Polish Border Treaty was signed confirming the existing border on the Oder and the Nysa Łużycka. 2019 will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the political breakthrough, after which the post-communist Poland ceased to share a border with the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany and began to have united Germany as its neighbour. Since 2004, this border has become an internal EU border.

The results of the project will therefore facilitate the perception of Polish-German cultural and political relations in the mirror of contemporary art and in the context of exhibition strategies, which may ultimately revise stereotypes concerning reconciliation and demonstrate how differently both countries construct their history-related message.

Artistic and curatorial projects will be analyzed, among others, through the prism of the following historical, political and social issues:

- Shifting borders and "lost homelands"
- Reconciliation (*Versöhnung*)
- Shared myths, traumas, taboo topics and memory
- Border cities as shared/separated cities
- Small cross-border traffic: workers crossing the border daily and tourist-shoppers
- European border regimes: migration, contraband, German-Polish border as an inner EU border as of 2004 (soft border)
- The spectres of former borders of Poland with the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany (the spectre of the iron curtain)
- Art as a (subversive) mirror of the official cultural policy of both states, which makes the border visible

The innovative character of the project consists, then, in analysing contemporary art in the context of Polish-German relations and in the perspective of the cultural policy of both states in general. In this context, the double meaning of the Polish term *dzielenie* (as separation and shared possession/experience) and the perception of the borderland as transition space will be the starting points for the debate on the Polish-German border area. The chronological framework since 1989 has been associated with the fall of the Berlin Wall, which has led to a marked intensification of the activities of artists and curators at and vis-à-vis the shared border. In this project, art will therefore be analysed through the prism of politics and history. Border art looks into top-down and bottom-up ways of asking questions about history and about a potential impact of this art on the relations between residents of borderland areas.