HOMELANDS

Paulina Korobkiewicz

HOME LANDS

Sylwia CISZEWSKA-PECIAK / Yuxi HOU / Ismail KHOKON / Marcin FORYS

Paulina Korobkiewicz / HOMELAND

Editor and Contributors:
Editor: Centrala, Nana Katsia, Paulina Korobkiewicz.
Texts by Rafailia Thiraiou, Sara Jones, Alicja Kaczmarek.

Designer:
Alexandra Demina

Technical Support for Pre-Printing:
David Janiashvili

Photography Credits:
Paulina Korobkiewicz, Sylwia Ciszewska-Peciak, Yuxi Hou, Ismail Khokon
Marcin Forys.

Publisher Information:
Centrala, Unit 4 Minerva Works, 158 Fazeley St, Birmingham B5 5RT, T: 0121 513 0240
CIC Number: 08043154.

In memory of Michał Sikorski, Sikor

ISBN: 978-0-704429-840-0

Post-Socialist Britain?: The Research Project

Professor Sara Jones
University of Birmingham. Principal Investigator, *Post-Socialist Britain?: Memory, Representation and Political Identity amongst German, Polish and Ukrainian Immigrants in the UK*

In this short essay, I want to introduce the research that underpins 'Homeland' – the project *Post-Socialist Britain?*, its origins, methods, findings, and outcomes – and to reflect on the contribution that 'Homeland' makes to it.

As is often the case, *Post-Socialist Britain* has its origins in another project, another collaboration between myself and Centrala, which took shape in the summer and autumn of 2019. This project was called 'Testimony in Practice'. It focused on first-person accounts, the ways in which people tell their own stories and how these stories can be produced and shaped by different artistic forms. It combined this with my long-standing research on the histories and memories of state socialism in Central and Eastern Europe. Centrala and I launched a campaign to gather the stories of those living in the UK who had personal or family memories of life under state socialism and during the post-1989 transitions to liberal democracy and capitalist economy. The stories formed the basis of a multi-media exhibition produced by artists Maciek Bączyk and Emma Lockey and curated and shown by Centrala.

I had worked on testimony and memory of state socialism before; what was new for me was that these stories were not being told in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Germany etc., but in the UK and by people who had built their lives here. Their accounts of life under state socialism were interwoven with their experiences of migration and hopes and frustrations in post-Brexit Britain. They showed that memory and its relationship to identity were something different when individuals are not remembering in the national context in which they were born or socialised. It was this connection between memory, migration and (political) identity that we aimed to explore in *Post-Socialist Britain*? At the same time, we wanted to show how these memories and histories are also part of the fabric of British society and consider if and how Britain itself can be thought of as "post-socialist".

Methods: The Central European Photography Club

We explored these questions through one-to-one interviews with migrants and migrant-led organisations, analysis of the British media, and arts-based research. It is the outcomes of the latter that are presented in the exhibition 'Homeland'. We chose photography as our artistic form – because it is accessible and popular –, but also because it has long been connected to ideas of memory. It is a form that appears to capture the past for the future, to freeze a moment in time to allow us to remember later. It is also a form that we use in our everyday lives, to keep a record of our families growing and changing, of celebrations, holidays, and other moments and objects that we do not want to forget. The connection between memory and photography means that it inspires story-telling – sharing photographs often means sharing stories.

The Central European Photography Club was the forum at which we explored this potential of photography. Our aim was to see how migrants from Central and Eastern European countries expressed their memories of socialism, transition, migration, and life in the UK in the context of the communities in which they live, which are always already "superdiverse"[1]. The club was located in West Bromwich (February-July 2022) and Hyson Green (September 2022-February 2023). It was open to anyone interested in being part of the group: we had participants with personal or family histories of migration from Bangladesh, Bulgaria, the Caribbean, China, (East) Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Russia, and Sudan. Some participants had a connection with the local area that stretched back over decades. They ranged in age from 18 to 70.

We ran two 10-week series in each location: with one session cancelled due to COVID-19, this made 39 workshops in total. Each weekly session took a similar format. The participants would receive some basic instruction in photography by the project's Community Engagement Officer, Oxana Bischin. They would then go on a photo walk and take photographs around a particular weekly theme related to memory and migration: hellos, familiar/unfamiliar, welcome/unwelcome, my history, family, journeys, belonging, inclusion/exclusion, community, and goodbyes. The participants were encouraged to also take photographs in their spare time and to send us their favourites. We printed those photographs, and they were the starting point for discussion and story-sharing at the following session. The idea was for the participants to produce their own work, but also

[1] Steven Vertovec, "Super-Diversity and its Implications", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30.6(2007): 1024-1054.

for an Artist-in-Residence – Paulina Korobkiewicz – to draw on and respond to the work of the Photography Club with her own artistic vision.

We were blown away by the enthusiasm and talent of our regular participants, several of whose work is showcased in the 'Homeland' exhibition or on our project website https://postsocialistbritain.bham.ac.uk/communities/. Some participants came to learn about their cameras and pick up tips and tricks for producing better photos, others were already highly skilled photographers, who came to meet others and contribute to the research. We are extremely grateful for their openness and willingness to share stories about themselves and their families and to listen to others share their own experiences.

Findings: Britain between the "Posts"

The stories and experiences of our participants helped us to understand how people remember in their communities. They also helped us to think through what it might mean to call Britain "post-socialist". "Post-Socialist" is a term usually reserved for those places that have a history of state socialist rule, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, and for some its use is outdated (even offensive), as it implies that these countries continue to be in a period of transition[2]. This is certainly not how we intended it; rather, we wanted to consider how memories of that period continue to impact present identities. But what could "post-socialist" mean in a country like Britain?

The sociologist Zsuzsa Gille speaks of a "global postsocialist condition"[3] – a term that aims to highlight how the Global West, East (and South) were never completely separated, that the dramatic changes in political, economic, and social systems in one part of the world did not leave the others untouched. The West was – moreover – very much involved in shaping the direction of the transition that followed the collapse of state socialism. One result of that transition was changes in migration flows: significant numbers of movers from countries transitioning from state socialism joined those who had moved to the West from countries emerging from colonial rule. Some of our participants drew on their photography of local neighbourhoods to tell these stories; they explained how the urban landscape (shops, restaurants, places of worship) had changed to reflect the culture, history, and everyday practices of new communities. Different histories of migration are layered on top of one another, and it is

[2] Martin Müller, "Goodbye, Postsocialism!", *Europe-Asia Studies*, 71.4(2009): 533-550.
[3] Zsuzsa Gille, "Is there a Global Postsocialist Condition?", *Global Society*, 24.1(2010): 9-30.

only through the narration of those who live there that these layers can be unpeeled.

Such local entanglements are related to global ones, both past and present. Scholars Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery argue that we need to "think between the posts" – that is, between the post-socialist and post-colonial. They describe the period after 1989 as the "post-Cold War" and call for the concept of post-socialism to become a tool to critique "the continuing social and spatial effects of Cold War power and knowledge", just as the concept of post-colonialism has become a tool to critique the ongoing legacy of colonialism.[4] The social, spatial and – I would add – political effects of colonialism are not confined to countries oppressed by colonial rule, nor are the effects of the Cold War confined to the places that directly experienced state socialism. In this sense, Britain can be thought of both with the tools of "postcolonialism" and those of "post-socialism".

One such Cold War legacy is the rhetorical division of the globe into the First (capitalist), Second (communist) and Third (non-aligned, post-colonial) worlds: the so-called "three worlds" ideology. Essentially a political division, this came to represent a hierarchy of development in the West that persists into the present: the former Second World was (and often still is) imagined as a "semi-periphery", a space "in-between", in transition towards (but never quite achieving) Western standards of progress. As Keir Starmer put it in a speech in the House of Commons in 2023, it would apparently be "shocking" if Poland were to overtake Britain economically.[5] This legacy impacts on movers from Central and Eastern Europe coming to the UK who find themselves stereotyped as a source of low-skilled cheap labour, more frequently overqualified for their jobs than Western Europeans, facing regular microaggressions, or even the victims of hate crime[6]. Ivan Kalmar has noted that this "Eastern Europeanism", as he terms it, has contributed to an "illiberal revolt" in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which includes racism towards movers from the Global South[7].

[4] Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery, "Thinking between the Posts: Postcolonialism, Postsocialism, and Ethnography after the Cold War, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 51.1(2009): 6-34 (p. 12).

[5] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0HaVqz88nQ.

[6] For an analysis of this in the sphere of art and culture, see Sara Jones, Centrala and Jakub Ceglarz, *In-between Spaces: Inclusion and Representation of Central and Eastern European (CEE) Artists in the UK Creative Economies* (2021). Available at: https://research.birmingham.ac.uk/en/publications/in-between-spaces-inclusion-and-representation-of-central-and-eas

[7] Ivan Kalmar, *White but Not Quite: Central Europe's Illiberal Revolt* (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2022).

Outcomes: Towards Mnemonic Conviviality

Urban neighbourhoods in "post-Cold War" Britain are superdiverse spaces inhabited by people with superdiverse personal, familial, and cultural memories of imperialism, decolonisation, state socialism and transition. Almost two decades ago, sociologist and cultural studies scholar Paul Gilroy suggested that common engagement with the "twentieth century's histories of suffering" might help foster the ability to "live with difference"[8]. The Central European Photography Club was a space in which we explored how the sharing of everyday histories and experiences could do the same. Participants brought their own interpretations of their environment to the group – informed by their personal, family, and cultural memories – and found the points of commonality between those stories.

To give just a few examples: a picture of a charity shop inspired cross-cultural remembrance of hard times at the start of the migration journey; an image of a discarded take-away prompted comparisons of cultural attitudes to food waste and shortages under different economic regimes; a photograph of a tram led to a discussion that ranged from childhood memories of East Germany, via a never-finished tramline in a Polish border town, to memories of the trams that once ran in Sudan. In this way, the Photography Club was a place where participants engaged in a form of everyday "memory talk" that recognises difference, but also finds connections across potential divides. It is this effect that we are calling "mnemonic conviviality".

The potential for memory to support "living with difference" in Britain is seen in the narratives produced at the Photography Club. It is also very much present in the 'Homeland' exhibition. Paulina Korobkiewicz has focused on the Polish migrant experience; however, her photographs do not explore this experience in isolation, but as it is embedded in the communities in which movers from Poland live and with which their memories and identities are interwoven. Her work avoids a view on Polish migration to the UK that emphasises only national difference and – while not denying the presence of conflict and division – instead highlights the potential for conviviality and connection.

Professor Sara Jones, University of Birmingham. Principal Investigator, *Post-Socialist Britain?: Memory, Representation and Political Identity amongst German, Polish and Ukrainian Immigrants in the UK*

[8] Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), p. 3.

Echoes of Migration: Centrala's Artistic Voice in Post-Socialist Britain?

Alicja Kaczmarek
Director of Centrala Space

Centrala, at its core, is an organisation dedicated to reshaping the landscape for migrants by providing cultural spaces and representation, advocating for greater inclusion, and amplifying the voices of artists. This ethos, grounded in the belief that art and culture are pivotal tools for social change, has driven our mission. Therefore, our involvement in the *Post-Socialist Britain*? The project was not just an initiative but a reflection of our commitment to these ideals. The project delved into the complex layers of memory, representation, and political identity among immigrants from post-socialist countries in the UK, mirroring our dedication to in-depth societal analysis and change-making through cultural engagement. Centrala's long-standing partnership with universities and research bodies has been instrumental in developing a unique methodology that blends community engagement and research with art production. This approach was epitomised in our collaboration with the *Post-Socialist Britain*? project, where we provided consultations, mentoring, and community engagement and coordinated and produced artists' residencies, exhibitions, and associated events. Paulina Korobkiewicz's residency, a cornerstone of this project, transcended typical artistic boundaries and significantly contributed to the broader research goals. Her unique perspective and artistic sensibility were instrumental in capturing the nuanced experiences of the migrant communities involved.

Centrala's support for the innovative use of photography workshops as a research method in the *Post-Socialist Britain*? the project was a testament to our belief in the power of art to express complex social narratives. These workshops transcended artistic endeavours, becoming conduits for migrants to articulate their experiences and stories. Paulina Korobkiewicz's immersive and participatory methodology did not merely involve observation; she became an integral part of the community activities, mentoring participants in photography. This approach enriched the project and fostered a deeper connection between the artist, the community, and Centrala, un-

derscoring our role in facilitating artistic expression and ensuring the community's voice remained central to the project's narrative.

Through Paulina's lens, the project poignantly represented the migrant communities, exploring the intersection of memory and identity in their new urban landscape. Integrating personal testimonies with photographic works in 'Homeland' created a compelling narrative about migration, identity, and belonging. These stories, reflective of a collective journey, were augmented by contributions from other photographers and workshop participants. Each brought unique experiences and perspectives central to understanding the multifaceted nature of migration and identity.

Paulina's photography captured the essence of migrant experiences. Her evocative and informative style offered a window into the lives of those she portrayed. The decision to use bookmaking as a medium for this project was a deliberate choice, offering an alternative, more intimate way for audiences to engage with the work and form a deeper, more personal connection with the stories.

The success of *Post-Socialist Britain*? lay not just in its artistic achievements but in its impact on the communities involved and the wider audience. It fostered understanding, empathy, and a shared sense of humanity. Centrala remains steadfast in its dedication to cultural advocacy and representation for migrant communities. This project is a testament to our ongoing efforts to use art as a medium for social change and inclusion. Looking ahead, we are excited to build on the success and learnings from *Post-Socialist Britain*?. We are committed to exploring new projects that continue to push the boundaries of cultural representation and advocacy, ensuring that the stories of migrant communities are heard and valued.

Paulina Korobkiewicz

Homeland

Rafailia Thiraiou
Exhibition Curator

We first met with Paulina Korobkiewicz in November 2022, after a few months in her residency at Centrala. She had already roamed the streets of West Bromwich in Sandwell and Hyson Green in Nottingham, familiarising herself with these areas and initiating dialogues with residents, participating in local celebrations, and sharing stories, thoughts and memories of their lived experience of migration. We discussed the influence of the Central and Eastern European migrant communities in those areas in their attempt to create a new homeland, their visibility in public spaces and their collective memory of migrating to England after a post-socialist reality.

Paulina's residency contributed to the broader research project *Post-Socialist Britain?: Memory, Representation and Political Identity amongst German, Polish and Ukrainian Immigrants in the UK*, where she attended and observed a series of photography workshops used as a research method to give migrants from these communities a platform to share their experiences through photography. Responding to this process, Paulina made a new body of work, constructing a contemporary portrait of those areas while mentoring and helping develop the projects of participants already involved with photography, all expressing their lived experience of migration and political identity.

Many old and new stories, photographs, and memories later, Centrala presents 'Homeland', an exhibition consisting of photos taken by Paulina and anonymous testimonies collected from people she encountered during her residency in those two areas and photographs taken by participants of the Central European Club. The exhibition focuses on the visibility of the communities within these areas, examining how the migrants have influenced the urban landscape while also contributing to and interacting with these diverse communities in their current homes. The composition of the photographs depicts the people, the geometries and shapes of these multicultural towns, the fusion of nostalgia for home, and the present memories, realities and connections.

Paulina was born in 1993 in Suwałki, Poland, and studied photography at the Warsaw School of Photography and Graphic Design

(2010-2012). Influenced initially by the landscape surrounding the area she grew up in and the train rides to and from home, where she observed the different landscapes through the lens of photography, her work consists of photography combined with text and moving images. Her process involves book-making as an alternative way for people to experience her work, with interplays of different materials and designs. Focusing on everyday objects within public space, she explores themes of home, migration, the trauma of post-communist states and identity politics.

Paulina has been particularly interested in how our surroundings influence our collective memory and histories and the human intervention in the environment, which she refers to as "gestures that swift the landscape and architecture." In previous work, we see brightly coloured buildings, details of shops, and tall tower blocks, which subconsciously showcase the transition from a socialist reality in Poland to a capitalistic 'West'. Photographs infused with shapes, colours, geometrical landscapes, and sculptural forms create Paulina's narrative visual stories, manifesting her talented eye for detail and observing the shared histories around us.

After moving to London in 2012, she earned a First-Class Honours degree in Fine Art Photography at Camberwell College of Arts. Her work has been the subject of exhibitions internationally. It has been featured in various publications while she has gained many awards establishing her career as a photographer. With her previous experience photographing the transition of post-socialist landscapes, Paulina has brought a new inside perspective to 'Homeland', where she has actively engaged with the residents and their stories. Her migration to England has also contributed to her initial influences highlighting the juxtaposition between the Polish and English cultural landscapes.

'Homeland' also highlights the importance of the artist's role as a social agent. As an artist, Paulina conducted community-based research, established trust, and shared experiences and migration stories through her visual storytelling. During her residency, she was not only observant of those communities. She stopped people on the streets, asked questions, shared answers, and participated in local events and celebrations. She eventually became a member of those communities.

This is most evident in her collaboration with the Central European Photography Club participants and their invaluable contribution to the exhibition. Through her warm colours, Yuxi Hou's work explores themes of growth, memories and family. Ismail Khokon and his portraits navigate the critical relationship between heritage, displacement, and identity. Through her photographic lens, Sylwia Ciszewska-Peciak documents moments in her experience of motherhood and moving into a new home. Marcin Forys's pictures showcase his desire to capture simple moments of urban life through his portraits and landscapes.

We are genuinely grateful for Paulina's involvement in the residency at Centrala and for offering, with her multidisciplinary work, a unique perspective from both West Bromwich and Hyson Green communities. Her insightful perspective as a migrant enriched the process and encouraged warm collaboration with residents and workshop participants, enhancing our collective memory.

West Bromwich, 2022


ELAND
British Heart
Foundation
Andrew Grant
To Let
0121 296 2833

West Bromwich, 2022

West Bromwich, 2022

West Bromwich, 2022

West Bromwich, 2023, Sylwia

West Bromwich, 2022


ANCHOR
STRENGTH
FITNESS
TAL
OFF LICENCE
SMART
0121 55

West Bromwich, 2022

West Bromwich, 2022


LEON
TYMBARK
Costa
Welcome

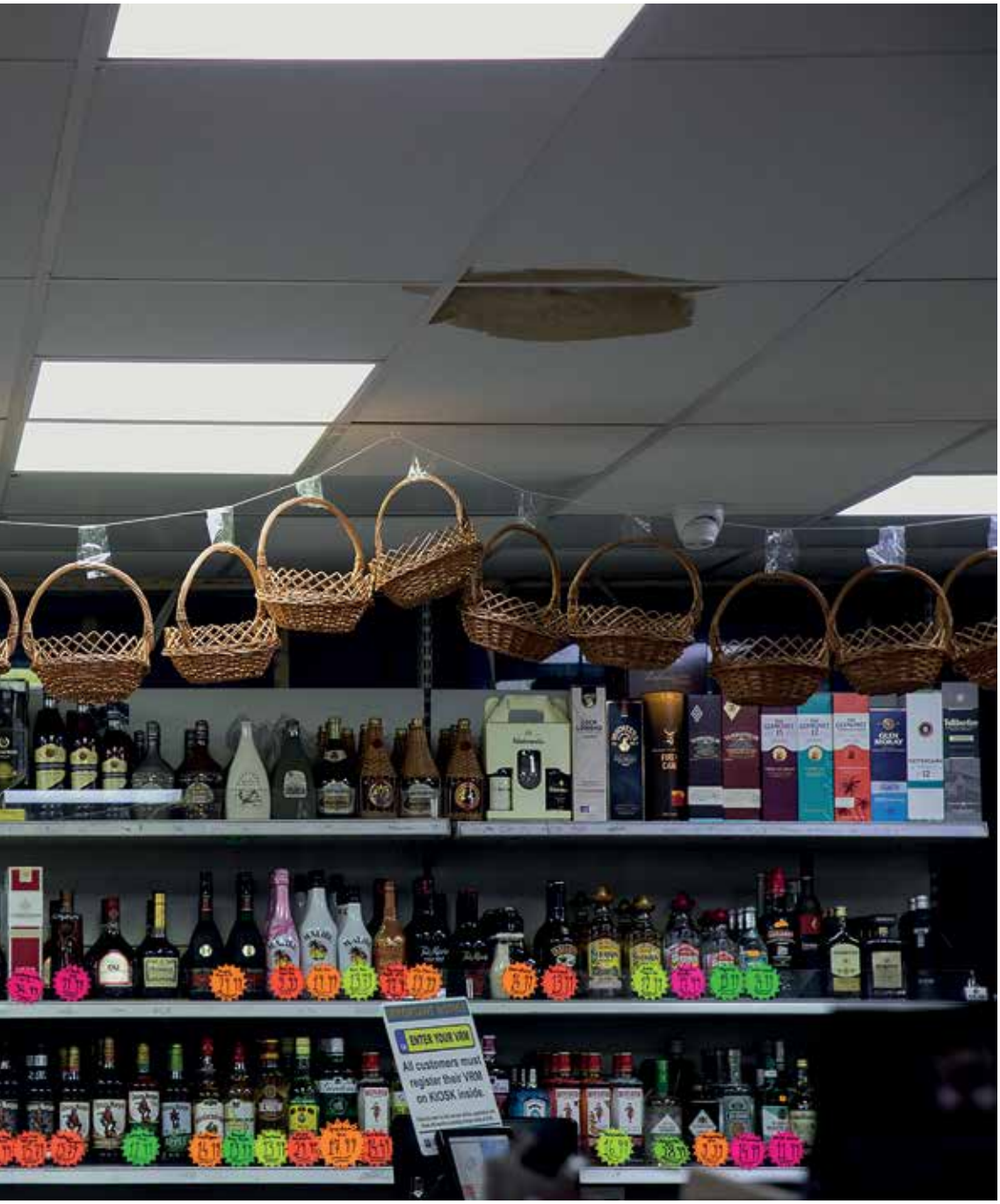
Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023

West Bromwich, 2023, Piotr

West Bromwich, 2022

West Bromwich, 2022

West Bromwich, 2022


ENTER YOUR VRN
All customers must register their VRN on KIOSK inside.

West Bromwich, 2022

Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023


BUCHAREST
INTERNATIONAL FOOD
Mr. Chips
Eat In or Take Out
Tel:975 5553
حلال
حلال

Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023

West Bromwich, 2023


NI MARKET
URDISH & ENGLISH FOOD
Lyca
Mobile
LycaMobile.co.uk
SKLEP
393
HIGH STREET

West Bromwich, 2022

West Bromwich, 2022

Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023, Magda

Birmingham, 2022

West Bromwich, 2023

West Bromwich, 2022

West Bromwich, 2023, Elena

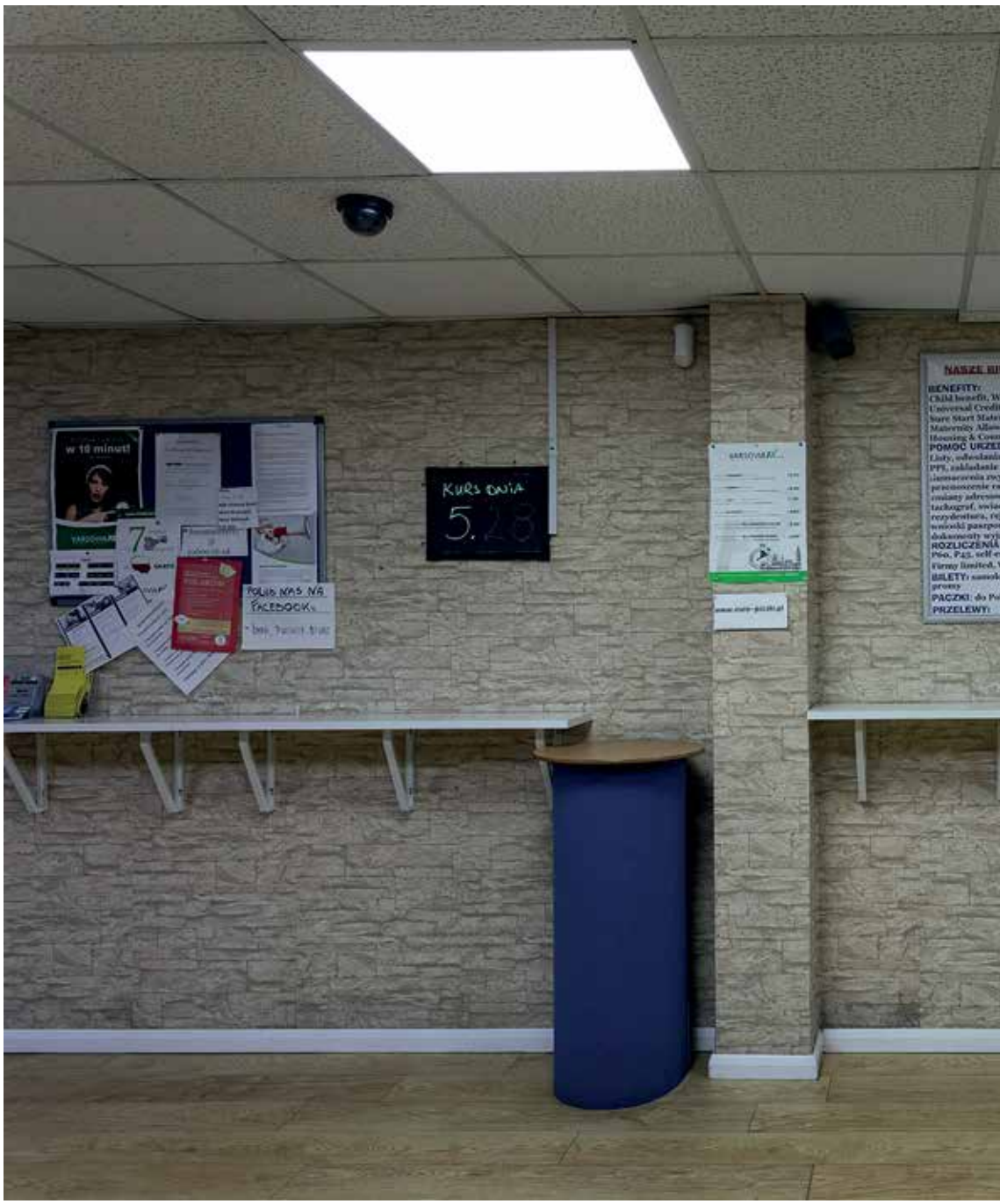
Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023, Agnieszka

West Bromwich, 2023

West Bromwich, 2023, Magda

West Bromwich, 2023

Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023



IMRA, Multicentre, West Bromwich, 2023


URO OFERUJE !!
PODATKOWE:

West Bromwich, 2023, Paulina

Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023

Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023


OFF LICENCE
GROCERIES
FRUIT & VEG
CONFECTIONERY
TANI
SHOP
ZAPRASZAMY
BREADS
HUCKNALL
HUCKNALL
OPEN
7 DAYS
50

Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023


B. CZĘSTOCHOWSKIEJ

Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023


HAWKSLEY RD
Medina Express Opticians
NHS & PRIVATE SIGHT TEST AND CONTACT LENSES
TEL: 0115 9788 786

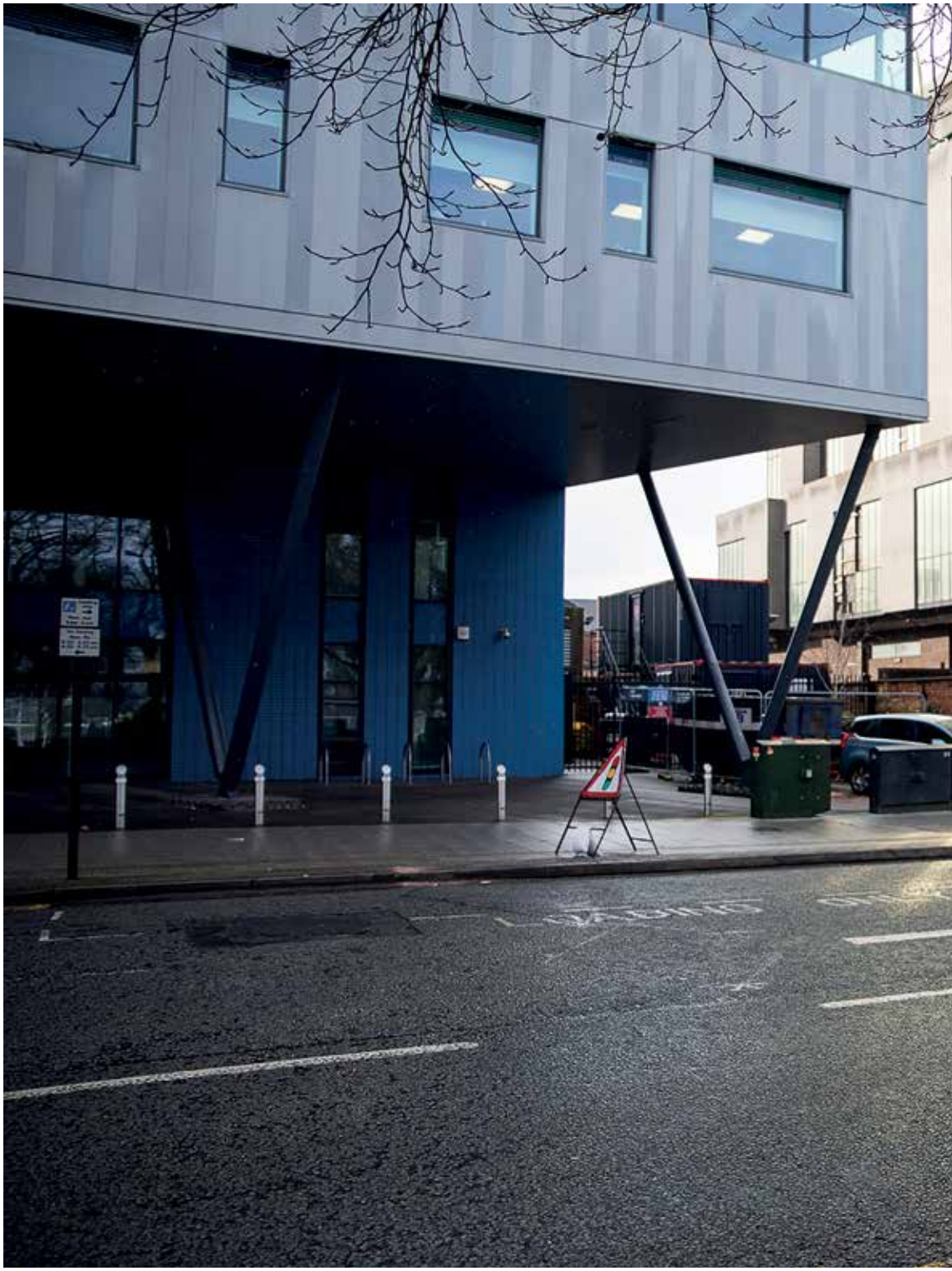
Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023, Paulina

Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023

Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023, Elena

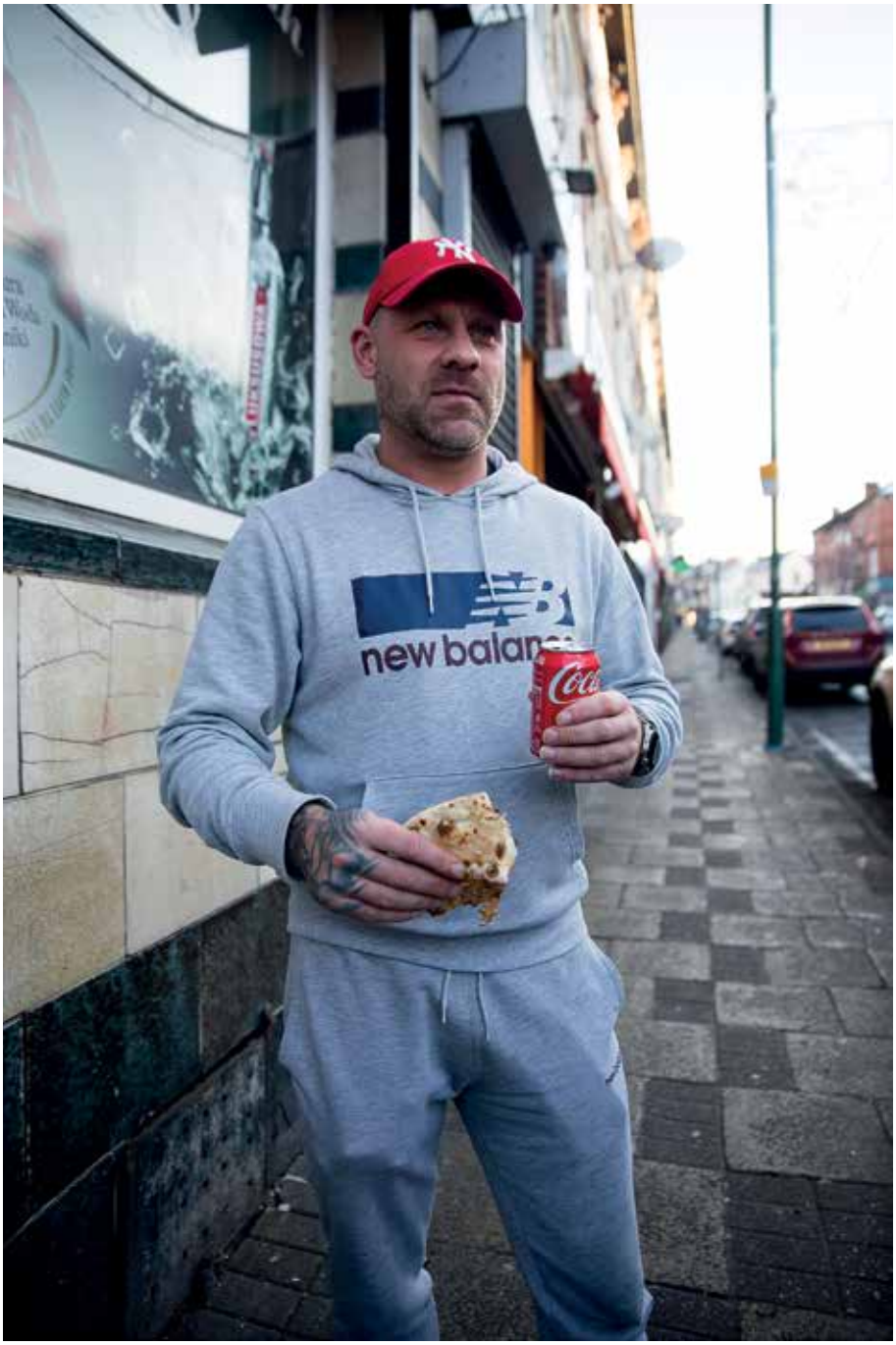
Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023, Tadeusz

Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023, Wioleta



West Bromwich, 2023


SOCIETY HOUSE
304
SOLD
41
41A
47
74
79



Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023

Hyson Green, Nottingham, 2023

Homeland Exhibition, Centrala Space, Birmingham, 6 October - 18 November 2023

Homeland Exhibition, Surface Gallery, Nottingham, 2 - 16 December 2023

Sylwia Ciszewska-Peciak

Rememories

'REMEMORIES' is a project exploring the home space as an essential element in the process of forming one's own identity as an immigrant. This work is a record of building their home, where her new story and a nostalgic journey to her childhood take place simultaneously.

The home space itself is a record of their entire life journey. It holds memories from their home country, events and moments that shaped them. She finds traces of Polish tradition in the objects around her and her everyday behaviours. Her home allows her to maintain a cultural and emotional connection with her home country, provides a sense of security and evokes reflection.

Welcoming their daughter, experiencing her childhood and accompanying her in her development transported her back to when she was a child. Raising her makes her reflect on Polish culture and become aware of its presence within her home environment. It allows her to reconnect with her roots. She returns, more consciously, to tradition, offering her child an identity while trying to build intergenerational bonds and bridges. She revisits her childhood memories for her daughter while shaping her own in another country and another reality.

Four houses, four different memories. What glues them together is their story of creating a home. The collage form allows her to show how the memory of places, tradition, past and present intertwine, becoming a bridge between the past and the present.

About the artist:

Sylwia Ciszewska-Peciak (b. 1989) is a Polish photographer based in West Bromwich. She recently graduated from the Academy of Photography in Krakow. Putting down roots in the new place led her to explore her new home's cosmopolitan nature by recording life on the street. In her street photography, she aims to capture stories: those candid, fleeting moments when people are most themselves, moments of introspection, ambiguity, joy and humour. The birth of her first daughter led her to documentary photography, using it as an instrument for deep self-reflection and self-therapy.

Gdzieś między zdmuchiwaniem/czymś mało istotnym.
To co stoi za tym to może niemoc/zdecyd/ronia.

Wszystkie: jakie wolny/nie pokazać, jak pomóc
z miejscem/rodzaje instytucje/ich zaangażowanie.
Stoję na pewnym etapie, przestawię z tej/niejasnej.

Przyjechała do domu moja córka, osobiście przyprowadziła ją dziewczyna
która się dzisiaj przedstawiła się w czasie, kiedy dawna bliska

Powracam tematyką składania, do tradycji, dzięki której
towarzyszy-kaja jednocześnie wiersz? mimo międzypokoleń

Yuxi Hou

Laolao's Suitcase

This project features photographs Yuxi Hou took of objects her grandmother brought on her journey from China to England. Old radios, rosemary trees, Chinese herbal medicine in plastic containers, and empty orange juice bottles. By shedding light on these domestic objects, she attempts to bridge the old and the new, home and afar, familiar and unfamiliar.

This project documents her migration journey and aims to reflect beyond her individual experience. It is a story of home and memories. Her grandmother's ID photos from her teenage years, needles, combs. These objects capture her faith and her philosophy of life. Through this work, she aims to reconstruct and foster a cross-generation, cross-cultural dialogue between us.

About the artist:

Yuxi Hou (b. 2004) is a documentary visual storyteller born in Beijing and is currently based in Nottingham. As a new immigrant and young adult, she's constantly reflecting on her marginalised position in society, exploring themes such as growth, identity, migration, memories and family through a sensitive account of human interactions in distinct communities.


LOOSE

Ismail Khokon

At the crossroads

The project, titled 'At the crossroads', will shine a light on the experiences of immigrants in Nottingham, empowering and giving a public voice to individuals within these communities. Through this project, he is trying to understand people's personal experiences of mental health during political, social and environmental upheaval in their home countries, looking at current events. He believes that during this time of global uncertainty, his work can connect people from Nottingham's immigrant communities whose mental well-being has been or is at that time affected by current affairs in their home countries, helping to build an essential network for support and unity. It is his current ongoing project funded by Arts Council England.

About the artist:

Ismail Khokon (b. 1984) is a British Bangladeshi socially engaged artist and photographer who explores the important relationship between identity, migration, heritage, displacement, health, well-being and environmentalism. He utilises his own lived experience to collaborate with others and highlight the experiences of marginalised communities and challenge the prevailing concepts of multicultural Britain.

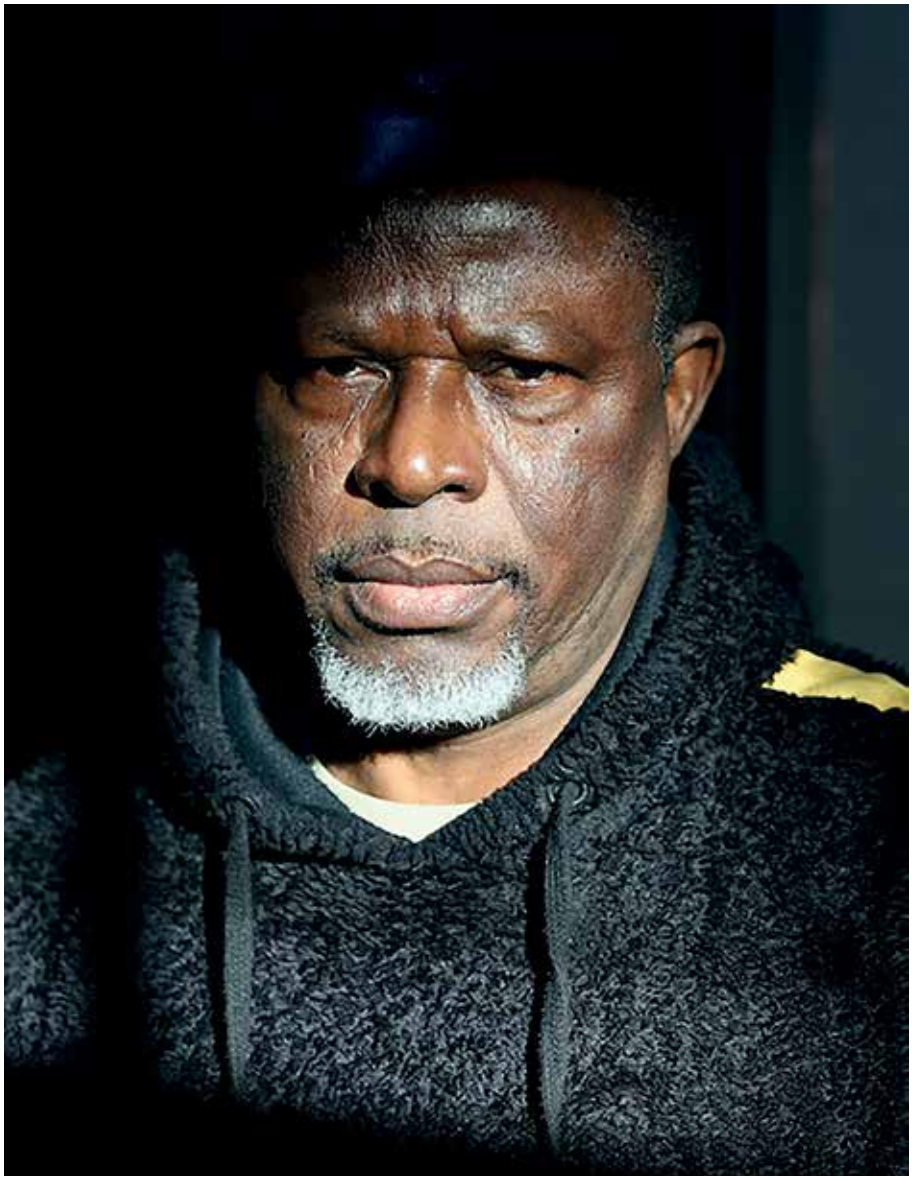
My mother Rabbenur

Jay Sandhu

Oliviera

Paula Pontes

Feny



Richard

Maria

Marcin Forys

Prism Gravity

'Prism Gravity' is a series of photographs taken in Hyson Green by Marcin Forys, a Polish photographer based in Nottingham. This photographic series explores the heart of Hyson Green through compelling portraits of people he met; Forys explores this vibrant community's intricate interplay of perspectives, origins, and diversity. The project's name, 'Prism Gravity,' underscores the idea that our viewpoints are shaped by our unique prisms, influenced by our cultures, birthplaces, and life experiences. Forys' lens documents the beauty in this diversity, celebrating the human spirit while challenging preconceptions. 'Prism Gravity' is a visual journey into a world where every photograph tells a story and every face reflects a unique facet of our shared humanity.

About the artist:

Marcin Forys (b. 1979) is a Polish freelance photographer based in Nottingham. His work is influenced mainly by sociological aspects, and his main subjects are the urban landscape and portraits. Through his visual storytelling, he creates awareness and influences his audience, leaving them with unanswered questions showing simple urban life.


ALARM
Nottingham
Valentine's
Fair

Acknowledgements:
We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to the creation of this book. Special thanks to Alishah Iqbal, Andre Nugent, Anna Fijalkowska, Bianca Parvuceanu, Elaine Crowe, Fola Shalom, Francesco Falciani, Francesco Gianni, Ismail Khokon, Janet Williams, Malgorzata Tokarska, Marcin Forys, Mohammed Elliley, Mohammed Umar Azmi, Oliver Parker, Rita Parkash, Sandra Brailsford, Sylwia Ciszewska-Peciak, Szymon Tokarski, Ute Hirsekorn, Yordanka Dimcheva, Yuxi Hou, Oxana Bischin, Veronika Zaiceva, Jaskirt Dhaliwal-Boora, James Cunliffe, Stephen Burke, Nicola Shipley, Paulina Jonkisz, and Eleonora Grabowska for their invaluable contributions and support.

We also acknowledge the collaborative efforts of the University of Birmingham, Nottingham Trent University, and Centrala, whose partnership has been crucial in bringing this project to fruition. Their commitment to exploring and understanding the complexities of post-socialist migration in the UK has been instrumental in the success of this endeavour.

Finally, our thanks go to everyone involved in the background, whose tireless work and support have made this book a reality. Your contributions have been vital in capturing the narratives and experiences at this project's heart.

Exhibition Information:
• Centrala, Birmingham: 6 October - 18 November 2023
• Surface Gallery, Nottingham: 1 December - 16 December 2023
• Curated by Rafailia Thiraiou

Collaborators:
• Centrala, University of Birmingham and Nottingham Trent University.

Funding Information:
• The production of this book was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). as part of the project Post-Socialist Britain: Memory, Representation and Political Identity amongst German, Polish and Ukrainian Immigrants in the UK (AH/V001779/1). A collaboration between the University of Birmingham, Nottingham Trent University, and Centrala.

Arts and Humanities Research Council
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
NTU Nottingham Trent University
Centrala