

Press release *at the water's edge* in Palanga

Do you remember the shores of the Baltic when the sea was divided by the Iron Curtain?
On 16 to 19 September, artists, documentary filmmakers, administrators and museum representatives will meet in the legendary seaside resort Palanga for a workshop centred around this question. Representing all countries bordering the Baltic Sea, they participate in preparing a travelling exhibition *at the water's edge* – beach life on the shore as a cross-border experience during the Cold War. The Nordic Council of Ministers have granted initial support for the project.

at the water's edge will build on personal narratives from both sides of the Iron Curtain. The aim of the travelling exhibition is to reach local audiences in all of the region's nine countries, to create a border-crossing dialogue based on personal memories and experiences, a meeting located between narrative and space from a period when people were actually unable to meet. Recent developments in the relations between Russia and the EU lend a disturbing topical importance to this project.

The workshop will take place in Antanas Mončys House-Museum in Palanga. During the Soviet period, Palanga was a famous holiday resort marked by strong contrasts. Here the sealed-off Brezhnev villa for party officials was built, and artists like Joseph Brodsky also visited. "But his faith's not enough for a walk on waves", the Russian dissident wrote in his poem *Palanga*. Here the Baltic Sea embodied both border and confinement. Over forty years later, the workshop participants come together in Palanga for an artists' communication project. Points of departure are personal memories of the Baltic – how it used to separate people, but also how fluid the borders between East and West really were.

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Gotland, Sweden, 1960



Palanga, Soviet Lithuania, 1960