Artistic perspectives on the legacy of the Second World War in Belarus and Germany

Panel discussion
08.12.2026
18:00 - 19:30 (Berlin)
19:00 - 20:30 (Minsk)

The discussion will be simultaneously translated into English and Belarusian.

DGO
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Osteuropakunde e.V.

ФОРУМ БЕЛАРУСЬ
FORUM BELARUS

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Auswärtiges Amt

Registration here:
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EJiaO2V-QRWtg77N2XrQww

The crimes committed by the German Reich in the occupied Soviet Union between 1941 and 1944 have left their mark, which is still visible today: the landscape is dotted with the graves of soldiers and civilians who were killed. In Belarus, the Holocaust has left behind the empty spaces where Jewish communities once stood in the cities and towns, as well as in hundreds of villages that were wiped out, along with their inhabitants, as a result of German occupation policy. In Germany, too, there are still mass graves – as yet unknown – of Jewish forced labourers and Soviet prisoners of war from Eastern Europe.

After the end of the war, both societies developed different approaches to overcoming violence. These include the interplay between remembrance and forgetting, which is managed by the state in different ways in the Republic of Belarus and the Federal Republic of Germany, and demanded by civil society. In this context, both memorial sites and the gaps in remembrance are given artistic expression by state and independent actors.

In this online discussion, we ask how, by 2026, the Russian war against Ukraine, the ongoing mass repression in Belarus and the shift to the right in Germany will alter this landscape. How do artists deal with the gaps in memory – particularly where historical experiences are barely present in the public consciousness or are deliberately suppressed? What opportunities does art offer for challenging established narratives about the Second World War and bringing alternative perspectives to light? What tensions exist between state-funded commemorative art and independent artistic positions?

Moderation

Felix Ackermann, Forum Belarus, FernUniversität in Hagen

Discussion

Olga Bubich, essayist, visual artist, lecturer, curator
Aksana Haiko, writer, playwright, theatre director, independent researcher

Introduction

Gabriele Freitag, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Osteuropakunde