

Remembering Migration in Museums, Exhibitions and Public Spaces

Female Labour Migration Histories and Remembrance Projects in the Ruhr Area

6 October 2025, 1pm - 8 October 2025, 1pm
LVR Industrial Museum Gesenkschmiede Hendrichs (Solingen)
Merscheider Straße 289 – 297, 42699 Solingen

The industrial regions of the Ruhr Area and the Rhineland were significantly shaped by migration – both immigration and emigration – since the onset of industrialization in the 19th century. After the Second World War, the German economy experienced a strong boom – the so-called Wirtschaftswunder (economic miracle). To sustain this economic growth and secure a steady labour force for West Germany's coal and steel industries, the Federal Republic of Germany signed labour recruitment agreements with several Southern and Southeastern European countries. Another agreement was signed in 1963 with South Korea. In the city of Solingen, various factories also recruited so-called "guest workers" – both men and women – especially from Italy and later Turkey. They worked in a variety of sectors and contributed to the production of scissors, knives, and blades. They were also employed in the textile and steel industries. In the early 1990s, discussions about the economic situation and rising immigration dominated the political debate in Germany. At the same time, a wave of far-right violence and racism swept across the newly reunified German state. One terrible consequence of this climate was the arson attack in Solingen, in which five women and girls from the Genç family were killed. The attack deeply shocked not only the city of Solingen but also the entire state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Many people took a stand against violence and hatred. At the same time, questions about societal failure and responsibility were raised.

In our workshop, we will approach this history through an exploration of various remembrance projects in the region: How is migration remembered in museums, exhibitions and public spaces? How were and are these remembrance processes negotiated? How are gender-specific perspectives taken into consideration? We will visit exhibitions, memorials and neighbourhoods in Solingen and engage in discussions about public remembrance methods with curators, educators and civil society stakeholders. The event will also include workshop formats, panel discussions and inputs from researchers and public historians. Another focus of the workshop is the further development of our FeMig.Lab online platform: we will engage in-depth with biographical accounts of female migrants in the region and the design and structure concept for the website developed by the team of web designers.

The workshop takes place within the transnational project "[Female Labour Migration in European History](#)" (FeMig.Lab). FeMig.Lab aims to make more visible the multifaceted history of female labour migration in and to Europe in the 20th century and its impact on today's societies. To this end, we connect museums, educational and cultural institutions as well as NGOs across Europe, and we are developing an online education platform.

The workshop in Solingen is organized by Minor and the LVR Industrial Museums.

Please find the preliminary program below.

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Funded by
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Preliminary Program

Monday, October 6

Time	Event
13:00 – 14:00	Arrival
14:00 – 14:30	Welcome by Minor, LVR-Industrial Museum and the LVR-Industrial Museum, Gesenkschmiede Hendrichs, Solingen and the LVR-Industrial Museum, Zinkfabrik Altenberg, Oberhausen
14:30 – 15:30	Female Labour Migration in West Germany and the Ruhr Area after WW2 and the Role of Female Migrant Workers in Strikes – An Overview by Sara-Marie Demiriz (LVR-Industriemuseum) and N.N.
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee Break
15:45 – 17:15	(Intergenerational) Self-Testimonies of Female Migrants and their daughters from the Ruhr Area Presentation of Ideas and Concepts for the FeMig.Lab Online Platform by Meltem Kücükylmaz (Ruhr Museum), Sara-Marie Demiriz (LVR Industrial Museums) and witnesses
17:15 – 17:45	Break
17:45	Remembering Female Labour Migration in Exhibitions and Museums I Panel discussions with representatives of museums and exhibitions in the region, introductory key note: Katarzyna Nogueira (Historian and Curator), panelists: Jana Golombek (LWL-Industriemuseum), Katarzyna Nogueira and Dietmar Osses (Ruhr Museum), , moderation: Nicole Scheda (LVR-Industriemuseum),
19:15	Group Dinner

Tuesday, October 7

9:30 – 10:45	Guided Tour through the “Gesenkschmiede Hendrichs” and Q&A with Nicole Scheda (LVR-Industriemuseum)
10:45 – 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 – 13:00	FeMig.Lab Online Platform Workshop: Presentation and Discussion of the Design Concept, status quo of the partner contributions (self-testimonies) and future possibilities of application
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 – 15:00	Collecting and Remembering – A book project and its impact from the perspective of the second generation. A Conversation with Maria Ricchiuti
15:00 – 16:30	Remembering Female Labour Migration in Exhibitions and Museums II Following personal stories and including the public space in building up the new exhibition in Solingen by Manuel Gogos (Author and Curator) and Justus Hermann (Radio-Author, Producer & Curator)

16:30 – 17:30	Free time to stroll through the museums and engage with each other
17:45 – 18:150	Walk through the Solingen-Ohligs neighbourhood, guided by Filippo Bologna, local resident engaged in (migration) remembrance in the public space

Wednesday, October 8

9:15 – 11:30	<p>Memory and Warning: The Solingen arson attack of 1993</p> <p>Interactive visit of the memorial site and discussion with representatives of the civic initiative around it together with Sascha Peirick and Winfried Borowski (Jugendhilfe-Werkstatt Solingen e.V.)</p>
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee Break
12:00 – 13:00	Future workshop for the FeMig.Lab network and project, wrap-up, feedback and end of the workshop