A Tour of the Mount of Hercules

Yochai Avrahami

Akademie der Künste der Welt

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Yochai Avrahami's *Mountain of Hercules* was part of the PLURIVERSALE I, a season of events, screenings, performances and talks held in the autumn of 2014. The first in an ongoing series of such seasonal programs, its goal was to offer a multiplicity of approaches to the cultural decolonization of Cologne, not just in its present dimension, but also in the frame of a history often repressed, forgotten, or remember all-too-officiously.

It is this dimension of local history and its remembrance that Yochai Avrahami addressed in his *Mount of Hercules*. A project in public space, it developed after a research visit to Cologne in 2014 and probed the sore topic of memorials for the 20th century. Installed on the Herkulesberg, a artificial mountain made of the debris of World War Two, Avrahami's work was a temporary monument to the memorial as such, an artistic mapping of the many modes of display chosen to represent atrocities and catastrophes.

This temporary exhibit of found images was located in a white construction tent similar to the one installed in the city's center to protect a recent discovery of archeological evidence for Cologne's medieval Jewish community. This find prompted broad debate in the city of whether this site should be the basis for a Jewish Museum: how should Cologne remember the presence of cultural otherness, and how should it address the atrocities committed not so long ago?

Avrahami takes a distanced view. He treats the atrocity display as a museological format, an artistic form to be probed for its imaginative possibilities and its ironies. Departing from an extensive knowledge of the shifting ideological agendas behind the many memorials in Israel, where he is based, he challenges the official version of memory to show a global panoply of such displays, asking how forms of display allocate and ascribe responsibility to victims and perpetrators, and which imaginaries arise from their depths.

Following publication provides an insight into this project. A short monograph by critic Ester Dotan introduces Yochai

Avrahami's work with the aesthetic of the archive, and explores its fine negotiations of fact and fiction. Yochai Avrahami provides a text version of the lecture performance he presented as a guided tour in Cologne, which he had accompanied by a series of linocuts, made especially for the occasion.

The Academy of the Arts of the World and Yochai Avrahami dedicate this book to the memory of our dear colleague and friend Peter Scheiffele, who passed away unexpectedly in October 2015. He was the driving force behind the project's realization.

A special thanks goes to all those involved in the making of The Mountain of Hercules, especially Franzesca Spirio and Birte Jürgens for their artistic assistance, and to Jan Kryzsons for his co-ordination of the installation and the present publications.

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Yochai Avrahami: On a Film Noir Set

Esther Dotan

Playing with Fire

Visual traditions wear out. Words, too, become hackneyed— e.g. memory, Holocaust, Zionism — words which permeate Yochai Avrahami's works. How, then, does one contain historical residues without staying impervious to them? How does one circumvent the obvious in light of the archaeological-historicist trend in art since the 1990s,[1] following the establishment of neo-liberalism as an exclusive, global economic-social-cultural mode? How does one avoid falling into the trap of nostalgia, or that of essentialist identity, or into the lap of a marginal niche which evades big questions? How can one keep from losing sight of the present and the future, or avoid entrapment in an already ineffective critique? How does one go back to relying vitally on the motif of the archive — in the rich tradition of Aby Warburg, André Malraux, Walter Benjamin? How does one add a new facet to this tradition prevalent among many artists, from Gerhard Richter to, for instance, the Israeli Dana Levy, a tradition also addressed by leading scholars and historians of art — Benjamin Buchloh, Hal Foster, Jacques Derrida, Boris Groys, Georges Didi-Huberman, Daniel Birnbaum (in an ardent essay about the exhibition "Atlas: How to Carry the World on One's Back" curated by Didi-Huberman),[2] Hito Steyerl, and others—from different, challenging angles?

1 Dieter Roelstraete, "The Way of the Shovel: On the Archeological Imaginary in Art," *e-flux journal* # 4 (March 2009); Dieter Roelstraete, "After the Historiographic Turn: Current Findings," *e-flux journal* # 6 (May 2009).

2 Daniel Birnbaum, "Into the Wild," *Artforum*, 89 (Oct. 2011).

Only visual or conceptual imagination stands a chance at shaking or even deconstructing aesthetic or notional banality; only a level of sensibilities activated by the power of the imagination can hope to become a lever for a new aspect, for art with "relevant value"[3] capable of overpowering culture's interested or exhausted filters, and taking its place in the wrestling arena called collective memory—a rather rare status to which every work of art naturally aspires. In light of all this, the following paragraphs will attempt to trace modi operandi in a selection of Avrahami's works, as well as his correspondence with some of the complex questions presented above. I will begin with a short, unpretentious video piece which, in retrospect, encapsulates the ars poetica of many of his earlier and later works.

The dynamics which effectuates the specific world of imagination in Avrahami's ongoing archive of findings may be pinpointed in a short, playful video he created during a sojourn in South Korea as a foreigner, a tourist, far from the conflicts that preoccupy him in Israel: School Night Watch, 2012. The work was shot while wandering in a deserted dormitory of a former technical school, now slated to become a contemporary art center. This dynamic is set in motion through the detective persona assumed by Avrahami, combined with film noir formulae: a meticulous, obsessive, voyeuristic, and intrusive search for evidence meant to crack a grand enigma in a dark, threatening arena of deserted, silent rooms The only sound is the squeaking, pounding, scratching movement of objects; gloved hands

3 "Relevant value" is a key term borrowed from the analysis of art hierarchies in Boris Groys's book. See: Boris Groys, On the New [1992], trans. G.M. Goshgarian (London & New York: Verso, 2014).

browse through open drawers, and hold onto objects enlarged in investigative close-ups. We do not see the protagonist, the detective, only his hands, and that only enhances the mystery. There is no plot, but an initial mediating effect is sketched—suspicion; suspicion as "the medium of all media," to once again borrow an observation from Boris Groys' philosophical analysis of the economy of media.[4] Avrahami, enticingly, is well aware of this paranoid effect, and he toys with it through various playful allusions. Thus, for example, the gloves protecting against fingerprints are large, clumsy pink-colored rubber gloves of the kind used for housework. Another example is the role of the camera. The lens snoops with task-oriented devotion. Only its pauses hint at the attention of the hidden figure holding it. Here it lingers a bit, only to resume peeking stealthily, with a caressing gaze, at a snapshotof a graceful young woman, one of those pictures the past tenants installed at the entrances to the rooms along with personal details. Another snapshot, left behind in one of the rooms, parodies a document of the type supposed to be included in an evidence file: a stamp flung like a mask on a young woman's face renders her expression frightening, threatening, suspicious. Another room yields yet another playful-violent find: a photograph of a captivating young woman in a bathing suit with a nail stuck in her eye. In another corner, the camera lens attempts to decipher— at length, but to no avail—abandoned strips of negatives.

Importantly, we, the viewers, smile, yet remain in total uncertainty. Moreover: time and again, the camera carefully scans the materiality and form of an inventory of banal objects, lit with

1 Boris Groys, Under Suspicion: A Phenomenology of Media [2000], trans. Carsten Strathausen (New York: Columbia UP, 2012).

mysterious, luring, exalting lighting which renders them as a stereotype of sculptural forms. This aspect is intertwined here with the film noir motif, which we shall revisit below. Another significant fact is, no doubt, that this inquisitive wandering takes place in a building which, as said before, previously served as a polytechnic, and whose next intended inhabitant is a center for contemporary art. The hidden presence of the detective/artist radicalizes the technique typical of actors such as Cary Grant, who used to keep his distance from full identification with his role, introducing nuances of a different gaze: like him, Avrahami is simultaneously a part of the situation, and external to it as an active onlooker. He employs the paranoid, concise, sheer effect, humorously emphasized in the seven minutes of this video, as a vehicle and an apparatus of investigation in works from different periods in which he is less of a tourist and more of an involved party.

Cardboard Taxi Underground

Take, for instance, the metonymic installation The Negotiations Continue, 2004, which intentionally adopts an archival visual language — news clippings and video documentation — while also deviating from it through the prism of sculptural imagination. It presentsa marginal scene, whose protagonists are cardboard minibus-taxis in a landscape interspersed with various objects made of frugal everyday materials such as papier-mâché and litter cast in the landscape. The result is an anarchy of persecutors and persecuted under West Bank occupation, depicting the Palestinians' impossible mobility routine in a space riddled with barriers and checkpoints. The overall fabric woven by all the installation’s parts gives rise to a meta-frame in which pestering procedures and constraints are intertwined with survival stories. The result is a subversive thriller of elusive taxis that improvise secretive routes using detouring maneuvers.

Inspiration Clichés

In the video and sound installation, The Sculpture Legion, 2011, one may also discern the dynamics of suspicion as a perusal mechanism of a hidden reality, this time in an extreme version. The concept of sculpture is entwined in this investigation in an especially organic manner.

Avrahami's imagination combines three matters into a single narrative. The first of these is a fact: in central Israel, there is a military base surrounded by a wall and barbed wire, regularly patrolled by armed soldiers; it reportedly contains a camp housing a weapon development center. The second was a media report according to which Hezbollah claimed that it discovered Israeli wiretapping and observation equipment in South Lebanon. The third element is a fantasized conjecture (yes or no) that these devices are concealed under layers of camouflage imitating rock formations, terrain views and caves, sculpted from a unique, pollutant developed in the aforementioned military camp. This mishmash of real, exaggerated, and fabricated data and its nuances reveals a a cracked, twisted state of affairs never fully elucidated. Confusion becomes the focal point of the viewers' sensory experience of the work, which in turn makes a statement about the fiction built into official archives. Moreover, one may discern here an essential quality of Avrahami's trash aesthetics: a two-way trickling of sculpture materials; items gathered from the field enter the gallery, and sculptural processing from the studio spills into open space.

Through a conceptual-formal tactic that imitates the display of a historical chapter in a national museum, this video installation presents the overall findings of the investigation gathered by the fictional detective: the sculptural objects of the intelligence project — in themselves, and as seen in rocky terrain that may or may not be Lebanon — and the interviews with Sculpture Legion artists, who may or may not be imaginary. The latter

recount their military mission with amusing gravity. Their words are interspersed with biographical clichés, like prevalent media accounts of artists in various fields of culture, whose descriptions of their work, their inspiration, etc., are rife with selfimportance. Avrahami shoots in several directions of the same story at once, not sparing self-irony.

Subjective Symbiosis

The Sculpture Legion fiction continues the collage-like practice from a previous workbringing together the incongruous. During a stay in Weimar, Avrahami came across a surprising, jolting, concrete history which, in conjunction with his distinctive tactic of subjective emphasis, formed the basis for the pseudo-archival, film-noir-like project, Uzi, 2010: the detailed story of the incredible connection between the grand narrative of the Nazi rise to power in Germany / Jewish refugees in a kibbutz in Palestine prior to the Holocaust / Zionism / the Bauhaus and its aesthetic-cultural heritage, and an Israeli weapon—the clean, modern development and design of a utilitarian object, the renowned Uzi sub-machine gun, introduced to the IDF in 1956, and subsequently purchased by security forces all over the world. The inventor of this sub-machine gun is Uzi Ga. Born in Weimar as Gotthard Glas, he was smuggled out of Germany in 1936, at the age of 6, to the Kibbutz Yagur where his father, Erich Glas, had found refuge in 1933. The archaeology of facts also includes the father's past chronology as a Prussian pilot during World War I engaged in aerial intelligence photography,who, after that war, studied at the Bauhaus school in Weimar. In Yagur, the father continued his activity as an artist, and created a series of Expressionist etchings in response to news he heard about the Nazi death camps; officially, the Jewish community (Yishuv) in Palestine denied knowledge of the Final Solution.

The display mode is, again, that of an archive of interviews and findings, divided into wings based on the customary classification into techniques (weaving, architecture, printmaking, metalwork, and photography). The aesthetics follows the conventions of the archive, ostensibly objective, despite its total subjectivization in gathering scraps of information to form a symbiosis of art/sculpture and an instrument of killing. By means of all these, and with the help of a vivid imagination, surrealistic touches and surprising facts, here too, Avrahami seeks the latent, and undermines the innocent or disingenuous, pseudo-innocent objectivity of storytellers in archives.

Rag Doll and the Ignorance Effect

Various works by Avrahami—such as the one he created for the São Paulo Biennial, 2014, or in Cologne, 2015, and under the influence of his sojourn in Weimar— give rise to yet another-persona related to the detective on a film noir set: this is that of the tourist, in his dialectic with reality in general, and in Israel in particular. Indeed, a tour bus traveling the streets of Jaffa stands at the centerof a work created by Avrahami in collaboration with Jaffa-based filmmaker and actor Scandar Copti: The Bus Tour, 2008 (as part of the project "Autobiography of a City" curated by Eyal Danon from the Israeli Center for Digital Art, Holon, in collaboration with Sami Buchari from Ayam—Recognition and Dialogue Association). Between stations, videos were screened inside the bus featuring different chapters from Copti's travels with a highly imaginative child-marionette operated with strings, a collage doll assembled by Avrahami from debris he found on Jaffa's beach. The streets of Jaffa are a time capsule of political-historical-social conflicts—an archive without walls. In one of the video chapters, Copti and the doll arrive at a neighborhood square with heroic bronze sculpture depicting a muscular soccer player in kicking

posture. Humorously and with a fair share of irony, an alleged piece of Jaffaesque folklore arises,, from Copti's explanations to the child-doll. There is no telling from the video whether the story is real, or whether it was concocted by Copti: a deliberate effect of ignorance which we have already encountered above in The Sculpture Legion. Copti discusses the sculpture's features at length, adding that the neighborhood's Arab residents are convinced that it represents a local cultural hero dear to them: the glorious Jaffa-based Arab footballer Rifaat Turk (who played for Israel's national team from 1976–1986). In a comment that does not appear in the body of the video, Avrahami notes that that the sculpture was, in fact (or not), erected in memory of Jewish IZL (Irgun) fighter who fell during the occupation of Jaffa in 1948…

The Real Suspect

The suspect caught in Avrahami's film noir chapters is Janus-faced. On the one hand, there is the built-in ignorance into which the viewers are cast through works made of anuninhibited, indecipherable mix of facts and fiction. This ignorance metonymically bifurcates into the ambivalence of cultural notions, and of display modes in general, habitually dictated by antithetical interests in historical realities. Simultaneously, the suspect is also the widespread automatic tendency to elevate artistic notions such as sculpture, and dissociate them from the mishmash of reality. Think of the ironic aura of the close-ups of banal objects in the video School Night Watch, or, in contrast—of the Uzi.

It is no accident that wretched-looking figures and crooked objects sculpted from Styrofoam, crust foam, cardboard, or waste materials are major presences recurring in various works. The frugality concerned here does not correspond with the concept of the "want of matter" coined by Sarah Breitberg-Semel, which dominated Israeli art around the 1970s; a notion which, at the

time, eschewed the oppressive monumentality of the national "us" in Israel, and the professed desire to enhance individuality through its expression as a personal, seismographic handwriting by accessible means. Instead, Avrahami's preference for the frugal look in sculpture, and its integration into an overall, complex and metonymic display context, tie it to a very different, twofold pole: 1. to a practice that may be regarded as a multimedia, visual-installational-spatial essay; and 2. to the mundane quality of the materiality of historical existence, to a space of existence beyond the individual, to the specific chaos of a collective reality, a geography to which Avrahami arrives as a tourist, although its location is Israel. This is the space inhabited by Avrahami's collaborations with the unique theater director and actor Doron Tavori— projects which deserve a separate essay.

Where does all this lead? Why is it all relevant? The impersonal paranoid effect channeled into Avrahami's archival reservoir is not a self-evident component in the lively desire for individualism; nevertheless, it is an integral building block of the cycles of consciousness in individual existence. The emphasis on impersonal paranoid effects, accompanied by consistent humor, bring fresh wind into the current intoxication with solipsist mirroring in the private swamp, duplicated by the contemporary culture of equivalents of selfie variations. And such a fresh wind is that a fuller, far less tacky option for consciousness.

Some of the objects presented in Avrahami's installations are kept in his private archive; these, however, are parts of a deconstructed whole, of a past event, itself non-negotiable. This fact further undermines the artist's display rack as a brand amidst narcissi. In today's world of values, this, too, is playing with fire.

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A Tour of the Mount of Hercules
Yochai Avrahami

Part 1: Academy, Museums

A small group of guests gather at the plaza in front of the offices of the Academy of the Arts of the World, on the edge of the Media Park in Cologne. The Academy was founded to give artistic expression to the fact that Cologne is a city of immigrants. Beyond the park, over and across the railroad tracks lies the Mountain of Hercules. It arose when ruins of buildings were quickly piled up after 1945 into a small mountain. There are similar mountains in many German cities. The millions of cornices, brick friezes, concrete and debris littered the steelfused soil, among paved walkways, planted trees and lawns,.The Tour starts with barely 30 invited guests. It's evening time and alreadydark and the park's trail have no lighting. Each visitor receives a small black flashlight and instruction on how activete and control its beam diameter. The plan is to take them to the top of the mountain and put them into the tent/museum which I built, to activate them once they are inside, within the display, and to escape.The tour begins with a brief and laconic review of the phenomenon of atrocities museums, using small pictures, asking to audience to shine their lights at me and Francesca, who assists me, holding up the images.

Part 2: Mountain

We have been walking for a few minutes. After crossing the bridge over the railroad tracks, we stand against the background of a concrete bridge. Francesca on my side shows the pictures and I tell following story:

In the late 1970s, I was on a school trip to Jerusalem for a few days. We visited Yad Vashem on Mount Herzl and the Chamber of the Holocaust, located on Mount Zion. Yad Vashem Museum, located on the secular side of the city, was a masterpiece of architecture, restrained design, properly displayed images, and it had professional maintenance. The Chamber of the Holocaust, however, as I remembered it, had a modest display of authentic objects in an ancient stone building adjacent to the Old City and its holy places.

Historian Doron Bar points to an event that split the Holocaust memorial between the secular-zionist and the ultraorthodox in 1949:

> Thirteen urns with ashes of victims from Mauthausen concentration camp were delivered to Israel by Simon Wiesental. They were supposed to be on the same flight from Vienna as the coffin of Herzl, the initiator of the Zionist movement. But for political reasons they arrived separately. Herzl's coffin was buried on Mount Herzel, which became the core of the Zionist national memorial site. The thirteen urns were placed in an ancient stone building on Mount Zion, the holiest sites Israelis could reach at the time, closest to the Western Wall, under Jordanian authority until 1967.

We can say that the Chamber of the Holocaust started out as a burial site of human ashes and sacred Jewish objects and not as a display site. It is managed by a an elusive and criminal ultra-orthodox yeshiva, and its director still doesn't consider it a museum.

The neglected Chamber of the Holocaust contains displays that have not been maintained for many years, minor interventions aside. There are a few sensational exhibits: burnt and desecrated Judaica,an aquarium with 2 bars of soap made from from human fat, and the thirteen urns mentioned above.

There are also photocopied photographs, paintings and a "fountain of the tears" in the yard, surrounded by dozens of marble slabs with texts but with no narrative. There are piles of trash among the exhibits and a cat lives there to eat the mice.

This is perhaps the most disgusting possible display of the most disgusting events, and that itself is valuable, even if it wasn’t the original intention.

In the same years after World War II, there were many attempts at commemoration in Europe as well. These commemoration sites have gone, and are still going through different forms. They take different perspectives and positions, from which they point and take responsibilities. In the name of responsibility, the visitor is flooded by multiple layers of information and parallel narratives specifying the victims.

The sculptor Gerhard Marcks' is a good example expressing the official perception of commemoration in Germany in the period from 1949 until the mid-1950's. Marck's son had died in combat as a soldier, which affected him strongly. He made several figurative statues in public spaces all over Germany and dedicated them to "all the victims of the war". He was against Communist monuments in East Germany, "those party monuments," as he called them. "I'd rather build monument to all the victims (including soldiers)," he said.

In November 1949, Marcks installed the sculpture The Angel of Death in front of Cologne's St. Maria im Kapitol church as a memorial to all of the war's victims. The unveiling ceremony was held in front of the church with religious leaders (Catholics, Anglicans, Evangelists) and also the Rabbi of Cologne, Moritz Goldschmidt, who mentioned that thousands of Cologne's Jews of Cologne had died...[A train passes noisily, and I have to shout:] only because they were born Jews.

"The German people should not be allowed suffer the ongoing desecration (besudeln) of cemeteries and memorials. The people that does not respect its dead brings shame upon itself. I wish that this memorial (the angel of death) will be a symbol of human justice and human dignity!"

But at this time, I don't want to blame anybody, because in mourning and death we are all equal, he continued. and we must always to be ready to leave life… All must ensure that brotherly love take root more deeply. At the end of his speech, he called upon the living to respect the dead.

Besides his many figurative sculptures, Marcks was one of the most important visual designers of large scale commemorative projects and war memorials in West Germany. He dedicated several mountains of debris as non-figurative monuments to the victims of the war. In 1954, a mountain of ruins in the Birkenkopf section of Stuttgart became such a monument, topped by a big cross. The municipality of Cologne was considering a similar idea for the mountain of ruins later known as the Herkulesberg, which would have then become a memorial to all the victims.

Apparently, the municipality of Cologne didn't like this kind of symbolism or land art, so Herkulesberg remained just a park. However, the municipality of Cologne gave permission for the monument you are about to see.

Part 3: Tent

This place is not protected by security guards as memorials usually are in this country. It prefers to use a chain and a key to hiring a security company. This fact brings us back to the word "besudeln," or desecration or vandalism in case of memorials. To give a valuable example: Elhanan Astrovic, a young ultra-orthodox Jew sprayed graffiti at onto a number of sites and monuments at the Yad Vashem compound on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem. He was caught by the police. His deposition, given in prison, included the request for a significant revision of the memorial system, calling for an alternative commemoration.

It is completely dark… Disposable gloves and black spray... here we go “Damn Zionists, take your hands from the Jewish people!”... not bad, no time, need get to the point... “The museum will be built as an alternative to the selective Yad Vashem,” I’m spraying... but if I had money maybe I would build such a museum… Yad Vashem is funded every year with millions of shekels. The state, media, military, police, and government institutions, all send thousands of teenagers to Auschwitz every year for brainwashing, and all I have is spray paint? What are you doing, Elhanan? Do you think it will help?

This case shows to great effect that presentation is the place where history is weakened, and the spectacle’s effects become stronger.

There is another bigger white tent in Cologne. It is located on the archeological site, where the Jewish Museum is supposed to be built. The archeological findings are spectacular: an inscription says: "this is the gate to get rid of the excrement” and a few boxes, filled with animal bones, possibly indicate that the people who lived there were Jews, according to the types of animals they kept.

These spectacular finds are perceived as an excuse to establish a spectacular museum.

This tent will play with the problematical universalizing view of the victims (by artists like Gehard Marcks), and all his successors in such debates on commemoration.

Part 4: Artists

> As an intersection between public art and political memory, the monument has necessarily reflected the aesthetic and political revolutions, as well as the wider crises of representation.... In every case, the monument reflects both its sociohistorical and aesthetic context: artists working in eras of Cubism, expressionism, socialist realism, earthworks, minimalism, or conceptual art, remain answerable to the needs of both art and official history.[1]

Back to Mount Zion, to the late 1980s, to a neighbor of the Chamber of the Holocaust, the David Palombo Museum. Palombo was a sculptor. He designed some of the monuments in Yad Vashem. The expressivity and Sisyphean quality of his sculptures give him a unique style and an affinity with national disasters. He was chosen to design the monument to the victims of Hiroshima, a commission he could not fulfill because he was killed tragically. While he was riding a motorcycle, his head was cut off by barbed wire stretched by ultra-orthodox Jews to limit movement in the area on Saturdays.

His widow later established a memorial museum in his studio.The visit in the place was a thrilling

experience: the place looked like a Gothic cellar. The audience was invited inside, and waited for Palombo's widow. She came in down the stairs, holding a torch, and lit a flame.

[1] Memory and Counter-Memory, the end of the monuments in Germany, James E. Young

Palombo's friend, Gershon Knispel, is an interesting example for the combination of "self-pitying Judaica" on one hand, and universalism on the other. Knispel also made the only monument in Israel to atrocities committed against the Palestinian people, in collaboration with the Palestinian artist Abed Abadi, in the Palestian town of Sachnin, in the north of Israel. Another example of Knispel's mixing of self-pity and universalism vis-a-vis the representation of atrocities is a series of prints made in collaboration with the famous "communist" architect Oskar Niemeyer. It portrays many atrocities from Palestine, Africa etc., blaming Israel, the USA and more countries, which the main motive is the open hand from Memorial de America Latina in São Paulo. [At this point, I make the illustrative action of pulling red paint in my hand] :

The practice of mixing ideologies, styles, and identities of victims and executorscan also appear as a mixture of artistic agendas.

Gunter Demming's famous life project, Stolpersteine is a nice combination of minimalism, conceptualism, and social sculpture, but also bears the expressive image of one man engaged in the Sisyphean work of insistently sticking Jewish golden teeth back into their original place.

We can see different versions of the idea of stepping on art in the sculpture of Menashe Kadishman at the Jewish Museum in Berlin, the hidden library of Micha Ulman and the single railway and stone plaza of Dani Karavan on the top of the Philharmonic in Cologne.

"The German people should not be allowed suffer the ongoing desecration (besudeln) of cemeteries and memorials. The people that does not respect its dead brings shame upon itself. I wish that this memorial (the angel of death) will be a symbol of human justice and human dignity!"[2]

[2] Ester Zandberg quoeting Sara Breitberg, Serial Commemorators, Haaretz, 24.3.2002

Part 5: Forms of presentation

In the years after the genocide in Rwanda, there where many local initiatives to commemorate the atrocities by presenting real dead people, preserved by white-wash powder, located on bunks. A new museum, commissioned by the municipality of Kigali, sponsored and produced by the Smith Brothers, two British Holocaust specialists who had already made a holocaust center in England. Mutsindashyaka, The Mayor of Kigali, had plan for the memorial: Dark crypt filled with bones, video projection of machetes falling on their targets + voiceover of screams. unfortunately this non prpper form of represenatation replaced by generic, up-to-date one + some local wooden craved sculptures.[3]

[3] Memorial Museums: Exhibiting War, Trauma and Atrocity, Amy K. Sodaro, Borough of Manhattan Community College

Forms of atrocities' presentation naturally apear with the imag of barbed wire. This is a good example of a very effective graphic design of visual symbolism for this topic, since the big wars of the 20th century.

Bars are always effective to put you in a very concrete position. Like barbed wire, bars are both authentic and symbolic object, to put the victim not on your side. Sometimes it's confusing, like the case of the madness museum in Minas Gerais, Brazil. This shows the manifestation of a woman who took off her clothes to get better conditions, putting herself in a cage, to be photographed by the Italian psychiatrist.

The photo is on display behind authentic bars.

This museum was a mental hospital with horrific conditions, until the well-known Italian psychiatrist Franco Basaglia visited there in the 1980s, and said that "it is like the holocaust". This became scandal, that brought the end of this place, which functioned as a propaganda against detention of people.

Architectonic elements are the container of the display. Sometimes the architecture is site-specific, addressing a place where things happened in the past, its function lies on the range between the original structure and an adaptation for visitors. The other option is a newly planned building, lacking any geographical connection to the topic of history.In both cases, the building also has to deal with changes in technology, which can call yesterday’s hi tech solutions into doubt. One museum heavily used slide projectors

in the 1970s, which meant that projections into long concrete tubes, that are no longer useful today because slide projectors are no longer used.

The Architectonic elements are always a combination of function and symbolism: circle, partition walls, cages\cells, handrails and pits and timeline. Architecture can also create a scenic background, as in the diorama, which generally is a stage for models and dolls.

On the other hand, and in parallel to art history, abstract sculptures express abstract and symbolic concepts, Then again, photographic panels, especially of portraits, brings you back to the reality, to facts, pointing on specific victims' faces and executing, criminals and murderers.

To get closer to the ultimate facts, bones and skulls are the ultimate objects, even if they sometimes function as abstract decorations.Ruins of people sometimes bite, so the other option is using ruins of buildings and objects. The charm of romantic ruins stands-in for the spectacular evidence of atrocity.

The presentation of atrocities is not always fixed or still, especially in cases where the information is not reliable enough, lacking information and data, but also, in the more interesting cases, when it points to atrocities that still exist in the present and warns that they will continue in the future. It requires flexibility so that one of its forms is re-enactment in public spaces. Its affectivity creates credibility where the reliability of facts are in doubt.

And finally, there are the visitors who are controlled and manipulated. Sometimes their range and order puts them into the position of an object of contemplation, warning that they themselves might potentially be victims in the future.

Part 6: Epilogue

How appropriate is the fixed architectonic format of the museum, its permanent and temporary display of objects in the remembrance of atrocities, - if memory itself is so flexible? [at this stage I'm raising piece of ruin, holds it like it was a skul in the scene of Shakespeare To be or not to be]

Is the real problem is that museum fetishism used as an attraction?

In Cologne, there are 2 options how to cover the Jewish archeological site: an official memorial plan - criticized as spectacular, wasteful, and pretentious - , and there is the opposition which is modest, more responsive and so on… This debate is full of local desires andpolitical antagonism, allegations of anti-Semitism, allegations of… At this point I feel like I'm trying to claim an argument, and not quite succeeding. I'm standing outside in the rain with a stone in my hand, surrounded by pictures of polititions laying wreaths in memorial museums. I said something unclear .... Need to get it done somehow, moreover, after the performance will be a panel for in the Nationanl Socialism Dcumentation Center, titled against fetishization of Memorial Museums.The audience stands at the end of the tent, on the edge of the abyss, directed me headlights, turning them my back, running down toward the railroad tracks, and disappeared behind the trees.

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