

January 24, 6pm

CEU Auditorium
Quellenstraße 51, Vienna

Blinken OSA Archivum, Visual Studies Platform and Institute for Advanced Studies at CEU cordially invite you to book launch and discussion

In Visible Presence: Soviet Afterlives in Family Photos (MIT Press, 2023)

by **Oksana Sarkisova** (CEU) and **Olga Shevchenko** (Williams College)

An absorbing exploration of Soviet-era family photographs that demonstrates the singular power of the photographic image to command attention, resist closure, and complicate the meaning of the past.

In Visible Presence explores the photographic images' singular power to capture a fleeting moment by approaching them as points of contestation and possibility. Drawing on over a decade of fieldwork and interviews, as well as internet ethnography, media analysis, and case studies, *In Visible Presence* offers a rich account of the role of family photography in creating communities of affect, enabling nostalgic longings, and processing memories of suffering, violence, and hardship. Together these photos evoke youthful aspirations, dashed hopes, and moral compromises, as well as the long legacy of silence that was passed down from grandparents to parents to children. With more than 250 black and white photos, *In Visible Presence* is an astonishing journey into domestic photography, family memory, and the ongoing debate over the meaning of the Soviet past that is as timely and powerful today as it has ever been.

Oksana Sarkisova is Research Fellow at the Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives and cofounder of the Visual Studies Platform at CEU. She is the author of *Screening Soviet Nationalities: Kulturfilms from the Far North to Central Asia* and coeditor of *Past for the Eyes: East European Representations of Communism in Cinema and Museums after 1989*.

Olga Shevchenko is Paul H. Hunn '55 Professor in Social Studies at the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at Williams College. She is the author of *Crisis and the Everyday in Postsocialist Moscow* and the editor of *Double Exposure: Memory and Photography*.

Read a fragment from *In Visible Presence* [here](#).

Moderator and discussant:

Dr. Friedrich Tietjen, Jewish Museum Frankfurt, Head of Photo Collection, Library and Archive



Reception to follow.