

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

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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.