

IGOR ZABEL **AWARD FOR** **CULTURE AND** **THEORY 2022**

Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory 2022 **Grant recipient**

Antonina Stebur, curator, art writer, and researcher, Minsk; currently living between Poland and Germany

Jury's statement

The jury has awarded the 2022 Igor Zabel Award Grant to **Antonina Stebur** in recognition of her extraordinary power of resistance, her commitment to decolonize Belarusian art, and her contagious belief – so evident in her texts, lectures, collaborations, and curatorial projects – that art is a practical instrument of political imagination.

Antonina Stebur is one of the most engaged and prolific curators and researchers from the younger generation of Belarusians. She graduated in philosophy from the Belarusian State University in Minsk in 2007 and completed her MA in contemporary visual and cultural studies at the European Humanities University in Vilnius in 2009. In 2019, she attended the Chto Delat School of Engaged Art in Saint Petersburg. She is a co-founder of the #damaudobnayavbytu project dealing with gender discrimination in Belarus, and of Spaika.media, a research group dealing with activist art and political performance. She is also a member of the AGITATSIA research group that gathers researchers connected with post-Soviet history and focuses on contemporary Russian art, in particular actionism and political performance. Her writings have been published in *Partisan*, *Moscow Art Magazine*, *ArtReview*, *ARTMargins*, *Block*, and other periodicals. She recently co-authored *The History of Belarusian Photography* (with Anna Samarskaya, 2020). Stebur has curated numerous exhibitions of contemporary art and photography in Minsk, Moscow, and Kyiv, and was part of the curatorial team for the exhibition *Every Day. Art. Solidarity. Resistance* at Mistetsky Arsenal in Kyiv that addressed protest movements and solidarity networks in Belarus (2021).

Stebur's texts, lectures, and curatorial practice not only reflect her research interest in post-Soviet studies and the mechanisms of state violence, politically engaged art, and feminist art, but are also an engaged way of thinking about the spatial and architectural dimensions of protests and exploring the notion of solidarity or "weak" resistance. Her work could be defined by the term engaged fem-criticism. She works individually but also in groups and collectives. The horizontality of her approach and her solidarity-based way of working are noteworthy. In Belarus, she was involved in protests as a cultural worker and also participated in various resistance actions organized by the IT community, which resulted in her forced departure from Belarus in 2021. She went to Kyiv where she



IGOR ZABEL
AWARD FOR
CULTURE AND
THEORY 2022

cooperated with the Ukrainian art scene on different projects and in particular on the large exhibition *Every Day. Art. Solidarity. Resistance* that presented the art of protests in Belarus through a cross section of contemporary art constructing and manifesting pulsating forms of interaction, resistance, and collectiveness. In exile in Ukraine, Stebur continued her activities, working on texts, exhibitions, and research, but when the war started in Ukraine, she was forced to flee again. She continues to work on an online platform of cultural workers *Antiwarcoalition.art* that resists war, dictatorship, and patriarchal power structures by means of art.

The jury is confident that this grant not only recognizes Stebur's past initiatives, but will also enable her to continue her research, and encourage her insightful writing, curatorial work, and activism in the resistance movement.

2022 jury members

Marta Dziwiałńska, philosopher and curator, Kunstmuseum Bern

Ahmet Öğüt, artist, Berlin/Amsterdam

Tomáš Pospiszl, art historian and curator, Prague