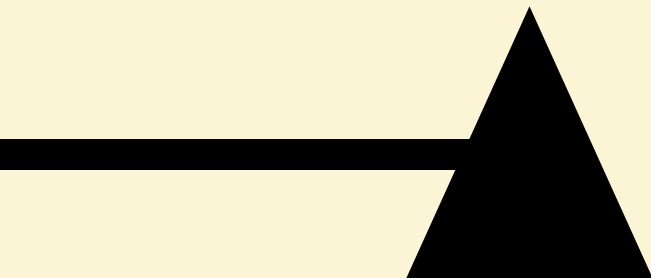

Prisms of Silence **Vaikuse prismad**

**Communicating
Difficult Pasts**



Symposium · Sümposioon

21–22 February 2020 · 21–22 veebruar 2020, Tallinn

Introduction

IN THIS SYMPOSIUM we seek to analyse and understand the prisms through which we could meaningfully reconsider significant silences. Our particular interest is in rethinking the silences about WWII, its aftermath and the Soviet era in order to explore how they could offer productive ways of understanding present social change. “Prisms of Silence” will discuss silence as a layered and complex phenomenon in the context in which relationships between communities and individuals often escape easy descriptions and have instead produced scattered histories and memories that remain divided.

The symposium “Prisms of Silence” brings together artists, curators, art historians and literary and theatre scholars from Czech Republic, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Chechnya, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, UK, France, Israel, Canada and Finland. This symposium forms part of the project “Communicating Difficult Pasts” (2018–20), which is curated by Margaret Tali and Ieva Astahovska and is held in collaboration with the Institute of Art History and Visual Culture at the Estonian Academy of Arts and the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art. The project concept evolves from the necessity to understand the darker sides of twentieth-century Baltic history, while setting it in a broader geopolitical context and including perspectives of minority communities.

In the course of this symposium we will ask: How can we think about silence,

right-wing movements and in relation to the repression of women and minority communities? Does post-conflict silence embed different qualities for different communities, and if so how could they be described? Which ethical and aesthetic strategies have been used to communicate the unspoken and silenced past? And how can oral history and vernacular memories challenge and shift official narratives of history, where difficult subjects like the relationships between antisemitism and communism, the Holocaust and Soviet deportations, often remain contested?

It might well be that trauma and silence can be analysed by crossing disciplinary boundaries. Presentations at the “Prisms of Silence” symposium will bring to the fore recent research that relies on art, literature, film and exhibitions as well as biographical material and revisits the role of the arts in analysing the persistence of memory conflicts. Presenters will discuss alternative ways of commemorating long-silenced traumas, revisit dissident activism based on missing histories of women and examine repression of different minority histories as well as ethical ways of communicating trauma and experiences of violence in the work of artists, writers and playwrights. By bringing together artists and researchers across disciplinary boundaries the symposium aims to add to the current frameworks of researching trauma and seeks for new methods for approaching long-silenced subjects.

We look forward to the discussions ahead of us!

Margaret Tali and Ieva Astahovska

Programme

Venue: Room A501, Estonian Academy of Arts, Põhja puistee 7, Tallinn

Day 1 Friday, 21 February	13:00	Lunch break
9:00– Welcome by Mart Kalm , 9:10 Rector of the Estonian Academy of Arts	14:30– Guided tour in the Vabamu 16:00 Museum, Toompea 8	
9:10– Introduction to the 9:30 Symposium by Margaret Tali and Ieva Astahovska	16:30– Session 3: WHEN SOURCES 18:30 FAIL: VISUAL LANGUAGES FOR ANALYSING PAST TRAUMA, moderated by Margaret Tali	
9:30– Session 1: ABSENCES, THEIR 11:00 IMPACTS AND MEMORY WORK, moderated by Violeta Davoliūtė, Vilnius University	Assel Kadyrkhanova , Image, Sound, Absence, Silence: Artmaking on Historical Trauma	
Asja Mandić , Suppression of Socialist Narratives of the Second World War and Its Modes of Visual Representation	Lia Dostlieva , “I still feel sorry when I throw away food— Grandma used to tell me stories about the Holodomor.”	
Annika Toots , The Exhibition <i>Displaced Time: 10 Photographs from Restricted Collections</i> as a Model of Remembrance	Kai Ziegner , A History of Violence	
Jan Miklas-Frankowski , A City of Amnesia: Marcin Kački’s <i>Białystok. White Power. Black Memory</i>	Aslan Ğoisum , Realms of Memory and Sources of Resistance	18:30– Dinner at the Estonian 19:30 Academy of Arts
11:00 Coffee break		
11:30– Session 2: DIFFICULT 13:00 KNOWLEDGE AND ARTISTIC INTERVENTIONS, moderated by Ieva Astahovska		
Margaret Tali , Thinking through Silence and Mental Health in Recent Documentary Film		
Zuzanna Hertzberg , Nomadic Memory: Artivism as Everyday Feminist Antifascist Practice		
Rasa Goštautaitė , Contested Soviet Legacy: The Case of the Petras Cvirka Monument in Vilnius, Lithuania		

Day 2 Saturday, 22 February	14:45– 16:15	Session 6: BREAKING SILENCES AND CHALLENGES TO CHANGING DISCOURSES, moderated by Ilya Lensky , Museum Jews in Latvia
9:30– Short keynote by Giedrė 10:15 Jankevičiūtė , Reconstruction of Contested History: Vilnius, 1939–1949, introduced by Margaret Tali		Shelley Hornstein , Architecture’s Dirty Little Secrets
10:15– Session 4: THE 11:45 UNSPEAKABLE AND AGENCY, moderated by Eneken Laanes , Tallinn University		Ieva Astahovska , On Collaborations, Silences and Lustration
Katrina Black , Absence as Form: Spaces of Articulation in the Work of Chantal Akerman		Maayan Raveh , The Implication of Silence—the Promised Land in Palestinian Christian Theology
Kati Roover , Project <i>Red</i>	16:15	Coffee break
Jaana Kokko , Oral History and Moving Image	16:45– 18:15	Session 7: THERE AND NOT THERE—WAYS OF GIVING VOICE TO THE PAST, moderated by Pille Runnel , Estonian National Museum
11:45 Coffee break		Eliina Niiranen , Finnish Linguist Pertti Virtaranta and Silenced Identity of Karelians in 1960’s Soviet Karelia
12:15– Session 5: PATTERNS OF 13:45 MUTING AND SILENCING, moderated by Siobhan Kattago , University of Tartu		Paulina Pukytė , Repetition of Silence
Franziska Link , Brawling Silences: Rereading Louis- Ferdinand Céline’s <i>Écrits</i> <i>Maudits</i>		Elisabeth Kovtiak , (Non-)sites of Memory of the Holocaust in Belarus: The Cases of Minsk and Brest
Mischa Twitchin , Refracting Implication: The Uses of Silence	18:15– 18:45	Final discussion and conclusions
Jan Matonoha , Dispositives of Silence: Injurious Attachments and the Discursive Emergence of Silencing; “Missing” Gender in Czech Dissent Samizdat and Exile Literature	19:00– 20:00	Dinner at the Estonian Academy of Arts
13:45 Lunch break		

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**Session 1: ABSENCES, THEIR IMPACT AND MEMORY
WORK, MODERATED BY VIOLETA DAVOLIŪTĒ
9:30–11:00**

ASJA MANDIĆ **Suppression of Socialist Narratives of the Second World War and Its Modes of Visual Representation**

The Second World War and its aftermath, as the most horrifying, chaotic and challenging time period in European history, has been contested ground for historians, especially in the former socialist countries. The memories of war, violence, genocide and Soviet repression had an impact on processes of identity formation for many nations. In more recent history, especially with the rise of nationalism and right-wing politics in the former socialist countries, the confrontations of resentful memories and conflicting views of histories often result in restrictions, repressions and rejections, and potentially violence and war. This paper touches on the ways in which the post-communist processes of the construction of new history, memory and identity in ex-Yugoslav republics (now states), operate as mechanisms of suppression of socialist narratives and its modes of visual representation, particularly those centred on celebration of the People's Liberation Struggle. The achievements of the People's Liberation Struggle, the partisan anti-fascist resistance movement during the Second World War, which was not only a war for liberation but also socialist revolution, provided fertile ground for building a new state and progressive classless society based on collectivism, solidarity, brotherhood and unity of all peoples and nationalities. Hence the glorification of this partisan movement and its ethical principles was part of the conscious politics of commemoration directed towards creating, preserving and transmitting memory and notions of identity through concrete material sites. Works of art as “sites of memory” (Nora), based on the Soviet aesthetic doctrine of socialist realism, guaranteed the unambiguous reception of appropriate content.

The paradigmatic example of such ideological keepers of memory are artworks from the collection of the former Museum of Revolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country that is—due to its multi-ethnic nature, resentful memories, conflicting views of the past and “competitive memories” (Rothberg)—still a battleground of nationalistic discourses potentially leading into another war. The paper analyses the curatorial/art projects that retrieved the works silenced twice—as a Soviet aesthetic doctrine after Tito's split with Stalin and as a communist ideological tool—and hidden in museum storage. It examines the potential of exhibitions as strategies of resistance through decontextualising, re-evaluating, re-examining, confronting (the exhibition *Treasures of Socialism*) and (re)framing narratives (the IRWIN exhibition of national heroes).

ASJA MANDIĆ is a curator, researcher and art critic who works as Associate Professor of Modern and

Friday, 21 February

Contemporary Art and Museum Studies at the University of Sarajevo. She completed her undergraduate and graduate education in Art History and Museum Studies in the United States of America and received a PhD from the University of Sarajevo (advisor Andrew McClellan, Tufts University, Medford/Boston). For seven years she worked as a curator of Ars Aevi Museum/Centre of Contemporary Art, Sarajevo. Over the years she has curated over twenty exhibitions, including the first pavilion of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Venice Biennale. She is the author of the book *Challenges of Museum Education* (Bosnian language) and six exhibition catalogues and is the co-editor of a catalogue/book *Treasures of Socialism* (with Michael Fehr) and the *Journal of Museum Education* (with Patrick Roberts). Her articles have been published in local and international catalogues, journals and books such as *Third Text* (2011), *GTA Papers* (2018) and *Participation in Art and Architecture* (2006). She was a Fulbright scholar at Tufts University, Boston in 2005/2006.

ANNIKA TOOTS **The Exhibition Displaced Time: 10 Photographs from Restricted Collections as a Model of Remembrance**

This presentation focuses on the perception of the Soviet past in Estonia through a site-specific exhibition, *Displaced Time: 10 Photographs from Restricted Collections*, by Aap Tepper at the Film Archives of the Estonian National Archives of Estonia (2018, re-opened in 2019; co-curator Annika Toots). The exhibition is based on archival materials from the restricted collections and analyses the processes of restricting and un-restricting materials during the Soviet occupation. *Displaced Time* brings out the uses and abuses of archives, and the power that the archives have in constructing collective memory and identity. By using a specific visual language, this exhibition becomes a model of remembrance, which engages with younger generations of Estonians and speaks across borders to an international audience who can relate to the issues of a traumatic totalitarian past. This presentation analyses *Displaced Time* as part of ongoing memory work, which aims to explain and understand the mechanisms of the Soviet period and its influences in contemporary society.

ANNIKA TOOTS is a PhD candidate at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Her research focuses on the role of visual arts in rethinking the past, and on the shift in perception of the Soviet past in

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Estonia since the 1990s. In addition, she has researched the dynamics between memory and art in post-Franco Spain. She has curated and co-curated several exhibitions that consider photography, memory and contemporary artistic practices, focusing on issues such as failure and nomadism. She is the co-author of the book *Artists' Spaces: 16 Studio Visits* (2017).

JAN MIKLAS-FRANKOWSKI **A City of Amnesia: Marcin Kački's Białystok. White Power. Black Memory**

Marcin Kački's book is a reporter's attempt to ask why the media coverage from Podlasie was "dominated by burning apartments, swastikas on walls, anti-Semitism, racism and football hooliganism". How was this possible in a place where Poles, Belarusians, Tatars and Jews have lived side by side for centuries. The reporter roams the whole of Podlasie: he visits Jedwabne, abandoned and repressing the memory of the "neighbors" crime, he confronts an assessment of Bury's activity among Belarusians and nationalists from Hajnówka, he is interested in both the inside story of the first Polish *in vitro* and the Eucharistic miracle in Podlasie's Sokółka, but he gives the most space to the regional capital Białystok. According to Kački, Białystok is primarily a town, which has "a problem with identity, because after the war it has written its history without a menorah and a mezuzah" (59), which is most conspicuously symbolised by Central Park—the city's landmark accessed by the "five most frequented streets connected with the largest roundabout in the city" (71). In 2014 Tomasz Wiśniewski made a short film to make the residents aware that under the park there is a Jewish cemetery. "Under tons of soil hundreds of Jewish matzevahs stand upright, and under them human remains wrapped in shrouds" (59). Białystok is a place of collective amnesia and repression of the Jewish history of the city, where neo-Nazi symbols are widely tolerated. Marcin Kački managed to create not just an impressive multifaceted anthropological case study of the society of a contemporary provincial Polish city. From *Białystok* emerges both a multi-faceted history of a city "without memory" and the shape of the whole Polish national community with xenophobia, nationalism and anti-Semitism.

JAN MIKLAS-FRANKOWSKI is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Media, Journalism and Communication in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Gdansk. His main area of research includes contemporary Polish reportage with a particular focus on Polish-Jewish relations and Jewish issues as well as the work of Czesław Miłosz. He is a founding member of the International Association for Holocaust Studies and a member of the Inter-

national Association for Literary Journalism and the Memory Studies Association.

Session 2: DIFFICULT KNOWLEDGE AND ARTISTIC INTERVENTIONS, MODERATED BY IEVA ASTAHOVSKA 11:30–13:00

MARGARET TALI **Thinking through Silence and Mental Health in Recent Documentary Film**

In my paper I contextualise two recent films as examples of working through "difficult knowledge" (Roger Simon). Both films, *Liebe Oma Guten Tag. What we leave behind* (2017) by Jūratė and Vilma Samulionytė and *Memory is our Homeland* (2018) by Jonathan Durand, tell layered and complex histories of the broader Baltic region by focusing on the life-stories of the filmmakers' grandmothers. They negotiate meanings of belonging during war-time chaos and uncertainties, and bring to the fore the injustices that evolved from the moving of borders, deportation and repatriation of communities that followed in the Lithuanian and the former Eastern Poland/ nowadays Belarus territories. What connects these two documentaries is their narrators' shared understanding of being intimately implicated by their grandmothers' experiences of war and a desire to understand how these experiences have shaped the third generation. I will bring to the fore how these two narratives discuss the relationships between mental health, transgenerational silence and storytelling.

MARGARET TALI is Mobilitas Plus Postdoctoral Researcher at the Institute of Art History and Visual Culture at the Estonian Academy of Arts. She completed her doctoral studies at the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis, University of Amsterdam, after which she taught Cultural Theory and Art History at the University of Groningen and Maastricht University. She's the author of *Absence and Difficult Knowledge in Contemporary Art Museums* (2018) and co-editor of *Archives and Disobedience: Changing Tactics of Visual Culture in Eastern Europe* (2016). She has curated several public discussion programs, most recently in the framework of *Communicating Difficult Pasts* (with Ieva Astahovska), *Archival Erasures and Artistic Activism* and *Impossible Dialogues* (with Inga Lāce and Katia Krupenikova 2015–17). Her current research deals with

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the complex memories of the Second World War in the Baltic States by focusing on practices of contemporary art and documentary film.

ZUZANNA HERTZBERG **Nomadic Memory: Artivism as Everyday Feminist Antifascist Practice**

Activist and artistic interventions into historical silences involve the risk of appropriation into a new dominant discourse that uses minority perspectives to reinforce oppressive ideologies that center commodifiable straight cis-male Western subjectivities. In my artivism, I seek to recall the long-erased memory and the disappearing history of leftist movements and activists, focusing on the stories of women and minorities that are often ignored in the majoritarian historical narratives.

In my talk, I will discuss four artistic interventions that address these issues. The *DĄBROWSZCZACY – DISAVOWED AMONG DISAVOWED* was an artistic performance bringing back the memory of the citizens of interwar Poland fighting in the International Brigades during the official national commemoration ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It worked as a symbolic dialogue between the canonised nationalistic history represented by the Tomb and the reality of actual anti-fascist organisation in interwar Poland. It was also queering the tradition of official gestures based on ritualised commemoration. My next piece, a series of six art objects entitled *Volunteers of Freedom*, was a direct response to the cooption of the International Brigade's story into a masculinist narrative about heroism. The project aimed to challenge the erasure of women from stories of heroic anti-fascist opposition and show the diversity of antifascist activism that went beyond armed interventions. In 2017, I staged another intervention into public memory with a plaque intended as a monument commemorating the International Brigades, the first such monument in Poland after 1989. Finally, in *A MICROCOSM OF THINGS: The Public and Private Lives of Collections*, I have queered the museum space by prioritising objects disregarded in conventional museal practice and reinterpreted them via abstract art to discuss the traveling ideology.

ZUZANNA HERTZBERG is an interdisciplinary artist, activist and researcher. Her practice includes painting, performance, textiles and assemblage. She is the author of installations and collages using archival materials. She is interested in the seepages of individual and collective memory, and in the search for identity in the mechanism of appropriation and reclamation of minority heritage, especially women's heritage, as well as issues of geopolitics and strategies of marginalisation of uncomfortable

narratives. She earned her PhD at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts (*Spaces of Ignorance*, 2018). She has participated in a number of exhibitions in Poland and abroad, is the co-founder of the Jewish Antifascist Block, a member of the Antifascist Coalition, and a member of the board of the Association of the Jewish Historical Society.

RASA GOŠTAUTAITĖ **Contested Soviet Legacy: The Case of the Petras Cvirka Monument in Vilnius**

The presentation will focus on contradictory narratives of the socialist past in Lithuania by drawing upon the case of the Petras Cvirka monument in Vilnius. In 2019, Vilnius municipality revived discussions about removing the monument to Petras Cvirka (built in 1959) due to his collaboration with Soviet authorities. Subsequently, myriad discussions emerged, with different stakeholder groups having distinct opinions regarding the fate of this monument. Some groups suggest that the monument should be removed, because it is a symbol of Soviet repression. Others propose leaving it intact due to its aesthetic, historic and educational value. There are also suggestions to leave the monument in place, but to offer a different interpretation to it through art. For instance, such attempts include the exhibition that was opened at VITRINA&Bench gallery, called *Monument and Censorship: To Remove or to Leave*, which presented artists' ideas for reinterpreting this monument. The presentation will discuss existing opinions regarding the case of the Petras Cvirka monument and will explore how art could negotiate contradictory beliefs and contribute to the discussion on understanding the Soviet legacy in present-day Lithuania.

RASA GOŠTAUTAITĖ is a PhD student at the Faculty of History at Vilnius University, Lithuania. She currently works on a dissertation titled *Contested Heritage and its Role in Cultural Heritage Politics in Post-Communist States*. Her PhD thesis addresses issues of contested Soviet heritage in Lithuania, situated in a wider context of post-communist and post-Soviet Eastern Europe. It is interdisciplinary research, interweaving heritage and memory studies, history and anthropology. Rasa has previously completed her MA in International Cultural Heritage Management at Durham University (where she graduated with First Class Honours) and holds a BA in History and Anthropology from Goldsmiths, University of London (where she graduated with Distinction).

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Guided tour IN THE VABAMU MUSEUM
14:30–16:00

Vabamu Museum

Vabamu Museum of Occupations and Freedom and its branch KGB Prison Cells are the largest active non-profit museum in Estonia. Managed by the Kistler-Ritso Estonian Foundation, the Vabamu Museum of Occupations and Freedom is a place that recounts the story of the Estonian people from occupation to independence and inspires people to maintain and stand up for their freedom. The museum was founded on donations by Olga Kistler-Ritso in the United States and was opened to visitors on 1 July 2003. Since the opening of the museum, the Ministry of Culture has consistently supported its activity.

The museum collection contains nearly 40,000 items: photographs, letters, and documents. The collection and storage of museum items began in 1999. Over the years, thousands have shared their stories with and donated items to the museum. The collections have received rare notebooks and letters written in the Gulag on Siberian birch bark, items which, at the time, provided a ray of hope in the midst of the darkness of camp life. During its 15 years of operation, the museum has hosted close to a million visitors, opened nearly a hundred temporary exhibitions and issued dozens of stipends. The museum collaborates on its exhibitions, conferences, seminars, discussions and film programmes focusing on recent history with many embassies, state agencies, non-governmental organisations and other partners in Estonia.

In 2018, the construction of a new permanent exhibition was undertaken at the museum. The new permanent exhibition focuses on occupations, resistance, recovery and freedom. We educate, engage and encourage Estonian people and visitors to reflect on recent history, feel the fragile nature of freedom and stand up for liberty and justice.

During the excursion we will go through the historical themes that touch upon Estonia's recent history, starting from 1939 and moving to the present. We will investigate the choices people in Estonia had to make during the Soviet and German occupations. What happened to those who stayed and those who escaped? To what extent can one be free in a society that is not free? What does freedom mean in a sovereign society? We will look for answers to these questions based on the fates of people.

For more information, please see: www.vabamu.ee

Session 3: WHEN SOURCES FAIL: VISUAL LANGUAGES FOR ANALYSING PAST TRAUMA, MODERATED BY MARGARET TALI
16:30–18:30

ASSEL KADYRKHANOVA **Image, Sound, Absence, Silence: Artmaking on Historical Trauma**

The 1930s famine in Kazakhstan was caused by the Soviet policies of forced collectivisation and sedentarisation. The famine and death toll of 1.5 million people contributed to the elimination of historical nomadism in that country. For many decades, it has remained a taboo subject, which has contributed to scarcity of documentation. Kazakh State Archives contain no more than five photographs documenting instances of suffering in contrast to numerous staged photographs of the achievements of the collectivisation campaign.

In my art-led research into the memory of this event, I studied existing photographs and witnesses testimonies to understand how it might be “inherited” by later generations—how memory of it is reconstructed through retellings, imagination and appropriation. My hand-drawn animation *All the Dreams We Dream* that derived from this research is a non-linear narrative that assembles these memory-fragments into one oneiric scene of ‘someone else’s dream’. It emphasises the nature of traumatic memory, which is both present and absent, haunting and elusive, and unlocated in time and place.

This paper will focus on my use of image and sound in the film. In particular, I will discuss how I use sound in regards to the theme of awakening that Mladen Dolar sees as “the riskiest moment”, so as to point to the concentrationary nature of this memory.

ASSEL KADYRKHANOVA is a visual artist and PhD candidate at the University of Leeds. She works across painting, drawing, installation and moving image. Her doctoral research concerns cultural memory and trauma in post-Soviet societies, with a particular focus on Kazakhstan. She looks at art’s capacity to act as a medium of memory, questioning how art can help our understanding of complex interrelations of individual and collective memory and formations of cultural identity in post-traumatic and post-totalitarian societies.

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LIA DOSTLIEVA **“I still feel sorry when I throw away food—Grandma used to tell me stories about the Holodomor”**

The experience of the Great Famine in Ukraine, the Holodomor, is not a subject that was openly spoken of in survivors’ families. Suppression was the most common treatment. Sometimes, this trauma was passed on to the next generations only as a kind of dark and gloomy bedtime story narrated by grandmothers to their grandchildren. But also, this trauma had always silently existed in everyday practices such as taboos related to throwing away unwanted or spoiled food, especially bread. And it still exists—even now wasting food is strongly connected to a subconscious feeling of guilt and shame. There are no logical reasons for this guilt—it does not originate in reason but rather in the “postmemory” (Marianne Hirsch) of this trauma. Simultaneously, in our generation, these practices started to overlap with ideas and practices of responsible consumption related to climate change and critical approaches to late-capitalist society.

Those subconscious feelings were the starting point for the post-photography research project realized with Andrii Dostliev “I still feel sorry when I throw away food—Grandma used to tell me stories about the Holodomor.” To illustrate and better understand this sense of guilt, we started recording traces of all the food we’d been throwing away. These prints were later collaged with pieces of found photos depicting anonymous and unrecognisable landscapes. Landscape here is used as a direct opposite of the Holodomor’s traces in postmemory of subsequent generations since mass deaths by hunger leave no traces in the landscape—unlike other collective traumas, which have their exact geographic locations and their traces can still exist in the form of “places of memory”. The project attempts to find a new visual language that could be used to talk about mass traumas and looks for a more personal level of expression of traumatic experiences.

LIA DOSTLIEVA is an artist, cultural anthropologist and essayist from Ukraine, currently based in Poznań, Poland. She has a degree in Cultural Anthropology. The primary areas of her research are trauma, postmemory and agency of vulnerable groups. She works in a wide range of media, including photography, installations and textile sculptures, and has exhibited her works in Germany, Italy, Ukraine, Poland, Austria and elsewhere.

KAI ZIEGNER **A History of Violence**

The main focus of my PhD thesis is on the artistic examination of my own personal experience of violence. Being born and raised in the GDR I wanted to investigate the effects of the political turnaround in my home country. I have therefore chosen the timeframe from 1986 to 2016 and 21 specific events related to different acts of violence as the subject matter of my work. The research methodology that I have developed is hybrid—it encompasses archival research, documentary and conceptual photography and experimental writing. Central themes are guilt, pointless violence, misleading role patterns, a dysfunctional father-son relationship, placelessness, disorientation and various entanglements in historic and contemporary Nazism. I travelled to all 21 places to photograph each site on colour and black-and-white medium-format film. Later I reviewed these photographs and started to write about them in different textual forms, including short stories, fictive dialogues, poetry and as a metareflexive journal. Eventually I transformed all the material into one experimental book. I consider it a means of communication and labour that enables deeper understanding of severe social change. It is a polyvocal composition intended to be used as study material in teaching or as a template for artistic processing (e.g., screenplay, playbook, piece of music, dance piece, etc.). I have shown excerpts from the book at different international events, mostly in the form of performative lectures and/or close readings, in which I actively involve the audience. At the “Prisms of Silence” symposium I will present a compilation of photographic and textual fragments of my work that allow for a critical discussion of violence as a research topic.

KAI ZIEGNER is an artist and educator, born in Plauen, GDR. He studied German Philology, Journalism and Political Science in Leipzig, Photography in Berlin and Fine Arts in Zurich. He holds a master’s degree awarded by Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) and is currently a PhD candidate in artistic research as part of the PhD cooperation program of Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK/CH) and the Linz University of Art and Design. Ziegner has worked as a journalist, filmmaker, author and photographer and is currently teaching artistic research strategies at Zurich University of the Arts and has taught before in Germany at the University of Potsdam. He is a member of the artistic research group founded in 2012 at ZHdK by Professor Giaco Schiesser. Ziegner’s works have been shown in several international solo and group exhibitions and published in different

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magazines and anthologies, including *Ojo de Pez*/Madrid, *Sekai*/Tokyo, Jovis Publishers/Berlin. The main focus of Ziegner's artistic research is the experience of structural violence in private and public space, on the onset and aftermath of social change in East Germany and on the experimental rethinking of history as an artistic research strategy. He is also interested in further development of artistic teaching methods for Bachelor, Master and Doctoral level education. He lives in Berlin with his wife and twin sons.

ASLAN ĠOISUM **Realms of Memory and Sources of Resistance**

In his presentation Aslan Ġoisum will talk about a selection of his artistic projects that touch the hidden history of forced migration in the twentieth century. He will disclose the background in which these works were created marking the context of the colonial past and present in the North Caucasus.

ASLAN ĠOISUM lives and works in Grozny, Chechnya. He employs various artistic media—mainly the moving image, sculptural installation and paper-based techniques—that articulate the collective and individual upheaval marking the North Caucasus history. This inevitably entails analysis of the colonial legacy of the Russian Empire, in all its guises. His recent exhibitions include: *Blood and Soil: Dark Arts for Dark Times*, Contemporary Art Centre (Vilnius, 2019); *Beautiful World, Where Are You?*, 10th Liverpool Biennial (2018); *How To Live Together*, Kunsthalle Wien (2017) and *People of No Consequence*, Museum of Contemporary Art (Antwerp, 2016).

Saturday, 22 February

Short Keynote 9:30-10:15

GIEDRĖ JANKEVIČIŪTĖ **Reconstruction of Contested History: Vilnius, 1939-49**

The presentation aims to reveal the attempts to reconstruct, in a relatively small art exhibition, the reality of an extremely complicated period of both Vilnius' and the whole of Lithuania's history of the mid-twentieth century. This was a period of significant geopolitical change (the political regime in the area changed 5 times in 10 years) and essential demographic transformations took place, as the Jewish community was exterminated during Nazi occupation and the Polish community was forced to 'repatriate' to Poland, mainly to former German cities, by Soviets after WWII. This historical period was long silenced, then seen in conflicting ways caused by different national perspectives: Polish, Jewish, Lithuanian and Bielorrussian, and to a lesser extent, Russian.

The exhibition preparation, which will be presented in my talk at the Tallinn symposium, represents the attempts to unite conflicting perspectives and to construct the basis for a dialogue that might help to create a common historical narrative. The exhibition will open at MO museum—the new center of modern art and culture of Vilnius—in September 2020, as part of a bigger project under the common title *Difficult Age*, which will consist of two shows. The second, curated by Polish curator Anda Rottenberg, is devoted to three influential “war infected” Polish artists: Alina Szapocznikow, Andrzej Wajda and Vilnius-born Andrzej Wróblewski.

The main challenges preparing the concept of the Vilnius part of this double show were caused by the necessity to choose the most important facts that could be accepted by all the bearers of the memory of the chosen historical period and could be explained in a convincing way with the help of documentary material and/or artefacts. The ways used to resolve this task will be illustrated during my presentation.

PROF. DR. GIEDRĖ JANKEVIČIŪTĖ is a Senior Research Fellow at the Art History and Visual Culture Department of the Lithuanian Institute for Culture Research and she also teaches at the Vilnius Academy of Arts. Her current field of interest lies in the artistic culture of occupied countries, which she explores by focusing on the situation of Lithuania in the middle of the twentieth century. The results of her research are published in the form of

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academic papers and exhibition catalogues, for instance, the Chapter “Art as a Narrative of the Everyday Life in Lithuania During World War II” in *The Art of Identity and Memory: Toward a Cultural History of the Two World Wars in Lithuania*, edited by Giedrė Jankevičiūtė and Rasa Žukienė for the series Lithuanian Studies (2016), and the catalogues *Under the Red Star: Lithuanian Art in 1940–1941* (2011) and *The Realities of Occupation: Posters in Lithuania during World War I and World War II* (2014, with Laima Laučkaitė). Currently she is writing a monograph on Lithuanian art and artistic culture from 1939 to 1944 and curating the above-mentioned exhibition *Difficult Age: Vilnius, 1939–1949*.

Session 4: THE UNSPEAKABLE AND AGENCY, MODERATED BY ENEKEN LAANES 10:15–11:45

KATRINA BLACK *Absence as Form: Spaces of Articulation in the Work of Chantal Akerman*

Across documentary and experimental films, performance and writing, Chantal Akerman utilised silences as a locus of energy within her work—as a structuring aesthetic device, as a form of resistance and as an ethical framework for relating. These silences most typically find form in her written and spoken dialogue, whether vocalised or made felt as the unutterable, and do so particularly through her relationship with her mother Nelly, who informed (directly and indirectly) her entire body of work. As the child of a survivor of Auschwitz, Akerman’s silences both communicate a fragmented transmission of trauma, and implicate the political history her mother endured after fleeing Poland as a young woman to reside in Belgium, only to be captured shortly after her arrival. As such they are active silences; silences consciously cultivated, despite the troubling affective states this calls forth, in order to protect and explore alternative forms of memory, relation and history.

This paper will read instances of intersubjective address and relation in her work that preserve silences as their structuring principle, even as they tangle with the estranging consequences of doing so. It will do so through reading two films in particular, *No Home Movie* and *News From Home*, in which correspondence and distance form a dedicated space between mother and

daughter. Akerman’s precisely calibrated use of such silences might be read as a kind of re-organising—an intricate braiding of form and affect through which they continually transform. In doing so, as I will argue, they resonate with alternative suggestions of how we might consider agency within the context of such painful historical narratives. Troubling the ongoing effects of traumatic pasts across a range of personal and political scales, silence is repurposed here to be understood not only as the consequence of a brutal and totalising erasure, but as a space of complex articulation.

KATRINA (KAT) BLACK is a writer, researcher and program curator based in London, and part of Jupiter Woods, an organisation and platform for interdisciplinary research and practice. She recently completed her MRes (with Distinction) in Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths University, with a specialism in Art History. Her research focused on silences and omission as structuring principles in the work of filmmaker and writer Chantal Akerman and the poet and writer Rosmarie Waldrop, and considered how movements between such absences might be utilised as feminist tools for exploring subjectivity. Her forthcoming work includes: a screening and conversation at the ICA London titled *Feminist Films on Work & Protest*, organised in collaboration with the feminist film journal *Another Gaze* and followed by a conversation with historian and theorist of radical psychiatry Hannah Proctor and filmmaker and performance artist Michelle Williams Gamaker; an essay for *Another Gaze* on desire in the work of Marguerite Duras and her film *India Song* (1975); and a commissioned essay for South London Gallery and Film & Video Umbrella, for the solo exhibition of filmmaker Sophie Cundale, in March 2020.

KATI ROOVER *Project Red*

In my presentation I will share my project *Red*—a film and sound installation—along with the process and thoughts behind the images and sounds. The film *Red* (2015, 21:45 min) was shown in a room where all the walls were painted bright red and the floor was covered with a red carpet. Later in the same year I finished three sound works about the silence and unspeakable in my family. The film *Red* consists partly of the material I collected and filmed myself and partly of historical archival material. It progresses chronologically with the history of Estonia, starting with the repressions during the Soviet era. The project developed in one year as I interviewed three generations

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of women I am related to. *Red* was an emotionally overwhelming working process, dealing with difficult memories about Soviet repression and the marks it left for the women I am related to. While working on the project, my main aim was to give voice to the women and their thoughts about political and historical events that have affected their lives over generations.

KATI ROOVER is multidisciplinary artist living and working in Helsinki. She approaches environmental changes through poetic imagination, creating works that combine her research with a broad range of perspectives; for example, human-non-human interaction, natural sciences, ecological and decolonial thinking, mythical storytelling, feminist new materialisms, elemental cinema and documentary essay film. She works with moving image, sound, photography, text and installations. Roover received her Master of Fine Arts degree from the Academy of Fine Arts (University of the Arts Helsinki) in 2016. www.katiroover.com

JAANA KOKKO **Oral History and Moving Image**

In my presentation I will talk about my film research titled *An Hour of a Working Woman*, which I have been working on since 2017 in Helsinki and Valga/Valka. The main written source of my research is the memories of Hella Wuolijoki (1886–1954). Wuolijoki was a Finnish-Estonian playwright, leftist politician, wood trader and farmer. She grew up in Walk in the Russian Empire and after the general strike in 1905 she adopted the Marxist theory of historical materialism, before moving permanently to Finland. Between 1905 and 1954 she was a significant actor in Finnish cultural and political life.

When I read Wuolijoki's memories and descriptions I became obsessed with finding the place she grew up on the border of Estonia and Latvia to ask myself a naive question: What is the window view in the moment of political awakening? Asking this question led me to collect oral histories of the women who live in the area. Moving image and audio are not only collecting, but also making narrations. The way an artist makes research differs from that of a historian: How does an artist listen to oral history? What kind of moments are important for an artist to select and mediate further? The land marks the person that inhabits it with its forms, flowers, trees and potatoes. And the violence is there too, of course.

JAANA KOKKO is a Helsinki-based visual artist with a background in arts and economics. She works

primarily with video, but also in the fields of photography, text and drawing. Her works revolve around the subjects of language, representation and alienation with the eye of a feminist. In her practice Kokko is often interested in “polylogs”, showing through dialogue how our world consists of different individuals and their interpretations of reality in their historical context. Since 2011 Kokko has been working on her practice-based dissertation in political and social arts and is particularly inspired by Hannah Arendt. She has lectured at the Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki, in the program Time and Space since 2016.

Session 5: PATTERNS OF MUTING AND SILENCING, MODERATED BY SIOBHAN KATTAGO 12:15–13:45

FRANZISKA LINK **Brawling Silences: Rereading Louis-Ferdinand Céline's Écrits Maudits**

Louis-Ferdinand Céline's antisemitic pamphlets *Mea Culpa*, *Bagatelles pour un Massacre*, *L'École des Cadavres* and *Les Beaux Draps*, published in France between 1936 and 1941, are amongst the most atrocious textual phenomena of violence during the Second World War. The pamphlets, while having been reprinted in France during the Occupation several times (they were Céline's first commercial success), later quietly disappeared from Céline's official record of work. In the aftermath of his incarceration in Denmark and his return to France, Céline himself wished for the pamphlets to never be reprinted. Essentially, they remain a blind spot. One edited collection was published in Canada in 2012; in France, publication is forbidden altogether. This silence, however, does not mute the texts themselves: digitised versions circulate through antisemitic networks, actively contributing to the continuance of antisemitic propaganda. In light of this, it appears to be a gross misjudgment to dismiss these texts as a “mistake” or “phase” in Céline's writing that was eventually overcome. Rather, reading Céline while excluding his pamphlets creates a dangerous silence that protects his role as a canonical figure in French literature and distorts the perception of his writings. Researchers are slowly acknowledging this, quickening their interest in the pamphlets and allowing for philologically as well as politically more appropriate readings to emerge.

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This presentation aims to contribute to these endeavors. In the proposed reading, the specific role of silence as a rhetorical instrument will be focused on and put into context, considering the pamphlets' historical role in France and their (international) reception. Thus, I hope to shed some light upon the dynamics of muting and silencing propelled by these texts, as they are in effect—and need to be—withstood, even today.

FRANZISKA LINK studied Comparative Literature, Philosophy, Finnish Language and Culture and Slavic Studies at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) in Munich, University of Helsinki (Finland) and State University in Saint Petersburg (Russia). Since 2018, she is a doctoral candidate at IDP Mimesis at LMU and currently works on her PhD thesis *Drastic Voices in the Works of Fyodor Dostoevsky and Louis-Ferdinand Céline*. In addition to her academic work, she contributes regularly to the *Yearbook of Finnish-German Literary Relations* (Jahrbuch für Finnisch-Deutsche Literaturbeziehungen).

MISCHA TWITCHIN **Refracting Implication: The Uses of Silence**

The hinge between parts one and two of Krzysztof Warlikowski's extraordinary production (*A*)*pollonia* presents a devastating staging of silence, when an SS officer in occupied Poland offers a "choice" to the father of a woman who has been caught hiding Jews. The officer proposes, in an exercise of sadistic power, that "only the person who hid the Jews is going to be punished" (Warlikowski et al., 2014: 37), allowing for the father to take the inevitable death sentence upon himself. A decade after its premiere at the Avignon Festival in 2009, the production is still in Warsaw's Nowy Teatr's repertory and poses profound questions to its audience about both the ethics and the rhetoric of self-sacrifice. Ranging from the example of Iphigenia to that of Yad Vashem's recognition of the "righteous among the nations", the performance also questions concepts of the tragic in the relation between theater and history, exploring its "uses" within nationalist politics. The question of silence here translates this relation into an intergenerational familial one, with its disturbing sense of implication—as Michael Rothberg (2019), for example, has recently addressed. While always culturally particular to their time and place, the significance of these questions are nonetheless shared across the former Eastern bloc countries, where (as Assmann [2015], amongst others, has discussed) a complex experience of silence—both official and personal—informed claims to legitimacy in post-1945 (and pre-1990) cultural politics. In this

presentation, I will explore this hinge scene in (*A*)*pollonia* as, precisely, a prism for exposing these politics as they continue to resonate within examples of contemporary cultural production.

MISCHA TWITCHIN is a Lecturer in the Theatre and Performance Department at Goldsmiths, University of London. Amongst his research interests, he is a member of the Memory Studies Association Arts Research Group. His book, *The Theatre of Death—the Uncanny in Mimesis: Ta-deusz Kantor, Aby Warburg and an Iconology of the Actor* is published by Palgrave Macmillan in their Performance Philosophy series, and examples of his performance- and essay-films can be seen on Vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/user13124826/videos>.

JAN MATONOHA **Dispositives of Silence: Injurious Attachments and the Discursive Emergence of Silencing, 'Missing' Gender in Czech Dissent Samizdat and Exile Literature**

In a brief summary, the talk will provide an overview of several books concerning the topic of silence and silencing (Jansen, 1991; Jaworski, 1993; Thiesmayer, 2003; Glen, 2004; Maier-Katkin, 2007), of which a collection edited by Maria Louisa Achino-Loeb (2006) is of particular further relevance, as is a book by Jean Clair (1998), given its fruitful usage of the term hegemony (Antonio Gramsci). Some attention shall also be paid to the volume *Censorship and Silencing* edited by Robert Post (1998), especially a contribution by Judith Butler, as well as the book *Languages of the Unsayable*, edited by Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (1989), which features a range of authors from Geoffrey Hartmann and Jonathan Culler to Jacques Derrida. Most of all though, the paper draws upon works by Wendy Brown and Judith Butler and the terms wounded attachment and injuring identities, respectively. Thus, in the present paper, I particularly focus upon a subliminal backlash against feminism, paradoxically within the very cultural context that founded its legitimacy in the discourse of human rights, equality or justice; namely, the context of the literary activities of the then anti-establishment, dissident activism in pre-1989 Czechoslovakia. Following the terms "injuring identities" and "wounded attachments", I attempt to criticise Czech underground and dissident literature for the paradox of internal unproductive contradiction, arguing that while fully absorbed, constituted and arguably blinded by

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its fight against the official regime, it was ignorant about the gender oppression that it itself—directly or indirectly—participated in. Focusing on Czech dissent and exile literary texts from the 1970s and 1980s, the paper discusses ways gender was excluded or silenced by interpolating readers through positive, dignified values, which were, however, at the same time wounding and dis-empowering.

JAN MATONOHA (M.Phil., 2006, UK; PhD, 2008, Charles University, Prague) was a Newton Fellow in the UK in 2012–13. He has published a number of articles and two books in Czech by Academia (the publishing house of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague), and has contributed to several others, including *Expropriated Voice: The Politics of Gender Culture under State Socialism*, edited by Hana Havelková and Libora Oates-Indruchová (Routledge, 2014). For about six years, he was a member of the editorial board of the bimonthly *Česká literatura* (Journal for Czech Literature). His research interests are the theory of literature, twentieth-century Czech literature, feminism and gender studies in literature and (non-human) animal studies in literature. Currently he is a member of the network COST (NEP4DISSENT) and INTER-COST, administered by the European Commission of the EU.

Session 6: BREAKING SILENCES AND CHALLENGES TO CHANGING DISCOURSES,
MODERATED BY ILYA LENSKY
14:45-16:15

SHELLEY HORNSTEIN **Architecture's Dirty Little Secrets**

Architectural historian, Robert Jan van Pelt, writes that it took him a decade to come to the awareness that the “crematoria of Auschwitz might be as important to our understanding of architecture as the great cathedrals”. Giulio Camillo’s *Theatre of Memory*, as described by Frances Yates in her book *The Art of Memory*, marked van Pelt when he studied under her. Camillo demonstrates, according to Yates, that a visitor must “perceive with his eyes everything that is otherwise hidden in the depths of the human mind”. Architecture’s dirty little secret is its silent role in what it can be designed for. Put another way, how can we begin to think about how the role of architects and the architecture they design have been silenced for whatever participatory

role they (building and architecture alike) have played in sometimes violent pasts. I propose to consider the exhibition *The Evidence Room*, curated and created by van Pelt and his team for the 2016 Venice Architectural Biennale. It is an unusual exhibition regarding the re-presentation of forensic evidence that van Pelt presented at the libel trial of Holocaust denier David Irving. At the trial, van Pelt argued successfully about the role architecture played for the Nazi project and specifically in the construction of the gas chambers at Auschwitz. I will argue that the exhibition assembles forensic objects to challenge ideas that move between human rights issues, architectural form, aesthetics and memory studies in order to examine what it means to display reconstructions as evidence of a silenced past. How do representations of evidence invite the viewer to peel away the silencing layer to reckon with the past?

SHELLEY HORNSTEIN is Professor of Architectural History & Visual Culture at York University. Themes she explores are located at the intersection of memory and place in architectural and urban sites, cosmopolitanism, nationhood and how architectural photography structures a conversation about place, citizenship and human rights. She is currently writing a book entitled *Site-Seeing: Monumental Itineraries and Architectural Tourism*, as an investigation of how architecture is the key to tourism through tangible and intangible places. Hornstein is the recipient of the Walter L. Gordon Fellowship, Canadian and International research awards and is on the advisory boards for several academic journals. She holds the inaugural eLearning Award for the School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design, York University, 2014. Her most recent book, *Losing Site: Architecture, Memory and Place*, was published by Ashgate in 2011. Her other books include: *Capital Culture: A Reader on Modernist Legacies, State Institutions, and the Value(s) of Art* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2000), *Image and Remembrance: Representation and The Holocaust* (Indiana University Press, 2002) and *Impossible Images: Contemporary Art after the Holocaust* (NYU Press, 2003). A graduate of the Université de Strasbourg (Marc Bloch), France, Professor Hornstein has taught at York University since 1985. Her courses include Memory and Place, Cultural Cartographies, Paris as Modernist Dream, The Celluloid City, No Place like Home and The Metropolis Revisited.

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MAAYAN RAVEH **The Implication of Silence—the Promised Land in Palestinian Christian Theology**

We say to our Christian brothers and sisters: This is a time for repentance. [...] This is a time of repentance for our silence. [...] Repentance for our concern with our institutions, sometimes at the expense of our mission, thus silencing the prophetic voice given by the Spirit to the Churches. Thanks be to God that our Church raises her voice against injustice despite the fact that some desire her to remain silent, closed in her religious devotions. [Kairos Palestine, 2009]

To the religious scholar, and certainly to those who try to understand the interconnections between the religious and the political, silence may be a prime asset. It may point to the power of religion in relation to politics and vice versa: when do theologians feel that religious value overcomes political or social value or interest, and they can speak up freely; in contrast, when do the political or social values outweigh the religious ones, and should the theologian remain silent?

In this paper I would like to examine the case of the silence of the churches in the West around the theological significance of the establishment of the State of Israel and the significance of the divine promise. Since the establishment of the State of Israel, many theologians in the Western World have avoided an open discussion of the issue of divine promise and have chosen to remain silent due to its sensitivity, as it bears essentially on Jewish-Christian relations after the devastating results of the Second World War, and especially the Holocaust.

An in-depth examination of the place of the “Promised Land” in Western Christianity will allow us to learn about both Judeo-Christian relations today, and the Church’s involvement in political conflicts. To that end, I will briefly outline the changes underway in Western Christian discourse on Judaism from World War II onwards. Next, I will present Palestinian Christian theology, which accused the Western Christian world of silence, and offer to change the discourse on the promised land from a discourse that focuses on Jewish-Christian relations, to a discourse on justice and human rights, thus allowing Christians in the West to break their silence.

MAAYAN RAVEH is a PhD candidate in the Department of Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and a fellow of the PhD Honors Program at the Mandel School for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, and the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for The Advancement of Peace. Maayan has a BA in Arabic Literature and an MA in Religious Studies, both from the Hebrew University. Her research

focuses on Christian theology in relation to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and on the tension between theology and politics. Born and raised in Jerusalem, Maayan is also an active member of several interreligious dialogue and peace organisations in Jerusalem.

IEVA ASTAHOVSKA **On Collaborations, Silences and Lustration**

In my presentation I will focus on how the difficult themes from the recent past are communicated in today’s Latvian cultural environment as attempts to overcome the “amnesia” or “structural silence” that has followed the break with the Soviet past. One of the most pressing issues is discussion about collaboration with the Soviet occupying power, since the so-called lustration process, differently from a number of other Eastern European countries, is very recent in Latvia. After the long delay of this process, a special scientific committee was set up to study the KGB archives and communicate information about its documents to the broader society. However, the work of this committee faced political pressure and inner disagreements, and to a certain extent failed to achieve its objectives. More successful in addressing these difficult issues have been the fields of investigative journalism, documentary cinema, theater, literature and, although less actively, visual arts. In cultural productions that interpret the legacy of collaborations, ethical and aesthetic layers interact. Instead of unifying narrative or attempts to clarify the “truth”, they rather expose the difficulties—complexity and ambiguity—of the communication process itself.

IEVA ASTAHOVSKA is an art scholar, critic and curator. She works at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, where she leads research projects related to art from the socialist and post-socialist period. Astahovska has compiled and edited a number of research-based publications: *Valdis Āboliņš: The Avant-garde, Mailart, the New Left and Cultural Relations during the Cold War* (2019), *Workshop of Restoration of Unfelt Feelings: Juris Boiko and Hardijs Lediņš* (2016), *Revisiting Footnotes: Footprints of the Recent Past in the Post-Socialist Region* (2015) and *Recuperating the Invisible Past* (2012). Her curatorial projects include the exhibitions *Valdis Āboliņš or How Fluxus Came to Aachen* at the Ludwig Forum, Aachen (2018), *Archaeology of Kinetics* at Riga Art Space (2016), *Visionary Structures: Form Johansons to Johansons* at Bozar, Brussels (2015)

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and the Latvian National Library in Riga (2014), *Berlin–Riga: Scores for Indeterminate Places* (2013) and *Parallel Chronologies: Invisible History of Exhibitions* in Riga (2011).

**Session 7: THERE AND NOT THERE—
WAYS OF GIVING VOICE TO THE PAST,
MODERATED BY PILLE RUNNEL
16:45–18:15**

ELINA NIIRANEN **Finnish Linguist Pertti Virtaranta and Silenced Identity of Karelians in 1960's Soviet Karelia**

In my paper I'm dealing with Finnish linguist Pertti Virtaranta's fieldwork among Karelians in Soviet Karelia. Virtaranta made a several fieldtrips to collect Karelian dialects from Soviet Karelia, gathered knowledge among Karelian refugees in Sweden and finally in the 1960s he gained permission to study Karelian dialects among Northern Soviet Karelians. In 1968 the circumstances in Soviet Karelia for foreign scientists were controlled. Virtaranta had to be careful not to cause harm for his informants by evoking unconventional memories in his Karelian informants. The local people were under political control: it was not possible to criticise the Soviet Union or everyday difficulties openly. The interviewed people evaded issues concerning their experiences in the recent past. For those reasons, the focus in the interviews was in the faraway past. What were those themes that were not present in the interviews?

The presentation tries to figure out the reasons for Karelians to keep silent. The difficult political situation was one of the reasons behind the silence. Also, Virtaranta's scientific orientation of as a linguist was addressing discussions to the past. The difficult position of the Karelian language was also a reason for the difficult communication situation between the researcher and informants.

ELINA NIIRANEN is a postdoctoral researcher at the Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland. She has studied Karelian folksongs and oral histories and made fieldwork in Russian Karelia and in Tanzania. Her studies are based on fieldwork among the Karelians and on archival materials collected during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Lately, Niiranen has focused on questions of identity and representations of Karelian culture in folksongs and narratives. Nowadays she

is working with the project concerning the Finnish linguist Pertti Virtaranta's field work in Soviet Karelia from 1960 to 1980. Her interests are dealing with the Karelian image in the linguist's work and those conceptions used concerning Karelians.

PAULINA PUKYTĖ **Repetition of Silence**

The sirens have a still more fatal weapon than their song, namely their silence. And though admittedly such a thing has never happened, still it is conceivable that someone might possibly have escaped from their singing; but from their silence certainly never. [Franz Kafka, Parables]

I will present the aims and results of the exhibition *There and Not There: (Im)Possibility of a Monument* that I curated in Kaunas, Lithuania, in 2017. The exhibition questioned traditional monuments and their ability to speak to us today, as well as the populist practice of removing/erecting prevalent in the memory discourse of public space in Lithuania. It asked how to remember what *is not there*, how not to forget what *is there*, how to forget, how to commemorate something we wish had not been and, in the face of over-saturation, what monuments we need and why do we need them at all? It used absence versus presence and counter-monument as its main paradigm.

The project sought to encourage and legitimise new ideas and strategies of commemoration, such as: the monument as an intervention into everyday life ritual; the monument that is there only when there is someone to create and perceive it at the same time; the monument as a constant effort; the monument 'on demand'; the monument that exists by its absence—an unerecable and therefore indestructible monument; the monument as a process and the monument that is there and not there at the same time.

Traditional monuments (such as figurative bronze sculpture) that are always there with their rigid didactic form could be likened to an uninterrupted sound that, after a while, becomes unperceivable (inaudible) because of the lack of silence. In order for sound to become a message, it needs to be interrupted with repetitive silence. Absence is visual silence. One of the strategies of turning a monument into a keeper and transmitter of living memory, one that "returns the burden of memory to those who come looking for it" (James E. Young), could be interruption (of presence) or repetition (of absence). The temporary endures through repetition.

PAULINA PUKYTĖ is a Lithuanian artist, writer and curator based in London. She writes critical and

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satirical articles on art and cultural issues, as well as experimental literature, poetry and plays. She makes site-specific interventions, still and moving image and conceptual projects using found artefacts, often employing coincidence and chance. She is also involved in the discourse of public space and commemoration and in 2017 curated the 11th Kaunas Biennial *There And Not There: The (Im)Possibility Of A Monument*.

ELISABETH KOVTIAK **(Non-)Sites of Memory of the Holocaust in Belarus: The Cases of Minsk and Brest**

The main focus of the presented paper is how neglected and silenced memories of the Holocaust influenced memorialisation processes and created “non-sites of memory” in the public space of Minsk and Brest. It explores the relations between official and vernacular commemorations of the Shoah in the Soviet era and today. The history of the Holocaust is underrepresented in the public space of Belarusian towns when contrasted with the wide memorialisation of WWII in general. Lack of official commemoration led to the creation of an intangible system of memorialisation that existed as oral history and now it starts to take digital form. These narrations—retold by guides and locals and digitised—fill the voids of memory and understanding of Jewish history.

The presentation will be structured in the following way:

- 1) *The Holocaust memorialisation in Soviet Belarus*: the reasons why the Holocaust was omitted from commemoration practices in the USSR, and in what forms it existed back then.
- 2) *Hidden commemoration*: post-Soviet commemoration of the Holocaust in the post-Soviet period in Minsk and Brest.
- 3) *Living with the dead*: At the end of 2018 in Brest, local developers dug out 1214 skeletons of Brest ghetto prisoners. This story led to a pause in the construction of the residential area and to a local scandal, as people knew that there’s a mass grave in this area. I aim to use this case to illustrate how ignorance of collective memory may lead to serious consequences.
- 4) *Giving voice*: in the final part, I will present digital projects—Citydog’s Jewish history map and Brest Stories Guide App—as examples of bringing back the voice of the silenced pages in history that may turn “non-sites of memory” into “sites of memory”.

ELISABETH KOVTIAK works as an independent researcher in Minsk, Belarus. Her academic interests include collective memory and its mani-

festations in art and public spaces (with a focus on museumising practices and flea markets). In her work, she mostly concentrates on transitional post-socialist societies. She worked as a researcher in projects on depression as a social phenomenon and civic activism in Belarus. She aims to introduce artistic and digital humanities approaches to her work to raise its impact, as she believes in the potential of creative dissemination practices. Elisabeth has obtained her MA in Culture, Media and Society at the Centre for Social Studies at the University of Lancaster. Her MA dissertation was titled *Beyond Post-Communist Nostalgia: Negotiating Personal and Collective Memory in Belarus*. Before starting her career as a researcher, she worked as a columnist and journalist writing on culture and visual arts as well as a project manager at the National Centre of Contemporary Arts on a range of independent cultural initiatives.

Session moderators

VIOLETA DAVOLIŪTĒ is Professor at Vilnius University Institute of International Relations and Political Science and Senior Researcher at the Lithuanian Culture Research Institute. Recently, she was a Fellow at the Imre Kertész Kolleg Jena (2018–2019) and Associate Research Scholar at Yale (2015–2016). Violeta Davoliūtė completed her PhD at the University of Toronto and is the author of *The Making and Breaking of Soviet Lithuania: Memory and Modernity in the Wake of War* (2013). A specialist in matters of historical trauma, the politics of memory and national identity, she has co-edited three volumes and has published numerous articles in journals like *Ab Imperio*, *Osteuropa*, *Ethnologie Française*, *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* (the Journal of Baltic Studies) and others.

ILYA LENSKY graduated from the History and Philosophy Department of the University of Latvia, specialising in Modern and Contemporary History. Since 2006 he has worked at the Museum Jews in Latvia; as director from 2008. His field of interest includes Latvia's Jewish history with emphasis on Enlightenment, modernisation of the Jewish community and Jewish-Latvian relations, as well as issues of Holocaust commemoration.

ENEKEN LAANES is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Culture Analysis at Tallinn University and Project Leader of the ERC project *Translating Memories: The Eastern European Past in the Global Arena*. Her research deals with transnational memory and transcultural memorial forms in post-Soviet memory cultures of Eastern Europe. Laanes studied comparative literature at the University of Tartu, University of Bologna (Spring 2001) and the Free University of Berlin (2003–4). She has been a Juris Padegs Research Fellow at Yale University (2013–14) and a Kone Fellow at the Helsinki Collegium (autumn 2019). She is the author of *Unresolved Dialogues: Subjectivity and Memory in Post-Soviet Estonian Novel* (in Estonian, Tallinn: UTKK, 2009) and co-editor of *Novels, Histories, Novel Nations: Historical Fiction and Cultural Memory in Finland and Estonia* (Helsinki: SKS, 2015).

SIOBHAN KATTAGO is a Senior Research Fellow in Practical Philosophy at the University of Tartu in Estonia. She received her PhD from the New School for Social Research in New York and is a contributor to its blog, Public Seminar. Her academic interests include collective memory, the philosophy of history, political and social philosophy and twentieth-century European history. Much of her research addresses the work of post-war philosophers such as Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers, Reinhart Koselleck, Jacques Derrida, Martin Heidegger and Emmanuel Levinas. Her publications include: *Encountering the Past within the Present: Modern Experiences of Time* (2020), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Memory Studies* (editor, 2015), *Memory and Representation in Contemporary Europe: The Persistence of the Past* (2012) and *Ambiguous Memory: The Nazi Past and German National Identity* (2001).

PILLE RUNNEL is a Research Director of the Estonian National Museum. Her research has dealt with new media and new media audiences, museum communication and participation at public cultural institutions and visual and media anthropology. She has worked as a researcher at the Institute of Journalism and Communication, University of Tartu, and carried out joint research projects with the Institute, including studying the generations and young people in the emerging information society and museum communication in the context of the information society. Her current research on museums, cultural heritage and museum audiences has resulted in a number of journal articles and book chapters as well as edited books, but has also been directly applied in the museum's development. She is responsible for the research agenda of the Estonian National Museum and supervised the production of the new research-based permanent exhibitions (opened in 2016).

Organising team

The symposium is organised by Margaret Tali and Ieva Astahovska in collaboration with the Institute of Art History and Visual Culture at the Estonian Academy of Arts and the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art.

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