

BULLETIN N. 4 – APRIL 2024

Speme

Questioning Traumatic Heritage: Spaces of Memory in Europe, Argentina, Colombia

What Speme is

SPEME - QUESTIONING TRAUMATIC HERITAGE: SPACES OF MEMORY IN EUROPE, ARGENTINA, COLOMBIA

Speme is a four-year RISE 2017 EU-funded project for research, innovation and staff exchange between academic researchers and professionals working in the field of spaces of memory, museums and sites of commemoration in Italy, the Netherlands, Argentina and Colombia. The project's ultimate goal is to create new ways and forms for the transmission of traumatic memories **of the past in the present** through which contemporary social and political issues can be further interrogated.

You can visit our website to find out who we are, and which institutions are involved in the project: www.speme.eu



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- Fieldwork
- Publication
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Near the end of the journey

The Speme project is coming to an end. After nearly six years of work and exchanges (in-presence and online during Covid-19), the international research group is preparing to draw conclusions and disseminate its results. This bulletin, the last in a series of documents reporting on the group's progress and activities, presents some of the latest activities conducted by SPEME researchers, with three of the main results soon to be available to all. In particular, the two scientific publications (a book in English that will be published with Amsterdam University Press and a book in Spanish that will be published with Universidad de Buenos Aires Press) and the final conference that will see international scholars dialoguing with members of the SPEME group on topics related to spaces of memory, art, and human rights in the European and Latin American context.

The workshop with the primary school

Each year, the Speme group was engaged in training workshops involving artists and participants of different ages. In the last year, researchers and heritage professionals were involved, led by Professors Viviana Gravano and Patrizia Violi, in an activity on mediating the difficult and traumatic past to primary school children. Thanks to the collaboration of a primary school in Bologna and professor Gianluca Gabrielli, the Speme group worked on what methods can be used to convey a story of violence without explicitly telling it. In particular, by conducting the workshop in a school in Bologna that has among its pupils many second-generation Italian children, the group discussed which methods are the most effective to talk 'metaphorically' about suffering without exposing children to violent images or narratives that might upset them. In the case of our workshop, to discuss the deportation of the Jews, the sense of construction and the diaspora they suffered, we did not show the children the terrible images produced by the Nazis, but worked on a story 'The Eye of the Wolf' by Daniel Pennac, which tells the story of a wolf forced into a cage and an African child forced to leave his country.



image taken from the workshop with the primary school in Bologna



image taken from the workshop with the primary school in Bologna

Then the teacher worked with the children on the theme of resistance and liberation, and the children made a large drawing in which they decided to represent liberation from their perspective, drawing themselves as partisans and ambassadors of freedom

The fieldwork continues

Amsterdam - May and November 2023

During the secondment organised in May 2023, SPEME members benefited from activities organised by UvA and H401. At H401, the group participated to lectures, art interventions, including for example “A Microscopic Burial” by Guston Sondin-Kung and “Pasajes VI” by Sebastián Díaz Morales.

Moreover, the collaboration between the UvA and the association “Arti et Amicitiae” produced the exhibition “Encountering Absence” in the context of which the researchers were also able to dialogue with the artists and students involved. The fieldwork included a visit to the Verzetsmuseum and the traumatic memory site of Camp Amersfoort.

During the secondment in November 2023, the researchers were involved in new activities to conclude the experience in the Netherlands in view of the end of the project. The fieldwork took place mainly at the Verzetsmuseum, the Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam and the Nationaal Monument in Kamp Vught, where the SPEME members were able to analyse forms of heritagization of traumatic memories.



Visiting these spaces allowed the researchers to construct new perspectives that could make sense of what the communities still perceive as a very difficult past.

Bologna - June 2023

The secondment in Bologna took place in June. The group attended conferences, lectures and participated to fieldwork. The lectures tackled the themes of violent and conflict memories, for example those of Holocaust (with Valentina Pisanty), of the coup d'état carried out in Argentina and “imagined” in Italy (with Francesco Mazzucchelli) or that of the Russian-Ukrainian war (with Svitlana Slipchenko and Alla-Petrenko Lysac). Among the main activities there is the aforementioned workshop “Transmitting memory to (very) young generations. An experiment with 4th grade primary school Italian children” at the Federzoni elementary school (with Patrizia Violi).

Moreover, the SPEME group went to Rome for fieldwork. The day in Rome was divided into two parts: the morning was dedicated to a visit to the Fosse Ardeatine, where the researchers were also able to confront the guide, a direct witness of the tragedy recounted there. In the afternoon, the group headed to EUR, the famous fascist quarter. In addition to visiting the monumental space and analysing the fascist language, the researchers visited the Museum of Civilisations (MuCiv), and in particular, an exhibition opened that very day entitled “Museum of Opacity”. The visit was led by one of the curators, Rosa Anna di Lella, who talked about the way the Italian colonial past and the ethnographic collection were handled.

meeting with the artist Guston Sondin-
Kung
at H401

Amsterdam, May 2023



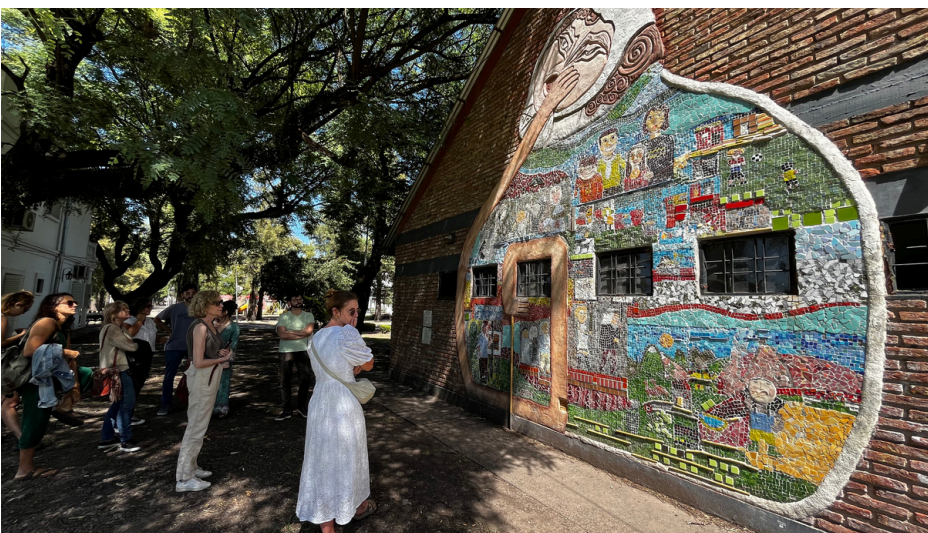
visit at the MUCIV (Museo delle Civiltà) in Rome

June 2023

Argentina - April 2024

In March 2024, the Speme group conducted its last fieldwork in Buenos Aires. During a seminar entitled “Rights, youth and disputes over memory”, organised by the group at the University of Buenos Aires, the researchers had the opportunity to dialogue with museum curators, educators and scholars on the forms of memory applicable today in a context in which right-wing and extreme right-wing policies tend to downplay the significance of the traumatic past. In particular, this month, visits and research were conducted at:

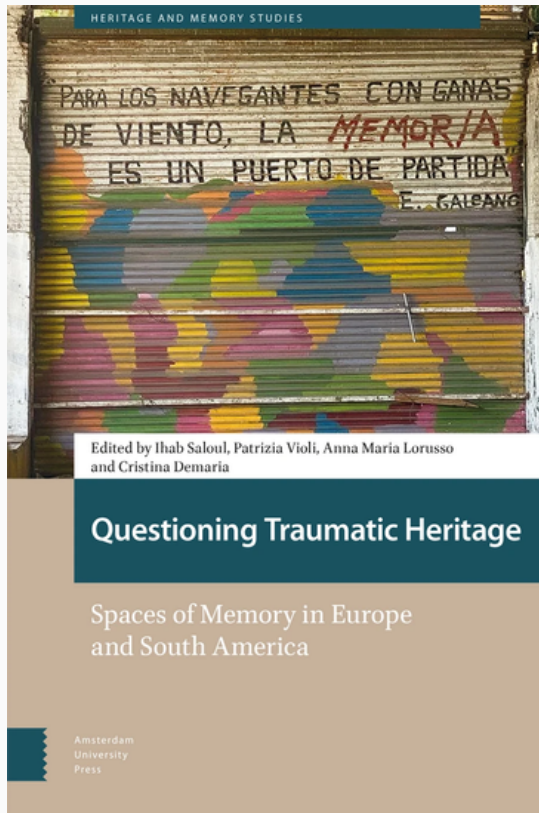
- “Mansión Seré” Former Clandestine Centre
- Parque de la memoria
- "Virrey Cevallos" Former Clandestine Centre
- Comisión Provincial por la Memoria (CPM)
- "Orletti" Former Clandestine Center
- "Club Atlético" Former Clandestine Center
- ESMA Museum and Site of Memory
- "Olimpo" Former Clandestine Center



fieldwork at the Masiòn Seré

March 2024

Publications



Questioning Traumatic Heritage Spaces of Memory in Europe and South America (Amsterdam University Press)

edited by Ihab Saloul, Patrizia Violi, Anna Maria Lorusso, Cristina Demaria

This book takes as its object of investigation an array of traumatic heritage sites and spaces of memory, including museums, former detention camps, and sites of commemoration, in Europe, Argentina, and Colombia, to investigate how various traumatic pasts can be preserved and transmitted through space, and which kind of actions might be taken both to improve knowledge of the past and to serve as an opening to a discussion of current social issues.



Arte y Memoria Abordajes múltiples en la elaboración de experiencias difíciles (Facultad de Filosofía y Letras Universidad de Buenos Aires)

edited by Lizel Tornay, Victoria Alvarez, Fabricio Laino Sanchis and Mariana Paganini

The texts in this book refer to traumatic memories that need to be recounted. Survivors and members of the 'second generation' undertake this laborious work with difficult memories. Gender tensions and dynamics run through narratives laboriously threaded around complex experiences. The bodies, supports of performative practices, acquire a particular significance in a country traversed by the absence of desaparecidos.

Towards the final conference

All the dialogues, research, fieldwork and reflections conducted over these years will be condensed in a final conference to be held in Bologna on 11 and 12 April 2024 at the “Umberto Eco” International Centre for Humanistic Studies. On this occasion, international scholars (to name but a few, Andreas Huyussen and Elizabeth Jelin) will dialogue with the Speme team on new strategies of transmission of traumatic memory through memory spaces, art and new politics of memory.



Spaces of Memory: Questioning Traumatic Heritage



11 - 12th April 2024

Centro internazionale di studi
umanistici Umberto Eco,
via Marsala 26, Bologna

Scientific secretary: Tiziano Iannello

[Click here](#) to attend the
conference via Teams



11TH APRIL

h. 9.30: **Opening** with Riccardo Brizzi
(Director of Dept. of Arts), Anna Maria
Lorusso and Patrizia Violi

h. 10-13: **Models of Memory**
- Robert Gordon, *The Holocaust in
Italian Culture, 2010-2024*
- Wolfgang Ernst, *Techno Trauma. A
sub-discursive Reading of Phonic
Heritage*

- Valentina Pisanty, *From Victim to
Survivor*
- Amit Pinchevski, *Retransmitted
Wounds: Further Thoughts on Media
and Trauma (on-line)*
Discussants: Francesco Mazzucchelli
and Andrea Borsari

h. 15-18: **Memory and Human Rights**
- Marcello Flores, *Memory of Trauma as
Victimization and Criminalization*
- Elizabeth Jelin, *Struggles for Memory as
Disputes about Power. Old and New
Challenges*
- Alejandra Naftal, *Un recorrido de
memoria*
Discussants: Cristina Demaria and
Daniele Salerno

h. 19:00 at the **Auditorium Dams-Lab:**
Studio Azzurro, *Tangibile memoria.
Origine e aspetti dei nostri testimoni*

[Piazzetta P. P. Pasolini, 5/b]

12TH APRIL

9.30-12.30: **Arts and memory**
- Andreas Huyssen, *Two Modes of
Memory Art Activism*
- Andrea Pinotti, *Nonuments.
Memoranda and their Paradoxes*
- Erika Diettes, *From Rio Abajo to
Oratorio. Images created and guarded
from the threshold*
Discussants: Mario Panico and Lars
Ebert

h. 14:00 at the **Biblioteca Universitaria di
Bologna (Bub), Aula Magna:**
Visit to Erika Diettes' work Relicuarios
[Via Zamboni 33]

15:30-18:00: **Spaces of memory**
- Philippe Prost, *Memory Architecture*
- Vincenzo Latina, *Environmental
Recovery of the Quarry between Punta
Sottile and Cala Francese, Lampedusa.
From the Rock to the Sky*
- Isabella Pezzini and Patrizia Violi,
*Stumbles of Memory. Stolpersteine and
Urban Space*
Discussants: Giovanni Leoni and
Marzia Luppi

18:00-19:00: **Conclusions**
Neyla Pardo, Lizel Tornay, Ihab Saloul
and Anna Maria Lorusso