



Tourism, memory and heritage

*emotional geographies of cultural production,
memory-making and commemoration*

1 - 3 June 2026

Amsterdam & Wageningen
The Netherlands



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Book of Abstracts

Session 1A

Adventures on a postcolonial road trip: narrating the past and confronting colonial imaginaries

Uma Kothari

In 1955 two young Indian tourists, my parents, embarked on an extraordinary road trip. They travelled from Mumbai to Southampton on a passenger ship and spent the next six months motoring overland back to India in a Morris Minor car. The end of the war in 1945 and Indian Independence in 1947 had produced an epochal postcolonial moment in which exciting possibilities for travel arose for those formerly colonised. Nourished by colonial rule in Anglophile tastes and aspirations, my parents set out in search of the landscapes, literature and histories that had swirled through their pre-Independence education. Through a personalised account of their travels, this paper blends storytelling and memoir with historical geography to reveal the cultural, political and historical moment in which they travelled. It recounts their visit to the centre of empire and shows how their expectations were shaped by deeply embedded imaginaries of Britain as a civilised, modern, even glorious world. They arrive in the land of their former colonisers with hyperreal expectations. Their travels, though, reveal a more complex version of England and Englishness than anticipated. As their journey progresses, these idealised visions of Britain are unsettled and revealed as over-inflated myths. Crucially, in offering a rare account from the unique perspective of non-Western travellers, their story confronts dominant historical narratives of travel. It upends the imperial centre to colonial periphery view of ubiquitous Euro-American travel writing and inscribes previously marginalised and overlooked non-Western voices onto the public record. Ultimately, their story is of ‘small’ people making their own modest contribution to ‘big’ history.

Uma Kothari is Professor of Migration and Postcolonial Studies at the Global Development Institute, University of Manchester. Her research interests include colonial legacies and decoloniality; postcolonial travel; island geographies and the power of stories. Her most recent book, *Critical Global Development*, was published in 2023 and *Stories of Place* is forthcoming in 2026. She is currently a Leverhulme Major Research Fellow on the project ‘Touring Britain in the 1950s: the adventures of postcolonial travellers’.

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“Walking Backwards into the Future: Diaspora Memory, Guided Heritage, and the Emotional Geographies of Sligoville”

Rose de Vrieze-McBean

This paper explores the emotional and cultural complexities of diaspora engagement with contested heritage through the lens of Sligoville, Jamaica’s first free village, and the site of Highgate House — a now-ruined but symbolically rich structure that once embodied post-Emancipation hope. Drawing from my work as the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council (GJDC) Representative for Continental Europe, I reflect on the ways in which diasporic communities navigate and emotionally engage with spaces of historical trauma and resistance, particularly when these spaces are physically fragmented or neglected.

Highgate House, while largely absent from tourist itineraries, has become a focal point of grassroots memory work and diaspora-led interest in heritage reclamation. I argue that such sites — often overlooked in formal heritage tourism circuits — serve as powerful emotional geographies where empathy, pride, grief, and longing converge. These emotions are not only felt during physical visits, but also through symbolic “guided tours” via storytelling, research, and digital reconnection.

Drawing on cultural memory theory and the affective politics of heritage, I examine how diaspora actors serve as both participants and guides in reframing the narratives told about these spaces. In doing so, they challenge dominant representations that often center colonial nostalgia or reduce such sites to ruins without resonance. The paper also considers the frictions that emerge when diaspora voices demand recognition of neglected heritage, and how these tensions may lead to generative forms of cultural production and policy engagement.

Ultimately, this contribution highlights the role of diaspora-led tourism and remembrance practices in reactivating cultural memory and calls for more inclusive, emotionally attuned frameworks for understanding the tour(ism) encounter at sites of slavery, resistance, and resilience.

Dr. Rose de Vrieze-McBean is the Global Jamaica Diaspora Council (GJDC) Representative for Continental Europe. She has worked for over 40 years in education and community development, with a strong focus on diaspora engagement, cultural identity, and the preservation of post-Emancipation heritage. Based in Belgium, she has led numerous initiatives across Europe to connect Jamaican diasporic communities to their historical and cultural roots. She has also worked as a lecturer and researcher at Breda University of Applied Sciences, (BUAS) Netherlands, where she contributed to various research projects, including EU-funded initiatives on Skills Development (such as NTG and Pantour) and other cultural projects. Her work explores the emotional and political dimensions of cultural memory, heritage tourism, and transnational belonging, with a focus on grassroots mobilization and intergenerational storytelling.

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Contested cotton heritage in the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, Derbyshire, UK

Susanne Seymour

This presentation reflects on over 10 years of collaborative interpretation work in the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS), Derbyshire, UK, through a series of Global Cotton Connections projects and associated developments (see Seymour et al, 2015; <https://www.derwentvalleymills.org/discover/derwent-valley-mills-research/recent-research/global-cotton-connections/>). These have sought to highlight the previously neglected enslavement and colonial contexts of this early centre of British industrial cotton spinning. Focusing on the development of the DVMWHS Visitor Centre at Cromford Mills from 2016-2024, the presentation examines our approaches, the Centre installations, and responses to this work.

Our collaborative approach has involved academics, community volunteers and heritage professionals, with a strong emphasis on facilitation of minoritised community-led perspectives. We have also worked from a position of recognising and highlighting different contributions to the Derwent Valley cotton industry rather than foregrounding victimhood or guilt (see Campbell, 2024). A central element of our work has challenged conventional narratives around the sources of raw cotton supplies vital to the industrial production of the Valley's textile mills. Prominent was a limited geographical framing focused on packhorse transportation of cotton bales from Liverpool. This was challenged through the installation in the Centre of a map of raw cotton supplies, highlighting the colonial Americas as a major source. We also had to negotiate different claims to representation, relating to mill owners, mill workers and enslaved and colonised raw cotton and textile producers. Previously the narrative at the mill was dominated by accounts of the mill owners and their entrepreneurial innovation. In introducing the experiences of enslaved and colonised plantation and cloth workers we decided to also include those of mill workers, through 'multidirectional memory' work (Rothberg, 2009; Campbell, 2024). A particular vehicle to achieve this was through commissioning a mural illustration showing enslaved cotton pickers, Derwent Valley mill workers and Indian weavers.

This work has prompted a range of responses. There remains a sense of challenge, particularly for white tour guide volunteers, in reconciling views of mill owners celebrated as industrial innovators and anti-slavery sympathisers, with their use of raw cotton produced through enslavement. Minoritised community volunteers have reported enhanced senses of pride, belonging and achievement.

Dr Susanne Seymour is Associate Professor in the School of Geography and Deputy Director of the Institute for the Study of Slavery, University of Nottingham, UK. She has expertise in the historical and cultural geography of Britain and transatlantic enslavement, with a particular focus on rural and provincial contexts, including landed estates (e.g. Haggerty and Seymour, 2014) and cotton mills (e.g. Seymour et al, 2015). In collaboration with volunteers of mainly African Caribbean heritage (Legacy Makers) and heritage professionals she has co-produced a range of creative rural heritage interpretation materials, for country house (e.g Blood Sugar film, 2018) and textile factory (e.g. Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site Visitor Centre, Cromford, Derbyshire, UK) sites.

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581 Places to Visit: National Museums Scotland Publishing and the Absent Presence of Heritage Museum Tourism Geographies

Mark Alan Rhodes II

National museums play key roles in the heritage tourism industry, shaping narratives, offering key spaces of protest and power, and institutionalizing the absence and presence of contested heritage. However, scholars often overlook one aspect of national museums: their publishing houses. The books of the recently shuttered National Museums Scotland Publishing unit included a unique listing of 581 suggested places to visit, primarily across Scotland. From the broader dataset, deploying geospatial techniques and content and narrative analyses, I ask

three specific questions. First, how do the spatialities of NMS's published places to visit align with NMS's own museological spatialities? NMS publications offer broader conceptualizations of Scottish geography and touristic patterns than the museums themselves, which are isolated to the Edinburgh-Glasgow Central Belt metropolitan region. Secondly, how does this intersection of literary and tourism geographies reflect broader tourism patterns in Scotland and pathways for sustainable tourism? Perhaps the museums' books direct readers beyond the overtouristed sites of Scotland, offering an alternative national tourism geography? At the same time, this framework offers a possible approach for others in the heritage tourism field to assess the history and health of heritage sites and their change over time. Finally, what absent present narratives feature across the tourism geographies of the publications and what impacts may come from the end of NMS publishing? Theorized through a framework of absent presence, I question missing publications, such as the 1999 work *Scotland & Slavery in the "Scotland's Past in Action" series* which was never printed. As any national press, spatial silences echo across the pages printed by NMS, but while some silences linger, the presence of difficult pasts nevertheless made it to print through these tourism-heritage intersects now in transition away from print media. At one point, NMS served as a role model in the museum publishing industry; a deeper dive into the spatialities and absent presence of heritage-tourism intersections offer a comparative lens for others to similarly understand the contested heritage found within the pages of national museums' books.

Dr. Mark Rhodes is an associate professor working primarily on questions of memory and heritage institutionalization. At Michigan Tech, he advises students in the Industrial Heritage and Archaeology MS/PhD program. He is an honorary Senior Lecturer at Bangor University for their Heritage Studies programs. And he is currently serving as the 2025-2026 Fulbright-Schuman European Union Affairs Scholar at Martin Luther studying EU industrial heritage policy. His proposed talk follows a 5-month fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh studying the publications of National Museums Scotland.

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Session 1B

Sounding Peace: Emotional Geographies of Memory, Music, and Post-Conflict Tourism in Kinmen

J.J. Zhang

Situated within the complex and sensitive cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan, where memories of conflict, division, and uneasy rapprochement continue to shape everyday geopolitics, this presentation examines how tourism and cultural production can function as emotionally grounded practices of memory-making and peace-building. Since 2009, the Kinmen Tunnel Music Festival, curated by Kinmen National Park, has transformed the Zhaishan Tunnel from a Cold War military relic into a vibrant cultural venue where tourism, memory-making, and cultural production intersect. This presentation conceptualizes the festival as a form of emotional heritage production, showing how music, space, and atmosphere rework a site once associated with militarization and division into one oriented towards empathy, reflection, and dialogue. Drawing on empirical research and audience narratives, it explores how affective encounters activate collective memories of conflict while opening up possibilities for reconciliation and a sense of shared humanity, and how cultural memory is not simply represented but emotionally curated and performed through sound, defunct military infrastructure, and embodied experience. Engaging the notion of emotional geographies, the paper highlights the frictions and generative tensions between commemoration and celebration, pain and healing, and history and future-making that shape this post-conflict tourism setting. Framed within the UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals, it demonstrates how creative engagements with difficult heritage can contribute to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by fostering affective diplomacy and peaceful cross-strait encounters, SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) through the adaptive reuse of militarized heritage infrastructure, and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by mobilizing collaborations among state agencies, artists, and transnational communities. Ultimately, the case shows that difficult heritage is not only preserved but materially, affectively, and politically activated in ways that contribute to sustainable peace and well-being.

J.J. Zhang is an assistant professor of Human Geography at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He gained his PhD from Durham University, UK. His research interests lie in the intersection of material culture, tourism, and geopolitics. He writes on issues pertaining to bordering practices and social memories as they unfold at the 'lived' and 'everyday' levels.

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Unruly Sonic Encounters of Colonial Heritage Tourism: Guided Tours and Lived Coexistence on Kulangsu, China.

Ruizhe Hong

Tourism development at colonial heritage sites is contested because interpreting the past and stabilising narratives is never politically neutral. A key gap concerns the unruliness of affect:

even when authorised interpretations appear coherent, the emotions they seek to evoke are only partly governable. This paper argues that such unpredictability is co-produced by the sensory and embodied conditions of the tour(ism) encounter. Focusing on sound, it shows that visitors encounter not only mediated versions of the past but also the lived present of a heritage neighbourhood, producing emotional geographies in which cultural memories are (re)activated through frictions, ambivalence, and pragmatic accommodation.

The paper examines Kulangsu, Xiamen—shaped by the former Kulangsu International Settlement and contemporary heritage-led regeneration. Guided tours are a dominant form through which the island is made legible to visitors, and crucially, audible. Within tours, colonial history is often romanticised through narratives of cultural encounter, fusion, and multiculturalism, foregrounding “cosmopolitan” conviviality while downplaying colonial inequality and unequal power relations. The paper asks how such romanticised heritage becomes affectively persuasive in situ, and argues that sound is a key medium through which selective colonial memories are (re)activated and rendered comfortable.

Drawing on a year-long ethnography (tour shadowing, situated listening, interviews with guides, residents and visitors, and analysis of tour scripts and sonic practices), the paper develops two arguments. First, it specifies the emotional assemblage of the guided encounter: guides’ embodied speech, route choreography, amplification, encounter with musical performance, and built-environment acoustics script what the colonial past can feel like—making romanticized colonial heritage hearable and orienting visitors towards admiration, nostalgia and pride, while relegating critique and unease to the margins. Second, it shows why affect is hard to fix in a lived-heritage setting: encounters with everyday community life and its soundscape often generate warmth and immediacy that interrupts critical distance. This ties heritage interpretation to the community’s present and imagined futures, complicating attempts to stage the site as unequivocally contested. Foregrounding sound thus clarifies the affective politics—and limits—of guided narration in colonial heritage tourism.

Ruizhe Hong: I am a PhD student in human geography, exploring sonic experiences in urban heritage spaces. My research critically investigates how everyday auditory practices - emotionally charged, embodied, and socially embedded - complicate, and sometimes disrupt dominant place meanings. Challenging ocularcentrism and fixed heritage narratives, I aim to develop a multi-sensory, affective understanding of heritage landscapes - those experienced as living, contingent environments embedded with plural temporalities, material traces, and sonic atmospheres. Methodologically, I draw on participatory and mobile approaches including sensory ethnography, interviews, and soundwalking to engage with how sound animate spatial memory and reveal entanglements between place, body, and heritage governance.

While grounded in geography, my work is shaped by and speaks to wider conversations in sound studies, anthropology, sensory ethnography, and critical heritage studies. I actively seek interdisciplinary collaboration and inspiration beyond geography to develop creative, situated, and open-ended ways of engaging with heritage - approaches that not only attend to what sound does by challenging accepted meanings, but also explore what sound could do through experimental, creative practices of sound-related place-making.

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Contested post-disaster heritage: looking at the affects of resonance and theatricality in post-2011 Japan.

Annaclaudia Martini

The Tohoku region, in northeastern Japan, has long been exposed to recurrent natural disasters, most notably the 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown in Fukushima. As recovery progresses, memories are passed on and crystalised into heritage landmarks and narratives by kataribe, professional local storytellers. Heritage practices and narratives in the region are, however, dissonant, due to the nature of the Tohoku region as a politically and socially subaltern, “internal colony” of Japan; different interests of national government and local communities; diverging desires and hopes within the same communities.

My paper utilizes critical heritage studies and geographies of affect to investigate heritage and memory in post-disaster Tohoku, looking at how polarizations between remembering and forgetting have forged not just occlusions, but new, and potentially transformative paths ahead for post-disaster communities. Dissonance in heritage interpretations is seen as producing affective-material excesses that conjure and highlight emotions, sensations, and imaginaries, and heritage is framed as a political discourse on meaning over contested layering of dissonant, haunted genealogies. Affectively, contested interpretations of heritage impinge on communities, and such pressure continue to exert force on people through practices of remembering as well as of active forgetting (McClintock, 2009).

Within affect studies, I utilize the concepts of resonance (Wikan, 2013) and theatricality (Willis, 2014). Resonance is the capacity to “dip into the wellsprings of ourselves for something to use as a bridge to others” (Wikan 1992, 471), to foster an affective reaction that can intensify and solidify in empathy-as-emotion or in other effects such as compassion. Resonance is made possible through theatricality, which is describes as the affect of presence and the affect of arrival (Willis 2014). Theatricality has the power to make “available to us the lost voices of absent others in order that they may urge us beyond the horizon of our own time and experience” (Willis 2014, 2). Within this conceptual framework, and based on yearly fieldworks since 2016 in the region, I frame heritage-making and heritage contestations in Tohoku as excess of meaning that carries affective as well as metaphorical power, and that frame heritage narratives and landmark not only processes of remembering but of political forgetting.

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Memory, Reconstruction and Tourism in Post-Earthquake Gibellina

Enrico Nicosia, Giuseppe Rombo, Mattia Spanò

Gibellina is a small town in central-western Sicily, in the province of Trapani. Destroyed by the devastating Belice earthquake of 1968 (Messina, 2019), it was rebuilt about 11 km from the ancient historic centre, which was razed to the ground and transformed into a work of land art: the Cretto di Burri, a monument covering approximately 80,000 square metres that traces the layout of the ancient city (Zorzi, 1995). Far from being a static commemoration of the past, the Grande Cretto instead refers to a re-semantisation of the place (Messina, 2020) that makes

memory a relationship that is continually brought into play (Varotto, 2025). Burri's Cretto is, in fact, just one of many works of art that, at the behest of the then mayor Ludovico Corrao (Camarrone 2026), have guided the rebirth of Gibellina in the name of attachment to a territory to be redesigned and not just remembered. Proclaimed Capital of Contemporary Art 2026, Gibellina is now a unique site where urban trauma, memory and artistic and cultural heritage intertwine. Insisting on these intertwining exposes one to the transformative experience of what is, in part, a ghost town (Messina and Nicosia, 2024), which translates earthquake trauma into a living, walkable museum. Gibellina's public artworks, architecture, and street layout serve as memory devices, generating diverse and often conflicting emotions in visitors. Gibellina's emotional geography sparks controversy, marked by ongoing negotiation between trauma, art, tourism, and local development. This whirlwind, shaped by heritage as a cultural and spatial process rather than just physical monuments (Smith, 2006; Massey, 2005; Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1996), is rare in more conventional commemorative sites. By framing Gibellina as a post-disaster laboratory, this research contributes to broader debates on experiential tourism, memory, and cultural heritage, showing how traversing a controversial museum-city can spark productive tensions between past, present, and future.

Enrico Nicosia PhD in Territorial Organisation and Sustainable Development in Europe is Full Professor of Geography at the COSPECS Department of the University of Messina. His recent studies focus on sports cities, urban suburbs, local development policies, ecotourism and film tourism. enrico.nicosia@unime.it

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Mattia Spanò is a PhD student in Cognitive Sciences at the University of Messina. His research focuses on the relationship between human beings, tools and the environment, in light of the latest technological developments and the perceptual dynamics that constitute the concept-scenario of landscape, regarding environmental, artistic and tourism issues. mattia.spano@studenti.unime.it

Session 1C

Revitalization and controversy: Shared history, different emotions: Controversial colonial legacies in Dutch and Indonesian public space

Gerlov van Engelenhoven (Leiden) & Remco Vermeulen (Rotterdam)

The colonial past that Indonesia and the Netherlands share is increasingly visible and present in public space. In the Netherlands, statues and street names which represent colonial history are the topic of vivid discussions. One of the best-known examples is the statue of Jan Pieterszoon Coen in the historical centre of Hoorn, a town which has promoted itself with its links to the 17th century and the Dutch East Indies Company.

Meanwhile in Indonesia, former Dutch colonial urban spaces such as the historical inner city of Jakarta, Kota Tua, are being revitalised through private and public initiatives into popular hang-outs. Whereas in Hoorn the existing narratives and the statue of Coen are being scrutinised and decolonised, in Kota Tua a similar critical reflection seems much less relevant to those revitalising and using the urban spaces.

In this session, we would like to briefly present both our case studies in a short, joint presentation, that ends with a few reflection questions meant to discuss with the audience (and potential other panelists). We envision an interactive session with the audience, that has a focus less on the individual presentations and more on the conversation among each other and with the audience. If the organizers have selected one or two other presenters with aligned topics, they are very welcome as conversation partners in our panel as well!

Envisioned takeaways:

- Provide insight into the expertise and contributions of the speakers
- Create a safe environment for open discussion amongst speakers and with the audience
- Collect input from the audience for further research
- Forge new connections between speakers and with members of the audience

Dr Gerlov van Engelenhoven is an assistant professor at Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society (LUCAS). His research concerns postcolonial memory and heritage, law and culture, and cultural interaction. He also teaches various courses on these topics. His research methodology combines participatory research with discourse analysis and (auto)ethnography. As part of his current research project, Gerlov hosts multiple episodes of the video podcast *Unboxing: Uitgepakte Verhalen*. This is a series made in collaboration with Museum Maluku (on Youtube and Spotify), in which he discusses matters of intangible heritage with fellow members of the Moluccan postcolonial diasporic community in the Netherlands.

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Remco Vermeulen is an external PhD candidate at the Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences. His research focuses on colonial heritage engagement, particularly by young people, in postcolonial Indonesian cities. His teaching also includes colonial and postcolonial urbanism, particularly in Indonesia, cultural diplomacy between Indonesia and the Netherlands, and gentrification in relation to heritage. Remco also is coordinator for international cooperation on collection management at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, working on knowledge exchange and capacity building programmes in the context of the International Heritage Cooperation programme which is part of the International Cultural Policy of the Netherlands, as well as for the Consortium Colonial Collections.

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“Walking Tours as Placemaking Strategy: Constructing Spatial Narratives in Jeron Beteng Yogyakarta.”

Rud Yoneko Tunggadewi

Urban heritage sites are multilayered cultural landscapes that integrate tangible and intangible dimensions of history and identity. Tangible heritage consists of architecture, landmarks, and urban morphology, while intangible heritage encompasses rituals, oral histories, and collective memory that portray local identity. However, rapid urban development and tourism commodification threaten the continuity of both value and elements of heritage sites. Within this context, placemaking has emerged as a strategy not only for conserving physical environments but also for revitalizing cultural meaning through participation and reinterpretation.

Walking tours, both cultural and spatial practices, offer an entry approach to this strategy. They collect stories embedded in streets, landmarks, and everyday settings, enabling visitors and local communities to engage with heritage beyond passive observation. Unlike other approaches that prioritize physical examination, walking tours activate lived experiences and democratize historical narratives. By foregrounding local voices, they reinforce sense of place, strengthen cultural resilience, and generate inclusive and democratic forms of heritage interpretation.

This study positions walking tours as a method of placemaking, defined as a multidimensional process that blends spatial experiences, collective memory, and community identity in constructing the meaning of place. Walking tours positioned urban spaces as exhibition venues and communities function simultaneously as curators, storytellers, and audiences. In this framework, placemaking extends from physical intervention to narrative practices that reconstruct the biography of a place. The research employs a qualitative approach centered on Jeron Beteng, the inner walled settlement of the Yogyakarta Palace area. Three walking tour providers were integrated as research collaborators: Jogja Good Guide, Jogja Walking Tour, and Slon Mlampah. Archival research, participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and comparative spatial mapping were conducted to analyse how different tour narratives interpret tangible and intangible heritage.

Preliminary findings show that walking tours weave fragmented heritage elements into cohesive spatial narratives, connecting cosmological alignments, architectural identity, everyday cultural practices, and contested historical perspectives. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that

walking tours, when utilized as a placemaking strategy, can transform urban heritage sites into vibrant cultural landscapes that sustain collective memory and foster inclusive heritage interpretation

Rud Yoneko Tunggadewi is a public sector professional with more than six years of experience in spatial planning policy and creative economy ecosystem development in Indonesia. She has led the revitalization of multiple creative spaces across Indonesia, integrating local identity, community participation, and sustainable design. Her academic foundation is in architecture, graduating Cum Laude and receiving distinction for her research on adaptive reuse of urban heritage site using the Genius Loci approach. Rud previously worked on community based adaptive reuse on urban heritage for Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI). Currently, she is preparing to pursue a Master of Landscape Architecture and Planning at WUR, specializing in Spatial Planning with a thesis stream in Heritage Management, aligning her long-term goal of strengthening heritage-based spatial strategies in Indonesia. Her professional and academic interests lie at the intersection of spatial planning, urban heritage conservation, and CCI to promote sustainable urban development.

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Affect in the discourse surrounding colonial exploitation and the planned National Slavery Museum in Amsterdam.

Nelo A. Schmalen

Amsterdam is the central location in the Netherlands where hegemonic historiography and memories of colonial exploitation and violence are increasingly being questioned. One step in this are the excuses on various political levels. The discursive shift becomes apparent in discussions of how memories of slavery and its legacy can become part of both a local and national narrative that influences urban structures and memory-scapes (Rose-Redwood et al. 2022). The discourse materialises in the plans for a National Slavery Museum in Amsterdam (Amsterdam/OCW 2024), which is supposed to become the symbolic and physical anchor point for a new national narrative of Dutch history.

Using a spatially sensitive discourse analysis (Bauriedl 2007a; Mayring 2022), I show how the discourse on colonial exploitation has changed and how and where it is connected to the urban (colonial) infrastructure. Furthermore, I elaborate on how the discourse is embedded spatially and temporally in global interconnections. These range from the place of profit accumulation (Amsterdam) to the places of violence and exploitation in the (former) Dutch kingdom (including Suriname and Indonesia). And from subjects such as the descendants of the enslaved or forced labourers to the descendants of profiteers in the Netherlands today. Using the concept of coloniality, I analyse how a (counter-)hegemonic processes of remembrance in Amsterdam relates to urban materiality, the consequences of colonialism and perspectives of justice in its reappraisal. For his conference, I will focus on the affective aspects that I found in the political documents of the discourse corpus. On a discursive level, I argue that the proposed museum will be a physical embodiment of decades of struggle for recognition of slavery history, driven by generations of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora in the European Netherlands and in the former and current Dutch colonies.

This article is a contribution to geographical research informed by postcolonial and decolonial perspectives and pursues a methodological approach that combines the analysis of colonial-influenced urban materiality with space-sensitive memory and discourse research. In doing so, I build on postcolonial geographical research on European cities and contribute to geographical memory research with a focus on colonial exploitation.

Nelo A. Schmalen: In my doctoral studies in Geography on postcolonial European port cities, I am researching the connection between memories of colonial exploitation and urban structures. This presentation will form part of the first article for my cumulative dissertation. Since 2023, I have been a Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung scholarship holder in the Crisis and Social-Ecological Transformation research group. Before that I completed an interdisciplinary Master's degree in Transformation Studies at Europa-Universität Flensburg (M.A.) before working as an architect and studying architecture at the University of Applied Sciences Berlin (Dipl. Ing. (FH)).

My research interests lie in critical urban and transformation research with a focus on urban structures and postcolonial perspectives as well as policies of sufficiency. My doctoral project has the working title Sustainability as a claim to the future: Coloniality as a foundation.

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Curating Affective Memory Landscape: Commemorating the G30S Victims in Museum Spaces

Arlenea H. Herdimansyah

Gerakan 30 September (G30S, or the September 30th Movement) that unfolded between the night of September 30th and October 1st of 1965, remains one of the darkest episodes in Indonesian contemporary history. Museums and historical sites associated with the event, including the Pancasila Sakti Monument and Museum Pengkhianatan PKI at Lubang Buaya, as well as the Sasmitaloka Ahmad Yani Museum in Jakarta, continue to occupy a central place within this memory landscape and shape public understandings of G30S through curated representations of violence and national trauma. Through monuments, dioramas, historical collections, and spatial arrangements, these museums construct historical narratives that frame how the events of 1965 are remembered.

This paper examines how G30S is represented within museums and memorial spaces. Situating these sites within broader discussions of contested memory and heritage tourism, this study analyses how visual displays, curatorial narratives, and spatial design produce affective meanings surrounding the memory of G30S. Methodologically, the paper adopts a comparative qualitative approach through critical analysis of museum representations and photographic documentation of the sites.

The paper argues that these museums do not merely preserve historical memory but actively construct interpretations of the past through visual and sensory representation. By analysing how traumatic history is narrated within heritage spaces, this study contributes to broader discussions on memory politics, museum representation, and the role of governmental heritage institutions in shaping historical consciousness in Indonesia.

Arlenea H. Herdimansyah is an independent early-career researcher whose work spans postcolonial studies, media industries, public responses to emerging technologies in creative spaces, and the political dynamics shaped by globalisation. She holds a Master's degree from Queen Mary University of London in Creative Industries and Arts Organisations, and a double Bachelor's degree from Bandung Institute of Technology and the University of Hull in Business and Management.

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Session 2A

Negotiating Migration Narratives through Tours Co-Created by People with Migration Backgrounds: Scripting Migrantour Utrecht

Jill Ahrens & Meghann Ormond

This paper examines how people with diverse migration backgrounds shape public understandings of migration through their involvement in Migrantour Utrecht, a community-based educational tourism initiative established in 2022 as part of the wider European Migrantour network. We look at how the initiative's Intercultural Companions (ICs) -- local residents with first- and second-generation (forced) migration backgrounds -- co-create and lead neighbourhood walking tours that unsettle dominant portrayals of immigration and work towards greater recognition of epistemic diversity. For ICs, participation in the project can be a way to claim civic presence, articulating and circulating accounts of their own lived experiences. Individual ICs' diverse heritages, intersectional privileges and mobility statuses shape how they collectively determine what does and does not belong in the shared tour script. Simultaneously, ICs must negotiate what a tour 'about migration' can meaningfully contain, without reproducing the very categorical boundaries it seeks to complicate.

We approach Migrantour Utrecht's evolving Lombok neighbourhood tour route script as a boundary object that both anchors and mediates these negotiations. Using qualitative text analysis of successive script versions, transcripts from co-creation workshops, fieldnotes and interviews with three IC cohorts (2022–2025), the paper traces how the script has been assembled across three overlapping moments. First, a structured co-creation process involved ICs comparing experiences, engaging with neighbourhood actors, receiving storytelling training, and developing tour themes that include colonial legacies, national identity, social inclusion and migratory regimes. Second, during tours, participants' contributions, often drawing on their own (families') migration experiences, complicated the existing script, for example around inclusion policies and practices. Third, later IC cohorts revisited earlier narrative choices, questioning the inclusion of colonial maps and celebratory claims of tolerance.

These script-centred epistemic negotiations highlight productive tensions around representation, narrative authority and ownership, and the weight placed on 'migration' as a collective identity category. At the same time, they open space for more decolonial forms of visibility and shared reflection in places shaped by overlapping mobility histories. Rather than fixing a single account of migration, the Migrantour Utrecht process reveals how tourism can become a practical forum through which people with diverse migration backgrounds contribute to revising the stories told about them, the (transnational) places they inhabit, and the contested heritages to which they are connected.

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Dr. Meghann Ormond is an Associate Professor of Cultural Geography at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. She is the author of 40+ peer-reviewed publications exploring how people who move - whether by choice or necessity - navigate belonging, entitlement, and care across borders. Working at the intersections of migration and tourism studies, public pedagogy, and critical citizenship studies, she examines how states and communities negotiate responsibilities for inclusion, and how historically marginalised groups co-produce place, memory, and civic learning. Across her career, Meghann has developed a sustained interest in the ethics and geographies of care, beginning with her work on transnational medical travel in Southeast Asia and evolving into a broader focus on how societies learn to live with and from difference. Her recent projects, including Migrantour Utrecht and Freedom Tours Wageningen, use participatory and arts-based methods to examine heritage-making by, and narrative change processes focusing on, people with migration backgrounds, people with disabilities, and people identifying as queer. Meghann's work has been supported by the National Geographic Society, the European Cultural Foundation, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. She has edited special issues for Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies and Social Science & Medicine, served on the editorial team of Globalization & Health, and currently serves on the editorial boards of Tourist Studies and Current Issues in Tourism.

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Community Heritage and the Reshaping of Memories, Mobilities and Meanings

Bernardo de La Vega

In this paper, we look at how minoritised groups and marginalized communities in and around Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) work on autonomously (re)shaping collective memory and counteract dominant narratives through living heritage production, decolonial education, and community-based tourism activities. A range of social museums and grassroots memory initiatives increasingly produce tourism and community practices targeting a variety of audiences. Narratives of resistance, place-based cultural expressions, and identity tangible and intangible elements are mobilised to tell a plurality of (hi)stories through divergent ideological

lenses. Encounters where emotions, subjectivities, embodiments, and uneven mobilities come into place, opening platforms to challenge established social paradigms and call for a collective social change movement.

By addressing stigmatization, invisibilities and epistemological injustices, these individuals and initiatives also grapple with selective valorizations; for instance, by heritage scholars, cultural tourists and an urban administration drawn between attempts to formalize and normalize the geographical and ideological edges amidst genuine attempts at creating a more inclusive urban realm. In parallel, authorities are exploiting these edges in their differences for purposes of city marketing and wider place making, playing to trajectories set by capitalist development imperatives.

In this context, continuously evolving technologies of heritage mediation and safeguarding also challenge the communities and produce new dynamics in the heritage production and ownership. Since the pandemic, new media technologies have popularized a wider range of approaches to multi-sensory storytelling, with potentially broader global audiences, while also creating new boundaries of exclusion due to the limits and affordances of technologies in use. Limited digital literacy, increased dependency from external stakeholders, and fear of sovereignty reduction over their digitised practices are concerns for the community heritage producers. Reflecting with local groups about their attempts at utilizing new media technologies in their heritage conveyance, this paper aims to contribute to the growing body of research that studies the dynamics of community heritage production and safeguarding at both the physical and virtual margins of the formal society.

Bernardo de La Vega is a doctoral researcher in Business and Management at Oxford Brookes University, examining how digital tools can strengthen community-led heritage and tourism initiatives in Brazil's marginalised territories. He also serves as Vice-Coordinator of the Observatory of Favela Tourism at UNIRIO, Rio de Janeiro. His research employs participatory and ethnographic methods to explore how minoritised groups mobilise memory, identity, and visibility through digital and tourism networks. By situating local initiatives within broader debates on digital transformation and community autonomy, his work highlights the potential of community heritage practice to reshape historically underrepresented narratives.

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Camila Moraes is an Associate Professor at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO) and Young Scientist of Our State (FAPERJ). She coordinates the PET/MEC-funded programme Observatory of Favela Tourism and acts as the institutional coordinator of the PROEXT-PG/CAPES initiative CEP Favelas: Extension and Research Centre in Favelas: Pilot Programme Babilônia and Chapéu Mangueira. From an interdisciplinary urban perspective, her research and outreach activities focus on favela tourism, mobilities, and new technologies, in collaboration with local guides, collectives, and community museums engaged in memory and environmental projects in favelas.

Fabian Frenzel is Professor of Social Geography of Tourism at the University of Trier in Germany, His research has addressed various instances of valorization of urban poverty and territorial stigma in tourism, heritage and wider cultural practices, with an empirical focus on metropolitan neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro, Mumbai, Nairobi and Johannesburg which are at once stigmatized and subject to complex, often selective valorisations.

Juliana Mainard-Sardon, Senior Research Fellow, Nottingham Trent University, PhD in Voluntary Sector studies. Her post-doctoral research explored digital storytelling to develop community enterprises initiatives in Brazil, Malaysia, and Mozambique. She works for VCSE National Observatory. She contributed to the UK's largest Covid-19 voluntary sector impact study. As Principal Investigator, she leads an NHS evaluation on representation of marginalised communities in research. She also examines equity in UK funding practices for the Esmeé Fairbairn Foundation. Juliana spent a decade as a community activist in Argentina.

Isabella Rega, Professor of Digital Media for Social Change in the Faculty of Media and Communication at Bournemouth University. She is a social researcher with 20+ years of experience working and researching at the intersection between digital media and education to promote social change, with a focus on marginalised communities around the globe. She has written, managed and led an extensive number of competitive research projects with a portfolio of 30+ international projects in Africa and Latin America for an overall budget of more than 4 million euro. She has published articles in various academic journals and co-authored the book *Media Activism and Artivism in the Global South* with Dr Andrea Medrado, published by Routledge (2023).

“Challenging existing perceptions and building shared narratives of the past: reactivating the United Irishmen heritage in Belfast City Centre”

Karine Bigand

Since the beginning of the post-conflict era in 1998, tourism to Northern Ireland has become a booming industry and has been part of Belfast City Council’s strategy to rebrand the city as a safe, inclusive, shared space. The city centre has been reconfigured to promote other narratives than that of the recent conflict, including local 19th and early 20th century industrial heritage – notably with Titanic Quarter, Belfast’s flagship urban regeneration project, developed on the city’s former shipbuilding lands. Other changes have included better transport provision, improved lighting, cleansing, as well as interpretative and street signage. The erection of new commemorative statues has aimed to challenge existing perceptions of the city, create new connections with its past and build emotional appeal.

Recently reactivated cultural memories also include anti-slavery, social reform and radical republicanism, all linked to the Society of United Irishmen, created in Belfast in 1791 by local Presbyterian merchants. Inspired by the American Revolution, the United Irishmen grew to become a national non-denominational movement, advocating representative government in Ireland at a time when Dissenters and Catholics were excluded from national political life. As their call for reform remained ignored, they staged a rising against British Rule in Ireland in 1798, with the assistance of Revolutionary France. The Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland was passed in 1800 in the wake of their failed republican coup, and Irish representation was transferred to Westminster until the partition of Ireland in 1921.

The legacy of the United Irishmen sits uneasily with the traditional “two tribes” perception of Northern Ireland, where ethno-political identities essentially equate Protestantism with British Unionism and Catholicism with Irish Nationalism/Republicanism. This paper will explore the incorporation of new narratives in Belfast’s public space and historical buildings, focusing on the reactivation of the United Irishmen’s contested heritage. The “1798 – A Belfast Rebellion” walking tour by local company DC Tours will provide a compelling case study of how guided

tours can foster sustainable peace in post-conflict societies, by reshaping existing perceptions and easing contested heritage into shared narratives of the past, for present and future generations.

Dr Karine Bigand is a Senior Lecturer in Irish Studies and a member of the LERMA (Laboratoire d'Études et de Recherche sur le Monde Anglophone) at Aix-Marseille Université in France. She holds a PhD in Irish Studies from the Sorbonne Nouvelle and an MA in Cultural Heritage and Museums Studies from Ulster University. Her research interests lie in the connections between history, memory and politics in Ireland, with a particular focus on how the legacy of conflict in Northern Ireland is represented in museums, exhibitions and the public space.

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**“Sevilla tuvo una niña y le pusieron Triana, la bautizaron en el río los gitanos de la cava”:
representation processes and spatialization practices of “Roma’s cultural heritage” in the
Triana neighbourhood**

Claudio Minca & Anna Khorlachenkov

In dialogue with the literature on the cultural geography of tourism and with critical heritage studies, this presentation examines the processes of spatialization and negotiation of “Roma cultural heritage” within the tourist context of the city of Seville, in Spain. Particular attention is given to the tourist spaces of Triana, a neighbourhood that historically hosted Seville’s Roma community and from which the latter was forcibly expelled as a result of urban renewal processes in the 1950s. Despite the prolonged absence of the Roma community, Triana is today represented in tourist discourses as the “Roma quarter” or the “flamenco quarter” via the construction of a specific cultural imaginary.

Through a critical analysis of the narratives conveyed by tourism promotion materials and the examination of discourses and performances enacted during guided tours, the contribution highlights how the “official” memory and identity of the neighbourhood are constructed through selective processes that mobilize cultural elements associated with a distant and mythologized past, framed around the idea of the cultural heritage of a community no longer present. The analysis underscores, on the one hand, the tensions between different and often conflicting processes of representation of the Roma community and, on the other hand, the ways in which these meanings are inscribed in the tourist space, generating a specific “cultural geography of the city.”

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Session 2B

When the Street Becomes a Site of Memory: Emotions, Narration and Contested Heritage in Femicide Memorials in Paris.

Alexandra Mallah

One January morning on rue Bouvier in Paris, passers-by slow down, stop, take photographs or lower their gaze. The walls are covered with hundreds of white sheets bearing, in black capital letters, the names of victims of femicide from the previous year. There is no signage, no explanatory panel, no institutional framework. Yet the emotional impact is immediate: an ordinary street has become a site of memory (Nora 1984). This paper proposes an analysis of memorials commemorating victims of femicide produced in Paris by the civil disobedience movement Collages Féminicides Paris¹, approaching them as memorial, narrative and emotional devices embedded in the urban public space. Unlike the sites, monuments and museums most commonly examined in scholarship on memory tourism and contested heritage, these memorials are characterised by their explicitly militant nature, their lack of institutional recognition, and their production within an illegal framework, deliberately embraced as a political strategy.

Drawing on a corpus of five memorials created between 2019 and 2023, each composed of hundreds of collages, the communication examines how these ephemeral installations (Santino 2006 ; Bazin 2017), addressed to city dwellers, transform ordinary urban space into emotionally charged sites of memory. How are collages, practices and spaces assembled to produce a commemorative effect? What processes contribute to transforming a wall and a street into a place of mourning and reflection?

Engaging with scholarship on the emotional geographies of memory (Doss 2008; Chevalier 2016; Chevalier 2017), memory politics (Gensburger et Truc 2020), and contested heritage-making practices, the communication shows that these militant memorials function as powerful devices of emotional engagement. This engagement is grounded in the very geography of the collages: their placement, concentration and spatial distribution along rue Bouvier, organized according to the content of the messages. This differentiated spatial arrangement structures a progressive emotional experience for passers-by, transforming the street into a memorial pathway where visual shock, repetition and accumulation combine, and where public space is reconfigured as a site of awareness-raising and the reactivation of the memory of victims.

Alexandra Mallah holds a PhD in Geography and is trained as an architect. Her doctoral research examined strategies for making women's memories visible in Parisian public space, through the analysis of exposed inscriptions of women's names. To this end, she focused on three research objects: Parisian female street names, the feminist collages against femicide in Paris, and the MonumentalEs project installed on Place du Panthéon. Her research lies at the intersection of social geography, gender studies—more specifically feminist geography—and urban sociolinguistics.

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Emotions at the heart of the visitor experience in exhibitions on the Atlantic slave trade and colonial slavery

Caroline CRETON & JULIE PASQUER-JEANNE

After a long period of neglect (Célius, 1998; Otele, 2012), exhibitions devoted to slavery are now becoming more common. In France, on the Atlantic coast, former slave ports are helping to shed light on this history, such as in Bordeaux (Hubert and Block, 2013), Nantes (Guillet et al., 2009), Lorient, and La Rochelle. The staging of such exhibitions raises a series of questions: how can this trade be exhibited using collections from former slave ports? How can the reality of the slave system and its current consequences be understood? What effect do such exhibitions have on audiences? Is there any memorial tourism linked to these exhibitions?

Using a communicational approach, this paper presents the results of two audience reception surveys conducted during temporary exhibitions on slavery and the Atlantic slave trade in the city of Nantes. The first – L'Abîme – was held at the Nantes History Museum, Château des Ducs de Bretagne, from October 2021 to June 2022; the second – MANIFEST – organized by the association Les Anneaux de la Mémoire, took place in a temporary exhibition space from September to October 2024. 92 interviews were conducted with visitors to the first exhibition and 45 for the second.

Based on heritage studies that consider exhibitions as a medium (Davallon, 2013) and the emotional shift in the humanities and social sciences (Memmi et al. 2024; Illouz, 2006; Détéz and Diter, 2025), we will analyze how exhibition designers seek to elicit emotion in audiences, before providing a detailed understanding of audience experiences. Regarding this last point, we will first address the type of visitors present, questioning the notion of memorial tourism in Nantes for the Atlantic slave trade and slavery, then return to how emotions manifest themselves in audiences and how they contribute to the experience. On this point, we will address in particular the different reception among audiences of African descent and other audiences. Finally, we will show how an expert audience for exhibitions on the Atlantic slave trade and slavery has been built up locally thanks to the work carried out by cultural institutions over the past thirty years.

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Resurrecting a Monument: Commercial Redevelopment of the Hamburg Flak Tower as a Catalyst for (Re)activating Remembrance.

Daria Myerscough

In July 2024, a long-awaited and widely debated destination redevelopment opened in Hamburg: the Heiligengeistfeld flak tower, which had been transformed into a visually striking ‘Green Bunker’. This colossal Nazi WW2 anti-aircraft structure, a building type unique to three cities – Berlin, Hamburg, and Vienna – was augmented with a stepped public rooftop park, a luxury hotel, and a concert hall. In its first year, it attracted 2.3 million visitors. Amid controversy and mixed feelings about the nature of this initiative, the ethics of commercially re-appropriating Nazi heritage, and its monumental character, the flak tower project has instigated change regarding the re(activation) of cultures of remembrance and forgetting.

In this paper, I argue that the redevelopment served to stimulate a reconceptualising a contested flak tower, furnishing a medium for reclaiming and readdressing its difficult past. Through the provision of a public forum, financial and spatial resources, and global exposure through tourism, the ‘Green Bunker’ acts as a vehicle for enacting change. To illustrate this, I present case study findings from fieldwork conducted in 2025, as part of my doctoral research. This encompasses historical and archival study, architectural research, and stakeholder interviews. I trace the historical transformation of the tower from a ‘war machine’ to a decontextualized concrete monolith, and finally to a globally acknowledged destination project and a memorial. The paper seeks to address the scarcity of informed historical enquiry of the flak tower, known locally only as the ‘Bunker’, and the need for verifiable facts and meaningful concepts to acknowledge the conflicts of interpretation that have emerged in the decades-long debate.

Tensions between actors have given rise, perhaps unexpectedly, to an apparently symbiotic fusion of commercial, cultural, and societal interests: the hotel and the rooftop park serve as mise-en-scene for a stream of publicity activities and footfall, including new memorial installations and cultural events hosted by the ‘Hildegarden e.V.’ association. In the words of the association’s spokeswoman: “It’s a future-oriented project”.

Daria Myerscough is a PhD candidate at the School of Art, Architecture and Design, London Metropolitan University. She is a student member of CUBE (The Centre for Urban and Built Ecologies) where she has previously worked as a Research Assistant. She holds a double MArch/MA in Architecture and has over twelve years of experience in diverse range of practices of varying scale and mission. Her research interests concern questions of ambiguity in the interpretation of architecture, with a focus on the uncanny and sublime in buildings and ruins, on military sites, and with regard to difficult heritage or unwanted monuments.

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Framing Empire, Guiding Memory: Emotional Geographies of German Colonial Photography in African Visual Heritage

Diana M. Natermann

Colonial photography — especially that produced in Africa by German photographers from the 1880s onward — circulates today not only in archives or exhibitions, but within touristic memory

landscapes, where it becomes an affective medium of heritage activation. My research investigates how images created by German colonial photographers active in Africa from the 1880s onward are (re)performed and emotionally interpreted by tour guides and visitors in postcolonial African museums and memorial sites.

I argue that colonial photographs function as emotional cartographies of encounter: they structure what can be felt, narrated, silenced, or contested to this day. In museums curating colonial objects — such as institutions in Germany including Hamburg’s ethnological museum MARKK, the Independence Memorial Museum in Windhoek, or the Fotomuseum in Antwerp — guides increasingly draw on photography to narrate histories of extraction, cultural violence, ethnographic classification, and racialised vision. These moments generate frictional emotional geographies shaped by trauma, shame, empathy, anger, and demands for visual restitution, while simultaneously reactivating layered memories of place, identity, and historical injustice.

The images themselves, however, reveal deeper structural continuities of visual racism. Photographic production in former German colonies such as Tanzania and Namibia formed part of imperial knowledge regimes that coded African subjects as exoticised “types,” criminalised insurgents, or “civilisational” lack. These racialised templates of representation have proven remarkably durable: from High Imperialism through decolonisation and into the 21st century, many of these photographs continue to visually underpin African stereotypes — timeless tribalism, picturesque suffering, or staged racial difference — legitimising the white European colonial gaze as a normative mode of seeing.

Yet in the 21st century, these inherited visual geographies are being actively contested and re-authored. African artists including figures such as Vitjitua Ndjiharine and museum specialists working on visual heritage reinterpretation — exemplified by initiatives like the African Artists Re-Framing Archives — are reclaiming colonial photographs as sites of epistemic rupture rather than imperial evidence. Through exhibitions, artistic interventions, and curatorial reframing, these practitioners assign images new postcolonial, pro-African narratives that foreground dignity, resistance, lineage, gendered self-representation, and visual sovereignty. By reinscribing photography into African identity frameworks rather than European classificatory regimes, they transform colonial photographs into generative memory objects that destabilise imperial scripts and remake emotional geographies of encounter — from shame-inducing spectacles to platforms of critical empathy, recognition, and narrative restitution.

Diana M. Natermann is a lecturer at Utrecht University and researches visual histories of empire through German colonial and postcolonial photography in Africa from the 1880s onward. She critically examines racist and racialised image regimes, the long afterlife of African stereotypes, and the persistence of the colonial gaze well into the 21st century. Natermann holds a PhD from the European University Institute, Florence. Her monograph “Pursuing Whiteness in the Colonies. Private Memories from the Congo Free State and German East Africa (1884-1914)” was shortlisted for the Waterloo German Studies Book Prize 2015. Natermann’s work bridges visual history, memory politics, gender and whiteness studies, and collaborates with contemporary African artists and museum practitioners on archival reframing and narrative sovereignty (eg. ARCK Project at the National Art Gallery of Namibia)

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Session 2C

The Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum as a “site” during a tourist visit

Jozef Lopuch

There are multiple ways to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and Memorial as a tourist. Visits can take the form of guided tours – either general or study tours – or individual tours. These options differ in terms of which parts of museum and memorial can visitors see and therefore they provide different spatial encounters. In this paper, my focus lies on a detailed examination of these encounters. My aim is to show that the museum and memorial do not constitute a homogeneous place, as it is often described in dark tourism literature. Auschwitz-Birkenau is frequently portrayed there as one of, if not the darkest, place in the world, as if the site as whole possesses a uniform degree of “darkness”. Instead, I argue that it is rather heterogenous, based on the qualities of lived encounters during a visit.

To fulfil this aim I decided to use framework of “site”, which enables to look at Auschwitz-Birkenau from more detailed viewpoint. In this context a site is understood as an “immanent (self-organizing) event-spaces dynamically composed of bodies, doings and sayings”. A site can be approached as “aggregating, negotiating and working materialities – bodies in motion, affecting and effecting”. These bodies that constitute a site can range from percepts to sign systems. During a visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau, there are different kind of these bodies that plays significant role in creating the (re)presentation of tragic events (and of Auschwitz-Birkenau during that period).

The museum and memorial – and the act of visiting it – consist of stories that are told by tour guides (e.g. about Maximilian Kolbe), material evidence (e.g. the belongings of deported people), historical photographs, information panels, buildings that are (or can be) visited, etc. In this paper, I aim to show, based mainly on participant observation, how these different components of exhibition are designed to engage visitor in different types of experiences: restorative (e.g. compassion for the victims), cognitive (primary learning about history) and emotional or affective.

Jozef Lopuch: I am currently finishing my PhD at Masaryk University, where I am also working, at the Faculty of Education. My academic focus is mostly on dark tourism – I was writing a bachelor thesis about dark tourism places in the Czech Republic and continued in my master thesis, that was about motivation to participate in dark tourism. At my PhD studies I began to be more engaged in cultural geography and my thesis is about Auschwitz-Birkenau. In this thesis I am trying to show how the guided tour looks like and what visitors encounter there and combine it with the perspective of visitors and their emotional/affective response and memory making process, to show more relational perspective to “darkness” of this type of tourism.

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“Tourist Guidebooks to the Unspeakable: Holocaust Travel Writing, 1945-2000”

Jonathan Marrow

Scholars of Holocaust memory such as Peter Novick have emphasized the so-called “silence” surrounding public discourse of the Shoah in the early postwar decades. Others, including David Cesarani and Hasia Diner, have challenged this view, arguing that Holocaust representations were widespread, particularly within Jewish communities. Yet little attention has been paid to the expanding phenomenon of Holocaust “tourism”, during which thousands, and eventually millions, visited concentration camps and Nazi-related sites for commemorative, educational, or spiritual purposes. Those who have written about travels to Holocaust sites have tended to neglect the history behind the commercial marketing and advertising of this distinctive and defining form of Dark Tourism.

This paper examines how diverse forms of English-language travel literature—including guidebooks, newspaper and magazine travel sections, and tourism advertising, pitched to both Jewish and non-Jewish audiences—framed visits to Holocaust sites such as Buchenwald and Auschwitz between the late 1940s and 2000. How did such travel writing contribute to either the publicization or repression of various aspects of Holocaust memory? When and how did Holocaust history become a recurring feature in glossy travel supplements?

The study reveals a more complex trajectory than a simple opening-up of memory over time. For instance, while commemorative travel appeared regularly in some tourism literature by the 1950s, early accounts avoided direct engagement with the machinery of Nazi terror, emphasizing instead visits to mass graves and abstract monuments. It was not until the 1980s that visiting to learn about the extermination process began to be portrayed more positively with an emphasis on genocide prevention. This transformation suggests that the crystallization of the pedagogical objective of Holocaust education as “Never Again” was a later phenomenon, stimulated by events of mass violence throughout the 1970s. Ultimately, I argue that the evolution of Holocaust tourism provides a crucial lens through which to trace broader societal shifts in Holocaust memory since 1945.

Jonathan Marrow is a PhD Student in History at Cambridge University, where he researches transnational Holocaust memory. His dissertation concerns the development of Holocaust tourism from the 1960s to the present. Marrow graduated from Georgetown University with a BA in History and holds an MSt degree in Jewish Studies with distinction from Oxford University. He spent several years as a history instructor at schools in Boston, Massachusetts and Chattanooga, Tennessee, teaching courses on Holocaust ethics and world history and has worked as a curatorial intern at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in New York.

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Negotiating World War II Memory in Finland: Immigrant Emotions at Contested Heritage Sites in Wartime

Tetiana Nahirniak, Olga Davydova-Minguet, Olga Filippova, & Daria Agapova

This study explores how two immigrant groups - Russian speakers and Ukrainians who arrived after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine - engage with and reflect on Finnish places of memory associated with World War II, examining their emotional and intellectual responses as visitors to these sites. Even prior to the war, and more so today, memory politics in the countries involved and Finland have relied on popular, sovereign WWII narratives that promote patriotism and readiness to defend the nation, yet are increasingly scrutinized for their role in shaping contemporary conflicts. Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine provides the backdrop for this study, intensifying the relevance of WWII narratives, which, in Finland, are closely linked to patriotism, national defense, and national identity. As presented in exhibitions at Finnish WWII places of memory, these narratives reinforce nation-centered framings of the past. In an increasingly diverse Finnish society, however, such narratives are received and negotiated differently, evoking a range of emotions, particularly among Ukrainians directly affected by the war and Russian-speaking participants, both of whom carry personal and inherited (post)memories of WWII.

The central question of this study is how these two immigrant groups perceive and reinterpret WWII within the Finnish context, and how they negotiate the tension between the narratives presented at Finnish places of memory and their own personal and familial (post)memories. It further asks how the ongoing war reshapes their emotional attachments to these narratives and to the sites themselves. The findings highlight the emotional geographies of contested heritage, revealing frictions between official WWII narratives and migrants' lived experiences, memories, and affective responses. Methodologically, the study draws on sensory ethnography, including guided walks, embodied perception, and Facilitated Timeout (Erätauko) dialogues, to examine how exhibitions, spatial arrangements, and dialogic encounters actively shape emotions, meaning-making, and interpretation. The case study focuses on Muisti – Center of War and Peace in Mikkeli, Finland, and is one of the sites of memory visited within the project Towards Relational and Multidirectional Dialogue on Memory Politics in a Diverse Finnish Society. By foregrounding the migrants' encounter at a contested heritage site, the study contributes to discussions on memory and heritage by showing how contemporary war intensifies affective tensions and reshapes engagements with the past.

Tetiana Nahirniak: I am a project researcher at the Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland, and a doctoral candidate in the Past, Space, and Environment in Society Doctoral Programme. I hold a Master's degree in History from the National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" (Kyiv, Ukraine). My research focuses on social cohesion, memory politics, and the democratization of post-Soviet societies. I have contributed to projects on memory politics in Ukraine, prepared research and analytical materials at analytical centres in Kyiv, and conducted research at the University of Warsaw on collective memory, minority integration, and post-Soviet democratization. tetiana.nahirniak@uef.fi

Olga Davydova-Minguet: I hold a Master's degree in Finnish and Russian philology from Petrozavodsk State University. At the University of Joensuu, I completed both my licentiate thesis and my doctoral dissertation, in which I examined the so-called remigration from the

Republic of Karelia to Finland and ethnicities within this process. Since then, I have studied migration flows from Russia to Finland (and from the former Soviet Union to the West) from the perspectives of identity, ethnicity, labour, family, and gender. Geographically, my research focuses on the border and border regions between Finland and Russia. I have paid particular attention to the transnational relationships and practices that emerge through migration, such as cross-border media use and identity and memory politics.

Olga Filippova: I graduated from Kharkiv National University with a Master's degree in History and a PhD (Candidate of Sciences) in Sociology. My doctoral dissertation was titled "Ethnic and National Identity in the Ukrainian–Russian Borderland." My recent research focuses on identity politics, the social reconstruction of the past, diversity in Ukraine's border regions, social cohesion, and vulnerable and risk groups. Currently, I am working on various aspects of Ukrainian forced migration - the reception and integration of Ukrainian refugees in Finland, migration and politics of memory, migration and human-non-human relations in multispecies families. Since 2025 I also teach courses on Ukrainian society, history and culture for the students at the University of Eastern Finland.

Daria Agapova: I hold a Master's degree in Art History from the European University at St Petersburg. My professional trajectory combines museology with cultural mediation. I am a specialist in museum communication and a curator of participatory cultural projects. My primary interest lies in community-based work, exploring ways to involve people from different social strata in research and applied projects. My focus is on museums as spaces for public dialogue, encounters between different people, therapy and inspiration, as well as institutions of memory actively shaping identities and producing social cohesion—or, conversely, polarization. I also work as a facilitator of constructive dialogues (Erätauko/Timeout).

“Never Again. Five Stars”: Playful Tools for analysing TripAdvisor Reviews of Dachau Memorial

Chris Groenveld

Digital tourism platforms fundamentally reshape the emotional geographies of contested heritage encounters. This research examines how TripAdvisor reviews of Holocaust memorial sites reveal the crisis of memory commodification while simultaneously containing genuine expressions that resist simple dismissal. Through analysis of visitor reviews from Dachau Memorial, this study explores how consumer platforms mediate the affective experience of historical trauma, creating new forms of emotional assemblage between visitor, site, and digital interface.

The research develops "Never Again. Five Stars," a collaborative board game that transforms platform data into collective critical inquiry. Players engage with real TripAdvisor reviews using theoretical frameworks, examining questions central to contested heritage tourism: How do digital platforms shape what can be said about historical trauma? What happens when consumer review logic encounters sites of atrocity? How do visitors navigate the impossible emotional geography of rating concentration camps?

The game methodology reveals the extractive dimensions embedded in both academic analysis and platform capitalism's treatment of memorial sites. By making visible the labour and ethical

costs of knowledge production around traumatic heritage, the project demonstrates how digital memorial encounters are structured by platform logic that commodifies affect and memory.

This practice-as-research approach contributes to understanding the contemporary transformation of Holocaust memory through digital tourism, examining how memorial sites become entangled with consumer review culture. The methodology has broader applications for investigating how digital platforms reshape the encounter with contested heritage, revealing the power dynamics embedded in seemingly neutral technologies of memory preservation.

The research offers insights into the emotional politics of digital memorial tourism, demonstrating how collaborative methodologies can transform extractive encounters with traumatic heritage into collective meaning-making that acknowledges rather than obscures complicity in systems of commodified remembrance.

Chris Groenveld is a CHASE DTP practice-as-research PhD candidate at Goldsmiths investigating how digital platforms shape memorial culture, developing collaborative methodologies to examine the commodification of Holocaust memory on consumer review platforms.

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Session 3A

Listening for Enslaved Voices: Tourism and Interpreting Slavery on Virginia Plantations

Mercedes Cao

This presentation investigates the narratives of slavery and the enslaved in public memory through their intersection with tourism at two plantations in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Drawing on my field research conducted at Mount Vernon and Belle Grove plantations in Virginia, I analyze how collective memory is contested with dark and often undiscussed histories. My research highlights how tour guides, institutional choices, and memorial architecture shape collective understandings of the enslaved experience. Attention is given to how language, emotional tone, and material artifacts either humanize or obscure the lives of enslaved individuals. My conversations with tour guides and examining interpretive practices reveal ongoing tensions between commemoration, tourism, and the management of difficult pasts. By situating these sites within broader debates on memory politics, affective heritage, and racialized historical narratives, this paper reveals the complexities of public commemoration in contexts shaped by enduring racial and historical inequities. Ultimately, this work calls for more intentional and inclusive preservation practices that center enslaved voices, lives, and legacies within American historical consciousness.

Mercedes Cao: a graduate student in Pan-African Studies at California State University, Los Angeles, in Los Angeles, California (USA). I recently graduated from Gettysburg College with a Bachelor of Arts in Africana Studies and History. Early on in my academic career, I chose to focus on decolonizing education, creating anti-racist pedagogies, and the recovery of marginalized historical narratives. I have traveled across the globe, dedicated to raising and hearing voices often unheard. One of my research interests is analyzing the methods by which historical sites that focus on slavery and enslaved peoples tell those stories. I am particularly committed to ensuring that histories of enslavement and racial violence are represented with care, accuracy, and humanity. I have previously conducted field research at the slave dungeons in Ghana, specifically Cape Coast, and Elmina. Most recently, I have visited George Washington's Mount Vernon and Belle Grove Plantation, analyzing how tour guides convey the history of enslavement and enslaved peoples to visitors. Along with my research, I have worked with the National Park Service in providing interpretative resources of cultural and historical sites throughout Boston, Massachusetts.

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Black & White Public Memory in the United States and the Gettysburg Address

Scott Hancock

This presentation examines the intersection of public memory and public performance during an annual commemoration of soldiers who fought for Confederate States of America, the largest slave-holding state in modern history. Each November, in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

(United States), thousands of people line both sides of a mile-long parade route, cheering on several hundred rifle-carrying participants, dressed in uniforms and clothing that meticulously replicates what soldiers and civilians wore in 1863, as they march through this small town of 7500 people. The Remembrance Day parade, which attracts tourists from around the region, ostensibly commemorates Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, delivered on November 19, 1863. When the parade kicks off and the first Union Army reenactors step out into the street, a loud cheer goes up. That cheer is repeated at two other points during the parade, two points that, from a historical perspective, are diametrically opposed: when African American reenactors, uniformed as the United States Color Troops, march around the corner, and shortly thereafter, when white reenactors uniformed as the soldiers the Confederate States of America, carrying a multitude of large Confederate flags, step into the main throughfare. This jarring juxtaposition, of Confederate soldiers being cheered with the same charged emotion as the soldiers they sought to kill during the American Civil War—especially African American soldiers—invites exploration of how tourism, heritage, and racialized memory all collide in this public performance. This presentation will trace that collision, from first Remembrance Day parades in the 1950s, which did not include Confederate or African American reenactors, to the current celebration of soldiers of an enslaving army. Lastly, this presentation will contrast the parade with how African Americans, in Gettysburg and nationally, have remembered and commemorated slavery, the war, and the Gettysburg Address.

Scott Hancock: I am an associate professor of history and Africana Studies at Gettysburg College. After spending 14 years working with teenagers in crisis, I switched careers and earned a Ph.D. in Early American History in 1999. Both careers have fueled desire to understand how African Americans have shaped and been shaped by American law and memory, and motivate me to tell the stories of people whom society and history have discounted as troublesome or unimportant. I'm currently exploring how places like Gettysburg can put African Americans and slavery back into the heart of stories told by landscapes and memorials. Some of my scholarly work has appeared in journals and anthologies, such as *AMPS, The Civil War and the Summer of 2020, They Are Dead and Yet They Live*, and my book *Walk Up The Hill: A College Student's Guide to Scholar Activism*. As part of trying to be a scholar activist, I also written for public audiences in local, regional and national publications, and welcome engaging with people in a variety of forums, including talking with visitors to the Gettysburg National Military Park.

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From Mapping to Confrontation: The Curaçao Slavery Heritage Guide as an Emotional Tour(ism) Encounter

Annemarie de Wildt & Lianne Leonora

This presentation examines how the Curaçao Slavery Heritage Guide functions as an emotional and embodied tour(ism) encounter within slavery and colonial heritage. Rather than relying on guided tours, the book assumes the role of the guide itself. It connects nearly seventy locations across Curaçao, including beaches, plantations, roads, and bays, to narratives of slavery, violence, resistance, everyday life, and the ongoing legacies of this past in the present. Many of these sites are today primarily perceived as touristic spaces and lack explicit commemorative marking.

The presentation analyses how reading, walking, and looking together produce a form of embodied encountering in which knowledge transfer is not neutral but affectively charged. The guide activates emotions such as discomfort, anger, recognition, and pride, confronting visitors with the tension between touristic aesthetics (sun, sea, leisure) and an underlying history of violence and inequality. The locations in the guide provide a concrete example of frictions of space: places that simultaneously accommodate leisure and trauma.

Special attention is paid to the question of for whom this tour works. The guide is explicitly intended for both Curaçaoans and (Dutch and international) tourists, yet it elicits divergent emotions and perspectives among different (groups of) people. The paper explores tensions between lived memory and first encounters, mourning and education, and recognition versus shock, particularly in relation to differences between Black and white Curaçaoans and between local residents and visitors.

Empirically, the paper draws on ongoing qualitative research conducted in Curaçao and the Netherlands, consisting of interviews with people who visited selected locations with and without the guide, including tourists, Curaçaoans, and professionals working in the tourism sector. The presentation demonstrates how the guide can be understood as a decolonial intervention in heritage tourism, in which emotions are not managed or softened, but deliberately mobilized to confront visitors and to complement or even disrupt dominant touristic narratives.

Annemarie de Wildt is a curator and researcher specializing in public history, and cultural memory. She is emeritus curator at the Amsterdam Museum, where she curated many exhibition projects addressing colonial histories, contested heritage, and their contemporary legacies. Since 2014, she has been involved in the Mapping Slavery project. In 2025, she co-authored the Curaçao Slavery Heritage Guide with Lianne Leonora, a publication that connects every day and touristic landscapes on Curaçao to histories of slavery and their ongoing afterlives. Her work explores how curatorial and touristic practices can mobilize affect and confrontation to challenge dominant historical narratives and engage diverse audiences.

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Lianne Leonora is a Curaçaoan historian and heritage professional and Director of the Mongui Maduro Library in Willemstad, Curaçao. She is dedicated to the documentation, preservation, and digitalization of Dutch-Caribbean cultural heritage. Leonora is actively involved in regional and international library networks and serves as President of the Association of Caribbean University, Research and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL). She is also a co-author of the Curaçao Slavery Heritage Guide, which makes local history and heritage accessible to a broad audience and is involved in the organization of the Ruta Tula commemoration on Curacao.

"Somebody Didn't Tell Somebody Something: Colonial Heritage, Erasure and Black Indigeneity in Belgium"

Dorrie Wilson

Living in Brussels' historic centre, I have become more aware of colonial sites and their effect on people and people of African descent, specifically. These relics reinforce the notion that within

the specific geography of the colony, inhuman behaviour is justified (“I have undertaken the work of the Congo in the interests of the civilization and for Belgium”– King Leopold II) and rendered normative, with art instrumentalised in mitigating the atrocities. For people of African descent today, these monuments continue to hold space as justifications and rationales that allowed slavery and colonialism to become essential structures within the European economic growth model, with Black bodies as the currency moving resource extraction and wealth accumulation forward. These sites resonate with and reinforce the common displacement and invisibility of people of African descent within the Belgian context; a constant reminder of who this country believes us to be, and where we should reside within it.

Using the 3-part article series, “Art Nouveau, Art of Darkness: African Lineages of Belgian Modernism,” by the art historian, Deborah L. Silverman, as a lens through which to consider the Leopoldian colonial era and its importance to contemporary Belgian sensibilities surrounding cultural heritage, tourism, and colonial monuments in the public space. In addition, I would like to interrogate the notion of these sites within the current Belgian context, (re)examining the notion of indigeneity (within the European context) as it relates to both the “colony” and the “metropole,” incorporating the voices and visions- both past and present – of scholars, curators and creatives of African descent challenging European notions of cultural heritage, structurally, politically and institutionally in Belgium.

Dorrie Wilson is an Black American independent researcher, writer and cultural curator, whose work is centred on the examination of structural racism, citizenship and migration within the contemporary European context. She holds double Bachelor's degrees in Afro-American Studies and Humanities - with a concentration in Black Women's Literature and Black Arts Movements -- from the University of California, and a Master's degree in European Urban Cultures from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, following study in the MFA programme in Theatre Management at the Yale University School of Drama. She has lived in Brussels since 2001.

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“Memory is made of stone” Brussels (De)Colonial Matter, the case of Emile Storms.

Jean Illi

Though not immediately obvious to an untrained eye, historian Lucas Catherine reminds us that “Congo is everywhere” in Brussels. Indeed, colonial matter, sometimes directly extracted from colonized territories to construct Brussels’ urban infrastructure and promote colonial ideology, seem intent on staying unnoticed. Hidden beneath a manhole cover, embedded in a wall, around a street corner, in the woodwork of an art nouveau building, or within the bushes of a park, from its many hiding places, it continues to inform Belgian society, subtly informing collective memory and national identity. While critiques of coloniality often center on immaterial socio-economical dynamics that perpetuate relations of domination, the concentration of colonial material in Brussels has fostered the development of a critical discourse based on material traces, among which monuments, statues, buildings and so on. This emphasis on materiality played a key role in framing the issue, from its articulation in activist movements to its management by public authorities. This research adopts a socio-anthropological approach drawing on Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s concept of historical silences,

Ann Laura Stoler's work on imperial debris, or Charles W. Mills' epistemologies of ignorance, alongside reflections from local scholars and activists about Afro-descendant populations' capacity to challenge dominant historical narratives by asserting their experiences and memories in public space. Through the combination of critical theory with ethnographic methods, this paper examines both the efficacy of a decolonial critique rooted in material traces and the reconfiguration of colonial matter's effectiveness within the evolving dynamics of coloniality. The trajectory of the Emile Storms statue—installed to celebrate the General's role in the "civilizing mission" before being alternately forgotten, contested, defended, removed and repurposed—tells the story of a battle over memory that, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot suggests in *Silencing the Past*, seems very much to be "made of stone".

Jean Illi is a PhD candidate in anthropology at the Université libre de Bruxelles (LAMC) and a member of the HERICOL project on colonial legacies in Belgium. His research focuses on how Brussels public authorities (municipal and regional level) address claims related to Belgian coloniality, particularly through public space.

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Tour(ism) encounters with Jewish heritage: story-based guided tours in the Jewish neighbourhood of Antwerp

Licia Calvi, Moniek Hover, Jörn Fricke

In this presentation, we want to report on one specific activity we developed as part of the Interreg Europe project JEWELS TOUR, on the valorisation of Jewish heritage in 6 municipalities in Europe, in which we as applied institution of higher education act as an associated partner. Responsible, inclusive and also technology-driven storytelling has been identified by the consortium partners as the main instrument to give visibility to their local Jewish heritage. In order to support them do so, we developed story-based guided tours that our partners could experience as 'tourists' during our consortium meeting in Antwerp in 2025.

These story-based tours are not the usual information-based tours tourist guides offer. Our tours are community-centred tours in the context of a living community, like the Orthodox-Jewish community present in the city of Antwerp. They entail that one or more persons (in this experimental case, 4 members of our research team) take up the role of different, fictional inhabitants and, as them, tell tourists the story of their local neighbourhood and daily life through their eyes. This role playing allows the 'guide' to speak to tourists in 1st person addressing them in 2nd person, thereby taking on a lively contemporary perspective and use it to reflect on events of the past in a personal way. Although the characters are fictional, their story is inspired by the stories of real members of the community and are therefore rooted in a non-fictional context.

We evaluated the participants' experience of these tours using mixed-methods. This role playing comes of course with some limitations that we will discuss during our presentation (for instance, one character, a 12-year old boy, could not answer all the questions that were addressed to him by the tourists). And potentially, with some risks (like objectifying the local community) as well as some ethical questions (e.g., how far do communities want to be

exposed? Is this a way to shield from the tourist gaze?). Yet, this 1st person perspective seems to have a strong impact on listeners because stories told in this way play with identification and empathy, crucial in powerful storytelling.

Licia Calvi is senior lecturer and researcher across the domains of storytelling and digital transformation of cultural heritage, particularly of museums. She is the internal coordinator of the Interreg Europe project JEWELS TOUR. Calvi.L@buas.nl

Moniek Hover is professor Storytelling. She provides (storytelling-based) research and development projects in the field of leisure and tourism. At Breda University, she co-leads the cross-academies' BUAs research theme "Designing, Managing and Measuring Experiences", as well as the Academy for Leisure specific research program line of "storytelling and consumer experiences".

Jörn Fricke is professor Leisure in a social context. His current research interests lie in the role of leisure experiences and resilience through community development.

Bunkers along the Belgian coast as representations of historical, heritage and memory landscapes: a promising path for research on the experiences of heritage?

Jasper Snoeys

Along the 67-kilometre Belgian coastline, bunkers dating from both the First and Second World War (built by the German occupying forces) are emblematic to the landscape. Some of these bunkers have been turned into museums and are part of heritage discourses of preservation and protection, such as those in the provincial domain Atlantikwall Raversyde in Ostend, while others are not museumified, but instead rather invisible parts of tourist spaces, such as those in the protected nature reserve Ter Yde in Koksijde or those integrated in (former) tourist destinations such as camping sites or playgrounds.

These bunkers not only represent (different) contested histories, but are also part of them, as they are embedded in landscapes that intersect different histories, such as a royal past, a medieval past, a tourist past, ... – and, in particular, the intergenerational and personal (hi)stories of individual tourists. As a consequence, these bunkers are integrated in a discursive intersection of different heritage, memory and tourist narratives that form part of the (contested) histories of intergenerational tourism and commodification along the Belgian coast. The bunkers have various current heritage and tourism functionalities that impact their meaning(s) of multi-layered pasts, presents and futures and give rise to a diverse range of memories and emotional geographies, such as the narratives on the notions of nostalgia and a damaged coastal landscape.

Following my fieldwork at the mentioned bunker sites with tourist guides using ethnographic sensory methodologies, and based on insights from landscape research, I propose in this paper a model in which heritage (tourism) functions as a three-part experiential, polyphonic and networked landscape consisting of historical landscapes, heritage landscapes and memory landscapes. Within these dynamic landscapes, tensions exist between macro- and micro-perspectives concerning the heritage representations, negotiations and interpretations. By integrating an interdisciplinary scholarship on critical heritage studies, public history, memory

studies and biographical (narrative) research, I particularly emphasize the importance of the role of the individual and its personal and family histories in these meaning-making processes.

Jasper Snoeys is a PhD student at KU Leuven's Cultural History since 1750 research group. Since September 2022, he studies the emotional and multisensory experiences of heritage tourism in Belgium. He has done research on the role of emotions within the history of the Flemish movement, on which he published in leading reference works (the Digitale Encyclopedie van de Vlaamse beweging) and academic journals (WT). His main interests are heritage experiences, (the theorization of) heritage, identities and memory cultures. He is co-editor of Cultuurgeschiedenis.be, the blogsite of his research group, and of Contemporanea, an online journal for contemporary Belgian history.

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Session 3C

From Ancestral Homeland to Heritage Stage: The Negotiation and Remaking of Hakka Collective Memory in Zhuji Alley, Shaoguan

Feifei Ji

This study examines the transformation of Shaoguan's Zhuji Alley—a site revered as the symbolic ancestral homeland of the Hakka diaspora—from a lived historical space into a staged heritage destination. Moving beyond narratives of preservation, it investigates the contested processes through which collective memory is actively negotiated and remade in tourism encounters. The analysis focuses on three overlapping arenas where memory is performed: the ritual adaptation of ancestral veneration ceremonies for tourist viewing, the narrative struggles embedded in guided tours and museum displays, and the embodied spatial practices of visitors as they walk, photograph, and interpret the site.

Methodologically, the research adopts a mediated approach, analyzing digital traces and archival materials to reconstruct memory dynamics without physical fieldwork. It systematically examines official promotional content, social media travelogues, visitor reviews, and visual posts alongside local gazetteers and clan records. This allows for a critical tracing of how different actors—state cultural agencies, local lineage organizations, tourism operators, and diasporic visitors—each attempt to inscribe their version of the past onto the alley's material and symbolic landscape.

The paper argues that tourism in Zhuji Alley functions as a key arena for memory politics, where the past is selectively reassembled for present-day purposes. It reveals how emotions such as nostalgia, pride, and belonging are strategically mobilized, and how the very meaning of “Hakka identity” is continuously rewritten through the friction between official heritage narratives, community memory practices, and tourist experiences. Ultimately, this case illuminates the broader tensions inherent in converting sites of deep historical significance into platforms of cultural consumption and identity formation.

Feifei Ji is currently a Visiting Scholar at the University of Plymouth, UK, and a full-time Lecturer in the School of Tourism and Geography at Shaoguan University. She holds a PhD from the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Her research centers on the intersection of tourism, cultural memory, and heritage politics in China. The proposed study on the negotiation of Hakka collective memory at Zhuji Alley forms a key part of his/her current research agenda during the visiting fellowship.

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Affective space beyond the visit: Local visitors' post-visit reverberations at a contested heritage site in Nanjing, China

Jiaqi Liang

This paper examines how the affective force of a contested dark heritage site extends beyond the visit and becomes embedded in everyday local life. Focusing on the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders in Nanjing, China, it conceptualises dark heritage as an affective space co-produced through local visitors' interpretations, embodied practices, and relational engagements with curatorial framings. Situated within tourism geographies' affective turn and informed by more-than-representational sensibilities, the paper asks how emotions are produced, performed, and reworked across the local visitor encounter and its aftermath, and how such processes feed into ongoing memory-making in the public sphere. Drawing on an interpretive, reception-oriented design and in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted in mid-2024, the analysis shows that the Memorial Hall elicits intense yet heterogeneous emotional responses while sustaining place-based relations that persist over time. These trajectories unfold through three interrelated processes. First, visitors enact reflexive affective agency as they interpret and evaluate affective cues. Second, embodied commemorative practices provide a practical vocabulary for reverence, mourning, and intergenerational moral learning. Third, and most centrally, post-visit reverberations carry affect into everyday networks of memory-making: recurring nightmares, avoidance or repeat visits, informal guidance offered to others in everyday and digital settings, community-organised activities, and transnational cultural exchanges. By foregrounding post-visit reverberations, the paper specifies an emotional geography in which the boundaries between

touristic space and lived space are continually crossed. For some, the site is lived as an ongoing relationship that organises locally grounded responsibilities for memory-making. For others, affective residues intensify rather than resolve, returning through haunting traces that unsettle linear time and spatial containment. While the fieldwork predates the renewed China–Japan tensions since late 2025, the framework specifies the mechanisms through which affective negotiations initiated in the heritage encounter extend beyond the site and into everyday local life. It therefore offers an analytical lens for understanding how such reverberations may be amplified and become more publicly legible when wartime memory becomes more salient in public discourse under changing public contexts.

Jiaqi Liang is a PhD candidate in Department of History at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Maastricht University. Her research examines dark heritage and postmemory in tourism contexts, focusing on local engagements with sites of historical trauma and their implications for cultural memory and community well-being.

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Topographies of Emotions and Muslim Minorities in China's Contested Silk Road-based Heritage

Yang Yang

This paper analyzes the engagement of emotions in the production of multiple cultural memories of ethno-religious minorities in northwestern China. Specifically, I use the Hui Muslims in Xi'an, China, as an example to show the role of emotions in shaping the Muslim geographies of the Silk Road-based cultural heritage, specifically emotions such as sadness and trauma related to the experiences of Muslim minorities in both historical and today's settings. Using the Muslim Quarter in Xi'an as an example, I examine how Hui Muslims and the local government present the contours of different emotions in the built environment and digital spaces such as social media. The Muslim Quarter in Xi'an is a crucial heritage site recognized by both the local government and international NGOs as evidence of Xi'an's status as the eastern terminus of the Silk Road's territorial route. Meanwhile, it has also been a residential space for Hui Muslims and other Muslim minorities since the 7th Century. The Muslim Quarter's overall emotional undertone as a heritage tourism site has been framed by the local government as pride and nostalgia for China's glorious past. However, the sadness and trauma associated with the Muslim Quarter's urban redevelopment since the early 1990s and the Muslim rebellion in Shaanxi during the mid-19th Century are often invisible in the context of heritage tourism. Both the local government and various actors in the Hui community actively inscribe the emotions and cultural memories they want to highlight as part of the Muslim Quarter's cultural heritage. Therefore, different topographies of these emotions are present in spaces including tourism streets, museums, varied versions of maps, and social media posts. They coexist in the Muslim Quarter as different aspects of its heritage. These diverse emotions, bolstered by the state and the Hui Muslim community, vary in visibility in the Muslim Quarter, eliciting a range of responses from locals and tourists alike. In doing so, I highlight the visualization and visibility of emotions in the built environment of contested heritage sites and the discourses of the related cultural memories.

Yang Yang is a lecturer in the Department of Chinese Studies at the National University of Singapore. She received her PhD in Human Geography from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her research focuses on transnational networks based on Islam and Muslim communities between China and Southeast Asia, feminist geopolitics, heritage diplomacy, and urban studies. Her research also looks into the gendered geographies of Muslim identities in northwestern China, especially the expression of Muslim womanhood through fashion in the Hui community.

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Embodied Narratives in Dark Tourism: The Memory Performance of Docents at the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall

Miao Yu

As "cultural mediators" in heritage sites, museum docents play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between institutional narratives and visitor reception. This study investigates the memory practices of docents at the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese

Invaders, a prominent dark tourism site in China. Adopting the theoretical lens of "performance" (Goffman, 1959), this paper explores how traumatic memory is constructed, performed, and transmitted through the interplay of scripts, bodies, and space.

Based on longitudinal qualitative fieldwork (2016-2023), including participant observation and in-depth interviews with professional and volunteer docents, the research analyzes the "front-stage" behaviors of these memory workers. The study identifies three dimensions of memory performance: the negotiation of narrative scripts, the disciplined mobility of the body, and the construction of vocal soundscapes. It argues that docents do not merely recite official history; they engage in an "embodied performance" that transforms the static memorial space into a dynamic emotional experience.

Furthermore, the paper critically contrasts human interaction with mediated interpretation (e.g., audio guides). It finds that while technology empowers visitor autonomy, it often creates a "double asynchrony" between physical movement and cognitive processing, thereby detaching visitors from the immersive context. The study concludes that the human docent's physical presence and emotional labor are indispensable in heritage interpretation, serving as the essential vessel for connecting traumatic history with collective memory.

Miao Yu is a Ph.D. candidate at the College of Literature and Journalism, Sichuan University, China. Her research interests lie at the intersection of media studies, memory studies, and urban space. She is particularly focused on how collective memory is constructed, performed, and mediated within heritage sites and urban infrastructures. Her current doctoral research examines the spatial politics and memory practices of the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall, utilizing ethnographic methods to explore the agency of human and non-human actors in traumatic storytelling.

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Session 4A

Heroes' Acre Zimbabwe: a site of contested significance to the nation and to its visitors

Sian Newsome Magadza & Malaika Newsome-Magadza

Zimbabwe's Heroes' Acre was built with the assistance of the North Koreans to commemorate the country's liberation and those that contributed to it through protracted liberation struggle against colonial settler rule. It is more than just a burial site containing physical and material symbols of the birth of Zimbabwe, being not only a memorial but also an active site for the internment of those conferred with 'hero' or 'heroine' status. Physical structures reflect images linked to armed liberation and the founding of the country.

The research analyses the site as an object of consumption, whether in the manner intended by its creators, or the symbol of state decision making it has become. It unpacks the alienation felt by many of those depicted in the memorial itself, using primary and secondary data, from visual image, interviews, visitor logs and comments, media and existing literature, and reflects on intended and unintended messaging.

There are tensions and contradictions between Zimbabwean traditional practices of honoring leaders and a North Korean and Soviet era form of memorialisation through grand symbolic monuments. The site must be understood as one of multiple meanings, at different times and to different people. It can be viewed not only as a place to remember those who contributed to nationhood, but also as reflecting discourse on power and inclusion and exclusion. This emerges in selection of those designated as heroes and heroines, and how their lives and contributions resonate to younger generations and others. As we look ahead to an era in Zimbabwe and regionally, where time and political shifts have distanced many from their 'revolutionary' parties, and from the socialist solidarities they once symbolised, there is a question of how memorials such as Heroes Acre will be understood.

This presentation seeks to open up discussion over the role of Heroes' Acre as a present reminder of the founding of a country through armed struggle, but also as a continuance in the creation of heroes 45 years after liberation. It further aims to expose how the site not only portrays national unity, but also emerges as a site of longstanding contestation.

Sian Newsome Magadza: Sian is an independent researcher who has worked in education in Zimbabwe, most recently as a lecturer at Zimbabwe Open University. Her research interests focus on responsible tourism, tourism mobilities, and political and cultural tourism with a focus on constructs and narratives in a Southern African setting. sianmagadza@gmail.com

Malaika Newsome-Magadza: Malaika is a PhD student (LSE London), specialising in decolonial conflict; identity; and ideology. She explores the mutually constructive power of irregular warfare, nationalism and transactional landscapes in conflict and state building, with a particular focus on Zimbabwe's liberation war. m.b.newsome-magadza@lse.ac.uk

An emotional geography of transplant tourism in developing economies

Mucha Mkono

This conceptual analysis examines the emotional geographies surrounding organ transplant tourism in developing economies, foregrounding the lived, affective and relational dimensions of a global medical phenomenon often framed primarily in economic or ethical terms.

Transplant tourism is typically embedded within unequal transnational care markets in which wealthy recipients travel abroad to access organs sourced from socio-economically vulnerable populations. While existing scholarship highlights structural injustices, this study centres on the emotional repercussions experienced by donors, recipients, brokers, and families whose lives are intertwined in these exchanges.

Drawing on emotional geography and structural vulnerability theory, the analysis maps how fear, hope, desperation, shame, gratitude, moral distress and embodied trauma shape the decision-making processes and post-transplant experiences of involved actors. In developing economies—where weak regulatory environments, persistent poverty, and informal health markets often converge—emotions are not peripheral but constitutive of the transplant tourism system. For sellers, the promise of financial relief is entangled with anxiety, stigma, and the emotional burden of risk. Recipients navigate competing emotions of hope for survival, guilt associated with ethically ambiguous procurement practices, and fear of medical complications. Brokers and clinicians operating in moral grey zones often experience ambivalence, professional dissonance, and compassion fatigue.

By conceptualising these affective landscapes as an emotional geography, the paper argues that transplant tourism generates spatially distributed emotional harms that mirror global inequalities. Emotional experiences are shaped by structural forces—such as economic precarity, policy gaps, and global health inequities—but are also reproduced through intimate encounters in clinics, negotiation spaces, and post-surgical recovery settings. These emotional dynamics influence not only individual wellbeing but broader social relations, including family cohesion, community perceptions, and social trust in health institutions.

The analysis contributes to transplant tourism scholarship by integrating affective dimensions into debates typically dominated by legal, economic or bioethical frameworks. It demonstrates that understanding the human impacts of transplant tourism requires attending to how emotions materialise within bodies, relationships, and spaces across both sending and receiving contexts.

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Avitourism as Cultural Memory Practice: IsiXhosa Bird Narratives, Heritage, and Emotional Geographies in Willowvale, South Africa

Athi Ndita & Hilary Kennedy Nji Bama

Tourism encounters are increasingly recognised as sites where cultural memories are activated, narrated, and emotionally experienced. Within this context, this paper examines how IsiXhosa indigenous knowledge systems and bird-related cultural narratives function as forms of living heritage and memory-making within emergent avitourism practices in Willowvale, Eastern Cape, South Africa. Avitourism in South Africa has largely developed through ecological and market-oriented framings, with limited engagement with indigenous epistemologies and the cultural memories embedded in local landscapes. Drawing on qualitative observations and focus group interviews conducted in IsiXhosa, the study documents stories, idioms, proverbs, and clan associations linked to birds, analysing them as mnemonic devices through which cultural values, histories, and human-nature relationships are transmitted across generations. These narratives are not merely symbolic; they evoke affective responses such as pride, belonging, reverence, and moral obligation, positioning birds as emotionally charged mediators between people, place, and past. The paper argues that integrating these narratives into avitourism practices, through guided storytelling, interpretation, and place-based encounters, transforms avitourism into a performative space of cultural memory rather than purely recreational or ecological activity. Such integration raises critical questions about narration, translation, and representation, particularly regarding whose memories are foregrounded and how indigenous knowledge is curated for visitors. By situating avitourism within debates on tourism, memory, and heritage, this study contributes to emerging discussions on emotional geographies and indigenous memory practices in tourism settings. It demonstrates how avitourism can serve as a culturally grounded platform for memory-making, while also highlighting the tensions involved in mobilising indigenous knowledge within contemporary tourism economies.

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Emotional Geographies, Guided Tours, and the (Re)making of Heritage in Apravasi Ghat, Mauritius: Paths of Remembrance

Samuel Ramapuram

This study looks at how guided tours at Apravasi Ghat, a UNESCO World Heritage site that marks the arrival of indentured workers in Port Louis, Mauritius, function as sites for cultural memory-work where contemporary identity, past violence, and tourism economy are negotiated. Framed by multidirectional memory (Rothberg, 2009) and emotional geographies (Anderson & Smith, 2001), the tour is conceived as a dynamic, situated performance in which

visitors, guides, spatial cues, and narrative techniques co-produce memory rather than a unidirectional transfer of historical knowledge. The trip is further embedded in transoceanic networks of imperial memory with immediate resonance for European publics due to the site's complex colonial past, which includes the early Dutch occupation of Mauritius. The research is based on ethnographic fieldwork that includes visual mapping of movement and stops along the tour path, fifteen semi-structured interviews with guides, heritage managers, and tourists, and participant observation on twenty guided tours. In order to demonstrate how materialities and narration either silence or mobilise contested memories, transcripts were thematically coded for emotive registers (guilt, pride, shame, empathy, and nostalgia) and analytically matched with spatial-temporal positions. Three conclusions are drawn. First, the collection of emotional cues: using narrative scripting, space choreography, and deliberate silences, visitors are invited to adopt moral stances regarding indenture as a system that replaces slavery. The second is the negotiation of memory scales: foreign tourists bring in decolonial, Holocaust, and Atlantic slavery frameworks that reframe local labour memory, creating conflicts with mnemonic claims established in the community. Third, tourism as active memory-work: the tour both commodifies and remakes heritage by staging and disseminating certain emotive narratives, stabilising some pasts while displacing others. I contend that heritage tourism edits, amplifies, and exports situated memory into global circuits of meaning, making it constitutive of earlier memory regimes rather than downstream of them. Debates over accountability in heritage practice are heightened when guided tours are seen as affective-political infrastructures of recollection. Who writes the history, for whom, and with what distributive and ethical consequences?

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Session 4B

Conceptualising tourism encounters as memory diplomacy

Alena Pfoser

This paper aims to develop the concept of memory diplomacy as a useful way to approach the production of cultural memories in tourism encounters. In our modern consumer societies, tourism is one of the central arenas for the production and circulation of popular knowledge about the past. In tourism promotion, the past has been used as a valuable resource to make destinations stand out on a global tourism market. Tourism intermediaries such as guides routinely circulate historical narratives, participating in both sight sacralisation and façade-peeling. Rather than passively consuming cultural memories, tourists actively engage in processes of remembering and can shape the tour guide narrative. This presentation draws on my recently published book “Tourism as memory-making: Russian tourism in the shadow of empire” (Pfoser, 2025) which studied memory production in Russian tourism to cities in the former Soviet space. In the book, I use the notion of memory diplomacy to examine how difficult pasts are dealt with on the tour. I further the analysis by elaborating on my understanding of the term, drawing on scholarship in memory studies and new/ cultural diplomacy. Memory diplomacy, broadly spoken, illuminates how cultural memory intersects with the making of international relations and geopolitics. While existing work is state-centred and tends to be instrumentalist in focus, examining tourism encounters widens the pool of actors considered relevant for the study of memory diplomacy and allows a consideration of the processual and relational character of memory-making, in this case in the co-production of memories by guides and tourists. Thirdly, it also offers us a novel way to approach the potentially transformative nature of tourism encounters without overestimating its impact by foregrounding negotiation and careful communicative adjustments. I elaborate on the relational nature and transformative potential of international tourism encounters in geopolitically contested contexts. I finally illustrate how memory diplomacy works in practice by drawing on Russian-language tour narratives as well as interviews with guides and tourists in three cities, Tallinn, Kyiv and Almaty conducted in 2019.

Dr Alena Pfoser is a Reader in Memory and Cultural Studies at Loughborough University, UK. Her research focuses on cultural memory and heritage, borders and borderlands, and cultural production, with a particular interest in Eastern Europe, Russia and Eurasia. She was the PI on an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) New Investigator project on heritage and memory-wars in post-Soviet cities (2019-2022), on which her book “Tourism as memory-making: Russian tourism in the shadow of empire” (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025) is based. She is currently working on two new projects, one entitled “Europe’s new Iron Curtain: Materiality, Emotion and Memory in the EU’s Eastern Borderland” (Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies) and one on grassroots cultural diplomacy.

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Moving with Grief: Tourism, Loss, and the Reconfiguration of Atmosphere, Place, and Time

Gina Khamis

This paper-in-progress examines how grief, understood as an ontological condition of vulnerability rather than a discrete emotional response, reconfigures the temporal, spatial, and atmospheric dimensions of tourism encounters. While tourism scholarship has increasingly engaged with emotion, memory, and heritage, grief remains marginalised or treated as an individual psychological state. This paper argues that grief constitutes a fundamental mode of being-in-the-world that reshapes how tourism is lived, sensed, and materially enacted through embodied and more-than-human relations.

The paper draws on a qualitative, affect-oriented research design that foregrounds lived experience, embodiment, and atmosphere. Empirically, it focuses on solace-seeking nature tourism, examining how individuals engage with landscapes such as forests, coastlines, and mountainous environments during or after experiences of loss. Data are generated through in-depth, semi-structured interviews that privilege narrative, sensory description, and temporal reflection, allowing participants to articulate how grief unfolds through movement, pause, rhythm, and spatial attachment. This approach is complemented by an interpretive analytic strategy attentive to affective atmospheres, understood as relational intensities co-produced by human and nonhuman elements including light, sound, material textures, weather, and silence.

Preliminary insights suggest that grief in tourism contexts emerges through temporal disruptions such as suspension, repetition, and disorientation; through spatial transformations that render certain places charged, restorative, or uncanny; and through atmospheric conditions that exceed individual emotion and circulate collectively. Rather than functioning as a backdrop, touristic environments actively participate in shaping how vulnerability, memory, and meaning are negotiated.

By positioning grief as an ontological and atmospheric condition, this paper contributes to tourism and memory studies in three ways. Theoretically, it challenges representational and emotion-centred models of experience by foregrounding vulnerability and relationality. Methodologically, it advances qualitative approaches capable of engaging embodied and more-than-human dimensions of tourism encounters. Empirically, it reframes tourism as a site of existential reorientation, where memory and meaning are continuously produced through affective engagement with place.

Gina Khamis is a doctoral researcher in Tourism Management whose work examines tourism as an affective, relational, and more-than-human phenomenon. Her research explores how grief and vulnerability reconfigure temporal, spatial, and atmospheric dimensions of tourism encounters, drawing on posthumanist affect theory, phenomenology of space, and critical tourism studies. She has a background in tourism management, languages & heritage, and EU-funded research projects, with experience bridging academic research, cultural practices, and policy-oriented work. Her broader interests include emotional geographies, memory and heritage, embodied mobilities, and qualitative methodologies attentive to affect and atmosphere.

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Remembering Water: Tourism as Affective Memory-Making on Marken

Anne Veere Hoogbergen

This paper explores tourism as an affective practice of memory-making on the former island of Marken in the Netherlands. Drawing on ongoing ethnographic research, I examine how guided tours, museum narratives, and heritage representations for visitors actively produce and circulate particular memories of living with water, with a strong emphasis on histories of flood risk, vulnerability, and resilience. With approximately 1,800 inhabitants and an estimated one million tourists visiting annually, Marken presents a striking asymmetry in the circulation of memory, in which narratives designed for visitors come to shape the island's affective landscape.

I argue that tourism adds an additional layer through which cultural memories become (re)activated and embedded in place. By repeating particular narratives, touristic representations strengthen specific emotional responses toward water and risk. This encourages shared imaginaries of resilience, responsibility, and attachment to the landscape within the local community. These memories are not only consumed by visitors but also influence how locals think about their heritage, identity, and belonging.

By situating tourism within the larger context of climate adaptation, this paper suggests that these affective memory practices play an important role in shaping contemporary responses to environmental change. As climate adaptation measures— like dike reinforcements— become more apparent and contested on Marken it becomes clear that the ways in which past water relations are remembered and narrated, shape how risk, safety, and future-making are emotionally understood. Thus, the affective conditions under which adaptation is negotiated, accepted, or resisted are subtly influenced by tourism.

By conceptualizing tourism as a form of affective memory-making rather than a purely economic or representational activity, this paper contributes to discussions on emotional geographies of heritage and memory. It demonstrates how tourism features centrally in contemporary processes of heritage formation by mediating the production of cultural memory, emotional attachment to place, and the moral orientations through which climate change and adaptation are experienced.

Anne Veere Hoogbergen: is currently a PhD candidate, as part of the larger THETIDA-project, within the department of Built Environment at Eindhoven University of Technology. Holding a background in Heritage Studies (MA) and Cultural Anthropology (MSc), her research focuses on how coastal communities in the IJsselmeer area cope with climate impacts on their cultural heritage, as well as how a better understanding of the affective dimensions of heritage can prevent maladaptation and foster meaningful climate resilience. Within her studies she maintains a special interest in the interplay between nature and culture, heritage transformation and loss, intangible heritage, lived experiences, and affective responses such as eco-nostalgias. Anne Veere holds an MA in Heritage and Memory studies and an MSc in Cultural Anthropology.

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Dark Tourism and the Innocence of the Nation

Samuel Raus

This project studies the discursive practices that construct the nation as righteous and always on the right side of history while whitewashing the dark periods of the past that do not fit this narrative — what I call the “innocence of the nation” for short — using the empirical case of guided visits to a former prison in Brno, Czechia. This prison, known as Káznice served three different regimes within a fairly short timespan between 1939 and 1956 and has seen many lives extinguished inside its walls. These three regimes stand in three different positions to the contemporary national narrative — the first (Nazi) regime is portrayed as external to the nation, a foreign imposition on the national “us”. The second (immediate post-war) regime, which sentenced and executed many alleged collaborators is congruent with the national “us”, while the third (Communist) regime has been externalised outside of the national “us”, even though its henchmen were Czechs (albeit often taking orders from Moscow). The “innocence of the nation” hence refers in this case to the belief that there is only one way of being (true) “Czech”, and those committing violence are either absolved (the ethnic cleansing of German speakers is still largely seen as justified) or (in the case of Czech Communists) banished outside of the discursive boundaries of the nation. In this way, the Communist era has been ‘othered’ — the national ‘we’ now exists outside of it and in opposition to it (Holý, 1996:9–10).

The prison has recently become a site of remembrance and memory (re-)production, with guided tours taking place there on a weekly basis. My project uses participant observation during the tours and post-tour semi-structured interviews with selected participants to study how both the tour guides and the visitors conceptualise the nation deictically — by observing the usage of pronouns such as “us”, “we” or “them” — and how their interpretation of history is challenged or confirmed by their visit to the prison complex to elucidate how this “dark tourism” contributes to the perpetuation of the narrative of the “innocent nation” and externalisation of guilt outside the boundaries of the nation.

Samuel Raus: After graduating from the University of London (BA Birkbeck, MA SOAS), I got involved with the Tripitaka NGO which manages the cultural events in the Káznice complex in Brno, Czechia. I have also worked with refugees extensively, and have presented at several conferences (in Croatia, Bosnia, and Czechia) on the topic of nationalism.

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Session 4C

Experiential learning among young people during study trips to Holocaust memorial sites

Marta Salvador-Almela & Laia Encinar-Prat

Dark tourism has increasingly been examined as a field with significant educational potential (Stone, 2012). Memory spaces can play a significant educational role, especially for young people, who are key agents in the development of democratic values, including respect for human rights, tolerance, critical reflection, and peace (Light et al., 2019). In this context, education grounded in the principle of “never again” is essential for achieving these objectives. Such education extends beyond formal educational settings and includes visits to dark tourism sites, such as museums, memorials, and commemorative places. These sites become essential for conveying the past to subsequent generations and for engaging young people in history (Light et al., 2019).

Trips to Holocaust memorial sites generate experiential learning that impacts students' cognitive and emotional dimensions (Bussu et al., 2023; Romi & Lev, 2007). Thus, the objective of this research is to examine the contribution of experiential learning in historical sites to youngsters' cognitive and emotional dimensions, and to the reflections and lessons learned in relation to contemporary societal issues.

The study is based on a case study in the framework of the Manresa-Mauthausen project, which involved a study trip for high school students to different World War II historical sites with the objective of disseminating history and raising awareness of democratic values. Specifically, a 4-day trip is organised to visit Ebensee memorial, the concentration camps of Mauthausen and Gusen and Hartheim castle.

The study's methodology is qualitative, based on a semi-structured interview conducted after the study trip. 33 high school students who participated in the trip answered the interview. The interview questions aimed to collect information about different aspects of experiential learning in historical sites by youngsters, including the cognitive and emotional dimensions, as well as the reflections and lessons learnt in relation to the present. The qualitative data will be analysed through thematic analysis within the three dimensions of experiential learning. The findings will inform the design of educational and interpretive strategies tailored to memorial contexts, thereby promoting critical reflection, democratic values, and empathy among young people.

Marta Salvador-Almela holds a Doctorate in Education, Society and Quality of Life from the University of Lleida (Spain). She is the research coordinator at CETT Barcelona School of Tourism, Hospitality and Gastronomy, affiliated with the University of Barcelona. Her research interests are tourism, anthropology, culture, ethics and gender. She is a member of the TURHOGA Research Group (Tourism, Hospitality and Gastronomy Research Group) and co-editor of the *Tourism & Heritage Journal*. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0318-1025>
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Laia Encinar-Prat holds a PhD in Education from Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain). She is coordinator of competitive projects, researcher and professor of tourism research methodology at the CETT Barcelona School of Tourism, Hospitality and Gastronomy, affiliated

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Playing with violent pasts: Affective frictions and moral expectations in playful encounters with(in) histories and sites of conflict

Stefanie Steinbeck

This paper examines how playful engagements among local tourists at heritage sites associated with violent pasts generate affective frictions within the tourism encounter. Drawing on ethnographic research from the Moving Museums Through Play programme at the National Museum of Denmark, the study compares visitor responses at two Danish heritage sites: The Viking Fortress Trelleborg, a Viking ring castle, and Frøslevlejren, a former Second World War internment camp, both sites with histories related to war, violence and death. At Trelleborg, playful activities, including re-enactment of historical battles, are overall readily accepted as meaningful and enjoyable ways of encountering history. At Frøslevlejren, however, even light, non-immersive activities such as treasure hunts generate uncertainty about their appropriateness, as well as much more varied reflections on the appropriateness of playful behaviour at a site embodying trauma and pain.

These divergent responses reflect how heritage sites cultivate distinct emotional regimes (Zembylas, 2018) that prescribe what visitors feel expected to feel and how they should behave. At Trelleborg, a permissive regime accommodates imaginative and embodied play, while at Frøslevlejren, a solemn regime constrains affective expression and renders play morally suspect. Visitors do not passively absorb these cues but negotiate them in ways that produce affective frictions. As Watson (2007) argues, museums are emotionally charged spaces where visitors bring their own values, memories, and expectations. By conceptualising play(fulness) as a productive disturbance within contested heritage tourism, the paper advances an affect-centered understanding of how playful engagements shape visitor experience.

While existing research has examined difficult heritage (Logan & Reeves, 2011; Macdonald, 2015), authorised heritage discourse (Smith, 2006), and experiential or playful museum practices (Daugbjerg, 2011), the intersection between play and affective expectations in heritage tourism remains underexplored. The paper addresses this gap by demonstrating that play does not operate as a neutral interpretive tool but as an affective catalyst that can amplify, unsettle, or redirect visitors' emotional orientations toward the past. The proposed spectrum of acceptance captures this range of responses and shows how playing with(in) contested sites and histories exposes tensions between institutional strategies for engagement and visitors' culturally mediated expectations of solemnity, reverence, and narrative coherence.

Stefanie Steinbeck: Cultural anthropologist exploring how bodies, emotions, and atmospheres shape visitor engagement with the past through ethnographic and affective approaches. I work at the intersection of research and museum practice.

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Contested Narratives and Emotional Geographies at the World War II Museum in Gdańsk

Aleksandra Cieslar

The World War II Museum in Gdańsk has emerged as one of the most prominent and contested sites of memory in contemporary Europe. Since its opening in 2017, the museum's permanent exhibition has been repeatedly reworked, reflecting political struggles over how World War II should be narrated, remembered, and emotionally framed within Polish public culture. Originally curated under the direction of Paweł Machcewicz, the exhibition presented the war through a broad, transnational and civilian-centred lens, emphasising suffering, displacement, and the everyday experiences of violence. Following the intervention of the PiS-led government in 2017, elements of the exhibition were altered to foreground heroic, patriotic, and nationally specific narratives. Further revisions and counter-revisions in 2024 have reignited public debate about narrative ownership, historical authority, and the role of museums in shaping collective memory.

This paper examines the World War II Museum in Gdańsk as a site of contested heritage in which competing narrative frameworks generate distinct emotional geographies of the visitor encounter. Rather than focusing on visitor testimony or guide practices, the analysis centres on the exhibitions themselves as cultural productions that mobilise emotions such as pride, trauma, empathy, shame, and moral identification through curatorial choices, narrative structure, and symbolic emphasis. The paper asks how shifts between universalising and nationalist narratives reconfigure the affective politics of memory and how these changes transform the museum into a space of friction between scholarly interpretation, political authority, and public expectation.

By situating the Gdańsk museum within broader debates on tourism, memory, and heritage, this contribution speaks directly to questions raised by the Tourism, Memory and Heritage conference. It highlights how museums associated with war and mass violence function not only as sites of education but as emotionally charged arenas where cultural memory is continually activated, contested, and renegotiated. The case demonstrates how heritage institutions become key platforms through which societies grapple with the contradictions of past trauma, present politics, and future identity.

Aleksandra Cieslar: is a Lecturer in the Defence Studies Department at King's College London, specializing in international relations, military conflicts, and historical memory. She holds a PhD in Defence Studies from King's College London, where her research focused on Polish historical memory and policies toward Russia. Her expertise includes qualitative research methods, systematic reviews, and the intersection of politics, history, and security studies. Dr. Cieslar has extensive teaching experience, having lectured on global and regional security. She has also served as an assessor for the King's College Research and Entrepreneurship Awards and as an editor for *Ante Portas – Security Studies*.

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Remembering the imagined: exploring the *affect* of secrecy and sensationalism on the production of nuclear cultural heritage¹.

Megan Thomas

Cold War era nuclear bunkers are increasingly emerging as sites of cultural heritage. This paper explores the ways in which mapping the webbed emotional geographies and memories of apocalyptic Cold War attack simulation exercises across the materiality and interpretation at nuclear heritage sites can reveal a plurality of lived experience that remains invisible within authorised heritage discourses (AHDs). Locating alternative imaginative and embodied experiences of oppressive nuclear civil defence spaces facilitates interrogations of the function of their discursive absence. The deterministic and singular narrative propounded at these sites fundamentally upholds and reproduces nuclear deterrence logic, thus 'productive' nuclear fear (Masco, 2008), through their interpretation of space, objects, and human activity.

However, reading the management and design of nuclear cultural heritage through the lens of emotionality and affect uses an ethics of care to disrupt AHDs bolstered by the continuous manufacture of state secrecy, fear, and manipulation. Reading nuclear spaces as sites of entangled human, non-human, and more-than-human interactions reframes and invigorates the meaning-making capacity of the site. This paper uses sociotechnical histories, object biographies, and oral histories of civil defence exercises across the United Kingdom (UK) nuclear bunker network to suggest that concrete structures are not affectively insulated and defensive. Nor can they be disentangled from wider nuclear infrastructures - including the coercion and extraction of minerals and resources (as well as nuclear testing) in the Global South. This approach illuminates an entangled web of nuclear interactions, whose patterns and repeated performances have consolidated a rhetoric that continues to endanger life on earth. Its championing of a plurality of lived experience at contested nuclear sites serves to inform citizens of the entangled nature of nuclear stateship and British nuclear colonialism. It represents a clear divergence from the cultures of secrecy, denial, and censorship that tend to characterise (and sensationalise) nuclear cultural heritage. This paper is also intended to develop an understanding that nuclear secrecy is manufactured and emphasize the potentiality of heritage interpretation and embodied experience to challenge dominant logics in acts of radical meaning-making. This in turn might empower heritage public(s) to take a more critical view of their own place within violent nuclear infrastructures and as active citizens of a nuclear nation.

Meghan Thomas: I hold a BA in History, an MA in Public History and Heritage, and an MA in Archives and Records Management with a specialisation in the management of digital records. I am an ESRC CASE student funded by the NWSSDTP in partnership with English Heritage. My research interests lie at the intersection of histories of emotion and technology, critical archival studies, Cold War heritage, and the phenomenology of imagination. My doctoral project is situated within the context of Cold War culture, built atomic heritage, and unstable interpretations of 'nuclear deterrence'. Specifically attuned to Cold War visions of possible futures, my research employs a methodologically pluralist approach to illuminate the entangled and affective sociotechnical legacies of British nuclear order active at nuclear cultural heritage sites.

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Session 5A

Curating digital returns: Virtual museums and the politics of heritage restitution

Merit Zimmermann

Debates surrounding the restitution and repatriation of cultural artefacts continue to shape European museum agendas (Herman, 2021; Murphy, 2024). In response, institutions increasingly turn to practices described as “virtual repatriation,” “digital repatriation,” and “digital restitution” as a means of addressing calls for decolonization, purportedly enabling communities of origin to reconnect with displaced heritage in digital form (Picci, 2025; Mohammed, 2025; Stec & Jagielska-Burduk, 2023). However, such approaches are often critiqued as strategies that deflect legal and moral responsibility, legitimizing existing power structures under the guise of progress (Karatagli, 2025; Palombo & Yates, 2023; Roodt, 2022). Digitization practices are further criticized as top-down processes that grant source communities limited access and partial authority, contributing to “digital colonialism,” where Western institutions maintain control over classification, access, and interpretation (Hu, 2025; Rouhani, 2023; Mohammed, 2025).

This paper adopts a decolonial perspective to examine the dual role of digital technologies in reinforcing and challenging colonial heritage structures (Montgomery & Wagner, 2025). We investigate the motives, methods, and objectives behind virtual museums dedicated to looted or stolen artefacts, and their role in restitution debates. Theoretically, the study builds on “decolonial curatorship,” defined as a practice that disrupts North-to-South knowledge flows and replaces Eurocentric frameworks through dialogue and engagement with marginalized voices (Yamomo & Titus, 2024; Muñiz-Reed, 2019; Chipangura, 2020; Knudsen et al., 2022), alongside “affective curatorship” (Varutti, 2022) and “curatopia” (Chipangura, 2020).

Empirically, the paper examines three grassroots virtual museums – the Milele Museum (Rwanda/Africa), the Museum of Stolen Art (Ukraine), and the Sahab Imaginary Museum (Gaza) – that combine top-down and bottom-up curatorial impulses. Methodologically, we employ the “media go-along,” a digital ethnographic approach combining interviews and guided virtual exploration (Møller & Robards, 2019), to analyze curators’ intentions and their construction of visitor experiences, including “mediator characteristics” like interface design, textual framing, and symbolic representation (Light et al., 2018). By asking by whom, how, and for whom these virtual museums are designed, this paper sheds light on the potential of digital restitution to move beyond reproducing colonial logics toward more collaborative, community-centered heritage curation.

Merit Zimmermann: I am a PhD student at Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands. My PhD research explores how institutional, individual, and community stakeholders attach meanings and values to digital culture. Moreover, I am interested in what these meanings and values are, and what they can tell us about people’s relationship to heritage and to the digital itself. By people, I mean cultural and public sector professionals such as curators and government officials traditionally referred to as “heritage experts” as well as individuals and groups in everyday life who are generally viewed as “non-experts”.

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Weaving Memories or Softening Violence? Curatorial Strategies for Difficult Heritage in Japan's National Museum

Wang Yilin

This paper critically examines the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo's 2025 exhibition *Opening Documents, Weaving Memories* and its treatment of Japan's wartime paintings as "difficult heritage." The *senso-ga* (war record paintings), originally created as military commissioned propaganda, are recontextualized as historical documents embedded within specific visual regimes and political discourses. The exhibition investigates how generations without direct experience of war might engage with the past and positions the museum as a collaborative space for the collective production of memory. Yet its deliberately subdued publicity and restrained interpretive language suggest an institutional strategy of "balanced handling," maintaining a careful distance between historical accountability and contemporary public discourse.

Drawing on Aleida Assmann's cultural memory theory and Walter Benjamin's critique of the aestheticization of politics, this paper analyzes how aesthetic strategies shape ethical engagement with historical trauma. Through observation and textual analysis of curatorial materials, it explores how language, spatial design, and emotional cues mediate the experience and transmission of war memory. MOMAT's aestheticized and neutral framing of wartime propaganda functions as a tactic to ease moral discomfort and reduce institutional vulnerability. While this approach fulfills the museum's educational mission without inciting controversy, its intentional depoliticization including the absence of explicit references to Japan's wartime aggression risks diminishing ethical resonance. Following Benjamin, the paper argues that overly formal or neutral presentations can obscure the violence and trauma inherent in these images. Special attention is given to the section "Views of Asia / Views from Asia," which exposes the imperial gaze embedded in depictions of occupied territories. Although now labeled as historical documents, these works offer limited acknowledgment of Asian victims or Japan's role as aggressor, revealing the challenges national museums face in exhibiting difficult heritage. The paper concludes by considering how such exhibitions might be interpreted outside Japan, particularly in formerly colonized regions and whether curatorial strategies should adapt to transnational memory contexts. As both a national museum and tourist destination, MOMAT must navigate Japan's unresolved dual identity as victim and perpetrator. By cautiously curating and aesthetically tempering wartime memory, the museum mitigates political risks while inviting scrutiny over collective responsibility and the politics of representation.

Wang Yilin: is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Global Arts, section curation. Her research focuses on Japanese wartime visual culture, memory politics, and the exhibition of "difficult heritage" in postwar and contemporary Japan. She examines how national museums negotiate narratives of trauma, imperialism, and collective memory, and how curatorial strategies shape public engagement with historical violence. In her curatorial practice, she is especially interested in collection based exhibitions and the possibilities of reframing historical artworks within new interpretive and transnational memory contexts. She holds a BA in Art History (Visual Culture Research) from the China Academy of Art and an MA in Curating and Collections from the University of the Arts London.

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Heroic Narratives and the Treatment of Slavery Memory at the National (MUPANAH) museum in Haiti.

Stanley Louis

The Musée du Panthéon National Haïtien (Mupanah) occupies a central position in the construction of Haiti's national memory, celebrating the figures and events associated with the Haitian revolution and the emergence of the first Black republic. While slavery constitutes the historical foundation of this revolutionary rupture, its presence within the museum's exhibition narrative remains fragmented. This paper examines how the memory of slavery is represented, curated and mediated at the most important museum of the country, focusing on the ambiguities that emerge between heroic national storytelling and the representation of enslavement as a traumatic historic experience. Based on a qualitative analysis of the permanent exhibition, including Carlo Célius, Marc Joseph and Jean Ronald Augustin work, the study explores how slavery is largely subsumed within narratives of resistance, emancipation, and national glory.

The paper argues that this selective framing shapes visitor's understanding of the past while raising broader questions about the politics of memory in post-slavery societies and the role of national museums in the patrimonialization of difficult heritage. By situating the Haitian museum (Mupanah) within debates on heritage tourism and memorialization, this contribution highlights how national museums negotiate uncomfortable histories for local audiences and cultural tourists in the Caribbean context.

Stanley Louis: is a PhD Candidate in Heritage (Études patrimoniales), focusing on the Memory of slavery and its mediation/representation within museums and exhibition spaces. His research examines the representation of slavery in Caribbean museums through a comparative perspective between France and the United Kingdom. His work explores issues of curatorial narratives, public engagement and the politics of memories in post-slavery societies. Alongside his academic research, he develops audiovisual and documentary projects addressing museums, visual culture, and the silences surrounding historical representations.

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How the Nation Learns to Feel: Emotional Governance and the Cultural Production of the 1947 Partition Heritage in India

Ananya

This paper examines how the memory of the 1947 Partition of India is being actively scripted into an emotionally legible heritage landscape through institutional intent and visitor reception. The Partition Museum(2017) which occupies Amritsar's colonial era Town Hall, exemplifies how a heritage site becomes a lieu de mémoire. Studying this in reference to the Delhi Partition Museum (2023), it shows how curators, heritage bodies, government institutions and tourism networks script the Partition narrative to trigger specific emotions, and how visitors and the broader public , interpret and reproduce those affective responses in their own accounts.

Drawing on Pierre Nora's concept of lieux de mémoire and Jan and Aleida Assmann's theory of cultural memory, this study treats Partition museums as sites where personal histories are reorganised into culturally produced narratives of the past. Laurajane Smith's critique of authorised heritage discourse is used to identify the institutional and cultural agents who determine which Partition stories are selected, stabilised, and circulated as collective history. Sara Ahmed's theory of affective economies helps explain this process where objects "which circulate accumulate affective value", becoming "sticky" sites of emotion. This provides the central analytic framework, for affect is structured within these spaces, guiding visitors toward empathy, reconciliation, and reflective nationalism while often displacing sustained engagement with colonial responsibility.

Ananya is a doctoral researcher in the Department of English, University of Delhi. Her research interests span postcolonial and gender theory, mobility and border studies, with a focus on how movement and displacement shape narrative form and historical consciousness. Her PhD examines women's travel writing in the twenty-first century, exploring questions of identity, empowerment, and transnational mobility. Her past work includes teaching at the University of Delhi, serving as a subject matter expert with the Ministry of Education's assessment wing, PARAKH, and consulting with think tanks and publishing houses.

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Old houses of Lima's city centre: the embodiment of past fantasies

Aldo Accinelli Obando

The city centre of Lima is recognised for its colonial and early republican architecture, like houses or churches, that showcase the city as the result of European foundation. Most of the old domestic architecture has a different use, it is no longer housing. Among these new uses is tourism: the houses are visited and a curated vision of the previous and/or current owners is presented. The tours given in such places emphasize the level of wealth that the inhabitants had and their roles played in important historical events of Peru, like the independence, given a romanticised idea of wealthy populations in Peru's past. The paper focuses on the discourse presented in three of these houses: Fernandini, an early twentieth-century house; Torre-Tagle, a late XVIII century building; de Aliaga, the oldest house in the city. Each one of them is managed by a different group: Fernandini is done by volunteers; Torre-Tagle by the state and de Aliaga by the family that built the house. Each one of these houses has had several restorations and renovations, which seek to give a sanitised view of the past. Important omissions about the roles and events in which the historical owners were involved are highlighted to emphasize how the choices given look to show a highly patriotic vision of these families, whereas the historic evidence at best points to a mixed legacy. Finally, the information presented in these tours is linked to general problems of Peruvian society that the elite of Lima benefit from.

Aldo Accinelli Obando is a Peruvian archaeologist that currently is doing his PhD in the University of Amsterdam. His project is analysing the coloniality of domestic spaces in Lima, Peru, specifically the ones of the elite of the city. He did his undergraduate studies at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú and his Research Master in Heritage, Memory and Archaeology at the University of Amsterdam. He is the editor-in-chief of Kleos, Amsterdam

Bulletin of Ancient Studies and Archaeology. He has been the coordinator of the Site Museum Julio C. Tello of Paracas in Peru, co-director of the Nasca Highlands Archaeological Research Project and has several years of experience working in both the private and public sector for heritage management, as well as archaeological research. He also works as a tour guide in the city centre of Amsterdam to survive the cost of living in the Netherlands.

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Session 5A

From Prison to Garden-Museum: Emotional Geographies of Trauma Tourism in Post-Revolutionary Tehran

Zohreh Soltani

This paper examines the complex emotional geographies that emerge through the transformation of Tehran's Qasr Prison into a garden-museum, analyzing how this conversion illuminates broader tensions in Iran's engagement with sites of political trauma. Through an examination of the 2012 museumification of this former Pahlavi-era prison, I explore how the curatorial strategies employed attempt to reconcile multiple, often conflicting emotional registers - from the documentation of state violence to the creation of leisure spaces.

Drawing on extensive archival research and site analysis, I demonstrate how the Qasr Garden-Museum project represents a sophisticated evolution in Iran's approach to curating difficult heritage. Unlike earlier prison museums like Ebrat, which focused primarily on displaying regime brutality, Qasr employs a more nuanced spatial strategy that creates distinct emotional zones - from contemplative garden spaces to confrontational exhibits of torture chambers. This zoning allows multiple modes of engagement, from casual visitors seeking recreation to those pursuing deeper historical understanding.

The paper pays particular attention to the role of tour guides (often former political prisoners) in mediating visitors' emotional experiences, and how their personal narratives interact with the museum's official framing. I argue that these guides function as crucial emotional intermediaries, helping visitors navigate between past trauma and present meaning-making. Significantly, this research reveals how the garden-museum format itself becomes a mechanism for "domesticating trauma" - making politically charged spaces more palatable for contemporary audiences while still preserving their memorial function. However, this domestication process is increasingly complicated by digital media, as current prison protests and testimonies circulating on social media create new frames of reference for viewing historical carceral spaces. This case study contributes to broader discussions about the emotional dynamics of dark tourism and heritage sites, while specifically illuminating how post-revolutionary Iran negotiates its relationship to politically traumatic spaces through cultural production and spatial practice.

Zohreh Soltani is an Assistant Professor of global modern and contemporary architecture and urbanism in the Department of Art History and the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. Trained as an architect and architectural historian, her research and teaching focus on modern and contemporary architecture and urbanism in West Asia and North Africa, with particular emphasis on how memory, radical political shifts, trauma, and war impact the built environment. Her interdisciplinary research integrates built, visual, and textual media across architecture, urbanism, and art history, bringing non-Western architectural traditions and underrepresented narratives into scholarly discourse. Her scholarly contributions have been recognized through numerous fellowships, including the Diversity Scholar Fellowship at Ithaca College (2018-2019) and the Grabar Travel Grant from the Historians of Islamic Art Association (2020). She has served on the Advisory Board of the Historians of Islamic Art Association (2023-

25), as an editor for H-Islamart, and is currently the Quarterly Conversations Co-Organizer for the Society of Architectural Historians' Architectural Studies Affiliate Group.

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The Umayyad Mosque in Damascus: A historical landmark of emotional and geographical significance, standing between heritage and contest.

Rida DIEB

This research aims to analyze the symbolic values of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, a UNESCO World Heritage Site of immense emotional and geographical significance. It focuses on the role of tourism in reviving the sensory and emotional experience of the mosque, and the competing narratives that shape it. Drawing on the theories of Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora on collective memory, the research analyzes the traditional tourist route that passes through the prayer hall, the shrine of the Prophet Yahya, the site of the head of Hussein, and the baptismal font, through the sensory and spiritual values of the site.

The study argues that the material accumulation of civilizations at this site—from the Temple of Haddad to the Temple of Jupiter, then the Byzantine Church of St. John the Baptist, and culminating in the present mosque—continuously reproduces a complex “emotional geography” through the interaction of competing religious and historical memories, giving rise to narratives that often diverge from one another, revealing a tension between official narratives and collective memory. Methodologically, this study surpasses textual analysis, adopting a multifaceted approach that seeks a broader understanding and integrates various types of evidence. This evidence includes local community narratives and collective memory, compared with testimonies from local and international visitors, historical accounts, media analyses, and academic perspectives. This approach highlights the crucial role of the tour in reviving the collective local identity of the Umayyad Mosque, offering original research on its touristic role as a sophisticated archive of historical and emotional identity.

The significance of this research lies in enhancing the visitor's (emotional) experience by integrating the tourist aspect with the spiritual and emotional dimension linked to collective narratives and memories that markedly diverge from the official discourse, which often highlights the magnificence of Islam in architecture and politics.

Dr. Rida Dieb is an associate professor of planning and environmental sciences at Damascus university and a researcher specialising in the conservation and preservation of heritage monuments. She is currently concentrating on incorporating sustainability ideas into the historical framework of the Old City of Damascus. Dr. Dieb investigates the connection between collective memory and sustainable urban conservation using novel approaches such as urban form analysis and cognitive memory mapping, a theme that aligns seamlessly with the conference's focus. Dr. Dieb possesses more than 25 years of expertise, is a member of the Joint Scientific Committee of Heritage Experts in the Arab World, and had held the position of Dean of the Faculty of Architecture at Damascus University in the past.

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Hagia Sophia in Istanbul: whose heritage?

Mariëtte Verhoeven

On July 10, 2020 Turkish president Erdoğan issued a decree ordering Hagia Sophia in Istanbul to be opened for Muslim prayers. Since 1934, the world-famous building had served as a museum showcasing both its history as a Christian cathedral (6th to 15th century) as well as a mosque (from 1453 onwards). Before the first Friday prayer was held on 24 July 2020 the building's 6th-century marble floor was covered with thousands of square metres of turquoise carpet, and the Christian mosaics were hidden behind veils.

The decision to again take the building into use as a mosque generated dismay and protest among Christians around the world and among academic and conservation communities. UNESCO expressed concern and sent a mission to investigate the impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, designated as a World Heritage site since 1985. After it was put into use as a mosque, the building was made freely accessible to tourists outside prayer times, if properly dressed, but the gallery with its monumental Christian mosaics remained closed. In January 2024, this gallery reopened as a museum with a separate entrance, and the ground floor is now only accessible to Muslim worshippers.

In the nearly 1,500 years of its existence, Hagia Sophia has been claimed and appropriated by various groups who have assigned different meanings to the building. In my contribution, I want to explore which narratives have been created over the centuries and which memories have been erased or preserved. Further I aim to investigate what the current situation of separate functions and visitor groups, i.e. the combination of a mosque for worshippers and a museum for tourists, means for the experiences of the various visitors to Hagia Sophia. Finally, I would like to ask what the current situation means for Hagia Sophia as a heritage site. Whose heritage is it, and who can determine what past has to be preserved here?

Mariëtte Verhoeven (PhD 2010) is assistant professor in Ancient and Medieval History and researcher at the Radboud Institute for Culture and History at Radboud University. Verhoeven specializes in the field of late antique and Byzantine cultural and architectural history. Her research focuses on the cultural history and transformation of heritage in Istanbul, from late antiquity to modern times. She also investigates the use of digital techniques to increase public awareness of and engagement with cultural heritage.

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Performing Byzantine Heritage: Tourists as Contemporary Pilgrims

Caroline Pereira Martins

The intersection of tourist mobilities, performing mobilities in Byzantine sites, and orientalism represents a dynamic and complex field of study that clarifies the contemporary experiences and representations of Byzantine heritage. Tourist mobilities encompass the movement of individuals, both local and international, who visit heritage sites for various reasons such as leisure, education, or specially spiritual enrichment. It is crucial to understand the motivations,

behaviors, and experiences of tourists for an effective heritage management and the preservation of cultural significance, particularly in contexts where religious, cultural, and historical narratives overlap. The aim of this paper is to investigate how tourist mobilities intersect with performing mobilities in Byzantine sites, showing how it is possible to delve deeper into the performative aspects of these visits and their influence on the perception of Byzantine heritage, highlighting not only how visitors navigate and interpret these spaces, but also how such practices contribute to the creation and reinforcement of contemporary understandings of Byzantine culture. The discussion also seeks to contribute to the broader debate on how contemporary mobilities reshape cultural meanings and how heritage studies can integrate more inclusive, critical, and cross-cultural perspectives that respond to the complexities of religious tourism and cultural identity in the contemporary world.

Caroline Pereira Martins is a doctoral researcher in Tourism and Leisure at Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Spain). Her project investigates how contemporary visitors engage with Byzantine heritage across Europe, with a particular focus on Venice and Thessaloniki. Combining cultural geography, critical heritage studies and mobility studies, her research explores how emotions, embodied practices, and contested memories shape visitor experiences in spaces where religious, migratory and imperial histories intersect. She has conducted extensive fieldwork with Orthodox, Armenian, Russian and Greek communities, as well as in major heritage institutions across the Veneto region. Her broader academic interests include sensory tourism, memory politics, affective encounters in heritage spaces, and the reframing of marginalized or under-recognized cultural narratives in contemporary tourism contexts.

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Witch Persecution in Roermond: Remembering Women Accused of Witchcraft.

Ilja Simons

In this presentation, I will present an early-stage, exploratory case study from the start of a research project on storytelling, place meaning, and contested heritage. The case focuses on contemporary engagements with the history of early modern witch persecutions in Roermond (Limburg), a city associated with one of the largest witch trials in the Netherlands.

During the trials of 1613–1614, at least sixty-four people, predominantly women, were accused, tortured, and executed. Although traces of this history are embedded in the urban landscape through physical sites and place names such as Galgenberg and Rattentoren, the witch persecutions long remained absent from local heritage narratives and everyday historical awareness.

Recently, however, the history of witch persecutions has gained renewed visibility through guided city tours, a dedicated exhibition (Hexpositie), participatory narrative walks, and plans for a national witch monument in 2026. Together, these initiatives point to a process of rediscovery and re-interpretation of a violent and gendered past.

Rather than evaluating these initiatives or presenting empirical findings, this presentation raises several open, exploratory questions: how and why is the history of witch persecutions being

made visible now, whose voices become central in these storytelling practices, and why does this narrative resonate in the present? Particular attention is given to the prominence of women's experiences and to implicit connections between historical persecution and contemporary concerns about gendered violence and injustice.

Empirically, the presentation draws on early field engagement, including participation in guided tours, exhibition visits, and narrative walking practices. These encounters are approached auto-ethnographically as a methodological entry point, used to identify emerging narrative patterns, affective moments, and tensions between official heritage framings and more experiential, emotionally driven interpretations.

The presentation does not yet offer answers to the questions it raises. Its contribution lies in clarifying the significance of the renewed visibility of witch persecution heritage and in showing how tourism and storytelling practices function as spaces where difficult pasts, alternative voices, and contemporary meanings intersect.

Ilja Simons (PhD, Tilburg University) is a senior lecturer and researcher at Breda University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. With a background in cultural sociology and qualitative research, her work focuses on storytelling, narratives, identities, and communities within tourism, heritage, and cultural event contexts. She studies how community, place, and meaning are constructed and performed through collective practices, and works with qualitative and art-based research methods to attend to less visible perspectives.

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Session 5C

Buying Into Empire: Making and Unmaking Imperial Memory in Literature and Commercial Space

Kyle Thomson

This paper examines the tension among different portrayals of Portugal's imperial legacy and how prominently it should figure in the contemporary Portuguese imaginary. I analyze a brief 'imperial memoryscape boom' in late 1990s Lisbon—articulated most notably through the Centro Colombo shopping mall and the Expo '98 district—alongside Patrícia Lino's *The Portuguese Explorer's Survival Kit in the Anticolonial World* (*O Kit de Sobrevivência do Descobridor Português no Mundo Anticolonial*) and António Lobo Antunes' *The Return of the Caravels*. These literary and spatial sites represent divergent mnemonic engagements with Portugal's imperial past: the literary texts operate through explicit critique and repudiation, while the commercial and touristic spaces work more ambivalently, inviting affective experience rather than presenting arguments.

Theoretically, the paper draws on Ann Laura Stoler's concept of colonial aphasia to understand how colonial histories remain materially present yet prove difficult to articulate, their effects experienced but their violence often left unspoken. Michael Rothberg's framework of multidirectional memory allows me to read the literary and spatial sites as different memory discourses in dialogue and tension with each other. Ann Rigney's work on mediation and remediation frames literary parody, commercial architecture, and themed urban redevelopment as distinct media through which imperial memory is reactivated and affectively reorganized.

Lino's and Antunes' texts remediate imperial symbols through parody and satire, stripping them of authority and rendering them unusable as national myth. Lino's direct address interpellates the reader, transforming them into an agent of decolonial practice. By contrast, Centro Colombo and the Expo district remediate maritime imagery within celebratory, navigable environments that mute colonial violence. While the Expo district remains tied to tourism, Centro Colombo functions as commercial space—yet both are monumental and connected to the same memoryscape, revealing how imperial memory extends beyond heritage sites into everyday urban life.

Overall, the paper contributes to understanding the frictions emerging when tourism intersects with cultural memory politics over contested pasts.

Dr. Kyle Thomson: is an Assistant Professor of Spanish at Queens University of Charlotte, where he teaches courses in Spanish, Italian, and the general education program. His research interests span comparative literature, cultural studies, and memory studies, with a focus on shifting conceptions of identity in postcolonial Southern Europe. His work examines how literature aspires to reach beyond the text and have consequences for space and reality. He is currently developing an article on Lucía Asué Mbomío Rubio's *Hija del camino*, exploring how travel narratives mediate migration, memory, and identity in contemporary Spanish literature.

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Location in Creation: On the Role and Significance of Place in the Creative Process of Contemporary Dutch Novelists

Stijn Reijnders

This presentation focuses on the role and significance of place in the creative process of contemporary novelists. Previous studies have shown that there is a symbiotic relationship between literature and place. Many novelists draw inspiration from existing places to create new stories, using familiar cities or landscapes to create a certain atmosphere. The use of factual, geographical details (street names, travel times, descriptions of landscapes) is a frequently used stylistic device. At the same time, the converse is also true: fiction is an essential part of place identities. Stories make a fundamental contribution to how a city, region or country is experienced and have the potential to transform anonymous places into meaningful “thick places” highlighting “imaginative heritage” enjoyed by millions of tourists.

Currently, little is known about how this relationship between literature and place is established in practice. How do literary authors draw inspiration from existing locations? Which places are chosen as the background for a story and how do these places influence the creative process? How are stories about pain and loss related to ‘real’ memories hidden in the landscapes? And finally, how do these authors evaluate the use of their fiction in situ, e.g. in the case of literary tourism?

Based on in-depth interviews with sixteen Dutch writers, this article shows how the role of place has three facets: existing places and landscapes are an important source of inspiration during the preparation of a novel, serve as a spatial framework for the actual writing process and function after publication as a material afterlife for the story and its characters. Taken together, these themes demonstrate how place plays a crucial role in the creative process and - in theoretical terms - how the narrative articulation of literature at a spatial level can be interpreted as a bundling and intensification of place identities. As such, this article offers a new perspective on the synergy between literature and landscape, examined from the perspective of novelists and with reference to their ‘modus operandi’.

Stijn Reijnders is Professor in Cultural Heritage and Vice-Dean of Research (Erasmus University Rotterdam). His research focuses on the intersection of media, culture and tourism. He is interested in the topic of media tourism: the phenomenon of people travelling to places because of an association with popular movies, TV series, books or other forms of popular culture. Recently he co-edited the books *Locating Imagination in Popular Culture* (Routledge 2021) and *Worlds of Imagination: A Global Perspective on Media, Tourism and Power* (Routledge 2024). Both books reflect on the complex interrelation between fiction, place and belonging in today’s mediatized society.

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Journey as Knowledge-Building: Embodied Travel, Emotional Encounters, and Ole Bouman's Design Practice in China

Yanru Dong

This paper examines the cycling project Journey to the East by Dutch historian, architect, and curator Ole Bouman, exploring how slow cycling, as an embodied tourism practice, generates emotional experiences while traversing controversial historical sites and war memorials, and how these experiences are transformed into the production mechanisms of cultural memory and spatial design knowledge.

Starting from Amsterdam, Bouman spent 156 days traversing 18 countries and 16 language regions, visiting over 500 historical sites and over 100 war memorials along the Silk Road. These heritage spaces bear multiple and competing memories of colonial expansion, imperial conflict, war trauma, and ideological clashes. This paper views cycling as a form of “slow encounter” distinct from mass tourism, analyzing how it amplifies tourists’ emotional experiences in controversial heritage sites through physical fatigue, spatial exposure, and environmental perception, transforming memory from merely an object of observation into a process of being perceived and endured.

This paper focuses on how Bouman transformed from a “tourist” into a non-traditional “guided intermediary.” By systematically translating personal travel experiences and emotional memories into design courses at Tongji University, exhibitions at the Being Art Museum in Pudong, and public talks and blog posts at TEDx Adventure, Bouman has constructed a narrative framework about architecture, sustainability, and peace among academia, cultural institutions, and the public. In this process, the emotions evoked by controversial heritage are reorganized, moralized, and embedded in spatial planning and design education.

This paper argues that Journey to the East demonstrates a tourism-based model of cultural production: transforming multi-dimensional and tense historical memories into future-oriented design discourse through embodied experiences and emotional engagement.

Yanru Dong: I hold an MA in Art History from the University of St Andrews, and my research focuses on visual culture in Chinese and British art, with particular attention to labour, gender, and identity in post-socialist China and neoliberal, post-industrial Britain. I have previously studied at Istituto Marangoni, Chelsea College of Arts, the Royal College of Art, Donghua University and University of York, and my research has been presented at several academic conferences, including the British Art History Association Forum, East China Normal University Symposium, China Academy of Art Art Institutions Conference, and Nanjing University workshops.

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Belle Époque Afterlives: Affective Politics of Colonial Memory on Urban Walking Tours in Egypt

Mohamed Elsayed

Tourism in Egypt is increasingly oriented toward locally curated walking tours that move beyond canonical monuments and mainstream heritage itineraries. Although these initiatives are proliferating, the practices through which they (re)activate contested cultural memories remain underexamined. This paper analyses three influential tour initiatives in Ismailia, Port Said, and Alexandria, conceptualising the guided walk as a charged public-history performance. These cities are selected for two reasons. First, with the partial exception of Alexandria, they remain peripheral to tourist geographies compared to Cairo, Luxor, and Aswan, enabling an inquiry into heritage-making beyond the national “must-see” circuit. Second, each city offers a paradigmatic case of entanglement with colonial capitalism and colonial urbanism. Ismailia and Port Said were developed as company towns by the Suez Canal Company and operated as quasi-autonomous territories until nationalisation. Alexandria, shaped by mid-nineteenth-century European settlement linked to the cotton economy, became a major site of foreign presence until the political ruptures surrounding 1952. Across these settings, social and spatial separation structured everyday life, while competing imaginaries continued to valorise cosmopolitanism and magnificence.

Building on the conference focus on emotional geographies and frictions, the paper examines how tours choreograph tensions between architectural admiration and recognition of racialised hierarchies; between local pride and the discomfort of exclusionary pasts; and between celebratory nostalgia—often framed as a “Belle Époque” and “melting pot”—and critical readings of segregation, inequality, and dispossession. In contexts where alternative narratives circulate weakly and formal historical education is limited, tour operators can become key mediators of collective memory for local and international audiences. Methodologically, the study combines semi-structured interviews with guides and participants with participant observation and digital ethnography across tour platforms. Analytically, it attends not only to what is said but to how memory is produced through embodied and sensory mechanisms: route design, stopping points, storytelling cadence, gesture and gaze, humour and silence, photo rituals, and walking itself as a pedagogical medium. The paper contributes to critical heritage studies and tourism research by showing how guided tours function as affective infrastructures of public history that shape place identity, curate remembrance, and make colonial pasts feelable in everyday urban space.

Mohamed Elsayed: a history researcher and educator within the arts and culture domain, joined various projects in Egypt with a primary objective of decentralizing and democratizing access to knowledge production in the social sciences and humanities. He actively participates in initiatives focused on humanities education and public history, particularly in Nile Delta and the Suez Canal Zone, demonstrating a commitment to fostering a comprehensive understanding of Egypt's rich historical and cultural legacy. Mohamed obtained an MA in History from the prestigious School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. His research pursuits primarily delve into labor and urban history as well as memory studies, illuminating lesser-explored facets of Egypt's historical narrative. Beyond his scholarly endeavors, Mohamed is deeply immersed in the realm of educational tourism, capitalizing on his profound interest in history and culture to curate immersive experiences for travelers.

Through Semsemia Tours, he endeavors to facilitate opportunities for visitors to delve into diverse historical landscapes and engage with its vibrant cultural milieu in Egypt's provincial towns.

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Session 6A

“Yes, we use the words, our ancestors”: Activating cultural memory through emotional co-creation at a slavery heritage site

Débora Póvoa & Emmanuel Akwasi Adu-Ampong

The role of emotions in heritage tourism has garnered increasing academic attention in the past decade. Scholars have analyzed visitors’ emotional experiences in museums and heritage sites, highlighting how their affective responses mediate their engagement with the past (see e.g., Smith & Campbell, 2016). At the same time, the emotional labor involved in tour guiding has been acknowledged, as well as the role of tourism and heritage professionals in managing visitors’ emotions (see e.g., Buzova et al., 2023; Laing & Frost, 2019; Walcott-Wilson, 2020). This paper contributes to this growing body of literature by discussing emotions in the context of slavery heritage tourism. Specifically, we analyze guided tours at Elmina Castle, Ghana—one of the major trading outposts of the transatlantic slave trade, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site visited by tens of thousands of tourists yearly.

Drawing on in-depth interviews with twelve tourism professionals working at Elmina Castle, we identify a dynamic of emotional co-creation between tour guides and visitors. On the one hand, tour guides adopt various strategies to activate and regulate tourists’ emotions. These include, amongst others, physically performing emotionally charged scenes, changing the intonation of their voice to create a solemn atmosphere, and evoking identification and empathy with the enslaved through the use of words such as ‘our ancestors’ and ‘our people’. On the other, the types of emotions that tour guides elicit through storytelling and performance highly depend on their perception of tourists’ profiles and expectations. Moreover, tour guides are also emotionally affected by the constant retelling of the painful history of Elmina Castle and by the tourists’ emotional reactions, which might seep into their own emotional state.

By identifying specific strategies of emotional activation employed by tour guides and demonstrating emotional co-creation dynamics during guided tours, we offer empirical evidence of how emotions permeate our interpretation of difficult pasts and contested histories. Ultimately, we argue that emotions can have a transformative role in slavery heritage tourism and that, more generally, cultural memories are deeply grounded in embodied emotional experiences.

Débora Póvoa is a Postdoctoral Researcher in the Cultural Geography Group at Wageningen University & Research. Her research focuses on issues of power, representation and identity that emerge in media, tourism and heritage practices, particularly in postcolonial contexts. She obtained her PhD (cum laude) in 2023, with the dissertation *Film tourism in Brazil: Local perspectives on media, power and place*. Débora is also a board member of the Erasmus Knowledge Centre for Film, Heritage and Tourism (FIHETO), film review editor of the *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* (ERLACS), selection committee member of the International Science Film Festival Nijmegen (InScience) and film programmer for the non-profit organizations Africadelic and Caribbean Creativity.

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Dr. Emmanuel Akwasi Adu-Ampong is an Associate Professor in Cultural Geography at Wageningen University & Research, The Netherlands. He is an Editor-in-Chief of the international *Tourism Planning and Development Journal* and a Senior Research Associate at the School of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

He works at the intersection of cultural geography, critical tourism studies, critical heritage studies and cultural memory studies. He is currently Principal Investigator for the €1.5 million European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant project: *Frictions of Space: the generative tensions of slavery and colonial heritage tourism (2025 – 2030)*. He was previously Principal Investigator for the Dutch National Research Council (NWO) funded Veni project: *The Embodied Absence of the Past: Slavery, Heritage and Tourism in the Ghana-Suriname-Netherlands Triangle (2021 – 2024)*.

Colonial Memories in Dispute: Tensions between Lusotropicalism and Colonial Heritage Tourism in Angola, Brazil, and Portugal

Helton Luiz Gonçalves Damas

This article aims to analyze the possible tensions between the representations produced by Lusotropicalism and those mobilized by tour guides operating in colonial heritage sites, with a focus on Angola, Brazil, and Portugal. Lusotropicalism is a concept developed by sociologist Gilberto Freyre to characterize a phenomenon resulting from Portuguese colonization, which occurred primarily in Brazil, but also in Asia, the Atlantic islands, and, to a certain extent, Africa. Within this theoretical perspective, the colonial past is commonly portrayed in a nostalgic manner, the achievements of the Portuguese Empire are glorified, and Portugal is represented as a distinctive country for having developed a supposedly more “benign” form of slavery than other empires. This narrative ultimately suggests the formation of racially mixed societies that were allegedly free from racial conflict. By contrast, a growing number of tourism-related initiatives seek to activate memories of the colonial past in a critical way, with the aim of challenging hegemonic narratives about slavery while simultaneously voicing the perspectives and aspirations of historically marginalized groups. **Methodology:** This study adopts a qualitative approach based on bibliographic research and discourse analysis from a cultural studies perspective. The analysis focuses on: (1) the foundational works of Gilberto Freyre and their critical reinterpretations; (2) studies on memory, heritage, and tourism; and (3) promotional materials produced by tour guides in Angola, Brazil, and Portugal. **Expected Results and Discussion:** The study seeks to elucidate the role of tourism as a site of memory contestation. In this context, tourism in colonial heritage sites is not merely a space in which Lusotropicalism is challenged, but an active agent that continually reconfigures the colonial past in contemporary contexts.

Helton Luiz Gonçalves Damas: A PhD candidate in Cultural Geography at Wageningen University. Holds a PhD in Sociology and a Master’s degree in Science, Technology, and Society

from the Federal University of São Carlos. Bachelor's degree in Tourism from São Paulo State University.

Geographies of rupture

Larissa Platz

This paper assembles a constellation of (autoethnographic) vignettes produced by scholars across different disciplines and geographic locations, all linked by the shared experience of being tourists at historically laden and contested sites of slavery and colonial violence.

Vignettes are analytically productive because they condense both a doing of fieldwork and a mode of writing, operating simultaneously as method and representation. In this context, the paper reads together Vincent Woodard's encounter with Somerset Place plantation in the southern United States and Saidiya Hartman's account of Elmina Castle in Ghana, alongside other fragments drawn from scholarship on slavery, colonialism and their ongoing afterlives.

Attending to what unfolds in these fleeting scenes—awkward silences, refusals to follow the script, affective overload, laughter, and a denial of one's own position as tourist—the paper asks how dominant narratives are (re)produced, ruptured, disfigured, and called into question. In these cracks, we glimpse not only the author's embodied response but also the fracturing of scripted roles and affective alignments among tour guides, fellow visitors, and the institutional mnemonic regimes.

Larissa Platz holds a Master's degree in Curatorial Studies from Zurich University of the Arts and is a PhD candidate in Cultural Geography at Wageningen University & Research. Her research examines spatial frictions at sites of slavery and colonial heritage within the Brazil–Portugal–Angola triangle. She is particularly interested in the politics of representation, media and ritual practices as forms of cultural invention. Working across disciplinary and linguistic boundaries, she writes in English, speaks in German, and dreams in Portuguese.

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Inside the Wound: Colonial Heritage as Ritual

Tamarah Kerr de Haan

This research proposes to approach colonial heritage sites as memoryscapes activated through the practice of ritual. Colonial heritage tours are approached as rituals of mourning without closure, and simultaneously as rituals of becoming without repair. Mourning is itself a ritual, not just in the loose everyday sense, but in a very precise and theoretical one. Ritual is the form through which loss becomes socially legible: it structures how grief is expressed, shared, contained, and transmitted across time. Without ritual, mourning has little to no collective grammar. If we consider mourning rituals to do at least three things, namely: naming a loss, marking a transition (life, death, presence, memory, person, ancestor), and reintegrating the living into social time, colonial heritage rituals systematically fail at the third.

In the colonial heritage tourism nexus, this research examines tours as ritualized practices of mourning and becoming. Similar to mourning rituals, these tours stage loss, generate collective affect, and, in certain instances, promise transformation. In these tours, what is named includes enslavement, displacement, violence, resistance, and what is staged unfolds through (but is not limited to), remembrance, silence, affective intensity, performances of moral responsibility, and forms of ethical witnessing and bodily passage across spatiotemporalities. Yet reintegration lingers in a state of disruption, as the violence that is mourned is not confined to the past, and life has not simply continued. The community has not been restored, nor has “the world” that was destroyed.

been replaced with a just one. The violence that is commemorated is structurally unresolved: the worlds that were undone through colonialism cannot be restored, and the temporal rupture they enact cannot be closed. As such, these rituals are suspended and produce a form of perpetual mourning without reintegration, where remembrance and grief circulate without social repair.

Central to this analysis is the uneven distribution of ritual participation. Tourists, often positioned through specific socio-economic and (post)colonial relations, are invited to perform acts of remembrance and ethical witnessing, while local communities living in and around these sites inhabit the material afterlives of colonialism without necessarily being addressed as ritual subjects. The site itself does not only represent loss; it is itself a product of ontological rupture, holding the tragedies of broken genealogies, disrupted spatial belonging, and fractured temporal continuity. The site is therefore not merely a place we mourn at, but what remains after the world has already been undone. In this sense, the ritual is taking place inside the wound.

These rituals distribute who is allowed to remember, who is invited to mourn, and who is rendered structurally excluded... even while living inside the ruins. By questioning who is recognized as a historical subject within world-historical reality, this research proposes to experimentally reconfigure the ritual to include local inhabitants as co-participants.

In so doing, the tourist can no longer be central, nor can the site be reduced to the symbolic. Instead of a ritual of remembrance, it becomes a ritual of relational reconfiguration that can hold violence without aestheticizing it. The colonial heritage tour as ritual keeps the wound open without turning it into spectacle. Therefore, the project asks how colonial memory might shift from symbolic commemoration toward relational and spatial transformation where ritual, mourning, and heritage are not treated as mere culture, emotion, or representation, but instead as technologies of world-making under conditions of historical collapse.

Methodologically, the research develops an experimental and (auto)ethnographic approach to colonial heritage research, combining embodied fieldwork, walking methods, and the design of alternative heritage tours that invite local inhabitants into the ritual field.

Tamarah Kerr de Haan is a PhD candidate in Cultural Geography at Wageningen University in the FRICTIONS project, where she explores the encounters found, created, and imagined in colonial heritage sites and cultural memory across Ghana, Suriname, Jamaica, and the Netherlands. With a background in Sociology (BA) at the University of Amsterdam and Gender Studies (RMA) at Utrecht University, where she focused on postcolonial, decolonial, and cultural memory studies, she thinks through the generative and uneasy entanglements of

slavery, colonial heritage, and the spaces where memory, place, and relation collide. Her work engages decolonial aesthetics and aesthesis, approaching artistic practices as sites of critical inquiry and experimentation through which colonial logics are unsettled and space is opened for sensing, imagining, and thinking otherwise.

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Presentation Panels

Tuesday 2 June 2026 Impulse Building at Wageningen University & Research

09.30 – 10.45 Parallel Sessions

Session 1A <i>NCounter Room</i> Chair: Aaron Yankholmes	Session 1B <i>Speakers Corner</i> Chair: Claudio Minca	Session 1C <i>Innovation Room</i> Chair: Meghann Ormond
<p>Uma Kothari: Adventures on a postcolonial road trip: narrating the past and confronting colonial imaginaries</p> <p>Rose de Vrieze-McBean: Walking Backwards into the Future: Diaspora Memory, Guided Heritage, and the Emotional Geographies of Sligoville</p> <p>Susanne Seymour: Contested cotton heritage in the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, Derbyshire, UK</p> <p>Mark Rhodes: 581 Places to Visit: National Museums Scotland Publishing and the Absent Presence of Heritage Museum Tourism Geographies</p>	<p>J.J. Zhang: Sounding Peace: Emotional Geographies of Memory, Music, and Post-Conflict Tourism in Kinmen</p> <p>Ruizhe Hong: Unruly Sonic Encounters of Colonial Heritage Tourism: Guided Tours and Lived Coexistence on Kulangsu, China.</p> <p>Annaclaudia Martini: Contested post-disaster heritage: looking at the affects of resonance and theatricality in post-2011 Japan.</p> <p>Enrico Nicosia, Giuseppe Rombo & Mattia Spanò: Memory, Reconstruction and Tourism in Post-Earthquake Gibellina</p>	<p>Gerlov van Engelenhoven & Remco Vermeulen: Shared history, different emotions: Controversial colonial legacies in Dutch and Indonesian public space</p> <p>Rud Yoneko Tunggadewi: Walking Tours as Placemaking Strategy: Constructing Spatial Narratives in Jeron Beteng Yogyakarta</p> <p>Nelo Schmalen: Affect in the discourse surrounding colonial exploitation and the planned National Slavery Museum in Amsterdam</p> <p>Arlenea Herdimansyah: Curating Affective Memory Landscape: Commemorating the G30S Victims in Museum Spaces</p>

11.15 – 12.30 Parallel Sessions

Session 2A <i>Innovation Room</i> Chair: Scott Hancock	Session 2B <i>NCounter Room</i> Chair: Gerlov van Engelenhoven	Session 2C <i>Reflection Room</i> Chair: Alena Pfoser
<p>Jill Ahrens & Meghann Ormond: Negotiating Migration Narratives through Tours Co-Created by People with Migration Backgrounds: Scripting Migrantour Utrecht</p> <p>Bernardo de La Vega Vinolo, et al: Community Heritage and the Reshaping of Memories, Mobilities and Meanings</p>	<p>Alexandra Mallah: When the Street Becomes a Site of Memory: Emotions, Narration and Contested Heritage in Femicide Memorials in Paris.</p> <p>Caroline Creton & Julie Pasquer-Jeanne: Emotions at the heart of the visitor experience in exhibitions on the</p>	<p>Jozef Lopuch: The Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum as a “site” during a tourist visit</p> <p>Jonathan Marrow: Tourist Guidebooks to the Unspeakable: Holocaust Travel Writing, 1945-2000</p>

<p>Karine Bigand: Challenging existing perceptions and building shared narratives of the past: reactivating the United Irishmen heritage in Belfast City Centre</p> <p>Claudio Minca & Anna Khorlachenkov: “Sevilla tuvo una niña y le pusieron Triana, la bautizaron en el río los gitanos de la cava”: representation processes and spatialization practices of “Roma’s cultural heritage” in the Triana neighbourhood</p>	<p>Atlantic slave trade and colonial slavery</p> <p>Daria Myerscough: Resurrecting a Monument: Commercial Redevelopment of the Hamburg Flak Tower as a Catalyst for (Re)activating Remembrance.</p> <p>Diana Miryong Natermann: Framing Empire, Guiding Memory: Emotional Geographies of German Colonial Photography in African Visual Heritage</p>	<p>Tetiana Nahirniak, et al: Negotiating World War II Memory in Finland: Immigrant Emotions at Contested Heritage Sites in Wartime</p> <p>Chris Groenveld: “Never Again. Five Stars”: Playful Tools for analysing TripAdvisor Reviews of Dachau Memorial</p>
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15.00 – 16.15 Parallel Sessions

<p>Session 3A <i>Speakers Corner</i> Chair: Zohreh Soltani</p>	<p>Session 3B <i>Innovation Room</i> Chair: Gina Khamis</p>	<p>Session 3C <i>Reflection Room</i> Chair: Diana Miryong Natermann</p>
<p>Mercedes Cao: Listening for Enslaved Voices: Tourism and Interpreting Slavery on Virginia Plantations</p> <p>Scott Hancock: Black & White Public Memory in the United States and the Gettysburg Address</p> <p>Annemarie de Wildt & Lianne Leonora: From Mapping to Confrontation: The Curaçao Slavery Heritage Guide as an Emotional Tour(ism) Encounter</p> <p>Sirano Zalman: Tourism and the slavery past on Plantation Resort Frederiksdorp, Suriname</p>	<p>Dorrie Wilson: Somebody Didn't Tell Somebody Something: Colonial Heritage, Erasure and Black Indigeneity in Belgium</p> <p>Jean Illi: “Memory is made of stone” Brussels (De)Colonial Matter, the case of Emile Storms.</p> <p>Licia Calvi, Moniek Hover & Jörn Fricke: Tour(ism) encounters with Jewish heritage: story-based guided tours in the Jewish neighbourhood of Antwerp</p> <p>Jasper Snoeys: Bunkers along the Belgian coast as representations of historical, heritage and memory landscapes: a promising path for research on the experiences of heritage?</p>	<p>Feifei Ji: From Ancestral Homeland to Heritage Stage: The Negotiation and Remaking of Hakka Collective Memory in Zhuji Alley, Shaoguan</p> <p>Jiaqi Liang: Affective space beyond the visit: Local visitors’ post-visit reverberations at a contested heritage site in Nanjing, China</p> <p>Yang Yang: Topographies of Emotions and Muslim Minorities in China’s Contested Silk Road-based Heritage</p> <p>Miao Yu: Embodied Narratives in Dark Tourism: The Memory Performance of Docents at the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall</p>

Wednesday 3 June 2026 Impulse Building at Wageningen University & Research

09.30 – 10.45 Parallel Sessions

Session 4A <i>NCounter Room</i> Chair: Stijn Reijnders	Session 4B <i>Speakers Corner</i> Chair: Larissa Platz	Session 4C <i>Reflection Room</i> Chair: Mariëtte Verhoeven
<p>Malaika Magadza & Sian Newsome-Magadza: Heroes' Acre Zimbabwe: a site of contested significance to the nation and to its visitors</p> <p>Muchazondida Mkono: An emotional geography of transplant tourism in developing economies</p> <p>Athi Ndita & Hilary Kennedy Nji Bama: Avitourism as Cultural Memory Practice: IsiXhosa Bird Narratives, Heritage, and Emotional Geographies in Willowvale, South Africa</p> <p>Samuel Ramapuram: Emotional Geographies, Guided Tours, and the (Re)making of Heritage in Aapravasi Ghat, Mauritius: Paths of Remembrance</p>	<p>Alena Pfoser: Conceptualising tourism encounters as memory diplomacy</p> <p>Gina Khamis: Moving with Grief: Tourism, Loss, and the Reconfiguration of Atmosphere, Place, and Time</p> <p>Anne Veere Hoogbergen: Remembering Water: Tourism as Affective Memory-Making on Marken</p> <p>Samuel Raus: Dark Tourism and the Innocence of the Nation</p>	<p>Marta Salvador-Almela & Laia Encinar-Prat: Experiential learning among young people during study trips to Holocaust memorial sites</p> <p>Stefanie Steinbeck: Playing with violent pasts: Affective frictions and moral expectations in playful encounters with(in) histories and sites of conflict</p> <p>Aleksandra Cieslar: Contested Narratives and Emotional Geographies at the World War II Museum in Gdańsk</p> <p>Megan Thomas: Remembering the imagined: exploring the affect of secrecy and sensationalism on the production of nuclear cultural heritage'</p>

11.20 – 12.40 Parallel Sessions

Session 5A <i>NCounter Room</i> Chair: Muchazondida Mkono	Session 5B <i>Speakers Corner</i> Chair: Jasper Snoeys	Session 5C <i>Reflection Room</i> Chair: Débora Póvoa
<p>Merit Zimmermann: Curating digital returns: Virtual museums and the politics of heritage restitution</p> <p>Yilin Wang: Weaving Memories or Softening Violence? — Curatorial Strategies for Difficult Heritage in Japan's National Museum.</p>	<p>Zohreh Soltani: From Prison to Garden-Museum: Emotional Geographies of Trauma Tourism in Post Revolutionary Tehran</p> <p>Rida Dieb: The Umayyad Mosque in Damascus: A historical landmark of emotional and geographical</p>	<p>Kyle Thomson: Buying Into Empire: Making and Unmaking Imperial Memory in Literature and Commercial Space</p> <p>Stijn Reijnders: Location in Creation: On the Role and Significance of Place in the Creative Process of Contemporary Dutch Novelists</p>

<p>Stanley Louis: Heroic Narratives and the Treatment of Slavery Memory at the National (MUPANAH) museum in Haiti.</p> <p>Ananya: How the Nation Learns to Feel: Emotional Governance and the Cultural Production of the 1947 Partition Heritage in India</p> <p>Aldo Accinelli Obando: Old houses of Lima’s city centre: the embodiment of past fantasies</p>	<p>significance, standing between heritage and contest.</p> <p>Mariëtte Verhoeven: Hagia Sophia in Istanbul: whose heritage?</p> <p>Caroline Martins: Performing Byzantine Heritage: Tourists as Contemporary Pilgrims</p> <p>Ilja Simons: Witch Persecution in Roermond: Remembering Women Accused of Witchcraft.</p>	<p>Yanru Dong: Journey as Knowledge-Building: Embodied Travel, Emotional Encounters, and Ole Bouman’s Design Practice in China</p> <p>Mohamed Yehia Elsayed: “Belle Époque Afterlives: Affective Politics of Colonial Memory on Urban Walking Tours in Egypt”</p>
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15.30 – 16.45 Parallel Sessions

<p>Session 6A <i>Speakers Corner</i> Chair: Emmanuel Adu-Ampong</p>
<p>Débora Póvoa & Emmanuel Adu-Ampong: “Yes, we use the words, our ancestors”: Activating cultural memory through emotional co-creation at a slavery heritage site</p> <p>Helton Damas: Colonial Memories in Dispute: Tensions between Lusotropicalism and Colonial Heritage Tourism in Angola, Brazil, and Portugal</p> <p>Larissa Platz: Geographies of rupture</p> <p>Tamarah de Haan: Inside the Wound: Colonial Heritage as Ritual</p>

16.45 – 17.40 Under the Bigi Bon Plenary Session: Open mic shared reflections



Tourism, memory and heritage

*emotional geographies of cultural production,
memory-making and commemoration*

1 - 3 June 2026

Amsterdam & Wageningen
The Netherlands

