

The Gulag Heritage

Hester den Boer

Exhibition, Web app, Nonfiction book





Hester den Boer (1981)

obtained a BA in Comparative Religion Studies, a BA in Russian Language and Culture and an MA in Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Amsterdam. She works as an independent journalist and photographer. Since 2009 Den Boer regularly travelled to Russia, often staying for several weeks in remote cities in Siberia. Her in-depth stories have been published in renowned media like *NRC*, *De Groene Amsterdammer*, *Trouw*, and *Investico*. Her photographs have been exhibited internationally in various places including Photoville (US) and Foam Lab (NL). In 2015 Den Boer was shortlisted for the European Press Prize.

The Gulag Heritage

During the thirty-year rule of Joseph Stalin millions of innocent citizens were imprisoned in forced labour camps (the Gulag), executed or exiled. Russia has never fully confronted this dark history.

Today, Putin's regime glorifies the idea of a strong leader. Stalin is praised for leading the Soviet-Union to victory over Nazi Germany. The fact that he was the architect of the Gulag is silenced. According to a recent poll, 38 percent of the Russians think Stalin was the most outstanding person in history and almost half of the population believes that the repression was necessary to maintain order in the country. Even victims of the Stalinist regime sometimes share this view on history.

For six months, photographer and journalist Hester den Boer travelled in Siberia. She visited former campsites, interviewed victims of the Stalinist terror, met with researchers who are now under prosecution themselves and talked to people who think Russia is in need of a strong leader like Stalin. In her project she brings these opposing voices together.

The Gulag Heritage gives a unique and intimate insight into Russia's past and the current climate of growing repression. The project will be launched in the winter of 2018 as a travelling exhibition, a web application and a nonfiction book.

Exhibition

Launch winter 2018,
Melkweg Expo (NL)

Web app

Launch winter 2018,
10 interactive stories (Slices),
www.thegulagheritage.net

Nonfiction book

Launch winter 2018, written in
Dutch, published by Atlas
Contact.

info.paradox.nl/gulag

Paradox

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