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DOCUMENTA

CENTAR ZA SUOČAVANJE S PROŠLOŠĆU

(In)Visible Traces. Artistic memories of the Cold War

20th Century Heritage in Danger.

***Recommendations and Perspectives
from the (In)Visible Traces Project***



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Public event *(Un)wanted Heritage*

On February 29, 2024, we organized a public event titled *(Un)wanted Heritage*, focusing on the cultural heritage of the Cold War. The event consisted of two parts: a presentation and a workshop. The event plan was developed during a kick-off meeting held earlier that month. The project consortium agreed that this topic is especially important for young people, as it helps raise awareness and inform them about this subject. In that spirit, we invited young people to participate in the event.

Following a brief introduction by Documenta's director, Vesna Teršelič, project coordinator Jurica Vitković presented the desk research conducted by project partners with the topics of cultural heritage of the Cold War in project countries.

In the first part of the workshop, Alice Straniero from Documenta provided a theoretical framework on the topic of unwanted heritage and public space. She shared several examples of heritage that had been removed, as well as those that had been retained or transformed to give the monument a new context. In the second part of the workshop, participants examined a commemorative plaque located near the Zagreb Botanical Garden. This plaque commemorates one of the first acts of sabotage by resistance fighters during World War II but is now neglected and deteriorating. In small groups, participants developed arguments both for and against the preservation and restoration of the plaque. These arguments were then debated among the groups.



Local Round Tables and Public Discussions

As part of the *(In)Visible Traces. Artistic Memories of the Cold War* project, project partners organised a series of local round tables, and educational activities in Croatia, Romania, Austria, and Germany. These activities created space for interdisciplinary exchange on the challenges of dealing with neglected, endangered, or insufficiently interpreted sites connected to the difficult histories of the 20th century.

Bringing together artists, researchers, educators, memorial professionals, students, cultural workers, activists, and local communities, the discussions explored how societies today approach places marked by political repression, ideological conflict, violence, displacement, and social trauma. Particular attention was given to sites and narratives that often remain marginalised, abandoned, politically contested, or disconnected from broader public awareness and educational frameworks.

The round tables and public discussions also formed an important advocacy component of the project. Beyond reflecting on existing conditions and challenges, the activities aimed to encourage broader public and professional discussions on possible future approaches to neglected memory sites and difficult heritage. Through the exchange of experiences, artistic practices, research perspectives, and local knowledge, participants collectively reflected on a central question present throughout the project: ***What can and should be done with these sites today?***

Although each activity emerged from a different local context, several common themes appeared throughout the discussions: **a)** the fragility of democratic and inclusive memory cultures; **b)** the tension between remembrance, tourism, and commercialisation; **c)** the absence of long-term institutional protection for many memory sites; **d)** the need to connect historical research, artistic practice, education, and community engagement in more sustainable ways.

The activities also emphasized the important role of contemporary art and artistic research in opening alternative perspectives on difficult heritage. Through artistic interventions, performances, exhibitions, educational walks, and public conversations, the project explored how creative practices can reactivate overlooked histories, encourage critical reflection, and create new forms of dialogue between past and present. Alongside the final conference held in Dresden in March 2026, these activities contributed to the development of recommendations and suggestions concerning the protection, interpretation, visibility, and future use of vulnerable 20th-century heritage sites. Rather than offering one universal model, the discussions encouraged context-sensitive, interdisciplinary, and socially responsible approaches grounded in dialogue, participation, and long-term public engagement.

The following sections present summaries, reflections, and recommendations developed through the local round tables and public discussions organised by project partners *Documenta* – Center for Dealing with the Past, ARAC – Romanian Association for Contemporary Art, BLOCKFREI, and Bautzner Straße Dresden Memorial.

Romania

Round Table: Claudia Dobre and Patricia Morosan

Anca Poteraşu Gallery, Bucharest, November 2025

The Romanian round table explored the relationship between memory sites, artistic practice, and the social processes through which societies negotiate what is remembered, forgotten, protected, or neglected. Organised by ARAC – Romanian Association for Contemporary Art at the Anca Poteraşu Gallery in Bucharest, the discussion brought together artist Patricia Morosan and historian Claudia-Florentina Dobre, moderated by Anca Poteraşu.

The discussion addressed the role of neglected or abandoned memory sites within contemporary society, focusing particularly on the ways artistic practices and interdisciplinary research can reactivate spaces marked by trauma, political violence, and silenced histories. Patricia Morosan presented several artistic works dealing with emotional geographies, European peripheries, and spaces of memory, including her intervention Pieces for an Invisible Monument, developed within the (In)Visible Traces project at the Lindenstrasse Memorial in Potsdam. Through whispered recitations of Horst Schüppel's prison poem In Untersuchungshaft, the work reactivated former spaces of Soviet imprisonment and reflected on the fragile relationship between absence, memory, and embodied experience.

Claudia Dobre approached the topic from the perspective of memory studies and heritage theory, discussing how historical narratives become institutionalised through museums, commemorations, archives, and public discourse, while many personal or marginal histories remain overlooked. The discussion particularly emphasized the tensions between official remembrance frameworks and more fragile, fragmented, or silenced forms of memory.

The Romanian round table also generated a series of recommendations concerning the protection and revitalisation of endangered memory sites. These included the importance of legal protection mechanisms, digital documentation and archiving, interdisciplinary educational programmes, artistic interventions, and stronger collaboration between cultural institutions, NGOs, researchers, and local communities. Special attention was given to the role of participatory practices and creative approaches in making neglected heritage more accessible and socially relevant.

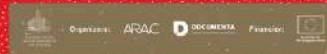
The discussion highlighted that memory sites should not be understood solely as static remnants of the past, but as dynamic social spaces where questions of identity, responsibility, historical interpretation, and public engagement continue to evolve.

The Romanian Association for Contemporary Art

Round table:
with
Patricia Morosan
and
Claudia-Florentina Dobre

Wednesday, 19 November, 17:00 - 19:00

Galeria Anca Poterașu
Str. Popa Soare, nr. 26



ARAC

BIO:

Patricia Morosan is a visual artist (born in Romania, based between Berlin and Athens) who works with photography, film, poetry, performance, and sound. Her works investigate the duality between intimacy and identity, exploring polycentric practices and methods of emotional geography, ecology, and posthumanism. She studied photography at the Ostkreuzschule in Berlin and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Leipzig.

Claudia-Florentina Dobre received her PhD in History from Laval University in Québec in 2007 with a thesis on the memory of communist political persecution from a female perspective. The winner of several research grants, including the Robert Schuman grant from the European Parliament (in 2007), Claudia-Florentina Dobre has co-organized 10 international conferences, edited several volumes and journal issues, co-produced the documentary film "Stories from Bărăgan. Memories from the Romanian Siberia" (2013), published 5 authored works, and coordinated or participated in numerous international projects. Her research fields include: the history and memory of communism, the memory of political persecution, everyday life during the communist period, museums and memorials, and deportations during the Stalinist era.



During the round table in Bucharest, the artistic intervention Pieces for an Invisible Monument by Patricia Morosan was presented and became an important part of the discussion on memory sites, artistic practices, and the challenges of preserving and interpreting difficult heritage.

Pieces for an Invisible Monument is a quiet symbol that resists monumentality: a reminder that memory may not always be anchored in stone, but can live in gestures, whispers, and fragile traces. The intervention takes place in the Lindenstrasse Memorial, a former site of Soviet imprisonment. Through whispered recitations of Horst Schüppel's poem *In Untersuchungshaft*, written during his incarceration in 1949, the performance reactivates the charged spaces of the prison cells, corridors, interrogation rooms, and courtyards.

By speaking his words back into the walls that once contained him, the work becomes both an act of remembrance and invocation: memory emerges as fragile, embodied, and spatially inscribed. The whispering voice moves through the architecture like a trace, unveiling the resonance of lives once silenced and suggesting the possibility of an "invisible monument" — one that resists erasure and re-inscribes history into the present.

Conception, production, text, and performance: Patricia Morosan

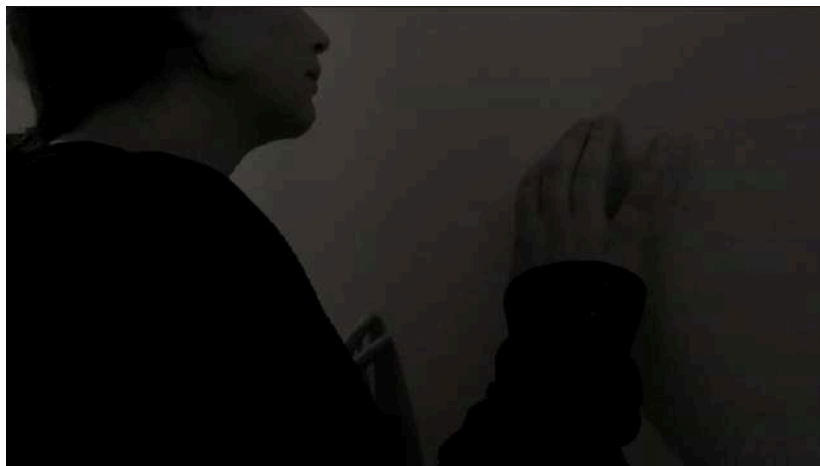
Camera and video editing: Uli M Schueppel

Soundscapes and sound mix: Cosmo Schueppel

Lyrics: Horst Schueppel



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJfwwu-zBBM>



Austria

Tracing the Cold War: Art, Heritage, and Memory

DAS WEISSE HAUS, Vienna, November 2025

The round table in Austria was organised by BLOCKFREI in collaboration with DAS WEISSE HAUS as part of the public programme accompanying the exhibition *3 Million* by artist Ryts Monet. The discussion focused on the relationship between contemporary artistic practice, Cold War heritage, and the challenges of interpreting neglected or overlooked memory sites within present-day political and cultural contexts.

Introduced by Nevena Janković on behalf of BLOCKFREI, the event presented the broader aims of the *(In)Visible Traces project*, particularly its focus on revisiting marginalised Cold War sites through artistic research, residencies, exhibitions, study visits, and public discussions. The round table featured Ryts Monet and art historian Kathrin Heinrich, moderated by Jana Dolečki, and explored how artistic practices can reveal invisible or suppressed historical narratives while opening new forms of public engagement with difficult heritage.

The discussion examined Cold War sites as layered spaces shaped by ideology, political conflict, social transformation, and selective remembrance. Particular emphasis was placed on the ability of artistic research to question dominant historical narratives, reactivate forgotten spaces, and create opportunities for reflection on the continuing relevance of Cold War histories in contemporary Europe and beyond. Ryts Monet also reflected on the importance of moving beyond Eurocentric perspectives when discussing Cold War memory, connecting European experiences with broader geopolitical histories in Southeast Asia and other regions.

The round table additionally produced a set of recommendations focused on the role of artistic and interdisciplinary approaches in dealing with neglected historical sites. These included supporting artistic interventions and temporary cultural uses of abandoned spaces, developing interdisciplinary residencies and study visits, strengthening community-based educational programmes, creating digital archives and maps, and incorporating direct engagement with memory sites into educational curricula. The discussion stressed that artistic practices should not replace historical research or memorial work, but rather complement them by creating alternative forms of visibility, emotional engagement, and critical reflection.



BIO:

Enricomaria De Napoli (Ryts Monet), born in Bari in 1982, is a Vienna-based artist. He holds a BA in Visual Arts and an MA in Visual Communication from the University IUAV of Venice. Since 2022, he has been a member of the Vienna Secession and is represented by Michela Rizzo Gallery (Venice) and Barvinsky Gallery (Vienna).

His work has been presented in numerous international institutions and biennales, including Palazzo Braschi and Fondazione La Quadriennale di Roma (IT), BIENALSUR (Argentina), Vienna Art Week (AT), Bucharest Biennale (RO), Fondazione Pistoletto Cittadellarte (IT), Steirischer Herbst (AT), Nakanojo Biennale (Japan), Kunsthaus Dresden (GER), Moscow International Biennale for Young Art (Russia), OFF Biennale Cairo (Egypt), Mediterranea 18 Young Artist Biennale (Albania), Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam (Netherlands), and Tokyo Arts and Spaces (Japan).



the round table discussion was followed by the opening of the exhibition *3 Million* by artist Ryts Monet, based on an artistic intervention within the *(In)Visible Traces. Artistic Memories of the Cold War* project.

The intervention critically approached Cold War memory from a non-Western perspective, focusing on the Vietnam War and the broader geopolitical violence that shaped much of the second half of the twentieth century. While the term “Cold War,” first used by George Orwell in 1945, is commonly associated with the ideological confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, the work emphasized that such understandings often overlook the numerous proxy wars, revolutions, and violent conflicts that unfolded across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and other regions

Within this context, the Vietnam War was presented as one of the most devastating conflicts of the postwar era. Lasting nearly twenty years and causing around three million deaths, including two million civilians, the war left deep human, political, and environmental consequences that continue to shape collective memory today. The intervention reflected on the use of Napalm and Agent Orange, the absence of reparations, and the enduring scars left within Vietnamese society.

Exactly fifty years after the end of the war, the artist traveled to Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), where the conflict ended, and Vietnam was reunified after more than a century of foreign domination.

The artistic intervention *3 Million* draws inspiration from the East Asian ritual of burning Joss Paper, in which paper reproductions of money and material goods are symbolically offered to the dead. In the central performative act, a young Vietnamese woman burns three million U.S. dollars reproduced as Joss Paper banknotes - one dollar for each Vietnamese victim of the war. Through this symbolic gesture, the work becomes both commemorative and political: the fire recalls the violence of American incendiary weapons, while the symbolic money evokes the unresolved historical responsibilities and unpaid debts left behind by the war.

Through video, performative action, sound, and spatial intervention, *3 Million* encouraged audiences to reflect on memory, ideology, political violence, and the continuing global legacies of the Cold War, while also connecting historical reflection with contemporary geopolitical tensions and new forms of global rivalry.





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qn8d9cs5spk>



Germany

On the Worth of Freedom // How to Commemorate “1989” in Times of Transformation

Dresden Walk & Talk, October 2025

The German round table and educational walk organised by Bautzner Straße Dresden Memorial focused on memory practices connected to the peaceful revolution of 1989 in Dresden and the broader challenges of commemorating political transformation, dictatorship, violence, and democratic change. The activity brought together educators, students, cultural workers, and memorial practitioners from Germany and the Czech Republic in a collective exploration of visible and invisible memory sites across the city.

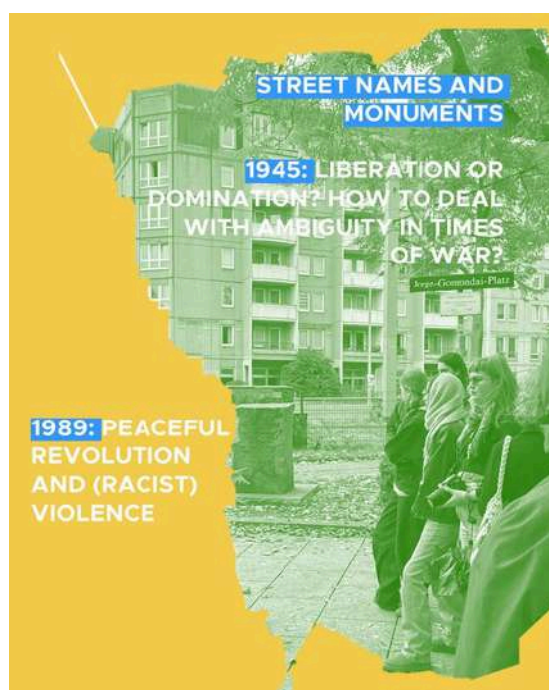
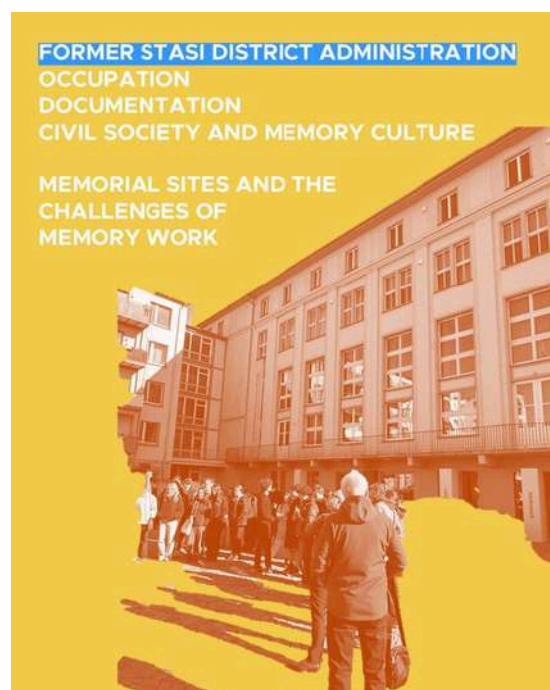
Structured as a “walk and talk,” the programme encouraged participants to critically observe the contemporary urban landscape without relying on historical photographs or predetermined narratives. Instead, the discussion centred on questions such as: **What remains visible? What is overlooked? Why do certain historical layers disappear from public consciousness while others become dominant? What still matters within today’s memory culture?**

The activity addressed a wide range of sites and themes connected to the history of the German Democratic Republic, the events of 1989, post-socialist transformation, and ongoing tensions surrounding public remembrance. Discussions included the role of churches during the peaceful revolution, contested interpretations of pacifism and violence, the symbolic reconstruction of the Frauenkirche, socialist architectural heritage, the memorialisation of Soviet liberation and domination, racist violence before and after reunification, and the transformation of former State Security institutions into sites of documentation and education.



Special emphasis was placed on the complexity and ambiguity of memory work in contemporary societies. Participants reflected on how remembrance cultures evolve over time, how political transitions reshape public narratives, and how neglected or controversial sites require continuous reinterpretation and dialogue. The discussion highlighted the importance of connecting historical education with direct spatial experience, encouraging participants to critically engage with urban space as a layered archive of social and political histories.

The Dresden activity further emphasized the importance of democratic participation, civil society initiatives, and educational practices in sustaining meaningful remembrance cultures. Rather than presenting memory as fixed or completed, the walk and discussion approached it as an ongoing process shaped by debate, reinterpretation, and the changing needs of contemporary society.



Croatia

Sites of Memory and Forgetting: Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur Today

Human Rights Film Festival, Zagreb, December 2025

The Croatian round table focused on the contemporary condition, public perception, and future memorialisation of the former political prison camps on Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur, among the most significant, yet still insufficiently protected and interpreted, sites connected to political repression in socialist Yugoslavia.

Organised during the *Human Rights Film Festival* in Zagreb, the discussion brought together artist Andreja Kulunčić, architect and researcher Darko Bavoljak, ethnologist and cultural anthropologist Renata Jambrešić Kirin, and professor and historian Branimir Janković. The conversation addressed the complex position these islands occupy within contemporary Croatian and regional memory politics, as well as the broader challenges surrounding neglected heritage linked to difficult and contested pasts.

Particular attention was given to the absence of a comprehensive memorial framework and long-term institutional strategy for the sites. Participants discussed the gradual physical decay of prison infrastructure, the lack of contextual information available to visitors, and the tensions between tourism, commercialisation, historical responsibility, and remembrance. The discussion also highlighted the continued marginalisation of former prisoners' testimonies, especially the experiences of women imprisoned on Sveti Grgur, which remain significantly less visible in public discourse and institutional memory.

The round table further explored the role that contemporary art, research, and interdisciplinary cultural practices can play in opening new forms of engagement with these locations. Through artistic interventions, public discussions, exhibitions, and educational initiatives, neglected memory sites can become spaces for reflection, dialogue, and critical engagement with the past, rather than remaining isolated ruins disconnected from their historical meaning.

The discussion emphasized that the future of Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur should not be approached solely through questions of preservation or tourism development, but through an inclusive and socially responsible memorialisation process grounded in historical research, public education, victims' testimonies, and long-term institutional care.



(In)visible Traces - 20th Century Neglected Cultural Heritage and Remembrance Challenges

Conference in Dresden

The last activity of our project, the conference “(In)visible Traces - 20th Century Neglected Cultural Heritage and Remembrance Challenges” took place from 3rd to 6th March 2026 in Dresden, Germany. It was hosted and coorganized by our partners at Bauzner Strasse Memorial, which is itself also a heritage site - a prison from GDR times, that was led by the KGB and Stasi.

The conference was opened by the welcome speeches by Uljana Sieber, Director of the Bauzner Strasse Memorial, Vesna Teršelič, Director of Documenta and Annekatriin Klepsch, Dresden's Mayor for Culture.

Using the former Stasi complex and nearby prisons as examples, Uljana Sieber showed how many sites of dictatorship remain hidden or difficult to interpret. She underlined the importance of research, interpretation, and international cooperation in making such places accessible for memory work. Vesna Teršelič head of Documenta, emphasized that many sites connected to the brutal history of the 20th century remain outside public memory. She highlighted decontextualization and the passing of eyewitnesses as major challenges, while also warning that political narratives often distort or deny historical events, creating national myths that are difficult to challenge and dismantle. Annekatriin Klepsch, Dresden's Mayor for Culture, welcomed the participants on behalf of the city of Dresden and pointed out that many places connected with the twentieth-century dictatorships remain “invisible traces” within the urban landscape. She emphasized the importance of recognizing and interpreting these hidden layers of history, reminding that well-known landmarks often stand alongside sites connected to repression, violence, and difficult pasts that require careful remembrance and interpretation.

After the opening conference speeches, Jurica Vitković, researcher at Documenta and coordinator of the project (In)Visible Traces: Artistic Memories of the Cold War, presented the project and its main results.

He explained that the conference represents the final major public activity of the project and an opportunity to reflect on its broader meaning. He pointed out that many Cold War heritage sites across Europe remain neglected, physically degraded, poorly marked, or absent from public awareness, which presents not only a cultural heritage issue but also a democratic challenge. He highlighted that the project aimed to address this by connecting research and artistic practice to reactivate such places and open new conversations about difficult histories. Vitković also emphasized that while artistic interventions can create visibility and emotional engagement, sustainable remembrance requires long-term institutional responsibility and support. As he noted, “One NGO, two artistic institutions and one memorial institution shape the nature of this project, which approaches the preservation of Cold War memory through civil society experience, institutional knowledge, and artistic practice.”

Tena Banjeglav, researcher and projects coordinator from *Documenta* presented to the participants 2026 European Memory in Action project, putting an accent on the aims, methods, and activities Documenta will be dealing with during this year. Banjeglav particularly highlighted project team decision to focus on neglected, abandoned, and marginalized Holocaust-related sites as their memorialization is an act of recognizing injustice, restoring the dignity of victims and survivors, and reaffirming human rights principles. As this conference shows, Cold War heritage is intentionally connected with Holocaust and genocide-related sites. These histories are different, but they face similar structural challenges: political pressure, institutional gaps, and reliance on civil society.



In the following panel, three historians, Milan Radošević from the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the AMICA initiative, Thomas Porena from Topografia per la Storia, and David Gonzalez Vazquez from EUROM presented historical contexts from their countries related to the period before and during the Second World War, together with examples of heritage sites and challenges of their memorialization. Radošević spoke about the Italian fascist occupation of the Istrian Peninsula in the 1920s and changing narratives about antifascism, as well as the creation of the AMICA initiative, which advocates for the establishment of an antifascist museum, interpretation centre, and archive. Porena presented little-known labour camps in the Umbria region where prisoners of war and civilians were forced to work during WWII, noting that sites connected with civilian labour remain largely unacknowledged. Gonzalez Vazquez addressed memory sites related to the Spanish Civil War and the following dictatorship, emphasizing that many locations of repression are still not memorialized, although some positive examples exist such as the Gernika Peace Museum and the Exile Memorial Museum.



The third panel brought together artists whose work engages with cultural heritage, memorialization, and socially engaged artistic practices. Through their presentations, the participants demonstrated how artistic interventions can open new ways of approaching difficult histories and neglected sites of memory. Each artist presented projects connected with heritage locations, reflecting on the ideas behind their work, their personal motivations, and the methods they use to interact with historically sensitive places. The panel was moderated by Anamarija Batista from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

Andreja Kulunčić presented her long-term research and artistic project *You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It*, which explores the complex legacy of political repression and ideological conflict. The project, developed through extensive research and artistic production, was shown in Bucharest (December 2024 – February 2025) within the framework of the (In)Visible Traces project. It also formed an important part of Kulunčić's retrospective exhibition *Making the World a Better Place*, held from May to October 2025 at the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb. Through this work, Kulunčić highlights how artistic research can critically engage with difficult historical narratives and activate public reflection on contested pasts.

Patricia Morosan presented her artistic intervention *Pieces for the Invisible Monument*, created within the context of the (In)Visible Traces project. The work reflects on memory beyond traditional monumental forms, suggesting that remembrance can persist through gestures, voices, and fragile traces rather than stone memorials. The intervention took place at the Lindenstrasse Memorial, a former site of Soviet imprisonment, where whispered recitations of Horst Schüppel's poem *In Untersuchungshaft*, written during his incarceration in 1949, were performed in prison cells, corridors, and courtyards. By reintroducing the poet's words into the architecture that once confined him, the work evokes memory as something embodied and spatially inscribed, allowing the site itself to resonate with voices once silenced. Her presentation also included excerpts from the film *Frozen Stories*, through which she reflected on the personal and emotional dimensions of working with traumatic histories and memory sites.



Ryts Monet, also a participant in the IVT project, presented several of his works that critically engage with the legacy of political systems, ideological symbols, and the transformation of public memory landscapes. In *Der Euro des Kaukasus* and *Portrait of Europa* (2019–20), he reflects on the intersections of European identity, geopolitics, and economic symbolism, using visual language that questions how contemporary Europe constructs and represents itself. The project *Workers from All Countries Unite! Forward Comrades, Let's Boldly...* revisits socialist slogans and visual propaganda, examining how revolutionary language and imagery circulate today and how their meanings shift once removed from their original ideological context. In *Memento Park* (2019), Monet engages with the afterlives of socialist monuments, exploring how former symbols of political power become recontextualized as historical artifacts, tourist attractions, or contested memory sites. Across these works, Monet investigates how monuments, political iconography, and public spaces continue to influence collective memory and political imagination in post-socialist and contemporary European contexts.

The discussion concluded that artistic practice holds significant potential as a tool for promoting awareness, advocacy, and the visibility of sites connected to the Holocaust, the Second World War, and other histories of violence and repression. By combining artistic research, personal engagement, and site-specific interventions, the artists demonstrated how art can open new interpretative spaces, encourage public dialogue, and contribute to the contemporary relevance of difficult heritage.



The day was closed with a city walk focusing on the National Socialist and Jewish past of Dresden. The walk started at the old cargo railway station, from where Dresden's Jews were deported to concentration camps. One part of the building, which had served as a transit camp, is now used as a cultural centre, while another part remains an abandoned and unmarked structure. The city of Dresden is currently trying to purchase the site from its private owner with the intention of transforming it into a memorial while also giving it a contemporary public function.

The participants then visited the site where the historic Dresden synagogue once stood before it was destroyed during the Kristallnacht. The synagogue was never rebuilt at the same location. Today the site remains physically empty, but temporary artistic installations mark the space and include QR codes that allow visitors to access additional information about the artworks, artists, and the historical events connected with the place. During the walk, the group also visited one of the three Jewish communities in Dresden, where a member of the community board presented their space and synagogue, spoke about traditions and customs, and shared current challenges the community faces, including the rise of antisemitism and the growing influence of far-right political movements.

In the city centre, participants met with artist Manaf Halbouni, who presented his work Monument at the very location where it had been installed. The project became internationally known when three vertical buses were erected in front of the Frauenkirche Dresden in 2017. Inspired by images from Aleppo during the Syrian war, where buses were used as barricades to protect civilians from sniper fire, Halbouni's installation created a powerful visual dialogue between the destruction of Dresden during the bombing of 1945 and contemporary war in Syria. By transferring this imagery into the centre of Dresden, the work connected different historical moments of violence and invited reflection on war, destruction, and solidarity across time and geography.

Finally, a representative of the City of Dresden responsible for cultural heritage and remembrance policy spoke about the reconstruction of key city landmarks after the bombing of 13 February 1945, when large parts of the city were destroyed. She explained the long process of rebuilding and restoration, while also discussing contemporary challenges of memorialization. One of the central issues, she noted, is the effort to move beyond the narrative of Dresden primarily as a victim of the bombing and to more clearly acknowledge Germany's responsibility for crimes committed during the Second World War.



DAY 2

The final panels of the conference were crucial for shaping the overall conclusions, strategies, and recommendations on how to promote and advocate for the visibility of neglected memorial sites, reflecting the broader goals of the (In)Visible Traces project. Panel 5, moderated by Martin Bock from the EVZ Foundation, brought together Anna Kaminsky from Bundesstiftung Aufarbeitung, Malgorzata Pakier from European Network Remembrance and Solidarity, and Oriol Lopez-Badell from European Observatory on Memories to discuss current challenges in European remembrance.

Anna Kaminsky highlighted the persistent divide in remembrance between Eastern and Western Europe. While Western countries often emphasize Nazi occupation and the role of the Soviet army as liberators, many Eastern European societies experienced both Nazi and Soviet rule. She also pointed out that remembrance practices in Eastern Europe developed later because Soviet regimes limited independent memory policies after WWII.

Malgorzata Pakier emphasized that Russia's aggression against Ukraine represents a turning point for European remembrance, reopening debates and creating space for new interpretations of history, including discussions about colonial and decolonial perspectives in European memory. She stressed that remembrance practices increasingly need to be future-oriented and connected with younger generations. As an example of participatory work with difficult heritage sites, she presented the Sound in the Silence project, through which young participants explore historical sites and create artistic performances inspired by their experiences. She also recalled the 2023 edition organized in cooperation with Documenta – Centre for Dealing with the Past and the Jasenovac Memorial Site at the former camp in Stara Gradiška, demonstrating how international collaboration can activate neglected memory sites.

Oriol Lopez-Badell reflected on the European Union as a peace project that emerged after the Second World War. However, with EU enlargement, new historical experiences and narratives entered the European memory space, sometimes creating tensions between different national interpretations of the past. In his view, European remembrance should not reinforce national victimhood narratives but should embrace a plurality of memories. This plurality should be both geographical and social, including the perspectives of historically marginalized groups such as LGBTQI+ communities, Roma, and people with disabilities. These reflections resonated strongly with the objectives of the (In)Visible Traces project, which seeks to highlight overlooked sites and encourage more inclusive and diverse approaches to remembrance across Europe.



The final panel focused on practical strategies for working with neglected and marginalized memorial sites and increasing their visibility, continuing discussions central to the aims of the (In)Visible Traces project. The panel brought together experts working on heritage protection, remembrance policy, and education.

Gilly Carr presented the work behind the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Charter for Safeguarding Sites. She outlined key threats facing many historical locations across Europe, including neglect, political pressure, lack of legal protection, and commercial development. Carr emphasized that safeguarding such sites requires coordinated cooperation between national governments, local authorities, researchers, civil society organizations, and local communities, highlighting the Charter as a framework for joint responsibility and action.

Vesna Marjanović, chair of Europa Nostra Serbia, addressed the vulnerability of heritage connected to the antifascist struggle and the socialist period in former Yugoslavia, particularly monuments created during the Cold War era. She emphasized that many memorials built in socialist Yugoslavia to commemorate the antifascist resistance have been neglected, politically contested, or deliberately destroyed after the breakup of the country.

As examples, she discussed the Generalštab building in Belgrade, an important architectural and historical symbol of twentieth-century Yugoslav statehood that was heavily damaged during the 1999 NATO bombing and later threatened with demolition despite its protected heritage status. Plans for its removal were halted after public protests and student mobilization, and discussions about its future are still ongoing. Marjanović also highlighted the destruction of the Monument to the Victory of the People of Slavonia in Croatia, opened in 1968 as one of the most significant modernist monuments dedicated to the antifascist struggle. The monument was demolished in 1992, symbolizing the broader erasure of antifascist and socialist heritage in the post-Yugoslav context. In 2024, artist Sandro Đukić and the Serbian National Council received a Europa Nostra Award for the project of its virtual reconstruction, which digitally revived the monument and renewed public awareness of its historical and artistic significance.

The final presentation was given by Bruno Boyer from the Mémorial de la Shoah. He presented their educational work with teachers through seminars titled Holocaust as a Starting Point, which bring together educators from countries with contested historical narratives to discuss difficult pasts and encourage dialogue. Boyer emphasized that Holocaust education based solely on the slogan “Never again” is not sufficient for strengthening democratic values. Instead, education should also address historical disputes and unresolved conflicts. He also presented participatory methods used during visits to memorial sites, where participants work with historical sources, investigate the location themselves, and develop their own interpretations of the past. These approaches strongly resonate with the goals of the (In)Visible Traces project, which seeks to activate overlooked sites through research, education, and international cooperation.

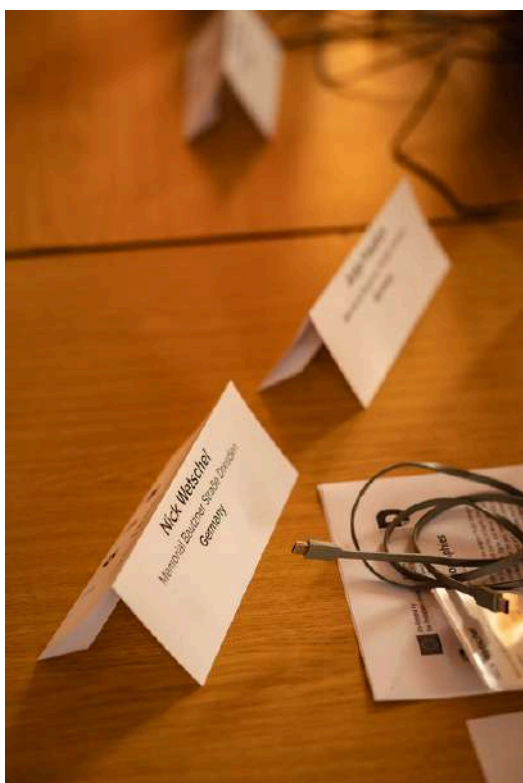




Foto: fLy Ralf Menzel @photographer_fly// Agentur ZERRLICHT
Foto of the (bus) intervention: Manaf Halbouni @manafh

Dissemination, Public Engagement, and Advocacy

Throughout the implementation of the project (2024–2026), dissemination was understood not merely as a supporting activity accompanying the project's outcomes, but as one of its central methodological and political dimensions. The project approached dissemination as an active process of opening public dialogue on neglected, marginalized, contested, and endangered sites of 20th-century heritage, many of which remain absent from institutional memory frameworks, insufficiently protected, politically sensitive, or increasingly exposed to processes of abandonment, revisionism, commercialization, and historical simplification.

Rather than treating dissemination as a final stage of communication following artistic production, the project integrated public engagement into many phases of its implementation. Public discussions, round tables, exhibitions, artistic interventions, educational activities, online campaigns, publications, study visits, and international conferences functioned simultaneously as spaces of research, knowledge exchange, advocacy, and public visibility. Through these activities, the project sought to connect cultural workers, artists, researchers, memory institutions, civil society organizations, policymakers, students, and broader audiences across different national and historical contexts.

Particular importance was given to creating transnational spaces for dialogue between experiences emerging from Croatia, Germany, Austria, and Romania, recognizing that the political and cultural challenges surrounding difficult heritage cannot be understood exclusively within national frameworks. The project therefore emphasized comparative perspectives and shared European responsibilities in relation to sites connected with political repression, surveillance systems, imprisonment, violence, ideological conflict, and contested historical narratives of the Cold War period.

The dissemination strategy of the project relied on a combination of physical public programs and sustained digital communication. These activities served not only as platforms for presenting project results, but also as important spaces for advocacy, networking, and collective reflection on the future of endangered heritage sites. These encounters enabled the articulation of recommendations emerging from local contexts while simultaneously opening broader discussions on European memory politics, institutional responsibility, and the role of contemporary art and cultural practices in confronting difficult histories.

Alongside conference and public programs¹, digital dissemination played a crucial role in extending the project's reach beyond institutional and academic audiences. Through a series of online campaigns published on social media platforms, the project communicated artistic interventions, heritage research, advocacy messages, archival materials, photographs from the training for youth, and reflections on memory politics to broader and more diverse publics. The campaigns sought not only to increase the visibility of project activities, but also to provoke public engagement with questions concerning the disappearance, neglect, commercialization, or political instrumentalization of sites connected to difficult pasts.

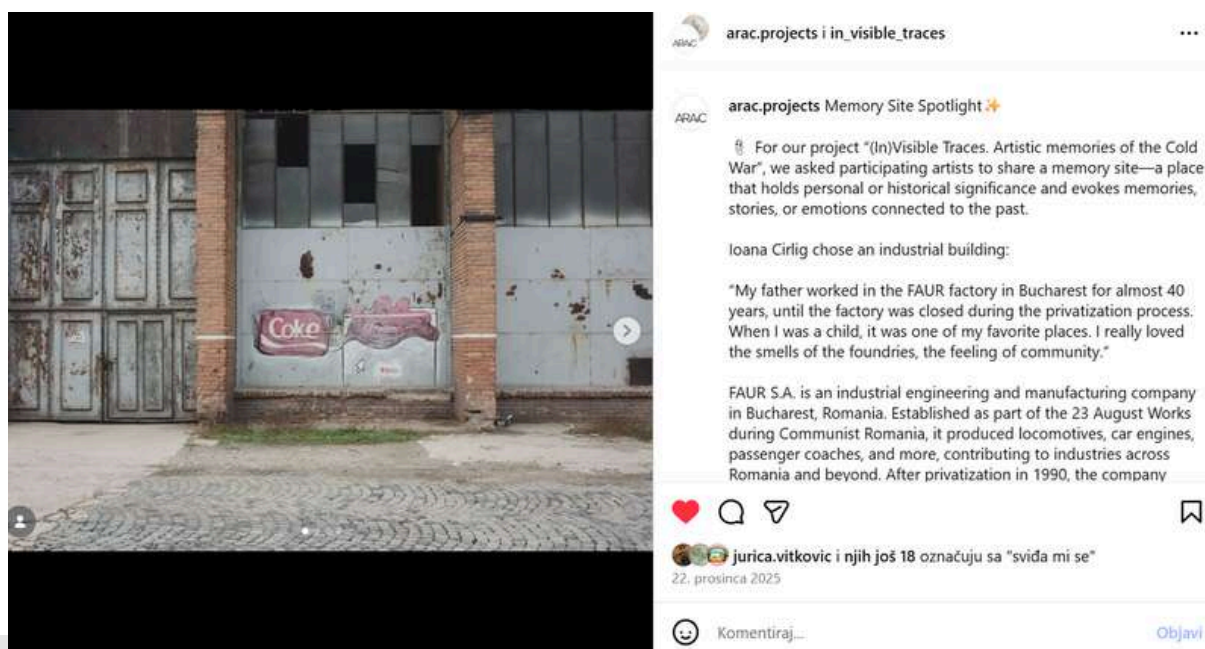
Particular emphasis was placed on visual storytelling, accessible language, and the creation of digital narratives capable of translating complex historical and political questions into formats suitable for wider public circulation. Through these campaigns, the project attempted to bridge the distance between institutional heritage discourse and contemporary digital publics, especially younger generations increasingly encountering historical narratives through online environments.

The online dissemination activities included thematic campaigns dedicated to endangered heritage sites, artistic interventions, public memory, and the relationship between visibility and disappearance in contemporary remembrance culture. These campaigns formed an important extension of the project's broader advocacy goals by continuously emphasizing that heritage preservation cannot be reduced to physical conservation alone, but must also involve public recognition, contextualization, accessibility, education, and sustained democratic engagement.

Selected online campaigns developed within the project include:

Memory Site Spotlight ✨

(https://www.instagram.com/p/DSjyCKtCC39/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=NTc4MTlwNjQ2YQ==)



¹ For example, during the exhibition, a rich discursive program accompanied the segment "Trauma." Over the course of five months, 20 discursive events introduced participants to the themes explored within the exhibition section "You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It."



Ioana Cirliș:

“My father worked in the FAUR factory in Bucharest for almost 40 years, until the factory was closed during the privatization process. When I was a child, it was one of my favorite places. I really loved the smells of the foundries, the feeling of community.”

FAUR S.A. is an industrial engineering and manufacturing company in Bucharest, Romania. Established as part of the 23 August Works during Communist Romania, it produced locomotives, car engines, passenger coaches, and more, contributing to industries across Romania and beyond. After privatization in 1990, the company continued its industrial legacy under the name FAUR.

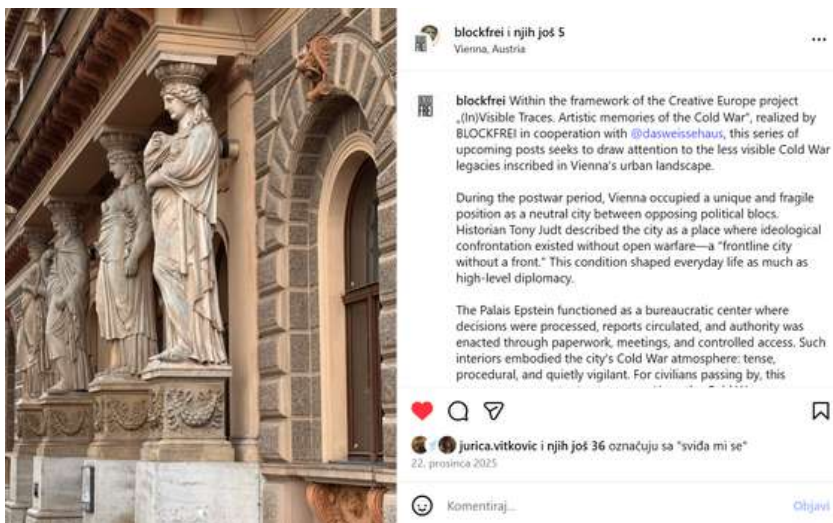


Attention to the less visible Cold War legacies inscribed in Vienna's urban landscape.

https://www.instagram.com/p/DSk2Wgril2s/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==



Palais Epstein, located in the very centre of Vienna - next to the Austrian parliament - is not only an architectural landmark but a site deeply embedded in Austria's political history. Built in the late 19th century, the palace has served key institutional functions connected to parliamentary life and state administration. After 1945, during the Allied occupation of Austria, Palais Epstein was used as the headquarters of the Soviet occupying forces in Vienna, until 1955. During this period, the building became part of the everyday machinery of occupation, control, and negotiation in a divided Europe. Its walls bear witness to a moment when Vienna stood at the intersection of competing geopolitical systems.



https://www.instagram.com/p/DSk7x36ju2a/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

During the postwar period, Vienna occupied a unique and fragile position as a neutral city between opposing political blocs. Historian Tony Judt described the city as a place where ideological confrontation existed without open warfare; a “frontline city without a front.” This condition shaped everyday life as much as high-level diplomacy.

The Palais Epstein functioned as a bureaucratic center where decisions were processed, reports circulated, and authority was enacted through paperwork, meetings, and controlled access. Such interiors embodied the city's Cold War atmosphere: tense, procedural, and quietly vigilant. For civilians passing by, this presence was constant yet opaque. Here, the Cold War was experienced not through explosions or speeches, but through regulated movement, surveillance, and the normalization of uncertainty.

A History at Risk - Protect Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur

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Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur are among the most important, but also most neglected, sites connected to the history of political repression in the former Yugoslavia.

After the 1948 split between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, the islands were turned into prison camps for people accused of supporting Stalin or opposing the regime. Thousands of people passed through Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur, many exposed to violence, forced labour, isolation, and inhumane living conditions. Around 13,000 people were detained on Goli Otok alone between 1949 and 1956.

Today, these places are still largely left without proper protection, interpretation, or a clear approach to memorialisation. At the same time, they are increasingly approached only as tourist attractions or abandoned landscapes, while the history they carry remains overlooked.

Through this campaign, we want to open space for discussing why the protection of these sites matters, not only as a question of heritage, but also as a question of responsibility, memory, and human rights.

Remembering places like Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur means recognising the experiences of former prisoners, preserving testimonies and historical traces, and creating opportunities for education and critical reflection for future generations.



The History Behind the Landscape

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Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur are often presented today as isolated, almost exotic destinations. But their history tells a different story.

These islands were sites of political imprisonment, where thousands of people were detained and exposed to violence, humiliation, forced labour, and extremely harsh living conditions. For many former prisoners, Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur remained lifelong symbols of fear, trauma, and silence.

Sveti Grgur, where many women prisoners were detained, remains especially absent from public discussions. The experiences of women imprisoned there are still far less visible, and only a small number of testimonies have been publicly recorded and preserved. Because of that, many stories connected to the island remain silenced even today.

Nowadays, there is nothing on the islands that clearly explains what happened there. What remains are mostly abandoned ruins, without proper context or interpretation. The sites still lack:

- comprehensive protection
- a clear and consistent memorial framework
- public interpretation of their history

At the same time, tourism around the islands continues to grow, often without enough context about their past. People walk through spaces marked by political repression and human suffering, while the history connected to them remains almost invisible.

Alongside the need to protect Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur as authentic historical sites, it is equally important to acknowledge the experiences of former prisoners and ensure that this history is not ignored or forgotten through respectful and inclusive memorialisation.



Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur are sites of memory with strong educational potential

https://www.instagram.com/p/DYRqQLDDW4m/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

Through study visits, guided programmes, and a focus on developing critical thinking, these places can help us better understand the mechanisms of political repression, the impact of ideology, and the consequences of silencing dissent.

Learning from authentic sites of trauma contributes to building the ability to recognise injustice, question power, and reflect on the values we uphold today. With well-designed content and guided approaches, these sites can foster a deeper understanding of human rights and the importance of their protection.

Education plays a key role in ensuring that these histories remain visible, understandable, and relevant. This includes integrating recorded testimonies of witnesses (both first and second generations), as well as materials from former prisoners.


The photographs shared as part of this campaign were created during the 2024 youth photography workshop within the project “(In)Visible Traces”, led by Sandra Vitaljić and Saša Kralj. As part of the workshop, young participants visited Goli Otok on July 9, 2024, during the commemorative gathering marking the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the first prisoners to the camp.




Voices from Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur

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The testimonies of former prisoners speak about violence and forced labour, but also about fear, humiliation, isolation, and the pressure placed on prisoners to participate in the punishment of others.

 Vera Winter, who was imprisoned on Sveti Grgur, described arriving on the island in 1950: “They pushed us into the ship like sardines. We did not know where we were going. When we arrived, other women prisoners were waiting for us. They beat us as we passed.”

 Vladimir Bobinac recalled recognising a former university colleague among the prisoners forced to beat new arrivals: “What happened to a person that a friend, a colleague, now stands there with bloody hands, beating people?”


For many former prisoners, especially women imprisoned on Sveti Grgur, these experiences remained difficult to speak about for decades. Only a small number of testimonies were publicly recorded and preserved, while many stories remained within families or were never spoken aloud at all. Today, there is still very little on the islands themselves that explains these experiences or gives space to the people who lived through them.

“On Goli Otok, you could survive hunger, labour, and beatings. But the hardest thing was that you could not trust anyone.”

— Vera Winter, former prisoner of Goli Otok

“The people beating us when we arrived were not guards. They were prisoners themselves.”

— Vladimir Bobinac, former prisoner of Goli Otok

 Within Documenta’s Personal Memories Archive, recorded interviews with Vera Winter and Vladimir Bobinac have been preserved. Their full filmed testimonies and personal memories can be accessed through the link in our bio (Linktree), with English subtitles available.

Vladimir Bobinac - <https://www.osobnasjecanja.hr/video-arhiva/vladimir-bobinac/?search=subtitle&val=bobinac>

Vera Winter - <https://www.osobnasjecanja.hr/video-arhiva/vera-winter/?search=subtitle&val=winter>



Vera Winter (1923–2015)

Vera Winter was born in 1923 in Glamoč, Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the Second World War, she was imprisoned in the Ustaša prison in Petrinjska Street in Zagreb after criticising the regime and widespread poverty. After graduating in economics, she moved to Belgrade to work in a federal ministry. In 1950, she was arrested and sent to Goli Otok because of her association with a man accused of being a Soviet spy. In 1953, she was transferred to the women's camp on the nearby island of Sveti Grgur, before being released later that year. For decades, she rarely spoke publicly about her experiences. Her testimony remains one of the most important testimonies about the women's camp on Sveti Grgur.

Vladimir Bobinac (1923–2014)

Vladimir Bobinac was born in Zagreb in 1923. During the Second World War, he joined the anti-fascist movement and became active in SKOJ. In 1941, he was arrested by the Ustaša police and imprisoned until 1942. After the war, while studying at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, he refused to participate in the boycott and denunciation of colleagues accused after the Informbiro Resolution. Because of this, he was expelled from the faculty and later arrested. In 1951, he was sent to Goli Otok, where he remained imprisoned until 1953. After his release, he eventually worked as a history teacher on the island of Krk and later dedicated much of his time to preserving the memory of Goli Otok and its prisoners.



Remembering the Women of Sveti Grgur

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From May 15 to October 12, 2025, the exhibition “Making the World a Better Place” by Andreja Kulunčić was presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb.

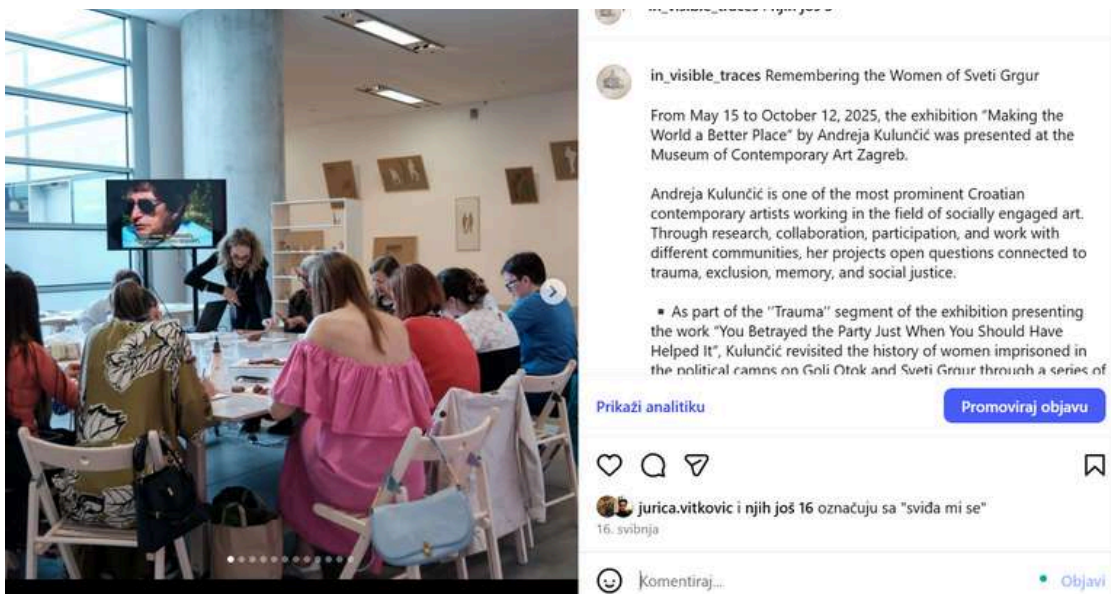
Andreja Kulunčić is one of the most prominent Croatian contemporary artists working in the field of socially engaged art. Through research, collaboration, participation, and work with different communities, her projects open questions connected to trauma, exclusion, memory, and social justice.

- As part of the “Trauma” segment of the exhibition presenting the work “You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It”, Kulunčić revisited the history of women imprisoned in the political camps on Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur through a series of participatory and research-based works.

One of the central parts of the exhibition was the participatory action “850 Women for 850 Women”, dedicated to the approximately 850 women imprisoned on Sveti Grgur. Visitors collectively created small clay anti-monuments, each dedicated to one of the women who passed through the camps.

- The exhibition opened space for discussing histories that still remain insufficiently visible in public memory; especially the experiences of women imprisoned on Sveti Grgur, many of whom remained silent about their trauma for decades.

Through workshops, participation, testimonies, archival materials, and public programmes, the exhibition encouraged visitors to reflect on how societies deal with difficult histories, what remains absent from public memory, and what meaningful memorialisation could look like today. Projects such as this remind us that Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur cannot be approached only as abandoned places or tourist destinations. They are also places connected to unresolved trauma, silenced experiences, and the ongoing need for public recognition, education, and thoughtful memorialisation.



Advocacy for the Protection of Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur

Advocacy activities connected with the protection of Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur represented one of the most important long-term public engagement components of the *(In)Visible Traces. Artistic Memories of the Cold War* project. Throughout the implementation period, the project emphasized that these islands should not be understood solely as abandoned prison complexes or isolated remnants of Cold War history, but as significant European sites of memory connected with political repression, imprisonment, ideological violence, and human rights violations during the twentieth century.

Within the project framework, advocacy was approached as an inseparable extension of research, dissemination, artistic work, educational activities, and public dialogue. The protection of Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur was therefore addressed through public discussions, Croatian round table, discursive program during Andreja Kulunčić's exhibition, study visit, digital campaigns, institutional correspondence, collaborations with survivor associations and civil society organizations, as well as through broader efforts to increase public awareness regarding the deteriorating condition and unresolved memorial status of the sites.

Particular concern throughout the project related to the continuous physical deterioration of the prison complexes and the absence of long-term institutional strategies for their protection, interpretation, and public accessibility. In July 2024, Documenta – Center for Dealing with the Past submitted a formal request to the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia and the Conservation Department in Rijeka, requesting information regarding measures undertaken since the introduction of preventive protection of the sites in 2016.

The request emphasized that the former prison complex “has been deteriorating and decaying in oblivion for years,” while underlining that the remains of the buildings constitute an important part of Croatian and European cultural heritage deserving permanent protection and inscription into the Register of Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia. The letter further stressed that Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur are places of suffering connected with the imprisonment of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience between 1949 and 1956, and proposed the establishment of an educational-memorial center dedicated to the history of political repression and human rights violations.

The advocacy correspondence also recalled that the Croatian Parliament had already supported an initiative in 2005 to declare the prison complex a memorial area, yet despite this support, the initiative remained unrealized while the physical destruction of the site continued. Through this advocacy work, the project repeatedly emphasized that commemorative gestures alone cannot replace systematic conservation policies, sustainable heritage management, educational interpretation, and institutional responsibility.

The issue of Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur additionally occupied an important place within the public and artistic programs of the *(In)Visible Traces* project itself. Croatian round tables organized during the project repeatedly opened discussions on neglected sites of political repression, institutional responsibility, and the role of cultural heritage in confronting difficult pasts. These discussions served as spaces for dissemination, advocacy, and the exchange of perspectives between researchers, cultural workers, civil society actors, artists, and broader audiences.

Particular importance within this framework was given to the exhibition and artistic research of Croatian artist Andreja Kulunčić, whose work addressed the history of women imprisoned on Sveti Grgur. Through exhibitions, public programs, and participatory artistic activities connected with the project, Kulunčić's work emphasized questions of invisibility, trauma, gendered experiences of political repression, and the absence of adequate institutional remembrance practices surrounding the islands. The exhibition and accompanying activities functioned not only as artistic work but also as strong advocacy tools contributing to greater public visibility of the sites and the histories connected to them.

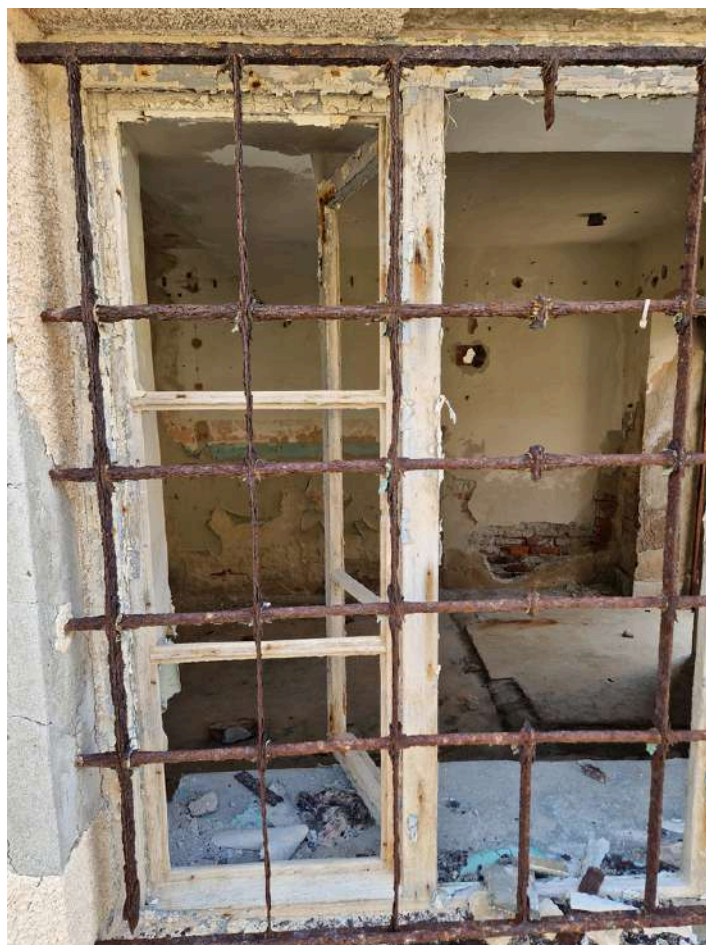
Questions concerning Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur were also integrated into the final international conference *(In)Visible Traces – 20th Century Cultural Heritage in Danger*, held in Dresden in March 2026. Within broader discussions concerning endangered and contested sites of memory across Europe, the Croatian case was presented as an example of the fragility of difficult heritage in post-socialist societies, particularly in situations where sites remain politically sensitive, insufficiently protected, vulnerable to commercialization, or excluded from dominant public memory narratives. The conference thus served not only as a platform for presenting project results, but also as an important international space for advocacy and dissemination concerning the future protection of Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur. Also, one of the speaker was Andreja Kulunčić, who presented their long-term work on this topic, connecting research and art "as an answer".

In response to the request for access to information, the Ministry of Culture and Media clarified procedural aspects related to public information access while referring Documenta to the competent heritage protection departments. The exchange nevertheless revealed broader structural problems concerning the governance and protection of difficult heritage sites, including prolonged administrative processes, fragmented institutional responsibilities, and the absence of clear long-term preservation frameworks.

Advocacy efforts continued during 2025 and 2026. In March 2026, Documenta again contacted the Ministry of Culture and Media and the Conservation Department in Rijeka, requesting meetings and information regarding future plans for conservation studies and protection measures following the expiration of preventive protection status. The letter additionally informed the institutions about planned public campaigns and educational activities connected with Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur, emphasizing the organization's long-standing work on educational programs for youth and adults, brochures, web platforms, study visits, and collaborations with organizations such as the Goli Otok "Ante Zemljar" association.

Importantly, the project's advocacy framework also addressed questions of accessibility and inclusiveness in relation to memorial sites. Correspondence received from the Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons of Zagreb County demonstrated growing public interest in organized visits to Goli Otok while simultaneously raising questions concerning accessibility conditions for persons with disabilities. Such initiatives highlighted that contemporary approaches to difficult heritage must include not only preservation and historical interpretation, but also broader principles of accessibility, inclusion, and equal participation in remembrance practices.

Through these activities, the project emphasized that the future of Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur depends not only on formal legal protection, but equally on continuous public dialogue, educational work, interdisciplinary cooperation, and democratic engagement with difficult histories. Advocacy therefore functioned not merely as an auxiliary activity, but as an essential process of negotiating how politically sensitive heritage is publicly recognized, preserved, interpreted, and transmitted within contemporary European memory culture.



Timeline of Advocacy Activities Regarding the Protection of Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur

As part of the advocacy activities developed within the project (In)Visible Traces. Artistic Memories of the Cold War, Documenta – Center for Dealing with the Past carried out a series of institutional initiatives aimed at strengthening the protection and public recognition of Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur as important sites of memory connected with political repression and human rights violations.

- 24 June 2024 – Documenta submitted an official request for access to information to the Ministry of Culture and Media and the Conservation Department in Rijeka, requesting information regarding activities undertaken since the introduction of preventive protection in 2016.
- 9 July 2024 – On the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the first prisoners to Goli Otok, Documenta sent an additional advocacy letter emphasizing the urgent need for permanent protection, conservation measures, and the establishment of an educational-memorial center.
- 25 July 2024 – The Ministry of Culture and Media responded to the request, referring Documenta to the competent heritage protection departments for further information regarding conservation activities and protection measures.
- 2024–2026 – Advocacy and dissemination activities continued through Croatian round tables, public discussions, educational programs, online campaigns, and artistic activities organized within the project. Particular importance was given to the work of Andreja Kulunčić, whose exhibition and public programs addressed the experiences of women imprisoned on Sveti Grgur and contributed to raising public awareness about the neglect of the sites.
- March 2026 – Questions concerning Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur were included in the final international conference (In)Visible Traces – 20th Century Cultural Heritage in Danger in Dresden, where the Croatian case was discussed within broader European debates on endangered and contested heritage.
- 6 March 2026 – Documenta submitted another official letter to the Ministry of Culture and Media and the Conservation Department in Rijeka, requesting meetings and updated information regarding future conservation plans following the expiration of preventive protection status.

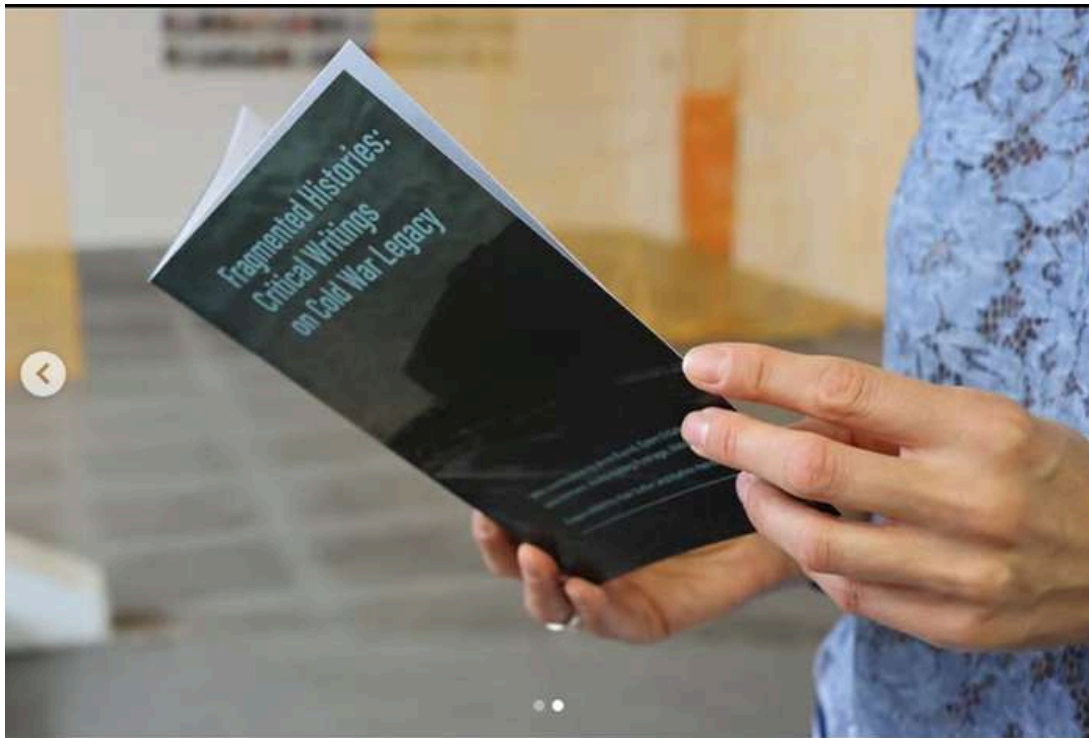
Critical Writing, Publishing, and the Dissemination of Cold War Memory

An important component of the project's dissemination strategy was the development of publishing and editorial activities aimed at expanding critical reflection on Cold War heritage beyond public events and artistic interventions. Within the framework, dissemination was also understood as the creation of long-term intellectual and cultural resources capable of sustaining public debate, research, and critical engagement with contested histories.

Particular importance within this process was given to the publication *Fragmented Histories: Critical Writings on Cold War Legacy*, developed through the Art Criticism Training program organized by BLOCKFREI and hosted by DAS WEISSE HAUS in Vienna in November 2024. The publication emerged from a two-day intensive workshop bringing together emerging art critics, curators, and cultural professionals from different contexts to critically engage with the political, artistic, and memorial legacies of the Cold War through writing, discussion, site visits, and mentorship.

The publication functioned simultaneously as an educational outcome, a dissemination platform, and an advocacy tool. Through critical essays, artistic analysis, and interdisciplinary reflections, the publication expanded the project's engagement with difficult heritage into the field of contemporary art criticism and cultural theory. Rather than approaching Cold War heritage exclusively through institutional or historical frameworks, the texts explored how memory, ideology, political violence, public space, architecture, monuments, queer histories, artistic censorship, and contested narratives continue to shape contemporary European societies.

The Art Criticism Training program itself represented an important methodological extension of the project's broader aims. By supporting emerging cultural workers and critics, the project emphasized the necessity of creating new generations of researchers and writers capable of critically interpreting complex historical legacies. The workshop combined theoretical discussions, field visits, collective editing sessions, and reflections on ethics and economy of contemporary art writing. Participants engaged with Cold War-related sites and exhibitions in Vienna, while also discussing how artistic practices can challenge dominant historical narratives and create alternative forms of remembrance.



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Publication
**Fragmented Histories:
Critical Writings on Cold War Legacy**

Fragmented Histories:
Critical Writings
on Cold War Legacy

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Aphex Twin • #1

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Fragmented Histories: Critical Writings on Cold War Legacy

With contributions by Anna Buyvid @buyvid , Eylem Ertürk @eylemerturk , Jana Hofmann, Andria Nyberg Forshage @hextosteron and Viktoria Weber @viktoriaeweb
Essays edited by Kate Sutton and Kathrin Heinrich @kathrinbheinrich

We are delighted to present Fragmented Histories: Critical Writings on Cold War Legacy, the latest publication produced within the framework of the Creative Europe project (In)Visible Traces: Artistic Memories of the Cold War @in_visible_traces

Organized by BLOCKFREI @blockfrei and hosted at DAS WEISSE HAUS in Vienna on 11–12 November 2024, the program provided a vibrant platform to explore the intersections of art, memory, and

nevena.jankovic i drugih označuju sa "svida mi se"
17. srpnja 2025

Komentiraj... Objavi

https://www.instagram.com/reel/DMNVE49tEQw/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==

Importantly, the resulting publication extended the project's dissemination activities into the sphere of digital publishing and transnational intellectual exchange. The essays were published both within the printed publication and through online dissemination platforms connected to DAS WEISSE HAUS and BLOCKFREI, allowing the texts to circulate beyond the temporal and geographical limits of the workshop itself. In this sense, the publication became part of the project's broader strategy of creating accessible, multilingual, and internationally connected memory resources.

The texts gathered within *Fragmented Histories* addressed a wide range of topics connected to Cold War memory and difficult heritage. Contributions explored unofficial Soviet photography networks and artistic undergrounds operating under conditions of censorship and state surveillance, revealing how alternative artistic communities developed within highly controlled political systems. Other essays examined the political symbolism of architectural spaces connected with authoritarian regimes, discussing concepts of "difficult heritage" through monuments, balconies, and public sites marked by histories of fascism and propaganda.

The publication also addressed broader questions concerning cultural "othering" during the Cold War, ideological divisions between East and West, and the role of international exhibitions such as documenta in reproducing political and cultural binaries. Additional contributions focused on queer memory, public monuments, post-socialist urban space, domesticity, militarization, and the memorialization of marginalized identities within postwar Europe. Through these diverse perspectives, the publication demonstrated that Cold War heritage cannot be reduced to singular political narratives or fixed historical interpretations, but instead remains deeply connected to contemporary struggles over memory, identity, visibility, and democratic culture.

As part of the project's dissemination and advocacy framework, *Fragmented Histories* played a crucial role in expanding public understanding of Cold War heritage beyond traditional memorial discourse. By connecting artistic practice, critical writing, historical research, and contemporary political reflection, the publication contributed to the development of more nuanced and interdisciplinary approaches to difficult heritage. It also reinforced one of the project's central arguments: that endangered and contested memory sites require not only physical preservation, but also continuous cultural interpretation, public debate, critical education, and the active participation of artists, researchers, writers, and civil society actors.

In this regard, publishing activities became an essential form of advocacy. Through critical texts and publicly accessible cultural resources, the project sought to resist historical simplification, nationalist appropriation, and the depoliticization of difficult histories. Instead, the publication advocated for approaches to remembrance grounded in plurality, critical reflection, democratic dialogue, and transnational solidarity across different European memory contexts.

Recommendations

During the implementation of the project *(In)Visible Traces. Artistic Memories of the Cold War* (2024–2026), project partners organized a wide range of activities across Croatia, Germany, Austria, and Romania. Through interdisciplinary collaboration between artists, researchers, memorial institutions, cultural workers, educators, civil society organizations, and local communities, the project explored neglected, marginalized, contested, and endangered sites connected with the difficult histories of the twentieth century.

The project focused particularly on places shaped by political repression, ideological conflict, imprisonment, violence, displacement, and silenced social trauma; sites that frequently remain outside dominant public memory frameworks, insufficiently protected, physically deteriorating, politically sensitive, or increasingly exposed to commercialization and historical simplification. By connecting artistic research, public dialogue, heritage studies, and advocacy practices, *(In)Visible Traces* sought to open broader discussions on the contemporary relevance of Cold War heritage and the challenges of remembrance in contemporary Europe.

This publication brings together reflections, recommendations, and perspectives developed throughout local round tables, public discussions, and the final international conference *(In)Visible Traces – 20th Century Neglected Cultural Heritage and Remembrance Challenges*, held in Dresden in March 2026. The recommendations presented here emerged through exchanges between participants from different professional, institutional, and national contexts, reflecting a shared concern regarding the future of endangered sites of memory and difficult heritage.

The recommendations below address a broad range of questions concerning the protection, interpretation, accessibility, memorialization, and future use of vulnerable heritage sites connected with twentieth-century dictatorships, political violence, war, and repression. Particular attention is given to the role of artistic and cultural practices in reactivating overlooked histories, the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation and public participation, the educational potential of memory sites, and the need for stronger institutional responsibility and long-term preservation strategies.

I. Recommendations for Authorities and Policy Makers

- Support small local initiatives and grassroots organizations that often play a crucial role in identifying, researching, and protecting marginalized memory sites.
- Support artistic work such as residencies, research projects, temporary exhibitions, and other cultural programmes that activate neglected sites and encourage contemporary engagement with historical memory.
- Ensure the sustainability of memorialization through stable funding mechanisms, partnerships, and integration into local, national, and European strategies and programmes.
- Support young researchers through grants and scholarships in order to stimulate the creation of new knowledge and research on abandoned and marginalized locations of suffering and resistance.
- Support the organisation of regular (annual or more frequent) artistic interventions at neglected and marginalized sites in order to attract public attention and increase the visibility of these locations.
- Support the organisation of regular commemorative events focused on victims at relevant sites, with the aim of encouraging public engagement and dialogue.
- Adapt existing memorial sites, museums, and other forms of memorialization to the needs, expectations, and communication practices of younger generations in order to encourage their active participation.
- Encourage the plurality of memories through policies, public calls, and activities that include and promote the histories and memories of minorities and underrepresented groups.

- The European Parliament, the European Commission, and national authorities should develop policies aimed at overcoming exclusive national victimhood narratives and ensuring the visibility of both majority and minority perspectives within member states.
- Policies and actions at both EU and member state levels should encourage countries burdened by the legacy of Nazi, Fascist, and collaborationist crimes, as well as difficult Second World War histories, to acknowledge responsibility for these crimes and preserve the memory of their victims and perpetrators.
- Governments, local authorities, and decision-makers should actively engage in education on Holocaust denial, distortion, and revisionism, as well as on the dangers posed by their dissemination.
- Governments, local authorities, and decision-makers should create opportunities for the professional development of members of the judiciary, police, military forces, and public administration on the topics of the Holocaust and other genocides through dedicated educational programmes developed in cooperation with civil society organizations and relevant institutions.
- Governments and local authorities should allocate greater financial resources for the protection and conservation of selected memorial sites, prioritising those of exceptional historical significance, better states of preservation, and with the necessary preconditions for sustainable conservation.
- Teachers and educators should receive training to create and conduct student-centred visits to sites connected with the Holocaust and antifascist resistance, including sites related to other Second World War genocides, killing sites, railway stations, transit camps, ghettos, hiding places, escape routes, and major resistance actions. These visits should incorporate innovative methodologies that encourage research and engagement with stories of suffering, pain, death, resilience, courage, rescue, and survival.
- Create and support local and international networks, as well as cross-border cooperation between institutions, researchers, artists, and civil society organizations working on neglected and marginalized memorial sites in order to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, methods, and experiences.

- Develop publicly accessible digital databases and interactive maps of neglected or endangered memorial sites across Europe in order to increase their visibility and support further research.
 - Support the use of digital tools such as virtual reconstructions, augmented reality, podcasts, and digital storytelling in order to make neglected sites more accessible to broader audiences.
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II. Recommendations for Memorial, Heritage, and Cultural Institutions

- Support young researchers through grants and scholarships in order to stimulate the creation of new knowledge and research on abandoned and marginalized locations of suffering and resistance.
- Create research and educational resources that include perspectives challenging dominant or mainstream narratives about these locations, particularly through the inclusion of victims' and survivors' testimonies and experiences.
- Initiate memorialization projects and other forms of marking neglected and marginalized sites, and advocate for their recognition among relevant policy- and decision-makers in order to ensure the remembrance of places of suffering and resistance for future generations.
- Organize regular (annual or more frequent) artistic interventions at neglected and marginalized sites in order to attract public attention and increase the visibility of these locations.
- Organize regular commemorative events at relevant sites in order to encourage public engagement and dialogue.
- Implement activities connected with neglected and unmarked sites, including walks, hiking trails, photography projects, exhibitions, and other artistic workshops.
- Adapt existing memorial sites, museums, and other forms of memorialization to the needs, expectations, and communication practices of younger generations in order to encourage their active participation.

- Whenever possible, organise activities involving witnesses of the past, particularly survivors and descendants of survivors, including meetings, public talks, study visits, and guided tours.
- Include recorded personal stories of victims and survivors in museum collections, educational materials, artistic works, exhibitions, and other commemorative formats.
- Encourage the plurality of memories through policies, public calls, and activities that include and promote the histories and memories of minorities and underrepresented groups.
- Teachers and educators should receive training to create and conduct student-centred visits to sites connected with the Holocaust and antifascist resistance, including sites related to other Second World War genocides, killing sites, railway stations, transit camps, ghettos, hiding places, escape routes, and major resistance actions. These visits should incorporate innovative methodologies that encourage research and engagement with stories of suffering, pain, death, resilience, courage, rescue, and survival.
- Create and support local and international networks, as well as cross-border cooperation between institutions, researchers, artists, and civil society organizations working on neglected and marginalized memorial sites in order to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, methods, and experiences.
- Develop publicly accessible digital databases and interactive maps of neglected or endangered memorial sites across Europe in order to increase their visibility and support further research.
- Support the use of digital tools such as virtual reconstructions, augmented reality, podcasts, and digital storytelling in order to make neglected sites more accessible to broader audiences.
- Encourage and support interdisciplinary cooperation between historians, artists, architects, educators, and heritage professionals in developing new approaches to the interpretation and presentation of difficult heritage.
- Support small local initiatives and grassroots organizations that often play a crucial role in identifying, researching, and protecting marginalized memory sites.

- Encourage municipalities and local communities to integrate marginalized sites into urban planning, cultural strategies, and cultural, educational, and tourism routes in responsible and historically accurate ways.
- Develop educational materials and toolkits that help teachers, guides, artists, and cultural workers interpret difficult and contested heritage in accessible and inclusive ways.
- Encourage and support artistic work such as residencies, research projects, temporary exhibitions, and other cultural programmes that activate neglected sites and encourage contemporary engagement with historical memory.
- Encourage the media to communicate the importance of neglected heritage sites and raise public awareness of their historical significance.
- Develop and promote ethical guidelines for working with sensitive heritage sites, ensuring respect for victims, survivors, and local communities while avoiding the commercialization or trivialization of traumatic pasts.

III. Recommendations for Professionals

(Teachers, Professors, Youth Workers, Curators, Educators, Cultural Workers, Artists, and Guides)

- Support young researchers through grants and scholarships in order to stimulate the creation of new knowledge and research on abandoned and marginalized locations of suffering and resistance.
- Create research and educational resources that include perspectives challenging dominant or mainstream narratives about these locations, particularly through the inclusion of victims' and survivors' testimonies and experiences.
- Initiate memorialization projects and other forms of marking neglected and marginalized sites, and advocate for their recognition among relevant policy- and decision-makers in order to ensure the remembrance of places of suffering and resistance for future generations.
- Implement activities connected with neglected and unmarked sites, including walks, hiking trails, photography projects, exhibitions, and other artistic workshops.

- Contribute to the adaptation of existing memorial sites, museums, and other forms of memorialization to the needs, expectations, and communication practices of younger generations in order to encourage their active participation.
- Whenever possible, organise activities involving witnesses of the past, particularly survivors and second- and third-generation descendants of survivors, including meetings, public talks, study visits, and guided tours.
- Include recorded personal stories of victims and survivors in museum collections, educational materials, artistic works, exhibitions, and other commemorative formats.
- Include and promote minority histories and memories, as well as those of underrepresented groups.
- Conduct student-centred visits to sites connected with the Holocaust and antifascist resistance, including sites related to other Second World War genocides, killing sites, railway stations, transit camps, ghettos, hiding places, escape routes, and major resistance actions. These visits should incorporate innovative methodologies that encourage research and engagement with stories of suffering, pain, death, resilience, courage, rescue, and survival.
- Create and support local and international networks, as well as cross-border cooperation between institutions, researchers, artists, and civil society organizations working on neglected and marginalized memorial sites in order to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, methods, and experiences.
- Contribute to the development of publicly accessible digital databases and interactive maps of neglected or endangered memorial sites across Europe in order to increase their visibility and support further research.
- Support the use of digital tools such as virtual reconstructions, augmented reality, podcasts, and digital storytelling in order to make neglected sites more accessible to broader audiences.
- Engage in interdisciplinary cooperation between historians, artists, architects, educators, and heritage professionals in developing new approaches to the interpretation and presentation of difficult heritage.

- Encourage municipalities and local communities to integrate marginalized sites into urban planning, cultural strategies, and cultural, educational, and tourism routes in responsible and historically accurate ways.
- Develop educational materials and toolkits that help teachers, guides, artists, and cultural workers interpret difficult and contested heritage in accessible and inclusive ways.
- Conduct and engage in artistic work such as residencies, research projects, temporary exhibitions, and other cultural programmes that activate neglected sites and encourage contemporary engagement with historical memory.
- Encourage the media to communicate the importance of neglected heritage sites and raise public awareness of their historical significance.
- Develop and promote ethical guidelines for working with sensitive heritage sites, ensuring respect for victims, survivors, and local communities while avoiding the commercialization or trivialization of traumatic pasts.
- Organize regular (annual or more frequent) artistic interventions at neglected and marginalized sites in order to attract public attention and increase the visibility of these locations.

IV. Recommendations for Civil Society Organizations

- Support small local initiatives led by committed individuals, groups, and grassroots organizations that often play a crucial role in identifying, researching, and protecting marginalized memory sites.
- Encourage young researchers to create new knowledge and documentation related to abandoned and marginalized locations of suffering and resistance.
- Create research and educational resources that include perspectives challenging dominant or mainstream narratives about these locations, particularly through the inclusion of victims' and survivors' testimonies and experiences.

- Initiate memorialization projects and other forms of marking neglected and marginalized sites, and advocate for their recognition among relevant policy- and decision-makers in order to ensure the remembrance of places of suffering and resistance for future generations.
- Organize regular (annual or more frequent) artistic interventions at neglected and marginalized sites in order to attract public attention and increase the visibility of these locations.
- Contribute to the organisation of regular commemorative events at relevant sites in order to encourage public engagement and dialogue.
- Implement activities connected with neglected and unmarked sites, including walks, hiking trails, photography projects, exhibitions, and other artistic workshops.
- Propose the adaptation of existing memorial sites, museums, and other forms of memorialization to the needs, expectations, and communication practices of younger generations in order to encourage their active participation.
- Whenever possible, organise activities involving witnesses of the past, particularly survivors and second- and third-generation descendants of survivors, including meetings, public talks, study visits, and guided tours.
- Encourage museums, artists, youth workers, teachers, and other stakeholders to include recorded personal stories of victims and survivors in educational materials, artistic works, exhibitions, and other commemorative formats.
- Include and promote minority histories and memories, as well as those of underrepresented groups.
- Encourage governments, local authorities, and decision-makers to create opportunities for the professional development of members of the judiciary, police, military forces, and public administration on the topics of the Holocaust and other genocides through dedicated educational programmes developed in cooperation with civil society organizations and relevant institutions.

- Encourage teachers and educators to create and conduct student-centred visits to sites connected with the Holocaust and antifascist resistance, including sites related to other Second World War genocides, killing sites, railway stations, transit camps, ghettos, hiding places, escape routes, and major resistance actions. These visits should incorporate innovative methodologies that encourage research and engagement with stories of suffering, pain, death, resilience, courage, rescue, and survival.
- Create and support local and international networks, as well as cross-border cooperation between institutions, researchers, artists, and civil society organizations working on neglected and marginalized memorial sites in order to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, methods, and experiences.
- Contribute to the development of publicly accessible digital databases and interactive maps of neglected or endangered memorial sites across Europe in order to increase their visibility and support further research.
- Encourage museums, artists, curators, and other stakeholders to use digital tools such as virtual reconstructions, augmented reality, podcasts, and digital storytelling in order to make neglected sites more accessible to broader audiences.
- Encourage interdisciplinary cooperation between historians, artists, architects, educators, and heritage professionals in developing new approaches to the interpretation and presentation of difficult heritage.
- Encourage municipalities and local communities to integrate marginalized sites into urban planning, cultural strategies, and cultural, educational, and tourism routes in responsible and historically accurate ways.
- Develop educational materials and toolkits that help teachers, guides, artists, and cultural workers interpret difficult and contested heritage in accessible and inclusive ways.
- Support artistic work such as residencies, research projects, temporary exhibitions, and other cultural programmes that activate neglected sites and encourage contemporary engagement with historical memory.

- Encourage the media to communicate the importance of neglected heritage sites and raise public awareness of their historical significance.
- Develop and promote ethical guidelines for working with sensitive heritage sites, ensuring respect for victims, survivors, and local communities while avoiding the commercialization or trivialization of traumatic pasts.



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