

Decolonizing Architecture Advanced Studies
2019 - 2020

WHAT DOES IT MEAN "TO DECOLONIZE" ?

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decolonizing architecture
advanced studies

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Entry points

Alessandro Petti

Outcomes, results, products are synonyms that try to capture and measure what has been accomplished. However, equally important in experimental artistic research processes are entry points. Having the courage to ask fundamental questions that drive not only research but our own existence is not for everyone; it requires a certain degree of courage, since it makes the researcher extremely vulnerable. This might be one of the reasons why Decolonizing Architecture course participants are all in a sort of 'crisis': eager to experiment; to change radically their professional trajectory; to find a community of peers and a protected space to think together; or simply to find a way out of the acritical and commercial dimensions of the architectural profession. Especially this year, haunted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis is something we all now share as a common condition. It is in moments like this that more people feel the urgency and necessity to challenge the entire frame of our existence, instead of simply trying to adapt to an unjust reality.

This year, course participants have spent time researching experimental sites of knowledge production, a solid entry point anchored in personal experiences and collective processes. What follows are a series of individual and collective sites understood as physical spaces, as well as communities, experiences and bodies. Based on the assumption that every student is a bearer of knowledge, course participants have intersected individual and collective research trajectories by establishing a common vocabulary as a theoretical framework and reference point for future spatial interventions. I am extremely glad to introduce three collective initiatives and 15 individual research projects that have emerged from the interactions between course participants, the city of Stockholm, and sites and communities both close and distant.



'The suburb of [Fisksätra](#) has a population of more than 8000 people and is the most densely populated area in Sweden. The suburb was developed in 1971-74 as part of the "Million project", a massive state-driven initiative for public housing that aimed to cover the needs of a growing population in Sweden after the 1960s. The municipality of Nacka sold the residential and commercial buildings to the private developer Stena Fastigheter AB in 1996, following a wave of housing privatisation that started in 1991. The tense relationship of the private stakeholders and the municipality with the residents, regarding for example public infrastructure or housing rentals, has been the starting point for several projects and discussions on urban development and injustice.'

The group collective formed by Milagros Bedoya, Olivia Berkowicz, Hannah Clarkson, Cherine Hussein, Konstantina Pappa, Matilda Tucker and Didem Yıldırım Boström have chosen Fisksätra museum as an entry point 'to induce a deep, embodied [listening](#) in a community that is characterised by immigration, with Fisksätra's inhabitants coming from almost 125 nations'. The series of research enquiries and interventions are woven together by the group's individual research trajectories, grounded in physically distant but personally embodied experience. [Milagros Bedoya](#), a Peruvian artist and architect, has based her research project on the crossing of the [border between Peru and Chile](#). She writes:

'I remember knowing the process one had to go through; I had memorised what documents to bring, which forms to fill, when and how many times you would be asked for them. The sequence of events and the stages of the journey were very clear in my head. Political borders are definitely fictions and they tell different stories, depending on where they are and the people they affect.'

The knowledge that emerged from her experiences and from the earth movement and clash of two tectonic plates led her to anchor her work in the concept of [telluric](#). [Olivia Berkowicz](#), a Swedish curator and writer based in Stockholm, mobilises the concept of being '[resinous](#)' to make sense of the group activities of the resina collective in Ferrara, Italy. Anchoring her reflections on the [National Archeological Museum](#) in Ferrara, she asks, 'could we describe our activities as resinous? We are gooey, gluey and sticky – we produce and leave an excess behind which is hard to define, a surplus value difficult to categorise'.

[Hannah Clarkson](#), a British artist based in Sweden, turns her gaze inwards, investigating her own [ailing body](#) as a site of knowledge production:

‘a site of conflict, a battlefield, colonized for years by invaders who had never even left home. An autoimmune condition has been companion to my adolescence and adulthood since the age of 14... How does one decolonize one’s own self? What knowledge is produced in one’s own ailing body? Am I safe here? What language do we have surrounding sickness, and how can we create a new, less damning vocabulary? How might [synonyms for shelter](#) help in understanding and expressing narratives of human needs?’

[Cherine Hussein](#) is a researcher currently based in Cairo and is interested in the ‘building of collective agency in the Arab World’. For this task, she uses Gramsci’s concept of [critical consciousness](#):

‘a process of critical self-understanding is the starting point for any transformative action, underlines the centrality of human empowerment to any successful revolutionary process and, crucially, is the basis upon which this form of social transformation is not one that aims at replacing an oppressive reality with its mirror image, but one that is capable of becoming an act of liberation for both the colonizer and the colonized.’

[Konstantina Pappa](#) is a Greek architect based in Stockholm, interested in ‘exploring performative acts of communities that challenge traditional notions of public/private’. The [hayat](#), a courtyard commonly used in the domestic architecture of the East-Mediterranean, has led her to explorations around the notion of the [threshold](#) as an archetypal form of passage, a space that connects and separate at the same time.

[Matilda Tucker](#) is a writer, artist, and researcher based in Stockholm and Berlin. She is interested in human rights; spaces of conflict and divided cities; language; and the relationship between art and politics. She has been revisiting her relationship with time, ‘by exploring different routes and modes of transport between [Berlin and Stockholm](#). From those experiences emerged the notion of [Langeweile](#), the German word for boredom, that could be literally translated to “long while”, connoting that we perceive time to be passing more slowly when we are bored.’

[Didem Yıldırım Boström](#) is a researcher and exhibition producer from Ankara, Turkey. Her site of investigation is the [Ruins of Ani](#), located on a secluded plateau that forms Turkey’s natural border with Armenia. She writes that ‘the city’s presentation has been falsified by the Turkish government in order to shadow Armenian history which led to Ani’s recent nomination as a UNESCO World Heritage Site’. By giving a performance in Ani, Didem aims to build a relationship with her maternal and paternal grandparents, and their mixed Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish roots, thereby examining the process by which Ani became a World Heritage site.

“Anı” means “memory” in Turkish; if one removes the dot over the “i”, “The Ruins of Ani” becomes “The Ruins of Memory”, just like Ani, in a way, became a ruined memory for the Armenians. The word [“reminiscence”](#) could suggest an opportunity to link “anı” (memory)

with its literal meaning in Turkish as a word, and “Anı” (beautiful) with its physical being as a ruined city of Armenians in Turkey.’



[Cyklopen](#), a self-built, self-organised cultural centre in Högdalen, Stockholm, has been chosen by Marco Cechet, Mark Romei, Pauli Rikaniemi and Ying Sun as a site of a collective intervention. They write that:

‘Cyklopen experiments with creating an operating model to challenge attitudes formed by consumer culture, imposed hierarchies, and the idealisation of efficiency in the modern world. Through this, it aims to create a space outside of the neo-liberal, patriarchal and modernist controls of the city; a space where new social relations can be created and brought into reality.’

In conversation with Elof Hellström, one of the Cyklopen’s founders, they focus their intervention on the centre’s volunteer-run library, which has the potential to record and reflect upon the collective memories of the building. The group proposes [‘to collect*’](#) as a form of engagement with knowledges that ‘have an intrinsic temporariness and are experienced through direct participation; the knowledges of the event, of the marginal, and of the experiential’. The intervention planned for the autumn aims to create a system to embrace these qualities, collecting a specific way of knowing, and engaging with the collection of ephemerality in the present, beyond traditional mediums. In doing so, they aim ‘to democratise the process of constructing narratives and memories, challenging traditional processes of archiving and curating to allow multiple voices to come to the surface’. The individual research project of [Marco Cechet](#), an Italian post-conceptual artist, revolves around [Sound System culture](#), where the dancefloor becomes a place characterised by collective ritual and its symbolic value:

‘What interested me were the origins of this culture; its transversal manifestations within different subcultures; its political connotations

and its capacity to link tribalism and utopia. Indeed, dancing is often at the centre of tribal rituals—it gathers people, driving them to catharsis—and while music can charge a space with its physical presence, its immateriality allows it to be extremely flexible.’

[Mark Romei](#), an Australian trained architect, has a particular interest in how the practice of architecture can meaningfully contribute to current social/political questions. His entry point is the reuse of a [colonial prison](#) in Melbourne:

‘the materialisation of the domination of Wurundjeri lands by British Imperialism, a legacy which has been kept alive well into the contemporary Commonwealth country, guided by a continual reproduction of colonial structures. It is a manifestation of a violent and brutal system of Indigenous land theft and appropriation, coupled with an industrial system of mass incarceration which utilised enslaved convict labour for its construction and reproduction. It is a spatialisation of colonial ideology. The [prevailing amnesia](#) of this reality clearly benefits the status quo.’

[Pauli Rikaniemi](#) is a Copenhagen-based architect from Finland, interested in queer spaces and identity expression: ‘My personal experience growing up, being a typical one in the LGBTQ community, is noticeable in the community’s ability to play with identities and to use this as a source of empowerment. As a response to society’s norms, it is a platform for critical thinking and non-verbal conversation.’ He has been working on the notion of what it means ‘[to guest](#)’. He asserts that ‘a guest as a passive object needs to be replaced with an active subject, possessing the agency to guest. Understanding a guest as a stranger opens up for a way of being together which doesn’t require homogenisation’.

[Ying Sun](#) is an architect based in Stockholm, dealing with the dilemma of ‘finding other strategies of working in the architectural profession without falling victim to the hegemonic mechanisms which sustain and reproduce the market and profits and which, ultimately, affirm the muscles of the neo-liberal structure’. Her site of investigation is the [void](#) between her motherland and life as an East Asian woman living in Sweden. She encourages us, like her, to dwell in the ‘[in-between](#), as a proactive political statement, to reformulate our political critiques from the ground on which we stand’.



Another group composed of Rodrigo Albornoz, Nefeli Makrynika, Meryem Saadi and Molly Sjögren have been working with Konsthall C in Hökarängen, Stockholm, learning from neighbourhood activism in the area:

‘Collective action and resistance is deeply rooted in Hökarängen: the citizens of the area protesting against the closing of Örby Library, against rent increases and pollution from toxic waste from the nearby power plant, as well as the mobilisation of citizens to clean up the lake Magelungen. In the last couple of years, the resistance of the community has been focused mainly on the rapid gentrification and privatisation of housing areas, and the commercialisation of public space. How can we understand this widespread commitment to social issues by the citizens of Hökarängen, in relation to other acts of collective resistance in Swedish history?’

The group’s intervention has focused on a playground that has the potential to connect [Konsthall C](#) with the neighbourhood by using the concept of [collective resistance](#).

Rodrigo Albornoz is an Argentinian visual and media artist and social art researcher based in Sweden. His site of investigation is [Plaza 24 September](#) in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia:

‘This site, right in the centre of the city, concentrates a collection of unique buildings of great heritage and colonial value. Such institutions physically represent the Colonial Matrix of Power. The Plaza has also been the site of protests and manifestations by Indigenous people in Bolivia since the 1990s, as well as the recent confrontations against Evo Morales’ re-election in November of 2019.’

Learning from the site and from ascendant Indigenous social movements, Albornoz engages the concept of ‘living well’ (or in Quechua: ‘[sumaq kawsay](#)’) to encourage a Latin American polycentric perspective as an alternative way of thinking and doing.

[Nefeli Makrynika](#) is an architect and urbanist based in Stockholm and Athens. She has chosen the breakfast room at the [Hilton Hotel in Stockholm](#) as a model for investigating spatial and social hierarchical relations: ‘The idea of hospitality in a hotel, of the guest and the host, is distorted and takes different meanings. For example, hospitality becomes a paid service that is provided by workers who are called hosts, to customers who are being addressed as guests’. In contrast, she recuperates the concept of ‘[Filoxenia](#), the Greek word for hospitality: a compound word from the words filo, which means love, and xenos, meaning stranger. It describes the social contract between the host (the person who is performing the act) and the guest (the person to whom the act is extended) and contains a set of rules and expectations that change based on cultural, historical and geographical locations.’

[Meryem Saadi](#) is a cultural activist, journalist and curator from Morocco. She first heard the word ‘[Al Hogra](#)’ on a visit to [Sidi Moumen](#), a stigmatised slum in the

periphery of Casablanca:

‘Al hogra (**الحكرة**) is a word widely used in North-African societies. The word originally comes from the Arabic noun “Ihtiqaar” (إحتقار), meaning contempt. In the Maghrebi dialects spoken in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, the term expresses different feelings ranging from injustice and indignation, to resentment, humiliation and oppression. It was originally used in relation to daily life situations, before becoming a more political term that describes a continuing state of contempt and humiliation for the whole society. In the context of power structures, “Al Mahgor” is the person or the entity experiencing “Al Hogra”, and “Al Hagar” refers to the person or the entity that is inflicting it. “Al Hogra” is a key concept in understanding the reasons behind the current tense social and political climate in North Africa.’

Molly Sjögren is a Swedish art historian and architect, whose research centres mainly around the display and communication of architecture in exhibition spaces, as well as the theory and practice of public art. Her site of investigation and intervention is a small artificial island at Djurgården in Stockholm:

‘The island was originally constructed for the 1897 Stockholm exhibition and was visited by 1,5 million people - almost a third of the whole population of Sweden. I have chosen to focus on the archeological dig, not just because it explicitly connects to the exhibition and activates the history of the island, but also because it illuminates the concept of the heterotopia, developed by Michel Foucault.’

The locations from where we speak

Marie-Louise Richards

“The politics of location. Even to begin with my body I have to say that from the outset that body had more than one identity.”

Adrienne Rich, *Notes Towards a Politics of Location* (1984)

The emergence of university departments devoted to Women’s Studies and Black Studies in the United States was born out of student and faculty activism. They were rooted in the social mass movements of the late 1960s, happening not only in the US but all across the world. As colonized countries fought for independence from imperial colonialism, native or minority groups of class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality were fighting for civil rights, social justice, sexual liberation, and equal rights. During those extraordinary times, universities were in a battle for these fields of study.

These struggles were founded on the acknowledgement of a need for academic fields that draw upon interdisciplinary methods, placing lived embodied experience at the center of study and especially when examining social and cultural constructs of identity, systems of privilege, domination and oppression, and the relationships of power. These new fields called for the centering of multiple viewpoints as a means to reconfigure knowledge systems while, at the same time, challenging received conceptual frames of reference and perspectives. Furthermore, they sought to acknowledge that the systemic disparity of social location between the ones who speak and those who are spoken for has a significant effect on the content of what is said and, by extension, the meaning of it. “The unspoken premise here is simply that a speaker’s location is epistemically salient.” (Alcoff, 1998)

To not only conceive of knowledge in terms of who it is for and by *whom*, but also from *where*, was a radical approach in knowledge production at the time. In many ways, it still is. Not only do we need to ask why, but we also need to ask what it means if this question is put at the center of how we think about the discipline, the practice, and the history of architecture.

In an article in *Arkitekten* (‘The Architect’), published by Sveriges Arkitekter (the union representing architects in Sweden) in October 2016, the results of a survey was shared focusing on the social imbalance within architecture education. It showed that of all first-year students at the school of architecture at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm, eighty seven percent were from families of which the parents had an academic background of more than three years of studies. In other words, nine students out of every ten. By way of comparison, of all first-year students in Swedish universities, thirty eight percent

had parents with academic credentials. For an even broader picture, one fourth of the population had parents with an academic background. This makes the schools of architecture one of the most socio-economically homogenous educations that leads to a professional degree in the country, surpassing even medicine and law.

I would argue that these statistics suggest something quite simple. To study to become an architect is, for the vast majority, an opportunity that is inherited. There are exceptions, of course, but even though architectural education is showing more diversity (‘broadening recruitment’ became a government requirement for all schools of higher learning in 2000), very few of the students that do not come from the same middle-class background as their peers complete their studies and graduate. Even fewer stay and excel within the profession. The studies that have followed up on this crucial fact are scarce, so we are left only to speculate on the reasons.

What should we make of this? I would like to consider architecture as a culture, a notion that the architect and theorist Dana Cuff discusses in the chapter “The Making of an Architect” in her ethnography *Architecture: The Story of Practice* (1991). Focusing on the everyday lives of architects—their situated actions, as well as what architects say and the meanings they construct—she demonstrates that this “culture of practice” does not only originate in knowledge acquired in and through education, but also in routine actions based on experience through the various stages of an architect’s education and career. By looking closely at what architects do, she offers insight into what appears normal or self-evident to architects. She reveals what it means to transform from a non-architect into an architect. Reflecting upon strategies of legitimation—on how practices are justified even though some of these produce and reproduce conditions that could be questionable to the field of architecture itself—Cuff invites us to consider how becoming an architect is, beyond gaining expert knowledge, also a matter of values and beliefs. The ways in which architects legitimize their work and actions, and how this system of meaning is translated into the formation of networks that range internationally, is also related to language and other cultural codes that are passed down within education itself.

Seven years after graduating from architecture school, I was returned to university as a student in an interdisciplinary course on architecture and art in Stockholm. I had been away from the traditional environment of architecture education for all those years, although I had been teaching since leaving school. My teaching engagements had focused predominantly on critical studies in architecture alongside interdisciplinary, experimental approaches and contexts. I was faced again with the judgment of material pinned to a wall: the pin-up crit. A well-known and widely published architect was invited to critique us on the work we had produced, a professor visiting from an esteemed graduate school in the US. I had not been in the presence of the kind of authority our guest embodied since the days of my own architectural training. I did not think anything of it at first; this was a familiar situation for me. After all, the education of architects is structured around this mode of learning: the work being produced in the studio and then

being judged, often quite harshly, by practitioners and professors from around the world.

In this crit, I became aware of something. I began to access language and movements that I had forgotten I knew how to do; attitudes that I had forgotten how to express. It was an out of body experience. The way I sat in my chair, the way I would raise my body and move over to the material pinned to the wall, study it, and sit back down in my seat. The words I would speak, and the way that I spoke them. The ways in which the space of the pin-up and the situation created by architectural critiques reactivated a dormant script in me, a script that I began to unconsciously access and then proceed to embody. I was following some form of direction that I had learned previously – and I realized that if I was to make myself heard, and to be taken seriously, I had to perform. A more important realization was in knowing exactly how to perform -- how to be granted validation.

In approaching the practices of knowledge production and legitimation in architecture from a cultural perspective, and by recalling my own coming of awareness through this out body experience, I have come to recognize since that what architecture education really teaches you is this performance. I confronted it by staying close to my own body. The language, the codes of conduct, and ways of expressing a set of values were the lessons that I would have to learn. This was the skill I had to master in order to pass through the education, and to earn the degree.

In *Towards a Politics of Location* the poet and scholar Adrienne Rich recognizes locations as maps upon or within which she had been created and where she creates. She also sees these places as histories. She asks the reader to examine where they themselves were created and, critically, to not to begin with a continent, a country, or a house, but to start with the geography closest to themselves: their own body. She challenges the reader to locate the ground from which they speak. Being with the material of her own body, she confronts herself with the particularities of the facts of her race and her gender, not her gender and her race, in recalling where her body first entered the world – in a segregated hospital. She recognizes that she was defined by race before she was defined as female, and that this was to be a lifelong fact.

The politics of location begins with her own body, but also begins with understanding that her own body has more than one identity: living a life being viewed and treated on account of her race first and foremost, and secondly by her gender. She was located by color and gender, but the implications of both appear mystified. The assumptions of racial and gender-based divisions are based on the notion that such divisions are neutral or natural, and not on the presumptions that there is one group that is the center of the universe while others are not. To locate herself in her own body means more than understanding what it means to be a woman; it also is about understanding and recognizing the places that her skin has taken her and the places that it has not.

Coming to an awareness of how I came to embody what I believed was expected of

me in order to be validated and heard, I learned to acquire the architectural modes presented to me through architectural education. In the process of learning them, however, had I erased others? In being a ‘good student’, who strived to achieve the cultural prestige of architectural being, thinking and doing, had I come to reject other modes I had carried with me into education? If so, would I even be able to identify what those were? How different was my education from all other aspects of my life, what scripts have I been directed to perform, and of what had I come to reject and erase?

This question of erasure opens up to a broader discussion on value; of what is validated as valuable and what is not. Being with the material of my own body, I have come to locate my practice in bringing the matter of embodied experience to the center. This center focuses on the education and practice of creating and shaping the material conditions of our built environment. In other words, the creation and shaping of a history and discipline in which ‘the body’ has been often referred to as abstract, not including the fact that with a history of social imbalance within the discipline the body of the architect is presumed to take the shape of what it always has been. All this despite the fact that far from all bodies that pass through the field necessarily fits the discipline’s own frame of reference, nor that such narrow frames leave the discipline with an even narrower perspective.

This is the location from which I speak.

Over this year, Decolonizing Architecture has called into question the principles that sustain current dominant bands of knowledge, as well as understandings and expectations of what society should be like, how social subjects should behave, and what bodies they should inhabit. By asking what knowledge is for and who benefits from it, what kinds of knowledge and understandings are encouraged, and which are devalued, silenced or simply not supported?

The present is affected by a moment in time when the meaning of “I can’t breathe” refers both to the current pandemic and to the eternal struggle for black lives to matter. Our vulnerabilities are palpable, and with these times we come up against how our daily experiences are affected by colonial legacies, and how to think and practice decolonization in our daily interactions as well as in our practices.

This year, the participants of the course have examined sites of knowledge production as locations where their own knowledge has emerged alongside the material of their own bodies. But not only this: it has emerged in terms of experience, urgencies, and interests, as in the case of their individual research projects, and also of locations in Stockholm as sites of knowledge production, as in the case of the collective research projects of Cyklopen, Konsthall C, and Fisksätra Museum. Here, the participants have been with the material of the physical site itself, as well as with its local communities and the people who dwell there. Our second year group of participants have been working similarly, developing research projects that they began during their first year in the course, probing deeper into contexts and their materializations, that we believe are only the beginnings of

continued rich research projects that show such exciting and valuable potential to be expanded in their future endeavors. When we ask what it means to decolonize, we begin with considering how locations are shaped by histories and how those histories give our bodies shape.

With the Indonesian art collective **ruangrupa** and the Tensta based collective **k.ö.k kvinnor önskar kollektivitet** (Women Desire Collectivity) the course came together alongside other groups from the arts program to create a space where we could meet for a few days in a remote location in the northern Stockholm archipelago to share and rethink knowledge. We had a particular focus on radical care, a concept that asks us to think of how we can care for each other in precarious times; how we can survive financially, socially, bodily, mentally, and politically. Together we explored the practice of care, of how and if this kind of tacit knowledge can be communicated and shared. This gathering offered an opportunity to learn from groups that do not normally share space nor time together. We came out of this experience with a humble awareness of the hard work, energy and effort that comes with the practice of care. The ways in which we situate ourselves in entanglements of colonial legacies, the ways in which we seek to experiment with approaches to complicate who holds knowledge, and what site and knowledge can be. We also asked how ways of learning or sharing knowledge becomes urgent, and in which ways can we experiment with transmitting and sharing knowledge. Ultimately, what are our tools?

For these very reasons am I so grateful to be part of the course and for the participants in it - each blurring, disturbing, contaminating the boundaries that protects the discipline of architecture with their curiosity and creativity in seeking new paths of learning. The courage and generosity of sharing their own experiences, knowledge and practices, and the ways in which each and everyone engages with the authors of decolonial, feminist, queer and postcolonial texts that we have read and discussed in our seminars. Most importantly, however, I am so grateful for the engagement with each other and with the guests and collaborators of the course, each of which expands our collectivity.

Acknowledgments

We are so happy to have been teaching this course together, and we are excited that next year some of these research projects will have the opportunity for further development in the continuation course.

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Alessandro Petti and Marie-Louise Richards



Radical Care Workshop,
Ivarsudde Vätö, October 2019

Experimental sites of knowledge production

In the last decade, art led educational projects have experimented with practices grounded in lived experience and forms of knowledge production connected to social struggles in societies. Architectural knowledge in these critical learning environments have been deployed both as an analytic tool to redefine conceptual categories as well as a pragmatic and material form of activist spatial intervention. What is at stake in these experimental learning environments is the possibility to connect different urgencies, without falling into the trap of reproducing universalizing or identitarian models.

During the course of 2019–2020 we will ask ourselves, what role do institutions of higher learning have in the greater transformation of society? How can the knowledge produced within its walls continue to be relevant and useful for students interested in developing a practice engaged in social and spatial transformation? What kinds of spatial settings, structures and institutions are required for the accommodation of interests born from the interaction between students, teachers and the broader social context? And finally, how to reconcile theory with action through combining a rigorous understanding of the problems with pragmatic spatial interventions?

The course aims to reflect on architectural and other spatial knowledges that emerge from sites — understood as physical spaces, as well as communities, experiences and bodies. Based on the assumption that every student is a bearer of knowledge, the course participants research interests, methods, questions and urgencies that serve as points of departure in establishing a common methodology and a common vocabulary. The aim is to come together in a collective ongoing artistic research project and an online platform, that is constituted by descriptions, conceptualizations, video essays, manifesto, photographic dossiers and other forms of analysis and intervention.

PART I

listening



{ listening }

Listening, in a deep, embodied sense, is not about objects, but about subjectivities. It is about collecting stories of lived experience. Stories of here and elsewhere. Stories of togetherness and sometimes stories, sadly, of not being listened to. Listening, and indeed narration, is a crucial part of agency and creating new collectivities, as well as enabling empathy. In *Preparing for the Not-Yet*, Jeanne van Heeswijk describes:

“...an embodied experience of relationship. It requires a willingness to listen. Not only hearing what the other has to say, but becoming sensitive to how someone else is. We learn that by sharing notions of how we see ourselves where we are.”

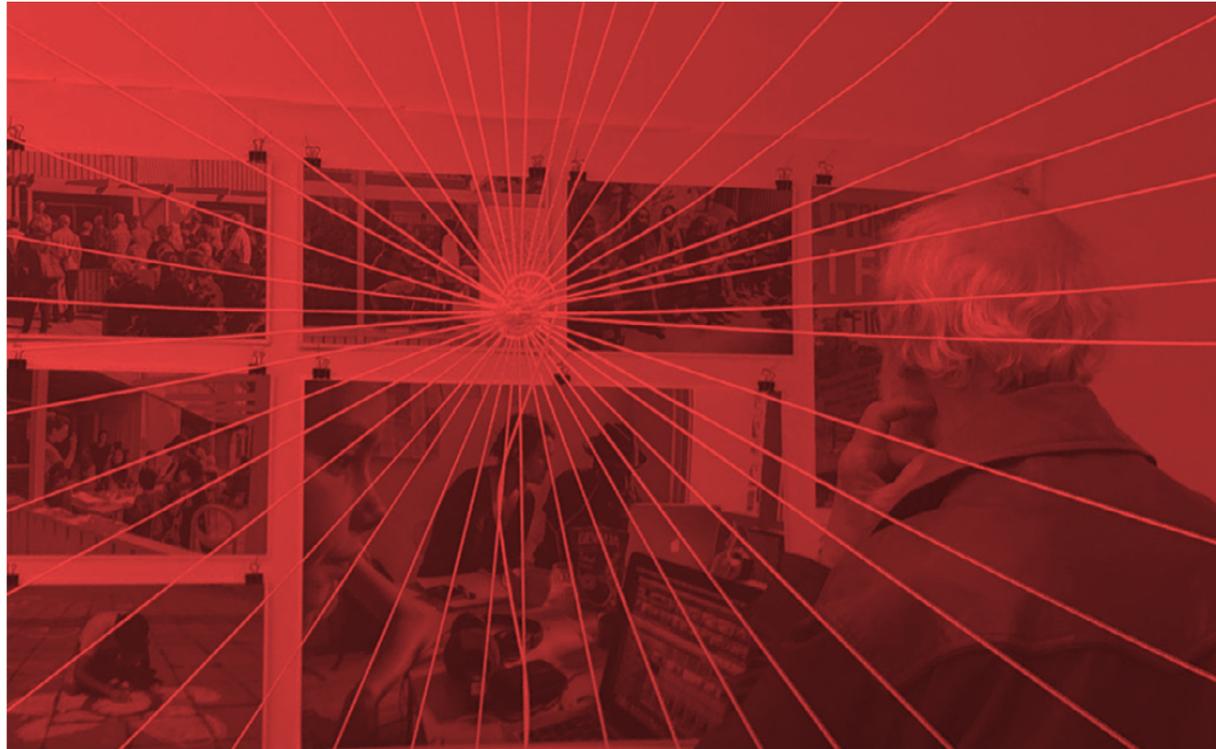
To induce a deep, embodied listening, is an attempt to learn from and empathise with one another, though we might come from different places and have different experiences of life. “What is important in that learning process,” continues van Heeswijk, “is ‘allowing’ for one’s own ideas and even ideals to be withheld momentarily, in order to understand what might emerge from the fact that all these differences are there together.”

In communities across the world, the everyday is something experienced both individually and collectively, in our similarities and differences; a kind of lived narration of routine and small surprises; a politics of our day-to-day lives; a series of stories we embody, whether we listen to them or not.

But what kinds of stories do we tell every day, and which ones do we listen to? When you meet a stranger at the bus stop, who do you tell about it? How can a child’s imagination change an old bridge into a monster’s palace? A laundry line into a superhero’s wardrobe? What makes a story worth telling? Does a good story have to be true? What stories lie out in the open and which ones hide in the shadows? Can we tell exciting stories about things we don’t usually notice? How do we express joy in our daily routines, in places we often go, foods we eat, and people we meet? What makes us feel at home every day? What does it mean to belong to a community? How can an archive of the everyday be fictionalised or situate itself outside of normative structures of time? Does our neighbourhood tell us stories too, and how do we hear them? How often do we tell our own stories, and how often do we simply listen?

– Milagros Bedoya, Olivia Berkowicz, Hannah Clarkson,
Cherine Hussein, Konstantina Pappa, Matilda Tucker,
Didem Yildirim

Fisksätra museum Stockholm



Listening: Here & Elsewhere. Life Stories at Fisksätra Museum

**Milagros Bedoya, Olivia Berkowicz, Hannah Clarkson,
Cherine Hussein, Konstantina Pappa, Matilda Tucker,
Didem Yildirim**

“Fisksätra museum is a cultural and political laboratory.”

Located in Fisksätra, a suburb in the east of Stockholm, the museum’s main objective regarding the content of its work is to explore and shape ideas related to urban justice, civic participation and empowerment, by researching issues around immigration, racism, unemployment, inequality and political power. For this reason, the museum’s focus is on situating Fisksätra in both a local and a global context. Based on a community that is characterized by immigration, with Fisksätra’s inhabitants coming from almost 125 nations, the museum employs notions of cultural heritage as a tool in order to address these issues. They consider their local heritage as a mosaic of people’s stories, global experiences and memories carried in their bodies.

This specific focus is reflected in the museum’s long-lasting project of collecting residents’ life stories, in the form of interviews which are also exhibited in the museum. This archive goes deep into people’s personal lives, as they narrate stories of migration: cultural, political, economic, and social conditions that are located “here and elsewhere.” The life-stories archive, in addition to being a documentation and research method, is seen by the museum as a tool for empowerment. “*Fisksätra museum – att berätta sig in i världen*” is how the museum chooses to introduce itself, which can be translated as “to narrate yourself into the world”. In that sense, the collection of interviews – with narration as a method – is used to counter feelings and experiences of injustice, exclusion, and “not being listened to.”

Empowerment is also a key notion behind the choice of the term ‘museum’; a challenge to the ‘traditional’ institution and a bold exploration of how a museum can be meaningfully situated in Fisksätra. For this reason, Fisksätra museum is mainly working with collaborative projects, based on the participation of the local community, in order to investigate the conditions of everyday life and processes of knowledge production by employing various artistic methods. The museum engages in participatory artistic projects with different local groups, such as children and teenagers or women from the area, while trying to incorporate Fisksätra and their discussions into a broader, more global context. The long-term planning and duration of these projects aim to explore in depth the conditions of knowledge production and create interpersonal relationships between the participants and the museum.

Fisksätra museum was first established in 2010, but acquired a physical space after five years of being active. It is now located in a ground-floor, two-room apartment, a typical example of the area’s architecture, with immediate access to the neighbourhood’s main public square. Between the commercial center, the municipal library, and the church, the museum’s location has not only been vital for its existence and its engagement with the local community, but has also shaped its artistic program. The square is considered an extension to the museum, often occupied for activities such as exhibitions, performances, film screenings, and festivals, due to a need for space.

Fisksätra museum and the content of its work is specific to the local context and cannot be separated from the neighbourhood, both as a physical space and as a collective of people and their stories. The suburb of Fisksätra has a population of more than 8000 people and is the most densely populated area in Sweden (according to 2018 official statistics). The suburb was developed in 1971–74 as part of the ‘Million project’, a massive state-driven initiative for public housing that aimed to cover the needs of a growing population in Sweden after the ‘60s. The municipality of Nacka sold the residential and commercial buildings to the private

developer Stena Fastigheter AB in 1996, following a wave of housing privatisation that started in 1991. The tense relationship of the private stakeholders and the municipality with the residents, regarding for example public infrastructure or housing rentals, has been the starting point for several projects and discussions on urban development and injustice.

The museum's main objective, as we understand it, is to become an amplifier for Fisksåtra's voice: to exhibit people's stories, to narrate the conditions of everyday life, and to represent the neighbourhood's essence through artistic practices. In our engagement with the museum and local community, we hope to tap into these existing themes and structures, whilst experimenting with methods and perspectives through storytelling and listening; materialising and interrupting notions of the everyday in Fisksåtra and elsewhere.

A neighbourhood can be a physical place in which people dwell together, or a threshold to other places, a portal to stories which allow us to inhabit a place we are no longer in or have not yet visited. Storytelling can give us a sense of being 'here and elsewhere', can transport us to other worlds, at least for a time. Walking - both physically and virtually - through the neighbourhood of Fisksåtra, we hope to allow these stories and their narrators a voice, inviting people to share their stories, in response to questions of their everyday - gossip and grievances, jokes and joys, stories and songs - and listen to those of others, seeing their everyday surroundings differently for a while. The sound of voices will be focused, concentration amplified, in an attempt to embody the concept of listening, in a place near or far, and map the neighbourhood through its stories and sounds, zooming in and out of the everyday.

{ lo telúrico }

Telluric: of the earth, of the soil.

The landscape in which I grew up and the experience of transiting it for extended periods of time are constantly in my mind.

On the border of are the words that automatically succeed the sentence I grew up in. And that's how I see it, how I remember it and how I think it felt like. The attraction, the pulling force that the centre or centres inflicted was felt deeply. The constant transit between cities during my childhood, the trips, the long journeys, were one of the ways in which that force performed.

In the midst of these circumstances, and also because of them, I am inclined to pay attention to the images in my head; the landscape, colours, rocks, mountains. They are the backdrops to my thoughts. Those images linger still in my head: the vast inhospitable landscape, the apparent monotony that can be dismantled by the mind of one that has seen so much of it.

On a different plane of existence, political lines dwell. They exist by dividing, naming and marking bodies. I think of this territory as one of them: an entity, connecting and communicating to its inhabitants, to their bodies and their thoughts.

I remember a phrase from a poem I memorised as a child: a man talking to the pampa: "Cuéntame, cuéntame, yérmica pampa" / "Tell me, tell me about it, barren plain"*. And the pampa responded. Man and pampa engaged in a conversation.

It is in this sense that I think the adjective telluric can be of use: to have it as an anchor to the soil.

The earth responds loudly from time to time in our territories. It moves, sometimes with vengeance. We've been preparing to face this for centuries. And this is when we are most aware of its presence, at least as an urban inhabitant.

The entire occidental coast of the continent shares this knowledge, this memory. It originates in the clash of two tectonic plates; their borders trace the shore of the Pacific Ocean, affecting four countries like an open wound.

My father used to be in charge of the seismographer in Tacna. He would occasionally take me with him to change the sheet of paper on the old machine. I remember the process of smoking the paper with an oil lamp and charging it in the drum, so that the fine needle could scratch a tracing of the imperceptible movement of the earth. The earth is really always moving and responding; most of the time it murmurs.

**La Pampa Sagrada en el Alto de la Alianza, Federico Barreto*

– Milagros Bedoya

Border territory Tacna – Arica



Milagros Bedoya

Crossing borders is something I've experienced since I was a child. I remember knowing the process one had to go through; I had memorised what documents to bring, which forms to fill, when and how many times you would be asked for them. The sequence of events and the stages of the journey were very clear in my head. Political borders are definitely fictions and they tell different stories, depending on where they are and the people they affect.

Defined by human human imposition and rarely rooted in an understanding of human and ecosystems, borders create an effect, physically, mentally and emotionally. I have the suspicion that my growing up near a political border made me sooner aware of my location in the world and my belonging to a group. In that sense, those early experiences have influenced the way in which I now move, cross borders, the ways in which I inhabit space.

The sense of location was also a product of my experience of distance, the feeling of being far away from the "centre." In the case of the town I grew up in, Tacna, I experienced the attracting forces of the bigger Peruvian city to the north, where I was born, and of the modern city to the south, on the other side of the border, in Chile.

The notion of centre and periphery becomes palpable at a border. Resources seem to be scarce and attention is definitely scarcer. But that creates other types of advantages. Going under the radar, being untouched by the chaos and conflicts that afflicted the centres. And the possibility of connecting to what is supposed to be foreign; in this case, with Chile and a city called Arica.

The short distance between the two cities made it possible to access TV and radio signals from both sides and to be familiar with certain images, sounds, events, slang terms. And, evidently, commerce was one of the strongest forces behind the movement of bodies and goods. It is within these dynamics that one grows up, learns to relate, and shapes an identity and a sense of belonging.

If something remains constant in the midst of these flows and in the surroundings of that arbitrary borderline, it is the land. Our territory: the extension of sandy mountains and the patches of trees and vegetation that interrupt them. The lonely thin roads that cross the desert, the distant rock mountains to the east and the proximity of the ocean to the west. Those shapes, colours, and sensations that formed a backdrop to our life and journeys are a visual and spatial frame; the signs of a language, of a sensible connection to the land.

The purpose is to explore this connection and to think how it can constitute a sensible language used and shared with this particular site. Tracing the political and physical processes that affect this land and the bodies that transit them, we'll explore our relation to space, positioning strategies and reference points. With the help of images, sound, rhythm, palpitations, memories, history and stories, we will try to enunciate this language

{ żywicowanie }

“A sweaty concept might come out of a bodily experience that is trying. The task is to stay with the difficulty, to keep exploring and exposing this difficulty.” Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (2017), p13.

Resinous is the adjective of the noun resin, which derives from the Latin word *rēsīnōsus*, dating back to 1640–50. Synonyms for this word include sticky, clinging, gelatinous, gooey, glutinous, attaching, clingy, amongst many others. It pertains to resin as the organic material which oozes out of pine trees, healing and protecting the plant against cuts, invaders and scarring.

This material may take many different forms: fluid like resin or solid like amber. It heals and preserves, but it can also be sticky and troublesome. For our group activities as *resina* collective, could we describe our activities as resinous? We are gooey, gluey and sticky – we produce and leave an excess behind which is hard to define, a surplus value difficult to categorise.

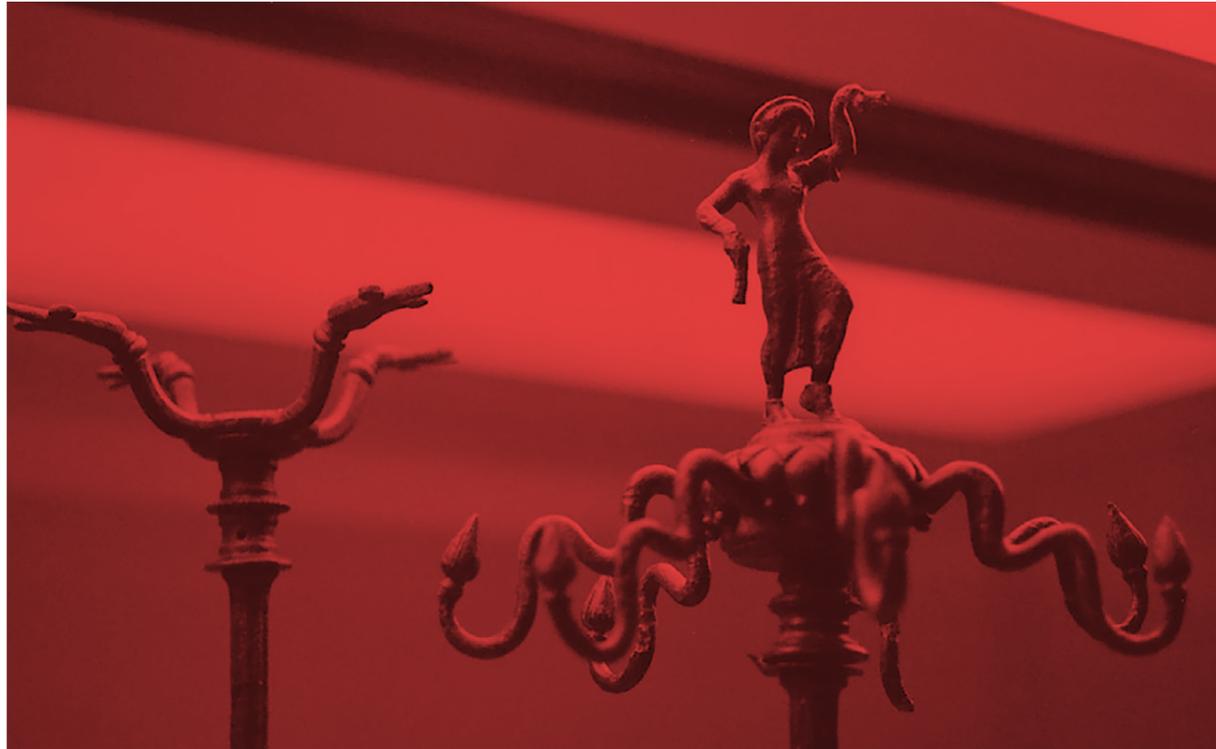
I would like to mobilise the concept of being ‘resinous’ as a working methodology. How does one work in a resinous manner? We have created a network connected by sticky tendrils; activating healing environments in which we have been able to discuss life infrastructures under necrocapitalist conditions. Thinking through the concept of being resinous, how do we inhabit this interstice of being both a solid and fluid organisation, gloopy yet smooth?

Bringing the term resinous closer to my own tongue, mother-tongue, I wonder what it tastes like? *Żywicowanie* emerges as a verb – to make resinous, to extract resin. *Żywicowanie* also bears likeness to the words *życie* (life) and *żywić* (to feed, support, cherish). Could this concept come to signify a collective life-making practice, a practice which feeds rather than extracts?

**resina* is a multi-disciplinary cultural association formed in 2017.

– Olivia Berkowicz

National Archaeological Museum Ferrara



Draining the marshes. Etruscan heritage and the Fascist spatialisation of power and myth

Olivia Berkowicz

In the lambent haze of the afternoon, the streets melt away by pedalling feet. Cinema Mignon disappears on the right-hand side, via Porta. S. Pietro swiftly transitions into via Carlo Mayr with its bars, greengrocers and soporific corner shops, until finally, one exits onto via XX Settembre. Recalling the way from Studio Carmelino to the National Archeological Museum in Ferrara, in my mind's eye, the sun is always set at four or five o'clock in the afternoon when the museum opens anew after its lunchtime respite.

Kept behind wrought iron gates, the National Archeological Museum is housed in a former Renaissance palazzo constructed in 1495 by the much-lauded Ferrarese architect and military engineer Biagio Rossetti. In charge of designing the 'Herculanean Addition,' some theorists argue this urban extension renders Ferrara the first 'modern' city. The double loggia of the Courtyard of Honour opens up to the visitor, with white sculptural decorations and a portico revealing

a sliver of the labyrinthine garden at the back. Although formed by the diplomatic and political relations of the Renaissance, the Archeological Museum of Ferrara straddles several dynamic moments in history, which for the sake of this text, are brought forward in light of its collection from the Etruscan civilization of Spina and the Fascist appropriation of this heritage to legitimise its sovereign rule.

The Fascist reorganisation of the countryside outside of Ferrara established a polycephalous extension of the fortified city. An industrial zone was established in the late 1920s north of the historical centre, as part of Benito Mussolini's 'Battle for Land.' Earlier in 1922, the marshes drained around the site of Spina came to reveal the archeological remnants of an Etruscan community. This discovery was instrumentalised by the Fascist government and propelled the city of Ferrara to house the archeological treasures of the Tyrrhenian necropolis.

Little more than a decade later, in 1935, the Hall of Maps was revealed to inaugurate the Etruscan collection. The Archeological Museum proposes several instances in which, as a site, it was formulated to operate as an ideological vehicle for driving Fascist policies. The Hall of Maps at the museum is but one example of how the museum exemplifies how ocularcentric modes of visualising national heritage, geography and politics are at work within the museum and history of Spina. The discovery of the archeological site was premised upon aerial photography, where – from a bird's eye perspective – the faint, ghost-like lines of settlements and burial grounds came to reveal the locus of the necropolis in the Comacchio region.

Salvatore Aurigemma, the first director of the museum, commissioned the frescoes in the Hall of Maps to promote the Fascist mythologisation of descentance from the Etruscans and connection to the ancient Roman empire. Here too, the aerial viewpoint comes into play – a panoramic array of historical and military atlases serve to illustrate the maximum expansions of Etruscan territories within the region in the fifth century BC.

** The National Archeological Museum was explored during Ferrara Residency 2017 and 2018, which were organised by the cultural association resina.*

{ synonyms for shelter }

How might synonyms for shelter help in understanding and expressing narratives of human needs?

My artistic, writing, and research practice centres around narrativity, materiality, and the synonym as a means to understand relationships between visual, written, and spoken language. Of particular interest are ideas of shelter and its related synonyms, and how these aid understanding of human needs and relationships – interpersonal and with clothing, objects, architecture. My particular focus is on shelter in relation to illness and the body; the nuances between caring for and protecting from.

My own relationship to shelter implicates my body and its (in)ability to protect me: an autoimmune condition plagued my adolescence, rendering my body—my corporal safehouse—unstable at its foundations, turning against itself, transforming care into attack. My experience of chronic illness is key to my research on shelter—and the failure thereof—in terms of body, relationships, empathy, care.

I propose shelter as a place—or person/feeling/object—in/by/about which poetic images are created, each person's story a synonym. I frame the synonym in three ways: investigating similarities/differences in human experience of shelter; linguistically, taking numerous synonyms for the word shelter; and relating different forms of artistic expression to one another. Through storytelling, can shelter be better understood?

Some synonyms for shelter include:

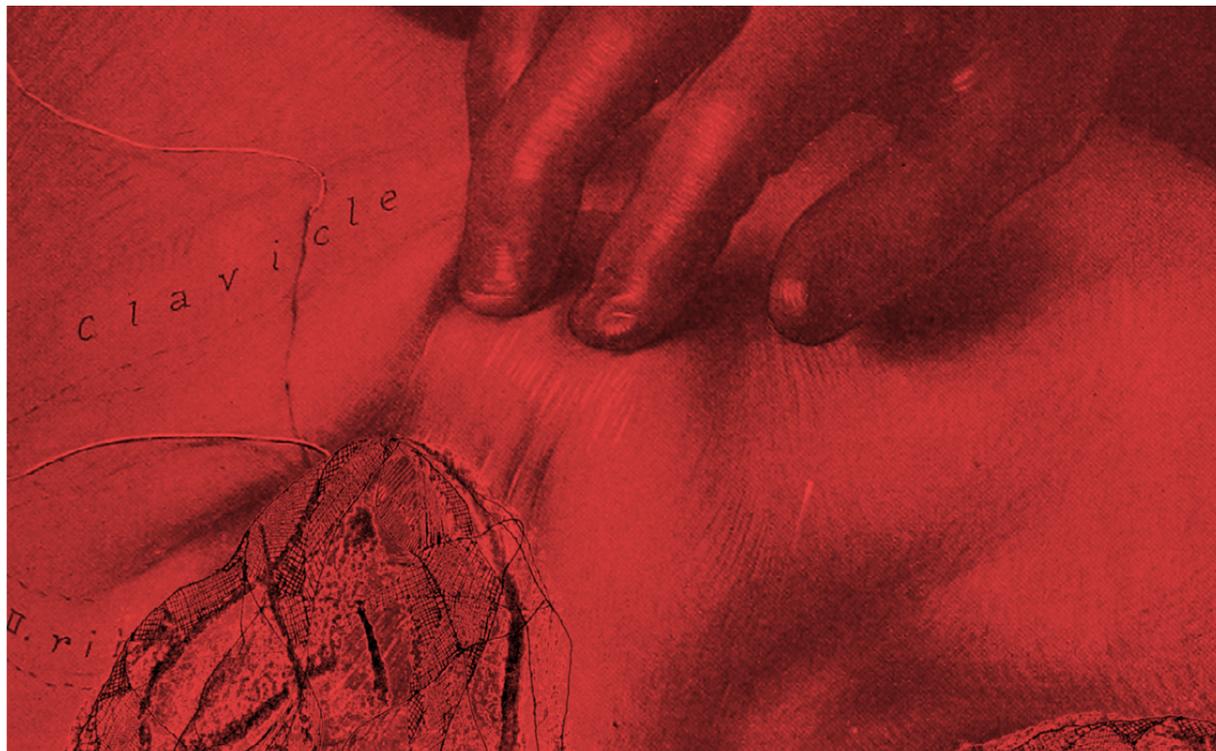
*Asylum Body Conserve Guard Hermitage
Home Membrane Protection Shelter Skin*

Taking each of these synonyms as a starting point for a poem, sculpture, or even a conversation, the concept of shelter is expanded to accommodate the breadth of human experience, and the nuances of needs. These needs and experiences can thus be understood as synonymous, but not the same.

– Hannah Clarkson

The Ailing Body

Cambridge, Oxford, London, Stockholm



Decolonising the language of illness

Hannah Clarkson

“Illness is the night-side of life, a more onerous citizenship. Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and in the kingdom of the sick. Although we all prefer to use only the good passport, sooner or later each of us is obliged, at least for a spell, to identify ourselves as citizens of that other place.”

- Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*

My own body was a site of conflict, a battlefield, colonized for years by invaders who had never even left home. Natives turned against their inherited land, attacked from the inside out. Stealthy at first, yet accelerating imperceptibly toward a denouement of destruction, an eating away, slowly, of all their ancestors had over years striven to build. At the age of 24, I was growing backwards.

An autoimmune condition has been companion to my adolescence and adulthood since the age of 14. It makes me tired, a dull pain in my head each day until I could not, cannot, remember what it feels like when the fog is not there. I zone out sometimes into other planes where my body is not so heavy, not so weighted in its chair.

Pins and needles. An attempt to mend, to stitch back together, but this is an embroidery which is taken too far, takes over the fabric of my skin and tangles my flesh, pierces pinpricks in muscles so they ache and twist and groan. These are pictures I never wanted, tattooed on my bones.

At first, those first years, I ignored it, ignored the creeping fatigue that marked me out from the others, fought hard to pretend I could keep up, armour a disguise to fight the difference away. I always said yes when my body said no. Rest was not an option. Stopping meant defeat. I feared if I lay down, my limbs would not let me up again. Increasingly, so focused on my efforts to affect the energy of my peers, I forgot to eat.

Fast forward the best part of a decade.

And all of a sudden I was shrinking. Fifteen kilos of flesh gnawed away until all that was left was tendons and marrow and a brain smaller and slower than it was before, though more anxious, more constricted and controlled. A broken body and a mind conspiring to fight one another, to destroy themselves. An immune system turned in on itself, cells proliferating as their safe house crumbled, façade dulled, and organs struggled to power the corpus of home. Protection was attack and care a misplaced empathy, a kind weapon of metabolic malice and mournful mending.

But this was my body, and I wouldn't let it win.

Yet, how does one decolonize one's own self? What knowledge is produced in one's own ailing body? Am I safe here? What language do we have surrounding sickness, and how can we create a new, less damning vocabulary? This will be a decolonising of the body, the mind, by and from and towards oneself, and the society in which the body dwells, a part of and apart. A reclaiming and an acceptance, is this a working with, or a striving against? What is difference between caring for and protecting from? Living in and as and with this fierce, fragile body, what do I learn?

I learn that I cannot do this alone, though only I can be it. I learn that empathy is not only a personality trait, but a learned action, born of experience, not only a noun but a verb. I learn that I am not superhuman, the shelter of my body not a given, I am not invincible. I learn that to decolonize, there must be new words to describe this otherness which is not an otherness, but an experience, an 'onerous citizenship' many people, in different mappings and different bodies, have. I learn, I embody, I attempt to decolonize, to re-citizen my body as a shared site which is my own.

{ critical consciousness }

In *The Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci highlights to his readers that “the starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory...” As such, Gramsci continues, “it is imperative to compile such an inventory” (1930–32). For Gramsci, this process of critical self-understanding represents the starting point for the possibility of any transformative action, underlines the centrality of human empowerment to any successful revolutionary process and, crucially, is the basis upon which this form of social transformation is not one that aims at replacing an oppressive reality with its mirror image, but one that is capable of becoming an act of liberation for both the colonizer and the colonized. A process aimed at recovering and politicising memory, and ‘inventing new souls’. And the pivotal agents in igniting this transformative process; highlighting the link between thought and action; illuminating this infinity of traces; speaking the truth to power; imagining alternative social and political relations, and revolutionising possibilities on the ground from within particular communities? Organic intellectuals.

In my current work, I seek to re-excavate and explore images of public intellectuals broadly linked to the Arab Left—as imagined and narrated from within their own self-understandings and conceptions of the world, and from within the history, philosophical worldviews, theories and geographies of the communities of resistance to which they belong. What are the self-understandings of these intellectuals? How do they locate themselves within their own history? What life experiences lead them to develop a critical consciousness, or give them access to alternative ways of being, of doing language, and of conceiving of and knowing the world? Do they all belong to a particular class or social group? Do they always inhabit the margins, and remain in radical spaces of opposition that do not seek to seize power?

How do they experience the world and themselves geographically, and how do these contexts and locations influence their ideas? How do they see power, social justice, solidarity and ‘the political’? How do their ideas and theories travel across histories, communities and geographies?

Through these explorations, I aim to experiment with ideas linked to the revolutionary power of philosophy; to the dynamics of building counterhegemony and communities of resistance; and to the politics of location and the creation of radical spaces of possibility at the margins. I aim to do so from within these particular points of beginning, and from within the oppositional struggles of this particular community of resistance. For, as bell hooks has voiced, “We are wedded in language, have our being in words...the oppressed struggle in language to recover ourselves, to reconcile, to reunite, to renew. Our words are a resistance. Language is also a place of struggle” (1989). The same can be said of where we choose to place our points of beginning. Beginnings are also a place of struggle. To begin with us, to centre us, is a resistance.

– Cherine Hussein

The scholar activist

Palestine and the Arab world



On beginnings, centring collective agency, and the highlighting of alternative selves and histories. Exploring the dynamics of building collective human agency

Cherine Hussein

If I had to choose one thing that I have learned from Edward Said that has kept coming back to me again and again, as an eternal piece of grounding wisdom in my work—it is that everything we research, everything we write, the very analysis we are able to see or piece together on a particular topic, is shaped by where we choose to place our point of beginning.

This of course applies to where we choose to begin a story or an analysis historically and contextually, but—in the case of knowledge production on the politics of resistance—it also crucially applies to whose knowledge, whose geography, whose practices, languages and struggles we choose to begin with when trying to engage in conversations about the political; about human agency; about the alternative worldviews of social and political relations that matter, and those that are made invisible, or sidelined as utopian. It applies to the collective human self

who is empowered to narrate; whose thoughts and ways of conceiving the world are produced as hegemonic; who is centred as 'raceless'; who is universalised as the norm and not seen as a racialised 'other'—to the collective self whose ways of being in the world are often charted to us as a 'neutral' point of beginning.

Echoing Toni Morrison though, no community or collective is in fact 'other'. For, as she emphasises in the *Tanner Lectures on Human Values*: "We have always been imagining ourselves... We are the subjects of our own narrative, witnesses to and participants in our own experience, and, in no way coincidentally, in the experience of those with whom we have come in contact" (1988). We are choices, and to begin with us is "to choose to examine centres of the self and to have the opportunity to compare these centres with the 'raceless' one with which we are, all of us, most familiar" (1988).

In many ways, I consider this choice to be at the core of my research interests, writings and decolonial methods revolving around exploring the dynamics of building collective agency in the Arab World—a choice to examine the human self by beginning from within, or empowering, the history, life experiences, self-understandings, geographies and conceptions of the world of a particular community of people. A counter-hegemonic community that I would consider myself to belong to—to emerge, experience and witness the world from within. I write to highlight and imagine our agency; to examine our history; to explore our worldviews and document our presence; to remember; to return; to compile an inventory; to chart my beginning of the excavation of the human experience, and of 'the political', from within; and, ultimately, to disrupt hegemonic places of beginning that are painted to us as 'natural', while disempowering us as marginal, utopian, backwards, or 'exotic'.

{ threshold }

A *threshold* as an archetypical form is a passage, a space that connects by separating and vice versa. For example, we say that we reach or overcome a threshold. The threshold's significance lies in its primary form: it is there to divide two situations, such as public / private.

The division implies the existence of a *border*: “In the colonial imaginary, a border traces the limits of civilisation before the dark world of barbarism, savagery, and underdevelopment” (Gavroche, 2015). A border exists as a separating line drawn on the ground or a raised wall. It also exists as an embodied experience or a conceptual barrier. The separation is ethical and political, announcing a division between what is permitted and not permitted, what is legal and illegal, between the included and the excluded. The notion of the border has expanded into the urban landscape because as a discourse it serves to divide, but also to rationalise and conquer. Thus, the border can be defined as a spatial manifestation of *control*.

On the other hand, a threshold is associated with notions of *space-making*, as it defines the place in-between, and is imagined as the passage through the border. But this quality of ‘letting things through’, is necessarily in a constant flux, meaning that at the moment it is solidified it becomes non-existent. To this end, the threshold as a concept is defined as the result of practices and rituals that perforate the border, and as the spatial articulation of playful acts that oppose a dominant will to solidify meanings and uses. Acts of play, according to Situationist vocabulary, are used to “undermine the very institution of language, and therefore both social order and authoritative control” (Ko, 2008). In our context, practices of play are conceived as small invasions of personal desire into the public sphere.

– Konstantina Pappa

The Hayat Agrinion



Semi-Public Spaces and Practices

Konstantina Pappa

The *hayat* is a term for an architectural element of the vernacular architecture in the East-Mediterranean areas that were formerly part of the Ottoman Empire. It can be described as a courtyard or a balcony, depending on the building. It is a semi-open space, covered by a wooden construction, and serves as an entrance and extension of the house to the public. Although there are variations in the typology, depending on the area, the *hayat* was commonly used in the domestic architecture of the whole region, appearing both in rural cottages and vernacular settlements.

The term *hayat*, translated in Turkish as *life*, was integrated into common Greek language (χαγιάτι) and has an Arabic root: *hayah*. This linguistic connection is interesting because vernacular architecture has been a disputed subject in these areas. Since the mid-1800s, after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, each of the emerging nation-states (such as Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, etc.) turned towards a nationalistic view of cultural heritage, as a way to proclaim their

sovereignty. In the case of Greece, research on vernacular architecture has often tried to create links with the Byzantine Empire (seen as authentically Greek, Christian, etc.) and renounces the Ottoman past, while similar cases of re-constructing a heritage are registered in Turkey and Serbia.

However, the special focus of my research is the function and use of these spaces in everyday life, particularly in the spatial context of the rural areas in southwestern Greece. Thus, the analysis is based partly on personal experience and stories shared in my family regarding my grandparents' *hayat* in Agrinio, Greece. Built in 1902, the house was located on the outskirts of the town, where the extended family (mostly the women) were growing tobacco leaves. The *hayat* was the part of the house where people spent most of their time and, interestingly enough, the character of the space is semi-public: on one hand it works as an entrance to the private part of the house, but it was also the living room, often a kitchen, and a gathering space for people of the neighbourhood to chat, eat, and sometimes work. The *hayat* can be characterised as a communal space, very close to the notion of a common courtyard, but its openness towards the public varies geographically, due to the climate or the cultural context (for example, in Iran it was a private communal space for the extended family).

In the study of vernacular architecture, variations in the *hayat*'s typology can be identified in relation to social fabric and proximity to settled areas. The *hayats* located inside towns are usually more privacy-oriented, in contrast to rural areas, where the communities were depending on collectivity, not only for labour but also in a need for sociability: there, these spaces served as a centre for the communal aspects of life. The cultural significance of the *hayat* stems from the moments of shared discussions, celebrations, and funerals that took place as performative acts of public life. Especially for women, who were limited to domestic environments and labour, the *hayat* was a vital social space. Therefore, the *hayat* was a communal space in practice that provided a platform for learning by sharing experience.

The aim of this research is to look into the different adaptations of the essence of the *hayat* in the contemporary context, embedded with notions of migration and gender. Knowledge in this case is produced by the spill-over of the private into the public, by making people visible and challenging dominant narratives. For this reason, the project seeks to explore performative acts of communities that challenge traditional notions of public/private, and identify the spatial conditions of these practices in the urban landscape.

{ langeweile }

The German word for boredom, *Langeweile*, could be literally translated to ‘long while’, connoting that we perceive time to be passing more slowly when we are bored. The opposite state is found in the outdated term *Kurzweil* (‘short while’)—a light pastime—in which you experience time passing quickly because you are entertained.

What is it that we are trying so hard to distract ourselves from? Do we lose something by ‘wasting’ less time and surrendering ourselves to computational thinking, by succumbing to the orders of algorithms that systematically aim to banish our boredom for us?

What would happen if we resisted the call of the devices and embraced the feeling of *Langeweile*, that uncomfortable sensation of feeling time passing more slowly? Or, as Vanessa Joan Müller and Cristina Ricupero put it, “but what would happen if ‘doing nothing’ or ‘inaction’ were to become a source of inspiration for a refusal to produce”? Could an occasional lack of rapid-fire stimulation help us process all the many-sourced inputs, and become in itself a site for knowledge production? Should ‘free’, unencumbered and unaccounted-for time away from screens be a given basic right for all?

– Matilda Tucker

Free Time

Berlin and Stockholm



The Acceptance of the Passage of Time

Matilda Tucker

The modern history of time is largely an economic one and the story of its standardisation is closely tied to the colonial and industrial exploits of the past one and a half centuries.¹ Accordingly, we use the language of economics to talk about time. We save time, we invest time. Time, especially free time, is seen as a scarce resource. But in 2020, that's not the only thing at stake anymore. The struggle around time is no longer just about working hours. We live in a time of deregulated working hours, home offices and 'digital nomads', in which the division between labour and leisure is becoming an increasingly muddled grey zone. The start-up language of efficiency, productivity, and (self-)optimisation has successfully infiltrated the domain of leisure time. Read these 10 books that will get you ahead of the curve, meditate for 12 minutes away from your phone so that you will be able to be more focused and productive later. A line at the top of the article page tells us how many minutes we can expect to spend reading it.

It is becoming more and more difficult to define what we mean by 'free time'. How has this led us to think about time in our digital age? What value do we assign to it? Are we on the path to assigning more value to information, over knowledge and the human processes behind it?

What does this do to how we perceive the passage of time and how we value it as an important site for producing knowledge?

Accessibility and immediacy facilitated by technology create a continuous flow of information. They allow for constant checking, sorting, and categorisation, culminating in the goal of banishing all uncertainties and ultimately feeding our anxieties. Meanwhile, the time and human effort that go into the process of knowledge production go unvalued, as they are sidestepped in favour of speed, efficiency, optimisation, and productivity.

At the same time, the ubiquity of certain technologies and digital spaces in our lives has become an unquestioned default. Unwanted 'down time', can immediately be filled with content from a device seeking to entertain us with its pixelated screen, and distract us from feeling the weight of the passage of time. There are always enough tasks and constantly renewable sources of stimulation to keep us either busy or entertained.

Opting out of technologies and certain digital spaces, and the goal and entertainment driven approaches to which they subscribe, is becoming more and more difficult. Reports show us how having access to offline, technology-free time is less and less a matter of choice and more an issue of factors like class.² Is all unplanned analogue time on the path to being erased from the experience of being human, in the quest to banish its close cousin, boredom? How can we re-illuminate the importance of such time in the production of knowledge?

My own practice through this course has been one of a mindful re-visitation of my own relationship to time, by exploring different routes and modes of transport between Berlin and Stockholm and choosing to 'invest' anywhere from 2.5 to 30.5 hours for each journey. As I undertake each journey, I map the knowledge produced along the way. In this inefficient drifting and the frustration of the occasional boredom accompanying it, I locate a site of resistance. I propose that we revisit the acceptance of the passage of time as a site of knowledge production and with that, bored time, 'nothing time', wasted time, unplanned time, empty time and 'free time' as important germinators for creativity and complex thinking.

{ reminiscence }

“A people which is cut off from its own past is far less free to choose and to act as a people than one which has been able to situate itself in history. This is why – and this is the only reason why – the entire art of the past has now become a political issue.”

– John Berger, *The Ways of Seeing*

Ani literally means unique, beautiful and exotic in Armenian. It's also a feminine name in reference to the medieval Armenian city of Ani. The great capital has since turned into what are now called The Ruins of Ani.

Anı means 'memory' in Turkish; if one removes the dot over the 'i', 'The Ruins of Ani' becomes 'The Ruins of Memory', just like Ani, in a way, became a ruined memory for the Armenians.

The word 'reminiscence' could suggest an opportunity to link 'anı' (memory) with its literal meaning in Turkish as a word and 'Ani' (beautiful) with its physical being as a ruined city of Armenians in Turkey.

In our age, 'memory' has taken on a very broad meaning, and tends to be used purely and simply as a substitute for 'history,' to put the study of history at the service of memory. It is claimed by some important philosopher's that "the time in which there was collective history and individual memories, a time in which the historian alone was supposed to deliver the truth of the past, is over. In manufacturing the past today, the historian must share its role with others." It is 'memory' now that it has acquired collective meaning. It is in this context that an extraordinary interest in 'cultural heritage' has emerged. The power of memory, its essential role in forging a national identity and the growing interest for memory and cultural heritage, undoubtedly coincide with the rise of conservative and right-wing politics. This is why the philosopher Boris Buden suggests that "the left shouldn't leave the past to the right, but rather openly claim it, and it should make the memory a site of political struggle, or better, a political cause. This is supposed to be the only way for the left to recover from the loss of history." However, Walter Benjamin says that "cultural history and heritage" increase the burden of the treasures that piled up on humanity's back; it doesn't really give us the strength to shake these treasures off, so as to get our hands on them. I, eventually, will take the words and approaches of these thinkers with me on my way through this research, alongside many others.

– Didem Yildirim Boström

The Ruins of Ani Kars



Memory as well as Ruins

Didem Yildirim Boström

'Ani Defteri' / Journal of Reminiscence

*"I once thought of loneliness as my grandma.
Legends, during those years, would begin as bandit songs.
No thyme-perfumed forests peeling out partridge melodies
resounded in my grandma's voice;
rather, if anything,
mountains;
smoky,
blood-soaked mountains
sentenced to be so by official decree."*

– Hasan Ali Toptaş

I've met my grandmother, but we never had an actual conversation. She spoke Kurdish; I couldn't. I spoke Turkish; she did just a tiny bit. She was Kurdish; so am I, partly. I'm also partly Armenian and Turkish. I was twelve the last time we met; she was seventy. She had a beautiful tattoo in the middle of her two eyebrows. I wished I had it too.

The woman who spoke a different language visited our home once every other year. She did the doctor visits and enjoyed the pictures on the TV screen because she didn't really understand what was spoken. My parents moved to Ankara in order to leave their identity behind when they were young. They weren't Kurds or Armenians anymore, and neither were their children. I heard them speak my grandmother's language only when they wanted to talk about something secretly. My grandfather is Armenian, but he preferred not to speak Armenian. He is from the same city as my grandmother: Kars. I visited my grandparents' city once. I don't remember much because I was around five. Many years after my grandmother's passing, my cousin, who became a teacher, was assigned to return to Kars. There, all the children in the classroom only spoke Kurdish, but all the books were written in Turkish. I asked him how he dealt with the situation. He said it was easy as he forbade them to speak Kurdish, just like his nation state does.

There is a beautiful and magnificent archeological site in my grandparents' city called The Ruins of Ani. It is located on a secluded plateau that forms Turkey's natural border with Armenia. The medieval city Ani was the capital of Greater Armenia for centuries. Nowadays, it is becoming a popular tourist site in northeast Turkey. The city's presentation has been falsified by the Turkish government in order to shadow Armenian history and in 2016, Ani was added to UNESCO World Heritage List. In this research, by giving a performance in Ani, I'm aiming to build a relationship with my maternal and paternal grandparents, and their mixed Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish roots, as well as their home city, Kars. I also want to examine the process by which Ani became a World Heritage site, in its pre- and post-nomination phases, seeking other truths and the answers to the following questions using a decolonial perspective: Whose history? Whose memory? Whose heritage?

PART II

to collect



{ collect* }

Often, when something new is erected in a neighbourhood, we think: “I can remember that there was something here before, but now I can’t remember what.”

Within contexts of urban struggle, how can pluriversal narratives be created and maintained through the collective memory of a place?

Collect*

Collect* is a manifesto for a social anthology.

Collect* is a form of production.

Collect* is a democratic practice.

Collect* is an anchor within local struggles.

Collect* is a container of multiple memories.

Collect* is the root of a series of words that may have different applications, but use this verb as their engine.

We propose to Collect*

To Collect* is to create a social anthology; one which records memories of marginality and the struggles of communities. A social anthology can become a collective device, a reference to re-invent everyday-life towards commonality, remapping the sites and alliances of resistance.

We propose to collect*, to engage with knowledges that have an intrinsic temporariness and are experienced through direct participation; the knowledges of the event, of the marginal, and of the experiential. We want to create a system to embrace these qualities, collecting a specific way of knowing, and to engage with collecting ephemerality in the present, beyond traditional mediums.

In doing so, we aim to democratise the process of constructing narratives and memories, challenging traditional processes of archiving and curating to allow multiple voices to come to the surface.

A collectivised collection.

A collectable collectivism.

A collected collectivity.

collectivisation of Collect*

** The addition of an asterisk is a typographic solution that highlights the capacity of this root word to have potential suffixes loaded onto it to multiply its meanings.*

– Marco Cechet, Mark Romei, Pauli Rikaniemi, Ying Sun

{ catalyst }

Methodologies:

- Mirroring / learning / displacing
- Reimagining
- Collective desires
- Self-confession
- Social device
- Situated knowledge

A catalyst is an informal and temporary action used to make structures of power visible. It initiates change from below through the disruption of an everyday situation. As an action, or a series of actions, it leads to shifts in perspectives, where new understandings, imaginaries and social structures can be envisioned, and collectively strived for.

Through a sequence of experimental workshops held at the Royal Institute of Art, we tested a methodology to reimagine spaces through collective desires. By learning from an informal site of knowledge production, *Cyklopen*¹, the aim was to blur the separation between creators and audience in a formal and hierarchical environment.

During the workshops, we identified spaces with potential for an active commons, in-between spaces which could connect people but failed to do so in their current use. One of them was *Mellanrummet*, a white box gallery space between degree students and the Faculty and Post-Master students at the institute.

Together with the participants of each workshop, a temporary collective was formed to discuss and create a common space. Starting with a simple question—what is missing from the space or what is your experience of it?—we collected individual points of view which formed a base for collective knowledge.

By reimagining individual desires into a collective desire through group discussions and mind-mapping, we aimed to create a fruitful ground for an open and non-hierarchical process of forming a space. Each intervention was left to live its own life by leaving traces of the common space, communicating the change and opening up possibilities for future use. Anybody passing the space was invited to continue the spatial conversation by leaving their own traces.

There was a barrier to acting autonomously within the workshops, which poses a question of how to form a collective process and encourage people to actively work together? If a facilitator is expected to lead a transformation, could there be a way of eliminating this role in the pursuit of levelling hierarchies?

¹ *A self-built, self-organized and volunteer-run cultural centre in Högdalen, Stockholm.*

– Marco Cechet, Mark Romei, Pauli Rikaniemi, Ying Sun

Cyklopen Stockholm



Collective memory as a site of resistance

Marco Cechet, Mark Romei, Pauli Rikaniemi, Ying Sun

Cyklopen is a self-built, self-organised and volunteer-run cultural centre in Högdalen, Stockholm. As an experimental model of self-organisation, the site has the vision to serve local collective needs. Conceptualised as an experiment on the creation of commons, Cyklopen sits outside of both the public and private realms, not owned by the state nor by private individuals. Instead, it's operated collectively and independently, by those actively engaged in the use of the house and its management.

In 2003, Kulturkampanjen (the original organisation behind Cyklopen) started by squatting in an old television house in Östermalm, Stockholm. With unsuccessful attempts to gain a venue of their own, both in Hammarbyhöjden Subway station and an abandoned conservation area, Albano Smide, they finally got a five-year lease in Högdalen to build their own space.

The design and construction process was open for everyone to participate in, and the building was finished in 2007 after two years of construction. The main feature

was a single, large, round, window, which gave the house its name: Cyklopen. But after just one year, the building was burned down by neo-Nazis. After another campaign and self-building process, the current venue, again named Cyklopen, was opened in 2013 in Högdalen.

“Why build a culture house in a suburb?”^[1]

The discussions about Cyklopen have constantly pointed towards its locality since the house's reopening to the public. The neighbourhood of Högdalen is a marginalised area in terms of its diverse inhabitants and the gentrification process in Stockholm. With the desire of being something else, radically rooted in the local context, Cyklopen provides a community space that emphasises solidarity and embraces people with different marginalised identities. Cyklopen is constructing both a site of resistance within local struggles, and an experimental model for the larger socio-political context.

“Don't ask what Cyklopen can do for you, ask what you do for you at Cyklopen.”^[2]

Through the engagement of active members and the participation of event initiators within house meetings, the culture house operates like a container, open to be used by any groups within the community, reflecting its guiding principles and values. In this way, Cyklopen experiments with creating an operating model to challenge attitudes formed by consumer culture, imposed hierarchies, and the idealisation of efficiency in the modern world. Through this, it aims to create a space outside of the neo-liberal, patriarchal and modernist controls of the city; a space where new social relations can be created and brought into reality.

What can we learn from Cyklopen in terms of knowledge production? How do we inscribe from informality?

As new members rotate through the organisation, and the temporality of events and struggles produce a state of continual present, how can memory exist and be retained in such a structure?

Cyklopen has a volunteer run library, which has the potential to record and reflect on the collective memories of the house. Can the space of the library become a site for the storage and production of knowledge? Not only in the form of the books within the space, but also recording the informal knowledge produced within and around the house, can the library become a space to anchor the common struggles of the larger community?

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^[1] Elof Hellström explained this was a common question asked when the house was opened.

^[2] Statement on Cyklopen's web page.

{ DIY }

The do-it-yourself (DIY) ethic promotes the idea that anyone is capable of performing a variety of tasks rather than relying on paid specialists. It requires that the adherent seeks out the knowledge needed to complete a task.

This ethic emerges in correspondence to punk subculture: is tied both to punk ideology and anti-consumerism. Its central point is the empowerment of both individuals and communities, encouraging the employment of alternative approaches when faced with bureaucratic or societal obstacles to achieving their objectives.

DIY culture originated in the late '60s and early '70s in the form of the free festival movement, mutating through protest camps, thus incorporating elements of the first radical tendencies such as beat and peace movements, and into punk through bands such as Crass.

In the 1990s, DIY became a somewhat recognised movement in the UK, where the protest (the direct action) and party (the festival) converged. The prime example of this movement was the Exodus Collective. This development constituted a significant cross-pollination of pleasure and politics, resembling the anti-disciplinary politics of the 1960s.

During the 1990s, this DIY activism became more prominent, demonstrating the desire for an economy of mutual aid and co-operation; the commitment to the non-commodification of art; the appropriation of digital communication technologies for free community purposes; and the commitment to alternative technologies such as biodiesel or renewable energy.

Nevertheless, from 1991–1997 the UK's Conservative government cracked down on squatting, animal rights activists, greens, travellers, as well as raves, parties and dance culture.

Despite this repressive wave, it is relevant to note that, because of internet expansion, the DIY ethic found a channel to spread and make knowledge more accessible.

Indeed, accessibility, and therefore self-sufficiency, are the advantages of this bottom-up way of conceiving society.

– Marco Cechet

Sound System Culture Kingston



When the dancefloor links tribalism and utopia

Marco Cechet

Stretching the idea of sites of knowledge production, I have focussed my research on Sound System culture, where the dancefloor becomes a place characterised by a collective ritual and its symbolic value.

What interested me was the origin of this culture; its transversal manifestations within different subcultures; its political connotations and its capacity of linking tribalism and utopia.

Indeed, dancing is often at the centre of tribal rituals—it gathers people, driving them to catharsis—and while music can charge the space with its physical presence, its immateriality allows it to be extremely flexible.

“The Sound System, succinctly put, is a mobile discotheque. It’s a platform on which you play music, that moves around.” Turntables, a microphone and a powerful amplifier with big loudspeakers constituted the audio equipment that is loaded up into a van and carried to different venues.

Sound system culture started in Kingston, Jamaica, in the late ‘40s/early ‘50s, when live music events were inaccessible to poor people. It used to provide popular music (mainly Rhythm & Blues) at large outdoor gatherings and parties. One of the earliest prominent Sound Systems was Tom the Great Sebastian, which got its name from a circus act and was founded by Tom Wong, son of a Chinese father and an African mother.

When at the end of the ‘50s, white Rock music started to supplant Rhythm & Blues, Jamaicans developed their original music —Ska and Rocksteady— starting their own record labels.

In 1962, Jamaica gained independence and started to re-elaborate the culture of the colonizers; it was the time when the users became producers.

In this scenario, music records became like books: a medium with which culture can be reproduced and spread.

Jamaican music came to England along with the Windrush Generation: the first wave of Jamaican immigrants who arrived between the late ‘40s and early ‘60s. The music was the first real link to keep in touch with what was going on back home. Parties were the only occasions of congregation for the Caribbean community which had migrated abroad.

Every technological implementation, every Western innovation was filtered and re-elaborated by Jamaican music. The fastest Rock generated the slowest shift of Reggae, while psychedelic influences generated the Dub sonic experimentation. Those musical genres, coming from the peripheries, influenced in turn the western-centric world. It is because of Sound System culture that Hip Hop was born in New York in the early ‘70s, as were both House and Techno music in the ‘80s.

Although with different names—block parties, house parties, warehouse parties—the plot was always the same: a legal or illegal gathering of people who want to dance and need to feel free.

From political messages of Roots Reggae lyrics, to the libertarian and escapist stances of the rave culture in the early ‘90s, it is not by chance that the authorities, through the police, had always repressed these manifestations, dismissing them as dangerous “anti-social” behaviours.

What can we learn from this culture? Which tactics can we borrow from it?

Image caption:

Sister Mary Ignatius Davies’ Mutt and Jeff sound system, as used for educational purposes at Alpha Boys School. Kingston, Jamaica / photographer unknown

{ carceral amnesia }

“A development like no other, Pentridge is a true Melbourne icon reimagined for the 21st century. Unique F&B and specialty retail opportunities are now available to join Pentridge’s retail hub, surrounded by stunning heritage listed bluestone buildings.”

This is the beginning of a real estate ad by the global property firm Colliers, who are responsible for the current scheme to redevelop Pentridge Prison and attract business investors to buy space within the precinct. To examine the concepts of colonial quaintness and carceral amnesia, the language of real estate seems apt in reflecting how these ideas are perpetuated to benefit systems of colonialism/capitalism within Australia.

To diminish the history of this site simply as a “stunning” building – solely with the intention of attracting investors and capital, and to further the process of gentrification within the suburb – is a case of amnesia over the realities of colonialism. What should the future look like for this place, one which is directed towards decolonisation? How can the legacy of colonial methods of incarceration and punishment be dispelled in the contemporary context? How can a movement be built to never repeat such a crime as Pentridge reflects, but to construct momentum towards transformative justice and prison abolition?

Pentridge is the materialisation of the domination of Wurundjeri lands by British Imperialism, a legacy which has been kept alive well into the contemporary Commonwealth country, guided by a continual reproduction of colonial structures. It is a manifestation of a violent and brutal system of Indigenous land theft and appropriation, coupled with an industrial system of mass incarceration which utilised enslaved convict labour for its construction and reproduction. It is a spatialisation of colonial ideology.

The prevailing amnesia of this reality is revealed in the uncritical perception that even one of the most violent colonial prisons, which closed only 23 years ago, can be reduced to decontextualised architectural elements, thus regarded as a quaint piece of history. With the case of Colliers, this reduction clearly benefits the status quo, with its overt objective being to add value to the site within global real estate markets.

– Mark Romei

Her Majesty's Pentridge Prison Naarm / Melbourne



Incarceration as a continual tool of invasion

Mark Romei

A short stroll from an old rental property where I used to live, long bluestone walls line the main road, propping up a series of gothic turrets and disused watchtowers. These structures are the remains of a notorious site of imprisonment in the colony, and then state, of Victoria. A colonial prison which had been operational for 146 years, only to be closed only in 1997. The perimeter walls have now been partially dematerialised, and today it backs onto a newly constructed housing estate, with recently constructed apartment buildings sharing the grounds alongside the old prison infrastructure. The reuse of this site prompts the question: how is history thought of by those who now live freely within the walls of the former prison? How do they perceive the past, as well as their role within it as a historical continuum?

Exploring the present state of the site through the lens of Aníbal Quijano's concept of "modernity/coloniality," in which the project of modernity is built directly upon systems of colonisation, the current combination of architectural forms reflects the

interconnected nature of these two projects. The site can be read as a spatialisation of Quijano's concept, where the bluestone blocks of the former prison visually appear to prop up the new luxury housing developments. It reveals the interwoven existence of the historical systems of colonialism with the contemporary forms of violent, speculative, and capital driven real-estate development.

So how can we begin to think critically about the history of this site, and how it fits into these larger structures and projects? One way could be to consider the origins of incarceration within Australia.

The prison is an architectural typology which found its form in the simultaneous development of both colonialism and modernity. It embodies the interconnected dimensions of these two projects. It should be needless to say that before 1788, no prison had ever been erected on this continent. In the 60,000-80,000 years of continual habitation, Indigenous People never had the need to develop large scale, industrial spaces for the confinement and detainment of large populations of people. Incarceration served, and does serve, as a tool of the settler-colonial invasion and occupation. To unpack this further, a useful frame can be established by borrowing a perspective from Patrick Wolfe: "invasion is a structure, not an event." Here, the continual and expanding deployment of the prison as a spatial solution to social problems which result from the recurrent internal logic of ongoing colonisation, is a material manifestation of this structure.

Settler colonialism is embedded in the logic of accumulation through dispossession, and incarceration functions as a tool to manage and control the effects of this spatial process.

The closure of Pentridge in 1997 was hardly a step towards re-examining the spatial apparatus of mass imprisonment, or the typology of the prison as a space of incarceration, but rather was a shift away from relying on traditional early colonial era structures, and towards a new model of private prison management. Conducted in newly built modern structures, this new model massively expands the prison-industrial complex in the process: a colonial system still thriving in the present day.

{ to guest }

A list of words/concepts attempting “to identify marginality ... as the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance.”

(bell hooks, *Choosing the margin as a space of radical openness*):

Gay
Queer
Other
Identity
Expression
Embody
Translate/transform
Appropriate
An ally
A guest

A guest; in Finnish: vieras; literal meaning: a stranger.

A guest, a visitor; vierailija; a stranger (with no obligations to be hosted or to be the ‘good’ guest).

To visit; vieraila; to go and be a stranger somewhere; to guest.

A guest as a passive object is replaced with an active subject, to guest. Understanding a guest as a stranger opens up options for a concept describing a way of being together which doesn’t require homogenisation. One can be a stranger and not have the pressure to give up yourself, to blend in. To guest is to exist in a multiverse, allowing a multitude of meanings or subjects to cohabit in a space.

As Donna Haraway describes in *A Cyborg Manifesto*, while making a case for fractured identities: “This identity [U.S. women of colour] marks out a self-consciously constructed space that cannot affirm the capacity to act on the basis of natural identification, but only on the basis of conscious coalition, of affinity, of political kinship.”

To guest is to make space for fractured identities, to defy appropriation. But in contrast to Haraway’s aim, to guest doesn’t require political kinship or kinship of any kind. A stranger is allowed in your home, in yourself; you are a stranger to them as they are for you.

The expectation of hospitality and interaction that is embedded in a guest remains. To guest is an attempt for the “partial, real connection” that Haraway is afraid of losing in giving up on fractured identities. It is also an attempt to learn to see from below: “The alternative to relativism is partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology.” (Haraway, *Situated Knowledges*)

By understanding a body as an active part of a non-verbal conversation, guesing makes space for contrasting views and resists segregation. While globalism and urbanisation driven by modernism have made the world easier to reach, the segregation of communities hasn’t followed. Two of the most influential and still widely used modernist dreams, Le Corbusier’s tower visions and Ebenezer Howard’s garden cities, are physical manifestations of segregating like-minded people in closed communities, taking away the space of strangers.

– Pauli Rikaniemi

Queer Spaces and Identity Expression

New York and Copenhagen



Individual and collective forms of queer identity

Pauli Rikaniemi

Growing up with a feeling of otherness forces one to negotiate personal identity with society's expectations and the accepted norm from a young age. My otherness, being gay, led me to take on a straight identity until I was ready to be openly gay. As a boy, not being ready to challenge the norm, a heteronormative society, I found ways of passing as straight until I gradually became open about my sexuality.

This conscious choice of expressing a false identity or the identity of somebody else, made me constantly aware of gender and sexuality. I needed to learn how the outside saw me and weigh it against the binaries of straight/gay and male/female. Doing this, I constantly questioned what it is to be gay and a man, in opposition to being straight and a woman.

My personal experience growing up, being a typical one in the LGBTQ community, is noticeable in the community's ability to play with identities and to use this as a source of empowerment. As a response to society's norms, it is a platform for critical thinking and non-verbal conversation. For example, Touko Laaksonen

with his Tom of Finland drawings utilises a pointed imagery of identities. With Tom of Finland, Laaksonen manages to address issues of sexuality, gender, lust and the national trauma of being in war between Hitler and Stalin, all of which for him were personal.

Ball culture, which was started by Black and Latin trans and drag communities in the USA in the early 20th century, is perhaps the clearest platform for identity play. At a ball, one is able to play with self-expression, while in public it is not always safe or allowed to do so. These safe spaces are a possibility to change the rules of society and to readdress imposed gendered roles.

The same tools of identity politics are naturally used in everyday situations as well. Like RuPaul says, we're all born naked and the rest is drag. The choices we make in expressing ourselves are choices of alignment and identity politics.

A safe space for experimentation allows an individual or group to express themselves without having to worry about the society's norms i.e. the colonial matrix of power (CMP). A transformation between a learned identity and one's own identity functions as a tool for knowledge production in the way that it makes the CMP visible.

A collective event, for example a club night, is a platform for shared identity play and a way of negotiating within your community. Gay bars and BIPOC events set their own rules of what is accepted behaviour, and in both, the white straight man is at best a guest. This collective play of identity expression has the same power to produce knowledge as the individual identity play has.

They are dependent on each other; the collective can't exist without the individual and the individual can't exist without the collective. The negotiating of a personal and a collective identity to and against society's norms can help see otherness as an anchor point which allows one to delink from the colonized concepts of gender and sexuality.

Gay bars and the whole pride movement were started by trans women of colour, but many spaces, communities and often even the pride movement itself have forgotten them. Instead, they are yet another playground for white men. In many cities, techno clubs have started to provide an option for queer spaces. For example, Copenhagen has seen a wave of techno events and spaces in the past few years, e.g. Et Andet Sted, Ved Siden Af, Monastic, Endurance, Mainstream and Group Therapy. What they all have in common is that they make clear that the events are safe spaces for LGBTQ and BIPOC communities.

{ in-between }

adjective

1. situated somewhere between two extremes or categories; intermediate.

“I am not unconscious, but in some in-between state”

noun

2. an intermediate thing.

“successes, failures and in-betweens”

(Google dictionary)

“What do I have to lose, in order to maintain a stable job and a decent life in Sweden?”

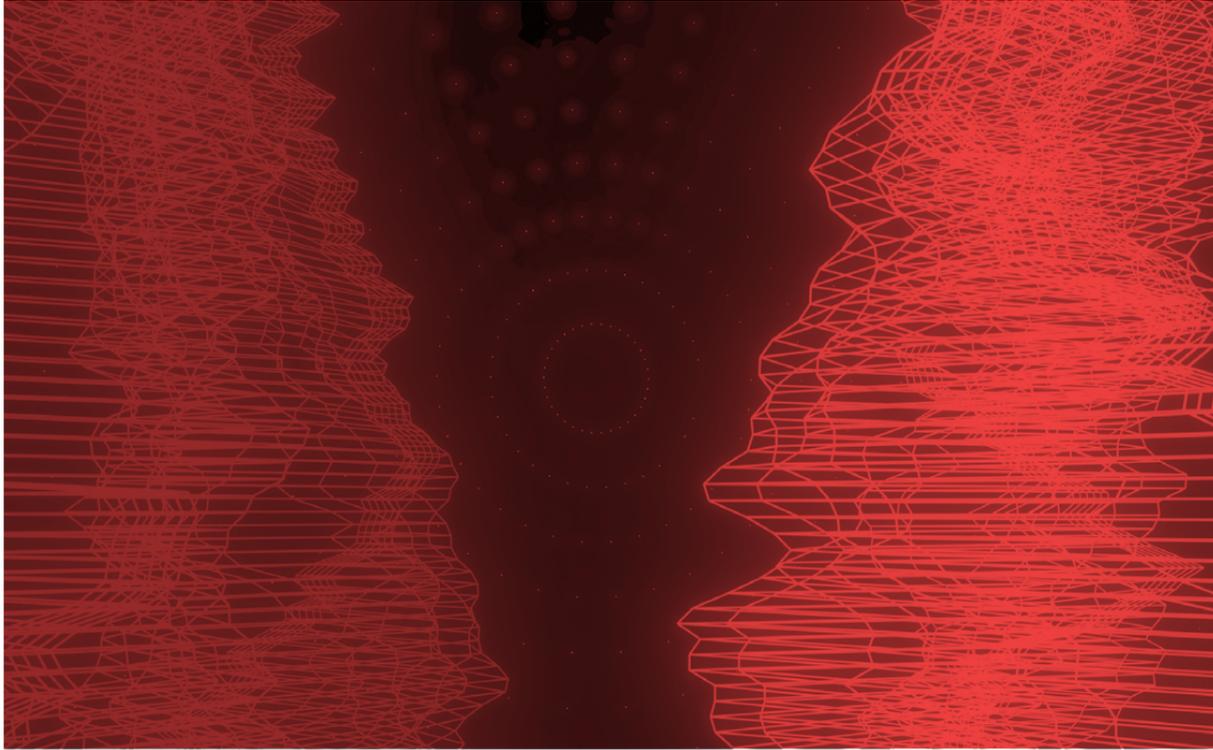
An uncomfortable yet honest question was spoken out loud by a Roma woman during the Roma Tangible Heritage Conference at Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm 2019. Carrying both the identity of being a minority and a Swedish citizen, she wonders how much she has to lose of her own Roma roots and culture, to be able to be accepted by the society in which she has been raised and educated. It seemed to me that the question reflected so many life choices with which she might have been confronted in the everyday – whether exposing herself as a Roma or acting like a ‘normal’ Swede, being alienated or assimilated, being loyal to her roots or transforming herself into the realm of normality.

Between those two extreme categories, we often tend to force ourselves to pick one side: to end internal struggles, to settle for a sense of home, to be socially accepted from at least one side. It is a survival skill that we have learnt from this social and political society. However, instead of trying to measure how much to lose by picking one side, could we actually imagine a way of being that exists between extreme categories, in which we could perceive the world from both sides and practice our social and political flexibilities? Dwelling on the in-between, therefore, comes as a proactive political statement, to reformulate our political critiques from the ground on which we stand.

Home is that place which enables and promotes varied and everchanging perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference. One confronts and accepts dispersal, fragmentation as part of the construction of a new world order that reveals more fully where we are, who we can become, an order that does not demand forgetting.” (hooks 2017: 19)

– Ying Sun

A Void Stockholm and 北京 (Beijing)



A dwelling territory for body-politics in which an alternative voice could finally speak for itself

Ying Sun

We cannot exist outside the hegemonic system we are critiquing.”
The quote came from Mekonnen Tesfahuney, who has been researching all his life in the areas of racism, migration and geo-politics.

How do we then, each one of us a political subject living in a society, formulate our everyday relationships with hegemonic systems, if there is no way out?

Looking inwards to my own life – as an immigrant who has struggled to detach herself from a dominant system back home, and has established her career in a commercial practice elsewhere – nothing seems to be worth complaining about. Indeed, just like many other immigrants who have been striving for a decent life in a wealthy Western country, my life is mostly secured by privileges of capital – a standard of life that is way beyond a shelter and basic human needs, a life that places options in my hands. However, if we zoom out to a wider perspective and

look from the dark side, one could also argue that the full-time job in a commercial industry is subsequently sustaining and reproducing the market, the profits and, ultimately, affirming the muscles of the neo-liberal structure. Are there really options in our hands in terms of how we want to associate with the political society, or is it mandatory that one has to be a component of the hegemonic mechanism if one asks for a decent life?

Looking inwards to my own life – as an East Asian woman who has been pursuing an independent identity beyond the control of geo-politics – I do share a collective feeling with the people who are struggling on the margins of any society, people who might have tried all kinds of directions for a sense of belonging. “Moving, we confront the reality of choice and location.” (hooks, 2017:15) Assimilation or being alienation might, for instance, come as two extreme categories, yet one might have encountered both at the same time as a matter of choice, along the journey to a new place.

In the book *Ignorance*, written by Milan Kundera, the author poetically illustrates the dilemma of an identity void, through the story of a Czech woman, exiled to France two decades ago, who finally got an opportunity to return to her homeland. The return journey was expected by those surrounding her as a holy moment – a moment of *Odyssey*. Yet, a void revealed itself bit by bit throughout her journey – her current being (after all these years of life in exile) had become alienated both by her French friends and her old friends back in her homeland. There, she stood alone between the history and present, between salvation by her French friends and negation by her friends back home.

I imagine that anyone living in this complex world could experience a void sometimes in life, between different geographies, cultures, identities or epistemologies. Falling out of the notion of normality and not being able to settle with certainties. However, the configuration of society is the consequence of different combinations of coexistence. Here I argue that each of us, as political subjects, could for a moment put the uncertainty aside and take the advantageous position of locating oneself in this void. Reimagining the void as a dwelling space, in which an alternative voice could finally speak for itself. By settling our feet on the site of uncertainty, we could secure our own territory to respond and challenge the dominant epistemology. Eventually, it empowers us to reimagine the socio-political relationship we have with this world.

PART III

*collective
resistance*



{ collective resistance }

The meaning of resistance – as a collective process – relies upon the active engagement of a local community, through the combination of individual actions, such as volunteer work, and collective actions, such as gathering of signatures or open meetings. Collective resistance stems from local relationships, existing social structures and knowledge gained in previous movements.

Collective resistance requires attentiveness, action and reaction on a group level; it is often a race against time to find alternative solutions to an urgent problem. To resist means to change; to create a new situation coming from the collective initiative, which lies beyond the institutions or power structures. Collective resistance is characterised by non-hierarchical, horizontal structures, established by individuals fully committed to a cause and fighting to improve local or global policies.

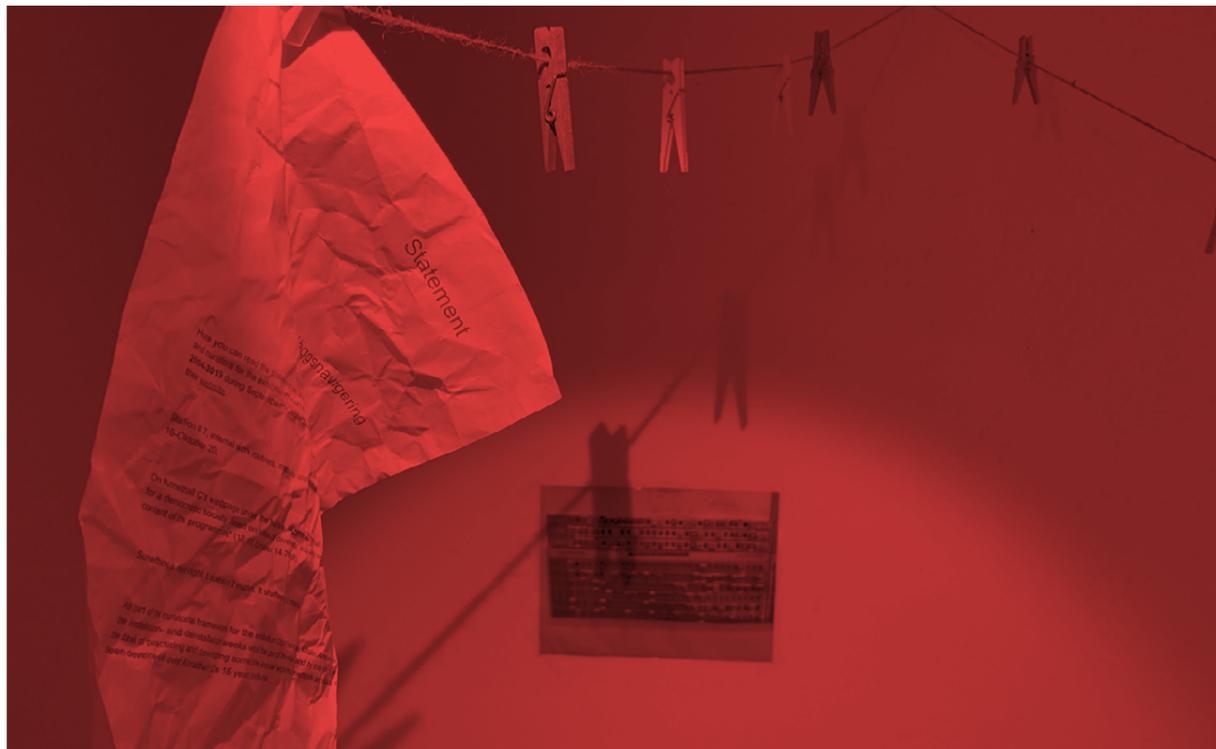
Therefore, our notion of collective resistance requires people who can push forward social needs over personal interests, who are involved and committed with a collective idea of changing for the better, for the ‘good living’ of our future generations; people who understand that their personal well being depends on the prosperity of the community.

Resistance is closely connected to the bodily experience and biopolitics; protests gain new material form in the gathering of bodies. The march, the protest, mobilisation, made us think that things can be done differently when our point of departure is within a collective union. Resistance, seen as a collective action, seeks to overturn established neoliberal policies, which are normally based on a number of underlying assumptions, reproducing the colonial boundaries and logics of domination and marginalisation.

Resisting dominant hegemonies and power structures requires a shift in our point of departure, from the vertical to the horizontal line, and this can be done through the political action of social movements.

– Rodrigo Albornoz, Nefeli Makrynika, Meryem Saadi,
Molly Sjögren

Konsthall C Stockholm



Beyond the Gallery Walls. Learning from neighbourhood activism in Hökarängen

Rodrigo Albornoz, Nefeli Makrynikola, Meryem Saadi,
Molly Sjögren

Konsthall C is an art space located in a former community laundry in Hökarängen, south of Stockholm. When it opened in 2004, it was presented as a “public work of art” and a “project of urban renewal”. The main objective is to “work for a democratic society based on values of diversity, equality and solidarity both in its organisation and in the content of its programmes”. The Konsthall has always been closely connected to the local community, mainly through its links to the City Council (‘Stadsdelrådet’), which has been working for the physical and social improvement of the area since 2002. The City Council is a co-operative volunteer initiative which represents local organisations and institutions. Konsthall C has changed throughout the sixteen years of its existence, and so has Hökarängen. The area has seen many transformations, going from being a peripheral run-down area into a place of accelerating gentrification and densification. During these

processes, Konsthall C has worked in different ways to uphold its connection to the neighbourhood.

Most recently, in the fall of 2019, Konsthall C received critique from the artistic community, bringing before them their own internal issues of race and gender politics. The critique put the institution’s own ideals and objectives into question, and challenged Konsthall C into self-reflection and a rethinking of its role as an artwork, institution and a public space in the community. New decolonial ways of thinking and existing needed to be developed, ones that sought to “deliberate on the identity (responsibility and purpose) of Konsthall C, to explore new futures for a cultural institution which stands at the disjuncture of communal and private”. Taking into account the institution’s structure, employment, archives, economy and relationships, this process was initiated together with the former researcher-in-residence Mansi Kashatria. One example of this is found in how Konsthall C has re-evaluated their process of electing and forming the board. This is in a way a continuation of the decolonial artistic programme of 2017, developed by artistic director of the time, Corina Orea.

Collective action and resistance is deeply rooted in Hökarängen, manifested for example in the many newspaper articles and other artefacts in the Hökarängen archive, deposited at Konsthall C. In the archive, you can read about the citizens of the area protesting against the closing of Örby Library, against rent increases and pollution from toxic waste from the nearby power plant, as well as the mobilisation of citizens to clean up the lake Magelungen. In the last couple of years, the resistance of the community has been focused mainly on the rapid gentrification and privatisation of housing areas, and the commercialisation of public space. How can we understand this widespread commitment to social issues by the citizens of Hökarängen, in relation to other acts of collective resistance in Swedish history?

These recent neighbourhood protests in Hökarängen made us think about the challenges and difficulties inherent to the process of doing decoloniality on site. Researching and analysing the recent socio-political movement found in the Hökarängen archive at Konsthall C, our further engagement aims to explore local resistance against privatisation and gentrification. Through our contact with Konsthall C, it became clear that the space extended beyond its physical limits to include the local community. Over the years, they have hosted different types of artistic programmes dealing with the role of the citizens and the living situation in Hökarängen, for example Bomassan, in 2018 (a one-year public research exercise that explored questions around city planning, local democracy, social art practices), and annual art projects that include all 6-year-olds in Farsta.

By looking at Konsthall C and the acts of collective resistance found in the Hökarängen

archive, and investigating how to take collective action in the neighbourhood, we seek to understand the relationship that exists between Konsthall C and the community, using the playground of Fagerlidsparken as a methodological bridge for our work. The playground, which lies next to Konsthall C, has for more than sixty years been visited by parents and kids from all over Hökarängen. It was also, until five years ago, the site of a pre-school, hosted in the wooden cabins surrounding the playground. After a decision by Farsta municipality to demolish the buildings, the city council and the local community decided to take action and save the playground by taking it under their care. We consider the playground to be an extension of the art gallery and a public site of collective resistance. This collective urgency of caring and supporting a public place, as well as its potential relation to Konsthall C, made us acknowledge Fagerlidsparken as a key site of knowledge production.

{ multipolarity }

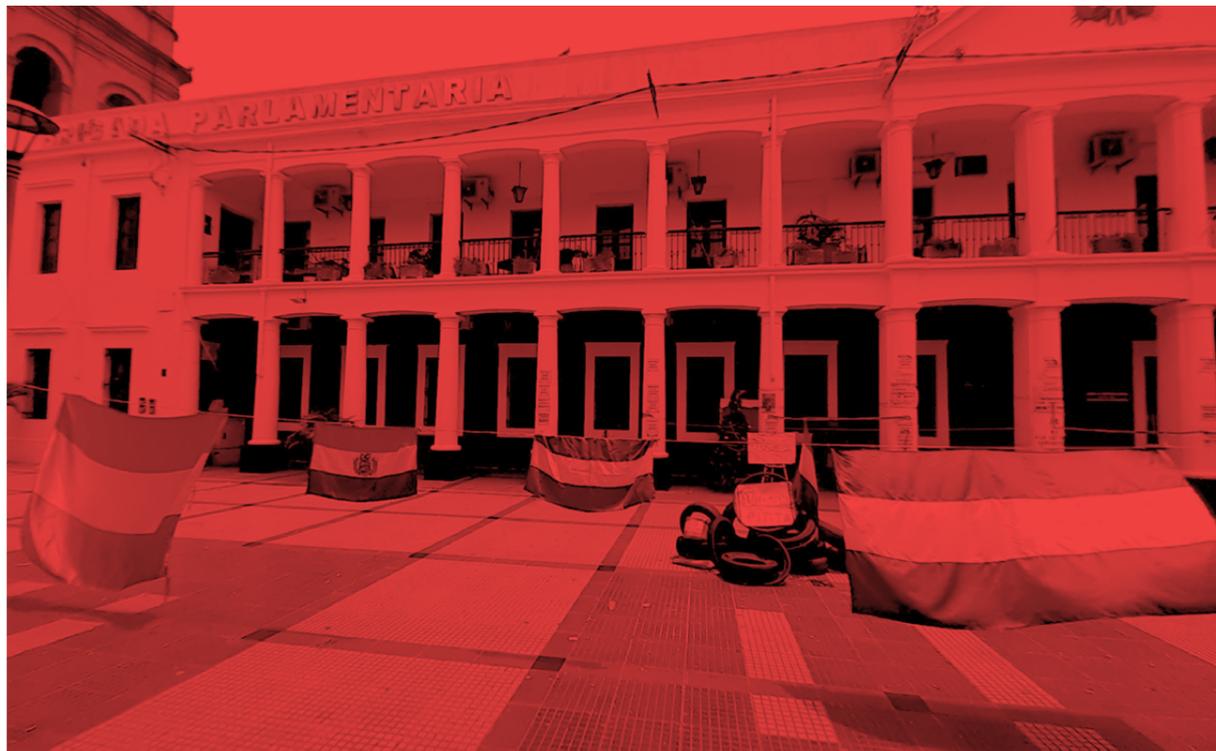
During recent decades, terms meaning ‘living well’ or in Quechua: ‘*sumaq kawsay*’ have become the conceptual centrepieces of ascendant Indigenous social movements, and have encouraged a Latin American polycentric perspective as an alternative way of thinking and doing, in contrast with the Western duality of ‘centre/margin’, ‘developed/un-developed’, and so on. The regeneration of *sumaq kawsay* as a new geopolitical, cultural, polycentric and multipolar world is examined through the decolonial practices of Indigenous Andean community-based people, especially farmers.

Decolonial thinking and ways of doing in Indigenous communities, seen here as dominant criteria for the methodology, production, structure and transfer of knowledge, have been overshadowed by the extension and limits imposed by Colonialism. Coloniality at large – *the current national and global neoliberal economics and policies, democracy, and the unchanged nature of the nation/state* – has curtailed but not eliminated the breadth and depth of autonomous Indigenous work in contemporary Latin America. The Coloniality of Power – *social stratification* – and the Coloniality of Knowledge – *social sciences* – together with Western Globalisation and its underlying Capitalism, have contributed to eroding the balanced Indigenous knowledge systems based in the Andes. However, they have not destroyed them entirely. Various local communities, currently based in different areas of South America, are recovering this ancient Indigenous knowledge, its languages and traditions, and its ways of ‘*living well*’, as an alternative mode to Western civilisation.

The nascence of a multipolar world is rooted in and emerges from the local, albeit from diverse place-based cultures. The wide spread of precolonial Indigenous cultures across regions and continents has made, past and present, their local place a ‘Glocal’ one, in the globalisation of the local. From an Indigenous Andean perspective of cultural affirmation, this new polycentric world is far from anthropocentric and bipolar, but rather an ‘eco-community-centred’ and ‘pluri-local’ scenario that encompasses a nurturing, respectful, and reciprocal relationship between people and local land. The understanding of nature as a social being, and the world as a multipolar place, can help us to adopt a different way of thinking, living and doing.

– Rodrigo Nicolas Albornoz

The Plaza 24 September Santa Cruz de la Sierra



Bolivia, first State of multiple localities

Rodrigo Nicolas Albornoz

Like many other cities of the South American continent, Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia was built in the order of the Spanish Colonial style, generated by a grid of blocks with the starting point at the Plaza 24 September. This site, right in the centre of the city, concentrates a collection of unique buildings of great heritage and colonial value. Such institutions physically represent the *Colonial Matrix of Power*: The Metropolitan Cathedral of Santa Cruz, the Colonial Cabildo Government building, the Parliamentary Brigade, the Social Club 24 September, and the iconic Palace Theatre, today converted into an administrative building for the Municipal Autonomous Government. The Plaza has also been the site of protests and manifestations by Indigenous people in Bolivia since the 1990s, as well as the recent confrontations against Evo Morales' re-election in November of 2019. The latter pressure on Morales' mandate -sparked by a Right Liberal Party supported by OAS and the EU- culminated in the boycott of Evo Morales' elections for the 4th presidency of the former leader of Bolivia, concluding with the assassinations of

many Indigenous people by the Military forces. Thinking about the challenges and difficulties inherent to the process of *decoloniality* implemented for the last 21 years of Evo Morales' and Alvaro Garcia Linera's leadership, the cause of the Indigenous people of Bolivia had gathered so much support among many sectors of society all over the country, as well as criticism from the professional workers and Western European minded population. Nonetheless, the government of the time could no longer ignore the demands put forward by the Indigenous peoples. Presenting the Indigenous movements as a political and social force, the lead of Evo Morales Ayma to the presidency pushed forward the adoption of a new Constitution where the Indigenous communities could finally regain their rights, their territories, and their dignity. On the other hand, the change of the Constitution was also in favour of the re-election of Morales, and was used as an instrument of opposition by the Right Liberal party against the 4th mandate of the President. Under the leadership of Morales-Linera, Bolivia declared itself as a first 'Pluri-national State;' a state of many nations, cultures and languages; a state of multiple localities or even 'Glocal Communities'.

The mandate of Morales-Linera, for the first time in the South American History, recognises the Indigenous ways of doing politics and justice, as well as the injustices committed to the Indigenous peoples, for example, by recognising their historical rights over their territories. Engaging with the challenges of these native communities, and the discussion on *coloniality* and *modernity* taken from the theories of Walter Mignolo and Anibal Quijano, the site explores new ways of thinking and becoming that emerge out of the experience of doing *decoloniality* on site, through government action and social movements.

How and why does *coloniality* reproduce and perpetuate itself so easily in our thinking, our practices, as well as in our politics and institutions? How can we challenge subjectivity by looking at the colonial structures of power through a 'delinking' from the notion of *modernity*? Through the analysis of concepts developed by the literature associated with the *decolonial turn*, and how *modernity* and *coloniality* are related -the first as a consequence of the second- this site shows us the implications and confrontations between contemporary thinking and doing in a *decolonial way* against established Western Neoliberal politics within the colonial countries of South America.

{ filoxenia }

Filoxenia is the Greek word for hospitality: a compound word from the words *filo*, which means love, and *xenos*, meaning stranger. It describes the social contract between the host (the person who is performing the act) and the guest (the person to whom the act is extended) and contains a set of rules and expectations that change based on cultural, historical and geographical locations. There are cultures where the act of filoxenia is considered to be a moral obligation and is sacred. Homer's *Odyssey*, for example, includes incidences of hospitality and its rules.

Fast forwarding some thousands of years, marketing strategies for the tourism industry have turned hospitality into a commercial product, misappropriating the term and using it to describe touristic infrastructure and services provided upon payment. In that paradigm of hospitality, the workers for the industry became the hosts and the customers became the guests, in order to make the service more attractive to the tourist.

Filoxenia stands against the exploitation of the term by the tourism industry and the consequent mistreatment of its workers. Filoxenia doesn't have to be at the level of 'unconditional hospitality' according to Derrida's definition, but it does need to question the idea of hospitality formed by the colonial matrix of power, and to expand our understanding of the roles of the guest and the host. The definition of the guest is particularly critical in radicalising the idea of hospitality, depending on the meaning that we give to the word. To be considered as a potential guest is a right that is extended to very few, depending on economic, ethnic, racial and social background. In filoxenia, that right is extended to everybody: the guest is the stranger, the foreigner, the other, the person that any of us could become at some point in time.

The Breakfast Room Stockholm



Contemplating rituals of non-places

Nefeli Makrynika

Place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten. But non-places are the real measure of our time; one that could be quantified – with the aid of a few conversions between area, volume and distance – by totaling all the air, rail and motorway routes, the mobile cabins called ‘means of transport’ (aircraft, trains and road vehicles), the airports and railway stations, hotel chains, leisure parks, large retail outlets, and finally the complex skein of cable and wireless networks that mobilise extraterrestrial space for the purposes of a communication so peculiar that it often puts the individual in contact only with another image of himself.

– Marc Auge, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, 1995

The Hilton hotel of Stockholm is situated by Slussen, one of the most central locations of the city, with public transport connections to almost everywhere, and a view over Gamla Stan, Norrmalm and Kungsholmen. It was originally owned by the Scandic hotel chain and was bought by Hilton in 2002.

Breakfast is an everyday ritual, and one of the most important. Therefore hotels, especially those which are part of big chains, provide a large variety of breakfast items to their customers. Breakfast usually takes place at the main dining hall, a large space with a lot of tables. This is attached to the kitchen area, which constantly supplies the buffet with food. At the Hilton Stockholm Slussen, the food is located in the center of a big hall with expansive glass windows looking out over the city and its infrastructure, including the metro lines and multiple roads. The customers enter the dining area where they are greeted by the manager, who suggests a table for them to sit. The servers are tasked with serving coffee and tea, and the customers have to take their own food from the buffet. Then the servers are responsible for taking the empty plates and resetting the table for the next guest. During breakfast, the tables with a great view are in high demand, which means that they must be set multiple times. The buffet is constantly being refilled, and coffee or teacups are never empty. The breakfast room offers a totally different experience depending on whether you are a ‘guest’ or a server. For the first group, it is the performance of an everyday ritual, a relaxed beginning to the day; for the second group, it is a working environment that is stressful, fast paced and physically demanding. Most of the time, the first group is unaware of the second, which only becomes visible when it is needed.

Big hotels, as Marc Auge suggests, are non-places; they are extraterrestrial structures at the same time as being part of the real measure of our world. In my opinion, hotels could be viewed and examined as a spatial expression of the colonial matrix of power. The clear division of space into two areas; the flow of goods and services from one space to another; the scripted performances as well as the spontaneous shared experiences: all these could serve as reference points to the real distribution of power and goods in the world. Even the different ethnicities – and the way the roles are distributed among them – are a direct depiction of colonial history.

The hotel, by being a symbol of the colonial matrix of power, has also created its own vocabulary where meanings and concepts are being appropriated. The idea of hospitality, of the guest and the host, are distorted and take different meanings. For example, hospitality becomes a paid service that is provided by workers who are called hosts, to customers who are being addressed as guests. Big chain hotels provide an environment that feels familiar by including design and service elements that have international, homogenised attributes, at the

same time as trying to provide a unique experience for their customers in order to gain their recurring preference. It is a world that tries to elevate everyday rituals into something memorable, by abiding with colonial ideals of the modern world pertaining to travel, tourism and service.

As Augé describes: “A paradox of non-place: a foreigner lost. In a country he does not know [a ‘passing stranger’] can feel at home there only in the anonymity of motorways, service stations, big stores or hotel chains” (Augé M., 1995). Could a hotel be considered as a potential place of shared knowledge? It is a place of shared experiences and cultural exchanges through rituals such as breakfast. It is a complicated space where experiences differ depending on the role of the person: a workplace for some, a refuge/shelter for others. A hotel is a place where shared knowledge is not self-evident, hidden behind a colonial mentality. This in my opinion is worth exploring, with the question: how could a structure like the big hotel be delinked, reimagined and finally redesigned as a place of *filoxenia* ?

{ Al Hogra (الحكرة) }

Widely used in North-African societies, this word comes originally from the Arabic noun “Ihtiqaar” (إحتقار), meaning contempt.

In the Maghrebi dialects spoken in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, the term expresses different feelings ranging from injustice, indignation, resentment, humiliation to oppression. It was originally used in relation to daily life situations, before becoming a more political term that describes a continuing state of contempt and humiliation for the whole society. In this context of power structures, “Al Mahgor” is the person or the entity experiencing “Al Hogra,” and “Al Hagar” refers to the person or the entity that is inflicting it.

“Al Hogra” was used for the first time as a politically charged word in Algeria, during the riots of 1988. The term made a strong “comeback” in North Africa during the so-called “Arab Spring” in 2011. First in Tunisia, when public opinion used it to describe the situation of Mohammed Bouazizi, the street vendor who set himself on fire in 2010 after being slapped in the face and spat on by a female municipal officer. During the demonstrations that took place before and after his death, the concept was used in many chants. Over the following months, “Al Hogra” was cited as the main reason behind the uprisings of the February 20 Movement in Morocco, as well as the Rif Hirak Movement, which has been denouncing the economic and social injustices in the north of the country since 2016. More recently, it has been at the heart of the peaceful protests that have been taking place in Algeria since February 2019. In all of these examples, “Al Hagar” is seen as being the state, or the system of power that controls and dominates Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian citizens.

“Al Hogra” is a key-concept to understand the reasons behind the current tense social and political climate in North Africa.

Sidi Moumen Casablanca



Moving beyond Stigma: The slow healing process of a community

Meryem Saadi

On a warm and dusty Spring day of May 2010, I visited Sidi Moumen for the first time in my life. Like most Moroccans, I had become aware of the existence of this slum in the periphery of Casablanca in 2003, after the terrorists' attacks that took place in the city, claiming 33 lives and injuring around one hundred people. The twelve young suicide bombers who carried out simultaneous attacks that night were all from Sidi Moumen. In the following days, the whole country realised with horror that the district had become a site of production for radical Islam (Salafism in this particular case), spread through speeches shared in Mosques, in-house meetings, and informal circulation of books, audio and video tapes coming mainly from Saudi Arabia.

Seven years after the terrorist attacks, I was going to Sidi Moumen as a journalist, to write an article about local organisations whose mission was to prevent the district's youth from turning to radical Islam. I had a meeting with Larbi, a local

activist who was going to introduce me to several organisations. I was very curious to learn more about this area of 47 km² and its 300,000 inhabitants. But he was a bit late, and I felt awkward standing alone in one of the main streets of this area. Was I in the right place? It did not look at all as I had expected. I still had in mind the images that were shown in the media in 2003: those of a scary slum, without any paved roads or proper buildings. When Larbi arrived and we started talking, I understood the reasons for my confusion. A year after the terrorists' attacks, the State introduced an ambitious national program called "Ville sans Bidonvilles" (Cities without Slums). Almost overnight, several important social housing units were built in the area, and some parts of the slums erased. I was glad to hear that, but my relief did not last long. After walking for almost ten minutes down the main road, there I was, in the middle of the slum that all the country considered to be a "terrorist's safe haven." It had not disappeared; it was just smaller than in 2003, and hidden between high social housing buildings. All I could see was an immense ocean of chaotic blocks composed of bricks, corrugated iron, and tin roofs; a strange mix between what could have been a city after a natural disaster and a conflict zone.

While we walked through tiny muddy alleys, we met many kids and teenagers who were randomly hanging out, playing cards or football. It was a very odd scene, since it was a weekday morning. We also crossed paths with a lot of young men, gathering in corners and smoking cigarettes or hashish. Anticipating my questions, Larbi said: "There are not enough schools for all the kids here, so most of them are illiterate. And when they grow up, it is hard for them to find jobs. There are no opportunities in the area, and outside of it everyone thinks that a young man from Sidi Moumen is a potential suicide bomber. Who would hire one?" He stopped for a while and continued: "It's really ironic. The actual terrorists became radicalised because they were poor, uneducated and marginalised by the rest of society. What they did was a sort of cry of help, to show the world that they mattered. But seven years later, what they did is making it even worse for those who are born here."

We kept on walking silently until we arrived at the office of the first local organisation that we were going to meet that day. It has been nine years since I visited Sidi Moumen. And honestly, I don't remember much of the long conversations I had with the local members of the organisations except this word, "Al Hogra," which came up numerous times; almost with every person I talked to, no matter their gender, age or occupation. Widely used in North-African societies, this one word expresses at the same time injustice, indignation, resentment, and oppression. Local activists in Sidi Moumen used this term to explain why the twelve suicide bombers were led to do what they did, and what the local youth was still experiencing. They were all on the same page on one point: the only way to fight the spread of radical Islam is to create spaces where "Al Hogra" doesn't exist.

Practically, that meant to provide the community with cultural, educational and sport activities that would enable the production of a local knowledge that could “counter” the spread of radical Islam and help the community to heal. Nowadays, several local organisations (Idmaj, Oum El Ghait, les Etoiles de Sidi Moumen ...) are trying to fill in the void by offering different workshops and activities to the youth for a symbolic fee. But is the (impressive) work of these local organisations enough to halt the spread of radical Islamist knowledge in Sidi Moumen and stop the stigmatisation surrounding its residents? I asked myself this question when I met Larbi 10 years ago, and I find myself still wondering today. It seems that it is time for me to go back there again.

{ heterotopian view }

Foucault states that space is the relation among sites, and that sites can be analysed through their relations. There are, however, sites that do not allow themselves to be defined by relation:

“I am interested in certain ones that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect. These spaces, as it were, which are linked with all the others, which however contradict all the other sites, are of two main types.” One type is utopia and the other is heterotopia, which in contrast to the former is comprised of existing places. Foucault’s examples of heterotopia include cemeteries, theatres and cinemas, gardens and prisons. The mirror is an example of something that is both a utopia, an immaterial representation of reality, while it is still a material object showing an existing world, and therefore a kind of heterotopia.

Associated with Foucault’s heterotopia is, for example, the juxtaposition in a single space of several spaces that are in themselves contradictory. This can be exemplified by the idealised miniature versions of different landscapes found in a garden, or the relation between the guards’ and the inmates’ spaces in a prison, which are often spatially overlapping but defined by power relations. The heterotopia is generally not a publicly accessible space. In order to gain access, the visitor to a heterotopia either has to undergo certain rites, like security at the airport, purification, etc., or access is restricted and compulsory, as in the prison. It is also something that is differing in a way that destabilises the surroundings, unsettling the ordinary. Foucault advocates the co-existence of many heterotopias in society, which would be a way to escape authoritarianism and repression.

In the article “Keys to heterotopia,” Gunnar Sandin uses the concept as a model, or metaphor, to analyse two landfills. The heterotopia is a way of analysing what a place reflects rather than what it consists of, according to Sandin (in commenting on the vast range of examples).

That allows a site (that looks like and is used like any other place) to be discussed theoretically, culturally and symbolically. The concept of the heterotopia as something differing from an un-specified norm has been criticised by many critical theorists, including Edward Said and Anne McLeod. The concept of heterotopia has also been used and developed further by geographers, artists and architects.

Heterotopia and Helgeandsholmen

Like the landfills of Sandin’s article (although not to the same extent), the artificial island of my example could also be seen as a constructed and conflicted piece of landscape that points to the unnaturalness of the whole surrounding landscape. But can this state of the unnatural be extended to include ideological frameworks as well? Could seeing the artificial landscape portraying historical events and shifting urban scales also be a way of pointing out history and urbanity as unnatural?

Many have argued that the large scale exhibitions popular in the 19th century are closely linked to, and even a product of, the imperialist and colonial power structures of their time. In view of these new perspectives on the world exhibitions, it is interesting to review what the Swedish Museum of History chooses to focus on in their archeological dig. What stories are being told of the exhibition and the place it inhabited? What role do the architecture of the exhibition and the landscape have in that narrative?

Heterotopia allows for the analysis of what a place reflects, Sandin states, and therefore exposing the underlying ideologies and traits. Treating the report of the dig as an aspect of the island, a form of the heterotopia – what kind of ideologies and structures can be uncovered?

Helgeandsholmen Stockholm



Understanding landscape through artificiality

Molly Sjögren

A landscape is not something natural or pre-existing, but rather something that is produced to reflect certain beholders, to produce certain values. There are instances when this is made more obvious, and the natural state of landscape is negotiated and questioned. Twice has an artificial island by Djurgården in Stockholm been the object of different activities, that can be interpreted as specifically pointing out this state of agency, as well as the quality of artificiality itself.

In 2008, the Museum of History in Stockholm initiated an archeological dig of the peninsula Framnäs Udde, and the adjacent small artificial island, at Djurgården in Stockholm. The dig lasted for 2 weeks and during that time 4 850 visitors came to the site. During the last week, 400 of the visitors participated in the dig, which could also be followed on a screen from the entrance hall of the museum. The archeological dig is thus framed as a meeting place, in which the museum wants to engage the public with archeology.

The island was originally constructed for the 1897 Stockholm exhibition – *The general art and industrial exhibition* – arranged in celebration of King Oscar II's 25-year anniversary as ruler. The exhibition included an industrial hall, art shows, restaurants and bars, and some 90 temporary pavilions, with altogether 3 722 participating parties from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Russia. The head architect was Ferdinand Boberg, who also designed the industrial hall, the art gallery and the main exhibition hall along with Fredrik Lilljekvist. During the 1897 exhibition, the island replicated Helgeandsholmen in the scenery of "Little Stockholm," which was a half-scale representation of medieval Stockholm, designed by Lilljekvist (picture above). The miniature town hosted several attractions, such as Sweden's first cinema and demonstrations of the recently developed x-ray machine. It was a thoroughly constructed life-like scenography that also hosted re-enactments during the exhibition, displaying life in the medieval city.

The Stockholm Exhibition of 1897 was seen by 1,5 million people, which was almost a third of the whole population of Sweden. That alone makes the content of the exhibition important to study, since it probably had a major impact on the people's view of the world, the neighbouring countries, and indeed themselves.

After the 1897 exhibition, the site of Djurgården has changed. The temporary exhibition buildings were demolished and only a few exist today, although some of them have been moved to other locations. Today Djurgården is primarily a place for leisure and culture: home to several museums (both from before and after 1897), an amusement park, restaurants, parks and a few domestic houses. To analyse this place from a critical perspective would not be a difficult task. The traces of power relations, discrimination, imperialism and nationalism are many, even at a quick glance. And in the midst of this Sunday outing paradise is the artificial island, which is not even included in most maps. Today, the island has a slightly different shape than in 1897. It was re-modeled in order to give place to an entrance to Skansen, which was situated there during early 20th century. The island of Djurgården is historically the hunting ground of the King, but started being developed for leisure activities, housing for prominent citizens and other uses in the late 18th century.

The 1897 exhibition is one important aspect in the investigation of this tiny island, hidden in plain sight. The other activity upon which I have chosen to focus is the archeological dig, not just because it explicitly connects to the exhibition and activates the history of the island, but also because public archeological digs in city centres in Sweden is rare. To render an image of the island, I will use the concept of the heterotopia, developed by Michel Foucault in the lecture "Des espaces autres" in 1967 (published in *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* 1984).



Radical Care Workshop,
Tensta, October 2019

Decolonizing Architecture

Course participants

Rodrigo Nicolas Albornoz is a Visual Artist, Media Artist and Social Art Researcher based in Sweden, with a BFA from Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and an MFA from Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts & Design in Stockholm, Sweden. The main interest of his work involves questions about the life of marginal societies, indigenous communities, backyard cultures or peripheries to Western European culture. Based on his personal experience of displacement from South America to Europe, he critically engages those realities as a ‘social emergency’ for which decolonial options are needed. Currently working with the problematics of informal labour in colonial countries, his previous works include: *Deambulando* (2020) Mobile sculptures for public space, award for the XXI International Biennial of Santa Cruz, Bolivia; and *Purification Lab* (2019) multimedia art installation, referring to social injustices in the illegal use of forced labour in narcotics production.

Milagros Bedoya is an artist and architect based in Stockholm. Her work addresses the circumstances that shape our public life, common history and built environment, and their impact on personal experiences and narratives. She has explored these subjects through performance, installation, drawing, and pedagogical practices. She has presented her work in Peru, UK, Spain and Sweden.

Olivia Berkowicz is a curator and writer based in Stockholm. She works at the intersection of critical visuality studies and contemporary art theory, manifesting in work exploring autonomous social forms of organisation and radical therapy. Since 2017, she has been part of the multi-disciplinary collective *resina*. Currently, she is collaborating with Marianna Feher on the research project *Tentative Transmits: Towards a Formerization of the East through the Radio as G/Host* (2020–2022), supported by the artistic research and development funding of the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. In 2020–2021, she will hold a fellowship at Akademie Schloss Solitude.

Didem Yıldırım Boström is a researcher and exhibition producer from Ankara, Turkey. She lives in Stockholm, where she works at the contemporary art institution Tensta konsthall. With a background in different artistic fields, she is fascinated by the connection, interplay and possible interface between literature, theatre, performance and visual arts. Didem’s current artistic research focuses on the heritage, memory, and ruins of the medieval Armenian city of Ani located in Eastern Turkey, which has recently become a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Marco Cechet is a post-conceptual artist currently based between Bologna and Stockholm. His work takes critical stances and plays with the idea of the mortality of an artwork confronted with the power of a transitory appearance. He has participated at “Manifesta 11” (2016) and “Smuggling Anthologies” (2013–2015).

Hannah Clarkson is a British artist based in Sweden, with a BFA in Fine Art from the Ruskin School of Art, Oxford and an MFA in Fine Art Craft from Konstfack, Stockholm. She has worked and exhibited internationally, including on a variety of site-specific projects relating to particular stories and/or places. She works with both sculpture and spoken word performance, with an interest in narrativity and materiality as they relate to ideas of shelter. She is currently working on a practice-based research project investigating the synonym as a means to understand human needs.

Cherine Hussein is a researcher currently based at Lund University. She completed her PhD in International Relations at the University of Sussex. Her work focuses on the politics of social transformation in the Arab World, with a particular interest in the writings of Antonio Gramsci and Edward Said, as well as the role of organic intellectuals in instigating social change. Previously, she has held postdoctoral research positions at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs in Stockholm, and at the Council for British Research in the Levant’s Kenyon Institute in Jerusalem – where she was also the institute’s Deputy Director. Her publications include, *The Re-Emergence of the Single State Solution in Palestine/Israel: Countering an Illusion* (London, Routledge: March 2015), and ‘The Single State Alternative in Palestine/Israel’, in a special issue of *Conflict, Security and Development* which she co-edited with Mandy Turner. Currently, she is working on projects linked to exploring traveling theories; theorising human agency and building communities of resistance; and highlighting emerging counter-hegemonic cultural production in the Arab World.

Nefeli Makrynika is an architect and urbanist based in Stockholm and Athens. Currently an immigrant, she is investigating alternative options of survival as an unemployed architect, that include art and the decolonial way of thinking. As a former activist, and having worked as an architect and as a server, she is always contemplating her role in society. Previous works include the design of housing and cultural spaces.

Konstantina Pappa is an architect based in Stockholm, Sweden. Her research seeks to explore architectural representation and spatial organisation as political and social manifestations. She is currently working on several projects related to processes of knowledge production, through the Decolonizing Architecture programme at RIA, as well as the various implications of digital media and algorithms in architecture and the built environment, as a Master's student at Södertörn University.

Pauli Rikaniemi is a Copenhagen-based architect from Finland. Most recently he has worked within architecture and urban planning in Helsinki at PES Architects and in Malmö at Kamikaze Arkitekter. He organised the European Architecture Students Assembly, EASA, in Denmark in 2017, and led multiple workshops within the framework of the assembly. He has an interest in collective working processes and queer practices within architecture. At the moment Pauli is enrolled in the Decolonizing Architecture post-master program at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm.

Mark Romei is a trained architect, with a particular interest in how the practice of architecture can meaningfully contribute to current social/political questions. He was born, and has lived for his whole life, as a settler on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri People, in the south east of the continent now known as Australia. Graduating from Monash University in 2018, his current research examines the use of architectural methodologies to research and communicate the militarised spatial histories of settler colonialism, and to trace the continuum of these structures into the contemporary context.

Meryem Saadi is a cultural activist, journalist and curator from Morocco, currently based in Stockholm. Her works explore the intersections that exist between contemporary art, architecture, social conflicts and political instability. Before relocating to Sweden in 2017 to pursue a Master's in Art Curating at Stockholm University, she worked at the National Foundation of Moroccan Museums (Fondation Nationale des Musées du Maroc), and collaborated with the Moroccan weekly magazine *TelQuel*.

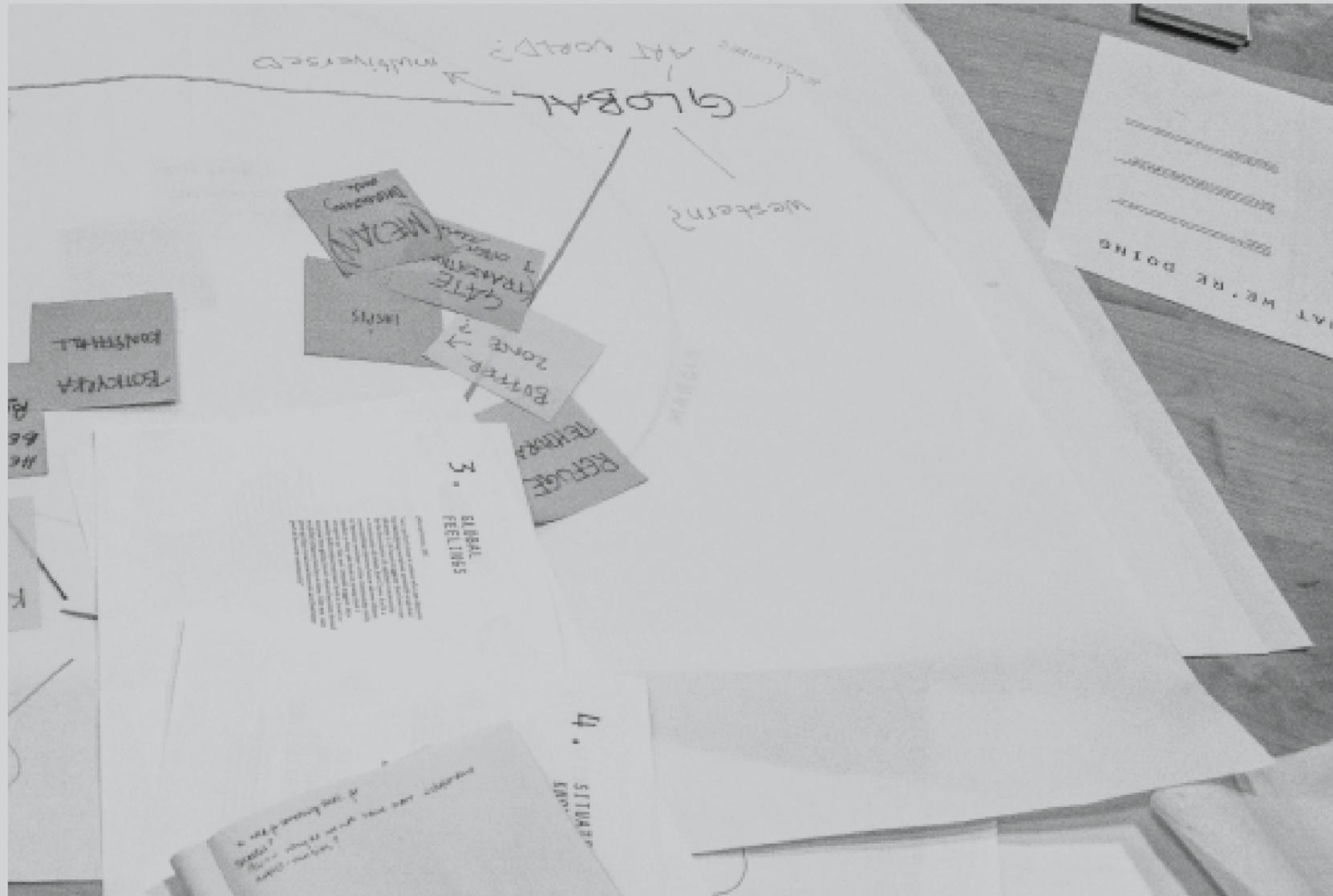
Molly Sjögren is an art historian and architect, whose main research is centered around the display and communication of architecture in exhibition spaces, as well as the theory and practice of public art. Working with municipalities and other actors, she helps develop and implement art policies and art programs for public spaces all over Sweden. She is also the editor of the podcast *Plats för konst*, that discusses questions of art and architecture in public space.

Ying Sun is an architect based in Stockholm. Her previous experience has been stretched across both artistic research and economically driven architectural practice in different cultural contexts. Looking into the variation in possible concepts of living has always been her ultimate motivation for architectural practices. Ying is currently working on several projects under the subject of societal knowledge production and its methodologies.

Matilda Tucker is a writer, artist, and researcher based in Stockholm and Berlin. She is interested in human rights; spaces of conflict and divided cities; language; and the relationship between art and politics. She recently completed an M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies in Jerusalem, where she wrote a thesis about loss, exile, and the political and performative aspects of mourning and burial in contemporary Arab theatrical adaptations of ancient Greek Classics. She is currently working on several projects, including research on encounters between Palestinian refugees and Jewish Kurdish migrants from Iraq in the village of Lifta, on the margins of West Jerusalem.

The **Decolonizing Architecture Advanced Course** is part of a five-year (2017-2022) sequence of courses that together form a platform for higher education and research on the topic of Decolonizing Architecture at the Royal Institute of Art. The course uses the term decolonization as a critical position and conceptual frame for an architectural practice engaged in social and political struggles. The courses are led by Alessandro Petti, professor in Architecture and Social Justice in collaboration with Marie-Louise Richards, lecturer in Architecture and enriched by the contribution of invited guests.

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The **Royal Institute of Art (RIA)** in Stockholm is a leading art institution of higher education located in Stockholm with a long artistic tradition dating back to the beginning of the 18th century. The education offers both undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Fine Arts and postgraduate studies in Architecture. RIA also run an active international program with lectures, exhibitions and publications.

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*Radical Care Workshop,
Ivarsudde Vätö, October 2019*

WHAT DOES IT MEAN "TO DECOLONIZE"?

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