

exercising
modernity

academy
2022



exercising [eastern]
modernity

open call

Berlin, 17.10.2022–23.10.2022

Exercising Modernity Academy is a project for intellectual and artistic exchange, focused on describing the Polish share in modern heritage in a new, interdisciplinary way as well as in an international context. The project aims to highlight modern ideas in a broader sense by tracing modernization practices in Europe and beyond, as well as by following the establishment of modern societies and modern states. Nevertheless, we pay special attention to culture, and more specifically to architecture, which we consider a unique field of various intersecting perspectives, ambitions, concerns and hopes relevant in the formation of the 20th century world.

The fourth edition of **the Exercising Modernity Academy** will be devoted to Eastern Europe and its historical and contemporary methods of understanding. We want to reflect on the concepts of East and West, have a closer look at the incoherencies between political, geographical, and cultural borders of Europe in the 20th and 21st centuries. We will examine the issue of the role of culture and architecture in shaping the societies, cities and states in this region of the world.

Our ambition is to create a field for reflection on the common experience of the 20th century's modernization movements of the states and peoples of Eastern

Europe from the ideological foundations of modernity and its successful representations in art and architecture, through the difficult experience of totalitarianism and its legacy, to contemporary narratives and self-reflections.

Finally, our goal is to sketch a broader and comprehensive perspective on what Eastern Europe is and how we can better understand the events, changes and processes that have shaped the world in recent times.

The Academy will take place in Berlin in October 2022, during which we will encourage a broader reflection on these issues through lectures, seminars and workshops.

The program of **the Exercising Modernity Academy 2022** will be focused on four thematic sections:

Section I. Modernity(/-ies) / Modernism(-s)

The first thematic section of this year's Academy will be devoted to the multi-layered relationship between what is modernity understood as a set of practices, forms, ideas and struggles of individuals and societies. Attention will also be paid to the relation between modernity and the foundations of modernism manifested in architecture or urban planning, i.e. a relation based as much on compatibility as on inconsistencies between the cultural theory of modernity and its practice. The different dynamics characterising 20th-century aspirations to modernity will be discussed, taking into account the cultural, social, or political specificities of these transformations in selected countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Looking at the architecture of such cities as Gdynia or Kharkiv, or considering the oeuvre of Eastern European architects developing their careers in Tel Aviv or Beirut, it is not difficult to get the impression that Eastern Europe was also an extremely fertile ground for attempts to practice modernity. So fertile, in fact, that within a short time these ideas became part of official development plans, setting an unprecedented, but also peculiar pace of transformation in various centres of the region. Eventually, the grains of modernist assumptions were adopted both in countries striving to realise the utopia of socialism and those oriented towards capitalism, but in both cases this was connected with a kind of revolution in the perception of the role of architecture, which became an important field for the implementation of these plans. Finally, the last highly significant element of this thematic section is the experience of the individual in all these processes. As is so

often the case in the systemic development of far-reaching, complex plans, individuals disappear from sight. Therefore, has modernity brought us closer to fulfil utopian assumptions or has it become a source of suffering?

Section II . Between totalitarianisms

In the second thematic block we will direct the attention of the participants to a range of issues connected with the experience of two totalitarianisms, which happened to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The oppressive systems – both Nazism and Communism – had a significant impact on the life of European societies for many decades. They also gave rise to many ethical dilemmas: what choice did the individual have to preserve their identity and survive at the same time? Is it possible to regain trust after decades of manipulation? How – during and after the Second World War – were narratives about the past, present and future produced? How does the legacy of both totalitarianisms shape the present of our cities, the surrounding infrastructure and landscape, and Central and Eastern European collective memory?

With these questions and issues in mind, our aim will be also to look at selected cities in Central and Eastern Europe as a kind of palimpsest, where successive layers overlap, sometimes deliberately attempting to falsify the original, covering up selected elements, and sometimes completing it and building it in – sometimes significantly – empty places.

Section III. World in motion – defining East and West

This block will focus on the ways of defining Central and Eastern Europe and the (in)coherences inherent in these definitions with respect to political, geographical and cultural borders. We will look at how, over the past century and in recent years, the imagined and experienced divisions between 'East' and 'West' have been shaped and how they have manifested themselves in common spaces, including architecture or the spatial organisation of cities, towns, suburbs or villages. We will consider the political conditions of the (re)production of the boundaries and imaginaries associated with the East. We will also examine how the East can be understood in the context of the architectural legacy of socialist modernism, and to what extent modernism developed under socialism differs from modernism formed under capitalist system. We will try to outline the

conceptual framework and to trace its evolution, also in the context of contemporary events, which force us to reflect anew on the – physical and imaginary – borders.

Section IV. Deconstruction/Reconstruction

Public space of many cities, towns and villages in Central and Eastern Europe is still marked by numerous sculptural, architectural or urban elements, which are material traces of foreign domination and presence of totalitarian systems in these territories. A particular group of such places and objects are monuments, erected in order to perpetuate the propaganda narrative, free of historical distortions and manipulations. Another category of this – sometimes perceived as dissonant – heritage is formed by various types of architecture: from the architecture of oppression and extermination, such as former labour and concentration camps, through residential and administrative buildings erected for the occupation authorities, to huge blocks of flats or even entire city districts, creating residential spaces in line with the dominant ideology. Some of them, apart from the symbolic layer, also have their still important utilitarian, as well as aesthetic or cognitive function, which makes any decisions concerning the further fate of this type of legacy arouse conflicting emotions.

Starting from the reflection on the role of aesthetics in politics, we would like to take a broader look at the issue of constructing forms of commemoration as an element in creating common identity (national, ethnic, political, etc.). We would like to question to what extent this kind of legacy constitutes a troublesome legacy today and what commemorative strategies, translated into architectural realisations or spatial policy, can be found in various countries of the former “Eastern Bloc”.

Through these topics, we will be guided by experts representing different perspectives and disciplines from all over the Europe.

Locations and dates

The Exercising Modernity Academy 2022 will take place on **17.10–23.10.2022** in Berlin.

Selection

Participants will be selected in an open call procedure, with a maximum of 18 people from Germany, Israel, and Poland (selected candidates should be a permanent resident of one of the aforementioned countries – citizenship is not required. Refugees from Belarus or Ukraine are most welcome).

Our offer includes

- Participation in the lectures and seminars of the Exercising Academy 2022
- partial reimbursement of travel costs:
 - for participants coming from Poland and Germany: up to 90.00 EUR gross;
 - for participants coming from Israel: up to 180.00 EUR gross;
- expenses for accommodation in Berlin covered in full;
- free participation in lectures, seminars and workshops held by experienced and acclaimed scholars and artists;
- for those who complete the course – the possibility of submitting their own research or artistic project, elaborated or expanded on during classes, for a special scholarship program organized by the Pilecki-Institut Berlin and devoted to the issue of modernity in the 20th century (details will be announced during the Academy).
- After the Academy 2022, the participants will have an opportunity to apply for Exercising Modernity scholarships for research and/or artistic projects.
(About the previous scholarship edition:
<http://exercisingmodernity.com/en/stypendia-2020/>)

Target candidates

- This call for proposals is directed at individuals.
- The Exercising Modernity Academy 2022 is open to researchers specializing in the humanities or cultural heritage, curators, architects, and artists who shall come from or reside in Israel, Germany or Poland.
- Admission to the Academy requires good working knowledge of the English language.
- Candidates shall be aged 18 or above.

Applications

Candidates are invited to submit their applications by e-mail to the address: apply@exercisingmodernity.com by **01.08.2022** (11:00 p.m. CET). Please write "Academy 2022" as the subject of the e-mail.

A complete application should include

1. Scans of signed forms:

- declaration concerning the controller of personal data – attachment no. 1,
- declaration concerning the provision of consent to the processing of personal data and personal image data – attachment no. 2.

2. CV in PDF format (two pages maximum) and/or portfolio (max 50 MB);

3. Description of your artistic/academic/professional interest – related to the main theme of the Exercising Modernity Academy 2022 (up to 2,500 characters incl. spaces);

4. The organizers reserve the right to contact the selected candidate(s) for additional online interviews.

Additional information

- Application documents will be accepted only in English;
- Successful candidates undertake to attend the stationary sessions in October 2022 (depending on COVID-19 restrictions);
- Courses, lectures and workshops will be held in English;
- Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact: **contact@exercisingmodernity.com**.
- The results of the recruitment procedure will be announced by **the end of August 2022**, and the list of selected participants will be published:
 - on the website of the Pilecki-Institut Berlin: www.pileckiinstitut.de
 - on the Exercising Modernity project website: www.exercisingmodernity.com
 - on the Adam Mickiewicz Institute website: www.iam.pl www.culture.pl
- The organizers are not under any obligation to substantiate the decisions of the enrolment committee. No appeal procedure has been provided for.
- For candidates selected to participate in the project, the present document will constitute an attachment to the agreement concluded between any such candidate and the Pilecki-Institut Berlin.

Organizer

Pilecki-Institut Berlin



Partners:

Adam Mickiewicz Institute

The Liebling Haus – White City Centre



Co-financed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland