Memories of a city

Edited by Jonathan Westin
and Ingrid Martins Holmberg

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Curating the city series

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ON THE HORIZON THE GREY SILHOUTTES OF NAVY SHIPS ON PATROL... (LIKE PREDATORS... WAITING)

MEN SWIMMING LOOK MOUNTAINS IN SEA. WHEN LOOK OVER SHOULDER ROCKY ONE SEES SNOW CAPPED THIS IS THE COAST LINE

CHILDREN BIKES... COUPLES ON LITTLE BIKES

CORNICHE (PROMENADE ALONG SEA)

MONUMENT (IN STONE) FOR NASSER (AND OLD ARAB LEAGUE)

HARD ROCK CAFE GUITAR ON (ROAD BUILDING BLOCK)

ETHNIC CHIC   NICE (ROOF)   COAT WITH FUR
RESTAURANT WITH SEA VIEW
SELEY SPACE CENTRE   CREPE

CAFFE RENAULT   WALLS RENAULT

1000 KILO BOMB

THIS IS THE (CRATER IN THE GROUND. IT IS NOT THERE ANYMORE BUT ONE CAN STILL SEE IT ON GOOGLE MAPS

THIS IS THE ST. GEORGE WERE THE BEAU MOVIE OF YESTERDAY USED TO COME JEAN PAUL BELMONDO AND BRIGITTE BARDOT

THIS SIGN USE TO HANG (AS A BILLBOARD) ON THE SIDE OF THE ST. GEORGE HOTEL (THE OWNER REFUSED TO SELL TO HARRIRI WHO OWNED)

STOP SHUKRI   STOP SOLIDERE

SOFITEL PALM BEACH HOTEL NEW

BUT THE FRONT IS NEW THIS AREA IS DEFACED BECAUSE OF THE RECENT ATTACK ON HARRIRI ON FEB. 14 2005 (ONE STILL FEELS THE SILENCE AFTER THE BLAST)

GIRL IN UNIFORM (MAID) TALKS WITH ANOTHER EMPLOYEE (LOVERS)

TWO MEN FROM THIS HOTEL SMOKE POT IN THE STREET. (THEY ASK OF ME FOR JOIN THEM LIKE ANIMALS

REGIS HOTEL SWEET BUILDING FROM THE 60'S

THIS IS A GHOST OF THE FORMER EXCELSIOR HOTEL

BUILDING WHICH WAS UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND IS NOW

THIS MONUMENT (FLAGS OF LEBANON IN A BUNDLE) ARE PLACED ON THE SPOT WHERE HARRIRI DIED

STATUE IN BRONZE OF RAFIQ HARRI (JUST A BIT BIGGER THAN REAL LIFE)

STAIRS

COLUMN OF ACHIEVEMENTS (AIRPORT AND SOLIDERE

LOOKS LIKE A CHEAP SWIMMINGPOOL LAS VEGAS STYLE

4 FEBRUARI 2009 THE WEATHER WAS IN BEIRUT WAS GOOD!

I PARKED   THIS IS THE RAFIK HARRIRI PLACE

ON TOP OF THIS BUILDING IS A ROOFTOP BAR.

TAXI CABS

CAR ON FIRE (A MERCEDES) COVERED IN WHITE PWDER! — NEWISH

HOLE IN WALL PEOPLE GET WATER FROM INSIDE.

SHOT TO PIECES

HIGH BUT ALSO MINIATURE SKYSCRAPER

THERE ARE SIGNS OF LIVING INSIDE... TOWELS ARE DRYING... PICTURES ON WALL

N SUITES TOURIST SHOP WITH OLD POSTCARDS

TUNNEL TOWARDS...

SIGN: BICYCLES FOR RENT

BARBED WIRE

GOLDEN ARCHES CIVILISATION AT LAST! SERB OUT

OLD BUILDING   IBN SINA STREET

BLOM BANY   LIBAN NET   HANK SECURITY   LATINO CAFE

ENTITY

A BOY WANT TO POLISH MY SHOES HE REALLY INSISTS! (ANOTHER MAN TELLS ME TO RUNNING BE CAREFUL FROM IN A FRIENDLY WAY

GOOD SANDWICH COFFEE PLACE

ARMENIAN THEY ALSO SERIE CARS

HOTEL   BUILDING (CAR WASH) WASH ME

ANOTHER ROAD BLOCK WITH ARMED MEN (JACKETS BULGE) YEAH GUNS

UNCLE DEEK COFFEE (VISITED BY CARS) PLACES

PLACES TO FIND YOUR CAR WITH STICKERS...

THIS LOOK LIKE PRISIM

SUCCES GYM (ALSO FOR MASSAGES)

SMALL INTERNET SHOP   OLD SOCIALIST MMM

THIS BUILDING LOOKS DEAD BUT THERE ARE WIRES RUNNING IN FROM THE ROOF!

OPEN FIELD   OLD RUIN

CLUB 70 (SHABBY) ARABIAN WORD... LA LICORNE

BUILDING OF NO INTEREST

BIKE SHOP

LEFT BEHIND BUILDING STILL GRACIOUS

MAN ON THE STREET SELS USED CLOTHES ASKS IF I CAN GET HIM A VISA FOR FRANCE!

SHUKRI GHANEM STR.

DRUG STORE   FREE

BARBER SHOP WITH OLD PICTURE OF BEIRUT IN WINDOW

HAMAD BAKERY   BREAD

VERY ROMAN TIL HOUSE OPEN BALCONIES AND BANANA TREES

NAJEM FURNISHED APTS

BUTCHER LAUNDRY BAKERY GROCERY

THE GULF TOWER BUT NOT IMPRESSIVE

15 IS THIS LIKE THE YMCA STUDENT(CIRCLE) MEN IN BLACK (SECURITY) LIVE HERE

24/24 PARKING

STORK NIGHTCLUB

ASHKAL ALWAN THE 4TH FLOOR ART OFFICE

RED BUILDING   MMB

ROAD BLICK (BECAUSE PHENICIA HOTEL) VERY SAFE! OFFICIAL PEOPLE STAY HERE IN HARDTYPES)

ROAD BLICKED

OLD MEN ON RUSTUM PASHA STR BENCH

PARKING SIGN. USED TO BE A BUILDING WITH KHOMEINI BANNER!

PICTURES ON SHOPS   TEENAGE STUFF

JUST FINISHED APT. BUILDING

SHOES LEFT BEHIND!

80'S APT BUILDING VERY SOLID AND CLOSED

SERVANT (PHILIPPINES TALKS FROM BALCONY TO OTHER SERVANT

EMPTY LOT WATER TANK

PARISIEN HOTEL (NEW)

YWCA SINCE 100 YEAR (CHRISTIAN)

SAS RADISSON IN THE LOBBY THEY SERVE GOOD COFFEE

MAN IN FRONT TELLS ME ABOUT HIS JOB (LOW PAY)

BALCONIES WITH OLD CURTAINS BLEU BLOWING OVER THEM (SAD)

NEW FLATIRONISH

BEAUTY PLACE GIRLS IN WHITE

CARPET SHOP BUILDING

HIGH FIELD   CAT SITS ON CAR

WALKWAY UNDER BUILDING

OLIVIA NICE   TREE

A PEACE SIGN (WOW!) PAINTED ON THIS WALL NOW PAINTED OVER

HOUSE SLUMHOUSE

ARABIA HOUSE

OVER THERE IS THE MOST FAMOUS HOLIDAY INN SOMEONE TOLD ME IT IS STILL HERE BECAUSE IT IS TO EXPENSIVE TO CLEAN IT UP SOMEONE ELSE SAID IT IS OWNED BY SOME KOEWEIT PRINCESS WHO SIMPLY FORGOT ABOUT IT.

HOTEL MOTEL HOLIDAY INN (SWAHILI GANG)   THIS IS THE HOLIDAY INN

THIS IS THE GEDENKNISKIRCHE OF BEIRUT (NOT AS IN BERLIN)

THIS IS SUCH A SHINY AND HAPPY NEW BUILDING NEXT TO THIS MONUMENT OF WAR

DEAD END   CONCRETE BLOCK

ECOLE SUPERIEURE DES AFFAIRES (ESA) (I DONT HAVE A SUGGESTION WHAT THEY TEACH HERE) SOMETHING GREAT!

KENNEDY (JACKY?) STREET

OLD GREY VW BUS (ONE SEES ONLY REALLY EXPENSIVE NEW CARS (S.U.V + 4WD) AND LONG FORGOTTEN VEHICLES LIKE THIS VOLKWAGEN BUS

BLOCK

SUITCASE WITH ROPE TO LIFT STUF

WATER TANKS   PALM TREES

OLDER WHITE BUILDING WITH WIDE VERANDAS AND COLUMNS.

PATCHWORK LIKE HOUSE   EMPTY LOT   BACH

THIS HOUSE FACES THE PALACE ACROSS THE STREET   FRONT

REMIND ME OF NAPELS SOUND AND SMELS

IMMIGRANT LIVE IN THIS CHEAP HOTELS BALCONIES ARE FULL WITH TRASH.

ANTIQUE SHOP ASKED HIM (I COME FOR DIRECTIONS) HE HELPED ME EXTENSIVELY

STAIRS   OLD HOUSE

SOLIDAIRE (CENTRE)

LIKE A THIN SLICE OF A FAT CAKE WITH CREAM

THIS IS A GREEN GARDEN LUSH LEAVES SCATTER THE GROUNDS..

JOUNBLAT PALACE KING OF DRUZE   VERY NICE PALACE

STEPS DERELICT HOUSE

THIS BUILDING WAS COVERED WIT POLITICAL POSTERS (NOW ITS PAINTED OVER AND LOOKS MUCH CLEANER)

Memories of a city
Introduction

In his work *De Zachte Atlas van Amsterdam* (2011), Jan Rothuizen lets us discover a city through drawings that can be read as diagrams, as hastily scribbled notes – shamelessly personal in their observations – and as a map that is not limited by measurable reality and is as perfect and faulty in the details as human memory. Guiding us through cities and places such as Bedford Avenue, Beirut (opposite side), Cairo, Guangzhou, a metro train wagon, and a refugee camp in northern Iraq with Syrian refugees, Rothuizen allows for the banal to be interwoven with serious commentary, in the process creating a whole that does not profess to be whole but rather utterly subjective: 'A pole *not* for dancing', 'this is the longest one site ride (31 minutes)', 'looks dead but there are wires running from the roof', 'building of no interest', 'barber shop with old picture of Beirut in window', 'man on the street sells used clothes asks if I can get him a visa for France', 'recent flowers at a monument (in stone) for Nasser and (Arab League)'. New York and Beirut blend together through the napkinesque drawings and jotted-down notes. We get to participate in an inscription of memory.

As Michael Guggenheim writes, memory is the capacity that differentiates between those objects and persons that simply exist in time and those that recreate or re-enact former states, meaning that memory is an act of re-enactment in which the past is reconstructed (2009, p. 40). This past does not have to be one's own, as artefacts – whether they be buildings, objects or inscriptions, *liux de mémoire* as Pierre Nora calls them (1989, p. 8) – mediate memories (Middleton and Brown 2005). Mediators, however,

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Opposite: Map of Beirut reprinted from *Beyroutes : A Guide To Beirut* (Archis) by courtesy of illustrator Jan Rothuizen.

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are seldom innocent but often transformative. They 'translate, distort and modify the meaning of the elements they are supposed to carry' (Latour 2005, p. 39).

In 1762, as part of his publication *Il Campo Marzio dell'antica Roma,* Giovanni Battista Piranesi had created a representation in the form of a map incorporating all known ancient monuments in the Field of Mars in Rome, regardless of the period these monuments existed in (Frutaz 1962, p. 81). Hence, more than a representation of the Field of Mars, this *Ichnographia Campi Martii Antiquae Urbis* was to a great extent a knowledge-map guiding us through a collective memory space. In her analysis of the *Ichnographia*, Susan Dixon describes the map as a *uchronia*, a concept by Renouvier which amounts to 'a pastiche of all times' (Dixon 2005, p. 119). In this uchronia, buildings, street levels and ruins of different historical times are interwoven and form a whole that does not concern itself with communicating a certain historical moment. Instead, in Dixon's reading, the map is an attempt by Piranesi to represent all memory of the ancient city in one drawing, folding both space and time in the process.

However, while Piranesi neither discloses nor concerns himself with a specific historical moment, he still respects the *space* of the city. As the name implies, the buildings, the streets, and the spaces of the *Ichnographia* adapt to eachother in a harmonious spatial and proportional organisation. This could be contrasted with Sigmund Freud's analogy between a city and the human memory, which challenges us to envision artefacts and buildings of different times juxtaposed and in conflict, as if the city was a memory of space without any sense of linearity through which to cull and discriminate monuments of the past (1930). This city, Rome in Freud's example, in which the Colosseum shares the same space as the Domus Aurea and Agrippa's Pantheon shares the Piazza Rotunda with Hadrian's Pantheon, and only archaeologist can separate them, could be referred to as a *synchronia* (see Westin and Hedlund 2016). This is a place where monuments refuse to be forgotten, where they keep flickering into existence demanding to coexist and form a motley whole. A place where buildings and artefacts appear both before and after restoration and reconstruction and are allowed to exist simultaneously: the Vittorio Emanuele monument crowded with the Senator Palace crowded with the Temple of Jupiter.

Memories are not always correct or easy to communicate. And, as Rothuizen comments through his work, a city is not only an assemblage of buildings and spaces. The 'elements of urban form', as Spiro Kostof calls them (1992), are not only materiality; a city is also those layers upon layers of meaning, of the activities in the spaces between structures, inside them, before them and after them. To be meaningful, a representation of a city, especially a city of memory, must perhaps strive to be more akin to a *polychronia,* a city of many eras, in which both time and space is of importance

but neither above negotiation nor exclusive. As such, each phase of this polychronia echoes both forward and backwards in time to tell a story that we then consume through an endless array of filters and pre-understandings that sweeps away any attempt to objectively approach the city or its artefacts in temporal isolation.

So when entering into any city we shall attentively look at its margin, note the detail, note the lambency and slip, examine the interstices; they are the sites from which alternative interpretations and representations stem over time. There is the debris, the left-overs and the lumber that we so urgently need for understanding the city beyond its rationality. In these margins, the city's fabric at first appears as disconnected, incoherent, scrappy and disjointed and much less connected, orchestrated and disciplined than we wish for. But after a while, our eyes get used to chaos and what we find are the rejections of applied order. The margins in this sense also tell about rejected memories, about forgetting – deliberate and casual.

In the major part of his book *How Modernity forgets* (2009) Paul Connerton proposes a typology of forgetting that is firmly based in both temporalities and topographies. In a minor but introducing chapter of the book he instead proposes two types of place memory: the *memorial*, intentional, recognized and named places of memory, and the *locus*, which is the generic nature of particular spatial experiences. Their distinction is based upon their different relationship to the process of forgetting: while the memorial has forgetting inscribed from the beginning, the locus is the product of continual transfer and transmission of cultural codes and orders: streets, intersections, houses… These carry with them the contemporary norms, but also the time it takes to build, and when erased may undermine societies. The locus, according to Connerton, is:

> 'experienced inattentively /…/ we accept it as a fact of life, a regular aspect of how things are. This is the power of the locus. This is why the locus is more important than the memorial – whose construction is so often motivated by the conscious wish to commemorate or the unavowed fear of forgetting – as a carrier of place memory' (ibid, pp. 34-35).

There are three particular kinds of forgetting connected to the locus: 1) the contemporary *settlement scale* (overarching our understanding), 2) the *production of speed* (overarching our capacities), and 3) *repeated intentional destruction of the built environment* (creating cultural amnesia). A poetic version of forgetting of this kind is presented in Italo Calvino's *Le città invisibili* (1972) where Marco Polo in 55 short pieces brings us the dreams and memories of his own city, thematized as different cities and based upon notions of memory, forgetting, signs, longing, transformation, or names *et alea*. The city of Sofronia, for example, has two halves, one of which contains the city's entertainments (joyrides, amusement parks etc.) and the other half contains

the serious part (administration, the banks, the schools etc.). One of these two parts is annually deconstructed and dismantled. When time has come, they pull out nails and repack, to haul it all away to an unknown place, adjacent to another half city. In the leftover half, amusement continues restlessly. They count the months, days and hours until they, again, are united.

This piece, called 'The intangible cities 4', tells us about both the volatility of the consolidated city and the longing of the frivolity city, not after stability, but after its 'other half'. There is loss. Noteworthy is that contrary to the vertical stratigraphy of an archaeological excavation, the two layers of this city are not temporal but spatial. Like many other of Calvino's remarkable visionary representations of cities, this unexpected layering makes us aware of our expectations for a unity between temporal and spatial linearity. Perhaps a jumble of expressions made from the dissonance of aspects and artefacts, both personal and public, enrolled from different times gets us closer to making the memories of a city our own? When representations arrive at challenging familiar linearity and ordered stratigraphies, we may meet not only a representation that we have never seen before, but also a world that is someone else's. We arrive at the threshold of inquiry and exploration.

The Contributions

Recognising the perils of being content with the conventions through which we mediate both collective and individual memories, in 2015 artists and academics gathered in an international conference called *Challenge the past / diversify the future*. Drawing over a hundred presenters from nearly thirty countries, the conference sought to critically address visual, audible, and multi-sensory representations of historical times, places, and cultures (Chapman, Foka & Westin 2016). Whether through the development of new methods and ways of documenting, expressing and experiencing both past and present times and landscapes, or through critical approaches to all of these that help us challenge or re-examine that which we have built our structures of perception upon, all sought to diversify both our common understanding of history and culture and the tools through which all is mediated. While the aim of the conference was to discuss how cultural ideas, traditions and practices are constructed (and are constructing), transferred and disseminated in society, we had also the opportunity to connect a wide range of researchers and practitioners within heritage studies, digital humanities, history, game studies and adjoining disciplines to see what new questions could be asked.

The aims of this anthology are twofold. First and most obviously, it gives some of the work on representations of urban pasts and presents from *Challenge the Past* a deservedly wider readership by bringing them into the context of *Curating the City*, a cluster

within the Centre for Critical Heritage Studies at the University of Gothenburg. Second, we also hope that this anthology will give readers an inroad, or perhaps inspiration, to move beyond the visual when thinking about representations. The senses themselves have been characterised as gateways to the mind and the body, and so they mediate between the individual and the social world (Witmore 2006). However, the ways in which different senses are experienced varies greatly both between and within cultures. The recreation of the senses often requires us to think beyond narrative and ocularcentrism: they require the speculation and estimation of 'sensory artefacts' of history and archaeology, including sound and movement, as well as a transformation into methodologically tangible materials (Howes 2005, p. 14; Foka and Arvidsson 2016). They also require that the conceptual making of 'intangible, sensory' artefacts take into consideration issues of spatiality and temporality.

The contributions collected herein deal with ways of challenging accepted historical representations of the city by offering modes of recollection and perspectives that capture both multi-sensory and multi-layered aspects of urban context. As such, they offer new empirically grounded research on the experiences of the inhabitants, both past and present, whether individually or as a collective (grouped together either by one's own definition, through happenstance, or through cruel intentions). With a focus on the city as a space that is performed by a host of actants reaching across time through both materiality and memory, the authors critically address modes through which visual, audible, and multi-sensory representations can challenge, diversify or uproot conventions of urban representation.

What unites the collected contributions in this anthology is a relentless refusal to let representations be mute and void of narration. Representations can have depth. Alda Terracciano, using Luce Irigaray's description of 'a philosophy in the feminine' and the concept of 'sensible transcendental' as an interpretative framework, gives an account of involving haptic senses as well as sight, smell and taste to communicate embodied and intimate experiences of seven cities – Naples, Shanghai, Mumbai, Tangier, Lisbon, Salvador and London. The experiences are gathered in an experimental artwork, an installation composed of seven immersive environments each occupied by a city and conceived as a 'memory box' made up of digital sounds, images, smells and tastes of the places. By entering the spaces, audiences are invited to explore the interaction among bodies, memories and urban environments as a form of primal artistic expression, immersing themselves in the living archaeology of the places. Rather than relying on verbal descriptions of the city, descriptions that strive to objectively map the division of a city into structures and spaces, Terracciano relies on sensory perceptions to engage her audiences and challenge pre-conceived notions of cultural essentialism, all the while reassessing the way in which we experience cul-

tural diversity in the streets of our contemporary cities. For Terracciano, the body is both a sensuous archive and a seismograph, a thing that alerts us to changes, barriers, movements, secrets, revolts, and engagement.

Moving on from cities of perception, Maria Dmitruk leads us into a city of remembrance. In *The Town that Never Existed*, what was once the flourishing town of Miedzianka and is now a nowhere swallowed by the earth, demolished by people, and covered with a growth of weeds is explored as a mnemonic space through installations. In her contribution, Dmitruk explores the role of the artist through a phenomenological approach to the investigation of the past. In Miedzianka emerged the fundamental question 'Ubi sunt…?', derived from the Latin phrase *ubi sunt qui ante nos fuerunt* (where are those, who were before us?). This phrase was a popular motif in medieval poetry and it used to open a meditation on mortality and the transience of life. Dmitruk found that those that came before are all around us, in the dust, turned into particles of soil, into something that has persisted and that offers a tangible presence of the lost town and its inhabitants. The *genius loci* becomes a guiding spirit for the project, and *place* is put in opposition to *space*, which is untamed and undifferentiated. Miedzianka is reinstated as a place through re-enactment, in which our senses have to be activated and tuned to the history of the place, but also through the very humanisation of the space brought on by the artistic intervention.

Can the memory of a city be reawakened? Can a lost city be experienced? The past is a lived reality that survives only in fragments and can only be experienced in retrospect (Silberman 2008, p. 82), and while we may never be able to recreate the past as it actually was, or even an imperfect version of it with a sense of incomplete present-ness and uncertain expectation, we can simulate it. Using a digital reconstruction of pre-earthquake Lisbon in the early eighteenth century, Helena Murteira, Alexandra Gago da Câmara, Paulo Simões Rodrigues and Luís Sequeira let the architectural reconstruction be a stage for the social and cultural dimensions of the city. When the city centre disappeared on 1 November 1755, so did more than a vague collection of buildings, streets and alleys reminiscent of an extended past. It was a long-standing memory, consubstantiated in a much-lived urban setting, connecting past and present. As heritage is as much intangible tradition and social history as any physicality, a challenge lies in recognizing the activities *surrounding* the monuments in addition to the monuments themselves. Entering the Second Life simulation, we are confronted with an animated, interactive and thought-provoking virtual model that provides a different perspective on the past in which the existing documentary sources and a long path of research into Lisbon's urban history is tested in an immersive environment. Not only does the model gather aspects that are usually studied individually, it simultaneously embodies the empirical experiences of each user and

their social interaction, from both an individual and a collective standpoint. To some extent, virtual historical environments are notional places that provide shape to a non-verbal scientific domain. The deconstruction of memory is part of the very essence of historiographical practice and the contribution emphasises this process by changing the paradigm of historical research, from both methodological and epistemological points of view.

How can we depict socially relevant historical events and their effect on space and urban structures? What artistic strategies can be used to 'recreate' the past through archival records? What are the possibilities of fiction, and how can we define its space within this practice? Setting out from the idea of two cities existing in spatial juxtaposition, one real and the other a mythic 'Thirdspace' (Soja 1996) – an alternative critical spatial awareness in which all social, historical, imagined, and experienced spatiality are interwoven – Karina Nimmerfall highlights the possibilities of a fictional space within a documentary practice. Nimmerfall describes in her contribution an experimental approach to the interpretation of archival records – one that deals with the reverse aim not to portray a supposed truth in history, but instead to highlight the possibilities of the imaginary and its space within our practice of rendering history and memory. Incorporating on-location research through moving images, a script based on archival material, and strategies of historical conceptual art, we are invited to challenge accepted historical representations through a discussion about artistic strategies and their possibilities of offering new forms of recollection and new perspectives.

A question Maria Dmitruk poses comes to mind here: where are those who were before us? Are they present in our documentation, in our representations? As Dmitruk writes, processes of decay occur vertically; generation above generation pile up in layers but are not always still and ordered. They move around. They seep through to one another. But so do also memories of a city. Memories that are told in filmic representations, in manuscript fragments, in buttons and bones sifted from the soil, and in multi-sensous engagements of past and present.

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Streets of... : A Multisensory Experience of 7 Cities in 7 Minutes

Stumbling Upon an Introduction

As I sit writing, it is unusually hot in London. The slower thinking process induced by the heat brings me closer to memories of feelings and places experienced in the art project I am set to discuss. And yet it was in the cold of the early days of spring that I first shared the notes on my art project and multisensory installation *Streets of… 7 cities in 7 minutes* at the University of Gothenburg conference *Challenge the Past / Diversify the Future*. The presentation took place at the time of a momentous natural event: a total solar eclipse, which occurred on 20 March 2015 across the far northern regions of Europe and the Artic. Because I was indoors to deliver my presentation I did not witness the progressive obscuring of the sun, nor could I see its connection to my talk. It was Marsha Meskimmon who gave me the clue by concluding her paper with a quotation by Luce Irigaray. The insightful description of the eclipse by the Belgian-born French feminist, philosopher and psychoanalyst suddenly awakened me to a methodology, a subtle dance "between chains of metaphysical binary oppositions", in which I had engaged during the project: "light, masculinity, universality, reason, and ethics, on the one hand, and darkness, femininity, singularity, emotion, and erotics, on the other" (Ince 1996).

The artwork developed organically over a production period of eight years, during which I travelled to Naples (Italy), Shanghai (China), Mumbai (India), Tangier (Morocco), Lisbon (Portugal), Salvador (Brazil) and London (UK) to unearth the hidden

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connections across their different cultures. More specifically, the aim was to uncover the ancestral memories of three historical, intersecting journeys (the Indo-European migrations, the Silk Road, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade) as they unconsciously resurface in people's everyday life. The artwork which eventually emerged form the process included seven units, each representing a different city, that immersed the audience in a virtual reality of the distinguishing sounds, images, tastes and smells of each place. As I noted in my travel log:

Reflection_1_Inspiration

Amma says: "Each nation is one organ in the body of the world", and so I see migration as blood circulation taking nutrients to each of the body's parts to keep the world alive. Like blood, it is a fluid movement of people's bodies, ideas, and memories. It regenerates the body of the world and gives life.

Streets of... mirrors and follows this movement, a journey that is taking me through seven cities and three routes, or rodas as they say in Portuguese. Sound guides me through the places I visit with its nearly tactile quality—a texture of everyday life that I want to bring back into installation rooms. The musicality of all things around me makes my walk in the streets like a dance, a relentless move between the inside and the outside. In Naples it is the sound of the city's perennial state of emergency, the sirens, the old songs, the voices of street vendors; in Salvador the sound of birds and *atabaques*, loud music and sweet words – sounds which I digitise, store in my external drive and name as sound waves. Meanwhile, my eye is caught by people's movements and postures – I am entranced by their beauty. It feels like falling in love.

1.

2.

Meskimmon's timely reference to Irigaray's theoretical approach to sexual difference offered me the opportunity to reflect upon the wider feminine paradigm of sensory cultural analysis and its iteration in my work. As I remarked in a recent article[1], far from reproducing an 'objective' image of the cities, my experience of the world had been conveyed in a multisensory installation space in which "the visual featured alongside other

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1. Extracts of this essay have been published in the online article "7 Cities in 7 Minutes: A feminine paradigm of sensory art" available at http://bstjournal.com.

perceptual faculties to craft deeper connections between audiences and their ancestral cultural memories of the places" (Terracciano 2017). As Irigaray suggests:

> "Ethics is no longer aligned solely with the Enlightenment values of neutrality and universality; ethical action is no longer required to be impersonal and free of emotion. An ethics of sensation, materiality, and the body, an erotic ethics, can be substituted for the lucidity of abstract judgment. From their role as the obscured and unthought substratum of metaphysical ethics, the body and eros become the shifting yet fertile breeding ground of new values" (Ince 1996, p. 132).

Interestingly, the creative process I engaged in helped me to develop a specific code of practice, which manifested itself in a number of ways, including the choice of collaborating with local artists for each city I visited. At the same time I had the opportunity to experiment with an artistic language focused on the body as a sensor of meaning. During my solo journeys I used the concept of sensorial urbanism as a safe 'navigation mode' through the streets of these foreign cities. I was inspired by the critical body of work developed by architects, anthropologists and cultural historians such as Joseph Rykwert, David Howes, and Constance Classen, which has increasingly shifted the predominant role of the eye in urban studies towards an interdisciplinary approach that embraces the whole range of sensorial phenomena and perceptual capacities. Moreover, I was interested in the power of the senses to connect to and evoke memories. Therefore the creation of a multisensory installation came to represent the most appropriate way to recreate an embodied experience of cultural memes, which in turn would enable audiences to recreate lived experiences across time, connecting the past to the present through their own individual journey through the artwork.

Indeed, the role played by the body as a 'place in time' emerged during the process as an issue of particular relevance. That realization was triggered by the discovery that the production of the artwork had coincided in time with the rare transit of Venus, a phenomenon that happens every 122 years, and again 8 years later, after which it takes another 122 years to manifest again.[2]

Although I related the synchronicity of this 'cosmic' occurrence to a sort of 'oceanic feeling' I occasionally experienced during my travels—in Freud's words the feeling of "an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole" (1930, p. 11)—Irigaray's description of 'a philosophy in the feminine, where the values of intersubjectivity, of dialogue in difference, of attention to present life in its concrete

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2. See *Time frame*, posted on November 5, 2010 at www.streetsof.org.

and sensible aspects' (Irigaray 2002), would provide me with a more accurate interpretative framework. By engaging with time beyond its aural quality, I had involved the haptic sense as well as sight, smell and taste to enrich the discourse around its affective embodied experiences and the role they play in understanding changing patterns of connectivity within diverse communities. In this respect, Irigaray's concept of the 'sensible transcendental' (2005) is a useful tool for unravelling the way in which my own intimate experience of the cities found its way in the installation. During my travels I pushed " the hierarchal dichotomies of mind and body, form and matter, sacred and carnal" (Tilghman 2009, p. 50) to unsettle historical, cultural and psychological assumptions of others and myself. As a result my relationship towards language shifted to embrace the practice of *poiesis* as described by Michel Onfrey:

> "The poet, more than anybody else, places his individual body at the centre of the place inhabited by his consciousness and sensibility. Every emotion, sensation, perception, every single story flowers in his whimsical soul, leading one day to a short text that offers the quintessence of a bizarre synaesthesia; the hearing of colours, the tasting of smells, the touch of sounds, the hearing of temperatures, the seeing of sounds" (Onfray 2007).

The Artist's Sensory Journey

The installation was premiered in 2012 during the London Olympic Games and later presented in various international venues as an experiential artwork composed of seven immersive environments (fig. 3). Each environment was occupied by a city and conceived as a memory box with a different architectural shape, made up of digital sounds, images, smells and tastes of the places (fig. 4). By entering these sensory spaces audiences were invited to *explore the interaction between bodies, memories and urban environments as a form of primal artistic expression, immersing themselves* in the living archaeology of the cities (figs. 5 and 6).

The seed inspiration for the installation lay in my long-term interest and research on the British intercultural landscape and London in particular. This diverse city, a crossroads of local and global identities, represented the hub of a wheel whose spokes radiate out towards other places in the world in a cultural continuum. Looking at everyday life as the arena in which memories of intercultural encounters are unconsciously performed, the project focused on the observation and extraction of the cities' specific memes – that is units of cultural ideas, symbols or practices transmitted from one person to another through speech, gestures and rituals. In putting the cultural DNA of the places on display, the project sought to break down cultural barriers and re-evaluate notions of migration, heritage and cultural identity in contemporary globalized metropolises.

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Over the years, my initial idea of a single-screen moving-image artwork changed and evolved[3]. It was Marshall McLuhan who suggested that the media is an extension of the senses. On this basis, my attempt to represent a sensory archive of everyday life was translated into seven multisensory spaces that would make use of new and old technologies to reproduce an ambience that could be perceived through all the senses. In this respect the installation was conceived as "a space where the socialisation takes place", as the anthropologist David Howes would put it, or, even more provocatively, where a form of 'mixophilia', borrowing Zygmunt Baumann's concept, can be temporarily established, offering visitors a glimpse of peaceful living with cultural difference, while enjoying sensorial stimulation (Bauman 2003, p. 112). This form of experiential engagement with the artwork was meant to linger beyond the visit to the installation, as people made their way back to their own surroundings. At the same time, far from being a realistic reproduction of different geographical and cultural areas in the world, the installation unambiguously reflected my own experience of the cities in its intimate reproduction of the atmosphere of the places.

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3. This is how the first artwork *Streets of Naples* was presented in 2004 at the London International Festival of Theatre.

Reflection_2_Naples

The production of the first video sound installation piece, *Streets of Naples*, took place in early June 2004. At the time I was curator of the London International Festival of Theatre, for which I created a framework of collective engagement to explore the nature of international theatre in London. Together with the festival directors, I invited one hundred people of different ages and cultural and professional backgrounds to respond to the question, 'What is theatre to you?' This mechanism of public engagement was conceived as a process of democratic creative practice. Suddenly the thought of life in the streets and alleyways of Naples as a quintessential form of theatre came to my mind. And so without hesitation I decided to go back to my hometown, and accompanied by a cameraman and a small, non-intrusive mini dv camera, I went out to record the movements, gestures and sounds of the Neapolitan 'theatre of everyday life'.

Set at the crossroads of ancient and modern cultures, Naples is a city that strikes visitors with its natural beauty, amazing monuments as well as manifestations of social injustice. I felt that the 'daily performances' of human life, with their comic and tragic aspects, could be crystallized into units of movement and sound rooted in the archetypes of the place, while connecting the city to the cultures in the world that had passed through it in past centuries. As I wrote at the time, I walked through Naples looking for "an ancestral gesture that contains and reveals without ever manifesting itself into a complete action – underlying memories swirling through the streets of the city".

7.

Aesthetic Research

Going back to Gernot Böhme's description of atmosphere as a condition, which implies the physical presence of the subject and object with a focused attention on place, the act of relying on sensory perceptions as opposed to a description and judgment of the city was based on the intention of engaging audiences with a different sense of aesthetics of the place. The point was to explore a new concept of the aesthetics of everyday life, rehabilitating the term, as Böhme suggested, to its original sense of theory of perception. In this sense the installation was meant to reproduce a different atmosphere as a result of the interaction between the physical and virtual presence of persons and objects within any of its given environments". Referencing Walter Benjamin's definition of aura in the work of art, Böhme suggests that the dimension of naturalness and corporeality in our experience of it means that "to perceive aura is to absorb it into one's own bodily state of being. What is perceived is an indeterminate spatially extended quality of feeling" (Böhme 1993, p. 116). The sensory experience of the seven cities was meant to engage audiences with the aura of the cities to stimulate an alternate approach to art and its consumption, and a new kind of aesthetics (see Zardini 2005). The project also reflected my on-going research on synchonic

systems of experiencing images and sounds of the everyday life through nonlinear interactions between visual and aural elements recorded in the streets. Although the moving images referenced a number of artists of the avant-garde movement – including Dziga Vertov (*Man with the Movie Camera*, 1929); Tina Modotti (seminal her immersion in Mexican everyday life); the American artists Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand (in particular their art documentary of everyday life in 1920 New York) – the final multisensory installation distanced itself from the naturalistic powers of definition of photography, experimenting with the concept of hyper reality and the categories of expression, realism, identity and the unconscious through a performative approach to the audience's interaction. Video works such *Exodus* by Steve McQueen and *Crumpling Shanghai* by Dong Song, or Raghubir Singh's colour photo sequences of everyday life in India, engaged with similar questions, while 'relational art' practitioners like Sophie Calle echoed my line of enquiry by imagining alternative ways of dealing with the subject/object divide. However, it soon became clear that the experiment I was engaged in was situated outside the perimeters delineated by these artists, as it aimed to critically reposition the viewer, the viewed and the artist, both in relation to their constitution as 'liquid' contemporary subjects and as conveyers of an ancestral past emerging from hidden memory routes.

Reflection_3_Identity | Broken Narratives | Geography

According to Hegel, "synchronicity mimes the utterance of the word that created things". This is how situations from the past make their way in the everyday life through sounds.. The challenge is to recreate this synchronicity in the editing room: the rumble of ancestral memories resurfacing through broadcast radio waves in the Petit Soco of Tangier or the clanking of fruit pushcarts at the Feira de São Joachim in Salvador with the voice of women selling fish at the old market of Lisbon; the sound of the sea obstinately caressing the coast line of Salvador, with the breaths of amazement from people watching the sunset at Porto da Barra, only geographically separated from the port of Lagos, Portugal which housed the first slave market in Europe.

Meaning reveals itself in between things. I start to understand the concept as I follow my route, resigned to the impossibility of representing life in a continuum. Only a broken narrative can reflect the nature of my experience of the city; my thoughts intersecting the vision of what surrounds me with cultural messages carried from my senses to the brain. It is a syncopated movement; it is jazz, an unbroken rhythm of drums running underneath the everyday life.

8.

The Body as a Living Archive

As Simon Weil noted in her book *The Need for Roots*:

> "[…] it is the distillations from the living past which should be jealously preserved, everywhere, weather it be in Paris or Tahiti, for there are not too many such on the entire globe. […] we possess no other life, no other living sap, than the treasures stored up from the past and digested, assimilated and created afresh by us" (2001, p. 51).

Looking at the interstices between memory, human body and urban environment, I set out to re-present the now-ness of the ancestral through a sensorial narrative of travel. Here are some extracts from my travel log in Tangier, a North African city, which I visited twice like all the other cities explored in the project:

Reflection_4_Tangier

The sound of the *adhan*, the Islamic call to prayer from the local mosque, fills the air. It is mixed with the clucks of a vociferous rooster perching on the balcony of the house next door. The terraces of the old buildings around us with their hanging laundry remind me of Naples. I feel at home. We sit down and talk. In a soft voice François starts telling me about the many myths of Tangier. I listen entranced as he talks about the links between the history of Noah and the creation myth of the ancient Tingis, a land that emerged from *la boue*, the mud that was formed after the flood. This is *la terre originelle*, the original land. According to the Old Testament the city was founded by Shem, one of Noah's sons and founder of the Semitic people, also known as Middle People. But then, according to the Greek myth, it was the giant Antaeus, the son of the god Neptune and the goddess Gaea, who founded Tingis. Then, according to the story, Antaeus was defeated by Hercules in a wrestling match. Hercules had traversed the sea between the European continent and North Africa to fetch the golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides, from which descend the pillars marking the confines between these two parts of the world. François tells me we need to go and visit the cave of Hercules, an archaeological site with Paleolithic inscriptions so I can feel the power of the myth. We will take a "grand taxi" to get to the site. I nod and write it down in my notebook.

The wind softly blows away the clouds hanging on the horizon. I lose track for a moment, but then François takes me back to the legend of Atlantis. According to Plato the mythical city was located right beyond the Pillars of Hercules before disappearing around 9,600 BCE. I look at the sea in search of signs. The seagulls are circling around the antennas. They are looking for food. The *adhan* starts again. I can't believe two hours have already elapsed. François moves quickly through the centuries, when Tangier becomes a Carthaginian port and then part of the Roman Empire. There is a long series of invasions, the Vandals, the Visigoths, then the Moors rule the city, and in 706 Tangier becomes the base for the conquest of Spain. He continues with a long description of movements, migrations, conquests and defeats, up to the time of the French colonial power, of independence, of the city's international status, and finally the incorporation within the Moroccan state.
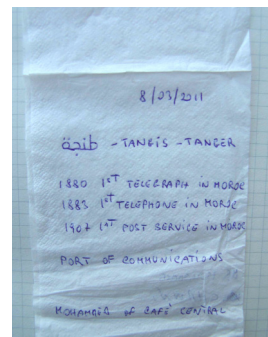
How many steps before mine have imprinted their marks on the old pavements of this white city? I can feel the thin layers of ancient dust falling on the buildings around me, filling my nostrils. It's chilly, I'm tired, and I need a cup of tea. We decide to get down to the Café Centrale and look for our new friends.
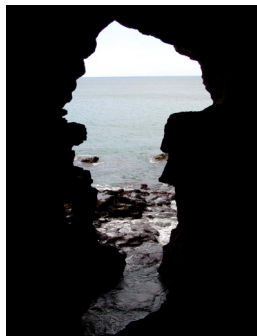
9. 10. 11.

As the multiplicities of signifiers were transmitted to me through the sounds, smells and sights of old Medina, the awareness of my body as a gendered, historical and cultural site of reception somehow receded, and I morphed into a seismographer engaged in the process of 'making sense' of the surroundings. Yet, as stated in David Howes's *Architecture of the Senses*: "The perceptual is cultural and political, and not simply (as psychologists and neuroscientists would have it) a matter of cognitive processes or neurological mechanisms located in the individual subject" (Howes 2005, p. 322).

My first encounter with Tangier was meant to unravel this crucial concept in all its complexity, as noted in my travel log:

News from Libya

I arrive in Tangier at the crucial time of the people's revolution in the Middle East. It's 7.30 AM and I can hear the roaring of the Arab masses crying for their freedom from the corrupt regimes of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen. Their voices are running along the alleyways of old Medina. Has the revolution begun in Tangier as well? The sounds of the TV sets from the small cafes in the streets come up to my room through its closed window, mixed with banging and clanging from the construction site at the old port.

I find out about the latest news when I get down to the Café Centrale. The TVs are all tuned on Libya, and people are glued to the screens, making comments and shaking heads at the images of demonstrators being killed in the streets of the nearby country.

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Since the onset of the project a continuous relational condition of engagement with the place had kept me anchored to a 'ground-truthing mode of exploration'. It was like a state of 'intimate-sensing' always activated, a state described by the geographer Douglas Porteus and reported by Howes in the following way:

> "Remote sensing is clean, cold, detached, easy. Intimate sensing, especially in the Third World, is complex, difficult, and often filthy. The world is found to be untidy rather than neat. But intimate sensing is rich, warm, involved… and the rewards involve dimensions other than the intellectual" (Howes 2005, p. 323).

My experience of the 'living environment' of the foreign public spaces I visited was taking place within the private space of my own body as 'the Other of the Other', to borrow a concept from Irigaray, luring me to a place beyond boundaries, where I could see only fragments of the whole. In a sense I was confronted with the irreducible otherness of both the surrounding and myself, forcing me to reconsider the interplay between the boundaries of my ego and the cultures in which I was immersed.

Reflection_5_Mumbai

I've been in Mumbai for over two weeks now and I start feeling the intensity of the experience. Every day I walk through its overcrowded streets, absorbing its colours, movements, and sounds, sometimes protecting myself from sudden, unexpected smells, often finding myself seduced by the depth of people's eyes. The weather is hot and sticky, opening the pores of my skin beyond its familiar limits.

Last night, as I lay in bed with fever, I had the feeling of being on a road of no return – India runs inside me and there is no refuge from the waves of pure life that it pushes through my veins. How can I write my 'poetry on celluloid', as Chickoo's cousin described it – how do I articulate my experiences, and why should I?

14.

15.

Sensorial Frustration as a Metaphor for Contemporary Being

As an act of meditation on the process of sensing the city, the multisensory installation was designed according to the spiritual color-coding system of the Moroccan *Gnawa* music tradition, which links West and North Africa to Brazil and Southern Europe. The central piece of the installation is the artwork *Streets of London,* whose wider dimension is meant to amplify the aesthetic process stimulated in the others, and induce an experience of internal visualisation by focusing on the single image of the rising sun on the city's skyline. The split between the visual and aural composition of the piece is aimed to tease out mental re-compositions of 'others' experienced in the artworks of the installation, but also in the real streets of London. The idiosyncratic sound, which cuts the sequence with CCTV images of people, brings back the focus on the process of video capturing in an era of video surveillance that involves us all. As described by Gaston Bachelard and reported by Wolfgang Schivelbusch in his essay *Nightfall Fear in the Street*:

> "Anyone who is in the dark and sees a light in the distance feels that he or she is being observed, because 'this lantern in the distance is not 'sufficient unto itself'". It constantly strives outwards. It watches so unflaggingly that it watches over things" (2005, p. 73).

So while the act of viewing has lost its innocence, creative mental re-compositions of people and images have the potential to open up new routes in the perception and understanding of our position in the world. The idea is at basis of the original treatment of the piece:

Action

London.

Nocturnal light.

Silence is not an option, neither is oblivion.

Only a transient moment of tranquillity falls upon the city at the break of dawn.

London is a forest of symbols and the room that hosts it is a hut, enveloping us with the sounds and exteriors of the city.

The light in the hut is icy, tenuous, full of vibrations, changeable, and secretive. It emerges from darkness in the space of six minutes, revealing the image of a skyline projected on the wall.

Meanwhile the sound of the forest, with its variety of species waking up to the growing light, is made up of the multifarious voices of London – a multilingual city where eavesdropping is offered as an alternative to 'looking at one another', an act somehow forbidden by social customs and sanitized by closed circuit cameras.

Like in a forest, the sound of animals/individuals slowly increases with the rising sun. It is at times menacing, at times joyous, but generally incomprehensible apart from brief moments.

Hidden in the hut, the viewer sees no other faces or bodies than those produced by internal visualization. The sound of the city/forest is a sculpture, a physical volume, which, together with light represents the only 'natural' element in the artificial space of the city.

Friction between Time and Space reaches its climax as the sequence is broken by CCTV video footage, increasing in speed until it's cut to black.

Quiet.

Friction between Time and Space is temporarily reconciled. The looped sound of the city/forest tenuously starts again. The shape of the city progressively emerges from the dark. The same 'theatrical action' is repeated in a loop.

16.

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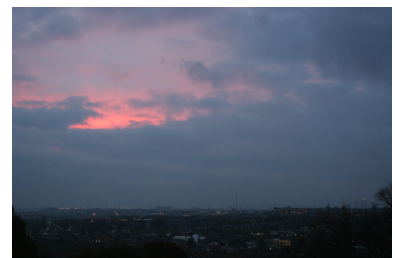
17.

Free-Flowing Interactions with Cultural Heritage

Resonating with the quantum physics concept of entanglement, the interconnection between London and the other cities was conceived as a sensory journey through remote memory systems that link the installation together. Consequently, my attempt to question definitions of centre and periphery, as we know them in geopolitical terms, was reflected in the option for the audience members to wander around the installation following their own personal inclinations rather than the suggested trajectory from the archaeological layers of the vernacular streets of Naples to the imperial past resounding through the streets of London. This approach is reflected in Edward Said's analysis of 'the voyage in':

> "*The voyage in*, then, constitutes an especially interesting variety of hybrid cultural work. And that it exists at all is a sign of adversarial internationalization in an age of continued imperial structures. No longer does the logos dwell exclusively, as it were, in London and Paris. No longer does history run unilaterally, as Hegel believed, from east to west, or from south to north, becoming more sophisticated and developed, less primitive and backward as it goes. Instead, the weapons of criticism have become part of the historical legacy of empire, in which the separations and exclusions of 'divide and rule' are erased and surprising new configurations spring up" (1994, p. 295).

It is in this circular mode of experience that my epic display of tacit heritage finds its place against the wider backdrop of philosophical re-thinking of the role it plays in the formation of cultural identities. Conceived as a living archive of everyday life,

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the artwork aimed to shift the emphasis away from the idea of the 'archive' as a static location or collection of material and towards the idea of a process that reflects the present in its permanent transition. At the same time, echoing Paul Gilroy's concern that "culture is now analysed as property rather than process" (1999, p. 17), the project followed in the footsteps of Said's 'geographical enquiry into historical experience' in an attempt to reconfigure 'these overlapping territories and intertwined histories' through a series of memory sessions with members of the audience directly connected to the cultures represented in the artwork. Concurrently with the opening of the installation in London, between August and November 2012 members of the public were invited to view and interact with the artwork as part of an intergenerational, community engagement programme, *The Living Archaeology of the Place,* and explore a creative interaction between art, life and collective cultural memories (fig. 17). The programme involved ten memory sessions carried out with members of communities living in London who either came from or had direct knowledge of the cities featured in the installation. After experiencing my virtual recreation of the place, participants were asked to share feelings, thoughts and memories of it. The engagement focused on old traditions, day-to-day rituals, urban life, and personal notions of home and cultural identity. In January 2013 *Streets of…7 Cities in 7 Minutes* and *The Living Archaeology of the Place* were presented at Rich Mix in London (figs. 18 and 19). A project evaluator interviewed audience members, and amongst the areas of critical

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discussion, community empowerment emerged as a particularly important question. This was detailed in the evaluation report:

> "By using digital media and the memory sessions, ALDATERRA Projects gives a platform and opportunity for discourse to intercultural communities to take greater control of the representation of their own histories and cultural identities. […] The audience feedback signified that as a result of displaying the diverse cultural landscape of the cities, participants felt and experienced a sense of freedom about their own cultural identity and diversity and thus felt better empowered to explore pre-existing notions of cultural diversity. The audience members responded that the exhibition compelled them to reconnect with a sense of adventure to travel again and offered them an opportunity to explore their pre-existing views of the cultures displayed among the seven cities" (Ardakani 2013, pp. 20-21).

With regards to the audience's engagement with the multisensory experience, the report also noted that:

> "Numerous participants [of the memory sessions] commented on the effectiveness of combining visuals, sounds and scents, as a very powerful and evocative sensory tool, which is also linked to memory. '*It was lovely to see and hear the sceneries and noise of my hometown – Salvador – it brought back to me some buried memories*" (Reference 1: Paula Andrea Pinheiro, Salvador memory session held at the Centro Português de Apoio 'a Comunidade Lusófona). […] The feedback from the Arts & Cultural Programmer of Rich Mix further validated the strength of the artist's audience engagement approach by pointing out that the artist's ability to work beyond the usual two- dimensional level of space was what truly set the exhibition apart from his usual programming. *'People connect with place, sights, sounds, and smells – the everyday. What I like about the project was that it was accessible to all levels of people and not necessarily just ones that happen to be art savvy*' (Oliver Carruthers, Arts & Cultural Programmer of Rich Mix)" (ibid., p. 17).

Issues related to the impact of mobility and free movement in society were also debated by the guests invited to the Artist Salon, which marked the end of the installation:

> *"'I do think the project can help the public in thinking about, and discussing how public space is free/unfree, regulated/unregulated, convivial/reserved and what could be done to improve streets as places of social and market exchange'* (Reference 7: Interview with Manick Govinda, Artist Salon Speaker and Coordinator for the Manifesto Club's Visiting Artists campaign)".

> *"'This consciousness imbues one with confidence for now they can recognise their worth as human beings and the worth of inheriting a different way of doing things in the UK as our host country. This confidence is essential when moving upward-*

ly in society, knowing that their cultural and geographical background is not a handicap, that in truth we share more similar traits and where we differ lies an opportunity for innovation instead of exclusion' (Reference 4: Interview with Luis Morais, Artist Salon audience member)" (ibid. p. 22).

Finally, in relation to the audience's engagement with their heritage and cultural identity, the report noted that:

"This active level of engagement of the programme offered them an opportunity to reconnect with their cultural heritage and reconsider the current status of their cultural identity. Within the memory sessions, some participants express concern that without this type of art and cultural programme, their identities are at risk of becoming homogenised and lose essence as a result of the ever-growing powers of mass media stereotyping. *The videos put me in touch with ancestral and archetypal aspects of everyday life and practices, recognizable everywhere'* (Reference 3: Interview with audience member at Rich Mix Exhibition Private View)" (ibid., p. 25).

An Open-Ended Conclusion

Feedback reported in the section above makes apparent that the multisensory mapping of the cities included in the installation would need to be regarded within a wider context of analysis that includes sensorial urbanism, digital archives, intercultural communication, diaspora studies, oral history, digital anthropology and human computer interaction (HCI). According to David Howes, and Constance Classen, sensory perceptions nowadays are mostly exploited for marketing strategies related to consumer goods and experiences, in both physical and virtual environments. The sense of smell in particular has recently entered virtual interactive spaces and systems of communication. Nonetheless, the way in which we perceive physical urban environments through the body is rarely acknowledged in city planning. In this respect the project raises a number of critical questions. How can we build public spaces that take into account the presence of our bodies as sensors of meaning and archives of unconscious collective cultural memories beyond marketing reasons? How can migrant communities contribute to the creation of a 'sensorial urbanism' and a broader, more inclusive understanding of urban art and archiving? And what position can this kind of work occupy within the gallery-and-museum sector and its debate on cultural and gender inclusivity?

Indeed, it is interesting to note that while an increasing number of museums in Britain have started to feature high-profile exhibitions inspired by social inclusion and cultural diversity, the question curators and senior management are now ask-

ing is weather the attempt to encourage groups at risk of exclusion might disengage general visitors. The almost unanimously positive public response to *Streets of… 7 Cities in 7 Minutes* across a wide spectrum of visitors suggests a different approach to exhibiting culturally rooted artworks. As Stuart Hall reminds us, identity is not an 'already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent'; instead we should think of 'identity as a 'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation' (1990, p. 222). Visitors to the installation have an opportunity to experience their own changing collective identities every time they enter the multisensory space, re-imagining their communities, their roots and histories in a dynamic interplay of past, present and future. At the same time, the design of these virtual hybrid environments has taken into account sensory perceptions and embodied practices to constitute an effective way of challenging accepted stereotypical representations of the cities and include actants otherwise excluded from them. In this respect, audiences and participants' active engagement with the artwork points towards a direction that goes beyond the 'artistic' confines of the project, making its methodology worthy of being extended to other fields. Whether or not the project managed to inscribe itself within the 'new epistemological project', which Haraway calls 'situated knowledges', it certainly represented an attempt to rethink issues of vision, power, and the Western gaze, and to create a more socially inclusive understanding of urban spaces (Braidotti 2011, p. 73). In our increasingly super-diverse cities (Vertovec) the critical issue at stake is to find a way to engage with urban intercultural practices to better respond to the needs of a globalised, 'technologically fluid' human condition, which often excludes 'others' through division and ghettoisation. As Bauman points out:

> "If anything, the contrary is true – since whereas the city is the dumping ground for anxieties and apprehensions generated by globally induced uncertainty and insecurity, it is also a prime training ground where the means to placate and disperse that uncertainty and insecurity can be experimented with, tried out and eventually learned and adopted" (2003, p. 177).

The artwork offers itself as a space for collective re-thinking and positive action around processes of democratisation and public creative engagement, stimulating a dynamic and inclusive approach to the living experience of culture in our globalised metropolises.

Images and Credits

Fig. 1: Still image of video research footage, *Streets of Naples*. Image courtesy of the artist Alda Terracciano.

Fig. 2: Still image of video artwork *Streets of Salvador*. Image courtesy of the artist Alda Terracciano.

Fig. 3: Installation units of *Streets of… 7 cities in 7 minutes* at Greenwich Peninsula Festival, London. Image by Antonella Fabiani. Copyright Alda Terracciano & ALDATERRA Projects.

Fig. 4: Interior of installation unit *Streets of Salvador* at Greenwich Peninsula Festival, London. Image by Antonella Fabiani. Copyright Alda Terracciano & ALDATERRA Projects.

Fig. 5: Installation *Streets of… 7 cities in 7 minutes* at Greenwich Peninsula Festival, August 2012, London. Image by Antonella Fabiani. Copyright Alda Terracciano & ALDATERRA Projects.

Fig. 6: Olfactory stimulation for *Streets of Naples* unit at Greenwich Peninsula Festival, London. Image by Antonella Fabiani. Copyright Alda Terracciano & ALDATERRA Projects.

Fig. 7: Still image of video artwork *Streets of Naples*. Image courtesy of the artist Alda Terracciano.

Fig. 8: Still image of video artwork *Streets of Lisbon*. Image courtesy of the artist Alda Terracciano.

Fig. 9: Hercules cave in Tangier. Image courtesy of the artist Alda Terracciano.

Fig. 10: Café Centrale waiter's handwritten note from artist's research files, *Streets of Tangier*. Image courtesy of the artist Alda Terracciano.

Fig. 11: Artist's handwritten note from artist's research files, *Streets of Tangier*. Image courtesy of the artist Alda Terracciano.

Fig. 12: Newspaper cut from artist's research files regarding people's demonstrations in the Maghreb area, *Streets of Tangier*. Image courtesy of the artist Alda Terracciano.

Fig. 13: Newspaper cut from artist's research files showing Moroccan people repatriated from Libya during the first days of the 17 February Revolution, *Streets of Tangier*. Image courtesy of the artist Alda Terracciano.

Fig. 14: Still image of a street in Mumbai from artist's research files, S*treets of Mumbai*. Image courtesy of the artist Alda Terracciano.

Fig. 15: Still image of child in Mumbai from artist's research files, *Streets of Mumbai*. Image courtesy of the artist Alda Terracciano.

Fig. 16: Still image of video artwork *Streets of London*. Image courtesy of the artist Alda Terracciano.

Fig. 17: Project coordinator gathering audience feedback at *Streets of… 7 cities in 7 minutes* installation at Greenwich Peninsula Festival, August 2012, London. Image by Antonella Fabiani. Copyright Alda Terracciano & ALDATERRA Projects.

Fig. 18: Installation *Streets of… 7 cities in 7 minutes* at Rich Mix, London, January 2013. Image by Antonella Fabiani. Copyright Alda Terracciano & ALDATERRA Projects.

Fig. 19: Q&A with the artist at project preview as part of the Snapshots programme, Rich Mix, London, 21 July 2012. Image by Antonella Fabiani. Copyright Alda Terracciano & ALDATERRA Projects.

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The Town that Never Existed

The past is always challenging us, as we appear here and now and have to work out our attitude towards there and then. It doesn't agree to be ignored. As a matter of fact it cannot be ignored, because some part of it is present all the time. History forms a continuum, which enables us to recognize the roots of our identity, understand who we are and shape our future with this awareness.

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Hans-Georg Gadamer said that people have a 'historically effected consciousness' (Palmer 1969, p. 117). He was also the one to emphasize Heidegger's critical approach to the purely scientific consciousness. Gadamer pointed out that science is not capable of embracing the entire complexity of human experience and that there are certain forms of truth that can only be provided by art. History has always been an important source of inspiration and one of the most crucial subjects for artists of all times.

The city is a field of dialogue and communication, just as art is. The city itself is often treated as a piece of art (Gutowski 2006). The concept of the city or the town involves the idea of social space, including both public and private spheres – these change in time, enriched with the factor of memory. The domain of memory and recollection is particularly interesting for an artist as it embraces very intense, deep, influential areas of human experience. The fact that it has the most personal and at the same time the most collective dimension makes the whole subject even more intriguing – more valuable for creative analysis.

In April 2013, together with other PhD and MA students, I arrived in Miedzianka, formerly known as Kupferberg. For a few centuries the area of the town had been famous as rich in mineral resources, especially different copper ores, but also silver and other metals. The mining industry contributed to the town's development and prosperity, but it was also responsible for the gradual destruction of the territory's tissue. In time Miedzianka began to look increasingly like a settlement founded on quicksand.

After World War II the town became the victim of a secret Red Army operation – Soviet experts developed a uranium mine there. About 600 tons of uranium were transported from Miedzianka to the USSR, but the deposits did not prove as rich as expected. Extensive mining caused great damage to the local buildings and environment. The government attempted to conceal the real character of the whole enterprise, so the mine was officially labelled as a 'paper factory' and the excavations were supervised by secret police. Miners suspected of indiscretion were executed.

Later the town was destroyed as part of the Soviet government's plan. Some houses were pulled down, some left alone to decay. In 1972 most inhabitants moved to the town of Jelenia Góra. In 2012, as the local community council published on its official website, former Miedzianka had only about eighty inhabitants.

We were asked to investigate the site, which was once a flourishing German town. The aim was to carry out a field investigation in order to develop artworks that would comment on, link to, and narrate the history of the lost town and its people. My presentation shall focus on three artworks that resulted from our research.

Chapter I

An Artist and the Past

In relation to the past an artist can play many different roles and deal with the topic in a wide variety of ways:

> The artist can depict scenes of historical events; the mimetic function of an image makes it possible for the audience to (re)visit places that no longer exist, furnished with props that an artist constructs according to his or her knowledge of historical aesthetics;

> The artist can revive the past or re-enact it;

> The artist can analyse the past and then comment on it;

> The artist can create a visual narration based on history or translate an historical narration into the language of art.

The traditional means of artistic expression played an important role in awakening and sustaining the memory of the past. Contemporary artists are not indifferent to history, though the visual language and the condition of art itself have changed. They still find in it – just as their predecessors did – an immense source of significant ideas. They participate in the debate, make their statements, but first of all try to encourage the audience to think independently.

The starting point for our research and data collecting was the book *Miedzianka. Historia znikania* (Miedzianka: The History of Disappearing) by Filip Springer (2012). During the fieldwork the workshop participants made a vast photographic record, which provided important visual data (fig. 1).

Due to the fact that our work had a special, creative character, some of the data were developed or discovered in the internal space of our sensitivity, our private memories, and our individual response to the experience. Michel Foucault appreciated art as a form of acquiring and storing some special kind of knowledge, which is not subject to the methodological criteria of science (1997, p. 55).

During our workshops in Miedzianka we did a lot of research, which for the most part was not scientific, just as the procedures we applied to the collected data were not scientific. As artists we have different tools and equipment at our disposal.

Methods we adopted during our investigation included exploring the scenery of the abandoned town, attempting to sense and analyse the experience inscribed in the territory/land, applying our sensitivity to get in touch with the *genius loci*, the spitit of the place. Further investigation was carried out during the creative process of project realization. It was this phase of our work when the data collected during field research finally got internalised, integrated with our innermost experience and transformed into a particular piece of art. I will describe this phenomenon in more detail below based on the case I am most familiar with – my own.

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In the Field

A particularly important aspect of our undertaking was its site-specific dimension. The direct contact with the place was a source of creative energy, which guided us through the process of project conception and realization. Miedzianka itself – that small Silesian town, which owes both its past prosperity and its final decline to rich deposits of various minerals – influenced us with its spirit and the stories of its people.

Christian Norberg-Schulz founded his place phenomenology on the idea of *genius loci*, or 'the spirit of the place' (1980, pp. 25-32). He examined and described many European landscapes, emphasizing the power of nature and naturalness and the devastating effects of human activity. According to Norberg-Schulz, man with his barbaric expansiveness is able to destroy the genius loci (figs. 2 and 3).

In the case of Miedzianka, nature is gradually taking over and taking care of what is left. The genius loci, though wounded and abandoned, is still there. It is as strongly connected with the energy of the local inhabitants as it is with the natural environment. Miedzianka's fate was partly inscribed in its geological properties, partly formed by history and the lives of local people.

The phenomenological interpretation distinguishes *place* from *space.* A space is untamed and undifferentiated; a place is described by five aspects: things, order, char-

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acter, light and time. These five, in spite of the changes to which they are subject, remain a specific conglomeration, an entity united by the unique spirit and emanating some special energy, which enables a visitor to feel the place.

It was the early spring of 2013 when a group of Polish artists and students I was part of visited Miedzianka for creative workshops. Our guide was Pawel Nowak, who was actively engaged in propagating knowledge about Miedzianka's history and preserving its memory.

We were shown the remnants of the town buildings – the old brewery, the local church. Most of the site-seeing, however, had to take place in our imagination. The majority of Miedzianka's former land has hardly any traces of the town, which has been swallowed by the earth – demolished by people and covered with a growth of weeds. So we walked together through some fallow grounds, pathless areas full of potholes, and time after time Pawel Nowak pointed at this *nowhere*, explaining that there was the market square, the post-office, somebody's house… We were like children playing a game of pretend (figs. 4 and 5).

The concept of re-enactment has a well-established place in the theory of history. According to R. G. Collingwood, the actual thought of an historical agent was sup-

Re-enactment

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posed to be re-enacted in the mind of an historian (1946, pp. 282-302). In the case of an artistic re-enactment, it is instead the audience who is encouraged by an artist to re-enact the mental reality of the past.

In Miedzianka, we were confronted with the necessity of a more literal re-enactment – we had to recreate a town that was no longer there. We had to visualise and sense it. We had to bring Miedzianka back into being, so that we could assume an attitude towards its non-existence later on. Our attempts were naturally personal and individual, so there emerged as many versions of the town as there were participants facing the challenge of recreation.

According to the semiotic approach every city, town, house, and interior space can be read as a text. The text before us consisted of many blank pages. First we had to write, so that we had something to read and analyse. The convention of the game in which we were suddenly involved stimulated a child's perceptiveness in us – it opened a new space in which the creative interpretations of the place's history could be developed (figs. 6 and 7).

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Chapter II

The Past and a City

The history of an urban settlement is usually incorporated in the area. Cities grow over towns, and the crucial opposition between center and suburban periphery marks the directions of their development. Cities that are abandoned and swept away by time slip into the realm of legend, but there is always some material left for archeologists to examine. A cemetery is a specific type of city with a special relation to the remains of the past – necropolis, a city of the dead.

As Lewis Mumford writes, 'The physical design of cities and their economic functions are secondary to their relationship to the natural environment and the spiritual values of human community' (2011, p. 91). The story of Miedzianka is a perfect illustration of this thesis, with the only reservation that in this case the town's economic functions were closely connected with the place's environmental properties.

Miedzianka is an example of a town whose citizens' interests and prosperity depended mostly on one particular branch of industry. The inhabitants included Poles, Germans, Jews, Gypsies, and many who identified with smaller local ethnical groups like Silesians. But they all formed a community, united by the place, needs, interests, norms, and values they shared. As in other small towns, the intensity of hu-

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man relations was much stronger than it would be in a city, where people are more anonymous and isolated in their individual worlds. Written records testify to a close, intimate co-existence among Miedzianka's multicultural community. The ties which connected the town's citizens and the way those ties evolved within the compass of generations were described by Springer in his book (2012). Indirectly these became an inspiration for our artistic projects (fig. 8).

Space

The phenomenologists hold 'a space' as opposed to 'a place'. According to Nor-berg-Schulz 'a place' is 'a space', which has been 'humanized'. I return to the term *space* because the area formerly occupied by Miedzianka turned into something in between. The above-mentioned center-periphery opposition brings to my mind the traditional binary view of the world, rooted in the Bible and developed later in Renaissance thinking – the opposition of the garden and the wilderness. In the case of Miedzianka, the wilderness takes over and triumphally conquers the ground where man proved unable to maintain any order or civilised life. The Garden, a place of a perfect harmony among all living beings, was designed for man, whose responsibility was to keep and guard it. It became an important reference for modern creators of the Garden City concept (fig. 9).

Miedzianka was denied any perspective of an harmonious development – it was pushed into the abyss of a messy wilderness, turned back into a *space* from which *place* had been banished (fig. 10).

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The meaning of the noun *space* changes with an addition of the adjective *social* – it becomes then 'the humanized space'. The social space belongs to a different ontological order than the physical one, and it is created in a collective process by groups of people and individuals who undertake all kinds of activities to fullfill their needs and aspirations. The people mark that space with their particular values, imprint their relations on it, and give to the area its specific identity. This particular type of space was firmly established in Miedzianka and we still can find some traces of it. The idea of a space in a purely physical sense – free from any tinge of sociological interpretation – is important for understanding the process of Miedzianka's passing away.

After the Second World War, Poland's territory was shifted westward. As a consequence many people were resettled. Plenty of those who had roots in the town going back many generations had to migrate across the new border to what was now a different country. The newcomers from the east, on the other hand, could not recognize Silesia as their home, so they didn't make much effort to maintain and restore what was left. These migrations of people form horizontal lines (short-term demographic changes) that are like wrinkles – they announce the decline. But since the beginning of the settlement and mining history in Miedzianka, passing away follows the vertical axis (changes over time). It is a universal law that the processes of memory and decay occur vertically, but in this particular case it is much more direct. Due to the fact that for several centuries it was a place of extensive mining, the small Silesian town was literally swallowed by the earth. Miedzianka vanished – it no longer existed in space by any definition of the word.

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Time

Robert Ezra Park, one of the founders of Chicago School of sociology, drew an analogy between cities and natural ecosystems. According to the concept developed by Park together with Ernest W. Burgess (Park, McKenzie and Burgess 1925), cities' functioning and growth are regulated by the same mechanisms that govern the life of organisms in nature – the instictive forces described by Charles Darwin are supposed to apply to urban structures and communities.

Park disregarded, however, that the factor of time operates in cities in a different manner than in other ecosystems. In small rural communities, which are more part of nature itself, tightly connected with and dependent on cyclical rhythms of vegetation, time follows a circular trajectory. In cities, which are detached from the natural rhythmical regularity, the trajectory of time takes a rather linear form analogous to the one depicting the life of an individual (fig. 11).

Miedzianka's time trajectory is discontinuous – the line no longer runs forward, no new local circle emerged. Instead there are only dispersed short life-lines of some people, animals, and the big common cosmic circle of vegetation. Sometimes it feels as if time itself had been devoured in Miedzianka along with everything else, leaving only a few remnants that can be measured with the lazy flow of soil particles in the hour-hammocks of *Ubi sunt…*, my installation project.

The Experience (I)

When I came to the realization stage of my installation project, when the black linnen hammocks were almost ready, I had to take care of the soil. I had more than a tonne of soil excavated from Miedzianka – it arrived at my studio in Warsaw wet and clumpy and I needed it to be dry and friable, so that it would filter smoothly through the holes in the hammocks.

I turned the heating on, found a large sieve and started to sift the soil. The time was running out, the date of the exhibition's opening was approaching, so I spent whole days on sifting for about three weeks. The process was monotonous and tiring but it also enabled me to merge physically into the materia of whose meaning I was becoming more and more aware. Actually I was experiencing the very essence of both my project and its original inspiration – the place, its people and its history. It was in some way a reply to the question in the title of my installation *Ubi sunt…?* – 'Where are those…?' They were there, in the dust, turned into particles of soil – into something that persisted.

Every now and then I found some small objects, which after cleaning could be identified as old coins, copper buttons from a miner's uniform, human toe bones….

Working like an archeologist allowed me to catch a glimpse of the world I was sensing – in its shape from before the great decomposition. The fact that it appeared time after time in these details made the whole experience somehow even more concrete and real. These little props spurred the visual aspect of my imagination.

The most special element of this stage of my work was connected with the sense of touch. It was the substantial, tangible presence of the lost world and its inhabitants – I felt it between my fingers, in my hair, in my teeth, I had it all over my skin. I could hardly get rid of it by showering, which I was doing several times a day. A few weeks after my work on the project had been completed, the tears running from my eyes were still black.

While installing hammocks with soil in the gallery, I had a chance to experience my project from a different perspective. As I was trying to determine the angle of friction and decide about the proper diameter for the holes, I had to focus on the interaction among the grains of soil. Those tiny particles constituted a system. I realized I had established a dynamic structure, which eventually became empty. The parallel with the other structure – the vital, urban organism, which had been losing its energy and matter as time went by – emerged in action and in the final form of *Ubi sunt…*.

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In the process of creating an installation, which was meant to generate a multisensory experience for the audience, I had to go through an equivalent experience myself. I visited the scene of events, I breathed in the air of the place, looked at what was left to see, and visualised what was no longer visible. I touched.

The sensual aspect is always somehow inscribed in a creative action, which involves a close contact with the material. In this particular case our projects referred to the space, which had its social dimension. By means of the multisensory procedures we entered the space of the former town, but we also managed to develop an intimate relationship with the social element imprinted on that space. By means of the multi-sensory procedures we tried to convey that experience to the audience.

Chapter III

The Town that Never Existed

The story of Miedzianka in connection with the fate of its citizens motivated our artistic research. We were aware that each particular case or situation has the power of its individual meaning, but also that in every human experience there is a universal element that makes every story important in some way and able to convey a sense of general significance. Miedzianka, with its tragic and seemingly uncommon history, appears with all the strength of a metaphor.

Utopias

The small Silesian town, both a witness and a victim of history, brings to mind a picture of the utopian cities that have featured in all cultures since time immemorial. Those images of beautiful places, perfectly arranged and inhabited by happy people, were either an expression of hope for a better future, faith in man's potential for progress, or they reflected a conviction that the original ideal life condition of our ancestors is irretrievably lost. The concept of the Golden Age was connected with the belief that the world deteriorates in time.

The legend of Miedzianka as a place of abundant natural riches brings to the area of the former town geologists who examine the soil in search of precious minerals, as well as treasure seekers who comb through the old dumping grounds in hopes of finding something valuable or just interesting. Many of them are guided by the real passion of exploration. They are pilgrims rather than tourists. Sometimes they find slightly broken vials of medicine from the old pharmacy or characteristic beer bottles with the local brewery's logo… Some of these treasures can later be found in antique shops in Jelenia Góra. Tales about Miedzianka's history stimulate people's imagination. The town in its after-life becomes an Eldorado (fig. 12).

But the truly utopian dimension comes with the memories and visions of those who actually lost it, and those who learned about it and made an effort to care. The experience of loss and longing usually disposes us to idealize the object of these feelings. What can never be recovered – like childhood – gains some special value, uncomparable with anything else.

Miedzianka turned into a kind of utopia for researchers and historians, for Filip Springer, the author of the book about it, for Paweł Nowak, who dedicated his life to preventing the town from falling into oblivion, for artists who try to understand and visualise it, and for people who miss it. But for those who were resettled, and for their children, Miedzianka is not just an ideal or perfect place but more than that – it's their home.

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Visual and Multisensory Artistic Projects

As a result of our artistic group's investigation, visual and multimedia projects were developed. They include our commentary and impressions, but because of their nature these cannot be treated as final conclusions. They are pieces of art that are open to the interpretation of the audience. There were sixteen realizations presented at the exhibition in Jelenia Góra in autumn 2013. I'll take a closer look at just three of them, including mine.

The Latin phrase *Ubi sunt…?* (*Ubi sunt qui ante nos fuerunt*) – 'Where are those who were before us?' – was a popular motif in medieval poety, and it used to open a meditation on mortality and the transience of life. The installation I created under this title referred to the universal experience that passing away happens in space as well as in time. While the migrations of people mark horizontal lines in history, the processes of memory and decay occur vertically – generation above generation pile up in layers, get compressed, penetrate one another (figs. 13, 14, 15 and 16).

Marek Wasilewski, one of the Miedzianka project's co-ordinators, created a video titled *Psalm* in which, as if using a magnifying glass, he focuses on the story of one person – one of the town's citizens. A German policeman, Hugo Ueberschaer, committed suicide to avoid being resettled – to make sure he stayed in Miedzianka forever. Before he died, he had his tombstone prepared with inscriptions from Psalm 70, an urgent cry for God's help. In Wasilewski's video we can hear the text of the

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Psalm read in German. The camera dives into the ground – it is 'a moment of passage from the zone of light to the dark, from the outside to the inside' (Nowak 2013).

In his text for the exhibition catalogue Wasilewski portrays history as a black hole – immense negative energy, responsible for all the misfortunes Miedzianka's people were to experience. What we actually see on screen is the inside of an anthill. This vision reminds us that a personal fate is always achored in the context of some community. Another work in the exhibition discussed the paradox of an individual in history and their de-humanisation (figs. 17 and 18).

The last work I'd like to discuss is titled *Sphere*. The artist Ela Wysakowska-Walters describes it as 'a result of a single memory trace – a memory of blowing-up a protestant church'. *Sphere* is a comment on reality. The sphere floating in the air above the forest is as absurd as the forest itself, which grows from the ruins of the town. In 1967 the rem-

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nants of Miedzianka's protestant church, which had been gradually decaying and sinking into the ground, were blown up by soldiers of the Home Security Corps. Ela Wysakowska-Walters hanged her installation – a large sphere made from sheet zinc – in the place where a similar object crowned the church tower, fifteen meters up in the air. As Wojciech Wojciechowski writes in his exhibition review, *Sphere* "recalls the absent shrine and seems to express hope for a new stage in contemporary Miedzian-ka's history. […] Ela Wysakowska-Walters's work doesn't speak just about the past, it also poses questions about Miedzianka's future" (Wojciechowski 2013).

Art critic Joanna Mielech perceives the project as an attempt to materialize the memory of a town that has actually vanished: "Hanging in the space of Mied-zianka, the *Sphere* is a creation of hope that will never get a chance to be fulfilled […]"(2013).

I also perceive the *Sphere* as a materialization of a process or an idea, but I see rather the process of passing away in its aspect of separation, the defragmentation embodied in the object. Ela Wysakowska-Walters's project reminds us that – inspite of everything – passing away makes the world fall apart (figs. 19, 20 and 21).

The Experience (II)

The visual and multisensory character of our projects gives the viewer a chance to merge into the experience of an artistic/historical/interpersonal/universal situation instead of just learning about something.

An impulse acting on sensory organs has a different impact than a mere piece of information addressed to the mind. A message of purely intellectual character fails to convey the emotional richness and complexity connected with most human actions.

The greatest significance of a multisensory experience, however, is of an even more basic nature. The very fact of sensing – seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching – awakens our awareness of being, especially when made more intense as it usually is in a work of art. This simple mechanism has important consequences. If I exist – and I do, because I feel – then the world concerns me, it comes into contact with me, it invites me into a dialogue I want to engage in.

The audience for our projects were given different images to look at, vibrations to sense (in Daniel Koniusz's project), and voices to listen to (in the installation by Karolina Janikowska and video by Marek Wasilewski). And they left the exhibition with dust in their eyes, noses and mouths….

Their imagination was sparked. We hoped that the art would allow a new space of relation to develop, which included the citizens of Miedzianka from the past, the artists who created the works, the viewers, and perhaps people from the future who would discover the story one day and get involved in it.

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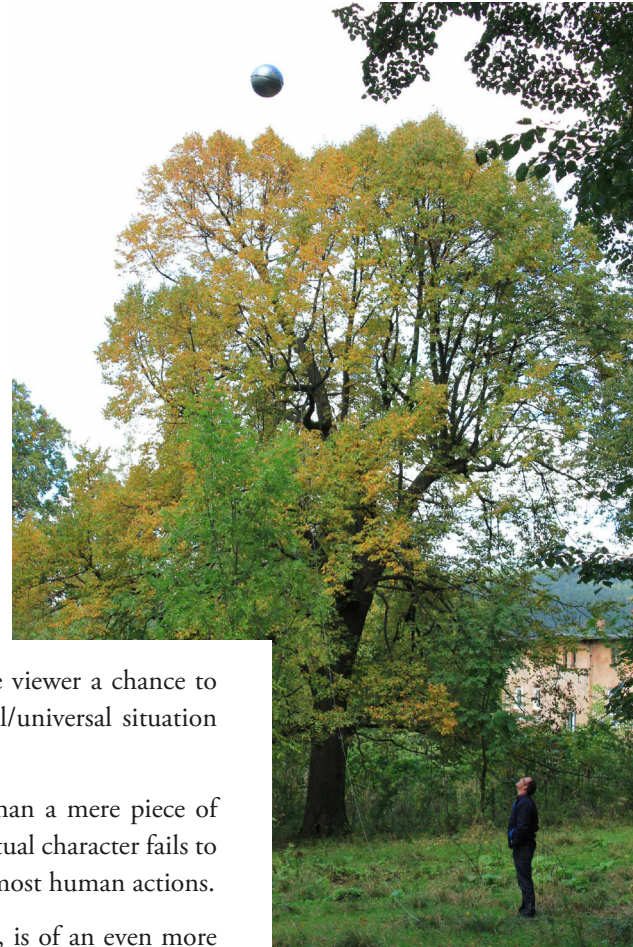
Conclusions

The small Silesian town is an interesting example of an urban settlement dominated by a specific branch of industry – mining. Its location in Central Europe and its decline in the particular historical moment make Miedzianka a special kind of symbol. The delicate and complicated issue of the interactions among people of different nations sharing the same quite peculiar territory demands an extra commentary, which would require special means of expression.

For us as artists this topic was an exciting challenge, which we faced armed with the creative tools of visual and multimedia arts. We were hoping to make a specific contribution to the debate.

We tried to re-enact Miedzianka's past. Some of us attempted to visualise it, others immersed ourselves in the narration of the land and its people. Each project participant worked out his or her own way of handling the subject. In most cases it was some kind of a synthetic approach. All of the artists aimed to revive Miedzianka's history in some dimension or to create a reality parallel to the actual one. The *Sphere*, *Psalm* and *Ubi sunt…* are results of a thorough analytical processes followed by transforming the story into a metaphor.

In art nothing is literal. Where the traditional methodology of history becomes insufficient, the need arises for some complementary message. That is a task for art. The sensitivity of an artist is fundamentally different from that of an historian or scientist, and can produce ideas that enrich those gained through science and other channels of knowledge. For art there is always a gap to fill.

Images and Credits

Fig. 1: Karolina Janikowska, Miedzianka 2013.

Fig. 2-7: Nina Hobgarska, Miedzianka 2013.

Fig. 8-12: Tomasz Mielech, Miedzianka 2013.

Fig. 13-16: Maria Dmitruk, 'Ubi sunt...', 2013.

Fig. 17-18: Marek Wasilewski, stills from the video 'Psalm', 2013.

Fig. 19-21: Ela Wysakowka-Walters, 'Sphere', 2013.

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Lost Cities as a Virtual Experience:
The Example of Pre-Earthquake Lisbon

The study of a lost city is always a great challenge. The city of Lisbon that was destroyed by the 1755 earthquake is more than a distant memory. In fact, we are mainly in the presence of an absent memory, because it disappeared abruptly, leaving few records of its former existence. Evidently, it is vaguely present in the districts around the castle, which were rebuilt outside of the adopted reconstruction plan. It is also perceptible through the existing fragmented and dispersed documents that survived the earthquake and Lisbon's subsequent history. However, the city centre that disappeared on 1 November 1755 was more than a vague collection of buildings, streets and alleys reminiscent of an extended past. It was a long-standing memory, consubstantiated in a lived urban and architectural setting that connected past and present. As such, it was able to generate, as all living cities are, a dialectic relationship between its material and social dimensions. The long and significant historiography of pre-earthquake Lisbon has been shedding some light on this lost urban reality. However, it fails to clearly reveal its all-encompassing character and to enable a visual outlook of the city as a whole. The project *City and Spectacle: A Vision of Pre-Earthquake Lisbon* was thus devised as a virtual, interactive and immersive laboratory of research on the lost city of early eighteenth-century Lisbon. It aims to recreate not only the city destroyed by the earthquake, on which the reconstruction plan was carried out, but also some aspects of its daily life, through the recreation of some events such as processions, bullfights, opera performances and the infamous inquisition exe-

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1. Georgius Braunius and Frans Hogenberg, Civitates Orbis Terrarum (Cologne, 1598). Lisbon in the mid-sixteenth century. Engraving. Lisbon City Museum.

cutions known as *autos de fé*. Its goals are the furthering of knowledge and debate on pre-earthquake Lisbon, but also the sharing of this experience with a wide audience in a context of social interaction.

This chapter will address the place of this project in relation both to Lisbon's historiography and to the study of lost cities in general in the realm of virtual archaeology and cyber-archaeology. As such, it will analyse its scientific, pedagogical and leisure potential and its new ontological value both as a scientific venture and a sensory experience.

The 1755 Earthquake in Lisbon as Both a Disaster and a Catalyst for Change

On the eve of the 1755 earthquake, Lisbon had long since lost its early-sixteenth-century status as the capital of the most prominent European colonial empire. However, it still held a significant place in the maritime trade network of the time. Its strategic location, facing the Atlantic at the western end of Europe, and its active role in the European colonial trade were responsible for its cosmopolitan character and large population (fig. 1).

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2. Dirk Stoop. The Palace Courtyard in the seventeenth century (1662). Oil on canvas. Lisbon City Museum.

Lisbon was from the early seventeenth century one of the most populous cities in Europe (Vries 1981), having reached a population of 191,000 inhabitants in 1755 (Rodrigues 2008). Lisbon also harboured a large number of foreign citizens, particularly merchants and sailors. African slaves were used as domestic servants, giving a distinctive imprint to daily life in Lisbon.

Lisbon was also known for its many convents and churches, the winding and narrow character of its urban layout and its dirtiness, 'the stinking Lisbon' as the Scottish architect Robert Adam emphatically labelled it (Fleming 1962).[1] In fact, Lisbon was not dissimilar to other European cities in the way it addressed urban challenges such as building regulations, sanitation, policing and lighting. However, the sharp contrast between the wealth generated by the Brazilian trade, manifest in the Baroque surge of early-eighteenth-century Lisbon, and the city's deficient response to those challenges was frequently noted by foreigners – particularly the British, who compared it to the steady progress of their own capital towards modernity (Macauley 1946, 1990) (fig. 2).

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1. Robert Adam knew about the 1755 earthquake in Lisbon while touring in Italy and aspired to be appointed by the Portuguese king to rebuild the city. In his letters to his family, he compares Lisbon to Edinburgh, his hometown, which was as well known for its lack of regular street cleaning (Fleming 1962).

3. Francisco Zuzarte (attribution). The Palace Courtyard on the eve of the 1755 earthquake (n. d.). China-ink drawing. Lisbon City Museum.

But Lisbon was also a city in transition. Notwithstanding the fact that the city remained in its core a medieval urban structure, a significant effort towards modernization is traceable mainly from the second half of the seventeenth century (Murteira 1999). The city council discourse reveals the development of a concept of the city as a coherent entity in need of all-inclusive management, which we can date back to the sixteenth century (Carita 1999; Murteira 1999; Caetano 2005).

The serpentine maze of the city centre was in some areas torn apart by the widening of some of its main streets, following regular patterns; new quays and public buildings were built; a 58-kilometre aqueduct was constructed, testing the engineering skills of Portuguese military engineering; old quays and roads were repaired and legislation was issued regarding the construction of new buildings or extensions of old ones (Pinto 1989; Rossa 1998; Murteira 1999). The Portuguese crown matched these endeavours by planning architectural ensembles that enriched the city centre and some adjacent areas (fig. 3).

This latter program of works largely benefitted from the Brazilian trade in gold and diamonds that had turned Portugal's King D. João V (1689–1750) and his son King D. José I (1714–77) into two of the wealthiest kings in Europe (Ayres de Carvalho

1962, Bottineau 1973, Mandroux-França 1989, Ferrão 1994, Calado, 1995, Rossa 1998, Delaforce 2001, Pimentel 1991, 2002, 2012, 2013, Câmara 2006, 2007, 2013, 2015, Januário 2008, Gallasch-Hall 2012). The aristocracy followed the crown's example and built several new palaces in the city.

Lisbon was slowly but relentlessly trying to modernize its image and seeking to adapt to the demands posed by its role in the commercial network of eighteenth-century Europe (Murteira 1999; Rossa 2002). On the eve of the earthquake, the Lisbon City Council was informing King D. José I that the public works of the previous decades had exhausted its financial resources (Murteira 1999).

At 9.30 AM on 1 November 1755 a violent earthquake shook Lisbon. Three shocks separated by only a minute were felt, with a total duration of nine or ten minutes, a rare and highly destructive occurrence. Estimated today as 8.7/ 9.0 on the Richter scale, the earthquake ruined Lisbon's city centre and caused severe damage in its adjacent areas. A powerful tsunami and a fire that lasted for five or six days completed the destruction. Several aftershocks followed, the first at noon, with almost the same intensity as the original quake (Paice 2008). In the first week twenty-eight aftershocks were felt in Lisbon, and some five hundred earthquakes shook the city before the end of 1756.

The 1755 Lisbon earthquake is considered the most powerful earthquake to have ever taken place in Europe. It was felt in a wide area extending from Portugal to Spain and North Africa. It occurred along the Azores-Gibraltar fracture zone (AGFZ), just off the S. Vincent Cape on the southwest coast of Portugal, and also badly damaged the cities of Seville, Cordoba, Granada, Cadiz, Algiers and Mequinez (Davison 1936; Baptista *et al.* 1998, 2003). Algarve fishing villages and other towns along the Alentejo Coast were inundated by the tsunami that followed the earthquake and reached as far as the coast of Brittany, southern Ireland and southwest Britain (Chester 2008).

For its role in the European trade, Lisbon held a significant colony of foreign merchants, of which the British were the most numerous. The letters written by some of these British merchants to their families at home are to this day the most vivid accounts of the terror and suffering undergone by those caught in the 1755 Lisbon earthquake (the British Historical Society of Portugal 1985, 1987). The trauma was extensive and severe. King D. José I refused to live again in a stone building and ordered the construction of a wooden palace. The court followed suit.

It is difficult to ascertain today the loss of human life with much accuracy. The lack of reliable census data from this period and the destruction of a significant number of the city's parish records do not help in this task. Estimates of the death toll at the time vary from 10,000 to 100,000 people in Lisbon alone. Recent studies suggest 30,000

to 40,000 deaths in Lisbon, including children, visitors and the injured that perished in the subsequent months (Pereira 2009; Paice 2009).

The material damage is even more difficult to establish. The Ribeira Royal Palace, with more than 250 years of history, the new Opera House, the new Patriarchal Church, the Custom House and several other public buildings, all the city hospitals, thirty-two palaces, and approximately sixty of the city's seventy-two convents vanished, and two-thirds of the city's building stock became unsafe for habitation (Moreira 1758; Sousa 1909, 1919; Boxer 1956; Estorninho 1956; Kendrick 1956; França 1983; Murteira 2004; Pereira 2009; Paice 2008). An innumerable number of records, books, works of art, money and goods disappeared in a few hours. Foreign losses may have reached twelve million pounds sterling, of which more than half were British losses (Kendrick 1956). Studies of the Portuguese losses propose very different estimates that range from 43% to 57% (Estorninho 1956), 32%–48% (Pereira 2006), 75% (Cardoso 2007) and 115–153% (França 1983) to 133–178% (Sousa 1928) of the nation's GDP. However, as Edward Paice claims, it is not possible to ascertain with any precision the value of the extensive loss of built heritage and its contents (Paice 2008) (fig. 4).

The 1755 earthquake in Lisbon shocked Europe to the core. The catastrophe was close to home whilst having a significant impact on the European maritime trade of the time. It quickly became the topic of the day, benefiting from the emerging media network brought about by newspapers. It occupied news headlines for more than six months, and as such it was probably the first event to deserve this media attention (Dynes 2003; Murteira 2004; Pantti *et al.* 2012). An impressive international aid campaign was put in place. From Britain, Spain, France, the Netherlands and the German States came money, goods, workers and technical expertise (Murteira 2004; Paice 2008).

More than a thousand texts were written on Lisbon as a result of the 1755 earthquake. The fast-growing production of copper engravings and etchings at the time also played a role in the widespread European interest in this city. In fact, several pictures were published portraying Lisbon before and during the earthquake (Moreira *et al.* 1998).

The discussion this literature generated encompassed many lines of thought (Araújo *et al.* 2007; Buescu and Cordeiro 2005; Murteira 2004; Almeida 2009). Religion and superstition were undoubtedly the main topics addressed. However, the discussion extended to the philosophical debate and furthered the search for a scientific explanation of natural catastrophes, particularly seismic occurrences. Optimism, as formulated by Gottfried Leibniz and Alexander Pope, deserved a strong criticism from Voltaire. In his works *Le désastre de Lisbonne* (1756) and *Candide ou l'Optimisme* (1759), Voltaire refuses to accept that ours is 'the best of all possible worlds' and argues that evil is a significant part of nature. However, it is Rousseau who points out

4. Bernardo de Caula.
View of Lisbon ruined by the 1755
earthquake. The Palace Courtyard (detail).
Quill pen drawing with sepia and grey ink.
National Library of Portugal.

the real difference in thinking, claiming to Voltaire that the scope of the catastrophe was in a great part a result of man's actions:

> "Moreover ... the majority of our physical misfortunes are also our work. Without leaving your Lisbon subject, concede, for example, that it was hardly nature that there brought together twenty-thousand houses of six or seven stories. If the residents of this large city had been more evenly dispersed and less densely housed, the losses would have been fewer or perhaps none at all" (Rousseau 1756).

In this, as we shall see, he is in tune with the Secretary of State to King D. José I, Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo (1699–1782), known in Portugal as the Marquis of Pombal, a title he would receive in 1770. His innovative approach to the catastrophe is considered today to be the first modern response to a natural disaster.

Pombal had already envisioned plans for Lisbon, which were supported by the experience and expertise of the Portuguese military engineering. The 1755 earthquake gave him the opportunity to develop an extensive program of works that would equip Lisbon to serve as the heart of a vast plan of reforms for Portugal. His aim was to reform and modernize the country within the political and social confines of ancient regime society (França 1983; Cardoso 2007). After the earthquake, his priority was to restore some sort of normality amidst the chaos. Most of the population had fled the city and refugee camps were settled on the outskirts of Lisbon. They lacked the most

basic needs, including water and food. Meanwhile, hordes of outlaws looted the ruined city, killing everyone in their path. Defying the odds, Pombal issued legislation regarding the punishment of the rioters, fixing the prices of basic foods, forbidding the uncontrolled reconstruction of any buildings in the city centre, setting up a team of medical experts to evaluate the risks of a plague and commissioning the old military engineer Manuel da Maia (chief engineer of the kingdom) to prepare a plan for the reconstruction of Lisbon (Freire 1758; Conceição 1818; França 1983; Almeida 2009). He also ordered a survey of all the destroyed properties, which included their location and dimensions, the identity of the proprietors, and a questionnaire to all the parishes about the effects of the earthquake (Freire 1758; Conceição 1818; França 1983; Almeida 2009). This last survey also included questions about any unusual phenomena witnessed that day that could provide vital information for the study of similar occurrences. As such, it represented the first politically centralized attempt to look at seismic phenomena from a scientific perspective. The reconstruction of Lisbon was a major enterprise that combined both political and legal expertise with a state-of-the-art approach to architecture and city planning. It was one of the first and most revealing examples of the ability of Enlightenment Europe to respond to natural catastrophes of this magnitude. A regular and standardized architectural and urban unit was constructed that took into account not only the economic and social challenges facing eighteenth-century European cities, but also their risk management response in the face of this type of adversity (fig. 5). However, the reconstruction plan also buried the old city and with it a significant part of its memory.

The Lost City as a Multisensory Virtual Reality:
City and Spectacle: A Vision of Pre-Earthquake Lisbon
The Historiography of Pre-Earthquake Lisbon: Attainments and Constraints

In Portugal, the study of the physical dimension of the city as a civilizational object, and of its built urban structure as a manifestation of certain historical circumstances, dates back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, with Lisbon being the first focus of interest. For instance, the neighbourhoods in which the material memory of Lisbon's pre-earthquake period better resisted the passage of time provide a good perspective on that era. Examples can be found in the configuration of certain streets, buildings and architectural elements, such as a window, an arch or a section of the castle walls.

This new approach to the city's past was owed to a group of scholars who, passionately curious about the past of the Portuguese capital, began investigating the history behind its most ancient neighbourhoods and disclosing this new information in the-

5. João Pedro Ribeiro. Copy of the adopted plan for Lisbon by Eugénio dos Santos and Carlos Mardel. Lithography (1947). Lisbon City Museum.

matic publications (Castilho 1879, 1902, 1884; Oliveira 1882–1911; Carvalho 1898; Sequeira 1906–09; Silva 1900; Brito 1911). The first of these scholars was Júlio de Castilho (1849–1919), and the first of such publications was his own *Lisboa Antiga: o Bairro Alto*, published in 1879 (with revised and improved editions in 1902 and 1904). Eight more volumes followed, dedicated to the *Bairros Orientais* and published from 1884 onwards.

Julio de Castilho's *Lisboa Antiga* was innovative due to its approach to the neighbourhood as a unit that conferred an urban and historical dimension to the sub-units, namely its buildings. The perception of the historical value of the buildings was the result of their architectural and material characteristics as well as their topographical implementation and the way in which they articulated themselves within the built urban environment (Rodrigues 2005). In the buildings constructed before the 1755 earthquake, these aspects were clear due to the formal and urban contrast established with the modern city. They were valued as a result of the knowledge they transmitted of the oldest ways of urban life, which were otherwise only accessible through iconography or through documentary and literary descriptions.

In *Lisboa Antiga*, Júlio de Castilho began a literary tradition with immediate followers and which eventually constituted itself as an autonomous thematic area – the Olisipography, a field exclusively dedicated to the study of the city of Lisbon (Branco 1994). This field is largely represented by works of monographic character or documentary surveys with the objective of raising awareness of the personalities, figures, habits, ways of life and social and urban practices of the past. The exception

goes to the studies of the engineer Augusto Vieira da Silva (1869–1954), which were dedicated to the reconstitution of the medieval walls of Lisbon, and which include the study of the layout of the buildings and adjacent streets. To achieve this, Augusto Vieira da Silva used a plan of the city destroyed by the 1755 earthquake, drawn up by the architects responsible for the reconstruction of Lisbon, namely Eugénio dos Santos and Carlos Mardel, whilst in preparation for the new city plans (Silva 1900). This plan allowed Augusto Vieira da Silva to compare the destroyed urban maze with the new layout, the first attempt at reconstituting the pre-earthquake urban configuration of Lisbon.

In essence, Olisipography, or the history of the city of Lisbon, did not exit these theoretical parameters until 1966, when the art historian José-Augusto França published in Portugal a doctoral thesis entitled *Lisboa Pombalina e o Iluminismo*. The book draws on the study of Lisbon rebuilt under the orders of the Marquis of Pombal after the catastrophe. The focus is on the reconstruction process and how it was determined by the aesthetic and ideological principles of the Enlightenment. In his study, for the first time in Portugal, José-Augusto França placed the urban form as an object of study in art history. He viewed it as an artistic fact determined by concrete historical circumstances, manifest in a conjunction of political, social and economic factors, such as political absolutism or the economic reforms introduced by Pombal, and its effects on the social organization of the country. Architecture and the remaining arts are also understood according to the urban form, thus arising as an integrative and regulatory framework of the parties through the aesthetic values of the Enlightenment (França 1987). With the establishment of this inter-dynamic relationship between space, architecture and art, the urban form is no longer the only issue at stake, but the city itself as an historical aggregation of society becomes the primary focus of art history. The concept of art history as the history of a city also began to be explored by Giulio Carlo Argan in the late 1960s, but in the context of the Italian cities of the Renaissance and Mannerism (Argan 1998) – a concept which José-Augusto França would reaffirm about forty-two years later in one of his last works dedicated to the history of the city of Lisbon, *Lisboa: História Física e Moral* (França 2008).

The publishing of the book *Lisboa Pombalina e o Iluminismo* was pivotal in the context of the historiography of art, of cities, and of Lisbon in particular. From it derived a set of studies that deepened the methodology and applied it to other periods of the history of Lisbon, namely the most ancient periods that preceded the earthquake (Araújo 1990; Rossa 1998; Murteira 1999; Carita 1999; Senos 2002; Caetano 2004).

In regards to eighteenth-century Lisbon, the works of Helena Murteira and Walter Rossa stand out (Murteira 1999; Rossa 1998). Whilst the work of Helena Murteira comprises an integrated analysis (both urban design and architecture) of the devel-

opment of the city between the late seventeenth century and the early eighteenth, Walter Rossa focuses essentially on the configuration of urban space, understood as the autonomous and individual study of urban form, which becomes one of the main topics of the history of Lisbon of the first half of the eighteenth century. This theme of the history of Lisbon's urban form emphasizes the viewpoint of planning and regularity as structuring values of a distinctively Portuguese urbanism, and even of an eighteenth-century Portuguese school of urbanism, which is thought to combine the geometric spirit of the Italian Renaissance treatises and the study of mathematics with the pragmatism of the military architectural experience in the Portuguese empire. This was the result of a political power needing efficiency and swiftness in the occupation and organization of its overseas territories (Correia 1995; Rossa 2002).

The other main topic in the history of eighteenth-century Lisbon is restricted to the available knowledge of the architecture and the interior of its main buildings, namely those that were part of the palace complex by the river Tagus and which disappeared with the earthquake: the Ribeira Royal Palace, the Patriarchal Church and the Tagus Royal Opera House (Carvalho 1962; Bottineau 1973; Mandroux-França 1989; Calado 1995; Delaforce 2001; Januário 2008; Pimentel 2012, 2013; Gallasch-Hall 2012). By studying the available documentary sources – such as iconographical sources (paintings, drawings and engravings), cartographical sources, city plans, administrative documents, letters and travel literature – authors attempted to establish what those buildings were like inside and out, how they were furnished and decorated, and how they were integrated into the artistic culture dominant in Portugal and Europe.

From the twenty-first century onwards, the application of digital technology to history and to the archaeology of a city through digital recreations or reconstitutions has made the amalgamation of urban and architectural structures possible. The present project is structured in this context, but it seeks to go even farther in that it aims to integrate in the same model the interior of the buildings, the sounds of the surrounding urban environment, and the representation of social events. Digital technology has made it possible to virtually synthesize the body of accumulated information and the current state of knowledge which has turned the city into a civilizational object of study in perhaps the most complete and complex manner.

The City and Spectacle Project: Origins, Aims and Scope

The interaction and bridging between cultural heritage and digital technologies has been promoting in the last few decades a consistent and widening debate about the way in which we understand the past, specifically in the context of art history and urban history, by imposing new challenges and different epistemological contours.

6. The Navy's Arsenal in Lisbon.

7. Ruins of the Royal Opera House. MM.
Paris, Pedegache and Jacques Ph. Le Bas [n.d.].
Engraving. National Library of Portugal.

8. Tagus Royal Opera.
Second Life recreation, 2005.

6.

By using Second Life technology in the OpenSimulator (OpenSim) version, the project *City and Spectacle: A Vision of a Pre-Earthquake Lisbon* was born with the purpose of virtually recreating the destroyed Tagus Royal Opera House, which had been inaugurated on 31 March 1755 with a production of *Alessandro nell'Indie*. The Opera was one of the most emblematic spaces of eighteenth-century Lisbon, conceived by the architect and set designer Giovanni Carlo Bibiena (1717–60). As a result, a first digital model of the theatre at a spatial, volumetric and scenographic level was presented in 2005 in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the 1755 earthquake (Câmara 2006).

As a result of the 1 November 1755 earthquake, the Opera disappeared from the urban fabric. Although it stood no more than six months, it has remained in the collective memory and the imagination of Lisbon's citizens to the present day. The memory of its unexpected disappearance, the witnesses' accounts, the few iconographic elements that have survived, in addition to a certain degree of controversy regarding its urban implementation, all led to an initiative to recreate this exemplar of artistic excellence, which in recent years has been the object of a pertinent, exhaustive and rigorous investigation.

The massing of this building would have clearly made an impression on Lisbon's waterfront. From the documentation to the analysis and comparisons of Lisbon's city plans prior to the 1755 earthquake, one realises that the location of the Opera House near the waterfront was intended to maintain a civic presence in the area. It would have occupied the vast space to the west of the Royal Palace and the India House, an area where today we can find the Navy's Arsenal (fig. 6).

Casa da Opera · Sale de l'Opera.
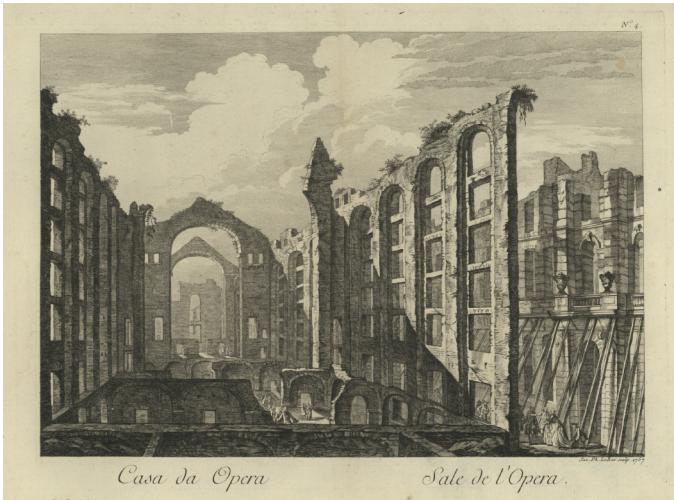
7.   8.

Recent studies based on analyses of the documentary and iconographic data point to a correlation between the old urban fabric and the post-earthquake layout, indicating coincidences between the deployment and location of the Opera House and the current building of the Navy's Arsenal (Januário 2008; Gallash-Hall 2012; Câmara 2015).

We believe that one of the most effective ways of evoking this forgotten heritage is to recreate the splendour and magnificence of the building, with the support of computer graphics technology, from the documentary and iconographic elements available to us. These include the well-known record of the ruins of the Opera House in an open engraving by Le Bas (fig. 7), a plan and longitudinal section, and engravings of the scenarios executed on the basis of the drawings of Giovani Carlo Bibiena for the two main productions shown there, *Alessandro nell'Indie* and *La Clemenza di Tito* (Câmara 2013). We thus proceeded towards a conjectural recreation of an interpretative and representative model of what might have been the interior of the Opera House.

The proposal for the 2005 modelling effort intermediated between the constructed theatre and the imagined theatre, and it aimed to understand the spirit of the epoch in which it was originally designed. The usage of an interactive platform like *Second Life* allowed not only for the reconstruction of the building's structure and appearance, but also its animation through the production of a *machinima* (low cost 3D animation) and the inclusion of an excerpt of the opera *Alessandro nell'Indie* presented at the inauguration of the building (fig. 8).

Taking into consideration the fact that a historical virtual reconstruction is always a conceptual task, we found it interesting at a later stage to deploy the Opera House into the urban fabric. We reconstituted its facade and extended the building into its urban context, the designated palace complex, and then proceeded to recreate the entire area destroyed by the 1755 earthquake. This provided the context in which to implement the reconstruction plan.

Choosing the Digital Tool: Second Life/OpenSimulator Technology in the Context of Historical Research and Visualization

In past projects, exhibits of heritage sites – whether on location, in a museum, or recreated digitally (either for specific haptic devices or for common technologies, such as a web browser) – have tended to show architecture and artefacts only, with limited interaction. They replace, in a sense, the traditional paper catalogue or brochure that is presented to visitors in a static form. Here we shall explore how to go beyond those limitations.

When using computer-generated models as part of a historical/heritage project, a few questions need to be raised beforehand. How do historians and archaeologists communicate their knowledge to the technical teams that develop the models? How is the researched documentation (architectural drawings, engravings, paintings, textual descriptions) incorporated into the model? How are decisions made when certain information is contradictory and/or incomplete, and how are those decisions recorded so that the whole process can be analysed and criticized at a later stage? How can a hypothesis be formulated and experimentally verified on a model? How easily can that model be changed if new documentation discredits some part of the hypothesis, or a different decision regarding the model is made? And finally, how can crowds be simulated inside the model, to test certain hypotheses, or to recreate historical events, as opposed to just presenting the architecture?

Early models of historical architecture that had been lost or changed were mostly considered experiments for testing technological advancements in graphics (Frischer *et al.* 2002). Historians and archaeologists only participated during the initial phases and were sometimes hired as consultants to validate the finished model. As a result, the historical accuracy and the validity of the models were often questioned, or at least criticized for the lack of transparency in the kind of decisions made over the documentation employed to create the model.

In the past decade, however, the research community in virtual archaeology has moved to adopt more systematic methodologies, such as the London Charter (Beacham, Denard and Niccolucci 2006) and the Principles of Seville (Lopez-Menchero and Grande 2009, 2012), where historians and archaeologists became the team

leaders of a multidisciplinary group involving the technical developers. The projects adopted an iterative approach in which at each stage the researched documentation would be stored in a database with appropriate metadata, and decisions to incorporate the documentation into the model would be properly recorded (Ryan 2001).

At the end of one iteration, the model would be critically analysed — a process that could also include external consultants — and the team leaders would propose further changes, adding more documentation, reviewing the acquired knowledge during the implementation of the model, and go to the next iteration, until the team leaders deemed that the formulated hypothesis was adequately tested and answered.

In fact, Forte (2014) suggests that the whole process of extracting information in digital form from a model that is being developed might constitute knowledge acquisition by itself, and is an important research result in itself, regardless of the original hypothesis. Developing the model, according to these methodologies, becomes a research field in its own right. Forte calls it *cyberarchaeology* (Forte 2008).

Still, traditional methods for developing 3D models of historical architecture follow a classical graphics development pipeline that is common to other industries, like computer-generated imagery (CGI) in movies or 3D models for architecture and computer games. The team proposing a model meets with the technical developers, who will then painstakingly create the models over a period of several months, until the finished models are finally rendered and can be presented to the research team for validation. Using modern graphics tools, the final model might be visualized from several angles, or walked through to check every element. Any change in the model, however small, requires a new start — waiting for days, weeks, or even months until the researchers are able to check the model again.

An alternative approach is to use virtual world technologies. Virtual worlds are persistent computer-generated environments where participants experience others as being there with them (Schroeder 2008); this definition focuses more on the sensory experience and the immersive quality of the participation in the environment. Beyond presenting 3D models, where users are 'detached' from the imaging (even if the model allows some degree of interaction), virtual worlds bring the participants 'inside' the simulated environment.

Among the several kinds of technologies enabling virtual world environments, there is a subset that allows users to create their own content and interactively display and even create content within a collaborative framework, often in real time. With these technologies, participants effectively design and create their own environment working 'inside' the platform. In such environments, created content is displayed in real time during the development cycle – there is no separate 'rendering' phase (a process

that can take several hours or even days) as each model is developed. Instead, developers 'inside' virtual worlds create models that are instantly visible for all participants.

This allows a different approach to developing heritage projects with 3D models. The team leaders – historians and archaeologists – no longer gather information that will be used to create the model, then hand the researched documentation to the developers and patiently wait until the model is done. Working 'inside' a virtual world is completely different: both historians and developers are logged in to the same environment in real time, discuss relevant details, and can manipulate the environment to explain to the developers what needs to be done. Similarly, developers can show the team leaders how the project is progressing, even in the middle of an interaction cycle, and ask historians for feedback or even to move some buildings around for fine-tuning. Historians, for example, can immediately move the camera's viewpoint (usually attached to the virtual representation of the user in the virtual world, commonly known as virtual persona or avatar) in order to compare the models with existing pictures, paintings, or engravings, and point out to developers where some changes have to be made (Forte 2009).

Such interactive, collaborative participation among all team members happens in a digital environment, where communication is either text-based (via chat and private messages, in real time or stored on 'notecards') or by voice-over-IP communications. In both cases it is easy to keep records and transcripts of the discussions, storing them in the project's database and later consulting them to validate the accuracy of the models. This is effectively an immersive virtual laboratory of archaeology (Câmara *et al.* 2009; Câmara and Murteira, 2010; Sequeira and Morgado 2013), in which historians and archaeologists are not merely passive observers of the 3D models developed by the technical team, but rather participate in the project during the development stage. At the end, once the models are validated, virtual worlds easily allow visitors to experience the 3D models, therefore simplifying the distribution of the content and raising awareness of the overall project.

Virtual worlds also allow more than mere 'virtual tours' of the environment. Because the environment can be programmed and populated with autonomous agents – 'bots' or 'non-playing characters' – crowds can be simulated using artificial intelligence, thus allowing researchers to explore how heritage sites had been effectively used (Maïm *et al.* 2007). In addition, visitors may be able to understand the context of the heritage site better by watching how bots populate the space and interact with the environment (Getchell *et al.* 2010). Virtual worlds also allow the staging of certain events, using actors or singers with their own avatars, to recreate a specific historical scene such as a public performance, which can even be attended by visitors (Bogdanovych *et al.* 2010). Such performances can also be recorded and distributed through other media.

In most virtual-world platforms, content can also be exported relatively easily in industry-standard formats, so that the same content can be used for developing mobile applications, interactive games (Anderson *et al.* 2010), or even used in documentaries and movies. An extensive description of all virtual-world platforms is beyond the scope of this chapter. For the project *City and Spectacle: A Vision of Pre-Earthquake Lisbon*, the choice was to use a relatively popular environment with a long track record, a considerable user base, technological maturity, and a promise of longevity in the future: Second Life® (Au 2008), a commercial product launched in late 2003 by Linden Lab. It implements a visually contiguous, persistent virtual world with user-generated content. It has attracted dozens of millions of users over the years, with a current active user base of about a million, and is available for all desktop but not mobile platforms. It supports haptic devices such as the Oculus Rift as well as 3D navigation devices, although it is perfectly accessible merely with a keyboard and a mouse. Content can be either built using the existing tools in the viewer interface – an open-source application developed originally by Linden Lab – or uploaded using industry-standard COLLADA files. It has stood the test of time as one of the longest-lived social virtual worlds and has been extensively used by many kinds of educational and academic projects (Allison *et al.* 2012; Duncan, Miller and Jiang 2012).

OpenSimulator (OpenSim) is an independently developed open source server platform launched in 2007 that allows precisely the same viewer application as Second Life to visualize content. Therefore content developed for Second Life will be viewed precisely in the same way under OpenSim. While some minor functionality is absent, and performance will vary according to the hardware used to run the server software, OpenSim shares almost all characteristics with Second Life, and research in one platform applies to the other, since content and programming can usually be exchanged in both directions. The main advantage of OpenSim over Second Life is its cost: it can be run on any available desktop computer without a licensing fee. The main disadvantage, however, is that Second Life has a much larger audience, and Second Life users wishing to connect to a virtual environment developed in OpenSim are required to register with a new avatar, even though they can use the same application to connect to both virtual world platforms.

In our case, the project was moved from a preliminary prototype done in Second Life to our own environment under OpenSim due to cost considerations. However, an effort has been made to keep the content fully compatible with both environments. Since content can be easily exported via COLLADA files, the whole project can easily be imported into future virtual world environments as they become available.

9. Aerial view of the Royal Palace complex. *City and Spectacle: A Vision of Pre-Earthquake Lisbon*, OpenSim version 0.7.5 Dev, November 2012.

10. The Terreiro do Paço (Palace Courtyard). *City and Spectacle: A Vision of Pre-Earthquake Lisbon*, OpenSim version 0.7.5 Dev, November 2012.

11. The Patriarchal Square and Church. *City and Spectacle: A Vision of Pre-Earthquake Lisbon*, 0.7.5 Dev, September 2013.

9.

The Outcome: A Novel Methodological and Epistemological Paradigm for Urban and Architectural History

"A city cannot be comprehended merely by a regular route within a particular district, the orderly distribution of public and private functions, or a set of representative and utilitarian buildings. Much like architectural spaces, with which the rest identifies, a city's urban spaces include interiors. A basilica's porches, the patios and galleries of public palaces, and the interior of churches are considered public spaces. In addition, the environment of private homes, the altarpiece of a church, and the decor of a bedroom or dining room can also be considered public spaces. Even the clothes and adornments worn by people in the street play a role in the scenic layout of a city" (Argan 1998).[2]

In this statement, Giulio Carlo Argan defines a city as a complex system of a variety of intertwined sets of human and biophysical factors, from topography to the social activities of its inhabitants. The *City and Spectacle* project draws on this premise with the intent of digitally recreating something beyond the mere virtual illustration of the Lisbon that disappeared as a result of the 1755 earthquake. The project chiefly aims to create a simulacrum capable of emphasizing the qualities and historical circumstances of that complex structure. To achieve this, the buildings are recreated not only

2. Authors' translation from the Portuguese edition of Giulio Carlo Argan, 1983, *Storia dell'arte come storia della città*.

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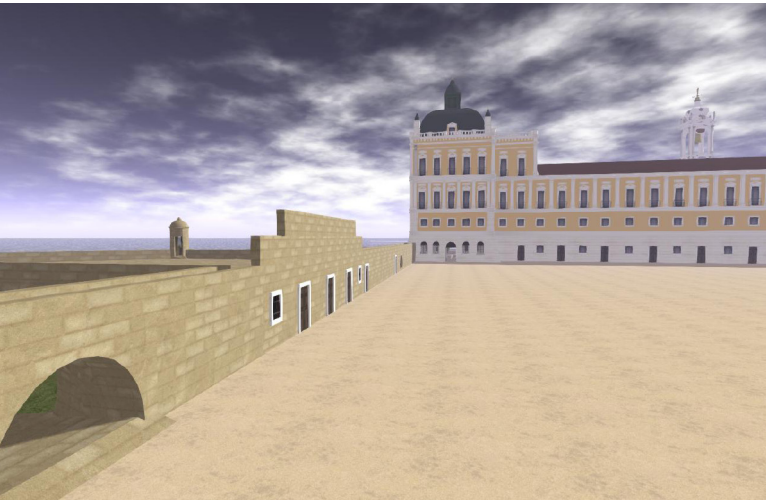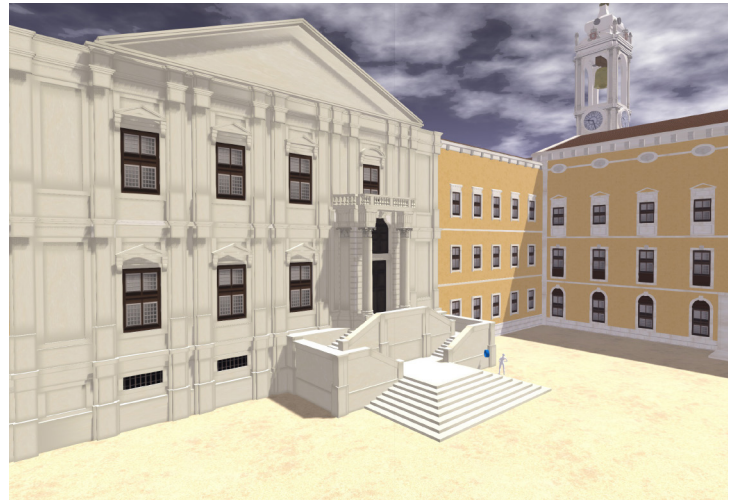
10.   11.

according to their individual value as architectural objects, but mainly in accordance with their urban value as a result of their contribution to the shape of the city. Hence the option of having decided to initiate the project by recreating the palace complex, perhaps the area of eighteenth-century Lisbon where the urban dimension of architecture is most evident. However, the ultimate objective of the project lies in the recreation of the entire area of the city altered by the post-earthquake reconstruction plan (fig. 9).

The technology of virtual worlds is used as a symbiotic system of accumulated information, of diverse types and origins, gathered by investigators from the written and iconographic documentation found in archives and national museums (fig. 10). The information is then converged into a three-dimensional, interactive and immersive simulacrum of Baroque Lisbon (fig. 11).

The technology used makes it possible to recreate not only the urban configuration of the city, but also the buildings and interiors of some of the most prominent city buildings (such as the Ribeira Royal Palace in the Palace Courtyard, the Patriarchal Church and Square, the Opera House, the Convent of Corpus Christi, and the All-Saints Hospital). In addition, an animated audio component will also be available, allowing users/visitors to experience the city's soundscape, such as the ambience of a market, a procession, a bullfight, or even an opera performance.

12. Virtual Museum.
August 2013.

13. The Royal Opera House (interiors).
November 2014.

14. The Royal Opera House, the Royal
Palace and the Shipyard.
November 2012.

12.

The recreation of the interiors of some of the buildings and events associated with them enhances the perception of their urban value with the perception of the role they played in the complexity of the urban structure, since they manage to depict how the various architectural approaches responded to the public aspirations and needs. As a result, the project will be able to recreate Lisbon on the eve of the 1755 earthquake in its spatial, architectural, social and cultural dimensions.

In addition to the physical and 'moral' dimensions of the city, the model also includes a virtual museum with search tools and text boxes that enable users to understand the historical context of the recreated urban structure. Through these search tools and text boxes, users are able to identify the conceptual and theoretical assumptions of the project, and the primary sources which most contributed to the aforementioned recreation of Lisbon (fig. 12). The project is still in its initial stage, since only the Royal Palace complex has been recreated so far, and that mainly in its outward physical appearance. The model also includes the first attempt at recreating the interiors of the Royal Opera House, of which there is scarce documentary evidence (fig. 13).

The text boxes and the virtual museum also require further development and updating. A meticulous study of the animation to be implemented in the whole model is being carried out by one of the authors of this chapter, Luís Sequeira, as part of a doctoral thesis.

One of the main challenges that the research team is facing is the lack of documentary sources of Lisbon prior to the earthquake, as well as the fragmented character of

13.

14.

the existent ones. Also, while the historiography of Lisbon is extensive and significant, it is unable to offer an all-inclusive view of the lost city.

Digital technology, namely virtual worlds technology, not only provides the tools to test and assemble evidence in a single model, but is also able to challenge the evidence and knowledge and demand their constant updating. By simultaneously allowing the creation and regulation of a model of a city, this twin component of virtual world technology is a fundamental part of a process through which one's imagination becomes one of the resources used by authors and users alike to represent, capture and comprehend the possibility of a past proposed by the recreation of a city (Morton 2013). It avoids the so-called *Disneyfication* of the model of a city and delimits the mediation of one's sensory perception of historical knowledge, which is potentially more exposed to the subjective projection of the views of the past, and of the individual memories of each user. The working hypothesis put forward is presented as an interactive and animated model that cannot include gaps in the information it provides. Therefore the different levels of accuracy in the documentary sources, or the lack of sources, as well as the diverse stages of research, need to be presented as such. The virtual museum and the text boxes guide users through the conceptual and methodological framework of the project, and prevent the visual simulacrum of a lost reality from being taken as an exact reconstruction of the past (fig. 14).

One can thus state that the perception of the complexity of the system that characterizes a city is coalesced in the socio-cultural and emotional dimensions of the project, which are enabled through its interactive, immersive, and multi-sensory compo-

nents. These components enable the user to interact with the recreated urban reality or with other users for scientific, pedagogical or merely recreational purposes. Such interactions are not subject to pre-determined routes. The users are free to choose their paths and are able to do so either randomly or informatively, as a result of the supporting text boxes that give historical context to the recreation of the city. This possibility allows for a performative digital model. In other words, it gives the model a mediating function in the development of one's consciousness of the complexity of the historical knowledge of the city, with direct consequences for its study and comprehension (Niedderer 2007).

The ability of users to immerse themselves in the model and interact with it and its creators concerns us for two reasons. First, the application of digital technology to historical recreation borrows from the role our emotions play in the cognitive understanding of the model of a city. Second, it is interesting for the process by which knowledge is transferred, particularly in regards to our understanding of a city's heritage and history. Knowledge is transferred either, as we previously verified, through our faculty of imagination, such as the historical understanding of a city's possible past, or through one's empathy with the city's model, namely in respect to the numerous route options one can take in the model, which can broaden the user's understanding of the history of the city resulting from its virtual recreation and its present significance (Smith and Campbell 2015). This also raises the idea of the experiential history so dear to Romanticism, which saw in the experience of the past conveyed by the ruins of cities like Pompeii, monuments like the pyramids in Egypt, and museums like the National Museum of Antiquities and French Monuments the most pedagogic and efficient way of transmitting historical knowledge (Blix 2009). However, the latter approach does not come without risks, namely that of falling into an overly populist, puerile, playful, superficial and even embellished view of the past – one closer to speculative illustration, a technologically sophisticated spectacle, or even a nostalgic narrative of the past than historical understanding (Lowental 2009). To this end, this project makes available the historical sources and critical biography it uses, along with the publications resulting from it. It provides text boxes with factual information, and gives users access to the scientific criteria used in the recreation of the city and its theoretical and conceptual basis. And it reveals the various stages of the technological process of recreating the city. This transparency and rigor conform to what is postulated in the London and Seville charters – that we should aim to restrict the model of the city to what is scientifically sustainable and verifiable, thus preventing its uncritical use and display (Witcomb 2013).

As a result of the interactive, immersive and multi-sensory components, the digital model goes beyond the 'rhetoric conventions of perception and the solidity of such

conventions as epistemological models' (Nechvatal 2001) as a means of acquiring the aforementioned laboratorial dimension. In fact, it acts as an experimental support for the collection and comparative analysis of the diversity of the historical sources in use, since it allows for the combination of literary descriptions with the iconological, panoramic or planimetric representations of the city. The project also allows the result of these procedures to be debated among researchers, IT experts and visitors in the context of the model itself, and allows it to be amended if necessary and updated in a timely and cost-effective manner.

The objective thus becomes to provide the user with a critical and integrated historical understanding. The laboratorial character of the project is therefore apparent in the continuous testing and collection of the available primary and secondary documentary sources, and in their translation into a visual working hypothesis that is in turn open to interaction. Contemporaneity is present not only through the historical research process but also by means of the interchange that the model provides with a wide audience of users. This fact obviously poses questions as to the epistemological and ontological character of this type of project in the context of historical research.

Conclusion

Since they allow one to understand the city from a critical and integrated perspective, digital models are converted into landscapes or, better still, into *memoryscapes* (Nutall 1991). In fact, strictly speaking, it is not the disappeared cities which are recreated, but the memories retained from them through the available documentation and their present interpretations. As memoryscapes, digital models are able to ontologically innovate, thus creating a new form of knowledge – digital knowledge. Such knowledge can translate itself through the convergence of factors constituting an urban reality, as a result of the memory of its inter-relations within a specific timeframe, and within a historic perception of the city. In the case of Lisbon during the first half of the eighteenth century, digital knowledge is manifested by its perception as a physical and material representation of a political and economic order, and of its social and cultural expressions as a spectacle.

We are thus confronted with a new and innovative research methodology, in that the recreation of a city does not constitute the final step through a mere illustrative synthesis of acquired results by means of traditional processes based on descriptive documentation, iconographic representation and archaeological interpretation. Instead, the recreation of the city embodies the main instrument of analysis of our object of study: the Lisbon that perished in the 1 November 1755 earthquake. It also tests the information obtained from the documentary, iconographic and archae-

ological sources within a virtual dimension that recreates the urban location, scale, disposition, and interior and exterior layouts of the lost buildings, in addition to their environment, spatial and landscape reality. The methodology used also verifies, in an urban space context, the articulation of the buildings in accordance with what is described or depicted in the documentation, or the architectural feasibility of their internal structures, as well as the contextual surroundings of their facades. Through Second Life technology it is possible to propose a recreation, debate it, and update it in a timely and cost-effective manner, whilst directly and simultaneously promoting the scientific, didactic and reconstructive dimensions and thus sharing the project with a wider audience.

The recreation in *City and Spectacle: A Vision of Pre-Earthquake Lisbon* is accomplished through a research methodology in which the virtual language is applied to historical research as a means of overcoming its heuristic and epistemological limitations. Concretely speaking, it allows for the long and complex process of researching the history of the city to be tested through its three-dimensional, immersive and interactive representation.

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On Real and Imaginary Spaces:
Strategies Towards a New Documentary Practice

Karina Nimmerfall

1. "For one to whom the real world becomes real images, mere images are transformed into real beings […]" (Debord 1995, p. 17).

In *Celluloid Skyline*, a project by the architect, author, and filmmaker James Sander, New York is described as two cities, "the first […] a real city, an urban agglomeration of millions' and 'the second […] a mythic city, so rich in memory and association and sense of place that to people everywhere it has come to seem real […]. A dream city of the imagination, born of that most pervasive of dream media, the movies" (2003).

Do the physical, "material" city and its cinematic representations exist independently of each other as two places in spatial juxtaposition? Or has the interaction of media-transmitted visual and spatial information already changed the way we perceive and experience cities so deeply that it creates new forms of realities, as the cultural critic and theorist Guiliana Bruno (amongst others) suggests when she writes that "[…] the landscape of the city ends up interacting closely with filmic representations, and […] the streetscape is as much a filmic 'construction' as it is an architectural one?" (2007).

These fluid boundaries between fact and fiction, and the role of mass media in the construction of realities, recall the concerns of the French filmmaker and theorist Guy Debord, who claimed that media images actively create realities. Film and televi-

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sion productions play an important role in this process, for example, because they can fictionalize real locations—a phenomenon that French geographer Thierry Joliveau, for instance, connects to the concept of *set-jetting*, a contemporary form of tourism where Hollywood blockbuster film locations are visited by fans and tourists (2009, p. 36-38). On the other hand, it also contributes to the "realization" of imaginary and fictional spaces, and the transformation of fictional representations into real places— thus shifting questions of representation toward the question of how media images can create and render new worlds (see also Steyerl 2008, p. 69). Examples include the Central Perks Cafe from the TV series *Friends*, which "came to life" as a worldwide franchise chain created by an Iranian businessman (*ibid.*, 37), or the still-rising trend of themed environments and the fact that Hollywood movies increasingly legitimize whole urban planning projects. This, in turn, creates a paradox: "[...] Hollywood cinema, an industry of artifice, contributes to the 'realization'—the action of making real—of imaginary and fictional places" (*ibid.*). The New York of the movies and the New York as a physical place have merged into a single "other" space.

2. The artistic research approach described hereafter aims to address precisely these overlapping levels of real and imagined spaces by making use of the changing concept of space, the so-called "spatial turn" found in the cultural and social sciences since the late 1980s. Based on the trialectics of space established by the French philosophers Michel Foucault (1997 [1967]) and Henri Lefebvre (1991 [1974]), in which space is understood no longer as something immutable or solely physical, spatial theories turned to an open concept of space. This was embraced and expanded by theorists such as the American human geographer Edward Soja. His theory of the "Thirdspace" completely opposes the idea of space as a material form, and by emphasizing the mental, imagined space, he claims an alternative critical spatial awareness in which all social, historical, imagined, experienced spatiality comes together:

"Everything comes together in Thirdspace: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history" (1996, pp. 56-57).

This radically expanded concept of space opens new possibilities for a documentary artistic practice, one that responds to the rapidly growing mediatization of our society: if applied to our contemporary concepts of space, one can assume that actual spatial structures and media images overlap, and together create the space we experience.

Based on current media theories that assume space and media not only determine each other and are mutually dependent, but also cannot be reduced to one or the other [1], the documentary strategies presented hereafter are meant to draw the attention of the viewer exactly to this phenomenon by describing spaces that are both real and imagined. The aim of this approach is not to portray a supposed "truth" in reality, but instead to highlight the possibilities of a fictional space and its space within a documentary practice. An example for this attempt is the photo-text-based series *Cinematic Maps*, photographed on location in New York City between 2004 and 2006.

3. *Cinematic Maps* is based on the popular US-American prime-time TV series *Law and Order* (1990–2010). In contrast to most other television shows that were mainly filmed in studios, *Law and Order* was shot on location in New York City, formally using aspects of Cinema Vérité for a documentary style. To support this concept and to achieve a maximum of realism, the show used precise addresses to frame the locations of scenes instead of commonly used establishing shots. But these descriptive addresses—heterotopias in a Foucauldian sense—are always slightly off, most likely for legal reasons. For example, the house number is always taken from a vacant parcel, a parking lot, a park, or an intersection, or just an unassigned address on the block.

Starting from these address inserts, and their appearance on the TV screen, the project documents—using the formal aesthetics of an establishing shot—the "real-life" locations in the city found behind these fictional addresses (figs. 1–3). This procedure does not intend to correct the facts, however, but is instead interested in developing an artistic method that treats the factual space of the city and the fictional space of the television series alike. With this form of documentary, image-texts—titles or texts that open up the image for a variety of imaginative associations—play an important and powerful role. For example, one can see an image of a typical apartment building in New York City, a picture of a "real" building in which people "actually" live but that is at the same time a stereotype, a film set, the home of a fictitious person, a crime scene, etc.—that is, a fictitious place that can often appear at least as real as reality itself.

Projects such as *Cinematic Maps* generated extended issues and questions, demanding an updated approach to documentary strategies—this not only in the context of the influence media image production has on the construction of realities, but also on our rendering of memory and history. Dealing with these issues, experimentation

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1. See also the dialectical concept of "MediaSpace" (Cauldry and McCarthy 2004).

THE APARTMENT OF
BILL TURBIT
106 LINWOOD STREET
BROOKLYN

1.

BANK OF NEW YORK
126 WEST 18TH STREET

2.

LASZLO AGENCY
7 WEST 36TH STREET

3.

with computer-generated spaces and visualizations opened up new possibilities and made it possible to visually recall a destroyed historic building—the notorious Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles.

4. The Ambassador Hotel, built in 1921 and torn down in 2006, served as centrepiece for the urban development of Wilshire Boulevard, one of the most important East-West corridors in Los Angeles. Furthermore it was linked to the history of the Golden Age of Hollywood, with its popular Coconut Grove Nightclub, and by serving as the location for the first Academy Award Ceremonies. In 1968, however, it became notorious when Robert Kennedy was assassinated in the hotel's kitchen. After the hotel

4.

was shut down in 1989, it was exclusively used as movie set for film and television productions, and ranged among the most widely used movie sets in Los Angeles.[2]

The three-channel walk-in video installation *Double Location (The Ambassador Hotel)* uses this phenomenon to digitally reconstruct the famous hotel lobby. This reconstruction, however, is not an objective architectural scale model based on archived floor plans, but rather an imaginative space that is grounded in medially transported descriptions of space found throughout a multitude of Hollywood films. Its spatial organization refers to iconic films such as *The Graduate* by Mike Nichols (USA 1967), mainstream hits such as *True Lies* by James Cameron (USA 1994), and *Pretty Woman* (USA 1990). It also includes many television productions, which often used the uncanny atmosphere of the deserted and dilapidated hotel.

In contrast to current trends in popular historiography that use computer-generated simulations to claim historical authenticity, the method used for *Double Location* is not intended to recreate the past by aiming to fill visual gaps. It addresses the perception and recollection of the real space of the hotel by considering the hotel's afterlife on celluloid. In contrast to the current demand for more and more realism in digital visualizations, its constructed space derives not only from the hotel's mediated atmospheres and memories, but also from the process of film editing. It does not draw on

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2. *The Center for Land Use Interpretation*, http://clui.org/ludb/site/ambassador-hotel-site

5.   6.

historical photos or actual plans, but instead uses the "void" between two frames of a cut as a method to generate sequences of rooms that no longer coincide with the actual room layout. This procedure, destined to fail in a traditional sense of documentary, and causing perspectives to appear distorted and proportions displaced, aims to reflect the fragmentary memory of spaces left by Hollywood films by incorporating their gaps and different modes of representation (fig. 4).

An important aspect in this context is the integration of the computer-generated animation into an active sculptural space that links physical and medial levels of perception in order to re-evaluate one's relation to mediated images and conventions. The spatial implementation in the form of a walk-in installation composed from projections and stage-like architectural fragments proposes that "[...] being on site [today always also] implies moving through a series of image spaces" (Frank 2009), suggesting that our experience of space is always generated from an interaction of the actual space with its fictional representations (figs. 5–6).

The outlined attempt to create a new form of documentary method, an artistic strategy that addresses the overlapping levels of real and imagined spaces in relation to the construction of history and memory, resulted in the multi-part project *1953*, consisting of the eighteen-part photo-text series *Index of Livability* (2011) and the architectural video installation *1953. Possible Scenarios of a Discontinued Future* (2013), which includes a script assembled from historic records.

5. *Index of Livability* (fig. 7) developed from research on the history of social housing in Los Angeles. The starting point was the lesser-known interest that the renowned Austro-American architect Richard Neutra took in socio-political design, manifested by his involvement in urban planning and affordable housing in Los Angeles during the late 1930s and 40s[3]. The project focuses on the six housing sites of Hacienda Village, Pueblo del Rio, Maravilla Village, Channel Heights, Elysian Park Heights and Progressive Builders Homes in the Los Angeles area, each of which were designed in part or in full by Neutra.

Built in the early 1940s, these developments represented the utopian vision of modernist large-scale urban planning. Based on the idea of the communal, they were planned with social areas, open green space, children's playgrounds and no automobile traffic. Some locations contained supermarkets, nurseries and primary schools, and some even formed the basis for co-operative movements and living experiments.

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3. See also Thomas Hines, "A Dream for Low-Cost Housing in Los Angeles That Went Astray: Planning: Architect Richard Neutra designed an innovative community of low-income housing in the late 1930s that could still work for the city", in: *Los Angeles Times*, June 21, 1992.

8.

Many residents of these projects were orientated to the political left, and were sympathetic to the perspectives of the left-liberal popular front, a fact that posed a threat to the government. The early 1950s was the era of McCarthyism and Cold War politics, as well as a new emerging form of "corporate modernism" (see also Parson 2005, pp. 6-7) shaped by economic growth and progress, along with the persistent belief that public housing was un-American. Together these led to poor maintenance and the neglect of most of the developments' buildings (Faletta 2015). Followed by severe decay and gang activity, these former modernist experiments now represented contemporary sites of "urban hell", and were either partially or fully demolished to room for more typical new suburban developments.

Researching this multi-layered history and its still visible impact on the geography of the city opened new perspectives on a multiplicity of spaces—the actual sites with their factual building relics, the archive with its collected and indexed documents and data, and the imaginary space of the utopian modernist vision. These multiple spatial layers and their reciprocal relationship recalled questions previously outlined with *Double Location (The Ambassador Hotel)*. How can we depict a historical space that has for the most part been physically lost, or was never even built, and is mainly remembered through archival records such as photographs, writings, newspaper clippings, or other types of media? What artistic strategies can be used to visualize these different layers of history, both factual and imagined? And most of all, what are the possibilities of fiction in this process, and how can we define its space within a documentary practice—a practice that might not only incorporate accepted formats such as film and photography, but also sculptural installations, appropriation and scripted texts?

9.

Index of Livability uses a method that combines visual and text-based research with strategies of conceptual art, aiming to produce a new perspective on history, one that does not intend to give answers, but instead to create a network of relations that formulates questions. Thereto the photographic images are inserted into a system of visual and text-based data. Each depicted site consists of three parts, or perspectives, each taking into account the different cultural, historical, social and political realities of the estates over the course of the past decades, with each image outlined in an accompanying and related text box. Integrated into this information is a list of references, enabling further independent research (figs. 8–10).

The black and white of the photograph supports the seemingly documentary nature of the current picture, and together with the colour separation guide on the left they refer to the process of (digital) archiving. At the same time these artistic interventions open up the image to a variety of interpretations regarding the political, geographical and cultural past, present and even possible future of the depicted site. And thus the interventions also question how we actually view and interpret documentary images and historical data. The artistic method used for *Index of Livability* does not aim to document the sites as they are today; it aims to describe a space that is created by the overlap of the actual, archival and imaginary space—areas that are mutually connected and determine each other.

This comes into play particularly in the second part of the project, in the architectural video installation and script *1953. Possible Scenarios of a Discontinued Future* (2013), which is based on Richard Neutra and Robert Alexander's unrealized master plan for Elysian Park Heights, at that time a new modernist form of utopia—a city within a

10.
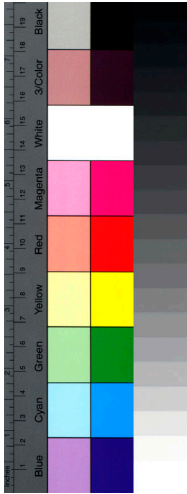
PROJECT:
Nueva Maravilla

DATE COMPLETED:
1974

REVISITED:
May 24, 2011

TYPE:
Public housing project

ARCHITECT:
Leon Glucksman, AIA

LOCATION:
4900 East César E. Chavéz Avenue,
East Los Angeles, California

SITE:
Located in unincorporated East Los Angeles, east of Boyle Heights and west of the San Gabriel Valley

FUNDING:
Public; operated by the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles

DESCRIPTION:
The complex is comprised of 504 two-storey buildings spread out amongst landscaped areas, giving the development the appearance of a middle-class condominium complex. Adobe-yellow plaster walls and the plain reddish roofs reflected the Mexican-American background of its occupants. With 350 family units, plus 147 elderly units, it is one of the largest public housing developments in the Los Angeles area.

SOCIAL FACILITIES:
Community center, senior citizen center, playgrounds, basketball court, communal flower gardens, handball court

REMARKS:
In the late 1980s crime in the Maravilla Housing projects skyrocketed, due to gang activity and other factors. Increased law enforcement was provided, as well as physical security improvements including fencing and security systems, to limit access to some housing complexes. Vigas, as well as painted murals, highlight the Hispanic presence. Two murals from the old Maravilla projects still exist today; they are now found on the exterior of the Community Development Commission.

FILE UNDER:
| Urban Redevelopment | Planned Communities | Garden Cities | Affordable Housing | Los Angeles | Richard Neutra |

RELATED PROJECTS:
Rancho San Pedro | Hacienda Village| William Mead Homes | Ramona Gardens | Pueblo del Rio | Aliso Village | Pico Gardens | Estrada Courts | Rose Hill Courts | Avalon Gardens

RELATED TOPICS:
East L.A. Walkouts | The Chicano Moratorium | Rubén Salazar Killing | 16th September Parade 1970 | Virgen De Guadalupe Murals | Maravilla Foundation | East Los Angeles Community Union | East Los Angeles Self-Government | Nueva Maravilla Redevelopment | La Rock | East L.A. Street Gangs | Historic Maravilla Handball Court Preservation | Maravilla Historical Society

city for a population of 17,000 to be located at the site of Chaves Ravine, a former neighbourhood that had once been just northwest of downtown Los Angeles.

Intended as centrepiece and prototype for citywide slum redevelopment, the controversial project from the outset[4] came to represent the lost battle for a vision of a "community modernism" (Parson 2005, p. 7) of the political left in Los Angeles, eventually affecting housing programmes throughout the United States. Supported by Red Scare politics deployed during the age of McCarthyism, Elysian Park Heights unleashed a highly publicized public housing war in which anti-Socialist polemic, private developers and real estate lobbyists, as well as the *Los Angeles Times* came to dominate general public opinion. After three years of detailed planning, the development project was abandoned in 1953, and the already cleared land of Chavez Ravine was used by the newly elected pro-growth government in a very different way: towards the end of the decade the social vision of Elysian Park Heights was replaced by Dodger Stadium, the new privately owned home for the major league baseball team relocating from Brooklyn (Cuff 2000; Parson 2005, pp 163-186).

The story of the Elysian Park Heights housing project exemplifies the end of one era and the beginning of another. After World War II the socially concerned Modernism of the

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4. In the first place the Mexican-American communities living in the Chavez Ravine area were threatened with dislocation and secondly architecture professionals expressed concerns about the projects density and the predominance of high-rise residential buildings. See also Thomas Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture* (University of California Press, 1994), 230.

political left emerged completely restructured with a new corporate aesthetic and a much more ambivalent ideology, giving way to neo-liberal urban development practices.

1953. Possible Scenarios of a Discontinued Future is dedicated to this shift in politics, represented both in the architecture and in the urban transformation of Chavez Ravine. Beginning with current footage filmed on location at Richard Neutra's progressive Channel Heights housing project (which had been destroyed in the late 1970s), dating from 1942 in San Pedro, the film follows traces of history to *Woman's Day* magazine[5], the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Elysian Park and Dodger Stadium, as well as to Neutra's own house, the VDL Research House. Through methods of montage, spaces and locations are blended and the built architecture 'projects' into the formerly designated site of the housing project (fig. 11). Inserted into an

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5. Richard Neutra published a "Do-It-Yourself" version of a chair he designed for Channel Heights in Woman's Day magazine in April 1947.

TIME CUT:

SPRING 1943

3.   EXT. MODERNIST HOUSING COMPLEX - DAY

Black-and-white establishing shot of a large, modernist housing development with geometrically ordered housing structures—a mixture of high- and low-rise buildings broken up by a mountainous topography, lush park land, and panoramic vistas. The white plaster facades of the buildings are combined with unpainted redwood, creating a bold abstract design. A tree branch is jutting into the edge of the well-composed shot.

MAN'S VOICE
(reporter, voiceover)

Coming upon the buildings on the shoulder of the green hills is like coming upon a vision of the future—of a postwar world where all workers will enjoy decent homes and surroundings. The apartments are tilted at angles specified to permit a maximum of sunlight. Each house is so placed that the living quarters face the ocean and the blank ends face the prevailing wind, which is frequently too violent for comfort. The diagonal placing of the units was developed to increase car maneuverability on the access roads and to gain privacy for the tenants.

3A.   INT. MODERNIST APARTMENT - DAY

Black-and-white wide shot into a 1940s-style, modernist living room with a view into a dining bay. The apartment has large panoramic windows and is equipped with simple, modern, yet very special-looking furniture made of wood. An easy chair made of plywood and plastic strap webbing is prominently placed in the frame. The kitchen table is laid out for two. Together with a bowl of fruit, two lit candles, and a vase with flowers, the set-up creates a photogenic still life.

MAN'S VOICE
(reporter, voiceover)

Following the teachings of the Bauhaus movement, local products have been used wherever possible. Colors are lively blue-greens, and rust reds, with touches of deep wine red and occasional cadmium yellow. Rugs are reversible jute, with narrow stripes of color, varying from room to room. Furniture wood is white pine, bleached a light blond and finished with two coats of lacquer. Note particularly the two easy chairs—one with arms and one without—that skip the whole problem of substitutes for steel springs with the aid of five fabric straps and a loose cushion. A number of fundamentally sensitive architects have testified that they are comfortable. Each tenant can supplement by adding color through hangings, spreads, throw cushions, and other incidental items chosen according to his taste. The easy chair was constructed to eliminate all doubtful upholstery substitutes. In manufacture, it runs as low as $9.50 and will replace in wear and comfort an upholstered chair for $30. The small room sizes make it difficult to get optimum use of space

(MORE)

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

without having furniture directly designed to fit restricted areas. Therefore, much consideration has been given to traffic lines to door swings, to the location of electric outlets and to all those factors which determine proper size and placement of furniture.

3B.   INT. MODERNIST APARTMENT - DAY

Black-and-white medium close-up shot of a young woman (very attractive, about thirty years old, pinned-up brunette hair). She is wearing a 1940s-style white blouse with padded shoulders tucked in the high waist of an A-line skirt.

CUT TO:

TENANT
(enthusiastically, to reporter)

I had never realized before how much we live by our senses, and how pleasant a good design can make that living. What is visible and what is not; from where and how the light falls, and on what; what good illumination really means—all these count so much on maintaining a "balance of nerves." I don't so much on all the technicalities of rheostatic control and head-gradual intensification, but I can tell you that head-aches and eyestrain are forgotten bills at our house. And so are colds. Sometimes I think the best thing of all is our extensive heat-radiating floor and ceiling. No attempt is made at our house to "heat and moisten a large volume of air," our house is like in that stuffy blanket. And it does make a difference if the whole neighborhood is planned, as well. Practically we don't live on a street at all, but on a park; no windows open onto anything but our own grounds.

3C.   EXT. MODERNIST HOUSING COMPLEX - DAY

Black-and-white establishing shot of one- and two-story modernist housing units surrounded by a beautiful, sloping, landscaped outdoor area. The complex seems new, and the small trees and bushes recently planted. A park path winds its way through the frame in a picturesque manner. We see the back of a girl (blond, shoulder-length, disheveled hair, about six years old) on roller skates and a boy (about four years old, dark blond hair) passing by on a tricycle.

CUT TO:

MAN'S VOICE
(reporter, voiceover)

The one-story, two-family house is more spaciously conceived than the usual project unit. The three-bed-room apartment for example, is provided with seven closets, including a large storage enclosure in the kitchen and a smaller tool closet right outside the door. The unusually wide bedroom closets with sliding doors have come to be regarded as the designing archi-tect's trademark. The horizontally sliding windows are inexpensive and they are easy to maintain. A further improvement is the arrangement for privacy, with the

(MORE)

12.

architectural installation (based on abstract fragments of Neutra's design), the work is accompanied by a fictional narrative—a script assembled solely from historical quotations by different political, cultural and intellectual stakeholders found in archival historical records (such as the personal manuscripts of Richard Neutra, as well as a variety of technical reports, newspaper clippings, congressional records, newsletters, architecture and lifestyle magazines, etc.) from the period between 1942 and 1962. In juxtaposition these quotations create a lively discussion that—when set within fictional scenarios—captures the opposing ideas and heated atmosphere of that specific time in history (fig. 12).

Through the use of text, film and installation, these locations are blended together, in turn blurring factual with fictional space. The result is the creation of an imaginary scenario—a portrait of a space that offers various imaginitive plans from the city's geographic and cultural past and future. It is just the kind of "Thirdspace" that Edward Soja describes as a place where all social, historical, imagined, and experienced spatiality comes together.

6. Since the late 1960's conceptual artistic practices within photography and film[6] have always included reflexive moments that question what is (re-)presented in an image or a work, pointing to the existence of an Other, one that is unrepresentable (Steyerl 2008, p. 62). Reflecting the debates in the field of postmodern critical studies, Edward Soja's concept of "Thirdspace"—a space of "radical openness" and "critical exchange"—perpetually expands to include an Other, thus opening creative possibilities and ways of re-thinking documentary practices. His strategy of "critical thirding-as-othering" aims to overcome binarisms, by suggesting "that when faced with a strict binary choice, with an either/or option, one should reject the imposed binary, deconstruct and disorder it, and force it open to a multiplicity of alternative choices"(Soja 1996, p. 1421). He opposes the dichotomy of the real versus the imagined, arguing for a third alternative that combines the "real-and-imagined" for a much broader understanding of "lived space".

By incorporating multiple perspectives that enable critical questions, contestation and renegotiation, Soja's concept of "Thirdspace" offers a working method for artistic investigations, especially in respond to the ongoing mediatization of our society and the transformation of our world from "a world of places and materiality to a world of representations and information, a world of vastly greater reach and less solid grounding" (Solnit 2003, p. 6).

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6. E.g. early photo conceptual work by Allan Sekula and Martha Rosler, or more recent projects by Omer Fast and Pierre Huyghe.

Images and Credits

Fig. 1-3: Karina Nimmerfall, from the photo-text series *Cinematic Maps*, 2004–2006.

Fig. 4: Karina Nimmerfall, *Double Location (The Ambassador Hotel)*, 2008, video still (monitor).

Fig. 5-6: Karina Nimmerfall, *Double Location (The Ambassador Hotel)*, 2008, installation view, Las Cienegas Projects, Los Angeles, 2011. Photo: Jeff Luckey.

Fig. 7: Karina Nimmerfall, *Index of Livability*, 2011, photo-text series, installation view. Photo: Jeff Luckey.

Fig. 8: Karina Nimmerfall, from the photo-text series *Index of Livability: Hacienda Village (II)*, 2011.

Fig. 9: Karina Nimmerfall, from the photo-text series *Index of Livability: Channel Heights (I)*, 2011.

Fig. 10: Karina Nimmerfall, from the photo-text series *Index of Livability: Maravilla Village (III)*, 2011.

Fig. 11: Karina Nimmerfall, *1953. Possible Scenarios of a Discontinued Future*, 2013, sculptural video installation. Installation view *Past Future Housing: Morgan Fisher / Karina Nimmerfall,* MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles, 2016. Photo: Jeff Luckey.

Fig. 12: Karina Nimmerfall, *1953. Possible Scenarios of a Discontinued Future*, 2013, detail (script). Photo: Jeff Luckey.

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An anthology about making representations of a city

Presented at the international conference *Challenge the past / diversify the future*, the contributions collected herein deal with ways of challenging accepted historical representations of the city by offering modes of recollection and perspectives that capture both multi-sensory and multi-layered aspects of urban context. As such, they offer new empirically grounded research on the experiences of the inhabitants, both past and present, whether individually or as a collective.

With a focus on the city as a space that is performed by a host of actants reaching across time through both materiality and memory, the authors critically address modes through which visual, audible, and multi-sensory representations can challenge, diversify or uproot conventions of urban representation.

Four projects. Four takes on making representations of a city.

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