



Suppressed by the Saviour

Hester den Boer

Exhibition, Web app, Nonfiction book



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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, and many Russians believe 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 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.

Suppressed by the Saviour gives a unique and intimate insight into Russia's past and the current climate of growing repression. Den Boer approached her subject both textually and visually by means of a travelling exhibition, a nonfiction book and a web application. The trilingual app – in English, Dutch and Russian – serves to complement and expand on the journalistic content of the book, while making it accessible to the international and Russian community.

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, specialized in Russia. Her photographs have been exhibited internationally in various places including Photoville (US), Foam Lab (NL) and Kaunas Photo Festival (LT). She published in renowned media like *NRC*, *De Groene Amsterdammer*, *Trouw*, and *Investico*.

In 2015, she was shortlisted for the European Press Prize.

Exhibition

Launch January 2019,
Melkweg Expo (NL)

Web app

Launch December 2018,
11 online stories (Slices),
www.suppressedbythesaviour.net



Nonfiction book

Launch January 2019,
written in Dutch,
published by Atlas Contact

info.paradox.nl/gulag

Paradox

documentary projects

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