

PUBLIC SPEAKER SERIES

“Teaching the Holocaust in contemporary Germany: Challenges of dealing with the past 70 years on”

By Anne Hennings

Tuesday, January 31, 2017, 4:00pm

Location: SRI CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

Building H, National Institute of Education

Instruction language: English

The Documentation Center of Cambodia’s Contemporary Art Gallery is pleased to announce the nineteenth event in its speaker series, **“Teaching the Holocaust in contemporary Germany: Challenges of dealing with the past 70 years on,”** by Anne Hennings. Students as well as the general public are welcome to attend this event.

Increasing attacks on refugee homes, racism, anti-Semitism and right-wing populism on the rise - current news from Germany and Europe awake bad memories and show more than ever the importance of learning from the past. Other than questions of justice and truth which are important in the wake of violent conflict and war crimes, mindsets and attitudes cannot be changed overnight but are a part of a long-term process. Teaching about the past is one way to address the latter. In this regard, the Holocaust has become an integral part of German school curricula including excursions to memorials, concentration camps, museums or talks with survivors. Although political education cannot be imagined without teaching the rise of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, there are still certain challenges to meet. First, even after so many years the question of presenting the truth without traumatizing is still there, particularly since dealing with this topic often causes feelings of guilt and shame. Some critics even go as far as to say it is unjustified to ‘burden’ the young generation who was only born decades after. Second, others argue that the Holocaust, despite its importance, is somewhat ‘overtaught’ and might eventually cause indifference among students. On the other hand, dealing with this dark chapter of German history during schooldays has also facilitated intergenerational dialogue. Engaging with one’s own family history might enable to reveal traumas that have been passed on over generations unknowingly. The benefits of teaching the Holocaust – despite its various challenges – are obvious, not least to keep the ‘never again’ spirit up and challenge racism and anti-Semitism today.

Anne Hennings is currently visiting researcher at the Heinrich Boell Foundation in Phnom Penh and a PhD candidate at the University of Muenster, Germany. Her research focuses on post-conflict societies in Southeast Asia and Africa, and the interplay of natural resources, ex-combatants and conflict transformation. Anne is speaker and co-founder of the research group “Nature-Resources-Conflict.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

MEMORY & JUSTICE

“...a society cannot know itself if it does not have an accurate memory of its own history.”

Men Pechet, Curator

SRI CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

The Documentation Center of Cambodia

t: +855 23 214 009

e: truthmpechet@dccam.org

w: www.dccam.org