

### Upper Silesia from the air

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The common objective of this German-Polish-Czech collaboration is to make a contribution to the visual history of the industrial and cultural landscape of Upper Silesia within a transcultural context. The project draws on both the existing holdings of historical oblique and vertical aerial photographs, which date from the period between 1920 and 1945 and form part of the Herder Institute's scientific collections, as well as current oblique aerial photographs produced by the Berlin photographer Thomas Voßbeck, a renowned specialist in the area of industrial photography.

The idea behind the initiative arose from book and exhibition projects that have already been completed at the Herder Institute. These projects focussed on historical aerial photographs of the cities of Wrocław/Breslau and Gdańsk/Danzig, which stand as important urban centres in the context of Central European, and in particular, German-Polish history. Within the framework of the current project is a plan to produce illustrated volumes in three languages (German, Polish and Czech). The first volume will document and explain the historical photographs while the second will focus on up to date aerial photographs. The images will also be shown, along with additional material, in an exhibition designed by the Silesian Museum in Katowice, which will tour various cities, initially in Upper Silesia, and later also in Czechia and Germany.

The work with historical and contemporary photographic material promises to bring about new insights into the survival of material culture within changing political and societal contexts. This will be helped by bringing to light sources that have long been neglected or, in some cases, are only now being created and compiled. Ideally, by combining a range of cultural, artistic and sociological approaches, together with the publication of various spatially presented "time layers", new narratives and forms of representation relating to the history of Upper Silesia will be able to be developed.

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