Abstracts

The Tale of the Stones. Memoryscapes of the Missing

Maryam Adjam, Uppsala University

Reflecting on the ways that absence is evoked in place through the act of remembrance, this paper outlines the convergence between the landscape as an archive of embodied memory practices and the landscape subjected to memory regimes in the context of on-going state sanctioned violence. Focusing on unmarked graveyards for the missing, political dissidents victims of state sanctioned violence in Iran during the 1980's, the analysis investigates the notion of absence in relation to the memories of the missing and what kind of space it evokes in sites associated with the missing. Four decades after the events no mourning ceremonies, marking of the graves or other acts of remembrance of those missing are allowed. Despite the ban the unmarked graveyards of the missing are still visited by those searching for them. Memories tracing the missing has marked these places, leaving material traces, re-enacting the memory of the missing in the place. Being a battlefield of traces left and erased, traces speaking and mute, these sites both encapsulate different and overlapping historical representations of the past, the memory politics articulated through these representations, as well as evoking a space of embodied memories bringing the missing to the fore as present absence. Tales of absences are rarely plain stories, outspoken and clear in content, but rather emerge as traces of ambivalence, speaking in and through the gaps and in-betweens, rendering a landscape of vibrant materials, enacting the memory of the missing as an experience of being missed, an experience of an entirety lacking. (Bennett 2010) Using bricolage as method, opening up for uncertainty as an affective dimension of the place, the analysis focuses on how absence is sensed and evoked through the temporary constellations memories assemble in the place and how the act of remembrance embodies a history of absences.

Fragile Archives: contesting state hegemony over landscapes through practices of activist evidence-making from Calais to southern Palestine

Maya Avis, Graduate Institute Geneva and Nataliya Tchermalykh, Université de Génève

In this paper we present a comparative investigation into activist communities' dutiful documentation of the violence and destruction carried out by state forces against informal living environments and their residents in two highly-politicised contexts: Calais, France and the south of historic Palestine. In both cases, communities have created their living environments autonomously, without the direct involvement of state actors. In Calais, humanitarian infrastructure and informal settlements are established by migrants and considered "temporary", whereas in the south of historic Palestine, the villages established by Palestinian communities are defined as "unrecognised" and "illegal" by the Israeli state, despite their historic presence in the landscape. In both cases, law - both domestic and international law - often operates as an invisible force, organising and reconfiguring the landscape in accordance with the imaginary of the state, an imaginary that destroys local communities' spaces of habitation and disregards their conceptualizations of land rights and spatial justice. The paper argues that although activist documentation practices may not necessarily be immediately relevant within existing legal frameworks at the time of documentation, they are often carried out in view of an imagined future trial, or justice that is yet to come. The production of visual documentation is a (citizen-driven) evidence-making practice which creates a visual evidentiary archive of the violence of French and Israeli security forces rooted in counter-hegemonic conceptions of the landscape produced and defended by communities and their allies, long before such material can be mobilized for the purpose of litigation. We show how the documentation often exceeds traditional legal avenues for seeking justice.

Forests of the Present-Past: Zionist and Religious Judaization of Israel's periphery through Commemoration Plantings

Erella Grassiani, University of Amsterdam

In February of 2025 a new forest was planted by the Jewish National Fund or KKL-JNF. This organization, founded at the beginning of the 20th century to buy land in Palestine for the creation of the Jewish State, has planted and taken care of all of Israel's forests since 1948. This forest, The Sword of Iron forest, named after Israel's military operation in Gaza, is planted in the south of Israel to commemorate those who were killed on October 7th by Hamas and the soldiers who died fighting during this war.

In this paper, I will analyse the planting and planning for commemoration like this forest as acts of creating a present- past in the desert landscape. The past that is being re-created in the present, reverberates Israel in its ancient, biblical image, where Jews are given the land of Israel by God to live on and to build their lives upon. Planting as commemoration creates a direct connection between the present (dead) and the present and future presence of Jews in the landscape. We can see the commemoration plantings by KKL-JNF and other religious and/or Zionist organizations as part of the creation of this present-past in the barren landscapes of the desert. In line with a clear political drive to Judaize the land through the creation of new Jewish settlements, the planting of forests as sites of commemoration is not only aiding these efforts from a practical point of view but it is also creating a Jewish presence and spiritual continuity through the very trees that are planted.

Cartography as a spatial archive of state violence.

Oriana Bernasconi. P Universidad Católica de Chile.

This article explores cartography as a spatial archive of state violence, focusing on mass raids under Chile's dictatorship (1973–1990). These raids were selective, multi-scalar interventions used to govern territories through siege, intimidation, and harm, aiming to create docile populations and dismantle resistance by instilling fear among neighbours.

In the study of memories of state-sanctioned violence, landscapes often serve as sites where absent bodies and suppressed violence materialize, simultaneously preserving, distorting, and erasing traces of historical trauma. Considering the city as a landscape of spatial records, we employed cartography as both a technique for eliciting memories and a strategy for representing results.

The study analyzes the mapping of memories of contested experiences of repression, their transposition into a collective cartography, and their subsequent exhibition. This exhibition was first held in the affected neighbourhood and later in a university setting, coinciding with the 50th commemoration of the military coup that initiated the dictatorship.

While memory mapping visualizes complex social relationships, retrieves local knowledge, uncovers hidden experiences, and challenges dominant narratives, cartographic representation—functioning as an archive—classifies, compiles and spatializes these experiences. We argue that this process of archiving offers a visual landscape of the political, moral, affective, and sensory dimensions of a territory subjected to state violence. By doing so, it challenges prevailing state-sanctioned narratives, reclaims marginalized stories, and pluralizes memory work.

keywords: human rights violations, collective memory, collaborative methods, mapping, sensorial memory, spatial archive

Post-/colonial necromobilities between Morocco and Spain.

Carla Tiefenbacher, University of Cologne

This paper explores contemporary heritage work surrounding the Spanish colonial presence in Northern Morocco. Following transfers of bones and archives to and from the former colonial Spanish model city of Alhucemas/ current-day Al Hoceima, I investigate how graveyard work there articulates enduring practices of Spanish coloniality.

The town of Alhucemas/ Al Hoceima carries high symbolic value for Spanish as well as for Moroccan cultures of political memory. Its name evokes a turning point in the brutal anti/colonial Rif war in 1925, and the emerging town formed a key location for the Francoist dictatorship as well as for anti-colonial and post-independence political uprisings. Under Spanish rule, military influences shaped the garrison town: its militarized economy and society, military urban planning and landscaping practices as well as its relations with small Spanish military bases and the military city Melilla in the vicinity. Those colonial infrastructures still remain visible in the form of land-based cemeteries in the ex-colony and graveyards, in rumors and in spatial memories. Focusing on migration movements surrounding the colonial-era Spanish graveyard in Hoceima, this paper asks: How do practices of reburial articulate relations with militarized landscapes? How do these repatriations stake claims for re-rooting and political hegemony? Investigating practices of care for graveyards and of repatriating loved ones, I analyze how colonial and military nostalgia and current border regimes intersect in planning and executing reburials, in collective forms of mourning, and how those practices may implicate injustices committed by more than one post/colonial state.

Sensing, Remembering, Presencing: Landscape as Dynamic Archive in Morocco's High Atlas

Simon Holdermann (University of Cologne)

This paper examines how Morocco's High Atlas landscapes function simultaneously as resources to be drawn upon and as materials to be transformed. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and revisiting my sensory engagement with the terrain, I analyze two material formations – a restored kasbah (ighrim) and a newly constructed concrete path – to demonstrate how landscapes serve as active archives mediating between past, present, and future – and between absence and presence, memory and possibility.

I begin by exploring landscape's role in the ethnographic research process, focusing on the embodied experience of being there. Along the lines of current debates in sensory ethnography and multi-sensory anthropology, I examine how fieldwork involves learning the landscape – an emplacement in a specific environmental and cultural context. This learning encompasses both cognitive aspects (knowing names) and embodied knowledge (learning to walk the terrain), demonstrating how landscape becomes an ongoing cultural process through which we locate ourselves in the world.

Then, I analyze a restored kasbah, or saintly house, (ighrim) as a landscape feature that functions as an archive that encompasses religious, social, and political histories. Once a ruin renovated through international funds, this structure embodies the concurrent processes of heritage-ization and NGO-ization in the valley. This landscape functions as a reserve of local histories and knowledges, not as static artifacts but as resources that can be drawn upon and 'actualized' – either in pilgrimage or tourism. These acts of remembering and reaffirming connections transform the landscape into an active archive where past meanings are continuously renegotiated in the present.

Finally, I examine a recently constructed concrete path as an intervention that transforms the landscape while expressing aspirations for development. This NGO-led infrastructure project inscribes new meanings into the physical environment – and thus making absent

futures tangibly present through material form. The path represents also a form of evidence-making for the NGO, manifesting and legitimizing their work by rendering abstract hopes and possibilities concrete. This process of infrastructuring becomes a form of presencing that simultaneously materializes futures and prescribes new ways of moving through and experiencing the landscape.

Mourning and the ritual mediation of absence in the Moroccan Gharb.

Martin Zillinger, University of Cologne

This paper is concerned with rituals of trance as they have been cultivated by religious confraternities in the Gharb, the lowland plains in North-Western Morocco. In elaborated trance choreographies the ‘Isawa of the Gharb turn the landscapes of the plains into spaces of transition - between the living and the dead, humans and spirits, memory and forgetting. The rituals invoke spirits and other external powers in the body movements of the entranced and relate the visible to the invisible realm. Long sequences of mourning make the dead and persons lost to migration, violence and social cleavages present. While collective mediumship stages various forms of alienation and forgetting, it also functions as an archive of memory that conveys a sense of belonging in landscapes of domination and violence. In my presentation I am interested in the ways in which memory and forgetting are distributed - stored, invoked and accomplished in collective practices of trance that elude any individual accessibility.

Archiving otherwise: Community, Landscape, and Cultural Action

Luciana Serrano, Universidad Nacional de San Martín/Cooperativa Espacial

This paper explores how certain landscapes in contemporary Argentina serve as living archives of violence, survival, and imagination, analyzed through three interdisciplinary, community-oriented research projects. Drawing from an ethnographic and cultural mediation perspective, it examines how landscapes shaped by neoliberal destruction, informal urbanization, and national imaginaries of the "desert" can become sites for memory work, resistance, and future-making.

The first case, the town of Bayauca in the Pampas region, reveals the layered scars of economic restructuring and environmental degradation, addressed through a participatory art project aimed at reconstructing community memory amidst decline. The second case, the grassroots development of a cultural center in Ciudad Oculta, a Buenos Aires shantytown, illustrates how community-led design processes can reclaim and transform state-owned abandoned land, embedding collective histories and aspirations into built space. The third case, *A Desert for the City*, presents a curatorial project that interrogates the historical and aesthetic construction of the "desert" in Argentine national discourse, highlighting its political mobilizations and contradictions combining artistic and scholarly interventions.

By engaging with landscapes not only as passive backdrops but as active sites in struggles for recognition, justice, and alternative futures, the chapter discusses the methodological implications of using participatory art, collaborative design, and curatorial practice as examples of cultural action that can excavate and mediate complex memory landscapes. Through these cases, it interrogates how cultural production in connection to landscapes can become a mode of critical archival practice, accessible to both local communities and broader publics.

Walking seminar - The trans-Saharan Jemaâ el-Fna

Yemoh Odoi, The Minority Globe

Jemaâ el-Fna square epitomizes the many contradictions at the heart of Marrakech. It is simultaneously the sanctuary of a secular tradition — that of the *halqa* — and a prime site of mass tourism, giving rise to numerous tensions. These affect not only the ecological integrity of the urban landscape but also the social and cultural ties that quite literally shape the square.

Within this idealized vision — often promoted through touristic narratives — the deeper historical roots of the *halqa*, particularly its trans-Saharan dimensions, are frequently rendered invisible. And yet, this practice is embedded in a shared oral culture, inherited from ancient trans-Saharan trade routes, including — among other things — the slave trade. These historically embedded connections are also physically inscribed in the landscape: is not Marrakech the gateway to the Souths?

As part of this walking seminar, we will explore how migrant communities contribute to the reactivation of trans-Saharan cultural heritage. How does their presence and organization disrupt the postcard-like image of Jemaâ el-Fna and how do they negotiate their presence? And at the same time, how do they inscribe themselves within the long-standing flows and passages that have historically traversed this space? In what ways do they, through their embodied knowledge, re-open the ancient trans-Saharan trade routes?

“Roots That Are Waiting”: (Rhizomatic) Memory, Migration, and Ecological Repair in the Moroccan Rif.

Nina ter Laan, University of Cologne, nterlaan@uni-koeln.de

This paper explores how landscapes in Morocco's northern Rif region function as archives of colonial violence, displacement, and environmental degradation while at the same time providing fertile ground for transgenerational and transnational reconfigurations of memory and identity. Focusing on diasporic and local initiatives, including tree planting, painting, music, and communal land restoration, I examine how the landscape becomes a medium through which Riffians confront historical loss and imagine futures of care and ecological renewal.

Drawing on fieldwork and participatory collaborations with activists and artists in Morocco and the Netherlands, I argue that such embodied practices of tending the land, through digging, planting, painting, and walking, reclaim a history of loss and violence and foster a sense of transgenerational and transnational attachment to the land. In these acts, the soil is not merely symbolic, but an active agent that stores memories, roots, and ancestral connections, summoning descendants back into relationship with land and lineage. These engagements transform landscapes marked by colonial toxicity and post-migrant rupture into not only mnemonic repositories but also sites of transformation.

Within the broader framework of landscapes as archives of (deadly) transit, this paper shows how memory work through soil in the Rif simultaneously mourns and regenerates. It asks how landscapes, as living archives, mediate between loss and possibility, especially for post-migrant generations navigating complex terrains of belonging.

The Police Camp in the Forest

Nicky Rousseau (University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, SA)

In my presentation in Lima, I sought to rethink some of the concepts of forensic in its iteration as forensis, and in particular that of forum. This exploration grew out of a serendipitous discovery of the etymological entanglement of forest (forestes) and forensic (forensis) through a common route/root to forum (foris). I was interested in whether an approach from the forest, rather than the forensic, would inflect our conception of the forum differently from that understood by Forensic Architecture (FA), as well as its implications for memory and memorialisation. I approached this etymological entanglement by placing a police camp in a particular forest and a particular history of violence at the centre of my research, namely the Mkambathi Forest and the suppression of the Pondoland Rebellion in 1960-61. These are also histories of disappearance and erasure.

Bios

Maya Avis is a postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Digital Humanities and Multilateralism. She is the co-editor of *States of Surveillance: Ethnographies of New Technologies in Policing and Justice* (Routledge, 2025). Her work explores legal orders, archives and sur-/sousveillance in Palestine and Israel.

Maryam Adjam is an ethnographer, currently based as a researcher at Uppsala University, Sweden. Her research interest includes the fields of memory studies and critical heritage studies. Using imaginative ethnographical methodologies such as ethnographic poetics and visual anthropology she has been exploring the intersection between ethnography, photography and literature, focusing on practices of remembrance in relation to experiences of war and state sanctioned violence. Her current research project "The Heritage of the Missing" focuses on absence as concept in memory and processes of heritage making in the context of state sanctioned violence. She holds a PhD in ethnology from Center for Baltic and East European Studies at Södertörn University, Sweden.

Oriana Bernasconi is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Applied Ethics and a researcher of the Centre for Dialogue and Peace at the Catholic University of Chile. She is the Director of the Millenium Nucleus Data Justa, a principal researcher at the Millenium Institute on Violence and Democracy Research and the leader of a Fondecyt project studying the knowledge infrastructures of the National Search Plans for disappeared persons in Peru, Colombia and Chile. She holds a PhD in Sociology from the London School of Economics and Political Science (2008), and a Master's degree (MPhil) in Cultural Studies and Sociology from Birmingham University (2002).

Oriana's work focuses on contemporary subjects and subjectivities, memory studies, human rights violations, knowledge production and circulation, human rights atrocities and democracy, education and citizenship. In the last ten years, she has conducted interdisciplinary research in Chile, Argentina, Mexico and Colombia on the role that documentation of human rights violations and archives play in a society's capacity to come to terms with evil pasts. Her book "Resistance to Political Violence in Latin America. Documenting Atrocity" provides in-depth analysis on state violence documentation, denunciation and resistance and how it affected civilians, activists and victims in Chile and beyond. Oriana has authored more than 50 publications in 3 languages in academic journals and books, and has edited four special issues on these topics.

Erella Grassiani is an Associate Professor at the Department of Anthropology, University of Amsterdam. In the last decades, she has specialized in the study of the Israeli military and the Israeli security industry. In the last few years, she researched non-state militia(like) security organizations involving the protection of land and agriculture. Recently she started a project on arboreal nationalism, studying nationalist politics in which both state and non-state actors instrumentalize trees. She is the author of: *Soldiering under Occupation processes of Numbing among Israeli soldiers in the Al-Aqsa Intifada* (2013 Berghahn Books). Further, she is the co-editor of *Security Blurs: The Politics of Plural Security Provision* (2019 Routledge) and *The Entanglements of Ethnographic Fieldwork in a Violent World* (2023 Routledge). She is the Editor-in-Chief of the anthropological journal *Conflict and Society: Advances in Research.*

Nicky Rousseau is Extraordinary Professor at the Department of Historical Studies at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, and Senior Researcher in the Missing Persons Task Team of the South African National Prosecuting Authority. As a historian committed to the practice of public scholarship, Nicky Rousseau's teaching and research have centred on truth commissions, histories of violence and counter-insurgency, histories of liberation, missing persons and human remains. As a long-standing part of the research

team of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, she concentrated on the history and involvement of apartheid security forces in perpetrating violations of human rights, as well as on missing persons. Among her most recent publications are 'The commemorative state, human remains and the question of missing-ness' The Immanent Frame (2021) (with Riedwaan Moosage, Ciraj Rassool) and 'Speak Out on Poverty: Hearing, Inaudibility and Citizenship in Post-Apartheid South Africa,' Political and Legal Anthropology Review, (2019).

Luciana Serrano, born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, is an independent researcher and educator with a focus on multidisciplinary spatial and human rights projects. With several years of experience, Luciana has dedicated her efforts to examining borders, identities, memories, and the sense of belonging in the contemporary world. Her work involves observing the ecosystem of techniques and experts involved in place-making, exploring how they engage in dialogue and negotiation with social demands and ecological realities.

Currently, Luciana is an active member of a research cooperative in Argentina, Cooperativa Espacial. Within this cooperative, she collaborates on projects at the intersection of architecture, art, technology, and community organization. Her toolbox includes methodologies stemming from applied anthropology, audiovisual media, critical cartography, and feminist methods. Luciana is committed to exploring the complexities of spatial and human interactions and is dedicated to advancing knowledge and contributing to meaningful projects within her field alongside communities and collectives who share similar aspirations of social justice. For more information visit: www.luserrano.com and www.espacial.coop

Nataliya Tchermalykh is a visual and legal anthropologist. She teaches anthropology of art at the University of Geneva and the Geneva School of Art and Design. She has completed her doctoral degree at the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva (Switzerland). She has published on such topics as political performance, artistic and feminist dissidence and the role of law in artistic settings. Her book Shifting Landscapes: An Anthropology of Art and War is forthcoming with Toronto University Press in 2025.

Nina ter Laan is a cultural anthropologist and postdoctoral researcher at the University of Cologne, affiliated with the SFB Digital Publics project. Her research examines the memorialization of colonial violence and ecological crises in Morocco's Rif region, focusing on music, media, and art in transnational memory practices. She holds an MA in Cultural Anthropology and a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Radboud University, where her dissertation, Dissonant Voices, examined the political uses of Islam-inspired music in Morocco. From 2013 to 2016, she taught at the Universities of Leiden and Utrecht, and from 2016 to 2020, she was a postdoctoral researcher at Utrecht University, studying the Islamic migration (hijra) of Dutch and Flemish Muslim women to Morocco. Her work combines ethnography with participatory, arts-based methods to explore contested pasts and diasporic belonging. She has published in HAU, Religion, and Contemporary Islam, and has forthcoming publications on Riffian musical memory and contemporary engagements with the colonial weapon of the Rif War.

Carla Tiefenbacher is a research associate at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Cologne. She holds interdisciplinary degrees in "Culture and Environment in Africa" (University of Cologne, MA), and Liberal Arts and Sciences (University of Freiburg, BA hons). Carla is currently conducting doctoral research on the history and present of the Catholic Church in the Spanish-Moroccan borderlands. The project builds on MA research on contemporary archival practices among the last Spanish colonizers of Northern Morocco as testimonies to the interwoven afterlives of colonialism and Francoism. Her research forms part of the research group on (Digital) Publics and Social

transformation in Morocco at the CRC 'Media of Cooperation' together with Nina ter Laan and Martin Zillinger (director).

Martin Zillinger is director of the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Köln, president of the German Anthropological Association and PI in the project "Digital Publics and Social Transformations in the Maghreb" in a German Research Council-funded research consortium on Media of Co-operation. Martin works on museum anthropology, media practices and has been facilitating high-level and activist attempts to transform the German ethnographic museum landscape. Among his recent memory-related publications are the Cultural Studies Issue 15/2 The Post/Colonial Museum (with Anna Brus and Michi Knecht) and an article on Iconoclash and the Restitution Debate (with Anna Brus and Michi Knecht), published in HAU, as well as the public anthropology initiative https://boasblogs.org/.

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