

NOTICE OF COMPETITION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE 2026 EXERCISING MODERNITY ACADEMY

and

**NOTICE OF COMPETITION FOR FINANCIAL SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITIES
UNDER THE 2026 EXERCISING MODERNITY PROGRAM**

**AT THE WITOLD PILECKI INSTITUTE OF SOLIDARITY AND VALOR
EXTRANEOUS BRANCH IN BERLIN**

The Witold Pilecki Institute of Solidarity and Valor (hereinafter also referred to as “the Pilecki Institute”) announces the following competitions:

1. **for participation in the 2026 Exercising Modernity Academy, entitled "Central and Eastern Europe: (de)constructed. Displacements, Relations, Transformations"** (hereinafter referred to as “the 2026 Exercising Modernity Academy”);
2. **for financial scholarships for cultural activities under the 2026 Exercising Modernity Program, entitled “Central and Eastern Europe: (de)constructed. Displacements, Relations, Transformations”** (hereinafter referred to as “the 2026 Exercising Modernity Scholarship Program”). The competition for scholarships for cultural activities implemented under the 2026 Exercising Modernity Scholarship Program (hereinafter also referred to as “the Competition for Cultural Scholarships”) is open solely to participants who shall have previously completed the 2026 Exercising Modernity Academy. The Competition for Cultural Scholarships will be held on the basis of the provisions of Article 15, Subparagraph 1 of the Act of 9 November 2017 on the Witold Pilecki Institute of Solidarity and Valor (consolidated text, Journal of Laws 2022.475) and §4, Subparagraph 1 of the Regulation of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, dated 13 December 2018, on scholarships supporting scholarly research and educational and cultural projects falling within the scope of activities of the Witold Pilecki Institute of Solidarity and Valor (Journal of Laws 2019.23, hereinafter referred to as “the Regulation”).

I. OBJECT OF THE COMPETITIONS.

The following are the Object of the Competitions:

1. Awarding a maximum of sixteen places to participate in the 2026 Exercising Modernity Academy, which will be held in Berlin on 7–11 September 2026.
2. Awarding a maximum of four financial scholarships for cultural activities under the 2026 Exercising Modernity Program. The Competition for Cultural Scholarships is open solely to people who shall have previously completed the 2026 Exercising Modernity Academy.
3. The 2026 Exercising Modernity Academy and the 2026 Exercising Modernity Scholarship Program will be implemented within the scope of the tasks of the Extraneous Branch of the Pilecki Institute in Berlin (hereinafter also referred to as “the Pilecki Institute in Berlin”) and under the Exercising Modernity Program, whose objective is a critical reflection on the legacy of 20th-century modernity in Central and Eastern Europe and its contemporary interpretations (hereinafter also referred to as “the Program”).

4. Graduates of the arts and humanities, including the history of art, history, architecture, cultural studies and disciplines closely related to these fields, as well as researchers in the humanities, curators and creators, and those interested in the relations between culture, history, politics and space, may apply for participation in the 2026 Exercising Modernity Academy and the 2026 Exercising Modernity Scholarship Program. Only people who have been selected for participation or have previously completed the 2026 Exercising Modernity Academy may apply for participation in the 2026 Exercising Modernity Scholarship Program.
5. The 2026 Exercising Modernity Academy and 2026 Exercising Modernity Scholarship Program are concordant with the mission of the Pilecki Institute, and specifically with its interdisciplinary research into the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century. Drawing on comparative research into totalitarianism, memory studies and cultural heritage studies, the Institute examines the structural, ideological and administrative dimensions of systemic violence. Particular attention is focused on an analysis of the Polish experience of modernity in the broader, international context, where it is treated as an element of the more complex processes taking place in the Central and Eastern European region and beyond.
An important point of reference for these analyses is the experience of the two most violent and destructive totalitarianisms of the 20th century – Nazism and Communism – which fundamentally affected the course of modernization processes in Central and Eastern Europe. Despite different ideological foundations, both these systems used modern tools to organize space, culture and social life, shaping both the material and the symbolic frameworks within which societies functioned.
In this context, architecture and art appear as particularly important fields of analysis – as tools for designing social reality, as carriers of ideology, and also as spaces for negotiation, resistance and the reinterpretation of imposed models.
6. Each of the four scholarships planned for cultural activities under the 2026 Exercising Modernity Scholarship Program will total up to 1,000 euros per month. Scholarship holders may apply for a refund of costs of travel and/or accommodation arising in connection with preliminary research and/or artistic research necessary for execution of the project, this totaling up to 400.00 EUR for each of the four planned scholarships.
7. It is planned to award four financial scholarships for cultural activities, each for a period of 6 months (from November 2026 to June 2027; the exact start and end dates of the scholarships will be specified in the scholarship contracts that will be signed following adjudication of the Competition). The scholarships will be paid in monthly installments and will not constitute an employment relationship. Scholarship holders will not be obligated to reside in Poland or Germany throughout the entire scholarship period.
8. Financial scholarships for cultural activities are awarded under the terms and conditions set forward in the Regulation.

II. 2026 EXERCISING MODERNITY ACADEMY

1. Background information and topical scope.

The **Exercising Modernity Academy** is an interdisciplinary program of artistic and intellectual exchange, which is focused on a critical reflection on the legacy of modernity and its contemporary interpretations.

The project centers on the study of processes of modernization, social and cultural transformations, and the ways in which art, architecture and design practice co-participate in their shaping. We are interested in modernity not as a homogeneous project of progress, but as a field of numerous contradictions, in which differing visions of society, authority and identity clash. Thus, the Exercising Modernity Academy proposes that modernity be viewed

as an ambiguous and multi-layered process, shaped in equal measure by emancipatory aspirations and the experience of systemic violence. We are interested in exploring how the legacies of these manifold phenomena influence contemporary cultural, social and design practices, and how they can be critically reinterpreted today.

The sixth edition of the Exercising Modernity Academy will be held under the theme “**Central and Eastern Europe: (de)constructed. Displacements, Relations, Transformations**”.

The program of the 2026 Exercising Modernity Academy is founded in the conviction that Central and Eastern Europe is neither an obvious geographic category nor a stable historical construct, but rather a field of tension and negotiation. In the present year’s program, we will approach this notion as an effect of the *longue durée*: from the disintegration of empires through the Second World War and the Cold War divide of the Continent to the post-1989 transformations. We are interested in determining how the region was conceptualized in discourses, how it defined itself vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and Russia, and how it developed its own identity narratives in the face of the world’s division into East and West. In this perspective, the concept of Central and Eastern Europe reveals its post-dependence character: it is both the result of historical relations of subordination, and an attempt to overcome them, which goes beyond situating the region “between East and West” and showing its functioning as a subject of its own history.

Successive blocks of the proposed program help evolve this perspective, presenting Central and Eastern Europe as a space of intense displacement and relations, where the experience of dependence – political, cultural, economic – intertwines with the movement of ideas, people and artistic forms. Changes of borders, wars, totalitarian regimes and migrations created conditions of forced adaptation, but at the same time generated new channels for the transfer of knowledge and practice, often informal and indirect. Finally, we will also be interested in the networks of ties linking the region to both the West – in the broader meaning of the term – and the countries of the Soviet Bloc, thus moving away from the simplistic center-periphery model in favor of multi-directional dependencies. In consequence, the Academy proposes that we view Central and Eastern Europe not as a peripheral fringe of global history, but as a dynamic laboratory of modernity, in which relations with the East and West, as well as the broader global context, have shaped – and continue to shape – specific forms of culture, thought and social practice.

BLOCK I – CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE – CONCEPT, HISTORY, NARRATIVES

The aim of the first block is to critically reflect on the notion of Central and Eastern Europe, and its variability over time. We will attempt to answer the question of whether Central and Eastern Europe can be considered a coherent geographical, political, cultural and epistemological category. We will look at the history of the emergence and evolution of this concept in the context of key processes of the 20th century, such as the collapse of empires, the Second World War, the Cold War, the bisection of Europe by the Iron Curtain, and the profound political transition that occurred post-1989. The block will take into account perspectives typical of historical research, political science and cultural studies, thereby allowing us to understand how the concept of Central and Eastern Europe has been not only a tool of description, but also of power, hierarchization and exclusion.

BLOCK II – DISPLACEMENTS

The second block focuses on moments of rupture of the continuum caused by border changes, wars, totalitarian systems, repression, anti-Semitism and the related experience of migrations from Central and Eastern Europe. Special attention will be paid to the individual biographies of those who left the region or had to adapt to the new reality, and this will be accompanied by an analysis of their strategies of adaptation, of how they functioned in their new contexts,

and of the roles they played in the circulation of ideas, knowledge and cultural practices. The block will also touch upon the issue of “mental isolations” – cognitive and communicational barriers that impeded the flow of knowledge between East and West, and the mechanisms thanks to which the transfer nevertheless took place.

BLOCK III – RELATIONS

The third and final block is devoted to an analysis of the relations between Central and Eastern Europe and other parts of the world, and the network of dependencies in which 20th century culture, art and design functioned. This includes relations with the broader Western world, as well as with Soviet Bloc countries and the USSR’s satellite states. However, instead of focusing solely on the center-periphery relationship, we will look at the connections, influences and dependencies functioning between different countries, institutions and individuals. This block will examine less obvious forms of cooperation, rivalry and exchange – in the sphere of culture, science, economics and ideology – that have not always been visible in official narratives or widely analyzed in research.

2. Selection of candidates.

- 1) Participants – a maximum of 16 participants – will be selected through an open recruitment procedure. Participation in the 2026 Exercising Modernity Academy program may be applied for by researchers active in the humanities, curators, artists, creators, and those interested in the relations between culture, history, politics and space.
- 2) Since the present year’s academy is full-time (intramural) and does not offer support as regards travel and accommodation, we encourage especially those living in and around Berlin to apply. The participation of persons from outside Berlin is possible, however the costs of travel and accommodation must be covered by individual program participants.
- 3) Candidates are required to have at least a communicative knowledge of English. Candidates should be at least 18 years old.
- 4) Candidates are invited to submit their applications in English via e-mail to the following address: apply@exercisingmodernity.com by time 23:59, **07.07.2026**. Candidates are requested to write “Academy 2026” as the subject of the e-mail.
- 5) A complete application should include:
 - a) Scan of the signed form “Information about the controller and the protection of personal data” – Attachment No. 1,
 - b) Scan of the signed form “Declaration concerning the provision of consent to the processing of personal data and personal image data” – Attachment No. 2,
 - c) Artistic/academic biographical note and/or portfolio,
 - d) Outline of a concept of a six-month scholarship project for cultural activities, related to the subject matter of the 2026 Exercising Modernity Academy (maximum of 3,000 characters with spaces),
 - e) All the above documents should be submitted in English.
- 6) Only individual applications will be accepted.
- 7) We reserve the right to contact selected candidates for the purpose of conducting additional on-line interviews.

3. Additional information

- 1) Those admitted undertake to attend meetings of the 2026 Academy in September 2026 in Berlin; individual contracts will be concluded with participants.
- 2) Classes and workshops of the Academy will be held in English.

- 3) Information about the Exercising Modernity project and previous editions of the Academy can be found at www.exercisingmodernity.com.
- 4) Any questions or concerns should be sent to the address: contact@exercisingmodernity.com.
- 5) The recruitment process will be finalized by 20th of July 2026. The list of selected candidates will be posted on the website of the Pilecki Institute (www.instytutpileckiego.pl), on the project website (www.exercisingmodernity.com), and on the websites of Partners.
- 6) The organizers are not under any obligation to substantiate the decisions of the adjudicating committee. No appeal procedure has been provided for.
- 7) For candidates selected to participate in the project, the present document will constitute an attachment to the contract concluded between any such candidate and the Pilecki Institute in Berlin, and will also constitute the regulations.
- 8) The Competition is not open to graduates of previous editions of the Exercising Modernity Academy.

III. FINANCIAL SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITIES UNDER THE 2026 EXERCISING MODERNITY PROGRAM OF THE PILECKI INSTITUTE IN BERLIN

1. Object of the Competition.

The Object of the Competition is to award at maximum four financial scholarships for cultural activities. A detailed description of the Object of the Competition is included in Point II hereabove.

2. Objectives and types of tasks implemented under the scholarships.

- 1) Scholarships are awarded for the process of creating the concept, which shall include in particular intellectual or conceptual work, research and preliminary research, and the gathering of materials. It is not required to complete or produce any final work or action (for example, print a book or stage a performance) under the scholarship. Products of the scholarship may include:
 - a) an artwork (in a final or draft version) made using all and any available mediums and encompassing all fields of creative practice, in a form which allows its presentation before an audience,
 - b) a concept of an exhibition,
 - c) a scholarly article or a research report,
 - d) a draft of a publication accompanied by summaries of individual sections or chapters,
 - e) documentation concerning a social intervention, together with a description of its objectives and a summary.
- 2) The project will be implemented under the guidance of curators from the Exercising Modernity Program, who will act in consultation with the program teams of partner institutions.
- 3) Scholarship holders are not obliged to remain in Warsaw or Berlin throughout the scholarship period.
- 4) Scholarship holders are obligated to attend substantive consultations (at minimum two consultation sessions) with the participation of people responsible for the scholarship program on the part of the Pilecki Institute in Berlin, on dates set during the scholarship period (dates will be determined jointly by all the parties).
- 5) Scholarship holders are obligated to present the results of their work to a wider audience during an event summarizing the scholarship, at the latest within 3 months of the end of the scholarship implementation period (the exact date, form of presentation of the scholarship

project and venue will be determined jointly by individual scholarship holders and the project supervisor during the final month of implementation of the scholarship).

- 6) Scholarship holders may avail themselves of 12 hours of free consultations with an expert/experts designated thereby (a maximum of 2 persons per scholarship holder), up to a total maximum gross amount of 400 euros for each expert, provided that the financial terms and the terms and conditions of cooperation with the proposed experts will be determined independently by the Pilecki Institute.
- 7) When the scholarship period comes to an end, selected scholarship projects will have an opportunity of obtaining additional financing intended for the production of a scholarship project developed during the scholarship period (for example, in the form of an exhibition, a book, or an artistic work). The works created by scholarship holders will also have an opportunity of being presented at events organized by the Pilecki Institute in Berlin, or by partner institutions of the Pilecki Institute in Berlin. All arrangements in this regard must be made in writing and in full accordance with legally prescribed procedures. Scholarship holders are not entitled to any claims in this regard.
- 8) Scholarship holders will be obligated to inform about the scholarships awarded thereto in publications and presentations resulting from the research conducted within the framework of their respective scholarships, which information shall be accompanied by the following notice: "Projekt zrealizowano w ramach programu stypendialnego Instytutu Pileckiego w Berlinie" ("The project was implemented under a scholarship program of the Pilecki Institute in Berlin").

3. Deadline for the submission of applications.

Applications for scholarships under the Competition are to be sent in between 15 September and 15 October 2026, which deadline is non-extendible.

4. Deadline for adjudication of the Competition. Criteria and procedure.

- 1) The deadline for adjudication of the Competition will be 15 November 2026.
- 2) The Competition committee passes opinion on applications on the basis of the following criteria:
 - a) the significance of the project for commemorative activities and the dissemination of knowledge within the scope defined by the Act of 9 November 2017 on the Witold Pilecki Institute of Solidarity and Valor, including: drawing on the modernist tradition to seek points of contact with contemporaneity and referencing issues of modernity relevant to the selected topical area in relation to the 20th-century history, art and/or culture of Poland and/or Eastern Europe, and also referencing at least one of the thematic blocks that are of key importance for the 2026 edition of the Exercising Modernity Academy (described in Point III.1. hereabove),
 - b) the cultural value of the project,
 - c) originality and innovativeness, attractive forms of presentation, the interdisciplinary nature of the proposed project and the utilization of source materials during implementation of the project, including: conjoinment of artistic and research components – regardless of whether the proposed activity is artistic, curatorial or other in nature, it is important for it to be rooted in research, the current state of knowledge, or the applicant's own exploration of their chosen field (projects may be based on *art as research, practice as research*, etc.).
 - d) the candidate's professionalism and experience in implementing cultural projects,
 - e) the candidate's achievements in his own artistic field, including scholarships, awards and prizes, both domestic and foreign.

- 3) The Director of the Institute awards scholarships in accordance with the principles set forward in the Regulation.
- 4) The Institute is not obligated to substantiate the decisions of the Competition committee or the results of the Competition. No appeal procedure is foreseen.
- 5) Information about the scholarships awarded will be published in the Bulletin of Public Information of the Pilecki Institute and on the websites: www.instytutpileckiego.pl and www.pileckiinstitut.de.
- 6) The person to whom a scholarship is awarded shall be notified of the award in writing within 7 days of that on which the scholarship is awarded.

5. Documents to be attached to the application.

- 1) Applications for scholarships under the Competition are to be sent only via email as a PDF file to the address: apply@exercisingmodernity.com
- 2) Please write the following in the application title: **“Konkurs na stypendia finansowe na działania kulturalne Ćwiczenie Nowoczesności 2026” (“Competition for financial scholarships for cultural activities, Exercising Modernity 2026”)**
- 3) All of the application documents are to be drawn up in English.
- 4) An applicant may submit only one application for a scholarship under the Competition. Competition applications may be submitted on an individual basis only.
- 5) An application must include the following:
 - a. CV and/or portfolio providing the following: name, surname and address of residence of the applicant, telephone number or e-mail address, information about the applicant’s achievements or accomplishments,
 - b. concept of the scholarship undertaking – a description of the cultural project (10,000 to 15,000 characters with spaces), the scholarship holder’s choice of persons (not more than 2) with whom the scholarship holder wishes to consult their preliminary research and artistic research, and an indication of the locations at which they intend to conduct their preliminary research/artistic research, in accordance with the principles set forward in Point III.2.6 hereabove,
 - c. scholarship schedule, which shall include information about planned study tours and preliminary research,
 - d. at least two letters of recommendation from scholarly, research or cultural institutions (domestic or foreign), or private individuals,
 - e. scan of a signed declaration concerning the controller of personal data (Attachment No. 1),
 - f. scan of a signed declaration of consent to the processing of personal data (Attachment No. 2).
- 6) The application must be accompanied by documents supporting the information provided in the application. All materials are to be submitted as a single PDF file.
The recommendations referred to in Point 5) d. hereabove are also to be submitted as originals.

Please notify any questions or concerns to the address: contact@exercisingmodernity.com

INFORMATIONAL NOTE CONCERNING THE CONTROLLER OF PERSONAL DATA

I declare that I have been informed that:

1. The controller of the personal data processed in connection with the recruitment procedure to the Exercising Modernity Academy is the Witold Pilecki Institute of Solidarity and Valor with its seat in Warsaw at 82 Sienna Street, 00-815 Warsaw. The controller of personal data may be contacted under the following address: Instytut Solidarności i Męstwa im. Witolda Pileckiego, ul. Sienna 82, 00-815 Warszawa, and by e-mail at iodo@instytutpileckiego.pl;
2. Personal data shall be processed for the period necessary to perform the tasks set forward in the present recruitment procedure, and stored for the period specified in the internal instruction of the Witold Pilecki Institute of Solidarity and Valor;
3. Personal data shall be processed for the purpose of assessing applications sent in under the recruitment procedure, and in the event that admittance to the Academy is granted – for the purposes of publishing announcements on the website of the Public Information Bureau (Biuro Informacji Publicznej), handling financial and accounting matters, and also in order to determine the existence of, pursue, or organize a defense against claims. Furthermore, personal data shall be processed as part of reporting, in connection with information addressed to scholarly circles, and also for archival purposes;
4. The submission of personal data is a statutory requirement and indispensable for the implementation of the objectives referred to under Point 3;
5. The recipient of personal data may be an entity duly instructed to act by the controller of personal data, such as an entity providing IT services;
6. Persons whom the personal data concern shall be entitled to access their personal data, and also to request the correction or deletion thereof. The submission of a request for the deletion of data shall be tantamount to resignation from the recruitment procedure conducted by the Witold Pilecki Institute of Solidarity and Valor in Berlin;
7. The person whom the personal data concern shall be entitled to lodge a complaint with the President of the (Polish) Personal Data Protection Office in the event that they shall consider that processing infringes the provisions of the general data protection regulation;
8. Personal data shall not be utilized in automated decision-making systems, and specifically not for the purposes of profiling.

place, date

signature

**DECLARATION CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF CONSENT TO THE PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA
AND PERSONAL IMAGE DATA**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that:

1. I consent to the publication of my personal data and information about my scholarly achievements in connection with the present recruitment procedure.
2. I consent to the gratuitous utilization and dissemination of my personal image data, recorded using any technique on any and all data carriers (including in the form of photographs and film documentation), by the Witold Pilecki Institute of Solidarity and Valor with its seat in Warsaw at Sienna Street 82, 00-815 Warsaw.

The present consent is granted free of charge and has no limitations as to the number of utilizations, the period of utilization, or the geographical scope thereof. My personal image data may be utilized for the purposes of the recruitment procedure through various forms of electronic processing, framing and arranging, placed together with the images of other persons, and also supplemented with accompanying texts, whereas film recordings in which I participate may be cut, edited, modified or added to other materials created for purposes specified by the organizer of the recruitment procedure, and also for informational purposes.

The present consent covers all forms of publication, and in particular distribution through the Internet (including on the website of the Witold Pilecki Institute of Solidarity and Valor and on social media portals, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) and inclusion in promotional and informational materials.

3. My personal image cannot be used in any way or in any publication that would be offensive to myself, or otherwise infringe my personal rights.
4. All and any content, including works, photographs and personal data, which is made available in connection with the recruitment procedure, is veracious and accurate, and does not infringe any copyrights or personal rights.
5. Third parties whose personal data has been used in the correspondence sent in by myself have provided their consent to the publication thereof.

place, date

signature