

Giving space and value: Exploring female and generational migration through storytelling

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The EU-funded transnational project “Female Labour Migration in European History” has set itself the task of drawing more attention to the specifics of women's labour migration in the European Union and making them public. Through personal stories, which are compiled together with the women concerned and presented on an online platform, untold and overlooked stories as well as structural challenges and conditions of women's migration are to be made visible.

(<https://minorkontor.de/femig-lab>)

A central question is how we can give space and value to the stories and narratives of women in a joint exchange? How do we manage to tell history and heritage together? How do we create low-threshold opportunities to talk about women's own or generationally intertwined migration histories – without overburdening them or projecting too many preconceptions?

This is exactly where the workshop wants to start and lead the participants themselves into the role of storytellers. Approaches from cultural and anthropological studies offer the opportunity to bring to light stories that do not normally find their way into archives and academic research. The low-threshold and associative methods aim to open up conversations of involving every generation of migrants, but also people without their own experience of migration.

Workshop Goal:

Explore ways to give space to stories – to listen to them, collect them collaboratively, and make them visible in an appropriate way.

Research Question:

How can a method help to stimulate conversation? And how can materials be used to create a dialogical approach to the theme of women including “generational dimensions”? In the workshop, a personal connection to the theme of migration and the aspect of generations will be established with the help of materials that are on hand such as photos and music, little objects, documents and apps.

Target Audience:

The workshop is aimed at museum professionals as well as anyone interested in exploring new approaches to museum work – particularly those who want to engage with the topic of migration, either through their own experiences or out of interest.

Workshop Focus (Proposed Plan):

- Future Generations: Perspectives and wishes in the context of migration
- Past Generations: Biographies, experiences, and their impact on present-day realities
- Current Stories: Experiences of people with their own migration background

CVs

Dr. Sara-Marie Demiriz – Research Outreach Officer at LVR Industrial Museum, Zinkfabrik Altenberg

Since October 2024, Sara-Marie Demiriz serves as Research Outreach Officer at the LVR Industrial Museum, Zinkfabrik Altenberg in Oberhausen. Her work focuses on outreach, participatory museum practices, and migration history.

After completing her studies, she worked at the University of Münster, various research institutes, and on museum projects. Until 2024, she was a research fellow and curator at the Foundation House of History North Rhine-Westphalia in Düsseldorf. Here she contributed to the conception and implementation of the major outreach project “Museum Mobil. We’re Looking for Your NRW Story” – a statewide initiative collecting personal objects and memories.

Anna-Elisabeth Hampel – Project Manager and Researcher at Minor – Projektkontor für Bildung und Forschung

Anna-Elisabeth Hampel is a project coordinator and researcher at the Berlin-based NGO Minor Kontor. Since 2019, she works on various projects at the interface between migration, labour, democratic participation and remembrance.

She coordinates the European network and remembrance project “Female Labour Migration in European History” (FeMig.Lab). She also contributed to the creation of the “We Refugees Archive” and coordinated the European project “Multi-Perspective Holocaust Remembrance in Contemporary Europe”. She is also involved in research, pilot-testing and networking projects about fair working conditions and democratic participation in the context of migration in Germany nowadays.

Gabriela Nicolescu – Anthropologist, curator and writer

Gabriela Nicolescu is an anthropologist, curator and writer who is interested in what visual and material culture perspectives can bring to development and migration studies, political economy, and the anthropology of health; museums and museum practices; and the history of social sciences, especially in Europe.

She has conducted extensive ethnographic work in Romania, Italy and the UK on the shifting relations between politics and representation, the diffusion and social organisation of cultural ideas, migration, remittances and notions of care work. Gabriela has curated and co-curated multiple international exhibitions in Austria, Romania, Hong Kong, Philippines and the UK. She taught in Goldsmiths, University of London and in University of Bucharest. Gabriela completed her PhD in Visual Anthropology in Goldsmiths, University of London.