

OSTGEBIETE / ZIEMIE ZACHODNIE. German-Polish Perspectives

German Eastern Territories, Polish Western Territories
– Images of an Intertwined History

Berlin, May 21 2026

To mark the 35th anniversary of the German-Polish Neighbourhood Treaty, signed on June 17, 1991, the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion and Reconciliation is opening the new special exhibition “Ostgebiete / Ziemie Zachodnie. German-Polish Perspectives” on May 28 at 6.30 p.m. Ten photographers from Germany and Poland explore the shared space of memory beyond the Oder and Neisse rivers, whose history has been recounted over decades from different national perspectives.

After the Second World War, Europe was reorganised by the Allies. As a result of Poland’s westward shift, large parts of the German Eastern Territories became the Polish Western Territories. For many Germans, the former German Eastern Territories are still associated today with flight and expulsion, with the loss of home and memories that live on within families. In Poland, the Ziemie Zachodnie, the Western Territories, tell of arriving in a foreign environment, of a new beginning after war and occupation and of slowly becoming familiar with places that had been shaped by German culture until 1945. These experiences do not just stand in contrast to one another, but are closely intertwined.

At a time when European cultures of remembrance are being renegotiated and the generation of eyewitnesses is passing away, the exhibition explores how history lives on in landscapes, families and images. It examines how different memories of the same places can coexist and relate to one another.

The team at the Documentation Centre, under the project leadership of Barbara Kurowska and Arvid Peschel, was supported by Karolina Gembara as artistic curator. The exhibition understands memory not as a closed narrative, but as a polyphonic and contradictory space of experience. The participating artists work with fragmentary archives, family histories and personal approaches to displacement, expulsion and new beginnings. The focus is not merely on historical reconstruction, but on the question of what traces the violent shifts in borders and populations after 1945 have left in landscapes, biographies and memories to this day, both in Germany and in Poland. Photography thereby becomes a medium of engagement with the visible and the repressed, with places whose German past continues to have an impact to this day.

The exhibition is presented entirely in three languages: German, Polish and English.

**DOKUMENTATIONS
ZENTRUM**

FLUCHT
VERTREIBUNG
VERSÖHNUNG

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Duration: May 29, 2026 until January 17, 2027

Photographers: Karolina Gembara, Annette Hauschild, Thomas Meyer,
Katarzyna Mirczak, Filip Piotrowicz, Natalia Poniatowska, Ina Schoenenburg,
Linn Schröder, Wojtek Sienkiewicz, Heinrich Völkel

Project leads: Barbara Kurowska, Arvid Peschel

Artistic Curator: Karolina Gembara

Design: Naroska Design

In cooperation with: OSTKREUZ – Agentur der Fotografen

Press tour: May 28, 10.30 a.m.
Register at presse@f-v-v.de

In presence of:
Project leads: Barbara Kurowska, Arvid Peschel
Artistic Curator: Karolina Gembara
Photographers: Annette Hauschild, Heinrich Völkel and Thomas Meyer

Individual press appointments after 28 May are available.
Contact us at presse@f-v-v.de

Press materials and press images are available at
www.flucht-vertreibung-versoehnung.de/en/press

Vernissage: May 28, 6.30 p.m.
Register at veranstaltungen@f-v-v.de

Further information at
www.f-v-v.de