ARCHITECTURE, CITIES, UTOPIAS

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UTOPIA IS ALL THE TIME IN THE MAKING
An Introduction by Peter Lang

While architects often consider themselves best prepared to deal with problems arising from within the civic realm, there is much about architecture education that falls short of the task. Architects are more inclined to plan spectacular buildings than to build everyday communities, or to rely on the latest technology rather than rely on the value of human resources. Architecture has left a troubled legacy of bankrupt clients, underserved citizens, fortified enclaves and decimated landscapes. Big capital has for too long commandeered the building process leaving cities and infrastructure in the hands of elite private interests. Not that any of these criticisms are new, Bruce Haggart, from the British counter-culture group Street Farmer wrote in the early seventies:

“Architecture has never been a popular art. Its clients have always been the rich. Its legacy is one of palaces, fortifications, office blocks, commemorations to those with power and wealth. It is an old role that architects play. Paradoxically they try to rationalize the old role in a world of new circumstances and consciousness.”

But what makes Haggart’s observation most poignant is that he doesn’t leave it at that... Haggart advises the architect to think about doing something else instead:

“Better to become entertainers, jesters, clowns, trapeze artists, alchemists singing songs of the new age...”1

If architects should remake themselves, they also have to be conscious of how to remake the institutions that are vital to achieving broader societal transformations. If on one hand the architect – urbanist, designer, or let’s say player-activist needs to operate first on him or herself, it follows that he or she needs to channel these creative actions through hospitable institutions, something not exactly available in today’s field of operations.

Teddy Cruz is a San Diego based architect and urban critic working extensively on the impoverished communities living around the border between Tijuana and San Diego. Cruz thinks it’s not enough to be deeply committed to documenting these extreme topographies, but it is also necessary to actively partake in their solutions. Where Cruz sees a major weak-point is precisely in the disconnection between concerned activists and the support institutions themselves.
“In fact, one primary site of artistic intervention today is the gap itself that has been produced between cultural institutions and the public, is to getting a new civic imagination and collective political will. It is not enough only to give art the task of metaphorically revealing the very socio-economic histories and injustices that have produced these crises, but it is essential that it also becomes an instrument to construct specific procedures to transcend them. The formation of new platforms of engagement in our creative fields can only be made possible with the sense of urgency, pushing us to rethink our very procedures the need for expanded modes of artistic practice, alternative sites of research and pedagogy, new conceptions of cultural and economic production, and the re-organisation of social relations seems more urgent than ever.”

This is why R-Lab has over the last three years emphasized the necessity of developing both a critically grounded activist practice based on field research, while also at the same time developing relationships with respected institutions to forge partnerships that can transcend current impediments to social and environmental change. To become relevant in today’s hyper saturated globalized society, it is necessary to develop novel methods adequate to today’s tasks—and that might have little to do with those we studied even a decade ago. There are therefore two basic goals to be achieved, one to translate what’s out there now into a practice that can be made relevant today, and two, to establish working relationships with the emerging generation of public institutions, who are vastly more nimble and capable than ever before to engage their communities and build mutual forms of cooperation.

R-Lab works like a creative think-tank, bringing diverse sources of knowledge, critical thinking, and methods of field observation together with novel means of production: the key is communication, participation and engagement by a wide array of tactics: performance, installations, multimedia productions, comic books, 3D models, and social media are the tools of today’s revolution. R-Lab continues this dual focus on personal research and institutional exchanges, using the urban context as the primary terrain for individual field studies in architecture, cities and material culture—while this year conducting a collective project together with Färgfabriken on cities in the Baltic and the Balkans. This larger workshop based project, bringing us to directly confront issues in our travels to Mostar and to Riga, enables exchanges of ideas and encourages new ways of understanding the city. And it is this aspect of the project that brings up the question of Utopia, a subject whose existence should never have been put to doubt in the first place. Utopia is all the time in the making...

Over the last few years R-Lab took on several creative challenges: specifically, in the two previous academic years, on the role of display in architecture, and in the deployment of game theories in activating space. We worked on Frederick Kiesler at the Tensta Konsthall on the former question, and INDEX - The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation - and Oskar Hansen on the latter. For this academic year, we leaned on Färgfabriken, working closely with Daniel Urey, as we developed together Bac & Bak, a project with far reaching implications for understanding the emergence of a significant European periphery. Daniel Urey, acting as senior consultant on urban projects at Färgfabriken helped arrange for us to work with ADA in Mostar (Architecture Dialogues with Art), and facilitated our contacts with art and academic institutions in Riga. These might appear as two completely different cities, with different histories and urban contexts, but as we were to discover, there were more than a few issues that were common to both.

In preparation for these two workshops, documented here in the insert ‘The Baltic’ Färgfabriken and R-Lab conceived of two Live Sessions held in Stockholm, first at Färgfabriken in Liljeholmen and then at Royal Institute of Art on Skeppsholmen. We have grouped some of the highlights from these live sessions within this same insert. Taken altogether, the course participants were provided with immersive discussions on Riga where we were joined by the advanced architecture design studio at Aalto University led by Frances Hsu. We were also joined on both days by an impressive set of professional and academic experts.

Clearly the first of the two Live Sessions at Färgfabriken succeeded in challenging the way the basic perception of the Baltic countries once viewed as distant hinterlands behind hardened Soviet frontiers. One way to critically understand the Soviet impact on this region is to, according to the discussions held during the first session, map the waterways, water infrastructure and the geo-political evolution of the Baltic coastlines. In the second Live Session, focusing on Mostar and the remnant nation state of Bosnia Herzegovina, we were privileged to get some very charged local perspectives. Amila Puzic introduced her critical way of working on public art projects in post-war Mostar and Sarajevo, and Behzad Khosravi’s screened his dark humourous documentary “The Black Eyes of Bruce Lee,” about the making of a life-sized stature depicting the famous martial arts master, meant to evoke one of the rare memories both Croatsians and Bosnians would have shared. After the bronze effigy disappeared from its pedestal, Khosravi, a video artist from Iran, spared no effort to track it down. The Live Sessions ended with a vibrant set of Balkan rock ballads and punk songs proving that this region on the edge of central Europe has always been home to incredible creative talent and artistic energy.

The political intrigues, duplicated infrastructure and twin administrations continue, nonetheless, to define Mostar’s contested cultural environment. We were joined by students from Oxford Brookes and their instructors, Nicholas Boyarsky, Camila Sotomay and Jason Coleman. Teaming together into four mixed groups with the R-Lab participants and local Mostar students, 4 independent approaches to the embattled city emerged, each with a peculiar read on the city and its contested territories. Ably guided by the director of ADA, Senada Demirović, and Dženan Dedić, director of Mostar’s Local Democracy Agency, we were given a privileged perspective on this beautiful if somewhat melancholic city. One of the principle goals during the trip was to discover traces of architecture
that transcended political, ethnic and religious divisions. Among the carved slabs of stone from the Bogomilian period, with their characteristic features of human figures with outstretched arms and oversized hands, were the ruins of brutalist buildings from the Tito era, burned with similarly inspired insignia etched into the raw concrete facades.

Rising above this fracas of eroded monoliths and bullet shattered facades was the WWII Partisan’s cemetery, a superbly landscaped naturalistic valley rising to the top of a prominent hill overlooking the city. Designed by the architect Bogdan Bogdanovic (1922-2010), this monument has fallen into decay, slowly disappearing under weeds and bushes. Bogdanovic quickly became the architect to celebrate, with his extraordinary sculptural retaining walls and mandala-like relics, cascading fountains and streams and profound non-denominational iconographic elements.

The second travel workshop brought R-Lab to Riga, Latvia, at the end of March. On the overnight ferry to Riga we were accompanied by Stina Hegelvist, art historian and currently part of the RIA administration, and Nick Dines, urban anthropologist specializing in Naples who was invited along to unpack the complexities of Riga’s symbolic memorials and conflicting social allegiances. The Tallink boat ride turned out to be a jammed packed heterotopic environment. We traversed the Baltic in the company of truck drivers, alcoholics contra-banding beer and two lively short-contrat Cuban bands, whose salsa music enlivened the evening and kept most of the course participants up into the wee hours. What those who slept late would miss, however, was the spectacular approach to Riga up the Daugava River in the early dawn. The shores of the river were lined with the detritus of the Soviet era industry, providing a slow-motion rolling visual of Latvia’s impressive resources and manufacturing capacity.

Unlike Mostar, the divisions marking Riga and its communities, native Latvian and arguably non-native? native? Russian populations would be much subtler but no less intriguing in the ways these conflicts played out across the city’s symbolic landscape. Building on Daniel Urey’s experience conducting earlier Baltic Dimensions workshops, we set up our base camp at the Kenepes Center and met with Viesturs Celmins, who is teaching at the architecture department at RISEBA and who gave us a highly polemical look at the city. We were also briefed on the controversial New Hansa City project by IevaAstahovskaya, a curator at the Latvian Center of Contemporary Art. The city in fact is littered with architecture and monuments that have had their functions altered, their messages effaced, their contexts re-arranged, or their origins repressed. From the notorious KGB headquarters to the block like Occupation museum AKA Victory Museum, to the amusingly fake medieval palace, only the Zeppelin housed food market-stalls and the Stalin era Science Academy asserted a deeper presence.

Following these two workshops R-Lab intends to launch a new independent platform, Re-Signification Architecture (re-SA), based precisely on developing alternative responses to contested urban contexts in and around the peripheries of Europe. re-SA is planned as an innovative and renewable platform, investigating, documenting and analysing social fragmentation within the context of the city, its monuments, landmarks, parks, squares while also encouraging experimental forms of cooperative designs in these public spaces. The two principle goals of re-SA are to develop a research archive and spatially based public practice, that seeks to overcome local prejudices and national biases, through the understanding and development of new forms of public landmarks, urban signs and novel communal rituals that can serve to bring communities together. (Re-Signification Architecture will be jointly run with Daniel Urey at the Royal Institute of Art, Architecture Area).

But while the results from these initial workshop efforts in Mostar and in Riga comprise the very first steps in what necessarily will be a much larger process, we did reach a small but “significant” epiphany. We can test our intuitions using souvenirs collected from these very same contested contexts. I am increasingly convinced that souvenirs, of the mass-produced kind, are precisely the types of objects that mimic the fate of their larger scaled counterparts. Like Stalin’s massive statues, the market of Stalin souvenirs fluctuated according to Stalin’s political trajectory, relating directly to the rise and fall of his cult status, being especially susceptible to the passage of time. The subject of Souvenirs is extremely vast, permitting a broad choice of examples worth examining. The final exhibition of student and workshop projects, to be held this year at the Mindepartementet gallery on Skeppsholmen and Tomteboda (...) will feature a small production of R-Lab produced souvenirs. Make sure you get one *.

PETER LANG, APRIL 25, 2017. STOCKHOLM.

*Souvenir offer limited to one per person, while supply lasts. R-Lab is not responsible for product imperfections or risks associated with the souvenir’s symbolic message.


WITCHES, BITCHES ON THE BEACHES
Ela Celary & Leire Mesa

Fuck the fiction paradise, we are the paradise!

The brutal beauty reveals in singing a song about witches and bitches, drinking Coca cola on the beaches, smashing the piano with a tree full of gender stereotypes. The music plays in the ski-resort full of cocaine-snow. Have we missed the boat already?

The witchcraft is waiting to peel the orange like the ritual of the bitches waiting for the new client that is smashing the coca cola on the green container that is now in the Ostermalm square.

The ukulele and the ngoni are making tones of slam to bring some hidden animality in the artificial surrounding. Someone said that this is like the paradise but I forgot already why? The ice on the water is cracking. Blood over the legs dripping into the icy water.

A woman is falling trying to keep the balance in a place with too much rocks and to little rock and roll, the sexy coca cola drug is dripping in the face waiting for the new concert that is going to began, welcome!

Guided tour to paradise

We will invite the visitor in a room that is masked as paradise. They will get instructions to follow us on a journey of experiencing the blurry path of our daily lives that is built on contradictions. To enter the room you need to pass by a curtain with a picture of a fake paradise beach. We, master of ceremonies, will guide through the ritual, giving them a can of coca cola and paper with a pen. On the paper they will be instructed to write, a memory of an ecstasy moment, like orgasm, eating chocolate, dance, music etc. On the wall will be the projection of the movie that will support the guiding and we will slowly transform from an ideal notion of western woman into raw bodies. The ritual will continue with some actions where the audience will be involved. We will finish with a common song about the “witches ,bitches on the beaches,” to celebrate our contradictions.
THE NO ONE
Marios Salatas

My field of research the last two years is focused on the gender studies. As my educational background is on architectural engineering I always set my theoretical approach to a confined or not geometrical space. My further studies on theories and philosophy added also the field of a socio-political space on the board. Hence, my gender inquiries strive to be defined on a specific socio-chronological grid. My research methods have as a starting point a pragmatic place and there I am investigating for invisible signs of the human (in)tolerance.

Hence, the last two years I engaged with a basic traffic artery in Athens, Syggrou Avenue. This highway connects the downtown area of Athens and the harbor of Piraeus, and gathers unconventional land uses: banks, insurance companies, car sales, car mechanics, night clubs, bars, centers with Greek pop live music, many fast food places, cultural centers, the national museum of contemporary arts, the University of theoretical studies, the new Opera house (designed by Renzo Piano), hospitals, strip tease clubs and last but not least transvestism prostitution. A recent Research Program tried to carry out a survey of this high speed avenue. An initiative from this research was to convert the highway into a green way increasing the cultural uses in the area — never called gentrification, but as it is assumed obviously.

My research has as basic protagonists the trans-persons that work as prostitutes in the street. This project was ended in a ninety seven book with the complicated title: Towards a polemology of the City - the Paradigm of Syggrou avenue. The book studied the relations between the different users of this highway under the perspective of war theory — from the pure theory of Von Clausewitz, to the Kantian and Ancient Greek approaches on the warrior. The most important result is that the area has not an obvious “problem” and that trans-persons in Athens still find their social place for street prostitution. So, my short film struggles to recreate the sense of that busy highway using Lynch’s filmic approach. The Almodovarian figures lead their lives offering pleasure to the suppressed male clients. Though they are very often victims of physical or verbal violence and protagonists of a contemporary “freak show”.

This argument has been based on the social observation and philosophical discussion about the Normal and the abnormal. The thinking of orthological vitalism - forged by George Canguilhem, Foucault's professor - consists the central axis on my perspective of the normal and the pathological. That is the reason why I cannot find fundamental problems on divided cities. People come along with each other as the normal comes along with the abnormal. According to vitalism: health and its opposite (sickness) are combined and perceived as a whole — while the one implements the other. The problems are showing up when the tolerance of one element increases rapidly. Here it is important to mention that vitalism uses the notion of defence - which of course implies a war situation that includes the memory as a mechanism of self protection.

This memory that helps to recover can turn into a violent and aggressive repulsion of someone or something that is recognized as stranger. The term stranger can be better replaced by the “other” which includes whatever is characterized as unknown, abnormal, different, strange, weird, sick, dirty, taboo, and unconventional. The Foucauldian notion of heterotopias also analyzes the otherness within different contexts. So, my ambition is to understand gender issues in Stockholm. Of course those issues demand years of research and personal contact with the area and the survey objects. As a result, this a personal reading of the area, represented freely while strongly respecting all the rights of LGBT communities and associations.

For a researcher from a Mediterranean Christian orthodox country the alternation of contexts is of high interest. I attempt to make a comparison between the two cities (Athens-Stockholm) and the way differently sexually oriented persons are perceived by the society. On a very generalized (of course not methodologically correct, but for reasons of confinement) way it can be said that homosexual persons in Athens hold two basic conducts. Either they are openly homosexual and their image and life style tend to be campy, queer, or just different. Or they have secret homosexual life, but socially they follow heterosexual patterns with possibly double life or/and homophobic reactions.

On the contrary, in Stockholm homosexual persons follow heterosexual patterns as well, but here they also accept their identity. Though, there is no gay-district or it is not very common to see men walking hand by hand, no matter if Sweden is an open minded country. The progressive spirit is obvious even on public spaces: toilets without gender sign is a fact. Furthermore, Swedish clothing brands promote new products that do not appeal strictly to men or women. What a progress... But does the society approve to be queer?

In any case, on this film I explore the limits of expression and identity. It is about a non-binary subject that is mapping an empty industrial space (Tomteboda). There is a transition to a new environment, that introduce the subject to a total new context. It can be conceived as a shift of Paradigm or/and as a Heterotopia. The thing is that this person tries to delete all kinds of identities. In order to succeed, the subject attempts to recall the memory or to reset it. For that reason, the voice-over speaks the tenth rhapsody of Odyssey. It is about the discussion between Ulysses and Polyphemus. When the second ask the name of the first, he answers Nobody. But when he defeats him at the end, then he tells him “if they ask you who has did that to you, say that it was Ulysses the son of Laertes. "Homer explains on a philosophical context how a man should keep in anonymity until he can accomplish his mission.

Marios Salatas (1987, Athens) is an architect engineer and theoretician with specialty on gender studies. He works and lives in Stockholm.

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360 «ὡς φάτ', ἀτάρ οἱ αὕτις ἐγὼ πόρον αἷθοπα οἶνον. τρὶς μὲν ἐδωκα φέρων, τρὶς δὲ ἐκπιεν ἀφραδίησιν. αὐτὰρ ἔπει Κύκλωπα περὶ φρένας ἠλυθεν οἶνος, καὶ τότε δὴ μιν ἐπεσσὶ προσηύδων μειλιχίοισι: «Κύκλωψ, εἰρωτάς μ' ὄνομα κλυτόν, αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τοι
CREATURE COMFORT
Joanna Sieradzka

Background of the Story
Some of the facts about the situation are known but most of them are unrevealed. The creatures definitely needs sun and food to survive. Also other creatures for reproduction. But may not, there is no obligation. Some of them think, that they are more powerful than earth. Time allows them to think like that. They don’t care about the future, they don’t care about the earth, they care only about themselves. In the end they don’t care about their families. This is strange, some may say, but the world exists, from one day to another. Some of the creatures use words to communicate, but sounds and letters are not compatible or not in agreement with each other. Communication fails. The moment of resignation and even frustration is present. The mental state needs to be changed. The creatures use bodies to move from one place to another in search of peace of mind and calm space. Along the way there are many things they can see. Other creatures that are similar, sometimes a bit different and sometimes no one thinks about who is who.

Everything is perfectly organized. Just splendid wholeness. Sky below and ocean above. Somewhere above the horizon, more to the north east there is an area, maybe more of a situation. Cold rather than warm. Colours are taken from dust. The environment is harsh. No one wants to be here at first. But this place has something to say about the world at large. There are animals here, birds, goose, turtle, fish, also da vinci vehicle, airplane in a water, in the sky also. There are some objects here in module 1:7. Maybe pieces of something bigger. You come closer and you can notice that they move slowly from side to side.

Chapter First and Last in One
It begins, well no one of those who live remember in fact how it was at the beginning. Funny, it’s the same for just everyone. Few think that it was better before and few think the future belongs to us. You take a first step, not knowing what to expect. Your imagination goes sometimes high in the sky, but you smoothly redirect yourself to a place where you can avoid misunderstanding or judgement.

In fact the beginning is more positive than next step. The next step is just when the system collapse. At first you don’t know where you are, you are trying to orientate yourself, but common signs do not give you satisfaction. You are again frustrated. You are going in circles. Small circles. Big ones exist constantly. Sometimes way too many circles, but there is a moment when something changes. You are tired. You must take another step. It makes you feel even worse and after that you suddenly jump into a surprisingly nice moment, which brings relief to your inner being. You like the space you are in.
It's calm and peaceful here. You take few moments of this feeling with yourself. As a memory. You rush again to the beginning of another corridor. Some may ask what for. They stopped a long time ago. It’s ok, if they are satisfied. You ask yourself what is happiness? You are not convinced. So you go to sleep. You wake up. Sometimes it is still dark, sometimes it’s bright. You feel not totally in control of the situation. But you need to try to keep balance. The other way is just not an option. You have an unpleasant moment of resignation and an idea of violence comes into your mind. You go out and keep moving forward. On the way again. It’s not so easy. But that’s how it is. The world moves in circles. When you understand that process you get a little bit down. But after that you see the good aspect of it. You take some moments of unknown consolation with yourself.

Additional Explanation of how the System Works
The pleasure is only possible in the moments of calmness and clarity. In places, where distraction is not present. It is just a paradise of your mind. In the state of mind like this you are just in yourself. You feel safe here like in no other places. World outside is very much hard to understand even thought more and more people describe it in a more complex and advance way. You feel free to make choices and you can really make them. World all in all have their own opinion so no worries. Planet hangs in a black mass in the universe and only few know how to explain this fact. Few believe, there is a bigger reason for this life, few are in a state of resignation and few are in a state of acceptance that they don’t know and they in fact do not feel the need to know. There are all those who know, which is scary.

Some of the creatures are asking a lot of questions, but almost no answer satisfy them. Time to move. In fact movement organize the whole process of existence here. And things here relate to each other in a way that direction of thoughts do not exceed certain numbers. Those almost like sustainable numbers. Everything is in one way or another related to each other and no harm can happen to anyone. Even that it’s dark here very often.

So I cooperate as I understand. We live in a moveable structures. Organs like. They look like an oval or round objects laid in between layers of water and air. Those structures are with a roof and walls, such as a house or factory, 5 level high and 2 level underground most often. Waves comes from power in the air and movement of container we are all in. The numbers sets the tone in here but it’s not the place of cynicism. Nothing can happen here without additional will or let say ability to ask question, why, where, what for. Quality of life is described not by the pleasure you take but by the lowest amount of abuse. Moments of swirl and confusion of course exists but you can enumerate their numbers. There are three of them, and make you really unhappy sometimes. You need to reflect upon yourself in those moments and about situation you are in. But fact that you can describe them, give you power to move.
DISINTEGRATION BOXES
Gabrielle Iwelumo

The Disintegration Boxes are playful experiments, a stepping stone in my research into the exploration of different, more inclusive interpretations of reality. Or even, what can be defined as real or not real, tangible or intangible. The boxes are games, designed to mimic the methodical practice of rituals: With the ‘hope’ that through a combination of physical exertion and the limitation/restriction of the senses the participant will become susceptible to new experiences. The idea is that to be fully ready to engage with the inclusive experience, we must become open, forgetting what we have previously thought to be real. Our minds must become clean slates, as it were.

The boxes use as reference the metaphor of water. An element that has repeatedly captured the cultural imagination as a medium for the dissolution of the individual’s sense of self into an anonymous and multifarious otherness. When it encounters the body of water, the body of the traveller, symbolically merges with the fluidity of the waves. This passage of the physical body through (or even on top) of the water is often said to be mirrored by the internal passage of the traveller’s mind. With the traveller’s sense of self extending and becoming “dispersed in the thought of water”, thus achieving a kind of intersubjective and fecund obscurity.

The ritualistic nature of the participant’s interaction with the boxes is intended to catalyze this transcendent experience.

The participant is encouraged to follow the instructions.

Box 1: Turn the crank and allow your sense of self to merge with the rolling waves.
Box 2: Step inside and stay there, for at least 10 minutes. Waiting participants are invited to observe the experience of “Participant X” by having a look through the peep holes.
Box 3: Climb up the wall and watch the breaking waves consume you. To increase the transcendent nature of your experience. Please hold your breath, on and off, for one minute intervals.

Gabrielle Iwelumo (1981, Dundee) is an artist and teacher. www.gabrielle-iwelumo.tumblr.com
ON THE EDGE
Eva Larsson

On The Edge

Lost Ideologies. Lost Visions
Turmoil. Nightmares

Voices of hard rule, a firm hand
Voices of Autocracy
Seductive voices - Ghosts in Time and Space - they return

For some a Utopia - the better future

A quest for the Pure
Cleansing, purging of the bad, the evil, the soiled
The dream of the omnipotent father, ruler, god

What do we legitimize in our Utopias?
Where are the other voices ... of equality, inclusion, caring for our future?
Can we ever arrive at Utopia? Or does it become Dystopia?

On the edge

My photos are not "a message without a code" a putative objectiveness
What do they hold?
My vision of Utopia? A quest for the pure?
Where do I end up?

Eva Larsson (1962. Stockholm) is an architectural historian and antiquarian living in Stockholm.

Image from 'Utopia' by Thomas More 1516
I SEE A TOWER
MARTA GIL

A wave of blind faith, a longing to see.

My train’s goes from Mestre to Udine, I left Venice behind an hour ago. I am on my way to Palmanova, an Italian renaissance nine-sided star shaped fortress. At that time I didn’t know that the track would take me to another star fortress in Latvia, to Daugavgrivas Cietoksni.

Once in Palmanova I will walk across Borgo di Udine in the direction of the main square, to the Piazza Grande. In the very center of the square I found a well and on the top of the well a mast with a tiny flag of the Venetian Republic. I stayed at the Piazza Grande for a while walking in circles, trying to understand the city, taking out-of-focus photos and looking for some guidance. The orientation is not easy in a city like this, I would have liked to have a drone to enable me to see from a higher perspective.

Inside Palmanova’s walls it’s easy to experience the power of the geometry, symmetry, a reticular housing system and grids. I want to quote Luciano di Sopra in his book Palmanova, Analisi di una città fortezza when he says: “No other surviving city in Europe expresses with such intact rigor the renaissance urge to impose geometrical harmony on urban plans”.

In the original construction plans of the Palmanova it is quite clear that there should be a presence of a tower in the middle of the Piazza but in the contemporary Piazza no tower stands. Why isn’t there any tower and what was the reason for not building it? I have been thinking about Palmanova’s tower and its absence is full of meaning to me. The presence of absence. I do believe that a tower in that position could be a powerful tool of orientation and visibility and a strong “panopticon ante litteram” as Fabio Isman says in his book Andare per le città ideali: ‘from the Piazza you could control all of the fortress’. The absence of the tower means to me an unfinished part of Palmanova’s utopic plan.

The meaning of this tower in this research is also connected with the Tower of Victory in Book of Imaginary Beings by Jorge Luis Borges. The legend tells us the story about A Bao A Qu, a creature that lives on the staircase of the tower and its relationship with the climbers of the tower. As soon as visitors starts to climb the tower A Bao A Qu changes and evolves following the climber on the way up but most of the time the visitor cannot reach the top. Only once the climber and A Bao A Qu reached the top and could see the ‘loveliest landscape in the world’.
Palmanova was founded in 1593 by the Republic of Venice and designed by Vincenzo Scamozzi. The spot for the city was chosen for strategic reasons to offer protection of the Italian peninsula from further Ottoman attacks and was also built to celebrate the 22nd victory of the Republic of Venice over the Ottomans.

However, the paradox takes over this city when you realize that no invasion has ever occurred, that no battle has ever been fought, and even more paradoxical is the fact that no one wanted to move there although the people who were supposed to live in this city would share the same amount of land and responsibilities.

In 1622 the promoters of the city were so desperate that they released many prisoners and gave them property in Palmanova. The History of the city counts with a military settlement in the 1800’s when Napoleon conquered the city and a second wall was built to strengthen the security. After that the Austrians were there and then the city was part of the Italian unification and since then most of the population actively living in the city has been military.

In the early spring I visited Daugavgrivas Cietoksnis, a star shaped fortress placed on the entrance the Daugava River estuary, 16 km far from Riga. Daugavgrivas Cietoksnis was built in the 17th century by Swedish engineers during the Polish-Swedish war in 1600. Throughout the course of history many invasions have taken place; Russians and Germans among them. The fortification’s internal area plan makes out an almost regular pentagon, with a total area of almost 10 hectares. All around the central square were barracks, warehouses, headquarters, Colonel garden, firewood shed, horse stables, cow and sheep barns, a coach house, a clothing warehouse, a church and a gun power house. The whole fortress was a war machine. The fortress is known by the locals as Kometa. This name comes from the legend that says the fortress was shaped by the crash of a comet on the land. For many years the fortress was abandoned but since 2016 a group of activists and people from Riga are reactivating it in a completely new way by creating an encounter, Kometa festival, for utopian wanderers giving the fortress a new renaissance.

Water is an element that has been part of this trip between these two fortress. In Palmanova, the water comes up to the periphery of the city as an amusement. A large park surrounds the walls. More than 6 km of green areas are dedicated to trekking and leisure for a lot of healthy tourists and locals. The landscape is full of undulating hills, hidden ancient ramparts, trenchers and arcs, magnificent bastions, a subterranean communication system. But despite this peaceful appearance it retains a perfect war machine ground plan. Meanwhile, Daugavgriva fortress is located on an island. It is an island inside an island. A water tower is part of the current fortress facilities. It used to be the tower of the main church, however, this was demolished by Russian troops and reconstructed as a water tower.

I see Palmanova as a past model of Utopia in a moment where we question and rethink what our new utopias may be. I see Daugavgrivas Cietoksnis as a contemporary path to discuss the how we share, build and construct together - utopias as a way to bring people together.

For me, there is an utopian potential in the technique of reverse motion, in revisiting, in the action of passing through the heart again (Recordis in latin) but with the pulse of new blood.

In this sense, I am lured by the idea of building a utopian tower in Palmanova, as a tower built by many where the process is the outcome, the tower would allow us to imagine as many futures as there are people.

Kometa Festival is the point of departure for Palmanova’s Tower, where I plan to get people involved with the first edition of a temporary construction of the tower. My aim is to find people interested in auto-construction and collective efforts. In the Future the story may continue.
THE PHEASANT ISLAND: A TIME THRESHOLD
Guillermo S. Arsuaga

We live in an exponentially globalizing world where the development of multiple systems and networks of exchange -of capital, information, goods, people- is producing a variety of challenges but also of opportunities for invention. However, while these new systems have provided new scenarios and conditions, there has not been a revaluation of the architectural project and the spatial and social implications that these new paradigms entail.

In the space of the border, the physical space intersects with dilemmas of flow, control, identity, belonging, memories and collective imaginary. The scale of such dilemmas range from geopolitical to the threshold of the intimate human identity, and it is precisely there, where this project explores the border as a symbol or as a memory for a country or a society when the physical border becomes a souvenir of what it really means, has meant, and will mean.

The Pheasant Island, a unique case study. The Pheasant Island, Isla de los Faisanes in Spanish, or Île de la Conference in French, is a 2000 m2 island located in the Bidassoa River that divides France from Spain in their western border. This island is rare example of a curious border arrangement: a condominium. A condominium is a territory jointly administered by two or more countries, often (but not necessarily) a territory on the common border between the parties involved. As one might surmise, such an arrangement depends on the benevolent cooperation of all parties involved - and indeed, historically, most condominiums have not survived very long. Nevertheless, The Pheasant Island is not only the oldest and smallest condominium in the world, but also the one where the sovereignty isn't shared simultaneously but alternately. Still now a days, every six months, a ceremony takes place in the island, where the military forces from Spain and France exchange the sovereignty of the island for half of the year.

The importance of this island and its condominium status starts in 1659, when Spain and France used this island as meeting-conference point to sign the Treaty of the Pyrenees that would end the 1635-1659 war between both countries. That important event for the two nations not only finished the longest war between them, but also opened a new scenario in their relations, the treaty was ratified a year after, in 1660, by the compromise between Louis XIV from France, and Maria Teresa de Austria, from the Spanish Crown, during an encounter in the same Island.

This event was that relevant that several artistic representations were produced during that time about it. One of the most important is the Tapestry made within the series on the life of Louis XIV that today is in the Versailles Palace, also later copied in oils by Jacques Laumonsier (Musée de Tessé, Le Mans)
Using this example as a significative and symbolic image of the event, on the scene we can recognize on the Spanish side Maria Teresa, the future Carlos II of Spain, the Count-Duke of Olivares, Spanish chief minister, as well as one of the Organizers of the meeting, and the painter Diego Velázquez, was in charge of creating a scenario capable of symbolizing the differences between two powers in litigation in the island. He was sixty years old at that time, and was dead two months after this encounter in Madrid.

On the French side, there was the widowed Queen Anne of Austria, sister of King Felipe IV of Spain and mother of Louis XIV, the Duke Philippe I of Orleans and Cardinal Mazarin, the French chief Minister.

Since then, the Island has become a particular Persephone for both countries, that exchange the sovereignty every six months, and has been used as a symbol for very important meetings and conference, royal encounters and weddings. The island starts like this developing its own story of becoming, as a symbol, as a memory and collective creation of all these important events; until the point where nowadays, these memories become the real identity of the island, that is not only the physical space anymore.

The nature of the island, made of sand, and located in river mouth, make almost impossible the believing that the same island, as physical space has not changed since the XVII century, due to diverse floods and other natural causes; and in fact diverse historical documents represent this island with different sizes, and dispositions during the centuries. The conception of the physical space and border as just a souvenir, a representation of what the real island is, an Imaginary Island; is directly linked to the understanding of the human condition in the same way, because we, human beings, we are made of our memories; and made by the beings that remember us. We use our memories, as raw material for building our life.

Are the essential memories, the first ones, the ones that walk with us during our life journey, where changing is the driving force of the existence. The verb to remember, recall the Latin expression Re-cardio, (recordar, ricordare...). The Romans thought that the heart was the place where our memories laid. And in fact, the happenings around us are stick to us by the affection they cause, and the way they keep on existing inside us is affecting us in our deepest essence.

This island, like the memories, is not here anymore, and its past allows us using the memory to think over them, for a future full of opportunities.

The Island is made of memories, and the initial memory waits the pass of time to become an island, and became an island and became an island again.

Guillermo S. Arsuaga (1990, Donostia/San Sebastián) is a human being, and architect. He is currently living and working in Stockholm. www.guarzuaga.wordpress.com


THIS MUST BE THE PLACE
Ela Celary

National movements have gained popularity in the past years in Europe. Home has become a central term used by populists to create fear. The idea of home have been questioned with the rise of globalisation, urbanisation and migration. In the following I will compare the different notions of the term "home" from a nationalist perspective and from a perspective of people living in exile.

**Nationalist understanding of home as "heimat"**

The feelings that are connected to home are a lot of times used by nationalist political opinions to exacerbate people’s fears. A concept of home as a static unchanging place that is endangered by foreign influences. Theresa May, the prime minister of United Kingdom said in her speech to the 2016 Conservative Party conference:

"...if you believe you're a citizen of the world, you’re a citizen of nowhere. You don’t understand what the very word ‘citizenship’ means."

According to GlobeScan surveys on global citizenship from August 2016, about half of the world population identify itself as a world citizen. The danger in those kind of statements is the strength of the narrative which is touching upon very basic human needs of belonging. No one wants to feel like a citizen of nowhere. Additionally national movements use strong symbols to formulate the connection between home and nation, which create a tangible feeling of belonging. Flags, passports, borders, armorials, currencies, anthems are those kind of symbols that own the narrative of a belonging together. The national movements use those symbols skillfully to manipulate and drive this feeling of home and belonging that it makes us believe this version of the story. As explored during our research visit to Mostar and Riga, memorials are also used as tools to connect a group of people through some traumatic or happy events in the past. So on one hand belonging together is based on abstract symbols, created by the structure of the state and on the other hand on history. The german term "heimat", used by populists is not a future oriented term , but refers to the past that is built on an imagined community, as Benedict Anderson describes, 'nations'.
Home from a nomad identity perspective
Migration and globalisation have shaken this picture of how we create together one homogeneous group based on the national home narrative. Who was not born in a place does not belong here, that is what the nationalists tell us. And if you left your own home you will always stay in a state of exile, not arriving and not returning. The next generations of your family will also be labeled with the term migrant along with the second and third generations. But does that mean that people who leave their countries, for whatever reasons, should never have a “home” again? We need to change the story what home and nationality means and find a definition that do not exclude. As Hannah Arendt says in her essay “We Refugees:”

“The refugee question has become universal. It requires a review of the self-understanding of states, that is to say, of the idea of a nation who lives in state of boundaries and whose borders are guaranteed by the state.”

Everyone that enters a cultural society will also become part of it, bringing in their own experiences and incorporate new experiences in their lives. Becoming a hybrid-identity opens up the possibility to advocate the connection of the the two nationalities or thought bigger, even no nationality. People with nomad-identities also own a home, that is very different from the static territorial owning of a physical space. The understanding of a home that is detached from a physical space, is easier for people that do not own a physical space called home. This nomad-home understanding is a chance to rethink and overcome boundaries and encounter each other as human beings rather than abstract nations.

Through drawing my personal picture of home and comparing it to the nationalist picture of home, I see a chance to create a stronger narrative that is not separating but unifying. I grew up as an asylum seeking child in the beginning of the 90’s in West-Berlin and own today the German and the Polish citizenship, and they are both my homes. The multiplicity notion of home is assembled for me by layers of different experiences. I am both and I am citizen of both. My understanding of belonging and home is built upon the experience of losing the physical space home and not owning a new one. And as I did not have a voice to speak it out while being in the process of searching, I feel the importance of sharing my view on home today. The words that I describe home with are, love, joy, sharing, happiness, pain, loss, memory, coziness, movement, shelter, flexibility, the pack, community, multiplicity… And that differs from a static, exclusive picture of home that national movements use. It is a home founded on basic fundamental human needs and this is universal either with a hybrid identity or not. We all are longing for the same home, it is just misused by nationalists that aim to create borders and boundaries.

Utopian vision of no nationalities
The concept of “Weltbürgertum” (World citizenship - Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose. 1784, Immanuel Kant) is not new and while we are already living in it, it is just a matter of rephrasing the story of what home is to all of us. The openness of the term home that is brought through migration, is exactly what frightens many people and they prefer to go the way that the national narrative is offering. The definition I create from a hybrid-identity perspective can be used as a tool to see the connection points between human beings, rather than seeing the differences. Concepts that are giving a more tangible feeling of belonging in a global scale are existing in different forms like world citizenship passport, world anthem and world flag.

If we understand that home is not static and not owned by one group of people, but that it is an universal need that everyone shares, we might arrive closer to peaceful living communities. It is not uniformity that I am aiming for but tolerance and as Bayle and Locke viewed tolerance as a tool to prevent war and conflict. National thinking was constantly falling in history and bringing suffering and pain. Facing greater future problems and become a resilient system we will need to leave the idea of monocultures, to frame it in terms of ecology. Diversity, also in our understanding of home is what I see as a first step. The strength of diversity is not just my own experience, you can find it in nature (ecology), but also in interdisciplinary work or wherever we create hybrids.

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In what proved to be an incredibly embarrassing setback, the coalition of Hi-European European nationalists released a statement without realising the automatic word check changed a key word from foul to fowl, thus exposing their weak position on protecting local natural environments, jeopardizing the very heritage sites they would need to celebrate were they to succeed in winning back their national independence. ‘without these natural heritage sites there would be no nation’ claimed one disgruntled citizen, who then went on to pledge her allegiance to a pan European effort to save the all natural environments across the continent.
MORE THAN FAKE NEWS!
Vol. 1, May 23 2017
URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY ON POINT!

"Public memory is never fixed but is part of an ongoing process of being challenged and remade. There is no closure regarding the significance of a past event. For Dines, this is not necessarily a problem, but rather a healthy condition in which the public is required to constantly negotiate and interpret the meaning of history in relation to shared experiences."

Dines presented a number of examples on the ways in which divergent memories play out in urban space. He began with the story of San Miniat, a small hill town in Tuscany, where a bomb explosion killed some sixty odd residents during WWII. The battle between entrenched German soldiers and advancing Americans. The commemoration of this event resulted in a succession of public plaques, each contradicting the other, as the town sought to establish the true culprits behind the tragic event. That those guilty were found in the end to be the allied forces and not the Germans as originally suspected did not alter the fundamental popular sentiment that was skewed against the brutal Nazi occupation.

As Dines pointed out, the tale of San Miniat represents a singular attempt to publicly acknowledge and reconcile divided memories and contradictory versions of a dramatic event that continue to resonate among a small community.

The quest to establish an absolute truth would have silenced the ways in which local people had dealt with the trauma and come to terms with the past.

In his next example, Dines focused on Piazza Plebiscito, the largest piazza in Naples. Nested between various seats of political power and some of the city’s poorest neighbourhoods, over the centuries this piazza was frequently used for mass gatherings and popular spectacles, while its early-nineteenth-century colonnade became a refuge and open latrine for the city’s more destitute inhabitants. Following a thirty-year period as a giant car park, the piazza was pedestrianized in 1994 and became a focus of urban regeneration through which the local administration and media sought to project an improved public image of the much-maligned city. This they did by harnessing what they perceived to be the piazza’s nobler (and traffic-free) past; a move premised on the claim that the car park had removed the piazza’s historic memory.

However, the recuperation of the piazza’s palatial surroundings – for instance through the organization of open-air concerts – faced a series of challenges, especially from everyday uses of the space that were shaped by longstanding ‘habit memories’ and which did not necessarily comply with its new status. So, Piazza Plebiscito continued to be traversed by locals on motorbikes, the colonnade became a source of public angst as once again it was occupied by resident lowlives, while the clearance of traffic reminded the piazza’s traditional role as a place of protest. Piazza Plebiscito highlights the unintended consequences of attempts to affix meanings to urban space through selected readings of place memory, and how at the same time the reconfiguration of public rituals and functions reflects divergent and often incompatible claims to the city’s public realm.

In a final example, Dines focused in on a city that did not officially exist: a make-shift squatters' town near Foglia in the southern region of Puglia, which over the last decade has been a temporary home for thousands of Saharan tomato pickers. Names the Gran Ghetto by the inhabitants themselves, this self-built city has been publicly portrayed as a site of incontrovertible squalor, where migrants are slaves to unscrupulous gangmasters, but it is also a place where migrants choose to return each year given its proximity to the workplace and because it provides for greater sociality, security and freedom than the night shelters run by humanitarian organizations.

In short, the settlement is both an emblem of structural violence, inadequate housing policy, inequitable agricultural production as well as a symbol of migration.

autonomy. After the Gran Ghetto was evicted by police and subsequently burnt to the ground, Dines raised the question about how this phantom town might be remembered in the future: as a site of migration heritage or as a place of Italy’s dark heritage?

In a follow-up to his talk, Dines responded to a couple questions to further qualify his position.

PTL/ In this environment where truth itself is increasingly challenged by dubiuous, counter-truths or alternative facts, how does the public realm, piazzas, streets, monuments and symbolic landscapes become objects of manipulation and persuasion, or perversion?

ND/ The public realm is always a contested site, otherwise it is not a public realm; it is something else. I say this at the risk of sounding rhetorical and perhaps overly influenced by my work on the ups and downs of urban life in Naples. Nonetheless, it is a fundamental starting point for thinking about how certain places function, streets, monuments or a piece of graffiti on a wall – can be manipulated by people in positions of power in certain moments and under certain circumstances (say an economic crisis or an election campaign) but how they can also be re-appropriated from time to time through acts of symbolic and street art that attempts to affix meanings to events, places and to the past. In other words, the ‘truth’ in the public arena becomes a battleground, one that is often low intensity and at times barely perceptible. There is never one ‘side’ that prevails entirely, there is no ‘mother of all truths’ that can blast away any irritating resistance. Whether we like it or not, we are all involved in a war of position (to use Gramsci’s term) and whether this war evolves into something else depends on our collective goals.

PTL/ Johaan brought up this contrast between memory and heritage. You may not actually see the situation coming down to just these two definitions of historical urban symbols. Would you like to restate your position vis-à-vis the unravelling of public interest and commitment to the preservation and maintenance of collective memorial sites?

ND/ It is true that in recent years the two terms ‘memory’ and ‘heritage’ have permeated academic and public discourse and have increasingly entered into everyday speech and that their meanings are often elusive and blurred. When they are used casually or interchangeably, ‘memory’ and ‘heritage’ can mean everything or nothing. At the same time, it would be difficult to provide succinct definitions without overlooking their complex semantic baggage. We could say that heritage is about the use of the past in the present, while memory is more about the residue of the past and the faculty of recall. But, of course, this is only a basic starting point and the two terms soon find themselves intimately bound up with each other.

Generally, I am interested to take a cultural materialist approach to thinking about keywords, in other words understanding how common concepts enter into popular usage and how their meanings change in different historical and social circumstances. We need to remember that less than thirty years ago, as architects or anthropologists we would have not been talking about heritage and memory, or at least not in the terms we use today. This suggests that we should attend critically to the reasons why memorial sites or questions of preservation have come to be seen by some as fundamental issues for contemporary societies. Moreover, ‘memory’ and ‘heritage’ means very different things to, say, Vladimir Putin, the speculators of New Hanza City or our friends at the Kanepes cultural centre, and likewise they can be mobilized in very different ways.
Karyatids in Riga Rebel Against Local Government

Last week, after attending the screening of Agnès Varda’s film “Les Dites Caryatides” from 1984 at Kanapēs Cultural Center, a series of feminist Karyatids in Riga’s famous Art Déco district have decided to leave the façades and go on strike.

ISABEL LÖFGREN

They promise only to return after the local government agrees to give a space of protagonism to women in public space, and redesign old historical monuments to pay tribute to women, and not only to soldiers, generals and patriarchs. “We are tired of being human columns,” they say, “always shown in pairs, half-naked or naked, with a piece of marbles on our heads.” They also expressed being tired of being shown identical or symmetrical, urging contemporary architects and city planners to move beyond Vitruvian ideals.

Women in Latvia are known for their resilience and for their role in supporting the development of society through the successive waves of occupation, invasion, and independence in the country in the past 100 years. They have endured the separations from their husbands during the first Soviet invasion, then survived the Gulag as refugees in Siberia after the Nazi occupation, and even made it through the lack of reparations for the lost children and families during the second Soviet occupation.

The importance of women in Latvian society is nonetheless apparent in the local architectural tradition in Riga of karyatids and public monuments. In Riga, female figures have been traditionally been chiseled into stone and placed in key places in buildings façades or in public squares usually holding up balconies, flashing metal stars into the sky as some sort of super heroes and playing mostly secondary roles in commemorative elements in several places in the city.

A current local feminist movement has recently alerted authorities at the injustice of using the female body in public space in a way that they are always appear as supporting elements but never having the chance to being the protagonists of their own lives with architectural structures and never being the object of monumentalization themselves. Instead they propose better working conditions for the karyatids and supporting characters of monuments, and also carving a space for their involvement in decision making in future monuments.

Mostar and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

At 15 years old, a young archer from South Korea receives a message in a dream. He wants to meet the Hungarian master in archery he admires so much.

SASHA STROGONOV

At 20, he takes his arch, a sitar and a used motorcycle and sets off on a journey to Europe. The motorcycle is stolen while Kazakhstan and hitchhikes through Central Asia to Turkey where he is able to get enough money from sitar playing in the streets to buy a new motorcycle. He manages to make his way to Europe on the motorcycle until it is totalised in Mostar. There he meets a group of French recent graduates in philosophy taking their year off before responsible adulthood. Broke but creative, the group finds a way of subsistence by playing music in Mostar’s Old Bridge. The Korean’s sitar attracts the attention of a busload of homesick Korean tourists happy to find a familiar sound. They hear the story of his quest and donate enough money for the entire group to continue the trip on a Van up the coast of Croatia and Hungary next.

In Hungary, the group gets caught in the middle of a national demonstration and are forced to go underground, finding refuge in one of the old baths on the hills of Buda. There the Korean learns that his mentor, the Hungarian master archer he so longed to meet, is deceased. Overcome by sadness, the Korean archer finds an empty plinth in a park in central Budapest where a statue of Georg Lukács once stood and planted an arrow.
Monument to the Anonymous Selfie Photographer

While Mostar is mostly well-known for being the city of romance, the birthplace of Bosnian comedians, and a contested site during the Balkan war, it is mostly known now for being the preferred destination for thousands of selfie photographers. The city government is now discussing the creation of a monument for the anonymous selfie photographer.

BORIS BOLTANSKI

Thousands of visitors go to Mostar each year looking for the perfect place for that singular selfie. Selfies have become so popular in Mostar that an annual convention has been setup, where hundreds of selfie experts convene every year. According to our team of expert data analysts, the favorite place for selfie is the Mostar bridge. But the favorite event to be “selfied” is trying to catch a Mostar diver in mid-air while taking the selfie.

Divers could take hours parading up and down the bridge before they suddenly jump into the water, so it is rather a test of self-endurance for the photographers to finally catch a glimpse of the diver while quickly setting up the selfie stick and take the photograph. “I have been coming here for five years now, and only this year I managed to catch a diver in my selfie as I should. But it was well worth it - I won this year’s selfie award,” says the self-made photographer.

While Mostar divers think that the crowds are gathered at the bottom of the bridge to admire their millennial art form of endurance and skill passed through generations of Mostarians, the truth is the crowds gather to be able to increase their popularity on Facebook,” says a data analytics expert who has analyzed over 100,000 Mostar selfies in the past week. The souvenir sellers near the Mostar bridge also report an increase in sales of selfie sticks during Mostar’s annual diving contest, which is now sponsored by Red Bull.

Upset at not being the main focus of the selfie, Mostar divers have reacted to the trend by taking selfies of themselves while parading on the bridge, and also taking selfies in mid-air while diving. Selfie photographers watching the selfie-divers have responded accordingly: now the challenge is taking a selfie with a diver in mid-air taking a selfie.

“Mostar’s selfie-image has really improved in the past years thanks to the rise of narcissism worldwide. Catching a diver in mid-air is not easy feat, but with improvements in selfie technology through YouTube tutorials and the annual convention, it has been a great success,” says an unofficially elected representative of the Mostar city council who is also the spokesperson for the non-existent mayor of the city.

The monument site is currently under discussion. An artist will be commissioned to create the monument, but it may take years until Mostar’s unofficially elected city council comes to a resolution of who will undertake the commission.

Architects Battle in Bastejkaln

Land allocation competition for two plots next to Bastejkaln parken in Riga is finished.

SARA SAXTON CHERINOS

Earlier today, President Hella Wudijoki announced during a press conference that Co-Pilot and Marge Architects will build rental units as well as condominiums in wood.

On November 8, the legislative parliament, the Saeima invited interested participants for an open international architectural competition. Total number of entries were 33, 18 for the plot as rental units and 15 for the grounds relating to condominiums. The smallest rental units consist of 2-3 rooms and kitchen and will be 65 square meters, the largest consists of 4-6 bedroom apartment and townhouse of 120 square meters. The location of construction is along Raina boulevard, north of Bastejkaln park. A total of 134 units will be built with the aim to increase awareness of sustainable construction, use the natural resources available in the Baltic region and is part of a stimulus package totaling €3 million.

To further strengthen local support newly re-elected Latvian President Hella Wudijoki announced that a letter will be sent to all Latvian construction workers currently abroad, inviting them to return home and use their internationally renowned expertise in the project.

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AN INVITATION TO DIALOGUE

TABLE GROUP

The aim of our performance was to create an intimate environment that would encourage dialogue with the local people of Mostar. We took several steps to create this environment, the first one being to place a table and chairs on Tito’s bridge in order to invite people to sit down with us. Actually sitting at a table, we felt encouraged a deeper conversation then would normally be had with someone just passing by. On the table we placed a homemade cookie cake that we had baked earlier that morning to attract peoples attention and to offer them a gift. We also placed a flower on the table to make it more inviting and create a more intimate environment.

Lastly we used Bosnian phrases like ‘ivoli ova harana’ to initiate conversation and invite people to sit down and eat with us. We chose tito’s Bridge as the location for our performance as we found it to be well populated, with many people traveling from the gymnasium back across the river, particularly at lunchtime. We also felt that the river was an ideal position to engage in intimate dialogue as it was a neutral area and a symbol of identity in Mostar.

On reflection, we found our experiment to be quite successful. We were able to engage in long conversations with a variety of age groups and genders, and perhaps offer them a connection with someone they may have not otherwise had that day. Overall, we enjoyed giving this gift of food and conversation, and perhaps benefited more from these connections with people than the locals did themselves.

REVERSE SYMBOLISM

ICON TRANSFORMER GROUP

As a first step, we took a group picture with the symbol that was located opposite the Zrinjevac Park. We earlier found out from a local resident that that the area surrounding the park was the space where people from both sides of the divided city use to gather. The photo was then posted on to various social media websites (incl. Street Arts Festival Mostar Facebook Page) as a first way to investigate if young people from the area will react to the symbol in any way. There was no particular reaction from the group’s members, apart from a couple of ‘likes’. Later on we posted our action intention in the comments of the photo, encouraging people to take part in the idea of turning ‘U’ into hearts. The Ustaše were members of the Ustaše – Croatian Revolutionary Movement a Croatian fascist, ultranationalist and terrorist organization, active, in its original form, between 1929 and 1945. Its members murdered hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews, Roma (Gypsies) and anti-fascist or dissident Croats and Bosnian Muslims in Yugoslavia during World War II.

The ideology of the movement was a blend of fascism, Roman Catholicism and Croatian nationalism. The Ustaše intended to create an ethnically “pure” Croatia, and viewed those Serbs then living in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina as the biggest obstacle to this goal.

After World War II, the Ustaše movement was split into several organizations and there is presently no political or paramilitary movement that claims its legacy as their “successor”. The term “ustaše” is today used as a (derogatory) term for Croatian ultranationalism. The term “ustaše” is sometimes used among Serbs to describe Serbophobia or more generally to defame political opponents.

CAN POETRY HEAL A DIVIDED CITY?

SHIFT PERCEPTION GROUP
Temporary site installations, using stone fragments from the original bridge structure. (their text is a modified poem)
the Emin Poem read during the movie. It is a poem by the Bosnian Serb poet Aleksa Santić.

Shift Perception Group: Matthew Dewell, Fiona Griffiths, ana Marrelli, Elia Celary, Simon Fugues, Isabel Leffler

Last night, returning from the warm hamam
I passed by the garden of the old Imam
And lo, in the garden, in the shade of a jasmine,
There with a pitcher in her hand stood ... 
What beauty! By imam I could swear,
She would not be ashamed if she were at the sultan’s!
And the way she walks and her shoulders move...
Not even an Imam’s amulet could help me!
I offered her salam, but by my din,
Beautiful .... would not even hear it.
Instead, scooping water in her silver pitcher,
Around the garden she went to water the roses.
A wind blew from the branches down her lovely shoulders
Unraveling those thick braids of hers.
Her hair gave off a scent of blue hyacinths,
Making me giddy and confused!
I nearly stumbled, I swear by my faith,
But beautiful .... did not come to me.
She only gave me a frowning look,
Not caring, the naughty one, that I am crazy for her!

PLAY IN THE CITY

PLAYGROUND GROUP
The group mapped population movement through Mostar and concluded there is a significant lack of gardens, parks, and playgrounds. As a result the proposal introduced spontaneous play events throughout the city.

Playground Group: Katie Reilly, Amit Bara, Shang Tan, Anna Odlunge, Anna Maria Faruland, Mario Salatis, Emina Usic.

Back by popular demand!

BUILDINGS OF DISASTER REDUX
Osama Bin Laden House,
Abbotabad, Pakistan, May 2, 2011.

Only $75! While stocks last!
Every object is individually cast of specially formulated natural, bonded earth. This building is 4.5" by 3.5" by 1.5" high. No more than 500 pieces will be made. Each one is handfinished and consecutively numbered.
The visual and physical landscape of Mostar is dominated by symbols of power and faith. At present these symbols and icons reinforce divisions across the city. The workshop will seek to reframe this infrastructure of power and division by focusing on new fictional infrastructures which might be ahistorical in scope scanning from the prehistoric to the future. There are clues to these potential fictional infrastructures across the city and region (the Pyramids of Bosnia, the Bogomils, the work and legacy of Bogdan Bogdanovic, disused physical infrastructures and so on). The workshop will be forensic in nature examining the traces of infrastructures of the present and recent past for clues and latent possibilities for re-use, transformation and reinterpretation. It will be transformative in its development of new fictional infrastructures. NB.
A consequence of this preliminary investigation is a move to re-evaluate the work of the Yugoslav architect Bogdan Bogdanovic, whose Partisan monument in Mostar is degrading rapidly. According to Ana Dzokic (PhD student RIA and co-founder of Stealth):

"Bogdan was a prolific writer, author of many of the monuments to socialist revolution and partisans (like the cemetery that you saw in Mostar) and also the dean of the Belgrade School of Architecture in early 70s, initiator of so-called New School which was after 2 years of quite relevant and radical experiments blocked by his opponents. In December last year, there was an event organised by Centre for Cultural Decontamination in Belgrade to look mostly into that last aspect of his work."

The R-Lab course set its aim two years ago on Frederick Kiesler, and this last year on Oskar Hansen, both multi-talented architects, artists, designers. A parallel focus on Bogdan Bogdanovic for this year's workshop with Fargfrikken on the Missing Europe would benefit greatly from a deeper introspection into this formidable architect's work.

The first goal is to bring this project to a wider audience, by making a specific publication and exhibition, while over the long-term the hope is to bring the monument back to life in Mostar. The Partisan Monument is just one example of a contested architecture, that will become part of a larger archive dedicated to "Re-Signification Architecture (RA), a new independent platform that will be mapping connections between contested urban spaces and their associations to architectural iconography. Moreover, RA seeks to develop architectural strategies that can grow to support new forms of social reconciliation in the public realm."
BAC & BAK

How can an Architecture Contribute to the Process of Reconciliation?

DANIEL UREY

The idea of connecting the Baltic and the Balkan was taken up within the exchange developed between the Royal Institute of Art (RIA) and Färgfabriken Contemporary Art Centre in the spring of 2016. Färgfabriken's engagement with both the Baltic and the Balkan started years back through the creation of Baltic Dimensions program, connecting art institutions around the region in order to talk about the different urbanization processes taking place. In Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Färgfabriken engaged with local partners in aiding the development and organization of Architecture, Dialogue and Art in Mostar (ADA Centre Mostar). As with previous international programs implemented by Färgfabriken, the goal for ADA was to show the importance of cultural platforms as a neutral space within divided cities.

Shortly after initiating BAC & BAK, the exchange between the RIA and Färgfabriken began by conducting relevant comparative analyses among contemporary urban spaces in the Baltic and the Balkan, specifically focusing on their urban and social contexts. Both regions, as in previous significant periods, have again become de facto buffer zones for the greater political, economic and military powers such as the EU, USA, Russia, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. These same powers were not late in developing new kinds of policies to secure that these regions play significant proxy roles. Keeping this in mind, the Baltic and the Balkan remain two regions where the politics of identity affect the dramatic, brutal and violent revival and resignification of these nations at the beginning of the 90s. And there are plenty of traces of these histories still there! Some are more blatant, some less evident – but they exist in the urban spaces surfacing as monuments, piazzas, streets, bridges, cemeteries, museums, schools, counter-propaganda centres. These environments act to compound conflicting memories!

However, the imagined connections were not intended to merely compose lists of conflicting memories, but were catalogued in order to ask ourselves if and how reconciliation can be supported by architectural design.

Obviously, such questions will always be relevant since reconciliation is a never ending process, but how do we start? To get to the answer of this question, this project started on a path into the land of symbols. With workshops committed to Mostar and to Riga, the first responses could be critically gauged and tested.

“Who listens when a Bosnian mother cries?”

How does a reading of violence in the city affect the notion of remembrance?

ISABEL LÖFGREN

READING VIOLENCE

The urban fabric in both Riga and Mostar shows the scars of a constant cycle of occupations and invasions, divisions and fragmentations. Our investigation of monuments, symbols and landmarks became a detective’s work in reading clues and finding evidence for past violent events and the challenges in writing histories that do justice to the suffering of victims from civil wars, occupations and invasions. How does a reading of violence in the city affect the notion of remembrance? How do women, and women’s narratives, claim public space for remembrance? How have these tactics of occupation and political and military domination come to determine the life narratives of men, women, children and families during key moments of invasion and occupation through the mechanisms of genocidal rape as an instrument of terror, forced separations, assassinations and deportations aimed towards silencing dissent and the successive dissolution of the subject.

POWERS OF HORROR

In Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, Julia Kristeva makes a distinction between intimate suffering and public horror through the notion of abjection. The abject refers to the human reaction (horror) to the threat of a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the distinction between subject and object or between self and other. In Kristeva, abjection is the shape of the border between the intimate and the public, or, “abjection is the fate of intimacy in the historical context of an unavoidable interiorization of public horror.” (Kristeva, 1980) If we consider Kristeva’s notion of the abject in the form of a city, where is the border of the intimate and the public suffering located?

DIVIDED CITIES

DIVIDED FAMILIES

In Mostar, in conversations with women who had survived the war as witnesses of mass killings, survivors of concentration camps, deportations, exile, family separations and even torture, there was a general feeling that the stories about the war are not shared enough. There is no proper avenue for a common mourning of lost lives, and there are few opportunities to speak out in the public sphere about the suffering within each family. Nearly all families in Mostar lost a loved one to the war, a war also known as a “war between brothers.” While many men died, most women survived. Of the women who survived, thousands were consistently raped by the enemy, many bore “war babies,” many went into exile and separated from their families, many are simply silent. The opportunity for a common healing is missing. Who suffered most?

COMMON GROUND = UTOPIA?

In a conversation with Senada and Djenana from ADA Centre in Mostar, this prompted some ideas about public space and possibilities for remembrance and reconciliation, and the demands of mothers to insist on reparations. However, what seemed most important was the need for creating spaces for listening. In a divided city where families lines straddle the city’s dividing lines, where would be the place where listening is possible? In a society where everyone is a perpetrator, is there a space of listening without judging or accusation? And how can we publicly take care of that pain? One of the paths may be to look at the present as somewhat liberated from the past. But this does not imply an erasure of the past, on the contrary. Rather it suggests ways in which we can open avenues for memorial practices that foster the work of remembrance. Remembrance as part of the work of freedom which is the ultimate ethical frontier.

PHOTO ZENA MOCIĆ
Recipes of our Common Memories

Baltikan food critic Leire Mesa takes us on an aromatic journey into the depths of the Riga Markets.

In the days that we were walking in Riga I decided to write words like a vomit of the feelings, smells, faces and bodies that I found in the way in the format of automatic writing. With the special attention of the bodies that are the architecture that contain our memories and the words that were lost in different corners. Words that came in Spanish and that were shaped with the google translator, a language that is changing in the journey and that will loose and gain different meanings.

At the same time I was taking photos keeping the same objective that I include them in relation with the texts. The memory of the architecture of our bodies. The simplicity of the essence that remind us of where we come from, the memory of the spaces that surround us. Repetition of the ritual of affection, repetition of the embrace of two women.

Walking between the bodies you can smell and hear the rumors of colors of ages that hide our truths.

The number of women who are seen walking in the market, the years of older people who want to keep small recipes that are composed of common memories. It can be observed how little by little these spaces of encounters that maintain the recipes of our grandmothers are gradually plasticising. Markets built with flexible buildings to incorporate the recipes are missing the smell of the common encounter.

The beauty of the daily life of the women of Riga in the market, keeping their traditions as a way to resist and keep their recipes and memories, of eye contact, repetition of the embrace of two women, repetition to stop and look into the depth of our eyes. The architecture is constructing relationships, like our bodies that are growing little by little. Without the attempt to flatten an abrupt terrain but keeping the brutality of the rocks that compose it.

Marina Abramovic Institute supports the Mostar Women’s Diving Club

In her recent visit to Stockholm, Marina Abramovic made a public statement for her support for the recently founded Mostar Women’s Diving Club, an experimental platform for art and architecture, and the practice of extreme performance art and feminist artistic research in Mostar.

Bogda Novic

Her first performance, due out this summer in Mostar, entails a performance piece where she will perform a series of dives from the Old Bridge down to the River Neretva 80 meters below, while reciting the poem “Emina” by Bosnian Serb poet Aleksa Santic for one entire week. Abramovic declared that the performance is a tribute to the suffering of women during the Balkan war and their forgotten histories of endurance. By appropriating the tradition of diving in Mostar mostly performed by men, Abramovic also makes a powerful statement about the role of women, performance and public space in post-Yugoslavia, and embracing the spectacular and symbolic aspect of reconciliation on the new Old Bridge. After her week-long performance, the Mostar Women’s Diving Club will take over the initiative and install a permanent diving board for women only on the Old Bridge and invite divers trained by the Marina Abramovic Institute to continue the performance.

According to the rules The Marina Abramovic Institute has strictly forbidden the use of mobile phones and selfies during her diving performance. Since Mostar is known as Bosnia’s selfie capital, it remains to be seen if there will be any spectators at all for the performance due to the mobile ban. However, the Google Cultural Institute, one of Marina Abramovic’s Institute main sponsors has already asked the artist to reconsider this decision under the threat of removing their million dollar support for the Marina Abramovic Institute altogether.

While Abramovic’s international reputation may attract international attention to the city and to Bosnia in the short-term, many local women’s artistic groups have voiced their concern that this kind of “international art world politics” will not really benefit the city’s problems or the need for a vibrant cultural life altogether.
Riga Fictions

All I remember about that time, those hours, in that city. I did not know where I was; I did not have any memories, any past, any becoming.

GUillerMO S. ARSUAGA

The city was extremely beautiful, a wired kind of light was sliding down on the shadowed walls, like melted gold; but when I got closer to this light, it froze like ice; it was impossible to capture the liquid essence of the city without interfering with it. A huge ocean of fear was in my head, the city was covered with a heavy fog, seemed like the city and its inhabitants carried this heavy weight on their shoulders; that did not allow any kind of new life, it made me breath with huge difficulty. My feeling of being in a territory where access was prohibited to foreign people was getting worse.

Confused I kept walking around the city; full of nightmares I started to understand that I came from far away, to find a shelter, to leave these fears behind.

I started looking at people, they were wired, or I was wired to them. They looked at me, everyone was looking at me and I was looking at everyone, I felt it, they could see my nightmares, my fears. They looked at me, everyone did, they knew who I was, and I did not. I was too afraid to ask about it, I was not sure I wanted to know. I recognized the city spoke two different languages, and I realized I could understand both, and probably spoke them; but I could not remember which one was mine, my language and which one was the others' language. I was too afraid to start using one of them, that would definitely identify me as one of them or one of the others, and I had no idea who I was. My anxiety was growing, I understood less and less; the people were waiting something, wanting something from me.

Suddenly something caught my attention, a big tall tower was breaking this dense fog, breaking the horizon line, there at the end of the city; it was the only thing that was not blurry for me, this tower, I needed to climb up there, as I always did. I crossed the city, until the tower, always looking up, trying to avoid looking at the people the only way not to have them look at me.

I arrived to the base of the tower, extremely tired, it was a heavy fight against myself to arrive there; but now I was there, I had to climb up this building. I exchanged a shy look with the lady at the entrance door, she pointed the elevator out of order, and her hand pointed the stairs door. There I was, a gentle ramp showed me the way up, and I still had difficulties to breath, and wondered why I was there and what I was doing, what I was supposed to do, the absurdity of existence was growing inside me. I felt more than ever that ascending was the thing to do.

I then climbed the stairs, I did the first one, and from the first one to the next one. My inductive mind told me then that I knew now how to reach the top. But the fears were still there, like Sisyphus, caring my huge weight ignoring the reason of the charge.

Exhausted, I reached a big bow window, the golden sunlight was melting over the city, covering every soul, street and nightmare that I left there, there was no way back. Around the corner a spiral stair was in front of me, I started going up, it looked easy, a faster way to the top. But a big claustrophobic feeling was invading me, there was no exit, no light there, and no way down either I had to keep going up, my breath was getting more and heavier in my chest. I started running up, looking for the exit, I needed to see it, but it just made it worse, I was totally exhausted when I got to see the first gold spot coming from above.

I went out in the terrace then, the sun was setting, the light was beating my eyes, I could not see anything.

But then I saw her standing there. I understood everything. I was her. I was me only when I understood I was her. We looked down, from the top, there was no fog anymore, and a huge vertigo took my mind, vertigo of looking out at my dreams down there. I was not me, I was my memories, and the people that remembered me. Everything made sense, finished the ascension, finished everything.

"Bambina siriana che guarda l'Europa"

"LITTLE SYRIAN GIRL LOOKING AT EUROPE" BY PIERO FRASSINELLI, SUPERSTUDIO. 2017
SPORT REPORT

SPORTS EDITOR: JUANNA GONZALEZ

9th Century.
Riga began to develop as a centre of Viking trade during the early Middle Ages.
WEST 1 - EAST 0

1200. Bishop Albert landed in Riga region with 23 ships and 500 Westphalian crusaders as a campaign of forced Christianization. The city of Riga was founded in 1201. This year also marked the first arrival of German merchants. Albert had ensured Riga's commercial future by obtaining papal bulls which decreed that all German merchants had to carry on their Baltic trade through Riga. In 1282, Riga became a member of the Hanseatic League. The Hanse was instrumental in giving Riga economic and political stability, thus providing the city with a strong foundation which endured the political configurations that were to come, down to modern times.
WEST 2 - EAST 0

1621. During the Polish–Swedish War (1621–1625), Riga and the outlying fortress of Daugavaqi came under the rule of Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, who intervened in the Thirty Years' War not only for political and economic gain but also in favour of German Lutheran Protestantism. During the Russo–Swedish War (1656–1660), Riga was threatened by Russian forces. Riga remained the largest city in Sweden until 1710.
WEST 3 - EAST 0

1710. In the course of the Great Northern War, Russia under Tsar Peter the Great besieged plague-stricken Riga. Along with the other Livonian towns and gentry, Riga capitulated to Russia, but largely retained their privileges. Sweden's northern dominance had ended, and Russia's emergence as the strongest Northern power was formalised through the Treaty of Nystad in 1721. Riga became an industrialised port city of the Russian empire. By 1900, Riga was the third largest city in Russia after Moscow and St Petersburg in terms of the number of industrial workers and number of theatres.

WEST 3 - EAST 1

1917. In consequence of the battle of Jutlava, the German army marched into Riga on 3 September. On 3 March 1918, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed, giving the Baltic countries to Germany. Because of the Armistice with Germany of 11 November 1918, Germany had to renounce that treaty, as did Russia, leaving Latvia and the other Baltic States in a position to claim independence. Latvia, with Riga as its capital city, thus declared its independence on 18 November 1918.

NULL

1918. Between World War I and World War II, Riga shifted its focus from Russia to the countries of Western Europe. The United Kingdom and Germany replaced Russia as Latvia's major trade partners. The majority of the Baltic Germans were resettled in late 1939.

WEST 4 - EAST 1

1940. During World War II, Latvia was occupied by the Soviet Union in June 1940.

WEST 4 - EAST 2

1941. Then was occupied by Nazi Germany in 1941–1944.

WEST 5 - EAST 2

1944. The Soviet Red Army re-entered Riga on 13 October. In the following years the massive influx of labourers, administrators, military personnel, and their dependents from Russia and other Soviet republics started.

WEST 5 - EAST 3

1991. On 3 March, 73% of all Latvian residents confirmed their strong support for independence in a nonbinding advisory referendum. The Republic of Latvia declared the end of the transitional period and restored full independence on 21 August, in the aftermath of the failed Soviet coup attempt. The Saeima, Latvia's parliament, was again elected in 1993. Russia ended its military presence by completing its troop withdrawal in 1994 and shutting down the Skrunda-1 radar station in 1998.

NULL

2004. Latvia joins NATO and the European Union. The NATO Summit 2006 was held in Riga. In 2014, Riga hosted the European Capital of Culture. During the Latvia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2015 the 4th Eastern Partnership Summit took place in Riga. The arrival of low-cost airlines resulted in cheaper flights from other European cities such as London and Berlin and consequently a substantial increase in numbers of tourists.

WEST 6 - EAST 3

2027. In March, after the exit of United Kingdom, France, Sweden and Greece, European Union is broken down. Latvia's economy collapsed, Russians banks required the payment of outstanding debts. Most of them were incurred by the modernization of the country as the construction of the New Hanza, a business and residential territory closeby Riga. In view of that uncontrolled situation, the Russian population of Riga raises for the fall of the pro-European government. Since the violent repression of peaceful demonstrations by the military authorities, Russia took part in the Latvian situation.

In 2028, the Russian army marched into Riga, which had been declared a "fellow city". On the night of 26 November, following orders from Moscow, the Latvian police killed 31, 234 Western people from Germany, Sweden, Norway, Poland and Denmark, including 4,115 children.

The next morning, Vladimir Putin led a huge and emotional crowd down the Uzvaras bulvāris towards Riga's Central Station. Nowadays, this day is celebrated as a National day in the New Republic of Latvia.

WEST 6 - EAST 4


CARLO CALDINI (1941-2017)

Carlo Caldini, co-founder of Gruppo 9999, passed away on February 22 in his home in Florence, Italy. Caldini was a pioneer of the early ecology movement and believed nature and technology could co-exist in building a better environment for living. He will be greatly missed.

STAR SPOTTER

Ivan Rebloff Spotted Buying Herring at Riga Market

JOANNA SIERADZKA

Saturday in Riga. Day almost like any other in this fantastic city. The society like one body. The future is bright and crystal clear like the sky and air above. The goods spread out in equal proportions.

Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité...

Only here you have an opportunity to meet unexpectedly, famous singer like Ivan who stopped here to buy a fresh herring, during his trip to Moscow.

The Market stands here since 1930. The meeting points on every corner, you just can't lose yourself here. And everyone is just as your friend. This is a place where glass is half full. And vegetables are almost for free. Layers of eastern-western past history in one onion! This makes the vegetable unique. The best from the rest. It can be stinky, smell but it's a base for many dishes from all over the world. You can buy it here. In Riga. Under Art Deco style roof, just for 0.50 euro per kilo.
u ritmu muzike za ples (LIVE '81)

slim Samo Sebe

sna.pjesma (Live @ Poljud, Split)

džak kao konj

i do 100 (HD) SPOT

Opus Dei) Official Video

uznaš 1997

boda [Official Music Video]

extra Live – Bubamara @ Sziget 2012

građe Beer Fest 2012
BALKAN FAIRYTALE
Vesna Salamon

Zagreb, the city divided by war conflicts of the 90’s.

After the civil war, the conflict left marks visible in some aspect of the surrounding; the aesthetic result of mass-produced kitschy housing exteriors. They are mostly cheap private housing, simplified versions of traditional vernacular models built in modern materials and mass-produced. The eclectic combination of towers, decoration, color and materials gives the houses a Disneyesque quality. Not surprisingly, the works at the front of the house are more developed than on the other sides. Visual appearance of houses is aesthetically confusing. With PVC windows and doors on dominant pink walls, roofs and towers, columns and occasional derelicts spots. Houses looks like sweet cakes and the kitschy aspect is more then welcoming.

Excessive sweetness, sentimentality and megalomaniac approach. The prime idea is to create something “out of the ordinary” which is tightly connected to the post war traumas and low self esteem. A particular state of mind on the area is longing for tradition, “our own better past” and it is tightly connected with collective identities and nationalist ideologies. The folklore is “the best thing we have” and an active demonstration in the symbolic marking of territory. Buildings are modeled to resemble castles, representing nostalgia and fantasies. A vision of progress and business prosperity.

The project is connected to a specific context and crisis we are facing today and it is related to a set of overlapping crises manifest around the Mediterranean Sea. These models do not look dissimilar to the vernacular houses of Greece, Macedonia or Spain. Ancient Greek style in symbiotic relation to old Roman sacral elements, false historical decorative elements and variations of regional decoration with a superimposed huge catholic cross at the entrance. The house, primarily as a patriarchal symbol, becomes a kitschy dollhouse and a projection of the individual prosperity after the extreme economical and political post-war period.

Vesna Salamon (1985, Zagreb) is an artist and art historian. Her practice is active between Zagreb-Berlin-Stockholm. www.vesnasalomon.com
INK: POSTCARDS FROM ALBY
Leire Mesa

I was born in the Basque region of Spain but currently live in Alby, on the fringe of Stockholm. As part of this community I’ve began to wonder how I can partake in getting across communicative barriers and let the plurality of cultures, languages, fictions, smells, music and realities affect people for good. The postcards are real objects, something to be touched. Where they are sent they create a path. I’d like to imagine these postcards generate relationships that combine into a map of affection across the globe, starting and spreading out from Alby.

MAP OF MAGNESIUM OF ALBY TO YOU
In an exhibition space the walls have a higher status of visibility. The corners often become forgotten spaces of no use. If we observe them in detail we may discover the corners to be full of potential. We could say that they are vertices from which segments radiate or that they are lines that draw the whole architecture of the space. Giving visibility to the corners is an exercise in fulfilling the architectural potential of the space which could be extended into a metaphor for the purpose of Alby as one of these corners of the world.

The materials that I use to make this exhibitions are the postcards, magnesium, my circus practice, my body and encounters in Alby square. The word of Alby is written with magnesium. I use this material in my hands to hang from the bar of the trapeze. This material serves as a safety precaution adding grip to my hands on the bar of the trapeze. I wonder how I can make Alby as a name visible, in a very small space with objects in a really small scale in a public exhibition space.
PAST-PRESENT-FUTURE
I had put a table, two chairs and my postcards in middle of the square between the metro station and the small shopping center, Alby centrum. Between these two spaces, the metro and Alby centrum, the whole life of Alby is developed: the people that walk to the metro station, to buy in the supermarket, to go their houses, the children that come from the school, the dealers, the old women that go to the market etc. There is only one cash point, one pharmacy, one supermarket, two bars (one only frequented by men), one really good pizzeria in the petrol station and three small shops of varieties. Alby is a neighborhood in which the majority of the inhabitants are immigrants.

Interrupting the everyday life to generate questions like:

“What is that woman doing sitting in the middle of the of the square with a cold and what does she want?”

The second interruption is when the people are approaching to ask me:

“What are you doing here?”

The third interruption is when I explain to them that I’m writing postcards made in Alby that are part of the project and have the objective to give visibility to the most beautiful parts of our neighborhood, like postcards from the most known cities like Paris, London or Rio de Janeiro. And I ask them:

“Will the postcards will help give visibility to the neighborhood of Alby? Do you think that they are necessary?”

From this conversation followed many interesting questions like this one from a man from Palestine who has lived in Alby for 20 years:

“Do you think that this actions make a sense in neighborhoods where we are poor and we don’t have the time? I don’t think that the culture can change too much, I don’t feel that I belong here so maybe it’s because of this that I cannot imagine a possible change here”

We were talking for one hour and I told him that I don’t have an answer and because of that I’m still here. For the moment even if they think that they are necessary or not I ask them for their addresses and we continue a communication by post. I also invited them to the Circus Encounter in Cirkuslillan, Subtopia. A space where we had been meeting to share a circus evening: playing with our bodies, discovering the trapeze, having fika and speaking about how it is to live in Botkyrka municipality and other conversations.

Leire Mesa (1975, Bilbao) is circus artist dedicated to creation, generator of actions and synergies for circus, theater and numerous rebellions. Member of the Cia Twisting the Balance. www.leiremesablog.wordpress.com & www.twistingthebalance.com
PARTICIPATION – FOR REAL
Sara Saxton Chirinos

Today’s Stockholm moves by force of carefully calculated business plans, exclusive housing development – placing, displacing and re-arranging the city in a Monopoly-game expansion. Conceived and executed in Excel, Auto-CAD; finance, technology and words interact to create. Some words are secrets, hidden behind the Due Diligence-process of a real estate portfolio expansion, some words are stories, myths, fake news or fairytales, interconnected with the bureaucratic machine that is responsible for planning and zoning and regulating, generating a string of descriptions, manuals, visions and master planning.

Citizen participation is a formality in the process. Municipalities grapple with ways to make the process alive yet it remains textbook; word driven but with little impact: public employees are pushed to provide a paper trail having ticked all the right boxes rather than generating a living, breathing physical environment. Accountability – in the currency of a bureaucratic machine.

From my vantage-point, it appears that words alone are driving an accelerated gentrification process that devours, controls and conforms the movement. If there is no feeling when expansion is planned – how can there be feeling in the resulting city?

Is there room for physical interaction in a democratic process? Can democracy in regards to one’s surrounding be a physical sensation? Can one influence the direction of an entire city with movement? Can the expansion be experienced in a body?

With use of the use of augmented reality and motion sensor input, and 360° footage of spaces to be altered, can disenfranchised stakeholders partake in and influence the direction in which their natural habitat moves, simply by moving?

Sara Saxton Chirinos. (1972, San Francisco) is an architect and project manager; working with infrastructure as well as private clients. Research Blog: www.poweredbysaxton.tumblr.com

Year of Construction: 1778, 1993
Architects: Carl Fredrik Adelcrantz, Gösta Edberg Arkitektkontor AB
Property Owner: Swedish State
Property Manager: The National Property Board of Sweden (Statens Fastighetsverk)
Current Tenant: The Royal Institute of Art
Year of construction: 1983
Architects: Gustaf Rosenberg och Bo Zackrisson
Area: Ca 100,000 kvm
Property owner: Areim (20%) Blackstone (80%)
Property Manager: Newsec
Rental agent: JLL
SINGING REVOLUTION
Simon Fagéus

You put your ear to the ground as if you were listening for the sound of something approaching in the distance. The stone does not echo anything from its past. As you press even harder against it, feeling the cold material slowly getting warmer, you hear nothing but your own pulse.

The rhythm is much slower than the 120 beats/min of marching parades. Comforting, as the memory of another body close to your own passes through your mind. The songs you used to sing together. Words you cannot remember.

The town has had many names, forbidden territory for foreigners because of what was referred to only as “The Object.” Once, in May, people were joining hands, singing patriotic songs of another nation. A peaceful defiance against its rulers, a singing revolution.

Trying to say something as if testing if your voice is still audible. Slowly navigating through town listening to the resonance of your own voice, like a sonar. Hoping the buildings will talk back at you.

In the Land that Sings more than half the population is part of a choir. Statistic calculations find the words most often repeated in their songs to be:

1. Sun
2. Maiden
3. God

In cities, the great tits sings another song, at a higher pitch in comparison to their rural relatives. They will not attract each other anymore, as if they were different species.

A female choir used to sing about freedom at the abandoned monument. They bore the same name as a poem of great importance. A poem about rain and the failing love to a woman, or perhaps a city. Metaphors are difficult to translate. In the end, you might have made it all up.

That monument, by the way, was built during the coolness of the night, to the harmony of wordless voices and a steady beat of hammers and chisel. The softer the stone, the deeper the tone.

You stop at a cafe that seems oddly familiar. The price of coffee is different depending on the pronunciation of your order.

Recorded birds singing at the intersection.

Approximate print runs of books published in Latvian, end of 19th century:
1000 Plays
2000 Original fiction
1000-2000 Poetry
2000-3000 Translated fiction
1000-5000 Calendars
2000-5000 Popular science
2000-15000 School Textbooks
20 000-30 000 Hymnals

As you are getting older, by each day, you turn to your childhood dialect. Your words getting obscure and distant to your own children. The places you refer to don’t exist anymore, the songs you used to sing are forgotten.
MATTER FROM THE AIR

Hana Vojáčková

Varying in intensity and content, dust is present everywhere in airspace. While cosmic dust is associated with dreamy beautiful visions, atmospheric dust, especially when perceived in the context of urban or industrial zones, usually has negative associations.

But, beyond these readings, dust can also be seen as a constituent of an ever forming membrane that enhances the visual fabric which defines the built environment. The process of dust accumulating on architectural surfaces, forming patterns and leaving marks, resonates with the processes of a media often used to visualise architecture - photography. Photography is based on the principles of marking surfaces - on leaving stains of light or imprinting with pigment dust.

Using photography to examine and articulate the visual impact of dust patterns creates a situation in which the medium of the work is ontologically intertwined with its subject matter. As such the project seeks to explore new conceptual possibilities of engaging photography as a form of imagining and looking at a built environment.

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Holborn Viaduct Staircase, North side floor 1, tile 3 horizontal x 4 vertical
BRIDGES
Anna Odlinge

My dad and I are just arriving at one of the many bridges for understanding in our city. My grand-grandfather has told me about why the city councils of Mostar once decided to let all new schools, that is what they were still called at that time, also act as bridges across the river and decided that all of them should be open to all children of the city and the surrounding countryside. Later the bridges, as we call them, were made available for people of all ages – for people of the city, the countryside and even for those that were just travelling through. I have heard that this is so everywhere all over our planet – but they are not always bridges; I know of a place where they call them treehouses for knowledge, and another where they call them spheres for wisdom or just even places for understanding; I mean that is what they all are.

I am five years old and for as far as I can remember I have been going to the bridges with someone else in my family at least once a week. Since my fourth birthday I have been going to one of them three days every week for preschool. My preschool has a large garden and a holoscope, where I have friends from the past and the future and from now of course. They are all real friends – some are made in other ways and some are made of the same stuff as me.

This morning at breakfast, I started wondering about the little waves in my teacup and as my dad has one of his dows today, he said we should go and find out more in one of the bridges. - Do you even know what such a dow is? - You see grown-ups operate three days a week, kids go to intrinsic school three days a week, and apart from what is still called a weekend, everyone also has two dows when they can make whatever they think is a good idea. - Well almost whatever they want – it depends – my mom and dad told me that when they were at university, which was this kind of knowledge community, they sometimes had to work with one and the same thing for 5 days a week and sometimes they had to do their major thing for 3 days a week only. My older cousin must work in the food gardens two days a week, but then he gets extra globits for that and he will get to go to travel very soon. He is excited, but I would not want to leave my family behind, just now. - Anyway that is how it works everywhere I have heard – all over planet Earth. That’s cool! Everyone can do this. My grandmother said that this way everyone has exactly what they need to live well and has enough freedom to follow their own path, but everyone also partakes in keeping things going.

So anyway, me and my dad, will go to Shenai today. We will go to learn about vibrations and we will also go fishing a bit later in the afternoon. - You see, they all have different names, the bridges I mean. The one where my preschool is, is called Deep History Gardens – I just say DG – and then there is one called Mnemosyne and one Opilijiv and one Keshhar - and that is all I can remember for now; you’ll have to ask my dad if you want to know about the others. There are thirteen bridges and you know what, they all have their own festivals – like once a year I think. Ours is just in a few weeks – I mean in the DG – I think it is the twelfth month of 2053.

Shenai is right in the middle of our city. First there is a space that just connects the two sides of the river – you know it is called Neretva, right, the river that is. So, what is cool is that from that part, I can crawl down through a little room into a really big one, but dad has to walk around and into the big room through another opening. - Oh, he says he could crawl through like me, but that he is more comfortable walking the other way. - So, sometimes we walk up all the way to the roof of the bridge and sometimes we go all the way down to the water – like today when we go fishing. But first my father and I will do something with the waves – that will be exciting. Maybe later I can tell you more about what’s going on inside. - Woah! Did you hear that sound?

Henriques further argues that developing such a system from integrating knowledge is not just an academic enterprise. He suggests that in an increasingly complex world the fragmented state of knowledge can be seen as one of the most pressing social problems of our time. Henriques also believes that history seems to attest that the absence of a collective worldview ostensively condemns humanity to an endless series of conflicts that inevitably stem from incompatible, partially correct, locally shoted justification systems.

Source: Wikipedia entry about the Tree of Knowledge System, as suggested by Gregg Henriques in several articles over the years from 2003 – 2008 and further.
THE CITY OF LOST CHILDREN
Isabel Löfgren

THE MISSING AND THE STOLEN
Every Sunday since 1977, a group of mothers in Buenos Aires gathers at the Plaza de Mayo to mourn, remember and claim the lives of their children lost to the dictatorship. The mothers took advantage of the symbolic importance of the square to open the public’s eyes to what the military regime was doing through the act of reclaiming their missing children. They congregated with signs and pictures of desaparecidos, their children, who were subject to forced disappearance by the Argentine military from the mid-70s to early 80s, also known as the “Dirty War.” All those suspected to be supportive of subversive activities, with leftist tendencies or however tenuously connected to people with those views, would be illegally detained, subject to abuse and torture, and finally murdered in secret. Survivors went into diaspora undercover or assumed new identities elsewhere, rarely. The “Madres de la Plaza de Mayo” movement does not involve the state or military apparatus in conflict resolution and reparations regarding the injustice of disappearance of their children victims of political régimes. Following suit, the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo is an organization which has the aim of finding the “stolen babies,” whose mothers were killed during the “Dirty War.” As of 2014, their efforts have resulted in finding 114 missing grandchildren.

SATURDAY MOTHERS
Every Saturday at noon since 1995, The Saturday Mothers (Cumartesi Annereli) gather for a sit-in for half an hour at Galatasaray district in Istanbul. They hold photographs of their “lost” loved ones. According to the Human Rights Association, between 1972 and 1996, 792 state-forced disappearances and murders have been reported in Kurdish regions in Turkey, with many more missing persons who remain unreported. Mainly composed of mothers of victims, they combine silent sit-in with communal vigil as their method of protest against the forced disappearances and political murders in Turkey during the military coup-era of 1980s and the OHAL-era of 1990s. On October 25, 2014, they held their 500th sit-in protest. “I started to cry after I started participating in the Saturday Mothers; before, I was crying in solitude, I could not express my suffering.”

MOURNING MOTHERS
Every Saturday evening since 2009, the Mourning Mothers meet at Lateh Park in central Teheran. Also known as the Mothers of Lateh Park, they are a group of Iranian women whose spouses or children were killed by government agents in the protests following the disputed Iranian presidential election of 2009. The group also includes relatives of victims of earlier human rights abuses, including mass executions during the 1980s. The principal demand of the Mourning Mothers is government accountability for the deaths, arrests, and disappearances of their children. In return, they are often arrested themselves at the park on grounds of “founding an illegal organization” and “acting against state security.” The Mourning Mothers have called for the revocation of death sentences for political prisoners, the release of prisoners of conscience, and trials of “those who were responsible for and who ordered their children’s murders.” In 2009, Iranian Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi urged women around the world to show solidarity with the Mourning Mothers by wearing black and meeting in neighborhood parks on Saturdays from 7 to 8 pm.

LADIES IN WHITE
Every Sunday since 2003, a collective of mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives of political prisoners attend the same Catholic Mass in the same Homena church every morning, followed by a silent walk, often holding flowers or photos of their imprisoned loved ones, and demanding their release of all political prisoners in Cuba. For this, the Ladies in White (Damas de Blanco), are arrested nearly every time they march, beaten and dragged into buses by state police. On some occasions, the Ladies are attacked with tar, punched, and scratched by a mob. It is the most important dissident group on the island today. The movement started when 75 dissidents were arrested during the so-called “Black Spring” of 2003. Despite being routinely detained and their protests broken up, the group has produced results, with all 75 political prisoners they have campaigned for now free.

CHILDREN OF SIBERIA
On June 14, 1941, the Soviet Union deported 15,425 people from Latvia (Lithuanians, Jews, Russians Polots) to Siberia. Among them were 3,751 children aged 16 or younger. During the process, men were separated from their families and brought to camps or sentenced to death in the Soviet Gulag. On June 14, 2009, a film crew led by Latvian documentary filmmaker Dzintars Geka, a number of children of Siberia who survived and returned to Latvia, and their children went on a pilgrimage to Siberia to install memorial plaques in memory of the mothers and children who were deported between 1941 and 1949. In another film, another group of survivors return to Siberia and revisit their land of childhood. Despite being orphaned in the cold and famine, it was their only childhood, with the friends and people who helped them to survive. In the autumn of 1942, 700 mothers and children of different nationalities were sent to the death island of Agapitova. Only 60 survived, among them six Latvian children. In a testimonial in the film, writer Gundega Repše says, “I know that the poor victors must live with knowledge about all of those whom they killed. The visitors from Latvia are former victims who have overcome themselves and became survivors. My mama Ilga said that the greatest crime at the gulags was that people were turned into animals, with an amputation of any spiritual energy. Not everyone who was humiliated to the level of an animal could recover and become human beings. Good Siberian friends who were like friends allowed them to overcome a code of pain which can never be healed. I have come here in my mother’s place, and the key to the code is nearby, in my heart.”

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FILTERED FEEDBACK CITIES
Anna Maria Furulund

Urban divisions and socio-spatial segregation have been harmful for our cities and societies in the past and continue to further influence our lives. I have looked deeper into history, causes/consequences/tools and started collecting counterstrategies.

Stockholm, Mostar and Riga - examples of places where certain differences between people are used to justify the splitting of cities occur typically along divisions based on ethnicity and income. Historically, divisions have also affected other groups or social identities such as city dwellers/country dwellers, scapegoat groups, gods/ mortals, castes, clans, sexes, people of different ethnicity, nationality, religion and age etc.

Causes/consequences/tools - in understanding urban division serves as a tool to reinforce political and economic inequality. There is always involved some form of institutionally organized human intentionality causing these divisions, which makes our societies less economically vibrant, culturally and politically equal, less democratic, less liveable and less safe. Visible and invisible tools of exclusion or inclusion are due to geographical, physical or legal forces. Urban planning is one cause behind these divisions, but could also be a solution. With the current urban planning in Stockholm as an example, there is a gap between rhetorical statements and practice, and socio-economic polarization and segregation is getting worse. This is the conclusion in Jon Loit’s recent thesis. He is a cultural geographer in Uppsala and claims that “Stockholm’s planning is in a dialectical state between a socially sustainable approach - with the goal of reducing inequities and segregation - and a neoliberal development logic focusing on competing with other cities to attract investment. The latter, however, predominates.”

Counter-strategies - work in progress. I am collecting examples of counter-strategies against harmful urban divisions and conflicts. I am looking for recommendations and quotes in texts about urban planning, architecture, urban history, cultural geography, sociology etc. and have found interesting quotes written by among others P. Marcuse, S. Stratis, D. Harvey, J. Loit, N. Smith, D. Massey. These quotes can be about architecture, zoning, urban planning, urban semiotics, economy, culture, art, education, language etc. They can be very specifically in response to a local conflict, but it can be interesting to examine how general they are and if they can be applied on other divided groups in other geographies. Next step would be to sort these ideas/instructions in some kind of system.

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Above: Filtered Feedback Cities Interactive Sound Sculpture. Filtering and feedback are two sonic effects that conceptually can be linked to this field. The borders between urban enclaves acts as porous screens or filters. Sorting or filtering out diversity, creating monocultures. The sonic analogy is the filtering of frequencies done by using the speaker’s vibrating materials as filters themselves, amplifying high or low frequencies. Feedback is a sonic analogy to closed systems or closed enclaves and makes sound with no input. The sound can be modified by moving the microphone in relation to the speaker, by changing the material that vibrates, by changing the placement in space or by connecting several feedback circuits.

Following Page: Counter strategies. Quotes, instructions collected from various texts written by urban planners, historians, geographers, sociologists etc. creating a map of possibilities.
Potential inter-enclave public space: Encouraging possible public space located between existing enclaves. This could be done by programmatic elements, new accessibilities et al. avoiding the limits of such strategies.

Expansive provision of public space and opportunity for public communications, s control, with its counter-acted. P.

Merging enclaves (redefine enclaves' edges to allow to an assembly of enclaves to have an urban role): Merging enclaves by cancelling out their in between limits and reconfiguring an ensemble border. The new resulting enclave will have a specific urban role vis-à-vis the urban agglomeration. S. Stratis

Expanded provision of social housing in different urban areas only in areas that have substantial social the Netherlands. P. Marcuse

New housing developments need to avoid the replication of a single identity social and/or religious communities ad should aim to create mixed neighbourhood, well lir oppu: C. Affle/Church

Legalization of squatting through national legislation affecting land titles and evictions and prohibition on confiscation or farmers, action against landlessness, pressure of rural immigration to cities

Inter-municipal agreements with respect to housing low-income households. Such between cities and suburbs, mixing low-rent and high-income housing. P. Marcuse

Location of public facilities and services at borders between partitions, to help unify disparate areas spatially and h

From non penetrable limit to porous border: Transforming the impenetrable limits of an enclave into a porous border that outcoming and outcoming of multiple flows of
APOSTLAHÄSTAR PÅ GÖTLAND
Juan Manuel Gonzalez

"Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend."

ALBERT CAMUS

I define pilgrimage as an ancestral ritual form of travel where the journey is taken under a purpose to reach a specific place, be it a holy or memorial site. But also, it is a framework for participants to test themselves mentally and physically to overcome personal fears. As the American writer Rebecca Solnit defines "retain much of the content of the pilgrimage: the subject of health and healing, the community of pilgrims, and the earning through suffering or at least exertion". Being a Pilgrim means sharing a path with other people that have the same attitude. Taking the spiritual concept of pilgrimage, the journey requires a ritualistic behaviour from the participants.

Nowadays, pilgrimage has become a popular form of travel for seeking a punctuation mark in personal biography. That is due to success of Camino de Santiago - 280,000 pilgrims in the last year, an all-time record. As an economic model for growing depopulated areas, local authorities made a special effort to make this sacred path popular again. The method was to open the religious path to 'secular' pilgrims: everyone can make a pilgrimage outside of religious motivation.

I realise the motive behind a pilgrimage is similar to that behind a tour: both are quests for non-quodtian experiences. Tourists, like Pilgrims, allow themselves outside the everyday life to be carried away in pursuit of renewing experiences. This recreational demand is echoed by the tourism industry that includes in its holiday packages sacred routes and secular modern pilgrimages - like Elvis Presley's grave at Graceland or 'Trees for Life Day' in Flevoland. Last summer, the British Pilgrimage Trust created a secular pilgrimage "to honour the 100 year anniversary of Jerusalem (the song), [...] making a 125 mile pilgrimage from London to Sussex, the birthplace of the song".

Through my artistic practice, I have found in pilgrimage a framework to converge my Catholic background, the exploration of old sacred traces, the creation of ritual contexts and the organization of relational platforms. For exploring the pilgrimage phenomena, my approach is based on three issues: ritual as a performative journey, walking as aesthetic practice and travelling as a reflection of human behaviour in the shifting world in which we live.

The island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea
But, based on practice-based research, a new issue has become the most interesting issue for my artistic practice: Communitas as relational situation. Defined by the anthropologist Victor Turner, Communitas denotes a strong sense of unity among ritual participants that transcends the daily differences of their social life, such as class, status, education, employment, or political affiliations. This spontaneous sensation of mutual communication and unity could be denominated as ‘fellow-feeling’.

As a continuation of my experimentation on walking linked to relational act, I will research pilgrimage as generator of Communitas through the creation of a secular route: Apostlahåstår på Gotland. Under the analogy of Tourist as a Pilgrim, the methodology of the project is twofold. First, to design a sustainable tourist-journey on a hedonistic place. Secondly, to involve people to join it in communal experience.

As a contextual framework: Gotland, an island located in the middle of the Baltic Sea. Since ancient times, the island has been a meeting point for the surrounding cultures. From the 70’s, Gotland is an appreciated tourist destination. For its cultural-historical heritage and natural environment is the favorite summer destination in Sweden. For that, I visualize Gotland a metaphorical model for the alienation of everyday life.

Apostlahåstår på Gotland is a path goes along by using the Medieval Churches as path-markers. The route will start on an old watchtower in the south of Gotland, only a few meters away from Sundre Kyrka. Going north, the pilgrimage will pass by and connects to medieval churches, farms occupied since ancient time, summer bathing places, artist studios, eco villages, seaports, museums, archaeological remains and low-population parishes… Following the ritual approach, the last step will be done in the night under full moon with the purpose to reach the lighthouse of Fårö on the sunrise of August 8th. As a symbolic metaphor, the end of the path means the beginning of another one.

"Pilgrim stems from the Latin peregrinus, which originally meant foreigner, wanderer, exile, and traveller, as well as newcomer and ‘Stranger’, as the professor of Anthropology Noel B. Salazar pointed out. The pilgrims of Apostlahåstår på Gotland will explore the island from an abroad view beyond of tourist-eyes by seeking a non-ordinary travel through the temporary role of pilgrim. Following Susan Graseck’s concept of ‘Explore the Past to Understand the Present and Shape the Future’, the route will highlight the historical legacy of Gotland in relation to the neighbouring Baltic Sea legacies in order to create a room for discussing the current political situation in the area. For breaking the alienation between visitor-tourist and local-provider, the pilgrim will approach the social capital of Gotland: hospitality - as sleeping in churches, barns - trade – as providing food from local farmers and fishermen - and community - as meeting local people in the vacation time.

Through the ‘fellow-feeling’ among the participants, my role will be to promote collaborative labour of participants and construct situations in which new ideas will be enacted in communal process: experimenting the ‘suffering’ of walking outside the comfort zone, sharing knowledge and experience, cooking dinners for local inhabitants and creating modern rituals.

Communitas, Spirituality and Walking converge in Apostlahåstår på Gotland following the concept of ‘archetype of journey’ by the professor of architecture Francesco Careri in his book Walkscapes: “The primitive roving lived on in religion (the journey as ritual) and in literary forms (the journey as narrative), transformed as a sacred path, dance, pilgrimage, procession. Only in the last century has the journey-path freed itself of the constraints of religion and literature to assume the status of a pure aesthetic act.”

I am a pilgrim. I first walked on Camino de Santiago in the summer 1993 when I was 16. This pilgrimage was a summer camp arranged by the school-seminary Cristo de El Pardo - Franciscan monastery on a nature-protected mount near Madrid where I received 6-years education for becoming friar to the Order of Friars Minor Capuchins. I did not take the vows. But walking to Santiago was an experience that I have been seeking as a personal and aesthetic statement: After my first way I did 4 different pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela. As a wanderer interested on sacred manifestations, I have been following S:t Olav’s steps during my studies at Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm. Supported by KU funding from my school, I created a community for walking on S:t Olavsleden twice. One on an old 560 kms Scandinavian pilgrimage from Sundsvall to Trondheim. Second on a new-created 60 kms path from Borga to Covarrubias in Spain-Camino de San Olav. In November 2016, I did my first pilgrimage by horse riding in Gotland together a diverse group of people with support of Baltic Art Center. The goal of this 3-days path is a ruin of S:t Olav’s chapel.

I walk. I walk as both pilgrim and artist. I walk for creating a social exchange. I walk for understanding myself in a stranger environment. I walk for exploring. I walk on a route made by stories that people tell me. Now, when walls are built to separate people, I propose to go through a route to join people. I want to make a journey by foot as a reflection of defining feature of the current society: travelling as escapism of everyday life and encounter with the other.

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