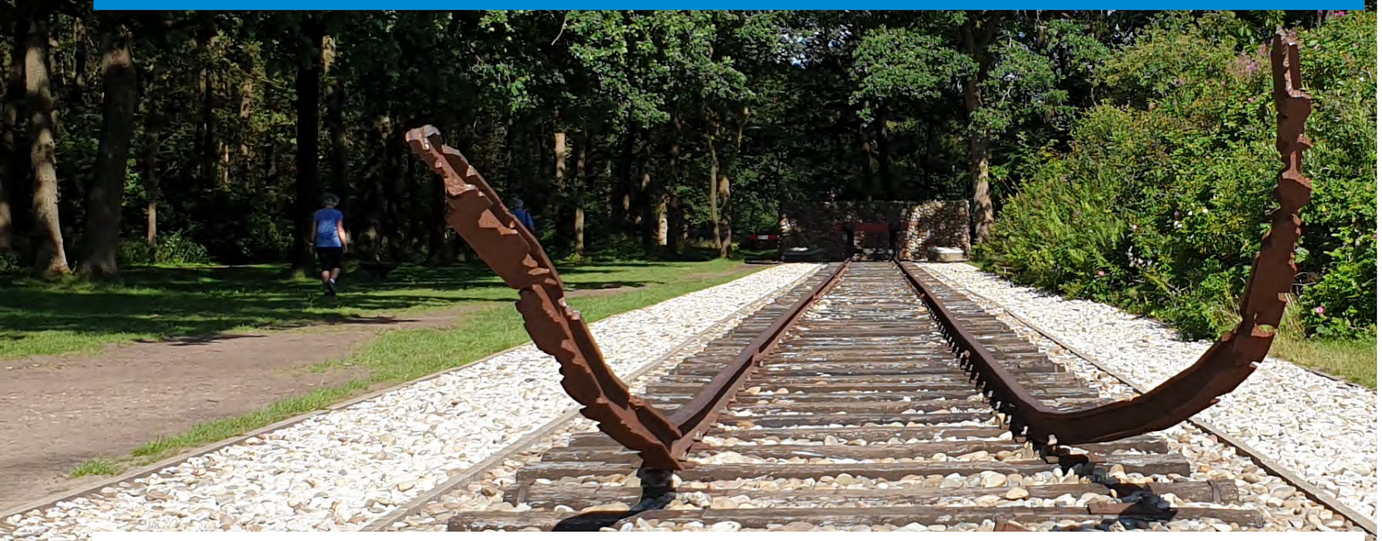
WE CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO THE SYMPOSIUM

DEALING WITH GHOSTS OF THE PAST.

ON THE LIMITS OF UNDERSTANDING THE LEGACY OF MODERN VIOLENCE AND WAR

And the farewell speech of prof. dr. Rob van der Laarse. To honour his retirement.

When: 12 January 2024, 12:30-17:00 CET.
Where: Auditorium and Aula Vrije Universiteit, De Boelelaan 1105, Amsterdam



Please register (for the Symposium only) at:
https://tinyurl.com/2nzbzsay

CLUE+ RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR CULTURE, COGNITION, HISTORY AND HERITAGE

VU VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

For almost 80 years, post-war Europe has been dominated by two world wars, the Cold War, decolonization and, above all, the Holocaust. While the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 gave hope for an escape from what has been called the 'age of extremes', the 'Wild Continent', or simply the 'House of the Dark', the legacy of 9/11 and the 2001 War on Terror has created new fears of a future increasingly similar to the unwanted past. For while the past had changed in European memory from something to be proud of to a 'foreign land' of which one can only be ashamed, every new 'crisis' since then has been interpreted as a return of history. But if the past still permeates 'our' present, while the present simultaneously defines 'our' past, is it not time to ask ourselves the uncomfortable question of how far we are actually removed from 'the era of the camps'? What role do the heritage of the camps and the memory of the Holocaust play in giving meaning and context to historical injustices and to present circumstances that we may have seen wrongly too much as different? One of the remarkable features of war heritage is that it enables visitors to experience a dark past by invoking reflection, beauty and silence. How can we guard against this uncomfortable connection to an unwanted past, other than by erasing the legacy of perpetrators and appropriating that of victims?

Such questions will be addressed in short presentations by speakers from different disciplines and countries who, together with Rob van der Laarse, have been at the forefront of research and musealization of memorial camps over the years.

PROGRAMME

12:15 - 12:30 *Walk-in*
12:30 - 15:00 **Symposium**, Auditorium Vrije Universiteit
15:00 - 15.30 *Refreshments*
15:45 - 17:00 **Farewell speech**. Aula Vrije Universiteit

HERINNERINGSCENTRUM KAMP WESTERBORK

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM Faculty of Humanities

AHM Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture

© Herinneringscentrum Kamp Westerbork: foto Bert Brouwenstijn, CLUE+