



The **STATE MUSEUM AT MAJDANEK** in Lublin
and the **MUSEUM OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR** in Gdańsk
announce Call for Papers and invite for
the international academic conference entitled

**(VICTIMS) AND [PERPETRATORS] OF THE THIRD REICH'S
CRIMES IN THE NARRATIVES OF HISTORICAL
MUSEUMS IN POLAND AND GERMANY: EXHIBITIONS,
MONOGRAPHS, EDUCATION**

The conference organised within the Polish-German Memorial Sites Forum is intended to inspire interdisciplinary reflection on the ways of presenting the tragic events of the Second World War. The event will concentrate on the topic of the victims and the perpetrators. Both of those categories – alluding to the triad that Raul Hilberg introduced into the scholarly discourse – are herein understood both at individual (biographies of particular individuals) and collective level (histories of various social, professional, national groups).

The primary aim of the conference is to provide a critical analysis of exhibitions presented in the museums that document Nazi crimes, though publications (especially syntheses and monographs) and educational programmes also remain within our sphere of interest. While the scholarly research reflects the current state of historical knowledge and the optics of studying the victims and their oppressors, it is the museum education that illustrates the essential direction of public and didactic engagement in Poland and Germany. That is where the memory politics of both countries and the strategies of various institutions do (or do not) overlap.

The conference hosts are particularly interested in comparative approaches to the topic. The event is intended not only to assess the existing narratives but also to foster the development of shared educational standards, analytic frameworks, and examples of good practice that could be applied in the future exhibition projects and the Polish-German museum programmes.





Proposed thematic areas include:

- narratives focusing on victims and perpetrators in permanent and temporary exhibitions;
- narrative models used to represent the relationship between perpetrators and victims, including their cultural and ideological backgrounds;
- modes of representing individual biographies in relation to collective perspectives;
- processes of constructing collective identities attributed to victims and perpetrators;
- “perpetrators perspective” in museum narratives – between the absence of sources and interpretative reconstructions;
- visual and narrative strategies for representing violence and trauma in museum exhibitions, including the danger of repeated victimisation and of “fascination” with perpetrators;
- victims and perpetrators in historical monographs and museum educational programmes (the role of language, interpretative categories, individual and collective portrayals);
- comparative analyses of museum narratives within various cultural, social and national contexts;
- the impact of contemporary scholarly and socio-political debates on the (re)interpretation of museum narratives regarding the victims and perpetrators of the Second World War.

We cordially invite scholars that specialise in various academic disciplines and particularly in history, museum studies, cultural anthropology, psychology, memory studies, and art history. Please submit the proposed title of conference papers together with an abstract (max. 1,000 characters incl. spaces) by filling the attached form and sending it to **cfp@majdanek.eu** by **30 October 2026**. Presentations must not exceed 20 minutes. The hosts reserve the right to include the papers of their choice into the conference programme. The call for papers results will be announced on 1 December 2026.

The conference is going to take place in the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk on 11–14 May 2027. The speakers will be invited at the organizers’ expense. Conference languages: Polish and German.

dr Tomasz Kranz



prof. Rafał Wnuk

