



Our

Reframing Memory

Gruesome

edited by Ric Allsopp & Serge von Arx

Cultural

Heritage



Our

Reframing Memory

Gruesome

edited by Ric Allsopp

Cultural

and Serge von Arx

Heritage

Contents



About the cover picture:

'White Line' was a transient intervention in the woodland of Håøya Island representing and commemorating the unknown and unmarked site where six Norwegian resistance fighters were executed and their bodies buried during the Second World War. The horizontal lines painted on the trees (indicating space) are a counterpoint to the verticality of their

trunks (time). Verticals and horizontals align only when viewed from the otherwise invisible camera position – demonstrating how a significant place can be defined by physical absence. By Ingvild Isaksen, Samuel Toro Pérez, Johanna Hélène Sophie Benrath and Anna Eglite. See p.23ff and p.50. Photo: Serge von Arx.

- 9 Preface *Ric Allsopp and Serge von Arx*
- 13 From an interview with *Markéta Fantová*

Introductions

- 17 Prelude: [Reframing Memory](#) *Ric Allsopp*
- 23 The Sensation of Memory *Serge von Arx*
- 42 Post-Memory *Nefeli Kentoni*
- 45 [On Time](#)

Water | Håøya Island

- 49 Three Stories *Serge von Arx*
- 53 The Stories We Tell – Håøya! *B. Kjartan Fønststeli*
- 69 Processing Material *Petros Lappas*
- 70 Hooded Swan *Sierra Casady*
- 73 [On Objects](#)
- 75 Beloved Silence *Julie Olympia Cahannes*
- 79 [On Attention](#)
- 82 To Arrive at a Space as a Stranger *Nefeli Kentoni*

Essays on Water and Dust

87 [On Borders](#)

91 Soul Estuary *Alan Read*

101 Dust, Data and Documentary Architecture *Ines Weizman*

Dust – Nicosia

121 From an interview with *Marina Maleni*

125 Conflicting Materials *Christian Sørhaug*

141 [On Assemblage](#)

144 To Arrive at a Space as a Local *Nefeli Kentoni*

149 [On Memory](#)

151 Never Forget the Memories You Never Lived *Petros Kourtellaris*

154 Missing Persons *Petros Lappas*

157 [On Forgetting](#)

Endings

161 Coda: [Reframing Memory](#) *Ric Allsopp*

166 Workshop participants

169 Contributors

173 Acknowledgements

175 Colophon



Part of the 'Green Line'
('Buffer zone' or 'Dead
Zone') in Nicosia, Cyprus.
Michael Piec/Shutterstock.
See p.125ff

Preface

This book is a collection of writings and images from artists, academics, researchers and student participants that relate to two associated scenographic research projects: *Emergence*, an international and multiyear project (2018-2021), organized by Prague Quadrennial with partner organizations¹, and *Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage* (OGCH) a series of practical research projects under the aegis of the Norwegian Theatre Academy/ Østfold University College (NTA)². OGCH developed from an original workshop on Håøya Island, and was expanded to Nicosia in Cyprus and Riga in Latvia³ within the scope of the *Emergence* partnership and with the generous support of the European Union. Prague Quadrennial describe the overarching *Emergence* project as responding to:

[t]he constantly changing patterns of political and socio-economical currents [which] bring forth situations, philosophical conflicts, and events that make up an identity of each generation and each locality. These moments and locations become written into the memory of locations and generations as markers on the shared map of emotions. Yet, these memories are sometimes in conflict with what is written in official history books endorsed by nations, and it is often these history books that shape new generation's views. It is through memories of past experiences that people interpret current events, and this is a central theme of our project: *Living Heritage/Reframing Memory*.
(See <https://www.emergence.pq.cz/home>)

Emergence reframes European heritage sites as a source of inspiration for scenographic work through workshops, residencies, site-inherent performances, and exhibitions. Participants become witnesses and are invited to interrogate their chosen sites – all of which which carry a complicated, often forgotten history – through a scenographic lens. Sites and history are understood as aspects of a continuously evolving process of becoming, requiring constant re-negotiation.

¹ *Emergence: From shared experience to new creativity. Living Heritage/Reframing Memory* is an international and multiyear project (2018-2021) organized by Prague Quadrennial with seven other partner organizations. 'Using performance, *Emergence* explores the role of local and global memory in shaping formations of cultural understanding and interpreting heritage in different areas across Europe as a tool and means of connecting established professional designers with emerging performance creators to develop strong dramaturgical and interpretative skills in the next generation of creators.' See <https://www.emergence.pq.cz/home>. [See also Interview with Markéta Fantová following].

² *Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage* is a practical research platform initiated by Serge von Arx and B. Kjartan Fønstelien in 2014. It explores the core of scenography and expands its understanding in a series of workshops with students from various

Norwegian and other European art academies and universities. The process of the initial workshops on Håøya is followed by the *Cyprus Theatre Organisation/THOC* and the *New Theatre Institute of Latvia (Latvijas Jauna Teatre Instituts)* who have applied a similar methodology to respective national mythologies and local circumstances, tutored by local artists and overseen by the initiators of the scenography project.

³ The final *Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage* workshop was planned to take place in Riga, the third destination in the triangle Håøya – Nicosia – Riga in 2020. Due to Corona related restrictions, the workshop was reorganized as a research project on the remote development and realization of memorials, with student groups in Latvia, Cyprus and Norway closely collaborating in May 2021. The workshop and its outcomes were unfortunately too late for inclusion in this present book. [Eds]

Correspondingly *Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage* sets out to reveal how history is imprinted into the landscape of such sites and how histories, narratives and mythologies are not always directly accessible by analysing material remains and artifacts. The vague, the blurry and the hidden are often only accessible through other means, and it is the capacity of the arts, especially scenography, to question and to engage with, remember and remind others about our past and the possibilities it holds for our future.

The OGCH workshops began in 2014 on Håøya Island in the Oslofjord as an investigation of the *scenographic deconstruction of national mythologies*. The project focused on three events, which took place on or nearby the island during the First and the Second World Wars. One has been the subject of such intense historical examination that it might be said to have had a disproportionate influence on the formation of national identity. The other two events have received a surprising lack of scrutiny. All three however, relate to the emergence, creation, and perpetuation of national mythologies in a broader context.

The OGCH project continued within the larger EU funded *Emergence* project and was expanded to explore a similar methodology in Cyprus, focusing on the Green Line dividing the Greek from the Turkish enclaves in Nicosia, and the 'Missing Person' project. Participants in the projects⁴ were encouraged to engage with places and their histories somatically and through their senses, and not only through conceptual or critical means. By meeting relevant representatives and researching corresponding records, the participants were able to re-contextualise the conditions that emerged from their sensory and somatic research, and then develop and realise their collaborative artistic works both in, on and with the site. The sensory inquiry is complemented by intellectual studies and analysis, which in turn results in further scenographic manifestations perceivable by the senses, be they fixed or in flux. (See Serge von Arx, 2020: 58)

In addition to the contributions directly concerned with the OGCH projects, the Editors invited supplementary essays from writers and

⁴ The international workshops took place with students of scenography, anthropology, museology, acting, and directing in different combinations, and were led by Serge von Arx, Professor of Scenography at NTA, and the archaeologist B. Kjartan Fønsteli, in

various collaborations with Sabine Harbeke, theatre and film director; Christian Sørhaug, anthropologist; Janne Wiberg, Head of Cultural Heritage Oslo; Marina Maleni, Cyprus Theatre Organisation; and others.

scholars. Alan Read writes here on memory and place, and Ines Weizman on documentary architecture – together complementing and extending the discourse and poetic scope that the scenographic research projects have opened. Ric Allsopp, as an outside editorial witness not involved in the OGCH workshops, has provided an introduction and set of commentaries which reweave the many threads presented in this book and bring together different voices and perspectives from inside and outside the scenographic and sensory territory explored by the project.

We hope that the work that emerges from immersion in the sensory and cognitive approaches to scenography used in Håøya and in Nicosia will contribute to a wider recognition of scenographic thinking as a means of revealing, confronting, deconstructing and reframing histories and memories, as well as the narratives and mythologies that emerge from them. In differing ways, these writings and images on scenography reframe conversations and engagements with memory, remembrance, forgetting, commemoration, and memorials. They engage with the central theme of both the *Emergence* and OGCH projects – living heritage and reframing memory – and present not only perspectives on complex cultural heritages, but also new directions in scenographic thinking.

Ric Allsopp & Serge von Arx, June 2021

Reference

Serge von Arx (2020) in *Håøya: Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage*, 2019, Fredrikstad: NTA/ Østfold University College.

from an interview with Markéta Fantová

Artistic Director, Prague Quadrennial

'*Emergence* awakens curiosity in people about places and situations that have come to pass. That we're looking at history through the lens of scenography is truly unique. It's necessary to promote the idea that scenography today no longer has any boundaries, it's not static. Especially in the *Emergence* project, scenography is about a remarkable experience to be perceived with all the senses.'

extracted from the
Emergence Project website:
[https://www.emergence.pq.cz/
rozhovor](https://www.emergence.pq.cz/rozhovor)

The objectives of the *Emergence* project

Our goal was to arouse interest in our audience and visitors in stories concealed within the collective memory of selected European locations. These locations are connected with complicated moments in history, and books and the press often refuse to speak about them. The project has a degree of socio-political overlap and the potential to address the greater public. When we succeed in uncovering the history of problematic places, naturally it evokes emotion. The emotions hidden in these locations serve as the basis for new scenographies, immersive performances, and installations. Forced evacuations, abandoned buildings ... all bear witness to a story that's both human and political and from which we can draw inspiration for new scenographic, performance, and architectural-urbanistic projects – such as in Kiev or Cyprus, for example. In dance and movement-based performances, for instance, we engage in a deformation of movement in order to make it inconspicuous in dangerous places, like Mariupol.¹

A Russian border guard at
'Checkpoint Hnutove' in
a village near Mariupol,
Ukraine in 2018.
Paparazza/Shutterstock

¹ Mariupol is an industrial and port city on the Sea of Azov in the Donetsk region to the south-east of Ukraine on the Russian border and a site of armed conflict between pro-Russian and pro-Kiev factions in 2014. 'Ukraine, Russia, the DPR, the LPR and the OSCE agreed to a roadmap for an end to

the wider conflict in the Donbas region on 1 October 2019. However, the conflict has not thawed since then and, by late summer 2020, still remained unresolved on multiple levels.' [https://en.wikipedia.org/
wiki/War_in_Donbas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_in_Donbas) [Ed.]

Introductions

What makes the project unique

We use scenography to look inside places with a rich history. We make new findings about that history with spatial-scenographic devices. Today, our understanding of scenographic space extends beyond the theatre to any space that we can transform through performance and dance into a place for sharing stories, emotions, and experiences. All the places we've chosen for our project possess a strong *genius loci* and we work with it. From a practical standpoint, the simplicity of the project lies in the fact that we're the only Czech NGO to receive a grant of this type on this scale.

Generations in true partnership

The project is a well-thought-out combination of participants configured to facilitate the transfer of experiences, knowledge, and inspiration. It encompasses groups of students from partner countries, artists, and also scientists, theorists, political scientists, and curators.² Our goal is to demonstrate that age doesn't matter – inspiration and art bring all generations together. The project is intended for anyone who's not afraid to explore and take part in new and sometimes controversial projects.

Scenography without boundaries

For a number of reasons, mainly to make it possible to describe its territory, scenography resorts to various types of categorization, which may suggest boundaries in places where, in reality, there are none. For example, with scenography, in reality there is no clear division between light and the stage, the stage and a costume, or an actor and an object. Take the costumes worn by an opera chorus, for example, which often become the actual scenography – and how the movement of the chorus can create important scenic changes. In our project, we erase the boundaries between individual scenographic disciplines and make use of situations that, all on their own, can inspire interventions that offer a deeper immersive experience.

² *Emergence* Project Partnership Members (2018-2021)

Coordinator: Prague Quadrennial, Arts and Theatre Institute (ATI), Czech Republic: www.pq.cz
Victoria & Albert Museum, UK: www.vam.ac.uk
IZOLYATSIA, Platform for Cultural Initiatives, Ukraine : www.izolyatsia.org
Instytut Teatralny im. Zbigniewa Raszewskiego, Poland: www.instytut-teatralny.pl
Cyprus Theatre Organisation THOC, Cyprus: www.thoc.org.cy
Norwegian Theatre Academy/Østfold University College, Norway: www.hiof.no
New Theatre Institute of Latvia (Latvijas Jauna Teatra Instituts), Latvia: www.theatre.lv
Associate partner: National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (Weiwuying) Taiwan:
www.npac-weiwuying.org



Prelude

Reframing Memory

Our concern with history is a concern with preformed images already imprinted on our brains, images at which we keep staring while the truth lies elsewhere, away from it all, somewhere as yet undiscovered.

(W. G. Sebald, 2001:72)

The writer and artist John Berger observed that what he did not know when he was very young was that 'nothing can take the past away: the past grows gradually around one, like a placenta for dying.' (1984: 78). Berger's rather disturbing image allows the past as memory to be imagined as a generative nutrient for the afterlife of both individual and social experience. Memory, perceived and framed between the present moment and the futures that it might or might not precipitate, is a form of afterlife. Despite our cultural attempts at memorialisation, that is finding durable holding forms that celebrate, commemorate and identify social and cultural values, memories and memorials are in a continual (if gradual) process of change and adaptation. It is a process that is as subject to the shifts and turns in cultural and social life, as are our embodied and changing experiences of living.¹

How is memory to be reframed? Memories come in different forms and sizes, brief and fleeting, hazy or clear, enduring or fading; memories are complex and diverse, individual and collective; not reducible to a single overarching category; memories form an immaterial clothing and accompaniment to our lives and find material expression in durable memorials, the ubiquitous presence of everyday objects, ephemeral wayside tokens and shrines² or arrive

¹ As an example, the recent global effects of the Black Lives Matter movement and its re-focusing of attention on the cultural and political legacies of colonialism; in the UK, the toppling of the Edward Colston statue (7 June 2020) in Bristol, and ongoing debates around the future of the statue of Cecil Rhodes in Oxford.

² See for example, Ghost Bikes: '... small and somber memorials for bicyclists who are

killed or hit on the street. A bicycle is painted all white and locked to a street sign near the crash site, accompanied by a small plaque. They serve as reminders of the tragedy that took place on an otherwise anonymous street corner, and as quiet statements in support of cyclists' right to safe travel. The first ghost bikes were created in St. Louis, Missouri in 2003.' - <http://www.ghostbikes.org>

A ghost bike memorial for a cyclist killed in SoHo, New York. Juan Aunion /Shutterstock

unannounced on the wings of music, the sound of a voice, the smell of cooking; or, unwanted, impose themselves on all aspects of our daily lives. Memories are not simply fixed images or narratives somehow filed away in our lived experience that replay themselves on demand or as a result of contingent circumstance. Memories have immediate or lingering embodied and sensory affects that change or modify our experience and in doing so are themselves subject to change and transformation. Memory itself is 'vulnerable', 'fragile' and 'subject to the dialectics of remembrance and forgetting' as the historian Pierre Nora has observed. (1996:1-3)

As a contribution to the reframing of memory, this collection of recent writings and images on scenography and cultural heritage gathers around ideas that shift away from set piece statements and move to process-based interventions and dialogues. Scenography is seen as a field of active and fluid transdisciplinary relationships rather than as a set of learned or repeated techniques and pre-defined processes. The interplay of transdisciplinary relationships in the *Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage* (OGCH) project includes strategies drawn from archaeology, social anthropology, performance studies and of course the various forms of articulation, documentation and analysis that are now a part of the 'routine' of artistic research and experience.

There is an affinity here with Rachel Hann's positive critique of an expanded understanding of scenography that exceeds the institutional orthodoxies of theatre as 'additional and illustrative, rather than formative and critical'. She adopts Thea Brejzek's position that the scenographer is 'the author of constructed situations' and 'an agent of interaction and communication'. (Brejzek 2010:112, quoted in Hann (2019: 23) and distinguishes between scenography (as 'crafting') and 'scenographic traits' (as 'orienting') that expand scenography to 'artistic and social scenarios beyond institutional conceptions of theatre.'

Crucially, if scenography happens as an interventional situation, then the orientations of scenographic traits are inclusive of all human and non-human agents that render a place as eventful, attentive. (Hann, 2019:23)

The practice of a sensorially oriented 'mnemonic scenography' as we see in the OGCH project, that attends to the social, material, non-material dynamics of a place (or site) of memory, and in doing so re-focuses or draws the attention of a spectator or wider public to a more mutable and fluid form of memorial or commemoration, would seem to situate itself within Hann's clarification of the scenographic.³

For Serge von Arx scenography is to be understood as an amalgamation of architecture and theatre into a time-based spatial art form, arousing all the senses. It inherently relates to our physical environment, the manifestations, the remnants, and the traces of our cultures, while these are being rearranged, reframed and recontextualised. Scenography is an artistic field in constant dialogue with external agents, and the artistic works that it develops set out to reveal hidden but existing phenomena - materials, narratives, images, and sensations - that form part of the identity of a particular site and its history, rather than the addition and imposition of new and potentially disconnected commemorative or memorial structures.

The installations that emerged from the scenographic process of the OGCH projects, and the contributions to this book from the students and participants involved, give an insight into the sensation of memory that Serge von Arx proposes, as well as to the approach and impact of a 'mnemonic scenography' as a process of the constant re-negotiation and reframing of memory. The 'memory' of OGCH and the stories that it explores is transformed in and through the experiences and scenographic activities of the students. It is here that memory is or can be reframed in ways that might redeem the past and shape the future. The sensation of memory - the sensory aspects of scenography imagined and experienced as a mnemonic system - is also here complemented by the metaphors and materialities of dust and water that move through Ines Weizman's account of documentary architecture and Bauhaus Modernism in the Levant; and Alan Read's memories and exploration of the Thames estuary in the 1970s and 1980s as 'an estuary boy at large'.

In both Norway and Cyprus, the students and participants examined local conditions, first with their senses: what frictions, disruptions and contradictions appear immanent and reveal themselves to careful observers. In this sense, the workshops in Håøya always started with two hours of strict silence. As the participants became involved in their respective investigations, they became more and more a part of the project, living together on the island without electricity and public transport to the mainland, collecting food from the fjord, preparing meals and eating together. This became as much part of

³ Hann advises: 'I attempt to dissuade the reader from understanding notions of scenographic as singular and monolithic. My adoption of scenographics stresses the inherent plurality and multiplicities that sustain a scenographic encounter.'

Consequently, scenographic traits result from a combination of orientating stimuli that exceed strict ontologies of empiricism and complicate the neat separation of theatrical crafts.' (Hann, 2019:24)

the workshop as working through the artistic and conceptual difficulties of the historical topics themselves. The aim of the workshops was a scenographic exploration that would trigger public debates and possible further public inquiry into the stories and events explored, rather than being simply based on well-researched factual foundations. The artistic and scenographic outcomes of the project were to involve all the senses, and reflect the surrounding natural, human, and anthropogenic context they were embedded in. A crucial factor was the scenographic relationship to time, in the sense of how the work unfolds and how it decays through the effects of natural and/or human forces, as Serge von Arx's discusses in his introduction, 'The Sensation of Memory' following.



Preparing food and eating together were essential elements of mutually-reliant island life on Håøya.



Serge von Arx

The Sensation of Memory

The eyes of Håøya

In spring 2013 Kjartan Fønstelién and I took our children and the whole of their 7th-grade school class for an adventure weekend to the island of Håøya in the Oslo Fjord. Forty kilometers south of Oslo, Håøya can be reached in summer by ferry from the capital and so it is a popular place for open-air activities. It is a beautiful, quiet spot permitting visitors to indulge in a clearly framed adventure in nature. Its forests are large enough to be 'lost' in without danger, as the coastline is always within a short walk. A stroll through the woods, which cover the majority of the island, will slow down any visitor who is attentive to their sensory surroundings: traces of reinforced concrete foundations lurk in the moss-covered grounds, hidden buildings in industrial appearance conjure up imaginative scenarios of this place's history like scars in the wilderness.

These sensations were the starting point for the *Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage* (OGCH) project workshops Kjartan Fønstelién and I developed during conversations around the bonfire on Håøya when all the children were asleep. Kjartan is an archeologist. He grew up on the mainland nearby, knows the island's multifaceted past – its earliest Stone Age settlements, and materials traces from the Bronze Age to Mediaeval times. He told me about the activities on the island during World War I, when Alfred Nobel drew up plans for a dynamite production plant, consisting of arrays of small wooden houses with brick walls in between them – to avert a cataclysm if one production unit accidentally exploded. The lack of a volunteer workforce for the armaments industry, Kjartan told me, led to the enforced labour of women sex workers from Oslo, who were rounded up police in the capital. No history book nor police record he knew of, mentioned the atrocities inflicted on them. Much better remembered was the night of 9th April 1940, when the German battle cruiser *Blücher* was sunk by two torpedoes shot from Oscarsborg fortress, adjacent to Håøya, with the loss of over eight hundred men, fragments of

'I want to see the world';
Suvi Autio, Bibi Kahk, Kerli
Kore, Laura Maria Kyllikki,
Patrik Wasilewska pay
homage to the memory of
the sailors who lost their
lives in the sinking of the
Blücher. See p.39 for the
place of graffiti in the Håøya
project.

whose bodies continued to be washed up on Håøya into the 1950s. And during the German occupation of Norway, he said, resistance fighters were taken to the island to be shot.

The story of these troubling events, of which there is little or no trace on Håøya Island, shaped the background for our participation in the wider EU *Emergence* research project. It focused on the capacity of memorials to trigger discussions around neglected, ignored or biased perceptions of the past, with the hope of stimulating further historical investigation. It also permitted an enquiry into fundamental questions about memorials as places of remembrance that connect past, present and future, and into the sensitivity necessary when dealing with fragments of Norway's complex modern history.

Researching the topology and material aspects of memorials is part of the education Scenography students and artists at the Norwegian Theatre Academy (NTA), which participated with other educational partners in the EU *Emergence* project. Scenography at NTA is understood as an artistic method that builds on the reading of a site and all the constituent factors associated with its social and historical development. A memorial provides a paradigm assembled from a thorough and careful choice of means. It operates on inherently fragile ground, since it persists in the form of a simulacrum of past events.¹ Because the complexity of their interdependence, all physical components of a memorial require careful study and they need to be unpicked and researched individually in order to be fully understood. The relationships between the entities that define the whole are likely to be divergent, even frictional or disruptive. It is out of these tensions that personal experiences evolve and new meanings arise.

More so than in other forms of scenography, each component of a memorial – the choice of materials and their combination (if materialized at all), the shape, colour, patina, attached symbols or textual elements – holds meaning within the whole (unless the creator specifically rejects the relevance of certain aspects). Such topological coherence gains value by choosing clearly articulated constituents that can shape a flexible, unstable or changeable network of meanings. The memorial as artwork unfolds

¹ 'When the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a plethora of myths of origin and of signs of reality - a plethora of truth, of secondary objectivity, and authenticity.

Escalation of the true, of lived experience, resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared.' (Baudrillard, 1988: 170)

within such an open framework, not simply as a result of the controlled composition of its individual parts.

Background

Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage consisted of a series of yearly workshops (2017-2021) with participants from various fields. Its fundamental aim was the scenographic deconstruction of national mythologies. The workshops started under distinct conditions: students were asked to develop a memorial that upturned standard practice by which certain scientific and/or historical facts lead to political debate that results in a decision to erect a commemorative monument. I am purposely using the verb 'to erect' since the vast majority of memorials are built with strong and durable materials and rise priapically from the ground. This process reflects a narrative rooted in the acts and collisions of society, rather than opening a discussion or establishing a discourse. But unless a memorial is designed to maintain awareness or to initiate change, it will tend to serve an opposite purpose – merely the manifestation of political, economic power. The underpinning agenda is societal and, when it involves public space, innately political. The physical, spatial quality of a memorial operates as a gathering place, bringing people together to reflect on past events, as Martin Heidegger described in 'The Thing' (2001: 172).

Memorials have the agency to accrue meaning and to focus political power. In respect to the human condition, people associated with a memorial's context rely on the relevance of the site, its physical circumstances, and its sensory qualities as a mnemonic catalyst, whereas the absence of a material, haptic faculty can emphasize the momentum of a place of commemoration. I am referring here to the mnemonic in contrast to the commemorative, to emphasize the revelation of the *hidden* or of hidden aspects in relation to past moments or occurrences with relevance for today. The hidden in this context often relates to 'consciously forgotten', ignored or even usurped memory. A memorial's sensory properties act more subliminally as a key agency that questions or reveals the hidden.

Dialogue as commemoration

To understand better the nature of memorials, we examined the concept of spatial narratives – the intention behind an abstract physical dramaturgy substantiated in space. Such narratives may be represented in a

linear sequence, as in music, most theatre or other live art forms, as well as in architecture; for example a predefined progression through rooms – most notably the architecture of the Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy in Italy.² Architecture, on the other hand, as a spatial composition of interconnected or interpenetrating rooms, also allows a multitude of inner passages and trajectories. Within the realm of performative architecture, in contrast to purely functional architecture, these non-linear dramaturgies also evoke abstract spatial narratives.

To elaborate on the fundamentals of my understanding of scenography, I consider two of its principles are axiomatic. Firstly, scenography exists, or rather emerges (since beginnings and endings are difficult to delineate) only as a dialogue with a point of reference. This reference can be a text, music, a person, a theme – virtually anything. Secondly, scenography, like all theatre, architecture and town planning, only comes into existence when in contact with an audience, a visitor or a passerby. These two dialogues are at the heart of scenography and distinguish it from other self-contained, autonomous art forms that manifest an inner dialogue with their respective artist(s). Hence, it is difficult to identify scenography as an autonomous work. In its core, scenography rejects distinct authorship, as much as it does commodification. We might easily separate the visual appearance of a stage-set from the other parts of a *mise-en-scène*, but the OGCH research relates more to an ecology of scenography, conceived of as an inner organizing principle or agency weaving all the constituents of a work to a whole. While scenography strictly deals with activation and accentuation in space, it contains the temporal component of all architecture: the development of space and our movement within it. Actually, I understand scenography as the time-based factor active in all architecture. In relation to my thoughts above, scenography is intrinsically a non-linear narrative.

Scenography therefore cannot exist alone. It is revealed in the way it brings all other threads of a creation into a cohesion – not by appropriating those other components, but by strengthening them mutually to produce a synergy. It can do so in many different ways, by aligning, contradicting, disrupting, resisting, uniting various parts; it is

² The nine Sacri Monti (Sacred Mountains) of northern Italy are groups of chapels and other architectural features created between the late 15th and 17th centuries and dedicated to different aspects of the Christian faith. See <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1068/>

crucial however, to develop these relationships as a network that frames uncontrolled openness and stipulates a potentiality. In theatre, the artwork comes into existence in our imagination; what we witness is merely a catalyst for our fantasy. In architecture the consolidation of that potential allows for the yet unknown to happen in an empty or negative space. We define precisely the dimensions and materials for a building, whose quality eventually results from the empty spaces within. The architect designs the shell not as a sculpture (although this is often a distortion in contemporary architecture) but as the jar whose essence lies in its emptiness, as Heidegger poetically exemplified in ‘The Thing’ (2001:165-68). In the performing arts, such emptiness is metaphorically created in the constructive tensions between text, movement, sound, light and space. These tensions trigger the spectator’s own imagination and reflections, which become a part of the live artwork, while also making the performance a part of their individual experience. Scenography’s dependence on a (first) dialogue with a reference point is always connected to its (second) dialogue with an audience.

In light of those preconditions, scenography is fundamentally a collective art form. It shares with architecture the same inner force of delineating an emptiness, where something yet not fully known can happen. That principle also adheres to the design of public space or urban planning at a larger scale. The innumerable facets of public space and the varying degrees of its ‘publicness’, the complexity in its arrangement in our built or otherwise physically evoked environment, are the playground of scenography and its non-linear narrative capacity. Weaving threads inherent to politics, economy, the legal system, culture, nature into a continuously changing topography relates strongly to how scenography functions. In the way it activates, dismantles and involves itself in public space, scenography is inevitably a political discipline.

Memorials are very specific symbolic and societal concentrations of spatial narratives. I consider them to be fundamental triggers of cultural storytelling, which always employs temporal directions as a political tool: the stories relate to the past, to history, to something important that has taken place, concurrent with its relevance to the future. Here the trajectory becomes more convoluted: certain memorials serve a clear propagandist purpose, while others help to create or sustain a community by a spatial identification. A memorial has societal agency. Memorials can be erected or destroyed to manifest power. Their removal, dislocation or

relocation can be either hegemonic suppression or democratic intervention. Our OGCH project focused on memorials as a democratic tool, as sensory agencies promoting assembly and debate.

As much as a memorial refers to a past event or sequence of events on a time axis, we often assume that it represents a moment frozen in time. The vast majority of official memorials are built out of the most durable of materials: stone and metal. In our workshop series we questioned that aspect of memorials: if a memorial's aim should be to trigger and sustain dialogue, should it not remain flexible, almost organic, to relate to constantly changing social, technical and political conditions? Should it not be adaptable to maintain relevance? Furthermore, should the memorial not become part of a debate in order to permeate it, and therefore remain sensitive and receptive to an ongoing discourse?

In contrast to rigid and dead materials as a manifestation, we examined memorials as live activations. This not only allowed students freedom to choose a form, but it also encouraged them to explore new scenographic territory. And we discussed how a material's fragility and vulnerability posed a risk as well as providing a quality. We focused on memorials as carriers of memory or agencies for remembering rather than for consolidating and materializing memory – which appeared to us to be an absurd endeavour. When approaching the topic of memorials from the perspective of the artist, we substantiated Arthur Miller's dictum: 'the job of the artist lies in reminding society what it has chosen to forget' (Bigsby, 2004: 112). In order to activate not only forgotten but also much more suppressed past events and memories, as Miller implies, memorials aim at a reciprocity with and an awareness of current developments and tendencies in order to interrogate them and, eventually, to alter their course. Commemoration and its manifestations should initiate critical debate. The memorial itself may never be alive, but it will trigger activity. Only if we consider history to be the science of the present will memorials remain in their true state of persistent instability, so enabling us to understand current conditions better and to address future demands.

The politics of shape

Any memorial is political. Its purpose is to create societal agency, triggering reflection and manifesting identity. How these qualities manifest themselves raises questions of ductility – how well they can cope with stress and change – since any community, from small groups to



'The concrete body parts over six resistance guys' – Alvhilde Mejlænder, Malin Hansine Nordahl, Petros Lappas and Max Woelky captured the imprint of human faces in concrete blocks and set them in the ground at various points on Håøya Island.



entire nations, is undergoing change incessantly. In contrast to a building's practical purpose, for example, should a memorial whose function solely consists in its relatedness or connection to a particular group of people not also be configured in a way that allows for perpetual change? This stands in clear contrast to the majority of what we conceive of as memorials: as solid embodiments, guaranteeing long lasting presence, withstanding natural as well as human stress. It may help to differentiate between memorials commonly agreed on as representations of glory and achievement, and those with a distinct emphasis on actions against minorities, ranging from localized atrocities to wholesale genocide. Recent actions related to the Black Lives Matters movement directed against monuments that celebrate Western imperialist figures demonstrate that these two categories merge under scrutiny. There can be no doubt that memorials to the Holocaust or other genocides, for example, must be non-partisan because they are required to remind us always of what must never happen again in any social or political circumstance. Hence, in the context of altering social contingencies, a memorial should be able to adjust to social and cultural developments to remain effective.

Timescales

Memorials are manifestations of a specific moment, but referring to a different moment, duration or recurrence. The intention of the designer(s) will always be to interact with the strict linearity of the timeline, by creating loops into the past. Past moments are reflected upon in the present and how these past fragments are woven into the present is of essential importance. It represents the inner configuration of a memorial, which subsequently gets materialized, takes shape and/or gains an appearance. The value of a memorial to trigger or continue a discourse, which was key to our workshop series, arises from the level of openness and the complexity of the relationship between that topography and those interwoven time threads. If they are identical, in the sense that shape is mere decoration, then they become situated between superficial euphemism and political propaganda.

Its relation to temporal anchors as well as its ductility – its ability to adapt to extrinsic changes – must be a key feature of a memorial. Thus, a multitude of temporal agencies is at play. I will differentiate between three major categories or scales of time development in respect to human apprehension and cognition. They can be seen as analogous to the three

'Levelled Trees' Traces of the Håøya dynamite factory are still visible among the island forests. Jordis Fellmann, Petros Kourtellaris, Maximilian Mandery and Ingrid Kvalvik Sørensen cut the trees growing inside the rectangle of this ruined foundation to the level of the remaining walls and painted the sawn trunks with white wax.

scales of measuring space in the history of painting – portrait, still life and landscape – that the theatre, performance and spatial design artist Robert Wilson regards as the structural backbone in his works. I see an equivalent means of measurement in the way we perceive time – as *real time*, *phenomenological time*, and *cognitive time*.

Real time is any kind of change that we can perceive at the very moment it happens; phenomenological time is change that we can perceive but only as a sequence of observations, specific moments rendering change visible; cognitive time relates solely to theoretical conclusions when witnessing a situation and relating it with rational knowledge and logical deduction. Here the speed of alteration is too slow for any significant change to be observed. To introduce scales of time seems crucial to me when approaching a morphology of memorials. While most visual or performing arts works can be readily associated with one of these scales, most memorials reject a distinct temporal identification. Rather they activate all three scales in parallel, intentionally or not. In contrast to a painting, the simultaneous development of different timescales is a *conditio sine qua non* in respect to memorials.

- 1 **Real time** relates to the way we largely subsist in the moment and take bodily action, even if the purpose of muscular movement serves a more complex, strategic goal. This is the only timescale we can act within, independent of the consequences of the action. One could say, we are trapped in this timescale; it is physical time, beyond our control. Any form of live art develops within this timescale, which can be called ‘live time’. It not only relates to our live actions, but also to our sensory perception, which is limited to apprehension in real time. Robert Wilson often emphasizes with regard to his theatre work that ‘time has no concept’ (Wilson, 1997: 79-95).
- 2 **Phenomenological time** builds on the sensory perception of ‘real time’ phenomena and processes them, intellectually or somatically. Walking through a forest in wintertime and taking the same stroll in spring reveals an obvious change of the surrounding nature. Additionally, though never truly identical, the repetitive pattern establishes a normality. I am concerned more with the slight changes and disruptions – for example modifications due to climate change (which will bridge to cognitive time). These natural principles are highly relevant

in our discussion about memorials, since any mnemonic statement inevitably take place within such an ecology. No work of scenography or architecture can start from zero. If it tries to do so, the ignorance of surrounding conditions will become a feature of its spatial expression. Phenomenological time is the platform most memorials work on.

- 3 **Cognitive time**, which I would frame as scientific time, relates to phenomena we process by logical conclusion and deduction. A change of geological substance is an example of this category. Its relevance for our reflection on memorials is the use of enduring materials and the notion of ‘eternity’, or at least of slow decay, which often plays a part in manifesting commemoration, especially in terms of the exertion of power and political representation. In one sense, many memorials relate to cognitive time, which often seems to be used to hide actual intentions.

These timescales intertwine. In most cases, all three are at play: real time facilitates the sensory experience of the memorial as a manifestation; phenomenological time contextualizes the immediacy of our perception, and cognitive time enables us to construct what we design.

Study and awareness of these factors are essential to the creation of a memorial, because it will never refer only to something that occurred in past. It will be woven into a complex network of spatial, social, cultural, political, economic, and technological preconditions, as well as their history. The term ‘site specific’ is thus as much a redundant phrase, as it is an expression of a biased hegemonic agenda. With any creation in public space, we have to start from the very place and its very conditions. Hence, disruptive design does not necessarily require us to destroy or build something, it can also operate in sheer ignorance of the prevailing conditions. Moreover, any spatial occupation is an irreversible political act.

These reflections on temporal contextualization are fundamental to memorial design and should be undertaken at the outset. In light of the elaborations above, the need for a certain level of flexibility in the scenographic definition of a temporal framework is key to the societal value of a memorial. How the commemorated past event is foregrounded, even if silently, and how that bridge from the past to the present is constructed to reach into the future, is the main mnemonic intervention to be reckoned with. The visual (or acoustic or haptic) language of a

memorial is important; it is like the face of a memory. If this face feels alienating from the very beginning, it will struggle to be effective as societal agency. If it is part of the present, not necessarily as a disguise, but as a dynamic that blends with the now, its impact will be much stronger. Similar to a performance act in a theatre or museum, which, by being defined and secluded within a socially agreed framing of exceptions, loses its power to surprise, intervene and disrupt, so a memorial must also be conceived within its surroundings. A core approach to mnemonic scenography might be one that brings ethical awareness to the exploitation of all the prevailing conditions.

As I have described, memorials can be read as *time machines*. As human beings, we do not have the ability to influence time, by changing, pausing or accelerating it. Our everyday conception of time is that of continuous, unstoppable progression. Our only means of gaining putative control of time is by defining space. Our only way to experience time, is through the alteration of materials and through movement.

Alteration primarily involves intrinsic and extrinsic decay, including organic change and metamorphosis. Movement relates to the very essence of scenography and architecture as time-based or ‘activating’ artforms. The architect shapes our experience of time – how fast and in what state we move from one place to another – and thereby there is a theatrical momentum in the way we experience somatic dislocation. That journey, long or short, builds a narrative, which can be abstract or relate to a story. However, the architectural experience of unfolding space is a non-linear narrative, and thereby always personal. In scenography, this non-linear architectural narrative is interwoven with other narratives, which link the work to its anchoring point. In the case of memorials, the anchor is the past event being commemorated. If these interwoven threads are identical, there is no room for the spectators’ imagination and interpretation, and the memorial becomes merely dogmatic. But the interplay, the open field of tension between those narrative threads, activates and engages the public and makes the memorial an agency of discourse. Similar to the Nordic social concept of the ‘*ting*’, from which the noun ‘thing’ originates, the spatial definition become a place of gathering, bringing people together in (political) dialogue.

The ownership of memory

The observations above lead to a fundamental question: who owns a memorial? Might ownership indicate a bias in societal purpose? The question echoes an even more fundamental one: who owns memory? Aside from everybody’s individual memories, which are less relevant here, any group or communal memory represents a starting point for mnemonic dissemination. Ownership of a memorial inherently must be diverse, the authorship of its development should be dissolved in a way that guarantees communal identification.

In becoming a work of architecture a memorial exists outside ordinary categories of good, beautiful or ugly. In my understanding, there is no good nor bad architecture; any work of architecture is inherently part of a distinct set of complex conditions of economy, politics, science, technology and culture. The various factors at play can hardly ever be subject to only one power. Building projects can be devised and executed by a single authority, such as Baron Hausmann’s reconstruction of Paris in the mid-19th century,³ and the schemes of many dictators since. Architecture, however, gains its identity solely from the life unfolding within it, which is to varying degrees uncontrollable (even in conditions of tyranny, guerrilla and underground activity emerges). This is important in relation to memorials that operate as architectural creations of mere representation, demonstration or manifestation. My objective and the aim of the OGCH workshops has been to define an architecture beyond those categories: architecture as non-representation, non-demonstration and non-manifestation.

Seen in the context I have described, all architecture is mnemonic; buildings provide society with its principal mnemonic factors and agencies. They combine the primary human need for shelter and protection with the purpose of human activity in a material expression of aesthetics – by applying decorative elements or by demonstrating an engineering art. Construction and functionality become a building’s face.⁴ The time it takes to realize a work and its duration once built – residential buildings normally last between 70 and 100 years – make architecture the

³ Baron Georges-Eugène Hausmann was responsible for the urban renewal and renovation of Paris under Emperor Napoléon III between 1854-1870.

⁴ Referring to the key principles of architecture – *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas* (*strength*, *utility*, and *beauty*) – established as a paradigm by Vitruvius (Marcus Vitruvius Pollio) in his ten volume treatise ‘*De Architectura*’.

main visible trace of human activity on the planet.⁵ Unlike most natural organisms, a building begins to decay at the very moment it is complete; the life of a building is defined by its ability to change its physical state and to decompose. The temporal overlapping which results from the longevity of architectural creations marks the organic development of (inorganic) building mass. Within the compound of a built structure and its overlapping and interpenetrating temporal layers, buildings, in their varying condition and state of decay or renewal, represent the mnemonic potential of any community. Especially in the congested shape of cities, in an entangled form, they contain the full potential of remembrance. The art of creating a memorial, much more effectively and economically than ordinary building, should involve recontextualizing or reframing aspects of the existing fabric of human traces. The work method then consists in disrupting and reweaving parts of that fabric, instead of imposing new structures.

However much it serves to activate reflection and debate, any memorial in a public space is an intrusion. How can one balance the first factor, which contains a certain degree of irritation, with the second, which risks becoming an annoyance – without nullifying the effort? The memorials we developed during the OGCH project had to be intriguing to a level that they raised awareness, but they also needed an element of playfulness. Nudge theory explores ways of influencing public behaviour not through restrictions or enforcement but by adjusting instinctive routines to trigger compliance, largely unconsciously (see Thaler, 2009). While nudging can be understood as a form of manipulation – and the memorial should refrain from subliminal effects or risks contradicting its own principles of openness – a certain attraction can result from not explicitly stating or illustrating intended meanings but from hinting at them. An example of this approach was demonstrated by the OGCH student group working on Håøya Island in the first workshop in 2014 with the story of the sinking of the German warship *Blücher*.

In order to give tangible form to the scale of the human loss, students collected the equivalent number of tree branches and laid them out on a lawn on the island. The arrangement of these 800 branches exposed the

⁵ The average age of buildings, based on statistics according to Renato Piffaretti, Head of Real Estate Switzerland at Swiss Life Asset Managers. See <https://bit.ly/3xsGXD8>

Mareike Dobewall, Camilla Hägebarth, and Freya Sif Hestnes assemble 800 branches – the figure corresponding to one estimate of the number of German soldiers who died in the Oslofjord on 9th April 1940. See *overleaf*





paradox between the single lives of a human beings and its abstract number as a cohort of soldiers. The students painted all the branches white and numbered them from one to eight hundred, eventually casting them into the fjord and letting them disperse. Branches floated ashore at many different coastlines; for some as strange objects, as a local newspaper article proved, for others, mostly of older generations, as clear signifiers. [See B.Kjarten Fønststelién pp. 52-67 following]

Finally, and consistent with the above, I would advocate that a memorial should indicate a moment of anti-climax. Narration in a public space invokes a concept of theatricality in architecture: I prefer the term *dramaturgy*. Dramaturgy can be described as the composition of a narrative over time. And once again this composition can, but does not have to be, linear. A memorial in a public space creates a new dynamic in the continuum of time which we perceive when moving across a space. In Western theatre since the 19th century we have become accustomed to performance as a temporal unit, starting with the lights going off in the audience and finishing with the lights being turned on again.⁶ This sensation of performance is affected and influenced by our apprehension prior to entering the theatre – the streets we have passed, the people we have met, the climate we have sensed. This is still more the case, in terms of memorials within public space – where they are located and how they are manifest. Any memorial inevitably is co-defined by its temporal and spatial relations to its surroundings. The narratives the memorial becomes a part of, are only to a small degree controllable by its authors. Therefore, most memorials tend to represent points of climax in the urban narrative. In order to achieve a synergy with its context, the memorial should avoid dominating those uncontrollable external factors and rather use them to strengthen itself.

Another student group, discussing the same topic of the *Blücher* asked 18 and 19-year-olds at the Videregående, the local high school, what dreams they had for their lives, and to write them on the streets at favourite places in the city of Drøbak on the mainland near Håøya Island. The students blended quotes in Norwegian from the local school with German ones from the German-Norwegian school in Oslo. The texts,

The students painted all 800 branches white, marked them with numbers from 1 to 800 – one for each lost soul – and, as an act of commemoration, cast them into the Oslofjord above *Blücher* wreck site, just as the early morning ColorLine ferry connecting Kiel and Oslo, was passing.

⁶ Karl Friedrich Schinkel and later Richard Wagner shifted the audience's gaze away from the spectacle of society itself to the actual events on stage.

many of them lighthearted, created discussions of different levels, and the use of the two languages invoked the reference of the project, especially among an older generation. In our series of workshops we explored the concept of a memorial as an activation and an agency. We aimed to involve the wider public in whom the memorial would eventually come alive. In the context of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's work on 'what meaning cannot convey' (2004), commemoration in architectural terms relates to the idea of an 'atmosphere' consisting of a field of interrelating sensory agents. Its nature and purpose dwell in ambiguity and in its power to keep captivating. Two students activated the 'Mølla', one of the few remaining buildings of the dynamite production plant, by discovering the individual sonic character of the myriad of glass pieces in its large, divided windows. Their work consisted of a concert, making the building sound, so emphasizing the cruelty of that place by transforming its materialized leftovers into an ephemeral eerie experience. The very lack of a clear definition lies at the heart of a memorial's vitality, which in essence is an accurately defined absence.

References

- Baudrillard, Jean (1988) 'Simulacre and Simulations' in *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* ed. Mark Poster, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp.166-184
- Bigsby, C.W.E (2004) *Modern American Drama 1945-2000* Cambridge: CUP
- Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich (2004) *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey*, Stanford: Stanford University Press
- Heidegger, Martin (2001 [1950]) 'The Thing' in *Poetry, Language, Thought* New York: Harperperennial, pp. 163-187
- Thaler, Richard H. & Cass R. Sunstein (2009) *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness*, Penguin Books
- Vitruvius (1998 [1914]) *The Ten Books of Architecture* [De Architectura c. 30-15BCE] trans. Morris Hicky Morgan New York: Dover Publications
- Wilson, Robert (1997) 'Time Has No Concept' in *Theaterschrift* 12, pp.79-95

Johanna Dahlbäck and Mulenga Mwansa 'sampled' the sonic differences between window panes in the 'Mølla', the last intact dynamite production building on Håøya, transforming it into a musical instrument. They also 'painted' graffiti on the wall with moss - creating an artwork that emerged only months later, by which time the space had been turned back into a storeroom.



Nefeli Kentoni

Post-Memory

To reflect –
 on the past,
on what passed.

Carefully selecting memories – memory fails.
 To apologize about forgetting.

To attempt to remember –
 to start from both starts
 – to re-assemble membranes.

First —
 to arrive at a space as a stranger: Håøya
 to arrive at a place as a local: Lefkosia

Second —
 to forget every other space
 to forget every other thing
 to arrive pure
 to be remade without
 the relation of the rest of the world.
 (Impossible)

Third —
 to remake the rest of the world.
 (Probable)
 New histories.
 (Oxymoron)
 National mythologies
 written onto the space,
 onto my place.

Sustained. Stained.
 Both covered.
 Uncover.
Forget.
 Re-learn.
 Stage a scene.
Remember.
 Stage a memory
 a post-memory
 a scene.

Stage a memorial for the forgotten.

To reflect
 on the forgotten,
 on what was chosen to be forgotten.

To remember.

On Time

Writing on presence and the production of time in performance Jon Erikson (2012:82-99) draws on a theory of time first proposed by St. Augustine¹ and developed by Paul Ricoeur (1984) which understands time standing in a psychological relation to the three domains of temporality: the past constituted by memory, the present by attention and the future by expectation.

This tripartite form that our consciousness takes is our sole relation to time. But Ricoeur points out a paradox about the tripartite division: while each psychological element relates to past, present, or future, they are all only experienced in the present – but *as* the past, present, or future.’ (Erickson, 2012:82)

Here the implication is that our experience of time and of memory is mutable and dependent on present circumstance and context. Serge von Arx also argues for a tripartite understanding of time as change: real time (change in the present moment), phenomenological time (the perception of visible change) and cognitive time (change perceived in relation to logical conclusion or deduction). In his essay ‘The Sensation of Memory’ he develops a relationship between these ‘scales’ of time in scenography and the design of memorials arguing that the value of memorial to promote or continue discourse arises from the complexity and openness of the relationship between the topology of a memorial – the way fragments of the past are interwoven into the present; and its topography – the detail and forms of the site or place that it occupies.

The issue of time and the continuity that memory provides is picked up in the epigraph of the recent *Lapham’s Quarterly* issue on ‘Memory’ (2020: 1): ‘The event is past; the memory remains. – Ovid, 8’

While I am not able to find the exact reference for this attribution, my research takes me to Barbara W. Boyd’s article on materiality and memory in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (completed between 3-8 CE). Boyd observes that

A fishing boat hijacked by Libyan traffickers, on which more than 1,000 African migrants died in 2015, is returned to its home port of Augusta, Sicily, after being controversially exhibited by the Icelandic artist Christoph Büchel at the 2019 Venice Biennale. *Barca Nostra* – as Büchel’s monument to the Mediterranean migration crisis was called – was roundly condemned and ranked by ArtNet News as among the worst artworks of the year. Alessio Tricani/Shutterstock

¹ St. Augustine, *Confessions* quoted in Giannachi et al., (2012)



aetiology – the investigation or attribution of causation, often expressed in terms of historical or mythical explanation – is ‘by its nature a form of mnemonic device: it both highlights the enormous gulf separating past and present and ensures temporal and cultural continuity. The aetiological narrative thus establishes its subject as a sign of permanence in an otherwise constantly changing landscape.’ (Boyd, 2020:1) She notes that the ‘nature of such memorials or monuments marks them as signs of permanence in an otherwise constantly changing landscape, and through their presence they function as what Pierre Nora has called ‘sites of memory,’ *lieux de memoire*. (Boyd, 2020: 1)

Serge von Arx's view of the process of scenography in the design of memorials moves away from a focus on the single object to the active inter-relationships and interplay between objects, memory, time and site. Memorials generate an experience of place – rethought as a ‘democratic tool’, as a ‘sensory agency for gathering and debate’ – perhaps echoing a classical idea of ‘polis’² as manifested in the ‘Missing Persons’ installation described by Christian Sørhaug and Nefeli Kentoni and situated in the local Agora or community centre.

Such ‘sites of memory’ allow us to reflect on and reframe the past. In a further reflection on the passage of time and memory the writer David Farrier, in his recent *Footprints: In Search of Future Fossils* (2020), explores the impact (material and geological) of contemporary objects as the fossil record of human civilisation in the shadow of climate change on the deep future. He exhorts us to ‘examine our present, and ourselves, by the eerie light cast by the onrushing future’ and makes a much-needed case for the role of the arts in a poetics and narrative of the Anthropocene:

It's an account of what will survive of us, and for that we need poets as much as we need palaeontologists. With stories we can see the world as it is and as it might be; art can help us imagine how close we are to the extraordinarily distant future. (Farrier, 2020: 23-24)

² See, for a contemporary example, Ferrini & Riaz (dir.) (2008) ‘Polis is This’. As Serge von Arx points out in his essay ‘The physical, spatial quality of a memorial operates as a ‘ting’, as a gathering place, convening people to reflect on past events.

Water | Håøya Island



Serge von Arx

Håøya Island: Three Stories

The small island of Håøya is situated in the Oslofjord, 26km south of Oslo. It shows traces of settlements from the Middle Stone Age and Bronze Age, through the Mediaeval period until the present. In summer, local people go there by ferry for recreation, but during the long winter months and even in spring, the island can only be reached by private boats. The absence of electricity and running water, and Håøya's remoteness in raw nature make it a relatively wild and untouched environment, even today. But a complex and dark history is inscribed into its landscape. Some anthropogenic traces reveal themselves to the curious visitor; others remain hidden in the memory of the elders on the nearby mainland.

During several workshops organized on Håøya between 2014 and 2019 we explored three stories from the island's history which are barely known, not sufficiently revealed or have been appropriated and mythologised. Little written documentation exists relating to two of them, and so they provided the background for a primarily sensory site-related inquiry. All three provided the context for our scenographic explorations and our reflections on national mythologies – how they emerge and how they are sustained. Each workshop dealt with the fundamental question of how we investigate our past and how contemporary society and culture receive and respond to such stories – each of which to some extent hides or conceals a 'gruesome cultural heritage' behind a veil of euphemism or suppression.

Blücher and the abstraction of the enemy

On the night of 9th April 1940, the German heavy cruiser *Blücher* was sunk by two torpedoes launched from the Oscarsborg fortress, adjacent to Håøya. This gave rise to a belief, with respect to Norway's situation in the Second World War, that the resulting delay in the Wehrmacht's occupation of Oslo allowed the Norwegian Royal Family to escape to England, from where they were able to play a significant symbolic role

'Ladder', part of *Ifigenia*
Avraam, Rachel
Dagnall, Toms Jansons,
Lea-Anna Niedermann,
Johannes Schmidt and
Benedicte Wedervang's
restorative memorial to
the men who died in the
sinking of the German
heavy cruiser, *Blücher*.

supporting the Norwegian resistance movement. The place in the Oslofjord where the wreck of the *Blücher* still lies marks the site where many soldiers died, among them many teenagers – fragments of whose corpses were still being washed ashore in the 1950s. Nothing in the immediate surroundings commemorates the dead. The necessary sensitivity when dealing with this fragment of Norwegian history raises fundamental questions with respect to a memorial as a place of remembrance.

Sex workers and forced labour

After the relocation of the dynamite production plant in 1916, and due to the lack of volunteer labour, the police rounded up sex workers in Oslo and forced them to choose between prison or work in the dynamite factory. Aside from some personal anecdote from people in the surrounding villages, a police note and a few newspaper reports, very little is known about the women who ended up in forced labour in Norway during the First World War. History books ignore this scar on the national identity. The research of the OGCH workshops was presented to local, regional and national political representatives, as well as to the press, resulting in two articles being published in newspapers, print and digital, which revealed and remembered the neglected destinies of those Norwegian women.

Legends of war in the resistance

There is much evidence of military activity on Håøya during the last hundred and fifty years. Between 1940-45, the island was used by the Gestapo as an execution site for fighters and members of the Norwegian resistance. After the war, as a punishment for their political involvement with the German occupying forces, Norwegian national-socialist collaborators were forced to dig up most of the corpses and organize proper funerals for them. Six graves on the island still remain mysterious and have never been identified. There is clear evidence that six resistance fighters had tried to escape from Norway on a captured ship when they were seized by the Gestapo and sent to Håøya to be executed. It is unclear why their remains have not yet been found.



A drone photograph of the remains of one of the Håøya island dynamite production plant buildings.

B. Kjartan Fønstelien (trans. – Lars Traaholt Vågenes)

The Stories We Tell – Håøya!

‘Everything is a story’ (Frances Hodgson Burnett, *A Little Princess* 1905)

This essay addresses the starting points of the *Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage* (OGCH) project, considering the material testimonies, archaeology, narratives, and traces of the landscape of Håøya, in addition to the national myths that have emerged from historical events on the island.

Håøya, an island in the heart of the Oslofjord, near the small idyllic town of Drøbak. Twice a day, one of the world’s largest car ferries, the Kiel ferry, passes by. The particular conditions of the seabed make the southbound ferry push enormous amounts of seawater into shallow and narrow waters. On the east side of the island, just south of the narrowest place, Dragsundet, you notice the ferry long before you see it. The sea is washed many metres inland. The Kiel ferry is 223.75 metres long and 35.4 metres wide. It plunges 6.8 metres into the water. The German cruiser *Blücher* was 208 metres long, 21.3 metres wide and plunged 7.95 metres into the water. It was about fifteen metres shorter than the Kiel ferries. And one of the largest warships of the time.

The name Håøya means ‘high island’, a name that is found on many islands throughout the country and in other Scandinavian countries and areas: for example, in the Orkney Islands, the ‘high island’ of Hoy. The owner of the northern part of Håøya, the Oslo Municipality, is currently expanding facilities for the growing recreational boat fleet. The old buildings on Håøya and the remains of the island’s history are deteriorating due to lack of maintenance and usage. At the same time, a crown of wealth symbols emerges around the island every weekend and holiday. Large white yachts appear in the sea, in the bays and by the piers. The boats and the owner are only bothered by the waves of the Kiel ferry. Beyond that, the island appears as a manicured holiday paradise. The island’s vegetation retreats year after year in favour of lawns, stainless steel grills, gravel paths and toilets supplied with electricity from solar cells.

German mariners in the Oslofjord escaping from the sinking wreck of the battle cruiser *Blücher*. The warship had been built in 1936 in defiance of the Treaty of Versailles and was named after Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher, the Prussian victor of the Battle of Waterloo. Wikipedia /Creative Commons



The island's history dates to the Middle Stone Age (Mesolithic). There are some loose finds from lithic tool production and some well-known settlements that can be over seven thousand years old. It seems that there have been permanent settlements here since the Bronze Age, through older and younger Iron Ages and from the Middle Ages until the end of the 20th century. The name Dragsundet comes from the fact that boats have been towed over land on the site since the Viking and Middle Ages. This was done to save time and challenges associated with sailing around in bad weather. 'Dragsund' or 'Drageid' are common names around the entire Norwegian coast. The two oldest houses on the island are over 320 years old and belonged to one of several farms on the island. The youngest houses are less than a year old and there are now public toilets built by the Oslo municipality. In the post-war years, Håøya was the island of the Conservative Party's youth organization just as the island of Utøya is the equivalent for the Labour Party.¹ In late autumn, winter and early spring humans are a rare sight. On the other hand, it is not uncommon to encounter deer. In the spring and early summer sea eagles, ospreys, and several other birds, nest on the island. In the surrounding sea there are lots of lobster, sea urchins, fish, and varieties of mussels.

Hints of conflict in the shadow of missing sources

'Was ihr den Geist der Zeiten heißt, Das ist im Grund der Herren eigner Geist, In dem die Zeiten sich bespiegeln. (Goethe, Johann Wolfgang: *Faust: Eine Tragödie*. Tübingen, 1808)

Faust points out to Wagner that history is fundamentally a mirror image of the time in which it was written by a contemporary narrator.

The fortress of Oscarsborg is located on the islands of Northern and Southern Kaholmen southeast of Håøya, and named after the Swedish-Norwegian King Oscar the First (1799-1859) who visited the fortress in 1855. Next to the Royal Palace in Oslo, the Norwegian Government in Exile in London (1940-45) and the WWII Norwegian Resistance organization Milorg,² the Oscarsborg Fortress is the most important monument to the part that Norway played in World War II. The first

¹ The island of Utøya in the Tyri Fjord, Viken was the scene the terrorist attack by Anders Brevik on 22 July 2011 in which 67 members of the Labour Youth League summer camp were killed.

² Milorg is an abbreviation of 'militær organisasjon' the main Norwegian resistance movement during World War II.

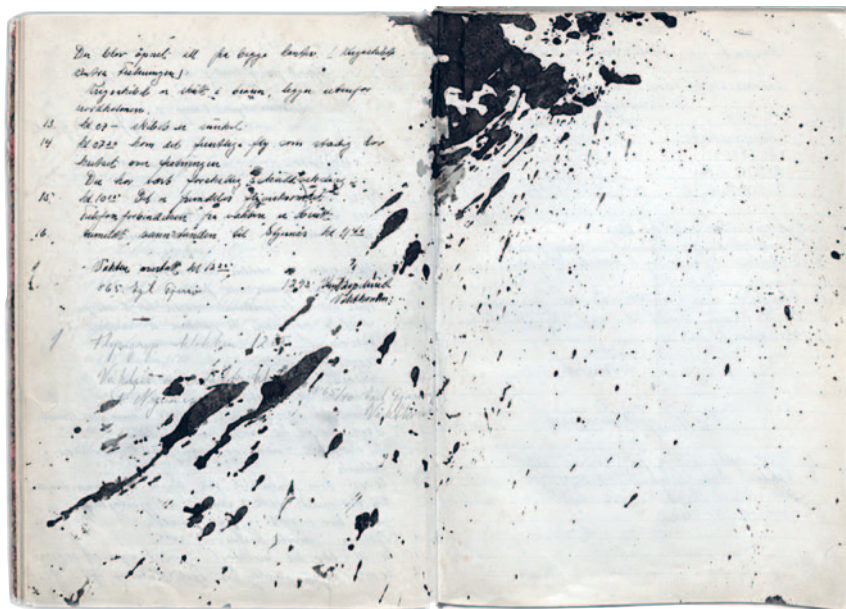
cannons had been placed on the southernmost of the islands in 1644. Among the last three shots fired from the heavy 280mm cannons installed in 1891, were two shots early in the morning of 9th April, 1940. The shots hit the cruiser *Blücher* which sailed further into the fjord and past the fortress. There it was struck by torpedoes from the Fortress' torpedo battery on Northern Kalholmen which led to it sinking shortly after. The wreckage is lying sixty metres down, just south of Askholmene.

On 7th April 2014, the third and last shot was fired during the filming of the movie *The King's Choice* (dir. Erik Poppe, 2016). The film is about the escape of King Håkon the Seventh (1872-1957) from Oslo in April 1940. Oscarsborg, the King, with the Crown Prince and the Government's escape on April 9, 1940 and the Norwegian resistance movement Milorg are inextricably linked to the Norwegian narrative of WWII. An important part of this story is also the cannons' names and manufacturer. The two 280mm cannons that were fired at the *Blücher* on the morning of 9th April, were produced by the German company Friedrich Krupp AG in 1891 and were given the Jewish names 'Moses' and 'Aaron'.³

In addition to the cannons' country of origin and name, the short dialogue between Colonel Birger Eriksen who was in command that morning, and a private soldier is the most well-known part of the story. The iconic conversation that took place just before 04:21 on 9th April 1940 is remembered as, 'Shall we shoot with live ammunition, commander?' 'We sure as hell shall!'

I could hear the shot in April 2014, which was only gunpowder, eight kilometres northwest of the fortress. People within a mile of Oscarborg would have heard the noise of war all morning and beyond the day of 9th April 1940. The entertainment company Perfect Escape has been involved in developing an 'escape room' game based on the events. They advertise it this way: '*Sinking Blücher* is known as Norway's most authentic Escape Room! The game is developed in collaboration with the Defence Museum at Oscarsborg, the island in the Oslo Fjord where the historically crucial drama took place. Now you can play this room in Oslo!' You can play *Sinking Blücher* at the Oscarsborg Hotel and Spa, which now occupies a part of the buildings at Oscarsborg Fortress. Ironically, you can also play the crazy inventor at Perfect Escape: '*The Mad Inventor*. The year is 2047

³ On the history of fortifications and armaments at Oscarborg – see www.nortfort.ru/oscarsborg/index_e.html



RAFA-4479 Ministry of Defence, Oscarsborg Fortress. Series Fa, archive piece 1, Watch Journal 27th March-10th April, 1940. It shows some of the last lines in the fortress's logbook before the invading German forces took control.



Young Conservatives' national camp on Håøya 1951. The house in the picture is Mølla. Skappel, Wilhelm/Fjellanger Widerøe A/S. Digital Museum.

and the world population's IQ has been drastically reduced! As the last remnant of reasonably intelligent humans, your mission is to save humanity from complete idiocy by completing the Mad Inventor's Machine in time!'

A protected cultural monument.

On 16th June 2016, the wreck of the *Blücher* was protected as a cultural monument. The National Heritage Board wrote about the decision:

The cruiser *Blücher* sank on 9 April 1940 at Askholmene in Drøbaksundet. The wreck of *Blücher* is now protected, to secure the shipwreck as a war memorial and grave monument. This is the first time a shipwreck from World War II has been granted protected status in Norway. The remains of the heavy cruiser *Blücher* have great symbolic significance in recent Norwegian history. The sinking of *Blücher* on April 9, 1940 was a military historic achievement and important for the fight against German Nazism. The purpose of protecting *Blücher* is to safeguard cultural-historical values, protect scientific interests, and secure the shipwreck as a war memorial and the last resting place of the dead. The protection includes the wreck itself and a zone of 100 metres around the wreck. The protection clarifies the law around diving activity around the wreck. It is a challenge that objects are removed from or near the wreck, including objects from soldiers. Therefore, diving activity will now be strictly regulated, and it will not be allowed to dive the wreck without permission from the Norwegian Maritime Museum. (The National Heritage Board, 16 June 2016)

The dead

Those who died in and around the *Blücher* on 9th April suffered very different fates. Anette Marie Hansen, born in 1885, was killed by shrapnel while standing in her kitchen in Drøbak. Olaus Anette Nyhus was working at the Reenskaug Hotel in the centre of Drøbak. She was killed as she fled the hotel. It is not clear what caused her death. A man fell down a staircase in Akershusveien 2 in Drøbak; he was dead by the time he was found some time later. (*Akershus Amtidstidende*, 8th April 2014). The German soldiers and sailors died in varying numbers – the literature and online sources range in their estimates from 650 to 1,200. The dead bodies that did not go down with the ship, burn up or sink, were brought to Oslo in several stages. In the absence of a separate cemetery for fallen soldiers in the beginning of the war, they were initially buried at Vestre Gravlund in Oslo – many of them in mass graves. (Syvertsen, 2006: 19) There may

have been about 330 people from the sinking of the *Blücher*. In May 1940, an honorary cemetery was established at Ekeberg in the southeast area of Oslo. The dead German soldiers who had already been buried were exhumed and transported to this cemetery. During the war years, this cemetery was of great interest and was visited by the Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels and the leader of the SS, Heinrich Himmler. The honorary cemetery had around 3,000 graves when the war ended. After the war, Nazi symbols were removed from the site; the graves were left in peace and are said to have been cared for by Germans living in Oslo. In 1952, all the graves were reopened and transported to the newly established Memorial Grove in Oslo-Alfaset⁴. The establishment of the Memorial Grove was decided in 1950 and two years after in 1952 Oslo hosted the Winter Olympics. Today, only parts of the stairs and walls around the Ekeberg cemetery are preserved. Damien Hirst's statue *Anatomy of an Angel* (2008) stands by the monumental staircase⁵.

The living

Those who survived the sinking came ashore on the mainland east of Askholmene. Much of the information about the survivors is related to myths and urban legends. People whose parents and grandparents were fishermen and ran forestry and ice cutting on Håøya have said that many were rescued by locals. However, others were said to have been pushed back into the icy water. The fishermen must also have found the remains of the dead in places where the sea currents would have collected them. These occurrences took place until the 1950s. Survivors who gathered on Askholmene stayed there for about a day and a half. They left their wet clothes to dry on the rocks. In addition, the soldiers made several inscriptions on boulders and large stones on the island. Among them: 'Was um gottes willen haben wir getan?' [For God's sake what have we done?]

One of the stories told about the German survivors, perhaps the only story that has endured, is about a young soldier who landed on the mainland. He escaped into the cabin areas north of Drøbak, a place he had visited with his parents as a child a few years earlier. He found the cabin of the family they had visited. He broke in, took off his wet cold

⁴ See <https://www.ww2cemeteries.com/nor-oslo-alfaset-german-war-cemetery.html> ⁵ For background to Damien Hirst's *Anatomy of an Angel* see www.damienhirst.com/anatomy-of-an-angel; <https://ekebergparken.com/en/kunst/anatomy-angel>



Damien Hirst's marble sculpture 'Anatomy of an Angel' (2008) in Oslo's Ekeberg Sculpture Park. The classically posed figure is based on Alfred Boucher's 'L'Hirondelle' (1920). Barnabas Davoti/Shutterstock.

uniform and found warm clothes in the cabin. Before leaving the place, he neatly folded his uniform and left it there. Then he cleaned up after himself. He left a note in which he apologized for the burglary and theft and fled east towards Sweden. He is said to have stayed there until the war was over. He then travelled to Norway and returned the clothes he had stolen.

Memorials to the dead of the *Blücher*

Apart from the war cemetery on Alfaset, there are no memorials to the fallen from the *Blücher*. This is an agreement between the German and Norwegian states. The Memorial Grove on Alfaset makes no references to one of the largest number of deaths from a ship in war. In addition, there have been few civilian shipwrecks with larger numbers of casualties. However, two of the ship's anchors were retrieved from the wreck when it was being emptied of large amounts of oil in 1990. One of the anchors is in a park in Drøbak; the other on Aker Brygge in Oslo. Aker Brygge is Oslo's most important place for commerce and a popular destination for visitors. It is also where you will find the most expensive apartments in Norway.

Oil is still leaking from the wreck and most people in the region associate the *Blücher* with the oil spill. The odour that accompanies this is often called 'Blücherlukta', the stink of *Blücher*. The Oscarborg fortress today houses a museum and hotel with a spa. A large opera performance is staged inside the courtyard every summer. The place is frequently visited in the summer. Outdoor tours usually start at a little yellow house east of the island right next to where the boat from Drøbak docks. At the so-called 'Hønsehuset' – the Hen House.

The myth of humanism in mercantile Norway

'You are a story – I am a story.'
(Frances Hodgson Burnett, *A Little Princess*, 1905)

On 6th December 1915, Sam Eyde, one of the men behind the invention of electrolysis, founded Birkeland/Eydeprosessen, A/S Haaøen factories. The Birkeland/ Eyde process extracts nitrogen from the air which is the basis for modern fertilizer production. In addition, nitrogen is one of the most important constituents of several types of explosives. Eyde established the Haaøen factories together with shipowner A. F. Klaveness,

Thomas Fearnley Jr., H. Wilhelmsen and G. Jebsen. The factory was based on the facility at Engene on the mainland to the west side of Håøya. (Magnus, 1965: 134). There is still both civilian and military production of explosives at Engene. The reason for the establishment of an additional factory on Håøya was, among other things, the great demand for weapons because of the ongoing war in Europe. Despite Norway's neutrality, large quantities of weapons were produced for export. Quite soon after the establishment, between sixty and seventy buildings were erected on the northern part of Håøya. Today, there are about twenty buildings left from the factory.

The history of weapons production on Håøya is filled with myths and stories transmitted from generation to generation. Among the very few places where the factory is described is the Norwegian Explosives Industry's anniversary book from 1965 and a simultaneous newspaper article in the newspaper *Social-Demokraten* published on 25th September 1916. Now the newspaper is called *Dagsavisen*. *Social-Demokraten* was owned and controlled by the Norwegian Labour Party.

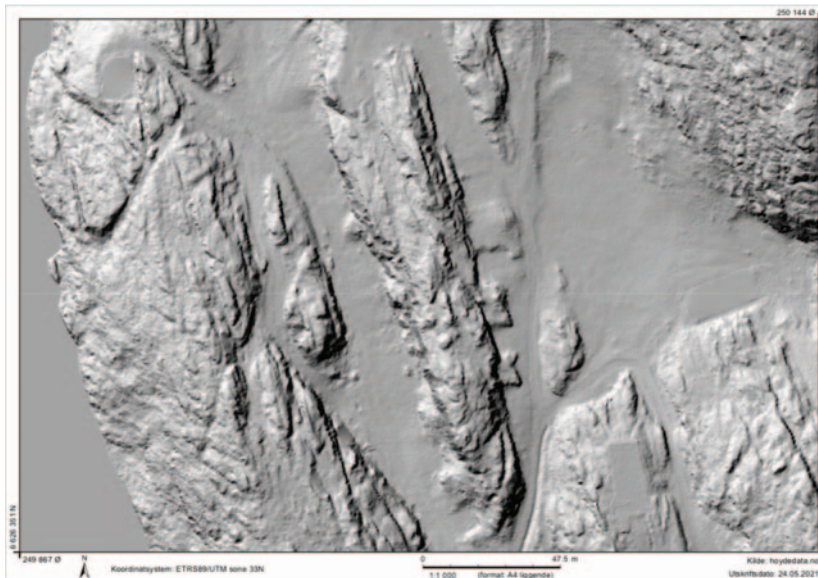
The factory consists of two departments. One for hand grenades and one for cartridges and underground mines. Each department consists of 8-10 small houses, each located in its own small valley, separated by a small, wooded hill. Between each of the houses, barriers have been erected to prevent a possible explosion from spreading from house to house. (*Social Demokraten*, Monday, September 25, 1916.)

The story comes from an anonymous source and describes the workers, their working conditions, the products, the constructions, and the factory landscape. We have been able to compare the source's stories with the archaeological traces in the landscape. The two valleys with the ramparts and the production cells are there. Not just on the map from the factory era, but in today's landscape. In addition, there is a description of the workforce:

At the factory are now employed approximately 60 female workers and 12-15 males. At full operation, the factory is supposed to employ approximately 200 workers. The majority of the female workers are young girls from the age of 14-15 and up. Of these young girls, there are already several, who are attacked by eczema. The substance (TNT) attacks the skin, which turns completely yellow. Your hands become full of sores from the drug. These turn into eczema.



Map of the Håøya dynamite factory in 1916. The two rows of buildings to the west of the area are the buildings described as '8-10 small houses, each located in a small valley, separated by a small wooded hill'. (Buildings marked in red have disappeared). Reproduced with the permission from Frogn municipality.



Laser scanning of the same area showing the remaining footprints of the production buildings.

Almost fifty years later, we find the female workers again in the Norwegian Explosives Industry's anniversary book:

As a result of the war, there was full employment everywhere, and it was difficult to find workers, both for the construction operations at Haaøen and for the expanded production at Engene. It is stated that the police in Christiania [Oslo] gathered flocks of street girls and expedited beyond, many came directly from the National Prison for Women. This was no easy workforce to keep track of, but they were good at working, and it is claimed that the work has never been more cheerful at the factory. (Norsk Sprængstoffindustri A/S, Jubileumsskrift 1965: 134).

Here it appears that most of those who worked there were sex workers from the capital who were sent to the factory by the police. This type of forced labour was not uncommon among prisoners and some groups in Norway at this time. Most often, such measures were justified by the Non-attached Members Act of 31st May 1900. The main reason for the law was not the fight against the sale of sex, but the possibility for Romany travellers (known as 'Taters' in Norwegian) to live without permanent residence. Nevertheless, according to PION (Prostitutes' Interest Organization in Norway), sex workers were sent out of the cities for various types of forced labour based on the legislation. There are interviews with women who took part in such work and described it as about as meaningless as the 'rolling fog' that appears in the south-west of Norway where they were sent to work as agricultural labourers.

On Håøya, there are remains of the buildings that are described in *Social-Demokraten*, which shows that the description of the physical conditions is remarkably accurate.

The National Prison for Women was located at Storgata 33 in Oslo. The place has also functioned as a penitentiary in Oslo and is most often known as the Penitentiary. The buildings have been demolished. However, you can see the last remnants of the building behind the bar in the restaurant 'Tukthuset mat og vinhus' – The Penitentiary Food and Winehouse .

So far in the project, no further work has been done with archive investigations related to the women and the other workers at the factory. The Social Democrat describes the conditions for the women in the factory as very bad. There was little water on the island. They received little or no treatment for injuries due to the handling of chemicals. Living conditions were very poor. Safety equipment related to the treatment of

chemicals did not exist. One of the reasons why a factory was established in a hurry on Håøya must have been that people on the mainland refused to work under such dangerous conditions. The population of Sætre, where the mainland plant still produces explosives, refused to work at the factory. The reason for this must have been that there were many work accidents there. It is said that the men were 'tired of picking up their mutilated wives and daughters' at the factory.

Such a large concentration of sex workers on an island has naturally given rise to stories over time. The narrative about the women is filled with stories about the sale of sex, abuse, childbirth and so on. It is said that men in the area visited the island during the period and that there was brothel activity on the small farm which is located to the southwest of Håøya. Furthermore, the girls from the factory must have been sent to the Oscarborg fortress to serve soldiers and officers there in the 'Hønsehuset' – the Henhouse – on the fortress. The factory was closed in 1918 at the end of the First World War though it is difficult to see any justification for this. There are explanations that there was not enough water and that the demand for the products disappeared in addition to an explosion at the plant which made it unprofitable to resume production.

During the period the factory existed, there was an enormous growth in industry in Norway much of it based around rapid development in hydropower production. Norway was neutral in the First World War that ravaged the continent. The term 'working time' is linked to the period. There was a great demand for some goods and several people earned unimaginable sums through speculation. In particular, there was a great deal of risk and opportunity for great gains in shipping due to the war.

Until 1905, Norway was in a union with Sweden. At the turn of the century, the country established itself as a cultural nation with key artists, technological development, and a modern democracy. The first of the Nobel Peace Prizes was awarded in 1901. In 1917 it was awarded the Red Cross. Alfred Nobel himself had been involved in developing the factory type where production was divided into small cells so that any explosions or fires would not spread in the building mass.

After production at A/S Haaøen factories ceased in 1918, the area was closed to visitors since the factory area was still full of dangerous chemicals and explosives. The entire northern part of the island was bought by the municipality of Oslo in 1937. In 1939 it reopened to the public but closed again in the spring of 1940. In the 1950s the Young

Conservatives arranged their summer camps there. After the war and until the 1980s, there was a traffic ban on the southern part of the island due to the activity of the military.

There is a landfill site on the west of Håøya where there are many tubular steel beds. These are found and spread throughout the northern part of Håøya. These may well originate from the factory sites where as many as ten barracks were built for accommodation. The foundations of these are still clearly visible.

Of the buildings left behind by the factory, the so-called Mølla is the most obvious industrial monument. Mølla is a large brick building. It has a lightweight roof construction and large windows due to the danger of explosions. In other words, not all the windows are there for the employees. (See p.41 above.)

The lost ones

'It is not down on any map; true places never are.' (Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick or, The Whale* 1851.)

In 2012, I was responsible for the registration of archaeological cultural monuments in Akershus county. By virtue of this, I was invited out to Håøya on a Saturday early in the summer. The author Helge Gert Simonsen was on the trip. He had just published the book *The Hijacking: the Icebreaker Isbjørn and the Evacuation of Svalbard*.⁶ In addition, there was a representative from the military, the Frogn municipality and a niece of one of the hijackers of the icebreaker Isbjørn. However, the largest part of the group accounted for approximately 25 men equipped with metal detectors. The purpose of the trip was to find the graves of Halvor Sverre Rødaas, Johan Henry Olsen, Bjarne Sevald Langseth, Sverre Helmersen, Ernst Thor Hekkelstrand and Karl Eugen Engen who were executed by German soldiers on 2nd November 1941. The execution could have taken place on Håøya. Sometime before, the men sentenced to death had hijacked the boat *Isbjørn* on Svalbard to sail to Iceland and then join the Norwegian forces. They were intercepted and arrested by the Germans, and they ended up as death row inmates at Akershus Fortress. From there and until their deaths, their movements are relatively uncertain. On the morning of 2nd November, they were accompanied by

⁶ See <https://svalbardposten.no/norway-s-last-search-for-war-graves/19.4841>



A page from an album page owned by Knut Falla showing photographs of the excavation of the graves at the courthouse on Håøya.

the German field chaplain Paul Kaiser on board a small steamboat. According to Kaiser, the boat took approximately an hour and a half before docking at a messy beach. The six men were led up from the beach and through the forest to a clearing. Six graves had been prepared there. The men were executed. Lime was sprinkled over the dead bodies before they were covered with earth. It was common to sprinkle lime over dead prisoners during the war as doing so enables the tissues to dissolve faster. Something that will hide traces of torture.

When the engine was stopped, the men jerked. They knew that their last hour had come. We prayed Our Father and went up. We went left into the forest, until we came to a clearing where the execution was to take place. They were brought forward one by one but could not see each other. (Paul Kaiser in Simonsen, 2012)

Paul Kaiser wrote these things in a letter to a Norwegian priest after the war. In addition, he was at one point captured on the Eastern Front. During questioning by Russian forces, he told them about the murders of the six Norwegians. During the trip on Håøya in 2012, it emerged that the men probably considered themselves Communists or on the left of politics. Recently, the relationship between the Communist resistance movement in Norway, the London Government in exile and Milorg has been in focus. The efforts of the Left during the war have largely been under-communicated.

The first monument to the Left-wing resistance movement during the war that was set up in Norway stands in front of the main railway station in Oslo. It is in memory of the railway workers' struggle for resistance. It was erected on 1st May 2015. The monument was and still is disputed. It has received strong criticism for its lack of aesthetics. The next monument to be erected over the Left-wing effort was unveiled at Mjøndalen station on 7th October 2016. It commemorates the so called Osvald group's blasting of a troop train of German soldiers south of Mjøndalen on 7th October 1943. The sabotage operation was heavily criticized by Milorg and the Norwegian Government in London. On several occasions, the monument in Mjøndalen has been tagged with a swastika. Only when the municipality removed the term Communist from the text was the monument allowed to stand in peace.

The trip to Håøya in the summer of 2012 was associated with the expectations of the niece of a hijacker who was part of the delegation.

After several attempts to find the executed men, she had high hopes that the graves of the dead would be found. However, neither then, nor in later attempts have the dead bodies been found. Archaeologists from Akershus County Municipality, together with the Armed Forces and NIKU (Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research) have made several attempts to find them. Several archaeological methods have been used, such as excavators and georadar. There are many opinions and traditions associated with where the place of execution is. Residents on the mainland say the shots could be heard on land. There are reports that a blue light has been observed where they lie, and that horses have refused to cross the graves.

The site of execution on Håøya

The vast majority of those executed during the war were exhumed shortly after the capitulation, something that was also done on Håøya in 1949. Kåre Iversen Hafstad and Paul Winnemoeller were executed south of the island on 25th February 1942 as were Olaf Andersen, Charles Jakobsen and Alexander Dugan Ugland on 16th March 1942. It was mainly collaborators and traitors who exhumed the dead who were then usually transported to their home cemeteries. The work was considered an additional punishment. Today the site of execution is marked with a stone, a cross and a plaque with the names of all twelve who were executed on Håøya during the war. There are still visible traces of the excavation at the site.

References

- Magnus, Morten H. (1965) *Norsk Sprængstoffindustri Jubileumskrift*.
- Simonsen, Helge Gert (2012) *Kapringen: Isbryteren 'Isbjørn' og evakueringen Svalbard* – Oslo: Spartacus Forlag. [The Hijacking: the Icebreaker Isbjørn and the Evacuation of Svalbard]
- Syvertsen, Bjørn H. (2006) 'Den Tyske Krigskirkegården på Alfaset', *Grorudalens Historielag Årbok*

Petros Lappas

Υλικό επεξεργασίας | Διατήρηση μνήμης Processing material | Memory retention

Ανασύρω αρχεία του παρελθόντος	I retrieve files from the past
Αναζητώ την ιστορία και ταυτότητα του τόπου όπου βρίσκομαι	I look for the history and identity of the place where I am
Ψάχνω να βρω την συνοχή σε θαμμένα κομμάτια	I search for connections in buried pieces
Θραύσματα χαμμένα κλήθηκα να ενώσω	Lost fragments I was called to join
Για να αποκτήσει νόημα και η υπόσταση η αφήγηση	The narrative acquires meaning and substance
Πρόσωπα σβησμένα	Erased faces
Σώματα σκόρπια	Scattered bodies
Που δεν βρέθηκαν ποτέ	Never found
Αγριολούλουδα ανθίζουν πάνω από το χώμα	Wild flowers bloom above the soil
Ψάχνω αντικείμενα για να δώσω διάσταση στην μνήμη	Looking for objects to give dimension to the memory
Για να αποτυπώσω και να οριοθετήσω ένα κενό	Capturing and filling the gap
Τα σχήματα που δίνουν θέση στην απώλεια	The shapes that bring light to loss
Που μορφοποιούν το ασύληπτο της ύλης	Forming the inconceivable of matter
Και γεννούν σκέψεις	Giving birth to thoughts
Αποκωδικοποιούν άγνωστα σημεία του μύθου	Decoding unknown parts of the myth
Τιμώντας ένα κρυμμένο παρελθόν	Honoring an unrevealed past

Sierra Casady
Hooded Swan

for the women taken to Håøya in 1916 and enslaved.



The composer and singer Sierra Casady photographed on Håøya Island in 2019 by Inga Aleknaviciute

What is night?
 A mystery of colour
 A loss of self
 A letting go of figure, sundered in the torments

On an island long ago, one girl, afraid of nothing – for there were no unturned tortures left for her to be mystified by – awoke by the water at dawn. Stirring were sheep in the wood. Bubbling in the water, fish swam freely. From her pillow of mulch rose the wet smell of wood or dreams unrendered. She sat. From her tiny, swollen breast rolled a quartz-coloured tear and it fell into the blue bruises of her empty lap. Would I fall into the cold sea, thought she? Would I live this day or the next? Who wants me? Where should I stumble?

Hooded Swan

words and melody – Sierra Casady; music – CocoRosie arr. by Doug Wieselman

The musical score is presented on a light blue background. It features five staves: Soprano (S.), Violin (Vln.), Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.). The lyrics are written below the Soprano staff. The score includes measure numbers 4, 7, and 9. The tempo is marked '♩ = 50'. Dynamics include 'mp' and 'normale'. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: 'Hood - ed... swan where have you gone No one knows you No one hears you In - to night they take you voice - less Wat - er black - ens cold sur - rounds you Stol - en maid - en hand of sil - ver'.

On Objects

Since the 1990s archaeology has begun to explore its relationships with theatre and performance as a means of re-thinking and extending archaeology's classical focus on the object and its meanings. How objects evidence their contemporary historical usage through re-enactment, physicality and the contexts of site and place can provide a radical rethinking of 'what remains'.¹

In the mid-seventeenth century the writer and polymath Sir Thomas Browne prefaced his introduction to *Hydriotaphia: Urne Buriall* (1658) this way:

In the deep discovery of the Subterranean world, a shallow part would satisfie some enquirers; who, if two or three yards were open about the surface, would not care to rake the bowels of *Potosi*, and regions towards the Centre. Nature hath furnished one part of the Earth and man another. The treasures of time lie high, in Urnes, Coynes, and monuments, scarce below the roots of some vegetables. Time hath endlesse rarities, and shows of all varieties; which reveals old things in heaven, makes new discoveries in earth, and even earth itself a discovery. That great Antiquity *America* lay buried for a thousand years; and a large part of the earth is still in the Urne unto us.' (1965:95)

That '[t]ime has endless rarities, and shows of all varieties' perhaps frames archaeological finds within a seventeenth century imaginative range of curiosity, discovery and the beginnings of empire, that does not necessarily reveal those darker or intentionally shrouded layers of what may be involved – a stratum or dimension of memory that is surfaced in the *Emergence* project as *Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage* (OGCH).²

¹ Mike Pearson (*Brith Gof*) and his 1990s collaborations with the archaeologist Michael Shanks resulted (2001) in an early example of the impact of performance theory on archaeology.

² The reference to 'the bowels of Potosi' – here signifying endless wealth and value – refers to the Bolivian silver mine at Potosi established in 1545 by the Spanish literally on the backs of an indigenous Bolivian labour force and the forced import of forty thousand slaves from Africa as the means of materialising the enormous wealth of the Spanish empire between 1492 and the 18th century. See <https://bit.ly/3y1Wx8B>

Icebreaker ships at work on the Vistula river, Plock, Poland in 2021. Piotr Krzeslak/Shutterstock



Browne's interest in curiosities to be found 'scarce below the roots of some vegetables' both reflects the emerging scientific interests of his times, but also points to the place or role that objects play in the surfacing of the past and the narratives and memories that they gather. In the writings and images which follow here, we find the scenographic and architectural use of objects and their interplay is central to a reframing of memories that reveal deeper and more ephemeral layers of our pasts.

As the social anthropologist Christian Sørhaug points out 'we reframe memory through the materials we engage' (see p. 135). These materials are both generic and functional – tools, boats, plates, clothes, chairs; and individual and particular – seashells, the sound of shoes on gravel, black and white pictures of Greek and Turkish Cypriot women holding photos of their sons and husbands, remnants of corpses washed ashore from the sunk German warship *Blücher*. Their use demonstrates both literal and metaphorical attempts to remember, resurface and memorialise what remains of a particular cultural and political heritage, and what is forgotten, overlooked, or hidden.

The interface between material objects and immaterial memories can be thought of in terms of a gathering of sensory images around an object as a 'thing' which, as the etymology of the word itself suggests, provides a locus for a gathering of personal, individual or social memories and images. Such objects as material, scenographic representations used as here in the context of performance or installation also shape, modify and reconstruct memory, linking individual memories kindled in the present moment of performance to wider social and cultural memories: for example the object or image of seashells installed in the Håøya Island forest (see Nefeli Kentoni, p.81) perhaps echoing Nora's image of memory as 'shells on the shore when the sea of living memory has receded' (1989:12); or a boat arriving on an island echoing contemporary images of displaced immigrants or asylum seekers.

Julie Olympia Cahannes
Beloved Silence

Geliebte Leserin

Beloved Reader

Bevor Sie sich nun die nächsten 5 Minuten in das
unten Geschriebene vertiefen, bitte ich Sie mir
meinen dramatischen Schreibstil zu verzeihen. Die
folgenden zwei Seiten sind einem intimen
Liebesbriefwechsel gewidmet.

Geschrieben auf Håøya im Spätsommer 2018.

Written on Håøya in late summer 2018.

This is a film about a man and a fish.

This is a film
about a dramatic relationship between man and fish.
The man stands between life and death.

The man thinks.

The horse thinks.

The sheep thinks.

The cow thinks.

The dog thinks.

The fish doesn't think.

The fish is mute, expressionless.

The fish doesn't think because the fish knows everything.

The fish knows everything.

[Lyrics from *This is a Film* (1993) by Iggy Pop and Goran Bregović]

13 IX 2018

Geliebte Stille

Ich habe Dich verachtet, ich habe Dich gehasst. Wir haben uns nicht verstanden. Gut, vielleicht war es ein Missverständnis über Jahre hinweg. Ich erinnere mich an Dich. Du warst ein jahrelang geliebter Freund, als ich mit niemandem redete. Meinen Eltern wurde gesagt, das Kind redet nicht viel. Man sei sich nicht sicher wieso. Vielleicht läge es an seiner Unsicherheit. Aber in diesem Liebespamphlet soll es nicht um meine verbrachte Kindheit mit Dir gehen. Ich möchte Dir beschreiben, wie ich mich in Dich wiederverliebt habe. Es war auf einer Insel namens Håøya. Norwegische Luft tränkte meine Lunge, Unruhe erfüllte mein Herz. Uns wurde eine Aufgabe gestellt, ich hörte die Stimme meiner Leiterin zum letzten Mal für die nächsten zwei Stunden, sah meine verschlossenen Lippen, die Unruhe in meinem Kopf. Ich wollte nicht allein sein, eigentlich niemals wieder. Und dann war ich alleine, alleine mit einer Insel.

Ich lief mit Dir in den Wald, Du hieltst mich an der Hand. Du warst da, nahmst Gestalt der Liebe an, die mich tröstete, die da war ohne etwas zu sagen. Ich werd Dir nie offenbaren, wieso ich traurig bin, und trotzdem wirst Du mich verstehen. Du hast mich durch Deine Anwesenheit berührt, mir geschenkt, was ich schon lange vergessen hatte zu lieben. Zu lieben was einfach da ist, zu lieben und nicht zu hassen, einfach zu sein. Zu atmen, zu hören. Zu spüren wie der Wind mich mit Küssen übersät, wie Erinnerungen mein Herz wachrütteln können, wie ich lächeln kann über etwas, das weit weg ist, wie ich akzeptieren kann, dass Du mich mit schlechten Erinnerungen auch plagen kannst, und doch mir sagst, dass es Vergangenheit ist, dass Du nicht die Kraft besitzt Dinge vergessen zu machen, jedoch mich liebst, egal was geschieht.

13 IX 2018

Beloved Silence

I have despised you. I have hated you. We did not get along. Well, maybe it was an ongoing misunderstanding. I remember you. You were a beloved friend for many years, when I did not talk to anybody. My parents were told: this child does not talk much. One was not sure why. Maybe because of its insecurity. But this love pamphlet is not supposed to be about my childhood spent with you. I want to describe to you how I fell in love with you again. It happened on an island called Håøya. Norwegian air drenched my lung, unrest filled my heart. We were given a task, I heard the voice of my teacher for the last time for the following two hours, saw my closed lips, the unrest in my head. I did not want to be alone, actually never again. And then I was alone, alone with an island.

I walked with you into the forest, you were holding my hand. You were there, took shape of the love that comforted me, that was there without saying anything. I'll never reveal to you why I am sad, but you will still understand me. You have touched me through your presence and given to me what I for long had forgotten to love. To love what simply is, to love and not to hate, simply to be. To breathe, to listen. To feel how the wind sighs about me with kisses, how memories shake up my heart, how I can smile about something that is far away, how I can accept that you can also afflict me with bad memories, still telling me that it is the past, that you do not have the strength to make me forget, but however love me no matter what happens.

Ich ass stumme Fische. Fragte mich wie das Leben im Meer ist. Es muss still sein. Doch was unterscheidet die Stimmen in meinem Kopf schon von seinem melodischen Ausspruch? Ist es die Genugtuung zu wissen, dass man nicht alleine damit ist, dass es da jemanden gibt, der dasselbe denkt? Ich hätte es geliebt mit den Quallen zu quasseln, meinen Alltag mit sinnlosen Gesprächen zu pflastern, eine Strasse zu konstruieren, auf der man sich auch auf einer Insel verlieren konnte, auf der man lachte und quietsche, meckerte und schrie. Ich entdeckte mit Dir Dinge auf Håøya, welche ich nur als Fisch erleben konnte. Ich hörte mit meinen Ohren wie ein neugeborenes Wesen, hörte, dass eine Ameisenstrasse denselben Klang haben konnte wie der Regen an einem lauwarmen Sommertag. Ich bemerkte die Geräusche, welche ich mit meinen Schuhen auf der Kiesstrasse machte.

Was ich mit Dir gelernt habe und nicht einfach so vergessen möchte: Man muss manchmal stehenbleiben, ganz Fisch sein, um zu verstehen, dass eigentlich alles da ist, was man will. Für einen barschen Wimpernschlag hast Du mir das Gefühl gegeben wieder ein Kind zu sein. Und dies ist wahrscheinlich das grösste Geschenk, was ich in meinem 21. Lebensjahr bekommen hab. Das Inselleben war kein Film, aber ein Fisch allemal. Das weiss ich nun. Geliebte Stille, nimm mich heute Nacht in Deine tröstenden Arme. Deine Dich für immer liebende
Julie

14 IX 2018

Geliebte Julie

I ate fish in silence. Asked myself how life under the sea was. I got to be silent. But what distinguishes the voices in my head from its melodic saying anyway? Is it the satisfaction of knowing that one is not alone with it, that there is someone who thinks the same? I would have loved to blather with the jellyfish, to pave my everyday life with meaningless talk, to construct a road which one could get lost on even on an island, and which one laughed and squeaked, bleated and screamed on. I discovered things on Håøya with you which I could only experience as a fish. I listened with my ears like a new-born being, heard that an ants' trail could have the same sound as the rain on a tepid summer day. I noticed the sounds my shoes made on the gravel road.

What I have learned with you and not just want to forget: one has to stand still sometimes, be quite fish, to understand that actually everything one needs is there. With a brusque blink of the eye, you gave me the feeling of being a child again. And that is probably the greatest gift I received in my twenty-one years.

The island life was not a film, but a fish without any problem. This I do know now. Beloved silence, take me in your consoling arms tonight.
Yours, forever loving you,
Julie

14 IX 2018

Beloved Julie

TACET

Deine Dich für immer liebende
Stille

Yours, forever loving you,
Silence



On Attention

Forgetting and losing things has been described as a 'breakdown at the interface of attention and memory' (Schacter, 2001) It reminded me that the interface of attention and memory is also a site of intentional forgetting on the part of 'history' in the narratives of those who claim and hold power.

Much of what the OGCH project seeks to reveal is that the interface between attention and memory is a contested site – a site of potential conflict and resolution played out in cultural, political and personal terms through performance, memorialisation and imposed or 'gas-lit' narratives. If the future that memorials look toward as imaginative (and actual) sites of discourse and change, is in part brought about by a 'shift of attention in the present' as I have argued elsewhere¹ then such shifts of attention, whether they lead to forgetting or to reclaiming or re-examining that which is forgotten or intentionally hidden as we see in the 'Missing Persons' project, are brought about by the agency of artworks that enable (through various means) such shifts in attention and their subsequent direction to take place. In W.G. Sebald's novel the eponymous Austerlitz remarks 'on the crucial shifts in the directions of one's life: 'We take almost all of the decisive steps in our lives as a result of slight inner adjustments of which we are barely conscious'. (2001:134; quoted in Santer, 2006: 132)

The Emergence project and its interest in scenography attempts to engage a sensory shift of attention to remembrance as a means reconstructing and reframing cultural heritage. Nefeli Kentoni writes of her experiences on Håøya Island in 'Post-Memory' in terms of the failure of memory, the difficulties of remembering a past that has left few if any traces. Her attention to the present moment is guided through sensations of working in collaboration with a

Economic collapse and severe food shortages following the fall of communism in Albania led to a refugee crisis in the region as people fled to Greece and Turkey – or, as here, to the Italian port of Bari in August 1991, aboard the massively overloaded cargo ship *Vlora*, where their arrival caught the authorities by surprise. Photo: Wikipedia

¹ This idea considered, tacitly in relation to Walter Benjamin's 'On the Concept of History', how an attempt could be made through shifts of attention within the

making of performance 'to deliver tradition anew from the conformism which is on the point of overwhelming it.' (Benjamin, 1940: Thesis VI) See Allsopp, 2009: 247-255.

'scenography of time and space demanding constant renegotiation' in the present; and the sensation of arriving in the time and space of the island 'as a stranger, and allow[ing] the site to take space within you.' The title of her writing – 'Post-Memory' – and the experience she describes, perhaps draws on Marianne Hirsch's observation that 'postmemory' is 'the memory of events that hover between personal memory and impersonal history, events one has not lived through oneself but that, in large measure to the stories of those who did experience them, have nonetheless entered into the fabric of the self.' (Hirsch, 1997 quoted in Santer, 2006:158)

There is an echo or resonance here with Walter Benjamin's phrase 'weak messianic power' which appears in 'On the Concept of History' (1940: Thesis II): '... then like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a weak messianic power, a power on which the past has a claim.' Eric L. Santer observes that 'the phrase appears in a passage that addresses the possibility not so much of discovering in the past resources for working through crises in the present as discovering in the present a new legibility of the past that in some sense redeems it.' (2006: 129) This sense of a 'new legibility' of the past would seem to run in parallel and coincide with the idea of an attention to scenography and memory that can intervene in the world and ask the question 'in what ways does the work open or close, energise or deplete, our capacity to imagine new ways of being in the midst of life?' since it is only through such aesthetic strategies 'that history can be redeemed.' (2006: 135) It remains a vital question with particular relevance to the OGCH project: 'For every image of the past that is not recognised by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.' (Benjamin, 1940 [1968]: Thesis V). Writing a decade later in 1951 the American poet Charles Olson affirms that '[f]or any of us, at any instant, are juxtaposed to any experience, even an overwhelming single one, on several more places that the arbitrary and discursive which we inherit can declare' (Olson, 1966: 55). The range of attention that scenographic artwork involves and demands moves us beyond the 'arbitrary' and the 'discursive' into those 'several more places' which perhaps coincide, for example, with the sensory world of silence described by Julie Olympia Cahannes in her letter 'Liebespamphlet' written during the workshop on Håøya Island.

Making 'Mobile with shells and sound' (p.84) – Julie Olympia Cahannes, Johannes Karl, Nefeli Kentoni and Christina Rezvöhh's intervention in the Håøya island forest.



Nefeli Kentoni

To arrive at a space as a stranger

Kjartan driving the boat, going back and forth between the shores and dropping us from the mainland to the island. The wooden pier, a liminal space, carrying the weight of us and everything we brought. Suitcases filled with stuff, unnecessary stuff. Minds filled with thoughts; *forget those thoughts*, you are now here. Grass. House. There are goats here. There is limited electricity. There are no showers. You can breathe here. *Here*, everyone is a stranger; this was our first bond. For two weeks, we lived, cooked, learned and created together. Our environment, the site, enveloped us; the same way it enveloped and hid the gruesome histories that were left to be forgotten on the island for so many years.

My group decided to work on a memorial about the women who worked at the dynamite factory, which was relocated onto Håøya in 1914 after several accidents. Due to the lack of voluntary workers, the police in Oslo arrested prostitutes, who were then given the ‘choice’ between prison and working in the dynamite factory. There is little information about the women and their story is ignored in the history books. This is how States form national mythologies. Remembering is an active choice. Learning about this made it harder to breathe, here.

Collaborating *here*, with strangers from different disciplines and diverse experiences and aesthetics was a challenge. However, having the site as a common reference, meant that we were gradually formulating a new collective language. Translating our intentions from self to group-interest and placing the responsibility on the shoulders of the collective. The site was infiltrating our creative process. Seashells – lots of seashells, were collected and connected one-by-one, while trying to comprehend the manual labour experienced by the women (*See pp. 81 and 84*). I now comprehend; the two actions were not comparable. Our scenographic installation was an attempt to rehabilitate and actively remember the women who worked at the dynamite factory. The seashell constructions

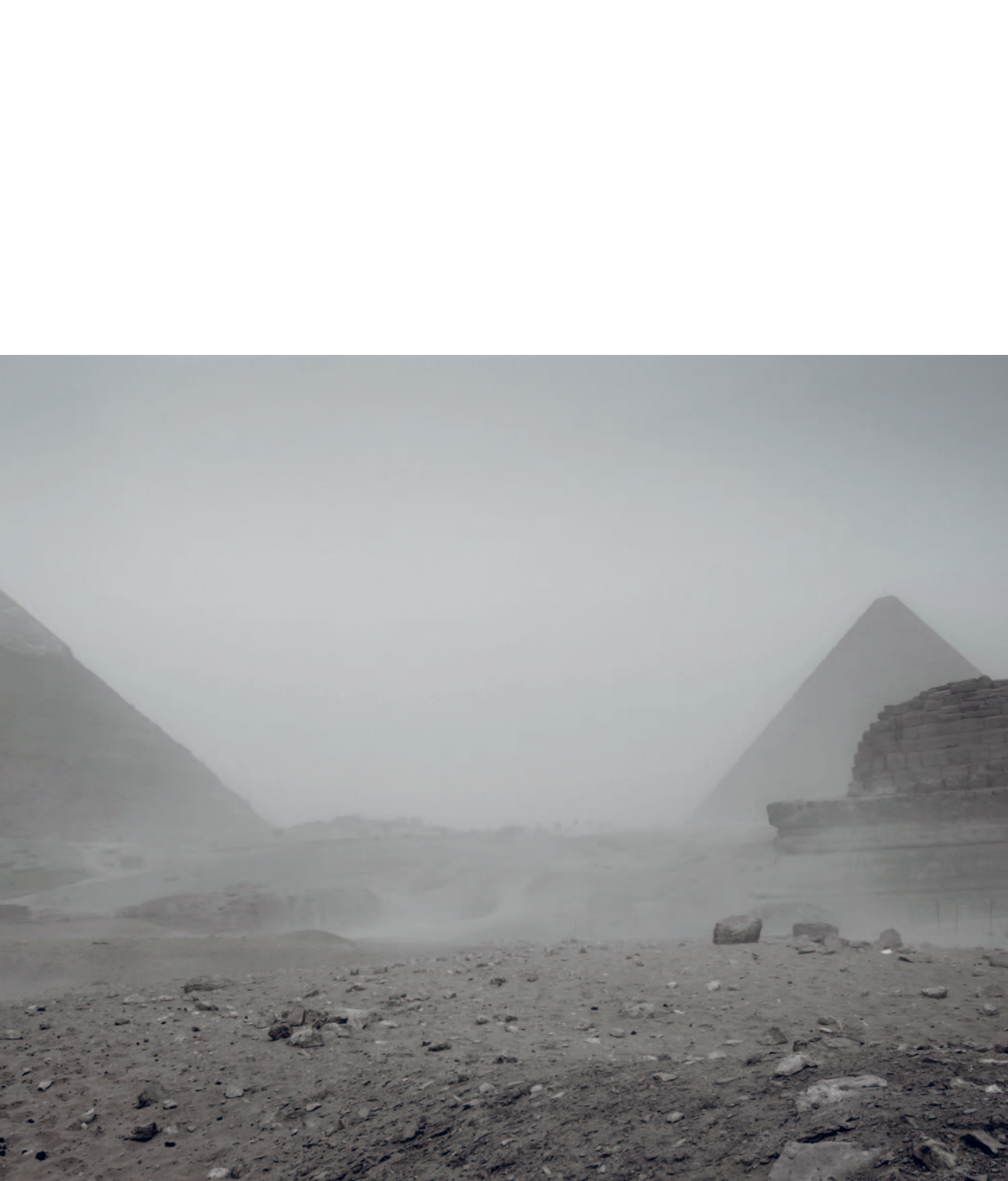
A full version of this extract from Nefeli Kentoni's article 'A Post-Memory: To reflect on the forgotten' was first published online in *Ascending Folio 1. Act 3* (April 2021) https://www.ascendingdesign.org/?page_id=19243. See also a short video of the Missing Person's installation '...' [sic] on <https://vimeo.com/332245691>





Essays on water and dust

camouflaged within the forest; the site was a collaborator. What I was not aware of then, was how the ephemerality of the natural materials would have added another layer to the construction of meaning; time became a collaborator. The scenography of time and space demands constant renegotiation. To arrive at a space as a stranger, and to allow the site to take space within you.



On Borders

Linking the body, the natural world and culture, the stories of the remembered past ‘change with circumstance and the sightlines available to tellers of the tale.’ (Lapham, 2020:15). The remembered past and the recorded past – both of which are subject to change and changing interpretation – are presented here in two invited essays which both complement and widen the discourse that the *Emergence* project as a whole has opened up and relate in particular to the two OGCH scenographic projects outlined here. In these essays change and transformation is brought about through (or at least in relation to) natural phenomena: the flow of water and the movement of dust, both of which define and defy cultural boundaries.

In Alan Read’s essay ‘Soul Estuary’, his reflections on the Thames estuary in Essex of the 1960s and 70s, the central image of water provides an imaginative and poetic link to the project on Håøya Island. Likewise, in Ines Weizman’s ‘Dust, Data, and Documentary Architecture’ on Bauhaus architecture in the Middle East, post-1948, the central image of dust links to the ‘Green Line’ border established in the 1970s in Cyprus and the arbitrary and infamous Sykes-Picot line that has divided the Middle East since 1916. The essays also provide a further array of objects and memorials that resonate with these projects – sunken ships, architectural remains, obelisks, pipework, doorhandles, oil slicks and motorbikes; as well as the non-human inhabitants of the natural world – lapwings, locusts, molluscs and mulberry trees.

The place of memory that the waters of the Thames estuary describe ‘traced a line between shore and horizon’ – the mutable boundaries of both geography and memory for ‘[t]hose of us without boats’ the swimming and floating bodies ‘that swam through the summers and the colder months too.’ In his discussion of the image field of Lethe – the river of forgetfulness and oblivion that flows through the classical underworld and whose waters confer forgetfulness to the souls of the dead – the cultural historian Harald Weinrich emphasises that both memory and forgetting are totally immersed in the fluid element of water: ‘There is a deeper meaning in the symbolism of this magical water. In its soft

The Giza pyramids in a sandstorm. Giorgio Caracciolo/Shutterstock

flowing the hard contours of the remembrance are dissolved and, so to speak *liquidated*.' (Weinrich, 2004:6)

Ines Weizman begins her essay with a description of the massive dust storm that swept across the Middle East and Cyprus in September 2015 – a cloud of 'suspended, transnational dust' and 'larger than any state it crossed' that reduced visibility to a few meters. The dust storm in part was a result of war-torn land abandoned by Syrian farmers and their families, that 'like all things abandoned, gradually turned to dust.' The image of dust not only describes a depleted and abandoned environment but also fills the ancient Mesopotamian vision of the House of Dust, the underworld 'whose people sit in darkness; dust is their food and clay their meat. They are clothed like birds with wings for covering, they see no light, they sit in darkness.' (Sanders, 1972:92)

The watery environment of the estuary, and the transnational dust of the Middle East are both concerned with 'matter in motion' and the processes of interaction, making and unmaking that determine that construction and deconstruction of memorials and the built environment.

Dust is matter in motion [...] Dust is never a single object. Dust is a lived environment in which human materials, building materials, airborne substances, materials from animals, and molecular substances interact.'

The figure of dust, like water, 'undoes the singular, fetish-like qualities of any object' and opens up the site of memory and the memorials that it generates as a place of discourse and potential change.

A sandstorm in Jordan.
Ahmad A Atwah/Shutterstock





Alan Read

Soul Estuary

I have always felt that I was living on the high seas: threatened, at the heart of a royal happiness. Albert Camus, 'The Sea Close By', *L'Été*, 1954

Those of us without boats, and that was all of us, swam through the summers and other colder months too, and when after hours of up and down, in and out, going nowhere, we rested, it was in the water still. Floating, talking on our backs, we scanned across our bodies towards the horizon. To float like this was to allow the current to do its work, head dropped back, listening to that place between above and below. Above: Lapwing, Pintail and Plover flurried, foraging to and fro, arcing in the atmospherics that were theirs. Below: the bivalve molluscs, known to their kind as cockles, the first to feel the warming of the earth that is their muddy floor. Not for long. Our slowly sunburnt bodies cooling were heating all around. While we existed on dry land, and swam in the river, we lived for the sea.

At one point in this Essex estuary, marked by an unsmiling granite obelisk called the Crowstone, taller, colder and straighter than an attentive guard of the ebb and flow, this above and below traced a line between shore and horizon, where the upstream river of fresh water, met the downstream river salt-water of the sea. It had to meet somewhere around here, that was what estuaries were for, and apparently it was here.

If on older maps this line had once been marked with the words: 'Here be Dragons', it would have wildly over-estimated the threat this boundary traced. We were the opposite of Blaise Pascal's subjects, who, according to his seventeenth century philosophical narrative of shipwreck, had all 'embarked'. Having left the land, there was nothing on offer for those poor souls, other than being saved or going under. There was no nuance. We floated between these two dramatic imposters to attention. "Nothing to see here, move along." This was estuary, not ocean after all.

The Crowstone rose from the shallows close to the shore at a place called Chalkwell that was where I presumed my teachers had always lived

The Crowstone in the Thames Estuary off Southend on Sea. It was erected in 1837 to mark the endpoint of the jurisdiction of the Port of London Authority. Brian Harris/Alamy Stock Photo

and died. They chalked-well before they were whited-out by the insidious spread of the white-board fog, buzzing with static, around the time teachers became second-class citizens, morally marooned by politicians who should have known better, but were busy moonlighting away, training their eyes up-stream to the City, and the executive board positions that glimmered in the river there. I went to school just yards from the Crowstone, and, with my sister, buried my first treasure close by, a bank of last resort, hard against the sea wall knowing this was the point from which other kinds of fortune could be made. Those of a different coin.

There had been something like this stone, standing here for more than eight hundred years, stone upon stone, sometimes side by side as now, slowly releasing their chiselled narrative from one to other, that since Richard 1st had ceded control over the river, a royal charter mentioned in the Magna Carta, this very place had become the Eastern extreme of the City of London's jurisdiction over the river. There was a thrill to floating just west of the granite marker, as a Suburbanite one felt closer to the Metropolitan current, the pull of the city that all early-career Estuarians feel. To the West, lit by the glow of Mammon you could make out profit, the liquidity of the river told you that, to the East, in the fog, where the river seemed to still, only loss. Lost at sea.

Less than a century before, the émigré writer Joseph Conrad had looked out from his hotel room on Surrey Street, off the Strand (itself once a beach), close on the Thames in London, and imagined this far end of the river he could not see as the aperture to his heart of darkness:

The day was ending in a serenity of still and exquisite brilliance. The water shone pacifically; the sky, without a speck, was a benign immensity of unstained light; the very mist on the Essex marsh was like a gauzy and radiant fabric, hung from the wooded rises inland, and draping the low shores in diaphanous folds.

But the light from where we floated was a stained mirage, for it flickered above the oil terminals beyond low-lying Canvey Island, at Shell Haven, which had, since Samuel Pepys recorded it in his journals three centuries before, always been called that despite the later branding of the earth by global corporations. The refinery was burning off the excess gas and covering the estuary with a fine film of petroleum spirit that conditioned our hair, when we had hair, floating behind us, as we lay on our backs with rainbow halos, with hints of Methane Pentane, bouquets of waxes,

Yvonne Stagg riding the 20-foot Wall of Death in 1968. ZUMA Press, Inc. /Alamy

greases and asphalts, watching the same stars that we had no idea also hung over the Niger Delta, Ogoniland, where oil and water still did not mix.

And, later, as we crawled from the tide, across the rake of the sand, hopping across the slow-cooked tar, to the high dome of the Kursaal, smaller than St Paul's and St Peter's, but a pinnacle of belief, a pleasure-palace for the lapsed faithful nonetheless, we might have imagined we could see through the chiaroscuro, the neon sign of Shell with its glowering Capital S. A blood-red circumference, to a yellow sunset. Upriver, we knew their world headquarters oversaw our concrete-embanked river-water each day and cast its 'office-lighting pall' across our source like an amber warning of things to come, in this Delta and others further afield.

I am not sure what I would have done without the oil of course, like others I would have been lost or at least seriously slowed down, de-lubed



would have been my fate. Duckhams were the trusted suppliers in our day, for the mirrored Lambrettas and the Triumphs we cherished. I had been a regular visitor to the Kursaal, just along the sea front, in the years that the Wall of Death was its most popular attraction. Yvonne Stagg would ride a 500cc BSA like nobody else before or after her, we all loved her, but she went to Margate, lost her balance and never came back. The catch-in-the-throat kerosene that gave a punch to the fuel tank was gone by 1974, but in those years we hung over the balcony parapet from above, reaching out our hands to touch hers, as they lifted from the bars of the rotating bike, as though hanging for us in midair. There were no 'high fives' then – this was what we once called feeling in the Essex Delta.

That 'losing balance' is what comes of leaving the Estuary for the Coast. We share the destiny of the seaside town, but pity those who mix them up, they have nothing in common, for while one looks out to the world, the other, with its far shore so near, returns that look upon the one who looks. Spectators in this place look out at wrecks from the safety of their dry land, but that is all, and as you look you are very soon aware that that wreck is your wreck, no one else's. What would be the point of risking going to Kent across the river at its widest point, when there was a perfectly good highway to follow that would take five times as long? We had no boat anyway, and there was no point in going to Kent, that much was obvious.

Never having known a proper sea nor a proper river, those other imposters to fortune, an estuary boy at large, who had never been further than the A127 Arterial Road or the A13, the two identically tarmacked routes out of the Delta, there was no escape even if we had been looking for one. Joseph Goebbels had always been suspicious of asphalt, the petroleum derivative that once conditioned our hair, for its order and its cover, its monotony and its sterility. But he would have recognized the estuary swamp that threatens such disorder as a littoral too-far for comfort.

There is only one way to leave a seaside town, if you can ever be said to leave that is, with one's back to the water. Unless of course, like Jim Carey in the final, floating scene of that most forensic of filmed suburban stories *The Truman Show*, you inadvisably take to that water, notwithstanding spoilers, thinking there is something, anything, beyond the cyclorama backdrop of the fake sky you will one day reach, with the tap of your prow against its imprisoning edge. And this shapes the lives of those without boats in estuary towns like this one. There was a yacht club, yes, but well beyond us. Its membership was a mystery second only to the golf club,

where the beautiful unruly sand of the estuary had been disgorged into the daunting discipline of bunkers. I took it race-hate had been invented amongst these fake dunes in the 1950s, in this white estuary.

The historian Simon Schama, an Essex boy as well, but one better versed in our shared past than most, described this very surface, down-river from his redoubt in Benfleet, at the opening of his path-winding work, *Landscape and Memory* in which he adventures amongst those myths of nature. His 'low, gull swept estuary', his 'marriage bed of salt and fresh water' might set him apart from 'sinister Kent', but he is still ten miles shy of what he describes as 'the gloriously lurid seaside town of Southend, developed at the end of the last century as "the lungs of London"'. Well, while Simon was looking-on and making mental notes for later doorstep works, we were, well, within, not quite Essex ethnographers but field-noters nonetheless. As he paddled amongst the crabs and winkles in the ooze that was ours, he stared at the exact point where he imagined 'the river met the sea'. While we were floating there, pitying outsiders for what they missed.

Meanwhile, from Sheerness in sinister Kent, the German novelist Uwe Johnson, recently exiled in the 1970s from his home in East Germany, is looking back the other way, from his first-floor Victorian bay-windowed room but cannot see Essex for the fog. He didn't miss much else, it has to be said. He can see the stark, rising derricks and masts of the sunken munitions Liberty Ship clearly enough, the *Richard Montgomery*, that, before the Cold War came along to haunt those of us within range of the inevitable firestorm that would first wipe out London, and then those of us on the Estuary beyond, offering its own continuous threat of unexploded war-time ordinance, just below the tideline. Three thousand tons of bombs, 1200 tons of TNT, 173 tons of self-detonating anti-personnel bombs with built in firing mechanisms. Still there, still, but for the lapping currents, that could set the lot off at any time. Estuary Primed.

And in a story called 'An Unfathomable Ship' Uwe Johnson reminds us of the risks of waters that run deep:

The explosion would produce a fireball, the blast from which would hurl sizeable objects and debris for more than a mile, perhaps landing on some super-tanker with over 100,000 tons of oil in its belly [...] Simultaneous explosion of the entire cargo would produce a tidal wave that would bore up the Medway and the Thames.



That was us. But the Ministry of Defence was never going to touch it, in case in doing so they set the whole thing off and became responsible for the consequences.

The *Richard Montgomery* was just one of the better named wartime maritime wrecks that broke the surface of the water at lower tides for all to see, for us to swim to, to climb on and dive from, in a peacetime saturated with deep-running nuclear fear. The Mulberry Harbour was another of these scuppered structures, an artificial floating-island, the size of a tennis court split down the middle at right angles to the net, to be towed across the Channel with a stouter chord, to support the beach landings for the Allied Invasion in Europe. A twentieth century invention that could only be used once, so dependent was it on the element of surprise. It was simply called Mulberry because when asked in the war office what the next code word in the list was, Mulberry was that waiting-list word. Primed in its own way, for active duty. Churchill had written a typically terse message demanding them for Operation Overlord in May 1942:

‘They must float up and down with the tide. The anchor problem must be mastered. Let me have the best solution worked out. Don’t argue the matter. The difficulties will argue for themselves.’

And the difficulties did argue for themselves and went on arguing for us. These stranded whales of war, carcasses that came and went and came back, haunted us with their taunt of ‘You’ve never had it so good’. Ripping the flesh with their encrusted bowels before municipal flumes incarcerated in cantilevered leisure centres with names like ‘Olympic Lanes’, smoothed skin for the sake of safety and wave machines rocked to the sound of the cash register. The seaside was sinking in more ways than one.

Once, on a high summer day, my friend Michael had dived from the Mulberry Harbour that had been towed back from Normandy and scuttled after the war, offshore, diagonal from Foulness. He had broken his neck. He was the last collateral damage of the Second World War.

But, given none of us had witnessed the sad impact so busy were we swan-diving less spectacularly ourselves, the story that went around was not so much of the accident as the aftermath. Michael, like a wounded archangel in sawn-off denim shorts, had gamely swum back to shore and only realized he had done what he had done at the Esplanade Disco that night, when Joe Cocker came off the decks with ‘Cry Me a River’. Michael was estuary incarnate, but you could say Joe was Honorary Estuary too. He might have been from Sheffield but he had got it in one. It was so wrong it was right, for those of us dancing at least. The track was from his live album *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*, and we had all been out in the midday sun. And more. And now we were dancing, well Michael was shuffling around with a broken neck, which gave us all an unexpected chance of romance. A last dance of the night to an anthem that to all intents and purposes should the songwriter have had his way, been the slow one to end the evening, where the rest of us would have, on less good weeks, when Michael was fit, drifted off to the edges, embarrassed in our tank-top isolation.

It was 1970, with a decade of dreams ahead, before the hand-bagged milk-snatcher matricided hope, quoting St Francis of Assisi back to those who already lived by his gentle code without needing to talk about it. We were nothing if not unsympathetic as we chorused at Michael as he keeled erratically in the strobe: ‘You can cry me a river!’ Within our lifetimes it would come to mean, ‘build a bridge, get over it’, but for now there was nowhere to go, but back from where we came. The pier stopped half-way,

A warning buoy at the site of the wreck of SS *Richard Montgomery*, 1.5 miles north of Sheerness, Kent. James Bell /Alamy

and that was how it was built, not how it was about to become, thanks to the paraffin that was always circulating in those parts.

Michael was taken away that night in an ambulance, while we hovered looking on from the bar, and I was never to see him again, not because he had died, no one that young died in the Estuary, they just faded away or worked in insurance, but because he had lived, and was obviously warned to stay well away from us, if he wanted to carry on that way, alive that is. He was a fallen hero to us anyway, for a week at least until we regrouped, without him, like a blurred family photograph from one good year to a less good year.

The Estuary was not without its own soul. It might not have had Soul, with a capital S, reserved to describe the wellspring of a music for those with more than these petty slights to consider. Petty on the Estuary as in Mods and Rockers for instance, that long before the invention of Mass Observation were innocently and without apparent record taunting each other with flapping deckchairs, like so many striped, demented albatrosses. It was not that no one was watching, we were circled after all by the slinking, low-beam, hooded headlights, customized cars that cruised the vinegared salty-strip with their tinny Blaupunkt radios broadcasting: “Freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose” for those of us flattened by the Weatherspoon Weather, the Happy Hour of lost souls.

And I would not go so far as to venture that what we were hearing on that brave night was ‘White Soul’, though Joe Cocker was so white you had to worry he was missing his Vitamin D all those years under the artificial lights. He had the courage to sing that line, that when Arthur Hamilton had written it, no other singer would dare to take on:

‘... I remember/all that you said;/Told me love was too Plebeian,/Told me you were thro’ with me, An ...’

If plebeian stood for something vulgar, common and shared, we knew what that love was on that dance floor, there, and then. Everyone under the Esplanade Disco ultra-violet light looked blue anyway. Now Michael was gone, we were all equal here and now. Just blue. That iridescent blue, oil-bled, petroleum-led, was the colour of estuary soul, the mouth of the river, that sang the song that said there had always, only, ever been ‘one way’, ‘my way’, ‘our way’, when it came to Essex, as, in the end, we knew we were all at the end, of the river, together, alone.

Acknowledgements

Epigraph from *The Sea Close By*, by Albert Camus, is from the Penguin Modern Classics edition (1967) translated from the French by Justin O’Brien

Histories of the Mulberry Harbour from South Machars Historical Society (Jane Evans, Elizabeth Palmer, Roy Walter). *A Harbour Goes to War: The story of the Mulberry and the men who made it happen*. Garlieston: Brook House Publishing, 2000

Crowstone narratives from Marion Pearce. *Milton, Chalkwell and the Crowstone*. Romford: Ian Henry Publications, 2000

Thoughts on shipwreck from Hans Blumenberg. *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997

Observations from Sheerness made by Uwe Johnson, ‘An Unfathomable Ship’, Trans. Lawrence Wilson. *Granta*, ‘A Literature for Politics’, London: Anchor Press, 1983

Estuary fellow-paddler Simon Schama. *Landscape & Memory*. London: Fontana, 1996

I am grateful to Sarah Blunt who commissioned ‘Soul Estuary’ for her week-long series *The River*, BBC Radio 4, 2016. The piece can be found here with original score and sound recording by Chris Watson: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07npx3c>

‘Soul Estuary’ represents a small exercise in local recovery, written in a wholly non-academic form to amplify footnotes that thread through previous work: *Theatre & Everyday Life* (1993), *Theatre, Intimacy & Engagement* (2008), *Theatre in the Expanded Field* (2014), *The Dark Theatre* (2020)

Due to its slight nature, it is not for further reproduction. ‘Soul Estuary’ forms the first chapter of a new work to be published in 2022 by Alan Read, *Happiness is Green Shield Stamps* (after Pat Douthwaite)



Ines Weizman

Dust, Data and Documentary Architecture

Dust

In September 2015, a massive dust storm swept across the Middle East. In Syria, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine, even in Cyprus, visibility was reduced to only a few metres. One of the scientific reasons for that dust storm was that Syrian farmers, chased out by war and drought, had abandoned their war-torn villages, homes, and fields, which had, like all things abandoned, gradually turned to dust. Then came the easterly wind and raised that dust into the air, gathering it up into an orange cloud system on a continental scale and slowly carrying it through the atmosphere, moving it across national borders. The cloud, larger than any state it crossed, reminds us that this wonderful but tragic war-torn region is a shared space, with a shared ecology, inhabited by a shared humanity.

The image of suspended, transnational dust makes me think of the famous scene of Michelangelo Antonioni's slow-motion blowing-up of a modernist masterpiece in *Zabriskie Point* – perhaps modernism's first on-camera death, the second being the one polemically announced in 1977 by Charles Jencks, the destruction of Pruitt-Igoe.¹ This essay could only start with dust: the dust cloud of the hundred-year history of modernism in this region and the political and colonial projects in which it was implicated. Dust is matter in motion, and this essay touches upon this dynamic. Dust is never a single object. Dust is a lived environment in which human materials, building materials, airborne substances, materials from animals, and molecular substances interact.² We could describe

¹ The Pruitt-Igoe housing complex in St. Louis was designed by the architect Minoru Yamasaki in the early 1950s and demolished between 1972-76. Yamasaki also designed the World Trade Centre Twin Towers in New York.

² This reflection on dust builds largely upon Eyal Weizman's reading in relation to an enormous analysis conducted by Forensic

Architecture to reconstruct the particularly heavy IDF bombing of the city of Rafah in Gaza on August 1, 2014. In relation to the cloud atlas FA produced to synchronize images and videos of the events from social media, he described these bomb clouds as 'airborne cemeteries of architecture and flesh.' (Eyal Weizman, 2017: 193, 133-213)

Stills from a 2015 Daesh video calling for the destruction of former French/British border buildings along the Sykes-Picot Line (today Iraq/Syria border). See p.106

these as the sediments of layers of history. Dust is the link between an object and its environment: it is neither one nor the other, but something in between. It is a complete record of the environment and its combination into a single substance when collected and compressed. The figure of dust undoes the singular, fetish-like qualities of any object but particularly that of a Bauhaus object, whose fetish qualities seem to have increased exponentially in this centennial. Carlo Ginzburg referring to Marc Bloch's *Feudal Society*, described the historian's gaze shifting between a 'constant back-and-forth between micro- and macro-history, between close-ups and extreme long shots, so as to continually thrust back into discussion the comprehensive vision of the historical process through apparent exceptions and cases of brief duration.' (Ginzburg, 2012:207) It is within this spectrum of micro- and macro-history that I would like to connect the very beginnings of the Bauhaus in Weimar with modernist architecture in the Levant, and with the materiality of the Max Liebling House, Tel Aviv, popularly referred to, erroneously but perhaps affectionately, as Bauhaus Modernism, even though not designed by a Bauhaus teacher or graduate.

The enormous dust cloud of 2015 passed by the sites ruptured by ongoing historical calamities. In 1915, a devastating locust infestation blackened the sky and destroyed most of the vegetation in Palestine, Mount Lebanon, and Syria. The great famine that followed was the devastating consequence of political, economic, and environmental factors, the combination of a severe drought, a plague of locusts, and a stifling blockade of goods and food supplies.³ After the Ottoman Empire joined Germany, the Allies enforced a blockade of the entire eastern Mediterranean in an effort to cut off their supplies. In return, a blockade was introduced by General Jamal Pasha, commander-in-chief of the

³ Part of the reason for the devastating effects of the famine in the Lebanese mountains and in the Golan have to do with the fact that at the end of the 19th century, the French had introduced silk production in Syria and in the Lebanese mountains. For this, farmers, supported by the Ottoman government, replaced their traditional agriculture with thousands of mulberry trees that the silkworms favoured. When World War I halted the silk trade, the Lebanese farmers, dependent for their food supply on

economic exchange with other areas, were severely affected. Their now one-crop economy, combined with the difficulties involved in making a rapid transition from growing mulberry trees to food crops, led to starvation among the poor. For a more detailed account of the agricultural changes that also led to changes in the form of ownership and maintenance of the land, and hence changes in social relationships among the area's inhabitants, see Kais Firro, 1990: 151–69.

Turkish forces in Greater Syria and the one responsible for the Armenian, Greek, and Assyrian genocides that began around that time. On May 9, 1915, Ottoman soldier Ihsan al-Turjman, stationed in Jerusalem, wrote in his diary (which was lost in 1917 and only resurfaced in the 1970s in the Abandoned Arab Property [sic] section of the Hebrew University library): 'Our lives are threatened from all sides: a European war and an Ottoman war, prices are skyrocketing, a financial crisis, and the locusts are attacking the country north and south. On top of all this, now infectious diseases are spreading throughout the Ottoman lands.' (Tamari, 2011:19, 118) Indeed, the region saw epidemics of such diseases as malaria, dysentery, typhoid, and typhus. (Wichart, 2014: 29-39)

It might be difficult to establish a clear line of causality between military violence, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and the epidemics of the time, but they certainly correlated. At the time, the Spanish flu was moving along the front lines of the First World War, as well as the lines of trade and supply that the war spawned. This particularly virulent strain of influenza infected about 500 million people worldwide, killing over 50 million people between March 1918 and March 1920. Despite its magnitude and impact, this horrendous figure has largely been undocumented and unaccounted for, probably because it was mainly viewed from the European continent and Western history tended to trivialize it in comparison to the devastation of the two world wars. (Spinney, 2017: 4-7) But as Laura Spinney argues in her book *Pale Rider*, the history of the pandemic requires a different 'approach to telling the flu.' (Ibid., 7) The pandemic is generally regarded as beginning with the report of a cook's illness on March 4, 1918 at Camp Funston in Kansas. This was one of the US military camps that recruited and trained soldiers of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), which would soon bring the influenza virus to Europe: first to France, then to the trenches of the Western Front, in the last six months of the war, and from there to Germany, Britain, Italy, and Spain.⁴ By May 1918, the virus had reached northern Africa and India, and by July, China, Japan, and Australia. In fact, the flu spread in three distinct worldwide waves, and understanding its

⁴ Paul Klee wrote in November 1918 in his letters to his wife Lily and his son Felix from his service in the Bavarian air force that he had recently suffered from symptoms of the flu: 'I had a clear case of influenza, with fever and coughing the day

before yesterday. A night of creativity returned me to health. It was all too clear that it wanted to break out, but couldn't.' 'Letter, November 14, 1918' in Paul Klee, 1990:353.



impact would require a non-European perspective as well as a form of historical narration that cannot be merely chronological. This is because the pandemic, as Spinney states, ‘is a social phenomenon as much as it is a biological one; it cannot be separated from its historical, geographical and cultural context.’ (Spinney, 2017:5)

Perhaps it is all too symbolic that Sir Mark Sykes, who in collusion with his French colleague François Georges-Picot drew the fateful line through the Middle East which bears their names, fell prey to this virus in 1919. It happened while versions of the line were being drafted and debated for the Paris Peace Conference in Versailles. He died at the age of 39 on 16th February 1919, in his room at the Hôtel Le Lotti in Paris. As a diplomat of aristocratic upbringing, his remains were not thrown into a mass grave like many thousands of other victims of the malady but were encased in a hermetically sealed lead coffin and returned to his family at Sledmere House, Yorkshire. This body in the lead coffin contains one of the very few traces of the virus today. In 2008, 89 years after his death, the body of Sir Mark Sykes was unearthed by a team of scientists who in his

uniquely preserved remains tried to find the genetic footprint of the 1918 virus which could potentially help to engineer a vaccine against the lethal H1N1 virus that was then spreading globally. The lead tub contained a dead body but living viruses. And in a way, the viruses still preserved in the bones of Sir Mark Sykes also contain the information necessary for the unpacking of the epidemiological history of World War I and the complete reorganization of states that have since eroded the bloody borders of the Middle East through subsequent wars, conflicts, and requisitioning of colonial empires. The grandson of Mark Sykes, Christopher Simon Sykes, said in the run-up to the exhumation: ‘It is rather fascinating that maybe even in his state as a corpse, he might be helping the world in some way.’⁵ Virologic archaeology is indeed part of the archaeology of modernism.

The Sykes-Picot Line in a hundred-year perspective

The establishment of the Bauhaus School in the same year of 1919 was a consequence of students and teachers returning from the front lines of World War I. The building, designed in Weimar by Henry van de Velde, who as a Belgian national himself became an enemy alien when the war began, still housed a hospital for war-wounded when Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus and was forced to share the building with soldiers and medical staff. The Germany to which these soldiers returned was different: the old order removed, a country in ruin, a broken system, broken bodies, the Kaiser had abdicated, and the empire was giving birth to a nation-state. People were moving across the continent. Refugees were everywhere. Europe at the end of 1918 might not be the same as the Middle East, but it brings to mind the hundreds of thousands of refugees who have since 2011 embarked upon a perilous journey to flee the wars in Syria and elsewhere, as their cities have been devastated by bombs and knives and turned into dust.

The two scenarios might not be the same, but one is a consequence of the other. What happened at the end of World War I determined the contours of conflict in the century that followed. The recent wars and the images of spectacular violence they generated are in part a consequence of

The partition map signed by Sykes and Picot, which formed the basis of the agreement that effectively divided the Ottoman provinces outside the Arabian Peninsula into areas of British and French control and influence. It gave the UK control of what is today southern Israel and Palestine, Jordan and southern Iraq. France was to control southeastern Turkey, northern Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. Wikipedia/The National Archives (UK).

⁵ From ‘Aristocrat’s coffin could hold key to bird flu,’ *The Telegraph*, March 1, 2007, retrieved on May 5, 2019, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1544160/Aristocrats-coffin-could-hold-key-to-bird-flu.html

historical violence whose roots extend to the colonial history of the Levant and the political and cultural occupation to which this territory has been subjected in the last one hundred years. Nothing embodies this colonial order and its bloody collapse more than the Sykes-Picot Line mentioned above, infamously first drawn in the sand with a measuring stick, dividing the regions dominated by the British after World War I from those dominated by the French: thus Palestine from Syria, and Syria from Iraq.⁶

In a 2015 Daesh video, a victorious Islamic fighter explained how he and his army had stormed a customhouse at the Iraqi-Syrian border. After stomping angrily on a metal signpost that had marked the border, the fighter then pointed to a map painted on the outside wall of a building, probably a former French border post, and went on to describe it as the legacy not of local politics and culture, but of Western colonial history. The film ends with a promise that Daesh will take all customhouses along the Sykes-Picot Line and a final scene – as if in homage to Antonioni – in which the building explodes, turning into an enormous dust cloud. This destruction helps to shift attention to the architecture of border and customhouses – not as forensic archaeology, but because these buildings, more than any others, are the manifestation of a border that was, along most of its route, unfenced and unprotected. Their architecture shows how the Levant, from Cairo through Amman to Damascus, has been seen as a screen upon which the development of modernism was projected. Modernism has professed itself to be a movement beyond borders, but along the Sykes-Picot Line it was employed in the service of imperial

⁶ As the First World War broke out, Britain, France, and Russia became allies against Germany and hence also declared war on the Ottoman Caliphate that had joined forces with Germany. In 1916, British diplomat Sir Mark Sykes and his French counterpart François Georges-Picot signed a secret agreement on how to divide the Ottoman Empire once the war ended. With the approval of Russia, which was still under tsarist rule, Britain was allocated the coastal strip between the Mediterranean and the River Jordan, Jordan, southern Iraq, and the ports of Haifa and Acre. France was allocated control of south-eastern Turkey, northern Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. Russia was to

take control of Istanbul, Turkish Armenia, and northern Kurdistan. Palestine at that stage was reserved for an international administration. This secret agreement became known in 1917 when Russian revolutionary leaders published its terms to the embarrassment of the British and the French. The line nonetheless became a reality after the First World War when Germany lost the war, and the French and British took their share of the Levant. According to Sir Mark Sykes, who in 1915 first presented his proposal, a line had to be drawn through the Ottoman Empire from the 'e' in 'Acre' to the last 'k' in 'Kirkuk' on the map of the Middle East. See further James Barr, 2012: 12.

Drone photograph of the lower (British) customhouse and (right) the renovated upper customhouse with 'Bauhaus' lettering, 2019. Ines Weizman/Centre for Documentary Architecture



border-making: part of an imperial infrastructure of oil pipelines, canals, train tracks and airfields. Modern architecture, as it is divided and displaced by borders, exile, and war, is a story that has entangled protagonists, objects, materials, and ideas. In its form and associations, this essay tries to capture something of this entropy.

Documentary Architecture

'Documentary architecture' regards the building itself – its material and media palimpsest – as a historical document. Next to the architectural document, the traditional *métier* of architectural history, 'documentary architecture' is a method of analysis that brings the architectural historian closest to the archaeologist.⁷ It seeks to make existing materials and textures, whether investigated by plain sight or under the lens of a microscope, tell their stories, the stories of time and transformations. The history of buildings is solidified in a long process of material transformations and adaptations. A formal analysis of buildings, for example merely through photographs and plans, is not able to reveal

⁷ See Ines Weizman, 2018: 6–25 (English); and 2019: 198–209 (German).

the possibility that the best records of the history of air quality, the history of pollution, are the external surfaces of buildings, which fold the chemical composition of the air into the first few millimetres of a building. The documentary method – a method that treats buildings as diagrams of site-specific material forces that negotiate abstract architectural intentions – approaches architecture and the story of buildings’ patina, adaptation, transformation, and degeneration not ‘merely’ as architectural histories, but reveals what might otherwise remain invisible to architectural history.

Documentary Method

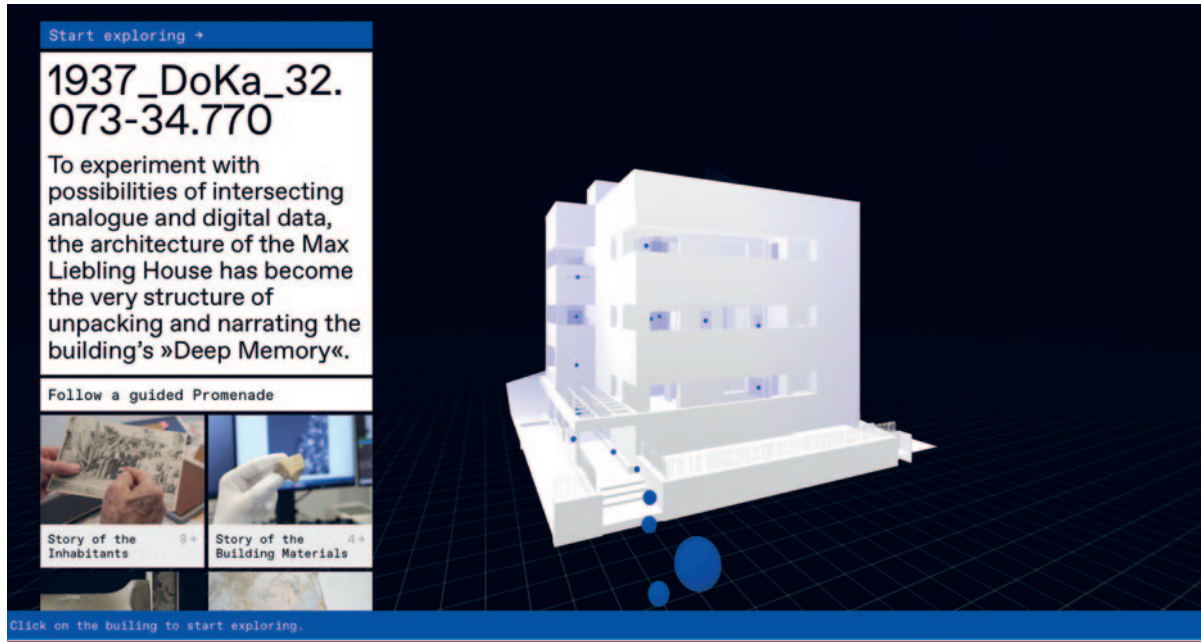
The German writer and playwright Peter Weiss (1916-1982) – *Marat/Sade* and *The Aesthetics of Resistance* – is well known for a particular genre of performance known as Documentary Theatre, and he was strongly associated with its development. Here the script is not so much a work of fiction as it is a collage appropriating documents such as court transcripts, meeting protocols, official reports, and news articles – and the play functions as a way of presenting charged historical moments. It is between these two genres – aesthetic pedagogy and the documentary method – that my work is situated, for the methods associated with the field I have developed under the term ‘documentary architecture’ includes both a close reading of physical material objects, on and in which political histories are inscribed, and a reading of representations, media, and documentary archives.

In this instance, the ruminations of Walter Benjamin provide an invaluable precedent, since the duality of matter and media was at the very core of his thinking. In his celebrated essay, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,’ he distinguished, of course, between the original, material, physical work of art and its reproductions – mediatizations we would say today. Benjamin, himself a collector of artifacts of the nineteenth-century European metropolis, had already unpacked the physical aspect or dimension of the object through the character of the collector: [The true collector knows],’ he wrote ‘[t]he period, the region, the craftsmanship, former owners – [...] the whole background of an item adds up to a magic encyclopaedia whose quintessence is the fate of the object.’ (Benjamin, 1968: 60) While the original’s unique existence and history can be forensically scrutinized ‘through chemical and physical analyses,’ the reproduction has none of this lingering, site-based materiality.

Besides helping to rid the work of its aura (of which Benjamin was critical), the reproduction, while stripping away a layer of material information, paradoxically helps to reveal other aspects of the object otherwise invisible to the human eye. What Walter Benjamin called the ‘photographic unconscious’ is the ability of media – he was writing about film and photography – to reveal things that are invisible and often imperceptible to our experience. Photography, Benjamin wrote, ‘can bring out those aspects of the original that are unattainable to the naked eye yet accessible to the lens’ and ‘enlargement or slow motion [...] can capture images which escape natural vision.’ (Benjamin, 1968: 220) If the physical dimension of the object is captured by the figure of the collector; then the analysis of media requires work resembling that of the psychoanalyst. ‘[F]ilm has,’ Benjamin underscores, ‘enriched our field of perception with methods which can be illustrated by those of Freudian theory [...]. By close-ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring commonplace milieus under the ingenious guidance of the camera [...] space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended. The enlargement of a snapshot does not simply render more precise what in any case was visible, though unclear: it reveals entirely new structural formations of the subject.’ (Ibid., 235-236) What our field can make of these sets of illuminations is the realization that we must see the object – the object of architecture – as both matter and media, dust and data. We must be both collectors and psychoanalysts not of humans but of matter, a dimension that might add to discussions about object-oriented ontologies, which assign a certain subjectivity to objects. For historians this approach means a demand that we develop ways of seeing anew. The documentary methods in architectural history and theory that I propose here, both as research and pedagogical programs, are intended to open up the magic encyclopaedia of the architectural object through material and digital means, undertaking close scrutiny and in-depth analysis in data platforms that cross-reference documents, films, and other recordings.

Mechanical /digital reproduction

When we think about reproductions today, we think about digital rather than mechanical ones. The digital era can allow architectural history and theory to be expanded in two separate and seemingly contradictory directions. On the one hand, new technologies of detection – like 3D



scans, remote sensing, proximate analysis (by instruments that resemble an MRI more than an X-Ray), and drones – can reach points otherwise inaccessible to the human eye. These technologies allow us to approach material objects in ways wholly new and unprecedented, seeking to unpack their *magic encyclopaedia*. The ‘chemical and technological’ analysis of material surfaces, construction materials, colour coatings, etc. reveal their layered transparencies, providing a glimpse behind the surface. Such digital object analysis can highlight the vibrant materialities of buildings, environments, infrastructures, and the earth, exposing that which lies in their depth. On the other hand, the historian can use representational models, data, and algorithms to expand the repertoire of contemporary research, complementing this new archaeological approach to material analysis with an analytical form that manages and cross-references a large quantity of data.

Architecture as document

To demonstrate the principles I have discussed above, I would like to illustrate this method of documentary architecture using recent research and engagement with the Max Liebling House in Tel Aviv (1936), being

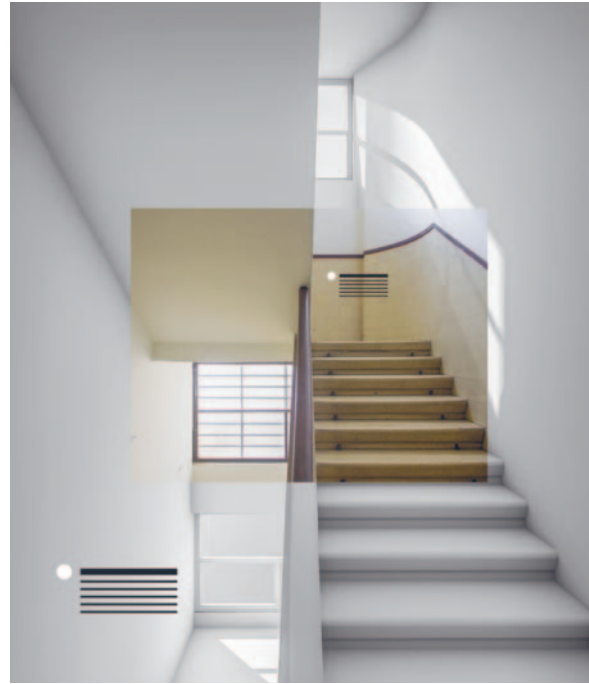
renovated to become a public centre concerned with the ‘White City’ of Tel Aviv (a UNESCO World Heritage site declared in 2003) and the ‘Bauhaus’ origins of its style. I have explored this building over several years together with the Centre for Documentary Architecture (CDA) that I founded at the Bauhaus-University Weimar and continue to run in collaboration with my new post at the Royal College of Art in London.

Tracing the materiality of Bauhaus modernism

In 2015, the Max Liebling Haus was opened in Tel Aviv as the White City Centre. This multi-apartment building was built by the investor Max Liebling and his wife Tony, who had immigrated from Austria via Switzerland in 1935. They commissioned the architect Dov Karmi, who had himself arrived in Palestine from Hungary via Belgium, to design the house in a more up-market fashion while also following the features of modern architecture. Max Liebling and his wife, who co-inhabited the building together with several families of well-known émigré physicians, bequeathed the house after their deaths to the Tel Aviv Municipality with the wish that the building be used as either an orphanage, a residential facility for children, an old age home, a dorm for needy students, or a museum. Until the last residents moved out of the building, the municipality used the apartments to house a kindergarten on the ground floor as well as for office spaces. Since 2015, one of the aims of the White City Centre (co-founded by the Tel Aviv- Yafo Municipality and the German government) is to support the development of a vibrant German-Israeli cooperation with a focus on preserving aspects of the UNESCO-declared World Heritage Site and the international style known in Israel as ‘Bauhaus architecture.’

We were working with the curators of the White City Centre and international preservationists to reconstruct the material history of the building as a key to understanding the striking spread of modern architecture under the British Mandate in Palestine. For the opening of the building, the Centre for Documentary Architecture was invited to present an exhibition on German-Jewish émigré architects that we had collected into an online film archive, a project that we have since continued to expand upon. Following the premise of the ‘documentary method,’ these research projects examine buildings as both material and media realities. Using techniques that combine archaeology and conservation, we produce documentary films on individual buildings,

A digital reconstruction of the Max Liebling House, Tel Aviv by the Centre for Documentary Architecture. The data platform presents architecture as a narrative device. <https://documentary-architecture.org/1937-dok-a-32-073-34-770>



and use film and digital documentation techniques to explore the biographies of architects, inhabitants, and users, but also the ‘biography’ of a building itself. As we look at the texture of material surfaces and through the depth of walls, trying to search for material clues that we can corroborate with documents, plans, photographs, notes, and correspondence, our work is as much that of the archaeologist as of the architect.

The 2015 exhibition also launched our research on the Max Liebling House itself. In the course of this work, the material fact of the building – rather than merely its architect or its inhabitants – has emerged as a protagonist, as well as a document of the trajectories of migration. Perhaps not surprisingly, some findings lead us back to Germany.

Adolf Loos, the architect, theorist and critic of modernist architecture, wrote an essay in 1898 under the influence of his experience in the United States, concerned with plumbing. In it, Loos makes a counter-intuitive claim: plumbing is not only purely utilitarian secret infrastructure, the mechanical core of a building, but also an embodiment of cultural, political, and economic logics that organize life within a building.

Strangely, as the renovation process began to strip the building to its structure, accompanied by several conservation studies that were commissioned by the Tel Aviv Municipality, some unused plumbing pipes and sanitary details that had lain dormant in the depths of the building revealed their origins. The visible surface of the building is currently in the process of renovation to restore its ‘Tel Aviv White’ to represent the supposed purity and freshness of ‘Bauhaus Style’ architecture, but underneath this apparent white skin (that upon more thorough research will prove to be more ochre or apricot) lies a dark past. Some of the plumbing elements, together with the house’s fittings and tiles, appear to have been manufactured in Germany. If true, how did these building materials get to Tel Aviv?

The controversial Ha’avara Agreement (Hebrew for ‘transfer’) was signed in 1933 between the Jewish Agency of Palestine and the German Reich Ministry of Economy (Reichswirtschaftsministerium), following negotiations between private Jewish businessmen and representatives of the German Zionist movement. This sophisticated agreement allowed German Jews, forced to emigrate from Nazi Germany, to transfer some of their capital – once they arrived in Palestine – by converting it into goods, including building materials, produced in Germany. The agreement was a means to solve the bind in which Jews, trying to leave Germany, were caught; due to Germany currency controls, they were not allowed to take more than two hundred Reichsmarks out of the country, while the British Mandate immigration authorities had set quotas of immigration that made visas conditional on a certificate that showed that émigrés had sufficient funds to afford life in Britain and in Palestine.

Mediated through a German trust company, Palästina Treuhandstelle zur Beratung Deutscher Juden GmbH (PALTREU), German Jews deposited their funds in accounts of the Anglo-Palestine Bank and the two German-Jewish banking houses that had partnered for this transfer, and these certified to the British immigration authorities the existence of sufficient funds. In Palestine – managed through the Ha’avara office in Tel Aviv – merchants and industrialists would order German products that would usually be heavily subsidized and hence cheaper than products produced in Palestine or other exporting countries. While German manufacturers would be directly paid through the PALTREU accounts in Germany, manufacturers in Palestine paid for the products through their Palestinian banks in Palestinian Pounds which would eventually provide

Max Liebling House, Tel Aviv, photographed by Jannis Uffrecht (Centre for Documentary Architecture) in 2018

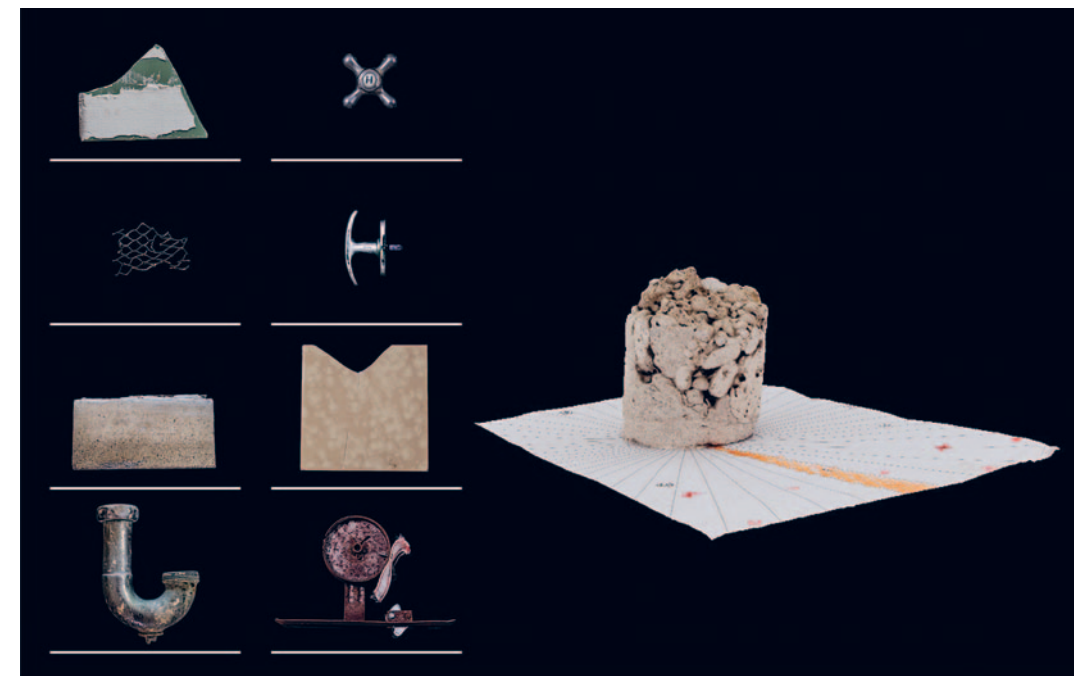
Germany with lucrative foreign currency. (Feilchenfeld, 1972) Consequently, this transfer of goods, and specifically of building materials (Bautransfer), generally supported the fledgling German economy, helping, in fact, to ease the effects of embargoes imposed on it. (Schubert, 2009)

The condition of the Max Liebling House, 'stripped bare' during the process of its renovation, presented a precious opportunity to unveil material evidence of a hidden past with the full spectrum of the methods of documentary architecture. Materials have complex stories to tell, details as minute as the constituent ingredients and colour pigments of the terrazzo of the floors, the inscriptions on the backs of tiles such as stamps for the company Villeroy & Boch, and pipework deep within the walls of the building, but also the house's more obvious façade elements, windows, door handles, fittings, and paints. Together with the White City Centre that set up a collaborative research network between municipal conservationists, preservation experts, historians, artists and our documentation team we reconstructed the trajectories of building materials, building elements, and objects to trace the complex history of modern architecture as it led back to German construction factories, manufactures, retailers, and, possibly, architects.⁸

To understand how controversial these findings might be, one needs to realize the power of the myth of the White City in the Israeli national narrative. Central Tel Aviv – known internationally as the 'White City' and embodying what is colloquially described as Bauhaus style – is actually a product of a much more eclectic form of the colonial modernisms promoted by European powers: the entire area of the colonized Middle East from Morocco to Lebanon was undergoing a relatively similar period of development using the forms of modern architecture. (Weizman, 2015: 112-120) However, in Tel Aviv, modern architecture has been presented as a unique form of national regeneration standing in contrast to both the European past, and the orientalist context of the Middle East. While the history of the German emigration to Palestine is certainly a core chapter within the history of the Bauhaus and the

⁸ Since 2015 the curators and conservation team of the White City Centre, Tel Aviv have conducted an intense educational program with a series of workshops, open house events, academic lectures and conversations that aimed publicly to

reflect about the history of the White City and the Max Liebling House. The White City Centre will open after renovation in 2019 with a series of research and exhibition projects.



The scrutiny of Documentary Architecture in action at the Max Liebling House – tiling, pipework and fittings all disclose a complicated and contested history.



migration of its ideas, protagonists, and objects, the currently celebrated Bauhaus jubilee intimates a much larger and multifaceted regional historiography of modernism in the Levant.

Our material analysis of the Max Liebling House revealed a problem in this narrative: a correlation between the time of construction of most of the buildings in the modernist core of Tel Aviv – between 1933 and 1939 – and the years of the Ha'avara Agreement with Nazi Germany. Thousands of migrants and refugees moved from Germany to Palestine during these years, and many products from factories affiliated with the German regime found their way to Tel Aviv, fueling the growth of the so-called 'first Hebrew town.' The White City, then, has an undoubtedly dark core, given the controversial nature of the Ha'avara Agreement, but this duality is fully understandable, given the historical circumstances.

Sharon Rotbard's critical reading of the notion of the 'White City' of Tel Aviv which celebrated Bauhaus-inspired modernism while distinguishing itself from the Palestinian 'Black City' of Jaffa shows another reality of how architectural historiography was instrumentalized by nationalist politics at the expense of the local population that had been displaced with the new cultural occupation consequent with the huge scale of Jewish immigration that began in the 1930s. (Rotbard, 2015) Narratives such as the 'White City which had emerged *ex nihilo* from the sand,' as Rotbard describes, have helped to build a moral alibi to distract from the ongoing processes of colonization and dispossession across the Occupied Territories and Southern Lebanon, but have also obstructed a deeper analysis of the complexities of the city's history, the story of arrival and displacement, and, additionally, in the context of this essay, the material story of the White City's origins in Germany. (Ibid., 44)

Modernism has always worshipped surface and colours – whether the Pantone colours of Le Corbusier, or the whiteness of the White City on the 'dune of the Mediterranean' – but here, in the Max Liebling House, built in part through a deal with Hitler's Germany, the white is also a whitening out, an attempt to hide and whitewash. When we peel away these layers, an archaeology of modernism is forced to reveal the layers of a fossilized past. The depth is the 'unconscious' of the wall and – like a contemporary version of Benjamin's photographic unconscious – is revealed by new digital methods and technologies. That technological unconscious is now being expanded through a multiplicity of sensors, modes of detection, and readings that go into the minute and molecular

level of matter. All that remained dormant for seventy years – unknown to the people who lived in the buildings and those who wrote their histories and that of the White City itself – are now exposed to the reality of these new findings. It is this 'architectural history in the age of digital detection' that permits us to uncover this latent, suppressed history.

The depth of the white walls is made of accumulated material histories, and these could only have erupted onto the surface through the gift of an opportunity – the renovation of an entire building. Conservationists, architects, photographers, filmmakers, and historians – like geologists – need now to rush to study the newly revealed stratigraphic layers of exposed earth and rock generated by such momentary 'seismological cracks.' The methods of Documentary Architecture will attempt to reveal more of the magic encyclopaedia of buildings, so intricately composed of material elements, documents, films, interviews, and recordings – physical and mediatic – of dust and of data.

Acknowledgments

This essay has been extracted with permission from two related essays by Ines Weizman: 'Bauhaus Modernism across the Sykes-Picot Line' (2019) first published in Weizman, Ines (ed.) 2019: 544-572; and 'Documentary Architecture: The Digital Historiographies of Modernism,' Weizman, 2018: 6-25 (English); and Weizman, 2019: 198-209 (German).

References

- Barr, James (2012 [2011]) *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East*, London: Simon & Schuster
- Benjamin, Walter (1968) 'Unpacking My Library,' in Hannah Arendt ed., *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* New York: Schocken Books
- Benjamin, Walter (1968) 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' in Hannah Arendt ed., *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, New York: Schocken Books
- Feilchenfeld, Werner, Dolf Michaelis and Ludwig Pinner (1972) *Haavara-Transfer nach Palästina und Einwanderung deutscher Juden 1933-1939* Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr
- Firro, Kais (1990) 'Silk and Agrarian Changes in Lebanon, 1860-1914,' in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22, no. 2, 151-69

- Foster, Zachary J. (2015) 'The 1915 Locust Attack in Syria and Palestine and Its Role in the Famine during the First World War' in *Middle Eastern Studies* 51, no. 3, 370–94
- Ginzburg, Carlo (2012) *Threads and Traces: True, False, Fictive* Berkeley: University of California Press
- Klee, Paul (1990) *Paul Klee, Tagebücher 1898-1918* Leipzig, Weimar: Kiepenheuer Verlag; (Cologne: Dumont, 1957)
- Rotbard, Sharon (2015) *White City, Black City: Architecture and War in Tel Aviv and Jaffa* London: Pluto Press
- Schubert, Günter (2009) *Erkaufte Flucht: Der Kampf um den Haavara-Transfer* Berlin: Metropol
- Spinney, Laura (2017) *Pale Rider: The Spanish Flu of 1918 and How It Changed the World* London: Penguin
- Tamari, Salim (2011) *Year of the Locust: A Soldier's Diary and the Erasure of Palestine's Ottoman Past* Berkeley: University of California Press
- Weizman, Eyal (2017) *Forensic Architecture: Violence at the Threshold of Detectability* New York: Zone Books
- Weizman, Ines (ed.) (2019a) *Dust & Data: Traces of the Bauhaus Across 100 Years*, Leipzig: Spector Books
- Weizman, Ines (2019b) 'Dokumentarische Architektur. Digitale Historiografien der Moderne' in *ARCH+ 234 Datatopia* (2019): 198–209
- _____ (2018) 'Documentary Architecture: The Digital Historiographies of Modernism,' *Faktur: Documents and Architecture*, no. 1 (Fall), 6–25
- _____ (2015) 'Bauhaus on the Golan. Notes towards an Architectural History of the Sykes-Picot Line,' *Bauhaus Magazin*, 7, 112-120
- Wichart, Stefanie (2014) 'The 1915 Locust Plague in Palestine' *Jerusalem Quarterly* 56/57: 29-39

Dust | Nicosia

From an interview with Marina Maleni

Cyprus Theatre Organisation (THOC)



'Scenography is the art of making space able to accept a context. Whether it be for theatre on a stage, or a city for an issue, or an environment to say something.'

The Cyprus Theatre Organization (THOC) is engaged in promotion of the art of theatre and cultivation of the theatrical sentiment of the people as well as artistic relations between the theatre world of Cyprus, Greece and other countries. During the *Emergence* project we were able to explore ways in which arts and cultural projects can act as a driver for supporting local talent through multinational creative exchanges. Implementing a series of workshops, talks, events and activities over these three years (2018-2021) we brought together art professionals, policymakers, educators, academics, and audiences who gave us important knowledge, skills and resources. All these tools will also be used to empower the artistic community in the future.

How the *Emergence* project achieved its goals

From Cyprus Theatre Organization's perspective, *Emergence* has achieved its goal to strengthen cultural participation, mobility and collaboration between important art and cultural institutions, artists and audiences from eight different countries. The partnership proved to be an effective tool for enhancing knowledge exchange and capacity building in varied and sometimes surprising ways. During these three years, each partner facilitated locally varied activities for the artistic community as well as for audiences.

Emergence placed emerging artists at the centre of the work, acting as a platform for the development and support of the next generation of international performance creators: all activities were specifically designed to encourage transnational mobility, create links between international professionals and advance their professional development within the international arts scene. All activities led by the eight partner

extracted from the
Emergence Project website:
[https://www.emergence.pq.cz/
rozhovor](https://www.emergence.pq.cz/rozhovor)

The ancient Cyprus
landscape photographed
for the workshop project
by Kristina Rezvöhh.
See also p.123.

organizations had as a common goal to provide mobility, exchange and co-working opportunities for scenography students, young and established professionals alike.

At the same time, the project's participants experienced the atmosphere of places with 'porous borders' – 'from the city of Nicosia divided by a militarized border, through the thin frontier zone in-between Ukraine and Russia, to problematic Brexit'. We feel it has been immensely successful in promoting all sorts of dialogue, between ethnicities, between convention and innovation, between the older, established successful generation of scenographers and the younger, emerging, budding generation of new scenographers to be.

In some respects the project exceeded our expectations, for example by giving participants entirely new experiences and allowing them to explore space in unique ways. On Håøya, for example, students survived without electricity, cooked their own meals, coped with quite primitive conditions – while at the same time working together wonderfully.

Acknowledging the lasting impact of conflict

The Cyprus workshop was an attempt to reflect on heritage and memory, provoking mobility, encouraging in depth interaction and collaboration between different artists: emerging and established; local and international; Greek and Turkish Cypriots, professionals and art students.

The tragic events of 1974 in Cyprus, amongst others, led to the forcible displacement of more than a third of Cypriots from their homes and ancestral lands, to the loss of loved ones and to the still unresolved tragic issue of the missing persons whose friends, relatives and families have yet to be informed of their fate. It approached the human aspect, as a spark of regional and communal memory of people whose lifelines were cut off forcibly and irrevocably. Two of the participants found it difficult to exist in a culture very different than theirs, where they felt that their individuality was perhaps not recognized in a manner they agreed with.

The enduring value

Emergence provided us with the necessary human and financial resources that made possible the planning of joint artistic and educational activities in Nicosia, enabling the exchange between established and early career artists, creating a platform for performance creators and audiences to



meet and interact. This long-term process allowed us to come closer to the initial goals: to offer new experiences, enhance careers and raise employability of young artists and creators across Europe, while establishing links between the Cyprus Theatre Organization and international institutions and individuals. We anticipate that gained experiences will help us better establish the international presence of our organisation, and secure a positive, long-term impact on the fast-growing arts community of Cyprus.



Christian Sørhaug

Conflicting Materials

I was sitting on the edge of the chair this particular Sunday. I was listening to a woman telling the story of how she lost her brother. I was watching her holding up a ragged, decaying pair of trousers, one of the few remains of her brother found in a mass grave. He was killed on the 14th August 1974 in the conflict between Turkish and Greek troops during the invasion of Cyprus, when the island became a battleground for the imperialist politics of Turkey and Greece.

The history of Cyprus stretches across millennia, but hearing the story of the loss of a brother at first hand always halts time. We were an odd group of people, captivated by her narrative, coming from all over Europe, though most of us were from Cyprus, Lithuania or Norway. Part of a workshop with *Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage* (OGCH) exploring the dark side of cultural heritage, the event took place in the ancestral home of the artist Toula Liasi. She had turned her home into a living museum where people could come to experience how life had been for the Greek Cypriots who had stayed after the 1974 invasion. Her village was a strange enclave in the Turkish occupied territories of Cyprus. Some people had refused to leave their homes even after the invasion, including her parents.¹

Toula had received her brother's remains from the UN authorities. As part of a United Nations effort negotiated in 2005 to locate Missing Persons from the conflict, the UN had excavated mass graves. Her brother had been identified through DNA testing. In addition to the trousers, which were relatively intact, Toula had received some parts of a metal belt buckle and other unidentifiable and decaying things. As the remnants of his body had been buried, she kept these elements, and created the art installation *Where have you been?* in her home. 'If you look closely, you can even see the roots in the trousers', she said, holding them up for us to

¹ 'The Sad Face of Cyprus' – 'This Week' – Thames Television, UK Documentary, 1976. Last Accessed 12 April 2021: <https://bit.ly/3mMF1AU>

UN Border Post 63 on the Cyprus 'Green Line'.
B. Kjartan Fønstelien

see. They buried her brother in a mass grave, left him alone – alone with the roots.²

Toula's story captivated everyone. Her matter-of-fact style of narrating, not being overly emotional, though at the same time conveying a deep love for her lost brother, made an impression on all of us. She had turned her family home into part shrine, part museum dedicated to her deceased brother and the enclave in which it was located. After her story, we walked through the village to the cemetery. We congregated around her brother's grave where she had reburied him. Looking out at the landscape from the cemetery, we saw hills, agricultural land, bushes and village houses. The landscape of Cyprus seemed the same on both sides, Turkish or Greek. However, a deep divide was evident all around.

The creation of this divide was not simply a local affair. It was not a question of a localized ethnic outburst drawing a line between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. External relations were deeply embedded in the construction of this conflict, larger than Turkey and Greece. In their article 'The Glocal Green Line', R. Bueno-Lacy and H. van Houtum reframe the question of the 1974 Cyprus conflict as a colonial power play between major global forces:

In the case of Cyprus, a varied collection of centres of imperial power – from the British Empire to Greece, Turkey, the US, the Soviet Union, the EU and the UN – have modelled places and heritage in Cyprus after geographies and legacies that never existed as they were imagined by those who promoted them. They have created imperial perceptions of distant closeness – what was in fact far and unrelated, such as the colonial motherland, is constructed as close and familiar – and adjacent remoteness – what was historically close and familiar, such as the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot neighbours, is constructed as distant and alien. Thus, rather than a fracture dug by ancient ethnic incompatibility between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, the Cypriot Green Line should be seen not only as a UN buffer zone or as a territorial division but mainly as a set of borders built over the past two centuries by discursive bricks of global and local provenance. The divisive narratives, practices and representations have entrenched a perception of the Cypriot Self that can be either Turkish or Greek, but never both. (Bueno-Lacy and van Houtum 2019: 30)

I think in the beginning we were overwhelmed by the daunting task of constructing an art installation that somehow would encapsulate, and

² See the catalogue to Toula Liasi's exhibition 'Where Have You Been?' in The Hague, NL (Liasi, 2018)



Artist Toula Liasi in her family home telling her story in 2019. B. Kjartan Fønstelien

destabilize, such a vast historical canvas. Decolonizing the dominant narratives of differences between Turkish and Greek Cypriots was beyond the short timeframe we were working with. How could we engage with this task and managed to give relevance to aspects of this decolonizing project? Politically this was a highly tense situation. Crossing the Green Line border pointed to the conflict between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots. Abandoned buildings along the Green Line, bullet holes through walls, warning signs and UN-posts are a stark reminder of the ongoing dispute.

Even when visiting Toula's house an 'official' guide was required to escort us into the Turkish area and the enclave where her parents lived. In the aftermath of Toula's story, the guide intervened suddenly. He told us how his father had been killed by Greek soldiers during the 1974 conflict. He narrated his story with substantial pathos, and repeatedly reminded the audience that there are different sides to this story. We became acutely aware of the highly volatile political situation in which we found ourselves



and of the complex sensitivities of people and place, and the narratives that still lie close to the surface as materials of potential and actual conflict. De-constructing and destabilizing national mythologies, as Bueno-Lacy and Houtum show in their analysis, demonstrates how place and heritage are a product of a varied and related collection of external imperial centres (British, US, Turkey, Soviet etc.) and their power plays and interests in Cyprus. On a more modest scale, these installations are methodological tools and analytical strategies that investigate heritage as assemblages. We strive to unsettle established borders between art practices and historical artefacts in order to open up new spaces to reflect on this conflict. (See for example Carrasco, Wolff et al. 2020). In this paper I am interested in asking how art installations, composed of highly heterogeneous component parts, generate new assemblages that can enact a reframing of memory.

The *Emergence* project Living Heritage/Reframing Memory shifts the gaze of the heritage industry toward a dark cultural heritage and its preoccupation with atrocities, suffering and death. In line with OGCH, the project strives to enact alternative and less articulated stories that are at odds with the master narratives dominant nation-states formulate. In Cyprus, the project participants worked over a two-week period with three stories that had unfolded on the island. In the first week, we gathered information from various sources; in the second week we started building installations relating to the three stories.

The first story ‘The Green Line’ concerns the establishment of the Green Line between 1964-1974 – a de-militarized zone that stretches for one hundred and eighty kilometers and still divides the island. In some places its width is merely twenty meters, in others as wide as seven kilometers. In some places you can clearly see the grotesque absurdity and destructive qualities of the conflict. For example, in the capital Nicosia entire city spaces are abandoned. Border crossings by tourists in Nicosia between the Turkish and Greek areas seem reminiscent of the Cold War in Berlin. The second story, the ‘Venetian Walls of Nicosia’, concerns the walls that surround the old town. The walls were finished in the latter half of the 1500s by the Republic of Venice. Though the walls are monumental, they are partly integrated into the urban sprawl of Nicosia. In this paper I focus on the third story ‘Missing Persons’ which concerns the stories of those who ‘vanished’ like Toula Liasi’s brother during the 1974 invasion.

The OGCH workshop method has been established for several years. For the most part the project has played out on Håøya, an island in the Oslofjord, Norway. Here participants have attended workshops exploring alternative narratives of Norwegian cultural heritage, working to decolonize established national mythologies. The workshops focused on three stories that historically played out on the island, using aspects of the local environment, combined with new elements, to construct alternative heritage stories made manifest in some type of installation. The participants practice a form of decolonization through their installations, leading and encouraging the audience to reflect somewhat differently on established historical facts. Such decolonizing art practices are a method and a strategic tool that enables a reframing of memory and our contemporary perspectives on society.

As an anthropologist, I was interested in following the assemblage process through which the art installation comes into being. ‘Coming into

Students visiting the cemetery on the Karpas Peninsula where Toula Liasi’s brother is buried. B. Kjartan Fønstelien, 2019

being' is key. In the assemblage process, it is external relations – the wider cultural and material contexts and contents – rather than simply internal relations between specific contents that constitutes an assemblage as a whole. What fascinates me in the making of art installations is the coming into being through a combination of relations and component parts that create an entity. There is never any fixed entity, particular form or specific material content beforehand. There is always a constellation of things and relationships in the process of coming into being. The participants were acutely aware of their task: to create something that would enact, or perform, something in the world, a something that had contemporary relevance for the people and place involved in its assemblage. I found it especially interesting how the participants imagined the relations between the various elements that could create an installation. It did not seem that they were concerned with any fixed models, starting points or markers guiding their approach.

Assemblage thinking holds that there are no essential models. Any such phenomenon is composed of a heterogenic assemblage of human and non-human entities with a temporary stability. New external entities participating in the assemblage can potentially alter the qualities of the whole. Wholes are also constantly emerging entities themselves, comprising a range of external relations. (See DeLanda, 2006). As a methodological tool, we cannot rest on an analysis that confines the conflicts between Greek and Turkish parts of Cyprus to a product of the internal affairs of Cyprus. Assemblage thinking is a critique of essences or the idea of primordial nation-states. If the concern of the state is to conserve, as Deleuze and Guattari (1980: passim.) have pointed out – and in whose writing much assemblage thinking originates – then we also need analytical strategies that assists us in breaking out of this thinking.

Working together with the 'Missing Persons' group gave me an opportunity to participate and observe how an art installation came into being. I was taking notes and pictures as the process unfolded using a 'go-along' approach as a central ethnographic research tool. (See Kusenbach, 2003). I travelled with the artists to various sites – market stores, woodshops, interior shops, lights decoration, restaurants – that allowed insight to the subtle reasoning and arguments unfolding in situ. Participating and observing, engaging in conversations, doing follow-up questions provided a wealth of information concerning the process of building an installation.

The assemblage process of the 'Missing Persons' installation unfolded in the second week as follows:

Monday – Agora: The site selected for the installations that would emerge from the assemblage processes of the three stories was the local Agora or meeting place, the cultural building and arts centre that doubles as a market, a place for assembly and community gatherings. The 'Missing Persons' participants discussed the politics of the situation. There was an acute awareness among the Cypriot participants not to engage in a discussion of 'whose rights'. When Toulia Liasis told her story, she did not victimize herself or the political situation. Her matter-of-fact narrative and the absence of blaming were part of what had impressed us all and following a brainstorming of potential ideas, guided the discussion of how the participants might make an installation that would reflect and reframe her story.

Tuesday – Waiting in a chair: Central to the brainstorming discussion on the Monday was the initial idea and image of a chair that enacted a feeling of waiting. This generated further discussion concerning what further materials might be developed for the installation – including the type of chair, electric fans, sand, the room itself transformed in a black-box, color and lighting. We sourced or bought the materials locally.

Wednesday – Building and being: The participants made drawings of a 'black box' which would be built outside around the windows of the installation, encapsulating the audience. We discussed how we could make a cover in black cloth, creating a black box, as well as to create a more soundproof room. The process of assembling all the component parts generates a synergy that energizes the participants and their creative process. We experimented with standing fans in the room to check the wind effect. The creation of a lot of wind made us all happy. The black box was around the vitrines and we discussed the positioning of the chair in the room that was formed, and how it could be attached.

Thursday – Re-assembling the black box: The black box was completed and the chair suspended with fish threads in-between the two fans, but there was concern with how it plays with the light, and how it looks from the outside the vitrines, standing in the black box.



The remains Toula Liasi received from the UN authorities when mass graves on Cyprus were excavated in 2005. 'The military trousers my brother was wearing when he was killed are still almost intact. Roots of plants growing above the mass grave are still tangled in the threads. The rusted metal pieces are from his belt.'
Photos: Marsel Loermans

Friday – Showing the last dance: We started the day with carrying sand into the installation. Others worked again with the black box. It was not quite secure and needed enforcing. Some expressed concern over the quality of the sand. The sand was wet and would not swirl as was expected. The artists suggested flour or cement, though nobody thought it would swirl. We tried sawdust; it did not swirl either. The chair was suspended mid-air with the fans making it move. Light bulbs became a central issue toward the end.

Participants were acutely attentive to the quality of the matter in the component parts of the installation, and how the various capacities of matter can play into its emergence. Though politics was not explicitly discussed, it under-pinned the process of building. Waiting in a chair for a brother who will never come – the central image of the installation – was a powerful image that commented on the difficult political situation Cyprus still finds itself in.

In *Vibrant Matter: A political ecology of things* (2010) the philosopher Jane Bennett explores how political practices are constitutively entangled with ecological systems. Human action makes itself possible through a host of non-human agencies:

If human culture is inextricably enmeshed with vibrant, non-human agencies, and if human intentionality can be agentic only if accompanied by a vast entourage of non-humans, then it seems that the appropriate unit of analysis for democratic theory is neither the individual human nor an exclusive human collective but the (ontological heterogeneous) ‘public’ coalescing around a problem. (Bennett, 2010: 108)

The ‘public’ is not a purely human field. Materials of various types entangle in producing this public. Cultural heritage is always engaging a more-than-human capacity. Conservation practices are public political practices. Conservationist policies are ways for the nation-state to exercise its unifying powers and creating a coherent public. However, many things are involved in exercising this public. Matter is a central concept that we as analysts must address when we discuss conservation practices since matter is neither silent, passive nor neutral. It is, as Bennett argues, very much vibrant, lively and agentic. The action of matter must therefore also be accounted for when we try to understand political action as a practice of conservation. There is a need for analytical accounts of the non-human entities that are swarming together with these human collectives. The

analytical gaze in the assemblage approach is a nexus, a hub, or collective, where we study how in the case of installations such entities emerge through the relations they engage. The specific materials of the installation were crucial.

Central in the turn to ontology and matter is an emphasis on how objects or things – here the chair, lights, fans, the black box – are involved in performing reality. In OGCH, the participants use the installations to explore alternative realities. The installations do not make any claim to represent historic reality or historical facts. Rather, they insist on being experiments into how someone could have experienced reality. Ontology, the study of what exists, turns our gaze from a representational idiom to a performative idiom. The science scholar Andrew Pickering suggests that we need to replace a representational idiom with a performative idiom (2017). One central move is to accept the impact and effect of non-human material entities in human lives, projects and in this case, art installations. Agency, that is the ability to create effects, is not a capacity that can simply be located in either humans or non-humans. Rather, agency and performativity are qualities of co-operation, co-existence and co-ordination in an assemblage of people and things. In this perspective the locus of agency is always a human–non-human working group (Bennett, 2010), a product of co-operation and dialogue. I like to think of us all participating in creating the installation as a human–non-human working group. Human work is only possible through our entanglement with non-human entities, and these non-human entities have capacities, which are mutually involved in construing the installation. Artists are always engaged in a morphogenetic field of forces where ‘... properties of materials are directly implicated in the form-generating process.’ (Ingold, 2002: 345). We re-frame memory through the materials we engage.

The tendency to purify and agree on one story and one reality is a trait of the modern condition (see Latour, 1993), and cultural heritage can be viewed as one mechanism by which we seem to agree on the idea of a single narrative reality. Nation-states, central players in the heritage industry, certainly try constantly to establish a singular narrative of its existence. Puzzled by the philosophical error of assuming that there is one overarching narrative reality for all humans, the philosopher Hilary Putnam points to emerging realities. He suggests we all are constantly involved in an endless negotiation and renegotiation of realities as life and language develop (Putnam, 1994: 452). The construction of ‘us’ requires

some 'other', and in the OGCH project we attend to 'others' that are often silenced, discarded or simply forgotten through the dominant narratives of history. In developing his concept of dwelling the philosopher Martin Heidegger also points to the connection between being and building. (Heidegger, 1971: 143-162) Rebuilding histories through installations, then, is concerned with re-discovering ways of remembering and being.

Thinking of cultural heritage as a type of scenography, we might ask how we can re-frame the corporeal influence of cultural heritage over our lives. The impetus of a scenographic approach behind the OGCH project has been described in the following terms by Serge von Arx:

Scenography as such does not exist, it is agency. Scenography is the spatial definition and establishment of potentialities for the unfolding of activities. Space created by architects and scenographers is the accurately framed void where performances, a stroll, a political debate, a love scene or our very lives take place. These physical frames activate our visual and haptic senses, our hearing, smell and even taste. Whenever our senses are triggered, our brain jumps in and interferes. Although it constantly activates cognitive or unconscious associations and interpretations, we nevertheless expand our corporeal experiences. (von Arx, 2016: 83)

Through the process of assembling installations, we open up a discussion that is already conserved, as is often the case with cultural heritage. The installations are experiments in commemorating the 'other' in various ways. If mainstream cultural heritage tends to advocate one master narrative, the installations create a dialogical environment where we can re-examine how the world connects and explore how other negotiations of reality might have been. By shifting attention from the installations in isolation, to the process of assembling installations with their surroundings, like the entire ensemble of nation-state building and its political underpinnings, we might get another perspective – and another perspective on what concerns us in relation to cultural heritage.

As art and scenography, these workshops strive to enter into a dialogue with heritage as something dynamic, and thereby reframe established memory. Analyzing installation as a heterogeneous assemblage of human and non-human component parts negotiates sets of relations in order to establish a dialogue. The temporary stability of the installation is dependent on human intervention. At the same time, participants are constantly surprised at how the mixture of elements emerges. The participants improvise and negotiate with materials and their capacity to create an

affective and sensory response in an audience. The workshops open up the possibility to relate to heritage as an evolving process of the constant re-negotiation of connections and relations in a world increasingly localized and globalized.

Outside on the door to the black box these questions introduced the installation:

- How does one question the barriers between the private and the public?
- How can I question the barriers between my understanding of your feelings of pain and waiting?
- Can I ever wait with you?

The main image was a chair suspended in air and the waiting it enacted. The chair is a typical Cypriot feature: you can observe people sitting along the pavement outside their house, being social with others; others doing nothing in particular, maybe just waiting for a family member. We covered the floor with sand, and below and above the chair we placed large fans. Originally, we thought the fans would whirl up the sand, creating an effect of dryness and barrenness, the type of landscape in which Toula's brother was located. However, the fans were not powerful enough. The various lights created a shadow of the chair on the walls, moving slightly from the breeze from the fans, creating the effect of a moving chair.

The materials of conflict we use in the OGCH project in combination with many other elements, offers a destabilizing view of mainstream cultural heritage. Bruno Latour makes the point that we do not assemble: '... because we agree, look alike, feel good, are socially compatible or wish to fuse together but because we are brought together by divisive matters of concern into some neutral, isolated place in order to come to some provisional agreement.' (Latour, 2005: 13). The divisive matters that concern us prompt us to create alternative stories. The process of assemblage itself generates a wealth of conflict among the participants themselves. Heated discussions concerning what type of light bulb should we use, fans or no fans, sand or saw dust, were constant throughout the process. One participant expressed the anxiety she has experienced. She told us that people on the Turkish side could still vanish. The other participants had not recognized the danger this project could pose for her. While they could relate intellectually, she did not feel they were able to understand her perspective.

In *The Public and its Problem* John Dewey talks about state formation and nation-state building as experiments: ‘... since the conditions of actions and of inquiry and knowledge are always changing, the experiment must always be retried: the State must always be rediscovered.’ (Dewey, 1991, s. 256). Rediscovering and exploring alternative stories, speculating on how others and their suppressed voices could have lived their lives, provides us with perspective. Though the tendency of the state is to conserve and solidify its power, and to create legitimacy for its project through the construction of certain master narratives, we need to explore alternative stories to reveal and reactivate those excluded in the narratives of the nation-state.

As expressed in the text to the installations, cultural heritage is both a private and public issue. The ‘other’ to which we contrast the ‘us’ of the nation-state, is historically ‘the enemy, the prostitute, the communist’ – and perhaps in contemporary terms might now include ‘the immigrant, the activist, the disabled.’ The gruesome aspects of our cultural heritage then offer us a way of re-discovering ourselves as a society. Viewing the installation on Friday, Toula expressed the importance of having outsiders looking at a people’s history in order to think differently about it. This decolonizing project provokes reflections on how we connect, have connected and how we can connect in re-imagined and re-framed ways in the future.

References

- Heidegger, Martin (1971) ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’ in *Poetry, Language, Thought* trans. Albert Hofstadter, New York: Harper Colophon
- Ingold, T. (2002). *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill*. London, Routledge
- Kusenbach, M. (2003). ‘Street Phenomenology: The Go-Along as Ethnographic Research Tool.’ in *Ethnography* 4(3): 455-485
- Latour, B. (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern* New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf
- Latour, B. (2005). ‘From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik: or How to Make Things Public’ in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of democracy*. B. Latour and P. Weibel. Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press
- Liasi, Toula (2018) *Where Have You Been* exhibition catalogue The Hague: Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus/ ANNA@KV2, (02-11 June), <https://www.toulaliasi.nl>
- Pickering, A. (2017). ‘The ontological turn: taking different worlds seriously.’ in *Social Analysis* 61(2): 134
- Putnam, H. (1994). ‘Sense, Nonsense, and the Senses: An Inquiry into the Powers of the Human Mind’ in *The Journal of Philosophy* 91(9): 445-517
- von Arx, S. (2016). ‘Unfolding the public space: Performing Space or Ephemeral Section of Architecture, PQ 2015.’ in *Theatre and Performance Design* 2(1-2): 82-94



On Assemblage and Method

Christian Sørhaug asks 'how art installations, composed of highly heterogeneous component parts, generate new assemblages that can enact reframing of memory' (see p.128). He provides an outline of an assemblage approach to scenography used in the OGHC workshops and reflected in some of the participants' texts here. Reading through these writings and texts that document the variety of strategies used in the scenographic work and installations that shaped and emerged from the OGCH projects, I see connections with strategies and ways of doing and making that are observed and confronted in other contemporary practices: adaptive form, opacity, listening, distance, sensation. The aim here is that this collection not only gathers documents and reflections on the OGHC project but widens the field of conceptual and active resources that can inform, enact and reframe how artworks can and do engage with memory, social interaction and place.

Tentative and adaptive form

In *Architectural Body* (2002) the artists Madeleine Gins and Arakawa describe what architecture means to them: 'a tentative constructing towards a holding place. Walk into this building, and you walk into a purposeful guess.' (2002:23). The work of architecture only begins to generate its meanings when it is 'entered and used'. The scenographic installations of the OGCH project emerged or were generated as active and flexible 'carriers of memory or agencies for remembering' rather than as consolidations or descriptive materialisations of memory. Gins and Arakawa propose an architectural body that is '[c]onstructed to exist in the tense of what if, it presents itself as intentionally provisional, replacing definite form with tentative form, the notion of a lasting structure with that of an adaptive one.' (2002: 28-29)

Opacity

The idea of memorialising or finding a scenographic modality in which to address or to listen to that which is fundamentally or partially opaque, as for

The 'Missing Persons' installation was made by Kristina Rezvõhh (Latvia), Nefeli Kentoni (Cyprus), Petros Lappas (Norway), Pia Lindstad (Norway), Refia Ors (Cyprus) and Stavri Papadopoulou (Cyprus). B. Kjartan Fønstelien

example in the material evidence on Håøya Island, is a question that is raised by the writer and scholar Kristen Kreider in her writing on the artist Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's video installation *Passages Paysages* (1978):

Throughout my critical engagement with and response to Cha's *Passages Paysages*, I attempt to consider how the artwork communicates in and through a fundamental opacity. Moreover, I consider such opacity as intrinsic to the artwork's 'voice' and my own embodied reception and perception of it. How, then, do I 'listen' and respond to the artwork's address? (Kreider, 2014: 105-6)

Here we might begin to consider the role of 'silence' and of a sensory embeddedness in the site of memory that was required of the workshop participants when they arrived on Håøya Island as reflected in Julie Olympia Cahannes' 'Liebespamphlet' and to the relative opacity of the various installations themselves.

The idea of a 'fundamental opacity' at the heart of the work – be that through erasure of evidence or narrative; or intrinsic to the 'voice' of the artworks, the place of language and its embodied perception and reception perhaps finds a useful analogue in the idea of a 'minor literature'. Proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1975) a 'minor literature', in addition to opening new perceptual spaces through a deterritorialization or displacement of a 'major' literature or language, is always in a process of differentiation without a fixed or stable identity.¹

Listening

The question of 'listening', and of 'responding' to an artwork's address and what that might mean for the scenographic process of memorialisation also finds an interesting analogue in Tina Campt's 'Listening to Images' which describes and designates a method of 'recalibrating vernacular photographs as quiet, quotidian practices that give us access to the affective registers through which these images enunciate alternative accounts of their subjects.'

It is a method that opens up the radical interpretive possibilities of images and state archives we are most often inclined to overlook, by engaging the paradoxical capacity of identity photos to rupture the sovereign gaze of the regimes that created them by refusing the very terms of photographic subjection they were engineered to produce. (Campt, 2017: 5)

¹ For a concise précis of the concept of a 'minor literature' see Victoria Addis (2017) 'Deleuze and Guattari: 'Minor Literature'' (March 18th) – <https://bit.ly/2SvBNa4>

Campt's affective and sensory engagement with historically dismissed photographic images of black subjects throughout the black diaspora – passport photos, ethnographic photos, prison mug shots – provides an analogical method for 'listening' to memory narratives, objects and sites and an analogy with the sensory approach to place and its materials used in the OGCH project.

Sensation/Emotion

In his reflection on the Håøya Island project Petros Lappas describes the sensations of '[l]ooking for objects to give dimension to memory' (see p.69) and we see in the writings of other participants Julie Cahannes, Nefeli Kentoni, Petros Kourtellaris and Sierra Casady (Coco Rosie) an extract of whose song composed during the workshop in the remains of the dynamite production plant is included here, a strategy of sensory and emotional engagement which concurs with and develops Serge von Arx's 'sensation of memory' and a practice of a sensorially oriented 'mnemonic scenography'.

Distance

Serge von Arx writes on spatial and sensory narratives in memorials, and the tensions that arise between the various scenographic threads that act as triggers of imagination. These provoke questions that arise from the physical experience of memorials as a space of reflection: the problem of finding the right distance between the various threads in play in the work to enable adequate reflections to arise. Brockmeier notes that 'narrative is a mode of thought that allows us to gain a more detached vantage point on the world and on ourselves. [...] [W]e owe narrative our specific human ability of hindsight, of interpreting and reassessing the past; in other words, narrative "has at its core a dimension of distance" (Brockmeier, 2015: 146) and the writer Italo Calvino in his essay 'Light in Our Eyes' (1982) notes in relation to metaphors acting as models for the functioning of the eye: '[a]s for the mirror, Claude Lorraine painted with his back to the landscape, which he saw reflected in a little convex mirror, conjuring up effects of distant hazy beauty. The pathos of distance thus comes into being, a fundamental component of our culture'.

Nefeli Kentoni

To arrive at a space as a local

Driving to the hotel, five minutes away from my house, in the old town of Nicosia. Passing through known streets, knowing when to turn left and right. I am no stranger to my city, I think. Arriving; meeting the others, it feels good to recognize some. We go for walks to breathe in the city; I am confused, I thought the city was already within me. I try to forget what I know. I try to be remade without the relation of the rest of my world. Impossible. Navigating myself, is a choreography of perfectly rehearsed steps to go from A to C; I skip the B. Border. The border is part of this choreography, it is the end of the stage, I think. Visiting B, requires an altered choreography, requires me to be the audience. I transform into a spectator. We go for walks, *there*, to breathe in this city; I am confused, I thought this city was not within me. I saw commonalities (and differences). New histories. An oxymoronic thought. We return, to *my* city, and I start missing steps, tripping on histories uncovered.

We naturally started forming groups, based on what story we wanted to work with: 'The Venetian Walls', 'The Ghost City of Famagusta' and 'The Missing Persons.' Interested in focusing on the human aspect of the stories, I chose to work with the latter. Cautious of my position, history and language, I will only touch upon the fundamentals of the story. During the intercommunal conflicts between 1963 and 1974, massacres led by both communities resulted to about 500 Turkish speaking Cypriots and 1,500 Greek speaking Cypriots disappearing. Families still wait for their return. This wait is political. I grew up with black & white pictures of Greek Cypriot women holding photographs of their sons and husbands, waiting. These same pictures existed on the other side; the only difference being the women were Turkish Cypriot. These pictures framed, endlessly waiting. This is how States form national mythologies. Through the refusal to accept the existence of both these pictures, the identities of Cypriots are being distorted as they are being formed.





Our scenographic installation was an attempt to stage the communal memory without separating the two communities. To stage the politics of waiting. The absurdity. The heritage site became the whole island, the histories and buried bodies that it carries. The façade of a clean history, a stained soil. Forget. Dig. Uncover. Re-learn. Expose. Remember. Collaborate with artists from the other side, crucial. Listen. Collaborate with artists who do not know your history, that are separated from the emotions of this history. Question together this history. Question the barriers of your understanding of these families' feelings of pain and waiting. Question your position. Stage a memory, a post-memory. Allow the scenography to become a witness, even if it is just for a moment. Read the site as if for the first time; forget the choreography.

A full version of this extract from Nefeli Kentoni's article 'A Post-Memory' was first published online in *Ascending Folio 1. Act 3* (April 2021) https://www.ascendingdesign.org/?page_id=19243 See also Nefeli Kentoni's *Shuffled Memory* <https://vimeo.com/197762658>. Photography: Nefeli Kentoni



On Memory

In Jens Brockmeier's magisterial exploration of memory, narrative and the autobiographical process (2015) he raises the question of how our concepts, metaphors, and models not only reflect but also shape the world in which we live. For Brockmeier, memory is of particular interest because 'what it is, its ontology, is not independent from the way we conceive of it, and such conceptions are not independent from the cultural economy of remembering and forgetting of which they are a part.' (2015: 26) Arguing that the 'venerable notion of memory as a storehouse, an archive of the past has been called in to question by new insights and perspectives (not least in the arts) over the last decades, he shows that the metaphor of the archive has 'shaped the idea of memory 'in Western philosophy, literature, art and everyday life 'for centuries and millennia.'

The conviction that memory is a kind of archive of past experiences and knowledge goes hand in hand with the assumption that there is a distinctive naturally and, that is, biologically given human capacity or faculty that enables us to remember. This faculty empowers us to encode, store and retrieve (or recall) the past, to use the technical vocabulary of modern scientific memory research. (2015: viii)

He argues that the decline of the explanatory force of the archival model has opened up new conceptions and scenarios of remembering and forgetting that are different insofar as that they 'envision them as constructive and reconstructive events, as ongoing, open, and creative processes that have as much to do with the present and the future as with the past. For Brockmeier memory and remembrance 'appear as part and parcel of social activities, as a cultural form of life.' (2015: viii)

Brockmeier's arguments for a reframing of memory, and his use of literary and artwork examples, align closely with the processes of contemporary scenographic and performance practices, and with the turn to process-oriented approaches to the composition of the artwork that have been developed since

Refugees and migrants reach the Greek island of Lesbos after crossing the Aegean sea on a dinghy from Turkey in March 2020. Ververidis Vasilis/Shutterstock

the 1950s across the fields of poetics, performance, installation, scenography; for example Olson's 1951 essay 'Human Universe' which in its understanding of the natural world of which we are an integral part rejects the negative aspects of a self-serving humanism and attempts to realign a human relationship with the natural world. 'There must be a way that bears *in* instead of away, which meets head on what goes on in each split second, a way which does not – in order to define – prevent, deter, distract, and so cease the act of, discovering.' (Olson, 1966 [1951]: 62)

If man [sic] choses to treat external reality any differently than as part of his own process, in other words as anything other than relevant to his own inner life, then he will [...] use it otherwise. He will use it just exactly as he has used it now for too long, for arbitrary and willful purposes which, in their effects, not only change the face of nature but actually arrest and divert her force until man turns it even against herself, he is so powerful [...] But what [he] will not recognise is, that when he turns it against her, he turns it against himself, held in the hand of nature as man forever is, to his use of himself if he choose, to his disuse, as he has. (Olson, 1966 [1951]: 56)

Olson's critique of humanism in *Human Universe* and his post-1945 shift towards an ecocritical poetics *avant la lettre* equates our internal processes with our external environment – 'equal that is, to the real itself'.¹ It shows that the implications and affects of our gruesome cultural heritage cannot be so easily separated from our gruesome environmental heritage, the culpability and (lack of) responsibility for which is a choice that we make, ignore or conceal at our peril, and not a consequence of a separate or otherwise given, natural or external reality.

¹ See Olson's essay on Melville, 1966 [1958]: 46-52.

Petros Kourtellaris

Never Forget the Memories You Never Lived

I could not imagine what was on the other side. My grandmother Sanem spoke of her beautiful lilies and roses as she tried to contain her crying. Her new, old living room with the long throws covering the sofas and armchairs as if to protect them. As if they are brand new. Who is going to protect her? But they are old. And she is old too. She is sitting in the corner of one of the armchairs, with her stature almost frozen but I can still see in her eyes how proud she is to be a noticeable presence in the room.

She knows she stands out. Red hair and duo-chrome nail polish, and a set of fiery eyes. On her fingers her wedding ring, along with a diamond cut ruby. And with her smile, she confirms it. She is in control of her old, new living room. The room smells of friendly dust, it is old. I guess it is quite uncertain when things became familiar and old to her. When did things reach a maturity within her? When did the evil settle in? I suppose I will never know. For she does not like to think of her old house, her old, old house, the other house that she built and left behind. Oh grandma, I promise not to forget the thing that I never really knew. I promise to treasure and protect and never ever forget the memories I never lived.

Who is going to protect the memories of now?

Hidden in plain sight is our democracy Sanem. Here in plain sight and if I believe in it really, really hard, I can almost see it growing from those gold sun-kissed fields of wheat, with a silly symbol of a dove that we both stereotyped and classified as the messenger of peace. How silly. We should have put a turtle on our flag from the very beginning. Because home is here and nowhere, home is with us just like the turtle. And look, off she goes now, slowly but surely, slower than ever, our democracy is half swimming half drowning. I close my eyes and the future is now, and all those cool things that I once imagined. Oh, how exciting those boring and

mundane things are. And I want to see them. I want to see the stamp on the letters and a new emblem and a new flag that people will be proud of. And an identity that is concrete and unshakable. And I imagine it. Rotating in a GIF on a website our new emblem almost like a holographic ghost of the 90s. And it gives me chills. And I want to protect the memories of our ancestors and fight for what they think is righteous. But who is going to fight for my future? Who is going to protect the memories of now?

As a participant in the Emergence workshops in Norway and Cyprus, I look back at opportunities that were given to me and allowed me to connect with others and myself. In Norway I learned that scenography is not just theater design, but rather a way into looking at space and stories. Studying on a course that focused on theater I was happy to explore a world outside of it that still used the same tools to create. And whilst in Norway I found friendship and a different way of working in Cyprus, I had to face my own invisible walls. Walls that kept me from seeing what was on the other side. Prior to the project I had not visited the Northern part of Cyprus. While my grandparents, who are refugees, encouraged me to go, my parents were not open to the idea, and with the military presence I felt somewhat afraid to go. The tour allowed me to connect with places I had only met in books, and that's when I realized the self-contradiction of my education thus far, focusing on not forgetting memories that were never mine in the first place. I am happy to see how the seeds of this project have influenced my own practice as I worked on a costume and film for my third year at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama in Cardiff, entitled 'Nitsa' [Peace] which further explored the past, making sure it is documented almost like a time capsule, with the hope that we can look into our own future, as a united Cyprus.



Petros Lappas
Missing Persons

Άδειο δωμάτιο παλιού σπιτιού.
In the empty room of an old house,
Ένα σιγανό αεράκι φτάνει το πρόσωπό σου.
A soft breeze kisses your face.
Γερασμένα πρόσωπα ντυμμένα στα μαύρα στέκονται στις γωνίες.
Aged faces, wearing black, stand in the corners.
Δεν μπορείς να τα δεις.
You can't see them.
Δεν έχουν ανάψει φως.
There is no light.
Εδώ, ο χρόνος έχει σταματήσει χρόνια τώρα.
Here, time has been still for years now.
Μόνο, μόνο μια λάμπα ταλαντεύεται στο κενό
There is only a single lamp swinging in the emptiness,
δίνοντας μια ελαφριά παρουσία στα αντικείμενα του χώρου.
Giving a slight presence to objects in this space.
Η παχιά άμμος έχει καθίσει σαν ένα βρεγμένο στρώμμα λάσπης
The thick sand has settled like a wet layer of mud
πάνω στατσιμεντένια σκαλοπάτια.
on the concrete steps.
Τα πόδια σου βουλιάζουν.
Your feet are sinking.
Προσπαθείς να περπατήσεις, αλλά όλο κοντοστέκεσαι κοιτάζοντας το κενό.
You are trying to walk, but you pause, looking at the void.
Εδώ ο χρόνος κυλάει σαν κάτι να άφησε πίσω σου.
Here, time begins to flow as though it left something behind.
Το δωμάτιο σε ρουφάει σαν σκοτεινό τούνελ στο άγνωστο.
The room sucks you into an unknown dark tunnel.
Πιθανόν ότι έχασες, βρίσκεται κάτω από την πυκνή άμμο.
What you lost probably lies under the dense sand.
Ένας δυνατός αέρας ταρακουνάει τα αντικείμενα του χώρου.
A strong wind shakes the objects within the space,
Θέλει να τα διώξει από εκεί μέσα.
Wants to drive them out of there,
Να φύγουν μακριά.
Send them far away;

Εκείνα αντιστέκονται με μανία.
They resist with fury,
Αιωρούνται κάτω από το λιγοστό φως δίχως φωνή.
Hovering under the scarce light without a voice,
Σαν να ξέχασαν ότι υπάρχει αυτή η καθολική δύναμη που κρατάει αιώνες
As if they forgot this universal power that has held
τώρα όλα στην θέση τους.
everything in place for centuries now.
Εσύ πάλι, που και που ξεχνάς να βαδίσεις.
You, on the other hand, sometimes forget to march on.
Τα πέλματά σου ακουμπούν ελαφρά στην γη και έπειτα χάνονται.
Your soles rest lightly on the ground, before disappearing.
Αόρατοι επισκέπτες ανεβαίνουν αθόρυβα την κυκλική σκάλα.
Invisible visitors climb the circular staircase silently.
Δεν μπορείς να τους δεις.
You can't see them.
Κρύβονται κάτω από στρώματα άμμου.
They hide under layers of sand.
Στέκεις σιωπηλός.
You stand, in silence.
Ψάχνεις να βρεις τις λέξεις στα ρυτιδιασμένα χείλη.
Searching for words on wrinkled lips.
Θαρρείς πως μέσα σε τούτο τον άνεμο έσβησε η φωνή σου.
As if your voice vanished in the wind.
Κοιτάζεις πίσω σου.
You look behind you.
Μια στενή χαραμάδα κάτω από την μαύρη πόρτα, αφήνει μια λωρίδα
A narrow gap under the black door lets a strip of light in.
φωτός να περάσει μέσα.
Hearing voices.
Ακούγονται φωνές. Ποιός ξέρει άραγε τι ώρα θα ναι εκεί έξω?
Who knows what time it might be out there?

On Forgetting

Olson's insistence on finding a means to 'bear *in* instead of away', of understanding 'definition' as a stultifying force that 'cease[s] the act of, discovery' resonates over years with a need to discover appropriate and active relationships with our pasts. The gruesome cultural heritage that was explored in the process of conceptualising and designing adaptable and flexible memorials on Håøya Island and in Cyprus surfaced the historical and wilful forgetting or overlooking of events on the part of accountable authority – events where states of exception were (or continued to be) invoked through 'the extra-judicial exclusion and detainment of the 'other' – a situation that has become (and continues to be) a 'normal technique of governmentality for maintaining sovereignty'. (Tello, 2016: xii-xix) ¹

In *Counter-Memorial Aesthetics* (2016) Verónica Tello examines relationships between vanishing refugee histories and counter-memorial aesthetics as a paradigm in the work of some contemporary artists including Mike Parr, Chantal Akerman and boatpeople.org.

This art is characterised by its treatment of vanishing voices and images bound to refugees experiences as heterogeneous: this means that they are, first, in excess of homogenous national bodies and narratives and, second, part of the myriad flows and networked events that structure a globalised world. This dual meaning of heterogeneity is central to counter-memorial aesthetics.' (2016: xix)

Tello's identification of 'heterogeneity' in the artwork perhaps resonates with – though is not to be directly conflated with – the scenographic emphasis and

¹ See Giorgio Agamben (2005) *State of Exception* Chicago UP. Such 'states of exception' are increasingly commonplace governmental tools globally and are too numerous to detail, but include for example both the recently confirmed UK Government decision to declare that Uighurs and other ethnic and religious minorities in China's Xinjiang region are

being subjected to genocide (22 April) – <https://bit.ly/2Uoe9x0>; and the UK Government's 'hostile environment' policy towards immigrants and asylum seekers and those, such as the Windrush generation, 'illegally' resident in the UK, brought in by the then Prime Minister, Theresa May, under the Immigration Act in 2014 .

Jewish Refugees aboard the 'illegal' immigrant ship *Theodor Herzl* in 1947. They were among the multitude who fled from Germany to Palestine before the establishment of the sovereign State of Israel in May 1948. World History Archive/Alamy



approach to surfacing and reframing the vanishing cultural histories and memories of the forgotten and overlooked, the 'disappeared' and enslaved that the OGHHC project focuses on. It is also worth noting here that the prologue to Tello's book begins in 2001 with the narrative of the *Tampa* – the Norwegian cargo ship that gave assistance to four hundred and thirty-three Afghani and Iraqi refugees in their attempt to reach the offshore Australian territory of Christmas Island where they were met by a hostile Government (2016: xvii).

Serge von Arx describes how the physical and spatial qualities of a memorial operate as a gathering place, convening people to reflect on past events: '[P]eople associated with a memorial's context rely on the relevance of the site, its physical circumstances, and its sensory qualities as a mnemonic catalyst; whereas the absence of a material, haptic faculty can emphasize the momentum of a place of commemoration'. It is a memorial's sensory properties that 'act more subliminally as a key agency that questions or reveals the hidden' (See p.25).

The Norwegian freighter *Tampa* with 438 Afghani and Iraqi refugees on deck manoeuvres off Christmas Island between the Australian Navy vessel *Manoora* and an Australian army assault craft in September 2001. Many of the refugees rescued by the captain of the freighter, Arne Rinnan, went on a hunger strike when the Australian government threatened to return them to Indonesia. Alamy





Coda

Reframing Memory

The sculptor Christian Boltanski has identified his work (1996) as concerned with ‘what differentiates us from one another’ which he calls ‘small memories’ or ‘the hoard of small bits of knowledge that each of us accumulates [that] make up what we are’ as opposed to the ‘great memories’ collected in history books and public memorials.¹ These ‘small memories’ – the details of everyday lived experience – are gathered in narratives and images as ‘mnemonic catalysts’. Their sensory as much as their semantic qualities give resonance to the work and to the experience of the work.

Thinking again on the way in which art work intervenes in the world and ‘in what ways the work opens or closes, energises or depletes our capacity to imagine new ways of being in the midst of life’, to use Eric Santer words (134-135) in my own reading of the writings and images collected here, I begin to find a constellation of ‘small memories’, of images as mnemonic catalysts. Some are sensory, some photographic, some imaginative: images of ships as exclusion and enclosure; image of ships as assistance, safety, refuge; the ship as housing or forced isolation for immigrants; the ship as sunken wreckage, as a hidden or immediate danger; boats as a means of arrival in Håøya Island; images of Vietnamese boat people in the 1970s, of Albanian refugees in 1991 on board the *Vlora* approaching Bari, the first port in ‘Fortress Europe’.

In his ‘Little History of Photography’ Benjamin writes ‘... to find the inconspicuous spot where in the immediacy of that long-forgotten moment the future nests so eloquently that we, looking back, may discover it. For it is another nature that speaks to the camera rather than to the eye: ‘other’ above all in the sense that a space informed by human consciousness gives way to a space informed by the unconscious.’ (Benjamin, 1999:510) The idea of the ‘choreographic image’ – the movement of water, of dust, of ships, of bodies – and of the ‘scenographic image’ – the momentum of a place of commemoration – as a form of mnemonic unconscious.

* * *

¹ See as an example of ‘small memories’ Boltanski’s 1991 installation *Réserve de Suisses Morts* - <https://www.macba.cat/en/art-artists/collectables/christian-boltanski>

Crewmen of the amphibious cargo ship *USS Durham* in the South China Sea take Vietnamese refugees aboard a small craft before transferring them to the freighter *Transcolorado*.
Wikipedia/Creative Commons

The German-American emigré poet Lisel Mueller has described memory as ‘the only afterlife that I can understand’ (1996) and Jens Brockmeier points out that the word ‘memory’ is like the word time: ‘there is no place, no spatiotemporal field, no *res extensa* that it can capture, although it has the flavour of it.’ (2015:304) Moving the metaphor of memory beyond the archive Brockmeier notes that ‘perspectives tend to reframe remembering and forgetting as social activities, as practices of persons who are steeped in cultural worlds abounding in mnemonic activities and artifacts’ and that the ‘notion of memory that shifts the attention from the single organ, the brain, to the biological-social-cultural lives of people, to individuals, that is, who remember and forget as in the midst of a cultural and historical world.’ (2015:308-9).

In his concluding chapter on the reframing of memory Brockmeier draws on Anselm Kiefer’s installation *Volkszählung (Census)*, 1990,² which tackles the dilemma of the long-established and reinforced discourse of mnemonic storage – ‘the set of archival concepts encapsulating the encoding, storing (or *retaining* or *maintaining*) and *retrieval* of memories’. It attempts (as an artwork) to ‘capture both the dilemma of ‘memory’ – an entity that does not exist but still haunts us – and the ‘method’ of reframing old things by re-describing them in new ways – a strategy which corresponds to the scenographic approach taken to the workshop installations on Håøya Island and in Nicosia – a strategy which reframes the materials and narratives of what remains in memory through sensory, poetic and scenographic means.

To follow an equivalent method of reframing through re-description, these commentaries have explored topics that emerge from and amplify the OGCH project: *time, objects, attention, borders; assemblage and method; adaptive form, opacity, listening, sensation and emotion and distance; memory, forgetting and images*. In Brockmeier’s analysis of Kiefer’s *Volkszählung (Census)* ‘the longer we walk around the installation, the more it turns into an enigmatic fossil. A memento mori from an era whose messages have become unintelligible as time has gone by.’ (2015: 313-315). Seen as a whole, I hope that these interventions help to map and expand a poetics that continues to reframe and redescribe scenographic and sensory engagements with memory, commemoration, and artmaking. Starting with an epigraph taken from W.G. Sebald (2001:72) in which he describes the predicament of history and memorialisation as ‘...images at which we keep staring while the truth lies elsewhere, away from it all, somewhere as yet undiscovered’, the writings, images and artworks reflected on here move us towards a future in ways we can hope will not ‘prevent, deter, distract’ us from new acts of discovery.

References

- Addis, Victoria (2017) ‘Deleuze and Guattari: ‘Minor Literature’ [18 March] <https://bit.ly/3jmUBn1>
- Allsopp, Ric (2009) ‘Still Moving: 21st Century Poetics’ in *Uncalled: The future of performance* ed. Sigrid Gareis, Berlin: Theater der Zeit/ TQW, pp. 247-255
- Benjamin, Walter (1968 [1940]) ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’ in *Illuminations* ed. Hannah Arendt, New York: Harcourt, Brace
- Benjamin, Walter (1999 [1931]) ‘Little History of Photography’ in *Selected Writings Vol.2 (1927-34)* ed. Michael Jennings et al., Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Berger, John (1984) *And our faces, my heart, brief as photos* New York: Pantheon
- Boyd, Barbara W. (2020) ‘Still, She Persisted: Materiality and Memory in Ovid’s Metamorphoses’ in *Dictynna* 17 | 2020 <https://journals.openedition.org/dictynna/2121>
- Browne, Thomas (1658) ‘Hydriotaphia: Urne Buriall’ in *Religio Medici* London: J M Dent
- Calvino, Italo (2013 [1982]) ‘Light in Our Eyes’ in *Collection of Sand* Penguin Modern Classics
- Campt, Tina M. (2017) *Listening to Images* Durham, NC: Duke University Press
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari (1986 [1975]). *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* trans. Dana Polan, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- Erikson, Jon (2012) ‘Tension/release and the production of time in performance’ in Giannachi, Gabriella, Nick Kaye and Michael Shanks (eds) (2012) *Archaeologies of Presence: Art, performance and the persistence of being* London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis
- Farrier, David (2020) *Footprints: In Search of Future Fossils* London: 4th Estate
- Ferrini, Henry & Ken Riaf (dir.) (2008) *Polis is This: Charles Olson and the Persistence of Place* <https://bit.ly/2SvBNa4>
- Gins, Madeline & Arakawa (2002) *Architectural Body* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press
- Hann, Rachel (2019) *Beyond Scenography* London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis

¹ ‘Made out of lead and steel, an ensemble of shelves filled with larger-than-life lead books or perhaps files or other documents: a massive archive whose sheer lead-heaviness seems to turn it into an indestructible monument. A statement of resistance against the flux of time’ (2017: 311-312)

Hirsch, Marianne (1997) *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press

Kreider, Kristen (2014) *Poetics + Place* London: I.B.Tauris

Lapham, Lewis H. (2020) 'The Remembered Past' in *Lapham's Quarterly* Vol.XIII, No.1 (Winter) 'Memory', pp.13-21

Mueller, Lisel (1996) 'Pillar of Salt' in *Alive Together: New and Selected Poems* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, pp.16-18

Nora, Pierre (1989) 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire' in *Representations* 26: 7-24 (April), University of California Press

Nora, Pierre (1996) *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past (Vol.1)* New York: Columbia University Press

Olson, Charles (1966) 'Human Universe' in *Selected Writings* ed. Robert Creeley, New York: New Directions, pp.53-66

Olson, Charles (1966 [1958]) 'Equal That Is, to the Real Itself' in *Selected Writings* ed. Robert Creeley, New York: New Directions, pp.46-52

Pearson, Mike and Michael Shanks (2001) *Theatre Archaeology* London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis

Ricoeur, P. (1984) *Time and Narrative, Volume 1*, translated by K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer, Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press

Sanders, N.K (trans.) (1972) *The Epic of Gilgamesh* Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics

Santer, Eric L. (2006) *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* Chicago: Chicago University Press

Schacter, Daniel (2007) *How the Mind Forgets and Remembers* London: Souvenir Press

Sebald, W.G (2001) *Austerlitz* London: Hamish Hamilton

Tello, Verónica (2016) *Counter-Memorial Aesthetics: Refugee Histories and the Politics of Contemporary Art* London: Bloomsbury

Weinrich, Harald (2004) *Lethe: the art and critique of forgetting* trans. Steven Rendall, Ithaca: Cornell University Press





Workshop participants

Core Group

Serge von Arx, B. Kjartan Fønstelien, Christian Sørhaug

On Håøya, 3rd-13th September, 2018

from Norwegian Theatre Academy/Østfold University
College: Rachel Dagnall, Ingvild Isaksen, Johannes Karl,
Petros Lappas Manakos, Maximilian Mandery

Gundega Laivina (coordinator of the project in Latvia),
Anna Eglīte, Toms Jansons, Kristina Rezvõhh

Marina Maleni (coordinator of the project in Nicosia),
Ifigeneia Avraam, Nefeli Kentoni, Petros Kourtellaris

from University of Oslo: Benedicte Wedervang Bruland,
Alvilde Lovise Mejlænder, Ingrid Kvalvik Sørensen

from Zurich University of the Arts: Sabine Harbeke
(coordinator), Johanna Benrath, Julie Olympia Cahannes,
Jordis Fellmann, Florian Lampert, Lea Anna Niedermann,
Johannes Schmidt, Samul Toroperez, Max Woelky

Inga Aleknavičiute (local coordinator)

Workshop participants *cont'd*

On Cyprus, 30th March-13th April, 2019

Organisers and Tutors: Aysu Arsoy, Sossee Eskidjian, Nurtane Karagil, Gundega Laivina, Toula Liasi, Marina Maleni, Yiannis Toumazis

Photographer: Inga Aleknavičiute

Students: Rêzija Adîtāja, Imge Hasoglu, Ingvild Isaksen, Toms Jansons, Paulīne Kalnina, Nefeli Kentoni, Petros Kourtellaris, Petros Lappas, Pia Lindstad, Refia Ors, Stavri Papadopoulou, Kristina Rezvõhh, Anna Eglīte.

Online in Håøya, Riga and Nicosia/Famagusta, 20th-30th April, 2021

Organisers and Tutors: Serge von Arx, Krista Burāne, B. Kjartan Fønstelien, Nurtane Karagil, Sodja Lotker, Marina Maleni, Imanuel Schipper, Yiannis Toumazis

from Norwegian Theatre Academy/Østfold University College: Kaja Aanonsen, Meira del Busto, Dyrlov Høegh, Olga Regitze, Alice Tomola

from Cyprus: Ifigenia Avraam, Panteleima Nicolaidou, Ioulita Toumazi, Yasemin Türkmen, Selin Üretici, Melisa Zabitler

from Riga: Oskars Moore, Kristaps Priede, Nikola Ščadro, Diāna Sutugina, Līga Ūbele, Betija Zveniece.

Contributors

Ric Allsopp – is an independent writer, editor and consultant, and Emeritus Professor of Contemporary Performance at Falmouth University, UK where he was Head of Dance & Choreography from 2011-16. From 1996-2018 he was Joint Editor of *Performance Research*, a bi-monthly international journal of contemporary performance (Routledge, Taylor & Francis). His research interests include the poetics and histories of the neo-avant-garde, and relations between writing, dance, and poetics. He recently edited *Blind Spot: Staring down the void* with Karen Kipphoff and Kevin Mount (design) for the Norwegian Theatre Academy (PR Books, 2020).

Serge von Arx – architect and Professor of Scenography, is the Artistic Director of the Scenography Department of the Norwegian Theatre Academy/Østfold University College. In 1997 he completed a degree in architecture at ETH Zürich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology). In 1998, he began a collaboration with Robert Wilson on over 50 stage, exhibition and design projects all over the world, and since 2003 he has been a regular mentor and architectural consultant at the Watermill Centre on Long Island, New York. In 2001, he opened a design studio in Berlin where he works as a scenographer, designer, and architect, focusing on 'performative architecture' – an amalgamation of architecture and theatre. In 2015 he curated the Architecture Section and in 2019 'Formations' for the Prague Quadrennial.

Julie Olympia Cahannes – born in 1997 in Chur, Switzerland. She grew up in the mountains of Graubünden and travelled to distant cities such as Beijing and Istanbul. She studied screenwriting at Zürich University of the Arts (ZHdK) where myths and European art history inspired and influenced her cinematic work including *Mona* (2020). Since 2020 she has worked as a screen writer and script consultant with Medea Drehbuchkollektiv, Zürich.

Sierra Casady – is an American musician and member of CocoRosie with her sister, Bianca. She trained as a classical opera singer at the Conservatoire de Paris. She is also a creative force behind the 'baby-metal' band, Metallic Falcons, with former guitarist of CocoRosie, Matteah Baim. Coco Rosie have been frequent collaborators of American avant-garde theatre director Robert Wilson, composing scores to his award-winning international productions, including *Peter Pan* (2013) at the Berliner Ensemble, *Pushkin's Fairy Tales* (2015) in Moscow, *Edda* (2017) at the Norske Theater in Oslo and *The Jungle Book* (2019) in Luxembourg. They have also performed at The Watermill Centre in New York. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CocoRosie>

Markéta Fantová – lives in Prague, where she is Artistic Director of the Prague Quadrennial. She is a stage, lighting, and costume designer for theatre, dance and performing arts. She has worked for

Contributors *cont'd*

theatres, galleries, and other visual projects in the US and Europe. Her costumes and theatre designs appeared in the American national exhibition at Prague Quadrennial 2007 as well as at World Stage Design V, Seoul, South Korea (2009).

B. Kjartan Fønstelien – has been a lecturer at the Norwegian Theatre Academy since 2003, running workshops connected to cultural heritage and exhibition scenography. He studied Nordic Archaeology, History of Art and Cultural History at the University of Oslo and the Norwegian Technical University in Trondheim. He has led several archaeological excavations including the artist Edvard Munch's home at Ramme, south of Oslo. He was Head of the Archaeological Department in the county of Askershus surrounding Oslo, and Director of the Viking Age Museum in Borre, and the Industrial Museum in Bergen. He has led workshops investigating the social aspects of food with sexworkers, refugees and the imprisoned, at DAMU in Prague and ZHdK in Zürich.

Nefeli Kentoni – is a London-based interdisciplinary artist and writer fascinated by the intersections between different disciplines, and by the spaces where scenography and philosophy, aesthetics and theatre, filmmaking and poetry meet. Theatrical and cinematic forms are the platform on which she negotiates the gaps between language and

image, the implicit relations that sustain the performer-viewer relationship, and the performativity of space. She completed her BA at the Royal Central School of Speech & Drama in 'Drama, Applied Theatre and Education', with a pathway in 'Writing for Performance'. She is studying for her MA in Performance Design and Practice at UAL Central Saint Martins, London. Her academic research is based on the politics and visuality of language and how scenography exists outside of the stage. www.nefelkentoni.com; @nfairy

Petros Kourtellaris – is a Cypriot born set and costume designer and artist. He received his BA in Design for Performance at Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. As a designer his work incorporates aspects of fine art, fashion photography, and makeup. As a performer he is interested in costuming, the digital presentation of self, and notions of costume as set. Common threads within his work are the vibrant palette, the joyful gestures of shapes and the flair for the odd and camp. His most recent roles have allowed him to work in prestigious film and TV productions both in London and Cardiff while remaining rooted to past theatre experiences. www.kourtellarispteros.com; @kourtellarispetros

Petros Lappas – is a multidisciplinary artist based in Fredrikstad. His work includes architectural projects, set and costume design, scenography, perform-

ative installations, sound installations, painting, sculpture and poetry. In 2016 he completed a degree in Architecture at the Democritus University of Thrace, Greece. He holds a MA in Theater and Performing Arts from Complutense University of Madrid (2016-2017) and an MFA in Scenography from the Norwegian Theatre Academy (2018-2020). He has collaborated as a scenographer with the director José María Esbec at the National Center of Drama, Madrid, and worked as a set designer in collaboration with the art director Isabel Viñuales. He has collaborated with and presented projects in Norway, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, England, the Czech Republic and Lebanon.

Marina Maleni – born in Nicosia, Cyprus, holds degrees in Theatre Studies, Acting, Sociology (Hons) and Communication. She has worked as an actress, TV host and radio producer. Since 2001 she has been Theatre Development Officer for Cyprus Theatre Organisation in charge of State theatre subsidies and policy forming, European collaborations, playwriting development, non-professional theatre, theatre education programs, and festivals. Among other appointments, she is a member of the Committee for Theatre in Schools (THOC – Ministry of Education and Culture), a Board member of CYCSTAT, and of the Cyprus Theatre Museum, and a member of the advisory body of the Cyprus Youth Board. Since 2007 she has been PQ Cyprus National Participation

Curator. She hosts weekly television talks on art for CYBC and has co-ordinated several European cultural collaborations for Cyprus, including *Emergence*.

Kevin Mount – is a book designer, typographer and essayist based in Devon, UK. He runs the ephemera imprint, The Letter Press, www.theletterpress.org, with the Oxford Professor of Poetry, Alice Oswald, using the printed page as a score or as an invitation to live performance. Their project collaborators have included the photographic artist Garry Fabian Miller, composers Oliver Coates and Stevie Wishart, pianist Joanna MacGregor, painter William Tillyer and mezzotint engraver Sarah Gillespie. For ten years before 2006 he was art editor of the journal *Performance Research*.

Alan Read – worked at Dartington College of Arts during the 1980s curating the Council of Europe Workshop on Theatre and Communities, and at Rotherhithe Theatre Workshop in London Docklands running a neighbourhood space for performance. In the 1990s he lived and worked in Barcelona researching Catalan festival culture, returning to London to direct the Talks Programme at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, staging events with leading writers, artists, musicians, and thinkers, and was subsequently appointed Professor of Theatre at Roehampton University. In 2006 Alan became the first Professor of Theatre in the 175-year history of King's College

Contributors *cont'd*

London and established the Performance Foundation developing the *Anatomy Theatre & Museum* on the Strand and the *Inigo Rooms* in the East Wing of Somerset House. He has received Major Research Awards from the Council of Europe, the Leverhulme Foundation, the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the EPSRC.

Kristina Rezvõhh – graduated from the Department of Scenography, Art Academy of Latvia, Riga in 2020. During her studies she designed theatre performances, contemporary dances and exhibitions including ‘Memorial Forest’ (2020). She has taken part in the Prague Quadrennial (2019), international projects including the Emergence Project, and festivals. Kristina participated in an Erasmus+ Internship at the 1646 Gallery, The Hague, Netherlands (2020). <https://www.christinaohh.com>

Christian Sørhaug – holds a Ph.D in Social Anthropology from the University of Oslo and is an Associate Professor at Østfold University College, Department of Health and Welfare Sciences. His research interests span issues such as indigenous people in a globalised world, voluntary work and elderly care, cultural heritage and nation states, youth culture and identity crisis, digital welfare infrastructure and social work. Theoretical interests are science and technology studies, material culture, medical anthropology and political ecology.

Ines Weizman – is an architect and theorist whose method ‘Documentary Architecture’ studies the material history of buildings, media, and technology artefacts. She is Senior Tutor for the MPhil/PhD Architecture at the RCA in London, and the founding director of the Centre for Documentary Architecture (CDA), an interdisciplinary research collective of architectural historians, filmmakers, and digital technologists. Weizman was trained as an architect at the Bauhaus University Weimar and the Ecole d’Architecture de Belleville in Paris, Cambridge University, and the Architectural Association where she completed her PhD thesis in History and Theory. She taught at the Architectural Association, Goldsmiths College London, the Berlage Institute of Architecture in Rotterdam and London Metropolitan University. Before joining the RCA, she was Professor of Architectural Theory at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar and director of the Bauhaus Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture and Planning. In 2016 and 2019 she directed the International Bauhaus-Colloquium and a series of conferences and exhibitions as part of the Bauhaus Jubilee.

Acknowledgements

The Editors would like to thank all the contributors to this publication, especially Alan Read and Ines Weizman for allowing us to use their essays, and all the participants, students and organisers of the various workshops and meetings that comprised the ‘Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage’ project. We are indebted to the following partners and individuals:

Norwegian Theatre Academy/Østfold University College, Norway

Cyprus Theatre Organisation (THOC) Cyprus

Prague Quadrennial, Arts and Theatre Institute (ATI), Czech Republic

In particular we would like to thank Patricia Canellis, OGCH project producer for Norwegian Theatre Academy and Kevin Mount for his design, typography and collaboration in the development of the book project.

The outcomes of the OGCH research project consist of three interconnected components: this book, *Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage: Reframing Memory* (2021); the exhibition *Materiality of Conflict* (2021), a haptic counterpoint to these reflections, exploring the narratives that are imbued in material fragments; and *Mnemonic Societal Scenography* (2021) an openly accessible app with geolocated sonic memorials as a democratic tool of commemoration.

*Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage:
Reframing Memory* was co-funded by
the EU Emergence Project and the Creative
Europe Programme of the European Union
and produced by Patricia Canellis, Project
Coordinator, Norwegian Theatre Academy
/ Østfold University College, Fredrikstad,
Norway.

Norwegian Theatre Academy
Østfold University College
Høgskolen i Østfold
P.O.Box 700, NO-1757 Halden, Norway
email: postmottak@hiof.no
www.hiof.no/nta

*Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage:
Reframing Memory*
© Norwegian Theatre Academy, 2021

Edited by Ric Allsopp and Serge von Arx
Copyrights remain with individual authors.
Every effort has been made to locate and
obtain permissions from copyright holders;
in the event of an error or omission, please
notify the publisher.

Designed and typeset in Minion3
and Alegreya Sans by Kevin Mount
at The Letter Press www.theletterpress.org

Printed & bound in Cornwall by T J Books
First published in 2021 by Norwegian
Theatre Academy / Østfold University
College

ISBN 978-82-7825-462-2



The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the content, which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained herein.

