

# Heritage Contact Zone

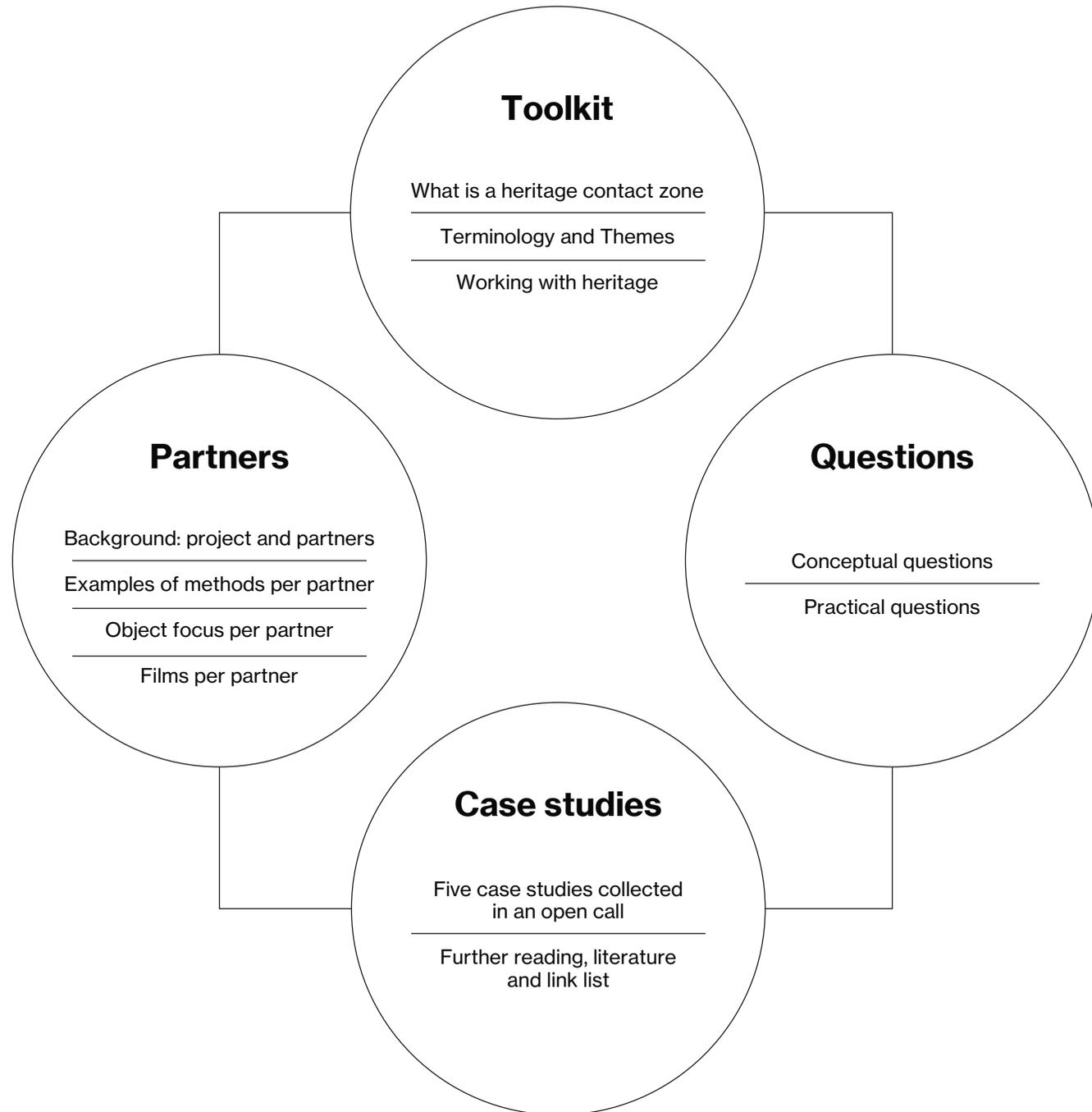


2018  
EUROPEAN YEAR  
OF CULTURAL  
HERITAGE  
[#EuropeForCulture](#)

# Toolkit

Project Heritage Contact  
Zone 2018-2020

# Heritage Contact Zone Toolkit



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1.

# Intro- ducing the toolkit



The HCZ Toolkit offers a repository of resources that can be used by practitioners and academics alike who **work with contested heritage and creative practices**. It brings together the findings of the project partners' activities and reference points that they have collected.

This Toolkit is designed for practitioners who work with difficult heritage. One might argue that all heritage is 'difficult' to one degree or another, but some sites, objects and practices are particularly contentious, or sometimes just particularly contested. Conflict can be useful, bringing issues out into the open, and this Toolkit is designed to help you make the most out of difficult situations. The Toolkit **helps practitioners use heritage as a space for dialogue**, for encounters to further more multi-vocal and creative narratives that can help **develop more inclusive collective memories through culture**.

It draws on the experience of the HCZ consortium, and borrows from some of the existing best practices out there.

# What is a Heritage Contact Zone?

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The approach of the HCZ combines the notion of conflict being necessary for creativity with the notion that conflict must be facilitated in order to be secure. The skill to get passionate without getting angry, to have a good argument that doesn't become personal, is a critical life skill that this project addresses in all its activities and for all target groups. Adam Grant describes in *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World* (New York, 2017) that we are living in a time when voices that might offend are silenced and that politics, religion and race have become untouchable topics in many social circles. His study shows the need to embrace more than ever the value of disagreement, and that challenging an opinion can be a sign of respect and care for someone. But this skill, to have a civil and constructive argument, needs to be learned. **Instead of trying to prevent arguments HCZ therefore wants to model courteous conflict in spaces that facilitate healthy disagreement.**

The psychologist Robert Albert argues that creativity tends to flourish in environments that are tense but secure. In such a space **participants need a facilitator to learn how to argue as if they are right, but listen as if they are wrong**, to make the most respectful interpretation

of the other person's perspective, and to **acknowledge where you agree with your critics and what you've learned from them**. One may call these facilitated spaces a conflict, or better, a 'contact zone'. We borrow these terms from Nora Sternfeld's essay "Belonging to the Contact Zone" (London, 2017). Sternfeld herself refers to James Clifford (*Routes, Travel and Translation*, Cambridge MA 1997), Mary L. Pratt (*Arts of the Contact Zone*, New York 1991) and Judith Butler (*Notes towards a performative Theory of Assembly*, Cambridge MA 2015). In these perspectives **contact zones are social spaces in which diverse social and cultural positions come into contact and have to coexist – more or less conflictually – and be negotiated**. Drawing on the creative potential of conflict sketched above and encouraged by the work of Pascal Gielen (*Aesthetic Justice. Intersecting Artistic and Moral Perspectives*, Amsterdam 2015) and Claire Bishop (*Participation*, London 2006) **HCZ gives artists a central role in its efforts to create and facilitate Heritage Contact Zones as spaces of encounter and creativity**. Artists have proven to be particularly able to facilitate such secure environments that use conflict towards creativity (cf. a.o. Nato Thompson, *Living as Form*, New York 2012).

# Working with Objects

Relating memories and memory work to the banal, everyday object has a long tradition. Major artistic movements of the 20th century put a special emphasis on the everyday object. The theoretical base for a number of contemporary experiments has been drawn from human and social sciences that focus since the 1980s on material culture's impact on human biographies, social relations and the construction of memory and historical narratives.

While postmodern theory has constantly challenged the constitution of dominant narratives, more **recent advances around material culture studies have attempted to activate new ways of thinking about the object as a crystallization of individual experiences, memories and of the relationships between humans and their material environment.**

Through concepts such as the *agentivity* of things (Alfred Gell) or the power of things as *faitiches* (Bruno Latour), the humanities and social sciences focus on the circulation of objects (object biographies) and their changing symbolic status due to institutional and individual processes of social, economic, cultural and political appropriation and instrumentalization and also the more personal values entrusted to objects by their owners (e.g. Bonnot and Miller). The consequences of this 'material turn' reach beyond the scientific circle into the public discussion on the monopolies of speech and the persistent unilateral interpretations and representations of history in the public sphere. You may think of a museum's conception of history or ethnocentric anthropology and ethnology and their need to reconsider them in the light of the multiplicity of lived realities and by including the voices of minorities, etc.

From the second half of the **20th century artists broadly introduced everyday material culture into their work and questioned the institutional frame of high- and low culture and of how habitually cultural value has been identified.** Some artists became collectors, "chiffonniers", "Spurenleser" or even "archeologists" such as Christian Boltanski, Anne et Patrick Poirier or more recently Danh Vo. The artistic experiments of Daniel Spoerri and Marie-Louise von Plessens "Sentimental Museum" (1977) caricatured the presentational forms of national history museum by replacing secular relics of national heroes successively by banal, everyday objects – often of humble material qualities - that did not refer to official narratives of la *Grande histoire* but to the everyday experiences and micro histories linked to biographies of average citizens. Other exemplary approaches such as Harald Szeemanns "Harald Szeemann. Grossvater: Ein Pionier wie wir" dedicated to the biography of his grandfather and notably the artistic interventions of Group Material[i] show the efforts to incorporate everyday material culture in order to undermine dominant discursive structures while developing a participatory action that sought to give a strengthened visibility to "minoritarian" points of view on the history of political and social developments[ii].

This shift in the status of the artistic and the historical or ethnographic object / artefact and its exemplary function within an official historiography (that usually focused on major events and a limited set of dominating protagonists, towards a microscopic history of individually lived experiences) is largely reflected in the main discussions of the pedagogy of history since the 1960s. **The revaluation of everyday and oral history underlined the conception of history as an evolving and fragile construction based on lived experience, including the stories and viewpoints of citizens** (including minorities or marginalised groups) that were formerly neglected in official narratives. These concepts were brought to light in museographic developments such as the American Neighbourhood Museums or the French Eco Museums and are equally present in rather recent transformations of museums, such as those dedicated to migration which focus on individual biographies and appeal to collectively accessible quotidian experiences, allowing the visitors to become active contributors in the processes of meaning making and value assignment. They rely on a potential for strong empathy to overcome the distance of the viewer and the other and see reality as a plurality of histories, regimes of values and imaginations. The fragmented presentation of individual objects as well as an emphasis on their material composition and singular appearance, marked by the traces of time and use, contribute to the creation of a place of contemplation or even a reflexive and individualized consumption of cultural objects that the viewers discover, select and enoble with their own eyes and by the associations they bring to them.

## FURTHER READING

APPADURAI, Arjun (1986)  
« Introduction. Commodities and the Politics of Value », dans idem, *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Londres/New York, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 3-63

BAL, Mieke (1992)  
« Telling, Showing, Showing off », dans *Critical Inquiry* 18/3, 1992, p. 556-594

BONNOT, Thierry (2014) *L'Attachement aux choses*, Paris, CNRS Éditions

CAPLAN, Anne (2015)  
*Sentimentale Urbanität. Die gestalterische Produktion von Heimat*, Bielefeld, transcript, 2017

Gell, Alfred (1998) *Art and Agency: an Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon.

MILLER, Daniel (2008) *The Comfort of Things*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2008

# Themes

Throughout the HCZ project, the partners have discussed, and constructively disagreed, over which themes might be useful. In our own working practices, and in our own languages, **we find themes imperfect and limited ways of grouping together difficult heritages.** We therefore offer five word clouds that help users of the Toolkit to find areas they are interested in, but with the caveat that **these are open categories, constantly open to reinterpretation and resignification and significant overlap.** To this end we also invite users - in the online version of this Toolkit - to tag sections in ways relevant to their own work:

## **Contested Spaces of Memory**

CIVIC SPACE (and institutions)  
GENTRIFICATION  
MONUMENTS

## **Political views that impact collective memory**

NATIONALISM  
REVISIONISM

## **Historic background of memory formation**

(POST) COMMUNISM  
COLONIALISM(S)

## **Forms of Heritage**

SOCIAL HERITAGE/Identities  
RELIGIOUS HERITAGE/Identities

## **Transversal themes**

ABUSE  
EXPLOITATION  
TOTALITARIANISM

# Terminology

The HCZ project members are a heterogenous group, with different backgrounds and specialisms. In this Toolkit **we have tried to avoid jargon where possible, as even within our consortium we make varied uses of terms.** Nevertheless, some key terms are worth noting:

- Audience, participants
- Community, target group, stakeholders
- Artists, heritage workers, creative producers, mediators, facilitator, moderators

Whenever we use one of them, recall that we use them interchangeably, so that where one of the partners writing one of these texts has used 'audience', another might have used 'participants' (and so on).

2.

# Partners and their work



- How can we work with difficult heritage and find inspiring new ways to use it to engage contemporary audiences?

- How should we work with complex human stories related to collective memory and put them in a historical context?

- How do we involve new audiences in more inclusive collective memory work?

These questions are the basis of the Heritage Contact Zone project and all its activities. They are the reason we have produced this Toolkit.

# The Heritage Contact Zone project

The HCZ works with contested heritage. The consortium of organizations from Germany, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium and Romania present a sample of neglected or contested heritages, tangible and intangible: a forgotten Synagogue, the memory of the Romanian Revolution, Bauhaus and the German diaspora, Holocaust memory, colonial memory in The Netherlands, Italy and beyond. The first phase of the project has investigated **how these heritages can serve as a space of encounter and creativity** by developing participatory workshop formats and five local exhibitions. In all these settings **artists have worked with citizens on the relationship between personal and collective memory. How are our own stories compatible with the varied groups who form our societies?** How can we overcome the divide between those who are 'in' and those who are 'out'? The experiences of HCZ collected in this toolkit focus on ethical questions, matters of methodology and examples of challenging practice. The partner organisations have tested the toolkit and actively work with it in their daily practice.

The Heritage Contact Zone (HCZ) recognizes that **European History is as much a history of violence as it is a history of shared cultural accomplishment:** the violence of wars, colonisation, totalitarian and imperial regimes, religious violence, economic violence leading to social injustice, racial violence and generally the suppression of 'others'. Based on the work of Aleida Assmann and others, the project partners believe that **only by recognition of all aspects of history - including violence, and by actively engaging with those citizens who still suffer exclusion as a consequence of this history being marginalised in mainstream heritage representations - will European societies be able to move forward** towards more togetherness and an enhanced feeling of belonging for all. Cultural mediators and artists can play a key role by opening up current heritage structures as 'contact zones' towards more inclusive narratives.

HCZ is the collective project of a consortium of small and medium-sized heritage organisations that work in collaboration with an academic partner and a European network.

All partners are respected players in the field and represent cultural realms that are complementary and highly relevant in terms of the current conflicts dividing Europe.

**HCZ implemented a community-driven series of events in five partner countries that showcased a new European heritage built by objects and stories that represent neglected and contested European heritage,** such as the history of slavery, totalitarianism, colonial history or intra-European wars. These objects were presented in five local exhibitions, curated in a participatory way by artists trained for that purpose. The HCZ website brings all five exhibitions together. The project itself is a legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. The project partners have also looked at other existing examples of using heritage spaces for a dialogue about neglected aspects of the European past, and have **developed this toolkit for small and medium sized cultural heritage organisations to implement community-based curating to facilitate new, more inclusive narratives** and heritage activities for all Europeans.

# About the partners

## ● H401

is a private foundation located in Amsterdam in the Herengracht building of late artist Gisèle d'Ailly. Previously known as Castrum Peregrini, H401 is a place where research, art and dialogue come together to investigate the human condition with all its contradictions. The central question is how we as a society, organizations and individuals with complex pasts want to deal with the present and the future. H401 works in collaboration with local and international partner institutions, with artists, thinkers, scholars and scientists. Academic and artistic research goes hand in hand with performative and participatory research, with residences, exhibitions, events, think tanks and publications.

## ● Culture Action Europe (CAE)

is a major European network of cultural organisations, artists, activists, academics and policy-makers. Our mission is to put culture at the heart of public debate and decision-making by raising awareness about the contribution of culture to the development of sustainable and inclusive societies. CAE aims at enhancing cooperation and exchange, engagement and dialogue, between various players across arts and policy sectors.

CAE is the only cross-sectoral network representing all sub-sectors in culture: from performing arts, literature, visual arts, design and cross-arts initiatives to community centres and more through over 140 members from 28 countries. Culture Action Europe explores trends in European cultural policy and creates knowledge. We connect stories, ideas and actions from local to regional to European and offer an international platform for collaboration.

## ● Goethe-Institut

is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach. The Goethe-Institut promotes knowledge of the German language abroad and fosters international cultural cooperation. It conveys a comprehensive image of Germany by providing information about the cultural, social and political life of the German nation. The cultural and educational programs of the Goethe-Institut encourage intercultural dialogue and enable cultural involvement. They strengthen the development of structures in civil society and foster worldwide mobility.

With its network of Goethe-Instituts, Goethe Centers, cultural societies, reading rooms and exam and language learning centers, the Goethe-Institut has been the first point of contact for many with Germany for over sixty years. Its long-lasting partnerships with leading institutions and individuals in over ninety countries create enduring trust in Germany. The Goethe-Institut is a partner for all who actively engage with Germany and its culture, working independently and without political ties.

## ● European University Institute

is a unique international centre for doctoral and postdoctoral studies and research, situated in the hills overlooking Florence. Since its founding in 1972 by the six original members of the then European Communities, the EUI has earned a reputation as a leading international academic institution with a European focus. The Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies' mission is to "contribute to research on the major issues facing contemporary European society, including

questions associated with the construction of Europe. ... It shall favour comparative and interdisciplinary activities." It is therefore interested in testing academic concepts in real life situations and contributing to instruments that impact societies, goals that are at the heart of the HCZ project.

## ● Human Platform

unites professional associations and individuals working in the field of culture, education and social care. Human Platform (HP) is dedicated to representing and protecting professional values, critical thinking and freedom of speech. It also aims at improving quality of life and fostering social solidarity. These goals are typically implemented through projects of its member organizations. In many cases, HP facilitates grassroots civic initiatives and fosters connections among civil movements and individuals. Among them, the Internet-Tax protests, Living Memorial and Tanítanék teachers' movement are prominent. The Living Memorial, one of Human Platform's member organisations has been created to contest the history falsifying official Monument to commemorate the German occupation of Hungary. This NGO created a counter-monument facing the official one made of small objects of remembrance, it also organises open public discussions of questions of remembrance and social problems.

## ● Timișoara 2021 - European Capital of Culture Association (ATCEC)

was set up in 2011 by 63 founding members from a variety of backgrounds: the public and the independent cultural sector, academia, the mass-media, the business sector, as well as by the citizens of Timișoara. ATCEC is a non-governmental, non-property, not-for-profit, apolitical and independent organisation, with a cultural and educational mission. From its very beginning, the scope of the Association was that of preparing the candidacy of Timișoara for the title of European Capital of Culture. As of 2016, when the city of Timișoara was designated European Capital of Culture for 2021, the Association has

focused on preparing the financial and legislative framework that would allow the development, planning and implementation of the Cultural Programme according to the Bid Book. As of 2019, the Cultural Programme entered the production phase with the aim of increasing its magnitude progressively through 2021. After 2021, ATCEC will continue to support and implement cultural projects for the local community and will ensure the sustainability of the year of the European Capital of Culture

## ● Etz Hayyim Synagogue Hania

is the last remaining witness to 2,300 years of Jewish history on Crete and a testimony to the island's multi-faith past at the intersection between Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Its founding director defined it as a "place of prayer, recollection and reconciliation" and it thus functions as an inclusive religious space, a historic site, a venue for cultural events and a research and educational institution. Its activities include religious services in the open spirit of Hellenistic Judaism, concerts, readings and lectures reflecting the Eastern Mediterranean heritage, guided tours for over 25,000 visitors every year, and exhibitions on intercultural themes and (Cretan) Jewish history as well as an educational programme for the general public and local schools. Etz Hayyim thus makes a contribution towards a more nuanced understanding of the multivocal past and present of the Eastern Mediterranean.

# Contact Methodologies

## (1) Building New Communities

## Etz Hayyim Synagogue Hania: Can an exhibition open up the multivocal past and present of the Eastern Mediterranean?

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The Etz Hayyim project included ten **groups who did not view themselves as memory communities at the outset but rather all felt marginalized by dominant mainstream society**. All groups felt underrepresented and, as became apparent during the workshops with each individual group, they did not necessarily feel that their parallel narrative would be seen as equally valuable or as legitimate as the dominant mainstream narrative.

The workshop facilitator therefore focused on establishing an appreciation for the equal legitimacy of the specific parallel narrative and on assisting the group in finding a preliminary form of expression for this narrative to be presented to the general public. The expression of this narrative (a selection of everyday items with a correlating short personal statement) at the exhibition “Parallel Points of View” (October 2019) corresponds to current worldwide mainstream perceptions and viewing conventions. Whilst this was a necessary concession to make dialogue possible with the dominant mainstream, this conventional form of expression needed to be explained to most participants.

Through the workshops, and enhanced by the experience of the actual exhibition, the **individual groups started perceiving the possibility of equal legitimacy for their narratives in relation to the mainstream narrative**. However, this initial exhibition project can only be viewed as a first step in creating new memory communities, because:

1. the very concept of parallel memory communities is new to our Cretan society;
2. the large number of parallel narrative groups was chosen to showcase, as an initial step, the wide range of diversity in today’s society of Hania, Crete;
3. this large number did not allow for a thorough insight into each group’s narrative;
4. due to entrenched misunderstanding between some communities, during the workshop phase there was no contact between the individual groups, instead the process allowed each group to develop their own independent narrative;
5. from the outset, the **facilitators envisioned a long-term perspective for the project, i.e. eventually bringing individual groups together to highlight various facets of exclusion and diversity**.

The project set foundations for new memory communities. In spite of expanding the boundaries of mainstream perceptions, the feedback from those ascribing to parallel and mainstream narratives was generally positive and encouraging.

# Contact Methodologies

## (2) Facilitating Change

## Goethe Institut: Engaging new audiences with forgotten histories

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**How is it possible to engage young audiences with largely forgotten historical artistic movements?** How can we highlight their continued relevance, and the problematic promise of their utopias? This is a basic theme that cultural institutes dedicated to cultural heritage as well as to the presentation of contemporary cultural life are constantly confronted with. **How do we contextualize past cultural assets when, for example, there are no more contemporary witnesses?** On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the famous Bauhaus University, an artistic movement whose influence continues to this day, the Goethe-Institut Lyon-Marseille conceived an interactive exhibition which aimed at three things:

1. to familiarise visitors with the basic ideas of the Bauhaus, especially those that had a social or utopian component (such as affordable housing, aesthetic products on the threshold of art and crafts, etc.).
2. to emphasise the shadow zones of the Bauhaus, from gender inequalities, hierarchical relationships (pupils/master), and the gap between the centre (Germany) and the periphery (outside Europe).
3. **to contextualise aspects of the Bauhaus utopias (such as affordable and humane living) in an environment (Marseille) where they are still particularly relevant**, and it was no coincidence that the three workshop leaders and exhibition organisers are all women and come from three different countries.

From **objects of contemporary everyday life, brought on site by locals, Bauhaus-like objects were made in workshops.** These objects and the process of their transformation act as a unifying thread, so to speak, between the institution, the Goethe-Institut, the theme (anniversary), the acting and producing artists\* and the audience. In the process of transformation itself, with the participation of the audience, the procedures and views of the Bauhaus were made concrete and vivid, and at the same time an inherent demand of the Bauhaus itself - namely to bring the creativity of each individual to light - could be realised. In this way, **the institution shows itself to be a learning institution that is also working on the de-hierarchization and decolonization of modern art.** The aim is no longer simply to present outstanding works of art (from a brilliant centre) to a periphery, but to actively and emotionally participate in the cultural heritage, which can thus be integrated much better. This process will become the basis for future work, in order to be able to conduct a dialogue with different cultures eye-to-eye, without ignoring problem areas.

In this sense, **the project contributes substantially to increasing the visibility and prioritizing the role of civil society in cultural life, social experience and emotional participation.** Without fully engaging with these aspects, the successful work of foreign cultural institutes will no longer be conceivable. In addition, this multilateral, intercultural perspective strengthens European cohesion by locating the essential core of cultural coexistence in diversity.

# Contact Methodologies

## (3) Facilitating Dialogue

# Living Memorial - Eleven Emlékmű

## Can using public space for dialogue challenge contemporary falsifications of the past?

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Living Memorial (Eleven Emlékmű) is named in the spirit of its initial concept: dead objects, sculptures, memorials, and symbols cannot take over the tasks of preserving, sharing and transferring memory, but they can help to open dialogues and discussions. **Living Memorial is a protest memorial facing the history-falsifying memorial erected by the Orbán government on Szabadság tér (Liberty Square) in downtown Budapest.** Due to several protest movements, the official memorial (or the Dead Memorial, as activists call it), has never been inaugurated. The Living Memorial, the one that conserves the real memory of suffering, is constituted of objects of personal memory placed on the square by the inhabitants of Budapest and even people coming from abroad, reminding the passers-by of the victims of the Holocaust and the role of the state in their fate. About 450,000 Hungarian Jews were taken to Auschwitz or other concentration camps, and only a few survived: the deportation was organised with the Hungarian state and its institutions playing an active role.

The protest movement is symbolized by two white chairs because beyond protesting against the regime's false propaganda, the aim of the Living Memorial civil group is to enhance free public discussions. **The Living Memorial provides a site for public discussions, because the movement's members believe that Hungarian people must engage in real memory work on their history of the past century without keeping certain facts in silence.** This aim is realized through open public discussions organised in the afternoons, close to the spot of the Living Memorial. The topics of these discussions vary from Holocaust memories, family histories, to various social problems like the education system, healthcare, social housing, social inequalities, the biased electoral system, the problems of the Roma, the state of cultural institutions, etc. Anybody can join in the discussions, take a seat on the dozens of white chairs set up in a big circle and take the microphone. The discussions are recorded and archived. **A special system of moderation has been elaborated and is used for ensuring a peaceful course for the debates.**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/elevenemlekmu/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/ElevenEmlekmu/>

# H401: Broadening Dialogue

The Herengracht Dialogues were conceived over dinner with Ram Manikkalingam and Avrum Burg. They identified the need to bring together people who share the same belief in a society where no-one is excluded, but who have different opinions on what the exact root causes of fragmenting societies really are and how to address them. **What makes us feel included or excluded from the narratives that hold our societies together, those that form the heritage that constitutes the framework for a wide range of individual memories from various cultural, religious and other backgrounds?** Twenty people with different experiences of the world and different fields of work were invited: artists, activists, scholars, funders, and policy makers.

Over a period of one year the group met three times for two and a half days to talk in a protected environment under Chatham House Rules. This meant that **participants were able to speak freely, without any member of the group being recorded, identified, and quoted publicly.** Themes like populism, globalisation, and intersectionality were discussed, sometimes specifically presented by a participant, or developing organically in the course of the dialogues. Anonymised reports helped participants to link their evolving thoughts from one meeting to the next. **The conversations were moderated by a duo of moderators, one to technically chair, and one to conceptualise what was said and steer the discussion in the most inclusive way by summarizing and formulating new questions that arose.**

As an outcome a magazine - PERPLEX! - was produced inspired by these sessions, but it is neither a report, nor a replica, of the sessions. The conversations in the magazine all started around the table, but grew in different directions, as time passed and relationships formed between participants. The editors and the designers have brought them together in PERPLEX! Use it as a guide to creating your own dialogue spaces, styles, dinners or 'derives' wherever you are. Please find the online version here: <http://h401.org/wp-content/uploads/PerplexMagazine.pdf>



# H401: Questioning Traumatic Heritage

Questioning Traumatic Heritage is a workshop format that H401 has piloted together with Creative Court, The Hague, who developed the format. Using the methodology of Theatre of the Oppressed, conceived by theatre practitioner, drama theorist and political activist Augusto Boal (1931 – 2009, Brasil), the workshop uses creative ways to research the dilemmas we face in the field of trauma, memory and heritage. Boal's methodology is rooted in Latin American societies and came to Europe in the 1980s, where it was developed further. **This playful method encourages our creativity, imagination and spontaneity while at the same time providing research tools enabling us to take a closer look at conflicts, unspoken emotions and unconscious behaviour.** Boal's saying "Peace no Passivity" has inspired many theatre-practitioners in the field of conflict, memory and transformational processes in many countries around the world.

In a three-hour workshop, **we focus on the dilemmas we are dealing with in our field and their underlying actors. By bringing these actors into the open we can start to look for alternative ways of perceiving them and approaching them,** which helps us to develop a deeper understanding of how traumatic experiences, working through in the present, could be transformed.

<http://heritagecontactzone.com/workshops/amsterdam/>



# Contact Methodologies

## (4) Reenacting history

## T2021 reflects

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**Looking back is not a passive but an active act. The reenactment process's main objective is to reactivate memory and channel historical personalities or events.** One can use different mediums – cartoons, drawing, action figures, and so on – but reenactment is one of the most powerful. Depending on how detailed the reenactment is, it needs a script ideally drafted by or together with researchers and experts, performers (professional or not), props, costumes, a selection of objects and sometimes a willing suspension of disbelief. The results are educational and entertaining at the same time and almost always beneficial for the audience's knowledge of history.

In order to raise awareness one needs a good rapport with the media which can help with impact in terms of the number of participants and good reviews of the reenactment initiatives. **Gathering feedback from the spectators is always a good way to revise and improve the reenactment episode.**

In the frame of the Theater as Resistance project, workshops were important milestones and relevant ways to make sure we stay on track with the archival research and public sharing of the results. The first workshop was organized at the very beginning and involved representatives of all the institutions we had as partners – local theaters, library, and other stakeholders. **We needed everybody at the same table in order to decide the best methodology for the project.** Together we drafted the steps we need to take in order to reach the objectives of the project.

The second workshop involved key personalities connected to all the theaters in Timisoara – actors, directors, writers – with a consistent experience in the field before 1989. Even more than we had hoped they proved to be repositories of significant memories which fit in the puzzle of our theme, Theater as Resistance, shining much more light on what we want to recover from this period of Romanian history.

# Contact Methodologies

## (5) Making Policy Work

### Culture Action Europe (CAE) & European University Institute (EUI): Are the directions that cultural policy has been taking over the last decade useful in making culture work for society? In particular, how do the policies of EU institutions help catalyse or constrain heritage?

Heritage has become an increasingly visible – and political – keyword in cultural policies across the world, and in particular in the EU. The most obvious example of this was the **European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (EYCH)**, the culmination of the most important attempts between civil society, European institutions and Member States to promote and put into practice an inclusive and forward-looking definition of cultural heritage. The year enabled rich exchanges between cultural heritage experts, European and national institutions, EYCH Stakeholders and Culture Action Europe (CAE) members, and has provided a sound understanding of the points of convergence and divergence between actors in the cultural heritage field.

In many countries and regions, **the heritage sector is deeply tied to the tourism industry**, an often vital source of income for local economies. There is historical precedent for this, of course, UNESCO's highly successful **World Heritage status has long been criticised as functioning mostly as place-branding**, rather than helping to explore and conserve the heritage values that it puts onto the global map. This highlights an often noted phenomenon: **policy on paper is one thing, but on the ground it is frequently very different**. Recently scholars have also been critically analysing the application in practice of the EU's own European Heritage Label (see Lähdesmäki 2017).

The contested relation between heritage, urban development, regeneration, preservation and tourism should be carefully re-examined with the aim to **ensure the sustainability of the host communities, their cultural practices and environment**. Lack of community involvement in the management of tourism, as well as in urban and heritage regeneration, especially in rural areas, can lead to the loss of cultural diversity, displacement of communities, gentrification and erosion of local authenticity.

Despite these criticisms of heritage policies, for heritage activists who are most concerned with reflective and critical approaches, there are positive examples from cultural policies. The most notable was **the Council of Europe's 2005 Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society** (more commonly known as the Faro Convention). This document has helped to frame many of the more positive – and socially progressive – aspects of cultural heritage policies that have emerged in the last decade. In particular, its emphasis that **heritage communities are things we choose to belong to – rather than things we are born into** because of ethnicity, language, class, etc. – is quite radical (see Zagato 2015).

The 2018-2019 Faro Convention Action Plan further defines these heritage communities as: “**self-organised, self-managed groups of individuals who are interested in progressive social transformation of relationships between peoples, places and stories, with an inclusive approach based on an enhanced definition of heritage**” (COE 2018: 23). What this does is push heritage away from being appropriated for identity politics, and more likely to be used to **help build more inclusive and open civil societies.**

Therefore we would welcome the stronger recognition of a value of cultural heritage that goes beyond the dimension of tangible assets: that is, heritage as a place for public engagement, reflection and re-invention of communities’ contested stories and histories.

**Communities, citizens’ engagement, co-construction and participation are critical elements that must be at the core of any heritage intervention.** Informed participation of communities helps foster ownership and ensures adequate responses to local realities and needs. Promoting diversity in interventions, particularly intercultural encounters, contributes to the well-being of citizens as a whole. Thus, policy-makers and those who implement cultural policies need to rebalance interventions to pay greater attention to soft-infrastructure and participation, rather than traditional approaches prioritizing hard infrastructure. Such a shift requires the strengthening of participatory methodologies, intercultural mediation and new evaluation frameworks to measure social impact and engagement.

The legacy of the EYCH should then be explicitly built upon the 21 May 2014 European Council’s definition of Cultural Heritage, reiterated in the 24 May 2018 Council conclusions, where cultural heritage is considered “in all its diversity and forms – tangible and intangible, immovable and movable, digital and a value in its own right [...]. **Progressing towards this wider understanding of cultural heritage requires explicit recognition across policies, programmes and actions,** with the subsequent adaptation of definitions, objectives and tools”. In fact, this will be the task of the first Commission expert group in the field of culture, **The Expert Group on Cultural Heritage, established in Oct 2019 and entrusted to secure the legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH).** The Expert Group builds on the collaborative approach between the European institutions and heritage stakeholders taken during EYCH and aims at keeping tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as well as its digitisation and inclusiveness, high on the European agenda in the coming years.

Community involvement to co-design and manage such processes should be placed at the core of the new Creative Europe programme, Horizon Europe, the European Regional Development and Cohesion Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the LIFE – Programme for the Environment and Climate Action, particularly in view of the mainstreaming of climate action in the proposed post-2020 MFF.



## FURTHER READING

Council of Europe (2018) The Faro Convention Action Plan Handbook 2018-2019. Online. Location: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-action-plan>

Lähdesmäki, Tuuli (2014) The EU’s explicit and implicit heritage politics. *Europeanizations* 16(3): 401-421

Lähdesmäki, Tuuli (2017) Politics of affect in the EU heritage policy discourse: an analysis of promotional videos of sites awarded with the European Heritage Label. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23(8): 709-722

Zagato, L. (2015) The notion of ‘heritage community’ in the Council of Europe’s Faro Convention. Its impact on the European legal framework. In, N. Adell et al. *Between Imagined Communities of Practice: participation, territory and the making of heritage*. Gottingen University Press

# Object Focus

## Materialising the Past

All heritage has both tangible and intangible aspects. Despite the separation between these two ‘types’ that has helped UNESCO and others to give greater – and much needed – recognition to intangible heritage, much of the conflict around heritage is around material objects or places. This makes tangible heritage sites, places and objects powerful tools for working with communities. Objects and places evoke and make the past real. **Consider what might happen when we put an early 19th century anti-semitic figurine into the hands of a Holocaust-denier, or place a slave-ship in a public square?** The late British anthropologist Alfred Gell wrote about the ‘agency’ of artworks, the power that they have to embody not only the ideas of their creators but also the networks of relationships within which they were created and had meaning. This ‘agency’ of material culture is perhaps equally applicable to heritage. Many of the HCZ projects work with objects and places that manifest the ‘agency’ of heritage in very real ways. **Here objects, buildings, monuments and places do more than just convey symbolic and cultural values, they can provoke reactions and reconfigure social networks and ideas about the past.** Below we consider how such objects and places can be highly evocative, sometimes misunderstood, but also tools for making the past feel real and lead to social inclusion.

Each of the following five objects are exemplary for many more that have been collected at the five local exhibitions of Heritage Contact Zone. You can find the others in the exhibition part of the website. We use each of them to show the different thematic and methodological approaches.



## Amsterdam

### Stirrups

These stirrups are from the 17th century and were used by the main character of the historic story of Jan Struys, who travelled from Amsterdam to Russia and Iran. The question was: how can historic objects and stories be interpreted today by contemporary artists and how do these challenge the viewers' cultural perspectives and prejudices? The historic objects in the exhibition Impossible Journeys Now and Then as well as the artistic reactions to them, represent a historic event that confirms the Dutch self-image of enlightened traders and conquerors of the world, traits that formed the basis of the 17th centuries wealth of The Netherlands. This notion of the 'golden age' is contested as it was funded by exploitation, blood and ideas of supremacy. Rereading the account of Jan Struys through the exhibition Impossible Journeys contests this notion and confronts the contemporary viewer with prevailing stereotypes of the Other, in this case Persians and Russians, the latter stereotyped as a 'drunk people on horses'.



## Marseille

### Ceramic boy

During seven days of preparation, 50 objects were collected and transformed into fictional Bauhaus artefacts. The transformation process took place visually, aesthetically, but also conceptually. The little ceramic sculpture of a boy was found by the owner in a flea market. The figure misses its head, one arm and one leg. The owner recounted how she used to have a special affection for the aesthetics of fragmented and atypical bodies. When the Bauhaus school was founded 100 years ago, handicaps were perceived very differently in society than today, and people with disabilities were kept hidden from the public. Much as today we can celebrate diversity and our differences – symbolized by the monument created underneath and around the boy's figure – in a similar way new technology, innovation and progress were highlighted through Bauhaus designs.



## Budapest

### Living Memorial

The two silver candlesticks were part of a Jewish family's treasures before WWII. The whole family was deported in 1944 and only a few members survived. When they came back to Hungary, they found their house robbed and damaged. Only a few objects were given back to them among which the two candlesticks.

They were part of the 50 objects presented in The Living Memorial's exhibition and daily discussions. The group had published a call asking for stories of remembrance related to objects of the last 100 years. Several dozens of objects and stories were thus collected. According to our traditions, we organised discussions where people presented their objects and told their stories. Each event was followed by vivid interest, and various problematic periods of the country's history were debated in a peaceful and friendly atmosphere but not void of deep emotions.



## Hania

### Tiny boat

Most refugees embark on tiny boats rather than seagoing vessels in their hope to find refuge in continental Europe. "I watch the tourists swimming in the sea and I remember our children drowning in the Aegean." The colour of the toy boat is reminiscent of the colour of naval life-jackets. At the same time, it actually is a toy; a toy European children play with on the beaches of the Mediterranean during their happy vacations. The workshop participants chose this particular boat to highlight a clash of experiences which continue to have vastly different impacts on refugees and Europeans respectively. Not only have the refugees lost loved-ones and their homes because of war and conflict, but on the last part of their journey they are forced to take the dangerous sea-route to Europe, a Europe that has been fortifying itself against all the international legal norms of refugee protection.



## Timișoara

The Communist Party membership card

In the beginning everyone wanted to have it, in the end everybody wanted to get rid of it. The most spectacular way to do it was to set it on fire in public. The Communist Party members had priority when it came to promotion in their workplace; a Communist Party member would get a passport/the right to travel more easily; a Communist Party member could not be followed by Securitate unless a special permit was granted by the party itself. Together with portraits of Nicolae Ceausescu, the Communist Party membership card was one of the first things set on fire in the streets by the angry Romanians taking part in December 1989's revolts.

# Films

1. Shattered Memories, Living Objects, Budapest
2. Parallel Points of View, Hania
3. La Grande Transformation, Marseille
4. Theatre as Resistance, Timișoara
5. Impossible Journeys/Spaces of Memory and Trauma (SPEME)/PERPLEX!, Amsterdam
6. Imperial Italy, Florence

3.

# Building a HCZ



# How to plan and manage a heritage contact zone

## Can heritage practitioners make complex stories accessible and still reflect historical context?

In participatory cultural work, especially when talking about complex histories or histories that have various versions depending on who tells them, **it is important to see who is in the room first**. Generally speaking, it is about the agency of who tells the story and who can talk about it. The principle of **'talking with rather than talking about'** is widely recognized. So if you want to deal with the history from the perspective of the Roma you let Roma tell their history; in other words you **respect the agency of representatives of a community to speak for themselves**. In social

science, this *agency* is defined as the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices. By contrast, *structure* is those factors of influence that determine or limit an agent and their decisions (such as social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, ability, customs, etc.). Whereas these structures should be made clear as well - by sharing available resources so that the participants can make up their own mind - these need not necessarily be scientific, though they should be serious. These might include YouTube-videos, infographics, Wikipedia articles,

and the like, and ideally they would already reflect multiple perspectives.

This begs the central question of how the groups that are supposed to participate are selected and eventually asked to participate. **Is participation a voluntary act?** How do you ensure that it is voluntary? Are you sure members have not been bullied, swayed, or talked into participating?

Or, to put the question differently: **what prerequisites must audience members meet in order to participate in art?** In this we must consider differences from one nation to another, which stem from current or historical political backgrounds and, most importantly, the guiding notions of the respective educational system. In addition, one must consider differences in regard to the participants' age group or social background.

It seems obvious that a central element of planning a HCZ project is framing its desired effects and objectives. On the theoretical level, they can hardly be distinguished from the objectives of the project per se. Yet in each case, even back in Brecht's time, the point was **to liberate the viewers from their passivity and convince them of the importance of their personal political and intellectual reflection on the topic at hand**, to inspire them to get involved in society beyond the artistic event - ultimately, to keep them from being mere bystanders. Yet isn't this process of emancipation primarily a reflective process that the individual must choose for him- or herself (in the sense of enlightenment) and that cannot be handed to him or her on an artificial silver platter? The ultimate question is whether participatory art practice can improve and broaden citizens' engagement with their difficult pasts. This Toolkit explores some of the ways that creating your own HCZ might do just that.

## The right question

The following two sections offer a set of conceptual questions and a set of practical questions. Whereas the conceptual questions are the ones that may need attention before a project is implemented (for example, in the planning phase, applying for funding and bringing stakeholders together), the practical questions will also need

ongoing attention during a project, and are thus more focused on monitoring, steering, and enhancement 'on the go'. Each question is introduced by a short text that elaborates on the need for asking this question and is followed by reference to the partners work, any relevant films, case studies or further reading.

# Conceptual Questions

| Conceptualize  
your contact zone.

# How to provide a forum for parallel narratives and facilitate a dialogue with the dominant narrative?

Carefully consider how to express a narrative so that it can reach a wide audience.

As a facilitator you should aim for creating a safe and open space to allow participants to formulate a narrative. At the same time, be conscious of the fact that providing a forum and disseminating this narrative is a long-term process which involves carefully navigating challenges posed by the dominant narrative.

Providing a forum for parallel narratives is a rather long-term process. You might want to view your first project as an introductory project (e.g. an exhibition) that presents various parallel narratives. During the initial project a somewhat cursory approach can be taken which has to be communicated to both the participants and the audience/public. The introductory project can set the stage for more in-depth follow-up projects.

The project curator/facilitator should not create the project FOR the proponents of parallel narratives but should, ideally, potentially create processes that let the narrative(s) in question develop. The facilitator should thus create a situation in which it is easy for (workshop) participants to establish a personal and trusting relationship with the facilitator. For example, collaborative moments of work should be designed not just to favour creativity, but also to consider the comfort and ease of participants. **Co-creation is also about recognising the different learning needs and styles of those involved.**

It is crucial to communicate the envisaged actual form of presentation of outcomes with your participants (e.g. the display of the outcome from the participatory workshop in an exhibition, performance etc.). You want the participants to be proud of THEIR narrative, THEIR display, THEIR exhibition. Invite all participants personally to the final event: that is, **promote ownership over the project.**

**The introductory project can then be a reference point for more in-depth follow-up projects,** which can focus on fewer parallel narratives. **There should be continuity among participants,** to allow building on results from the introductory project, and continuity in project aesthetics to increase the consistency and impact of the outcomes.

To ensure the long-term impact of the project, **consider from the start how to create a constructive dialogue with the mainstream narrative.** This can be made possible by choosing a form of presentation that is easily “digestible” for the general public ascribing to the dominant narrative,

e.g. an art exhibition might be a better approach than a public discussion forum. Furthermore, carefully choose your language (linguistic as well as visual):

- **Use references to and key-terms from the dominant narrative:** this creates a sense of familiarity that can function as bridges and provide the opportunity for proponents of the dominant narrative to relate to parallel narratives;
- Avoid questioning the dominant narrative directly, rather add new/alternative perspectives: **don't say you (dominant narrative) are wrong, rather show that I/we (parallel narrative) is right, too,** from our point of view;
- Have several editors (not associated with the narrative and project creation), who are nonetheless familiar with your local situation, read/double-check the visual/linguistic language to minimize any potential offence or misinterpretations.

Include interactive approaches at project presentations (e.g. exhibitions):

- Give the general public, who may feel challenged and/or exposed, the chance to express their opinions and impressions, for example, a short questionnaire that can be displayed towards the end of the exhibition and provide an overview of the feedback and help facilitate dialogue;
- **Prepare a thorough press release to make sure that the project is not misrepresented in the press.** Use existing press contacts to ensure open-mindedness on the part of the journalist covering your event and project;
- Compile a catalogue, including a thorough project description, as well as a website to create resources for an ongoing widespread dialogue as well as reference points for follow-up projects. It might be important for the facilitator/webmaster to be able to moderate incoming posts which may be offensive.

**Do all the above without being untrue to the story you want to tell and the narrative you are presenting.**

# How to claim/justify/communicate legitimacy for the initiative of a project? How to identify the relevant skills?

A bird's eye view is needed when identifying issues connected to difficult heritage and collective memory. But for implementing specific projects a horizontal approach is essential.

Claiming the initiative is not about taking the moral high ground, it is about using the resources one has access to in order to help improve a situation. Asking the right questions based on a real concern and a deep knowledge of a particular situation is the common ground from which a justified initiative can start. What is the situation and what can we do to improve it? This is to ensure the legitimacy of the initiative from the very beginning.

The leading organisation should be perceived as the motivator, the guarantor of the project and maintain an invested interest in it throughout the evolution and the realisation of the project. While governments, local administrations or big cultural institutions like Goethe-Institut are concerned with public heritage on a national level, the role of smaller institutions addressing particular issues in terms of heritage is also essential for a horizontal approach and to ensure authentic representation. This is why **claiming the initiative of a project would be ideally a joint venture between big institutions and small ones, a partnership meant to represent as many viewpoints as possible**, and use the relevant skills of all partners to cover all angles of an issue, as much as possible. For the purposes of the project all concerns of the stakeholders should be properly and timely addressed.

This can be done by:

- The promotion of the diversity of actors;
- Consultation on the implementation period;
- Informed consent of all the actors involved.

An essential step is to **involve people directly connected to the issue addressed, people affected by it, alongside experts who can work with them to help improve the situation**. If the initiative regards a particular place, a city or a country, or a small community, at least one of the organizations involved should be representative for that place or community, even if they don't have the skills or the resources to solve the

problems. To ensure this is happening the organization which initiated the project should:

- Build trust and manage the relations between all participants to the project;
- Take seriously the opposition of some of the actors and try to involve them in the decision making process.

For the legitimacy of an initiative to be recognized by all those involved as well as public opinion, **special attention should be paid to the way the initiative is communicated publicly**. This should involve a transparent and open flow of information throughout the implementation of the project, while aiming to reach the next level which is to secure public attention and provide help in the process of policy making.

## FURTHER READING

Heinelt, Hubert, Sweeting, Hubert & Getimis, Panagiotis (2006) *Legitimacy and Urban Governance: A Cross-National Comparative Study*. London: Routledge

# How to address ethical questions before and during a project?

The first step is to ask ourselves the ethical questions, both before and during a project dealing with a difficult heritage.

Some of the core questions can be: do we have the legitimacy to develop the project? How can we evaluate or comment on a past that we did not live through ourselves? Are we aware of the complexity of the situation and the stories of those involved in the project? How can we make sure we do not judge any of them and represent everybody justly? What can we do to find the most appropriate forms to share these stories with an audience?

Once we have consulted on these issues before starting, both with the team of the project and with the people inspiring the project or contributing to it with their own stories, **we need to keep our eyes open and keep asking questions all along the way.** This is in order to make sure we either avoid, as much as possible, controversy in terms of representation, or on the contrary embrace it when this is relevant. For example, **controversy can be relevant when it is about recognition of various viewpoints, traumas and emotions connected to personal or collective memories,** and especially so when opposing viewpoints are normally expressed in a violent manner and the conversation requires a safe environment to allow for pain to be shown and recognized by all participants in order to allow for really 'working through'. In all cases presenting every angle of a situation/story and fact checking are both necessary. Dealing with the past that we did not live through, or telling the stories of people who do not have a voice or are not here anymore to tell these stories themselves, are actions which come with huge responsibility. Opening the archives or presenting alternative narratives which challenge the official narrative can be like opening Pandora's Box and we need the tools to use our findings responsibly. Here are some suggestions:

- Check the facts by confronting at least two different sources;
- Avoid black and white descriptions of a complex situation;
- **Ask the same core questions of your project to at least three people (triangulation), who hold different kinds of positions** within civil society and official institutions;

- Brainstorm with the project's team to decide the form used to share your findings to an audience (more ideas are better than one);
- Make clear in all promotional materials and communication of the project the complexity of the facts/situations/stories your project has at its core to arrive at a more (the most) accurate representation of reality;
- Define for yourself what 'safe space' means for the people involved;
- Try to use a language and/or methods suitable for all participants.

## FURTHER READING

<http://www.archivesandcreativepractice.com/books>  
<https://confcodeofconduct.com/>  
[https://github.com/apontzen/london\\_cc](https://github.com/apontzen/london_cc)  
<https://revojs.ro/code-of-conduct/>  
<https://www.aps.org/meetings/policies/code-conduct.cfm>

# How to protect the identities of participants and stay true to the story?

In working with contested heritage the identity of participants has to be protected according to the specific context without compromising the narrative.

A decision needs to be made at the beginning of the project if participation will be anonymous. Any decision has to be consistently applied, communicated to the participants and the public and might necessitate certain adjustments in the presentation of the project.

“ When we discovered personal stories in the archives of the former secret police we did not know at first how to deal with their identity. ”

Cristina Modreanu, curator of Theater as resistance.

Heritage is contested and promoting alternative narratives might necessitate protecting the identity of the participants without compromising the integrity of the narrative. Considering the specific local context of the mainstream dominant narrative community on the one hand and the particular community of the parallel narrative on the other, **decide at the beginning of your project whether participation will be anonymous or not.** The decision needs to be clearly communicated both to the participants as well as the public invited to your project presentation. The approach has to be consistently applied.

To ensure anonymity, **in small communities it might be necessary to rework the story** (e.g. points of view of the narrator: change the generation, age, gender) in cooperation with the particular participant to prevent personal identification. To ensure the truthfulness of the story, make sure that the alterations you might need to make do not affect the core message of the story.

# How to use creative approaches with memory building? How to reenact, perform and represent the past?

Imaginative reconstruction can be a key strategy to the dilemma of how to reenact/perform/represent the past.

It is sometimes argued that the role of the **artist/mediators/facilitators** is in many ways the same as the role of the historian or the social scientist when he/she uses the archives or alternative narratives as a source of inspiration. The artist is always looking for alternative, creative ways of telling a story, but his/her attempt is similar to a historian's in trying to repair, to make the past whole and to raise awareness of it.

As much as we trust and base our actions on research there is a moment when artists should take a leap of faith and trust in their own creative attempts to recreate the past. In doing this they can move forward from the researchers' tendency to just contemplate and comment on the past through archives, and to actually intervene in the official narratives to reimagine the relationship with the archives and seek to produce original new works. There are a series of risks in seeking a different narrative for history but there are also tools meant to accompany the artists who start such a journey. **Performing the past is an act of repair in which there is always something lost** – nobody can exactly reproduce something that already happened – and something to gain. Artists can use artistic means to reproduce a certain atmosphere, to engage creatively with the idea of memory and how people select what they want to remember. By choosing the pieces of decor, the costumes, certain symbolic objects, music recordings or even smells and/or tastes they can channel particular eras or moments in time. Performative strategies like dialogues, repetition of words and/or gestures, choreographed movement, and visual incentives can have a good

impact. Feelings like nostalgia, the sense of loss, curiosity of the younger audience for certain periods of time they only heard about can also be a powerful support for memory-related artistic endeavours.

Also, nowadays, **new technologies can be the solution to the crisis of memory rather than its cause** (as suggested presciently by Vannevar Bush in his article "As We May Think"), so new technologies as well as social media networks can be used creatively in the act of performing the past and make visible the works of art resulted.

## FURTHER READING

Blocker, Jane (2015) *Becoming Past. History in Contemporary Art*. University of Minnesota Press

Bush, Vannevar (1945) "As We May Think". *The Atlantic*, July edition

Savran, David (1993) *Breaking the rules: The Wooster Group*. The Theatre Communications Group

# How to identify risk and find strategies to deal with it?

Identify risks to prepare your team to work under extreme pressure, and identify where your actions will have the most impact.

Identifying risks is an opportunity to consider how your organisation will react to negative events and the consequences of your interventions. This 'preparedness' will help your team develop the skills and capacity to deal with varied scenarios.

In working with 'difficult heritage' the risks and threats are inherently higher. Identifying the right strategies for your organisation requires two things: flexibility and deep understanding of your context. Often communities and/or individuals have already clashed, and in some cases physical violence between communities is an ongoing factor. **Assume that any intervention you make is going to have unintended consequences that will increase tension** around the heritage place, object or practice you work with.

In developing your strategies it is worth studying how risk is managed by major heritage organisations like UNESCO and the Prince Claus Fund who work with physically threatened heritage (see the resources below) in war zones and post-conflict social reconstruction. They provide essential strategies for assessing risk, which at its most basic might include identifying:

- **Primary hazards** (e.g. earthquake);
- **Secondary hazards** (e.g. aftershocks and fire);
- **Immediate risks** (e.g. practitioners lives; unable to work because of social upheaval);
- **Vulnerability factors** (these underlying causes might include inadequate housing, lack of insurance, and so on). [adapted from Tandon 2018, p.25]

If possible, **collect data on the risks**. For example, you might **run a survey**. You could:

- photograph the heritage at risk (tangible or intangible);
- document the processes that threaten the heritage;
- record interviews with key stakeholders, and repeat over time to build a picture of change.

Expert institutions like ICCROM recommend that you encrypt your data; however, you will have to judge whether a policy of total transparency and openness with your data is preferable to protecting the identities of participants in your heritage project. These kinds of **ethical questions can be integrated into your project's Code of Conduct** (see below).

Consider undertaking a **triage of your heritage at risk**. Evaluate which objects, places, performances or beliefs are of particular importance to the collective memory of communities you work with. How threatened are they by the risks you have identified? Can you realistically take steps to mitigate these risks?

Often, **social dynamics are beyond our control** and the situation spirals into conflict. In these cases it is worth looking beyond the heritage sector itself and to borrow strategies from those NGOs and civil society actors who work with peacebuilding, and in particular ideas of 'conflict sensitivity'. Peacebuilders recognise that **conflict can itself be socially productive**, and the processes you work through with the opposing parties have the potential to build more open societies. However, these are long processes requiring sustained long-term commitment of resources and people. Aim to build relationships and communities of practice around the heritage.

Planning will help your organisation face risk and reduce negative impacts. Three basic steps are:

- Develop a basic Code of Conduct (borrow one from an organisation you respect), it will help identify priorities, and enable your team to act quickly and ethically when needed;
- Train your team in how to use basic conflict management strategies (see link below);
- Constantly re-evaluate your own indicators for potential risks.

## FURTHER READING

Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (2012) *How to Guide to Conflict Sensitivity*. UKAid.

Conflict Sensitivity tools: <https://conflictsensitivity.org/resources/tools/>

Peacebuilding Toolkit for Educators: <http://www.buildingpeace.org/train-resources/educators/peacebuilding-toolkit-educators>

Myers, D., Smith, S.N., & Ostergren, G. (eds.) (2016) *Consensus Building, Negotiation, and Conflict Resolution for Heritage Place Management: Proceedings of a Workshop Organized by the Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, California, 1-3 December 2009*. Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute. Available at: [http://hdl.handle.net/10020/gci\\_pubs/consensus\\_building](http://hdl.handle.net/10020/gci_pubs/consensus_building)

Tandon, Aparna (2018) *First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis Toolkit*. Prince Claus Fund for Culture & Development and ICCROM. Available at: [www.iccrom.org](http://www.iccrom.org)

# Practical Questions

Set up and manage  
a contact zone

# How to build and engage your memory community?

Opening-up heritage to citizens rather than ‘owners’ or ‘inheritors’ can create new and more inclusive memory communities.

Finding creative ways to engage diverse audiences around a particular heritage can create new and open memory communities. It is a significant challenge to offer alternatives to established narratives around the past and who it ‘belongs’ to.

In many cases a memory community seems to define itself: those with opinions about a particular heritage talk about and represent their ideas loudly. However, **the loudest and most visible advocates or critics of a heritage are not the only possible members of a memory community.** Identifying a heritage with just one particular group can further accentuate social divisions, and **reducing a given heritage to one group of ‘stakeholders’ makes working through the conflictual aspects of heritage representation harder.** Consider issues related to one example relevant to many European states: to whom exactly does colonial heritage ‘belong’? Does ‘decolonising’ museum collections and heritage sites open-up or fence-in memory communities? Which stakeholders should determine how this heritage is represented?

Deliberately seeking to broaden memory communities may be one strategy to tackle such questions. Doing so is as important for societies traumatised by their pasts, as for those which have failed to question long-held narratives. Stigma and ignorance of the complexities of the past continue to define public memory: the **history taught in schools, nationalism, popular films and TV series all contribute to what is widely known – or hidden – in the heritage narratives that dominate a majority culture.**

How then can we work in ways that leave heritage-making open to as wide a range of the public as possible? As the individual HCZ projects

illustrate, using artists as facilitators can often help integrate such processes with local needs, and also to demystify and contextualise local biases and stereotypes. **First steps are to understand why people are not engaged (or are negatively engaged) with a past.** Ask:

- Why is this heritage either unknown, or claimed by one particular group (memory community)? Was this always the case?
- What are the conflicts around this particular heritage, and who controls the narrative?
- Can different communities be brought into a dialogue that directly engages with the problematic aspects of this past? What are the perceived barriers (ethnic, linguistic, etc.) to belonging to this group?
- **Are there particular points in the story of the heritage, or its public representation, where you could work together?**

Building and engaging a memory community is also complicated by how we all relate to the past in terms of our own sense of identity and belonging. **Contemporary identity politics go hand-in-hand with the apparent banalisation of our historic horrors, as the ‘selfies at Auschwitz’ phenomenon has demonstrated** (Zalewska 2017). Finding ways to help people meaningfully identify with a heritage and build a socially inclusive yet sensitive memory community remains a key challenge.

Museum Studies and policy-makers have made much of the possibilities of participatory approaches. However, even well-intentioned educational work can sometimes perpetuate stereotypes and hierarchies. In her study of ethnographic museums Nora Landkammer (2018) describes how in the educational programmes (mostly) white children gather round globes and are encouraged to ‘explore’. Why does ‘exploring’ seem more natural than focusing children’s attention on the indigenous perspectives instead? The ‘explorer’ is not a benign figure, rather they embody the inequities of how the objects themselves were collected, and the racism that justified imperial ambitions. **Educational strategies that don’t deeply question the underlying prejudices of a majority culture can further division, and sharpen the pain that some communities feel over how ‘their’ heritage is represented in public spaces.** This has often been a reason for lack of engagement with memory institutions from minority communities.

Instead, **what can create a shared sense of belonging is not the heritage itself, but the work the different stakeholders do together.** Find strategies that work for your particular social context, and increase the impact and visibility of this process through media, art practices, and exhibitions in local institutions that are used by the broadest range of society. This may mean looking far beyond a museum, choosing instead to work in a public square, a train station, or on a hill. Two basic ideas to help build and engage a memory community to start with are:

- **Make the memory material:** use participatory techniques that deal with the material culture connected to this particular heritage (letters, everyday objects people can relate to) to engage as broad a range of people as possible;
- **Create shared experiences:** broaden engagement through performances, interventions and projections in public space, guided walks and remappings of space.

In summary, engaging a new memory community is about transformation through a shared process; **build a new community around the shared memory of working through something together.** In this way, the actual heritage being worked on is less important than the fact that previously separate memory communities are now working together.

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# How to adapt your plan to the memory community you work with?

The facilitator/s should have a clear vision about two things, at least: his/her memory community and his/her goals.

Through deep understanding of his/her memory community, and constant monitoring of discussions, a facilitator can help its members work through traumatic and often taboo issues around the past. By directly involving members of the memory community in decision-making and directly discussing areas of conflict, they can establish their legitimacy in the eyes of the community, and help uncover the complicated ways in which they relate to the majority culture.

Understanding a memory community means several things: the facilitator has to have a top-down overall view of the community, its place in the larger community (town, country, institutions), and also how this community is represented in the larger community, and which feelings, stereotypes, and prejudices circulate between them. As much as possible, he or she has to **have an indigenous knowledge about the memory community**: whether there are subgroups inside, what feelings, traumas, sufferings are inscribed in the memory of the group, and whether they are collective or individual. But it is also important to be aware that **certain traumas, feelings, and so on may be considered taboo**, or are rarely the subject of collective conversations.

As well as understanding the feelings of the memory community towards the majority culture, the facilitator has to understand the bonds that link them to this broader social context. Once these often slippery opinions are clear, **the facilitator has to continuously monitor the discussions and the activity of the memory community to be able to detect any changes** that might occur: changes in the tone, mode, any personal or collective hurts or offenses or even susceptibility. In such cases and depending on the weight of the case, it is useful to

stop the discussion and **start a ‘negotiation’: a discussion on the meta-level: ask for the opinions of the various participants on how they see the situation and how to handle the problem.**

If the perceived problem is not a concrete or immediate one, the facilitator can adapt the planned activities to the needs of the memory community. In most cases it is preferable to discuss the modifications with the group working directly with the facilitator, or at least with the most active and most dedicated members of the community. They can also help the facilitator to make the group smoothly accept the changes. It is also **advisable to include members of the memory community in decision-making and programming**, their contribution is invaluable and can spare the facilitator from making unexpected mistakes.

# How to set up a process with the right method for your heritage contact zone?

Finding a balance between conceptualizing content before the beginning of a project and providing a space open enough for participants to create their own narrative.

To create an open space for participants, the facilitator needs to share their conceptual decisions. For participants to benefit from the open space during the project meetings, the facilitator should provide exercises/create opportunities for participants to fully grasp the concept of the legitimacy of parallel narratives as well as to better understand the social/cultural conditions in which they and the project are operating.

The project team and the facilitator(s) need to be well informed about the topic and the different possible interpretations and cleavages concerning the concrete heritage they are going to work on. It is helpful to read historical, social and other studies and consult experts not to leave out / hurt / falsify certain viewpoints / social actors or groups. **The choice of active participants at the beginning of the project is also important.** The fact that, for practical reasons, in the run-up to the project, the particular narrative has to a certain degree been decided on and that the specific participants have been invited poses two contradicting/opposing challenges:

- On the one hand, the choices were made by the event organizers with an outcome in mind that fits the project parameters;
- On the other hand, the **facilitators aim to create an open space which allows the participants to determine the additional narrative** and to decide for themselves if, how and to what degree they ascribe to that particular narrative.

Considering these challenges, the **initial choices of the facilitator have to be clearly communicated to the participants** and become part of the process of guiding the participants through the project.

While the workshop method *World Café* focuses on moderating a decision-making process leading into a specific communal action, setting up a heritage contact zone might rather focus on reflection and understanding social and group dynamics.

For the process of engaging participants, the role of the facilitator is decisive in creating a safe space (cf. How to

find your facilitator). **The facilitator should offer an introductory exercise sensitizing participants to the concept of diversity and emphasizing that different points of view are not necessarily wrong but can rather be alternatives to one another.** In the course of the project, when various narratives are related, the communication of strong emotions is best avoided or calmed down. The facilitator has to find ways to let the expression of emotions be communicated but in appropriate proportions so as not to heat up uncontrollable disputes.

Guide participants through a series of questions, to place themselves and their narrative in the (existing) network of memory/identity communities:

- Allow participants to **reconsider the current (often binary) social and group divisions they and the dominant mainstream community are used to.** Neither do we want to reinforce existing dividing lines nor do we aim for an offensive expression of the parallel narrative;
- Attempt active (as opposed to re-active) self-description through awareness of the fact that the generation of the mainstream narrative produced a series of excluded/marginalized social groups or minorities. Support participants in realizing how the generation of their (minority) group was a by-product of this social process;
- **Discuss how the parallel narrative group is perceived by the dominant mainstream society** and contrast this with the active self-description (above);
- Facilitate an expression of this self-description (text, object and/or art work);
- **Facilitate dialogue between parallel and mainstream narratives through the presentation event** enhanced by interactive components.

# How to find your facilitator?

Why a good facilitator is a key success factor and what to think about when trying to find the right person.

Participatory projects are about a bottom-up process, about co-creation and collaborative decision making. Whilst one could argue that they are about empowerment of a community, practitioners know the paradox that you can't give away power, it needs to be taken. How then can a good facilitator ensure a process that is satisfactory for all individuals involved and take responsibility to deliver the project goals?

A successful participatory process, be it a workshop, or a longer term collaboration with a community, is highly dependent on the facilitation. The facilitator will be an agent for change, creating a safe space for everyone to speak up and engage. Whereas a facilitator will always keep the central question for a project in mind, he or she empowers the participants to be creative and become co-authors of the process. A facilitator is aware of the responsibility of such a position, articulating clearly what he or she can do and also what is not their role. Usually artists that have worked with communities as their main focus of work will have vast experience with these questions. It may be good to **get in touch with international initiatives like the European Academy of Participation**, or similar networks to tap into their pool of trained and experienced artists. It may also be useful to **consult *Living as Form* by Nato Thompson or *Participation*** (Whitechapel Gallery edition) to establish a profile for the facilitator that fits your ambitions. The following skill set may serve as a point of departure to formulate your own skill sets targeted to your specific project.

#### A good facilitator will have knowledge of:

- the historical and contextual perspective of participatory practice and understand contemporary examples including current debates such as authorship and ownership in collaborative practice;
- practical and theoretical research tools and methods to enable them to reflect critically on their own practice;
- creative processes and strategies for working in diverse contexts;
- the ethics and principles of participatory practice including working with different stakeholders;
- how teams work and different leadership models;
- social entrepreneurial strategies;

- risk management including health and safety issues;
- relevant ecological and sustainability issues.

#### A good facilitator will master the skills of:

- initiating, generating and exploring relevant ideas, propositions, challenges and provocations;
- devising the appropriate strategies and/or methodologies for a particular participatory project;
- applying collaborative processes and working with co-creation methodologies;
- communicating professionally, internally and externally, with diverse groups of people;
- working with organisations and individuals in different cultural contexts;
- enabling and/or empowering others.

#### Good facilitators will show an ethos of:

- self-reflection and critical engagement with their own practice and that of others;
- resilience and openness to uncertainty;
- empathy (not excluding professional distance);
- responding responsibly and ethically to complex situations.

It is important to **formulate your particular tailored skill sets** (the above list may serve you merely as a reference) that suits your project specificities and discuss it with facilitators before you agree with them to collaborate. This should be part of a process in which you take enough time to talk through your project idea and all aspects of the project. It is extremely important that your expectations are outspoken and transparent. There can be no hidden agendas. This is basically meant to **build trust as the main principle on which a good facilitator will lead the group**, including you and your organization: 'into the open'.

# How to disseminate and deal with the media?

Sharing, awareness raising and knowledge transfer can transform how your project is represented by the community and the media.

Dissemination may depend on the community's will to disseminate, to show themselves to a larger audience. There might be problematic heritages whose proprietors are not willing to go public. Even in this case, it is important to discuss the question with the memory community and arrive at a consensus at least about the recording and the archiving of the community's shared memory, stories, objects, activities. This may be important in a later period when it becomes free for public use or scrutiny.

The question of dissemination is also important because the community's material may contain taboos or discourses / discussions which are not necessarily easy to understand for people outside of the memory group. This is why it may be decisive to elaborate the material for dissemination (explanations, additional information, rewriting, etc.).

**Dissemination has to be agreed upon by the members of the community.** Sometimes it is difficult to decide who the members are because the community may be constituted by people who participate with different regularity. Enough time should be left for the members of the community before a decision is taken.

If an agreement has been achieved, it is **important to design the process of dissemination well: what to present to a larger public? The actual activities of the group? Or its results?** The audience has to be chosen carefully and the presentation has to be designed accordingly (e.g. Holocaust stories in a school).

Media is an important factor in dissemination but not the only one: face-to-face events, conferences, workshops, evening programmes in public institutions may be good channels for dissemination. It is important to be on good terms

with the media, especially friendly media that can also help in case hostile media outlets attack the group (it may happen, especially in the case of identity-groups or minority groups). **Friendly media should from time to time broadcast information about the group in relationship to the problem/memory they are working on** (minority culture, remembrance days, festivities, or on the contrary, when attacked or discredited, etc). If the memory community has special events or through their activities they have developed some results, it may be important to solicit media coverage.

If negative media reactions are broadcast, it is important to answer and explain the functioning of the group, its aims, its results. In such cases, it **may be helpful to ask members of the community to participate because personal examples can often facilitate sensitivity and responsiveness.** If the attack is strong or wild, the facilitator should take up the offense and appear in public in defense of the project. It is also a good move to ask experts to back the project and explain its goals and values.

# How to build and engage your audience?

Audience development is a key factor to achieve impact. The audience may be the community that participates in your 'heritage making' activities or may be outside of it.

Once you have identified your community, the participants in your heritage making process, you will be in a conversation with them about the target groups that will benefit from your and their collaborative work. This may seem premature but having an audience in mind will help you in your participatory processes.

Not all memory groups need an audience or a large audience (e.g. 2nd generation Holocaust survivors' discussion group). **If the memory group agrees on speaking to a larger audience, it is through personal connections that it is easiest to make the first steps to build such an audience.** A few such relationships may help to build the first audiences, for example school teachers can help to build access to schoolchildren or classes. Members of the memory group may also want to inform their acquaintances about the activities of the group or their results. In other cases, especially if there are important results to communicate to a larger audience, it might be helpful to reach possible audiences through the media: events can be advertised or their contents explained in various media channels (cultural programmes, local media). Social media is a strong asset in building up an audience or even to find new members for the group. The importance of social media relies on the fact that through these channels such people can be reached who are already interested in the topic of the group. This enables a more precise targeting.

If an audience has been forming around the memory group, it is vital to have them informed about the activities and events of the group. **People in the audience should feel that they are not neglected, that their presence and attention is sought for and that their opinion or reactions count.** The memory group should have a webpage, a Facebook page, an email sharing group, a newsletter: with regular updates and monitoring any of these information sources can help build and preserve the audience.

# How to use formative feedback?

Why formative feedback in all phases is key to a successful collaborative project.

Feedback is an essential way to ensure the quality of your project. Quality in this context relates not only to the outcome of the artistic product but especially to the process and how this process is experienced by all participants.

The different stakeholders of a project - like the commissioning organisation, the target community, the public, the facilitator(s) and producers - all represent different ways of working: professional, lay, introvert, extrovert, literate, illiterate, intuitive or highly structured, **making a very diverse group function in a way that it is satisfactory for all involved it requires regular moments to share how all individuals experience the process**, especially if emotional labour is involved. These moments can take a variety of forms: conversations, physical exercises, games, creative processes. Their aim is not to judge or assess a process or an outcome but to identify what aspect can be enhanced and discuss proposals on how this could happen.

Collaborative responsibility for the quality of a process will impact positively on the experience of all involved as well as on the outcome. Through answering simple questions - such as: What are we trying to do? How are we trying to do it? How do we know it works and especially: what are we doing to improve the experience? - **a facilitator or a participant may open up a conversation that is less about evaluating experiences but more about how to grow as a group and as a project.** There are many ways to organise formative feedback.

It may also be important to organise regular monitoring meetings on different levels: it may be a restricted circle of the project team, people who are actively engaged in the functioning of the memory group. It may be a larger circle of regular members of the participants; this can be a kind of 'plenary' session that deals with and discusses:

- monitoring (where we are ...); or,
- further developing the project (what do next or in the long run) are discussed. Another case when such a meeting might be important: when conflicts, clashes are felt or foreseen between various participants or group of participants.

## FURTHER READING

Examples of how to organise formative feedback can be found here:  
<https://www.atd.ahk.nl/en/theatre-programmes/das-theatre/feedback-method/>

# How to resolve conflict in workshops and projects?

Learning to deal with conflict and dissent creatively involves creating mutual respect, and finding a context-specific way to work together.

Conflict is normal and can be used in creative ways to further mutual recognition of different points of view. The past is essentially polysemic, it is multivocal, but it is also messy. Yet we live in an era of identity politics where we seem to be increasingly unable to talk to one another, let alone recognise other points of view. Solutions need to be both philosophical and practical, and based on deep understanding of a particular context.

Accepting that different points of view are as valid as our own is theoretically easy, but hard to actually reconcile when we meet these viewpoints in practice. We can learn much from the established techniques of peacebuilding, and in particular from conflict sensitivity (see link to resources below).

We often assume we know why an individual or a group holds to one view of the past, frequently seeing them as based on ignorance or prejudice. One strategy for moving beyond this impasse is to find what different points of view actually agree on: historical fact-checking can be useful here. And fact-checking also helps the participants in heritage-making processes to develop a critical sensibility, to question their own viewpoints and to discover why particular points of view matter to others. For minority communities whose heritages have been marginalised from mainstream narratives, this can be a crucial process.

Develop and encourage processes that **help participants in your contact zone to recognise the limits of their knowledge**. Communities often talk about ‘pride’ when discussing their heritage, and this is the default mode for most national presentations and understandings of heritage too. But one way to develop greater sensitivity to other points of view is to **encourage a humbleness towards heritage**. The Italian feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti has suggested that societies ‘become minoritarian’: she means that we need to be culturally humble, to recognise that our views of the world are only partial, and **be open to what other views can teach us**. When we are culturally humble, when we think of our own viewpoints as ‘minoritarian’, we are more likely to be able to recognise and accept others.

Achieving this is hard, and can be a deeply unsettling process for participants. How the facilitator of your

heritage contact zone is seen by the participants is crucial. Unfortunately, choosing the right facilitator – or style of interaction – is still more of an art than a science: in some cases a facilitator seen as dispassionately external may help participants to critically discuss their points of view, yet in others you may need someone with recognised legitimacy through their existing ties to a local community or issue.

Give people the tools to think like historians, to interpret and be exposed to other interpretations of historical material. Don’t just work on getting people to discuss their different points of view, but also get them to work on the raw material of heritage. Pulling apart and analysing historical sources, archives, etc. in a shared process.

Secondly, engage them in a peacebuilding process together. This in itself might enable them to overcome conflict, to turn friction into creativity.

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4.

# Learning by failing



Sometimes, in spite of the best planning, projects fail or certain parts of a project fail. Sometimes failure can cause projects to take an unexpected direction. But first of all failure is a powerful moment of learning. Experiencing limits, rejection, flaws and moments of crisis in a group can cause frustrations. Ideally the project plan will have identified moments of risk in a project and stakeholders are prepared for failure and compensate with back-up scenarios.

Feedback sessions will help to deal with failure as an opportunity of growth.

In cases of failure, where a project spirals out of control, transparency and sharing may not save the project but can help the protagonist and outsiders to learn. Samuel Beckett famously remarked: *Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.*

We now hear from three of the HCZ practitioners about how they have dealt with failure. These are failures of very different kinds, from the institutional level to objects.

# Dealing with Scandal

Lars Ebert, co-director of H401 (formerly Castrum Peregrini) takes us through how to cope/act when your institution itself becomes an object of public narrative for all the wrong reasons.

In 2018 Castrum Peregrini was confronted with sexual abuse in the past of the organization; evidence emerged implicating its co-founder, Wolfgang Frommel (1902-1986), and his circle from the 1950s to the 1970s. Until then the organization's mission was based on a heroic story of its past: a community of Jewish and non-Jewish youngsters had survived there in hiding during Nazi occupation. With the abuse the place was now not only one where lives had been saved, but also where lives had been damaged. The organisation felt ready to work through this trauma head-on with public programmes, participatory workshops and artistic research, with everyone that wanted to contribute. But this dialogic approach to “working through” was strongly opposed by a media outrage and public opinion that made it clear that the mere witness of history as a basis for a dialogue was not enough. It lacked the clear and unambiguous moral judgement of good and bad, that would help the public to relate – or not! – to the story of Castrum Peregrini and its protagonists. Also, this dialogic approach did not actually support victims and recognition of their trauma. The question of guilt and justice was not resolved. Castrum Peregrini therefore constituted an independent commission chaired by the retired judge Frans Bauduin that would investigate the abuse in the circle around Wolfgang Frommel until his death in 1986. Their report was published on the 06th May 2019. The same day that the report was published all major

Dutch newspapers covered the news. Reactions were mixed: from repetition of the previous outrage to more subtle reflections. Individual reactions in social media were mixed, too. Private messages primarily were very supportive towards the organisation's efforts towards transparency and working through.

Castrum Peregrini/H401 recognises the victims and their stories and hopes the report, and the offers of support set out in it, are helpful to work through their trauma. With victims speaking out, their stories can gain a place in the memory of Castrum Peregrini.

Castrum Peregrini is determined to follow the recommendations in the report, although they pose some serious dilemmas: how can one work through traumatic history by making it disappear by changing the name Castrum Peregrini, getting rid of the books of Frommel and by “cleaning” all of his traces from Gisèle's wartime safehouse? These dilemmas are yet to be solved. Of course, the physical heritage linked to the memory of traumatic events is painful for victims. At the same time the intrinsic link between tangible and intangible heritage can be a basis of working through trauma, and maybe that basis is even a *conditio sine qua non* for working through as such.

But ambiguous, negative, traumatic heritage, or – as in the case with the canon debate the ‘naming’ of negative heritage – so far mainly causes outrage, which prevents society from really working through.

# Failure to outsource the call for objects

Ovidiu Dajbog-Miron describes the difficulties that Theater as Resistance had in trying to collect the stories behind the objects that the public donated to their project.

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Simply publishing an announcement when searching for relevant objects for a particular research theme or for organizing an exhibition is not always enough. Besides giving enough information drafted in a funny, catchy text, **one may also need to reach out personally to collectors, passionate people, and history buffs in order to spread the word and make the search more personal** and send the message that the result really matters for a reason.

In the process of gathering objects and documents for Theater as Resistance we managed to convince people to donate old objects, books, materials. However, **we were less successful in convincing them to tell the stories of those objects and share their personal connection to them** (with some exceptions, especially from the theater field). Nonprofessionals are often reluctant to put themselves on the spot and they tend to avoid public exposure even in small amounts, which is always something to carefully consider when outsourcing a call for public gathering of objects, documents, materials and so on in connection with a particular project.

# Working with the Wrong Tools

Lars Ebert outlines using a method that didn't work, and iterative improvement

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**There is no quick fix: from solution to process.**

Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam, NL, offers a challenging and inspiring example. Triggered by preparatory talks of a project in 2017 **the centre was confronted with the question whether its name that refers to the inhumane colonial past of the Netherlands would symbolise a problem in the integrity of the institution that is well known as a platform for radical thinking and art initiatives** that critically question the social status quo. The debate about the name soon grew in dimension with intense and polarised discussions all across the art world, mainstream and social media and politics. Today the **centre has entered into a longterm multi-year process to reflect on its name and what it symbolises**, making this part of its mission.

Founded in 1990, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art was conceived as an art house with a mission to present and discuss the work created today by visual artists and cultural makers, from here and afar. It organizes exhibitions, commissions art, publishes, and develops educational and collaborative initiatives. This non-profit institution has especially worked with artists, and engaged audiences, who are interested in posing challenging inquiries and articulations of our present. While its program considers the contemporary, it also regards how art has been created and experienced in the past, and it imagines the futures art can come to shape.

Recently, and after a series of public debates, the institution has come to examine the origins of its name. To read more about this, go to: [The Name-Change Initiative at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art.](https://www.wdw.nl/en/our_program/long_term/the_name_change_initiative)

In a period of 2 years time all internal and public conversations have not led to a solution of the name question that would be meaningful and inclusive for all stakeholders involved. Instead the **institution with time has embraced full transparency by publishing a timeline on the name change initiative, with all important moments in it, cross references and background information.** This transparency again was not a solution but has sustained a process that went deeper than finding the right name: **it questioned the inner workings of an institution** as such, scrutinizing governance, management and content. The current director states in a public letter on the same site: "First, the current name indicates the institution's location, but does not express the institution's vocation, which is to present contemporary art and theory. Secondly, the current name impinges upon the institution's pursuit of inclusivity, which is vital to the relevance and contribution of cultural practice in general. [...] The name change initiative at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art is thus designed as an opportunity to change the character of the institution. For the critiques of our institution's name raised an existential rather than situational problem for us. **Informed by larger decolonizing efforts underway in the Netherlands, the 2017 name critiques and debates brought to the surface the importance of acknowledging the multi-vocal heritage of an increasingly diverse society.** The name change initiative thereby involves several structural and programmatic changes that I consider necessary to enable before even thinking of proposing a new name."

**Follow the process at** [https://www.wdw.nl/en/our\\_program/long\\_term/the\\_name\\_change\\_initiative](https://www.wdw.nl/en/our_program/long_term/the_name_change_initiative)

# Five case studies selected through an open call

This chapter focuses on projects from which we have derived our reflections above or which serve as an illustrative example of the challenges this toolkit addresses. These projects are either from the realm of the HCZ partners or have been submitted through an open call survey that was issued by HCZ in the first half of the project. These projects are not meant to be exemplary or serve as best practice examples, but rather as inspiring practices that reveal the challenges, possibilities and potentials as well as the pitfalls of engaging in participatory and creative processes in heritage settings.

The organisations represented here defined themselves as contact zones or as working with contact zones. As they all operate on various levels, locally, nationally or transnationally, with some having a more activist, others a more educational or a more artistic background, diversity in form and content is a given.

## 1. Museum of the Communist Consumer

The Museum of the Communist Consumer is situated in the basement of the independent theatre Auăleu and of Scârț Loc Lejer in Timișoara, Romania. It was established in May 2015 after 5 years of trying to gather and save as many everyday Romanian heritage objects as possible. The Museum reached out through public calls and announcements, it bought lots of the objects from flea markets, saved them from the trash and all possible and unimaginable ways. This museum mainly deals and works with objects produced in Romania during the communist regime. Toys, dolls, games, books, bicycles, vinyl records, tapes, radios, TV sets, decorative objects, furniture, musical instruments, posters, clothes, shoes, bottles, glasses, photos, magazines etc. All of these are the subject of a permanent and continuously growing collection displayed in an apartment arrangement that makes it an immersive experience for visitors.

The museum is not receiving any financial support, and is run from private sources. Also, the Aualeu theatre and the Museum are completely independent.

The mission of our project is to preserve objects from the Romanian communist era together with their stories in a participatory way that involves the audiences. You can find *Muzeul Consumatorului Comunist* on Facebook.com.

The unique aspect of our museum is that people can actually look through the objects, touch them, they can also listen to music from our vinyl collection, read books and magazines, children can play with toys, etc. They connect their private memories to the object and exchange their thoughts about them with the other visitors. Entrance is free and still the museum is sustainable without public funding or employees. It is a real grass-roots civil society initiative. The audience and participants constantly provide new material, following public calls asking for certain objects. “The past still has much to offer and reveal, we just need to dig in the proper place.”

— Ovidiu Mibăiță, theatre director and owner of *Museum of the Communist Consumer*

### Thematic tags

Post-communism  
Post-totalitarianism

### Target group

All citizens

The main conflict related to the objects in our collection is that it was really hard to be a "consumer" during the communist era. There was very little to find in stores, people had basically the same objects in their homes but still everyone did their best to maintain the impression that they had everything and everything they owned was unique. Another conflict is given by the fact that even though after the revolution in 1989 everyone did their best to get rid of their possessions directly related to the communist regime and still nowadays some of them cry when seeing them in the museum.

### Currency and self-reflexivity

Participants and visitors are invited to reflect in writing. This feedback shows how the perceptions in society are developing and what the general impression is of the museum's work. The feedback books that could in the future easily turn into a written museum of impressions and collective memory that develops through time. These written reactions are an important feedback-mechanism that impacts on how the work of the museum develops.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

[www.facebook.com/aualeu.teatru/](http://www.facebook.com/aualeu.teatru/)  
[www.facebook.com/muzeuconsumatorcomunist](http://www.facebook.com/muzeuconsumatorcomunist)

### How do you deal with conflict? What is your main method?

“All conflicts have their deaths so we decided to look upon their births and not to forget their roots also. We treat conflicts with smiles, care and attention and even though it sounds odd sometimes they get shy.”

## 2. Theater as Resistance

We are researching relevant stories connected to the theatre before 1989, when this art was extremely important in Romania for those living under the totalitarian Ceaușescu regime.

**The ordinary peoples' stories about the power of theater in their lives are the body of immaterial heritage that we are trying to preserve.**

Theater as Resistance is a project focused on theatrical archives of theatres in the multicultural city of Timișoara - Romanian, Hungarian, German theaters and the Opera, as well as student company Thespis, Merlin puppetry theatre and the independent company Aualeu. Our mission is to **investigate the relationship of theatre with society and the various ways in which acts of resistance were produced** under the umbrella of this relationship.

**What is unique (thematically, culturally or socially) to your specific institutional or project context?**

1. The multicultural context of the city of Timisoara, with its majority of Romanian citizens and strong historical minorities: Hungarian, German, and Serbian.
2. The rejection of the communist past which is still hurtful for those who lived through it and the lack of interest of the young generation for heritage of all kinds. And yet, when the stories about the past are told using the tools they are familiar with, young people can be very interested in them.
3. Institutionally, we produce the project under an NGO umbrella, with support from Timisoara 2021 and we have as partners mostly public institutions with very different ways of working, which sometimes generate tensions from which we all learn.

### Thematic tags

Post-communism  
Post-totalitarianism

The **Theater as Resistance project had as a starting point the archives - theater archives as well as bureaucratic and political archives of the former State Police - Securitate.** The last ones in particular are highly controversial in Romania, as in other Eastern European countries, as they have been used for political fights. **It is very difficult to do research using these sources and yet one can find extremely valuable information which helps reconstruct everyday life and relationships under a totalitarian regime.** One can also make the connections between those times and the current times which are still affected by the past in ways we sometimes do not see.

**Our main target group is the generation/s born after 1989 with little knowledge about the communist life.** Still the past is affecting their present lives, with many mentalities passed on to them by their parents or by society in general.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

www.facebook.com/  
theaterasresistance/  
Instagram:  
teatruicarezistenta

It helps them to understand where all these toxic dynamics come from. Another target group are intellectuals and researchers of all ages who use the results of our research for their work, as well as artists whose works are relevant for the social context before and after 1989.

### Currency and self-reflexivity

As curator of the project Cristina Modreanu and her co-curator Ovidiu Mihaita have started their analysis from their own experience in relationship with theater, growing up as children in communist Romania and as theater professionals after 1989. The outcomes of the project have a personal component both in a written as well as in a performative way with texts in a fanzine, performances created by Ovidiu Mihaita and interviews we conduct in the frame of the project. Through this interaction we keep the research alive and relevant.

**How do you deal with conflict? What is your main method?**

**Diplomacy and inclusiveness are necessary skills or attitudes for this work.**

We invite people to join the creative process instead of criticizing from the margins. This results in an organic participatory co-creation process.

## 3. Migrationlab

**Migrationlab builds heritage spaces of conversations between migrants, refugees and locals who never met before based on a storytelling approach** translated through various artistic forms (poems, music, visual art, performances). Migrationlab works with the transformation of space and objects that support the storytelling process and create the conditions for authentic conversations to take place. Since 2014, the **Migrationlab Foundation, active in Europe and beyond, has been exploring new ways of encounter and communication in public space between migrants, refugees and locals** by directly involving them in this process by co-designing and co-creating temporary public living rooms. The “Welcome to the Living Room” (WTTLR) experience enables migrants, refugees and locals to come together to get to know each other, share life experiences and stories using artistic forms, start a conversation about migration topics that matter to them and find solutions to local problems they face in their community.

Migrationlab debuted as a blog with the same name in September 2014, showcasing its founder Laura M. Pana’s personal journey and reflections on being a Romanian migrant woman in Europe and thus encouraging migrants, refugees and locals to share their stories and reflections on migration in the online

space. The blog was created in response to a lack of authentic public discussions in which all three communities would share their own perspectives on migration. Soon the blog developed into a project and an organisation. Since 2014, the **Migrationlab communities have transformed different urban spaces into Migrationlab public living rooms:** artistic spaces; art galleries; a room in a former bread factory; the attic of a museum; a classroom in a university; a room in a student dorm; a space in a church; a neighbourhood theatre; and Mr. Friday - a fisherman refugee boat we sailed with on the IJ River in Amsterdam, that transported 282 refugees from Egypt to Lampedusa in 2013. Since 2014 Migrationlab has travelled to five European countries and seven cities and different neighbourhoods within each city.

**Migrationlab’s aim is to find new ways to communicate with and relate to each other in public space.** Together with migrants, refugees and locals we co-create the conditions (dedicated space and time) for real discussions and developing a new language. Through collectively exploring creative activities we find ways to manage conflict and develop solutions about how to live together in the same neighbourhood or city.

**What is unique (thematically, culturally or socially) to your specific institutional or project context?**

Migrants, refugees and locals are given the possibility to create together a dedicated space and time where their stories, reflections and life experiences can be shared, discussed, reflected upon, and debated. By their direct participation in this process, **through co-design workshops facilitated by Migrationlab, these communities become the “owners” of these temporary spaces**, by deciding together on what the public living room should look like (design, objects, colours, sounds), in which part of their city it should take place (location, heritage) and what stories and topics should be discussed (the topics, stories are not imposed).

### Thematic tags

Civic space & gentrification  
Social Heritage &  
Religious Identities

### Target group

Migrants, refugees, locals

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

www.migrationlab.org  
@migrationlab: Instagram,  
Twitter, Facebook

Migration has become a polarising topic in recent years. Social heritage is sometimes ignored, denied or rejected based on misconceptions and prejudices or as a result of negative political discourse and media reporting. Conflict can thus arise as a result of different ways of living and thinking. On the other hand, the civic space may also be at the core of a conflict by denying the rights of migrants, refugees and locals to meet and engage in meaningful conversations.

### Currency and self-reflexivity

Migrationlab has been evolving organically and therefore stayed authentic, by not imposing too many rules and most importantly to empower migrants, refugees and locals to become the co-creators of the Migrationlab public living rooms, which means that they are the ones who shape these spaces and the stories and conversations within these spaces. Additionally, the combination between trial-error and lessons learnt has been the most effective way to develop. For example, after the introduction of the co-design workshops, we started using the methodology we developed in different European contexts to co-create spaces of encounter and collaboration and facilitate a participatory process for cultural institutions and NGOs to work on complex topics such as diversity, inclusion, social cohesion, migration, culture, social entrepreneurship. Migrationlab is in constant movement and transformation, which allows the conditions to stay relevant.

### Main method of dealing with conflict

Migrationlab’s living rooms open the doors to everyone. Opening the space in this way and allowing different perspectives in the room leads to honest discussions even if the opinions are different. Exchanging thoughts and perspectives can help participants become empowered through moments of self-reflection. By the sharing of stories a stranger has a name and history. They become a person and not a label. By communicating their intentions and meaning with others, people try to understand, to change or to adapt. In the Migrationlab co-created public living room, people are looking for new ways of communicating because they have to look at so many perspectives. Concepts like labelling someone or something with the binary thinking of “us” and “them” are challenged. The participants react by developing a new language, which words we need, how we can express some particular or new phenomena like a child being brought up in many cultures.

## 4. Creative Court

The Netherlands has a long history of being a global marketplace of people, objects and ideas. It has made the country into what it is today. Still it has to live with the afterlife of what were often racialised and violent forms of exchange and migration. The **Dutch colonial heritage still generates controversy**, the most famous example being the confrontations between the supporters of Black Pete and their critics. Many in Dutch society consider these social and cultural clashes a threat to social cohesion and stability, others understand them as a necessary means to deal with the traumas of these pasts. Creative Court believes in the importance of a broader understanding of the workings of these at times rapidly escalating conversations about our common heritage. The question that we address is: **In which ways does our common colonial past work through in our feelings, perception and social interaction today?** In addressing that question, Creative Court conducts literary and theoretical research, and conducts empirical research based on theatrical techniques in order to develop constructive ways of dealing with our contested and fragmented past.

### Thematic tags

Colonialisms & contested monuments  
Abuse & exploitation

### Target group

Participants come from diverse social backgrounds, age groups, professions, education and positioning in relation to the topic. Participants have origins in either a former colonising nation and participants with origins in former colonies. Diversity within the group is key.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

[www.creativecourt.org](http://www.creativecourt.org)  
[www.twitter.com/CreativeCourt\\_](https://www.twitter.com/CreativeCourt_)  
[www.facebook.com/creativecourt.org](https://www.facebook.com/creativecourt.org)  
(We expect to join Instagram soon as well)

Empirical research includes looking into different stories and images, such as videos and photographs. In parallel, participatory workshops create experience-based knowledge that can be transferred in a performative manner. The process results in a theatre performance and installation in which the findings are translated into an audience experience that offers a new shared perspective for the future.

Creative Courts mission is to develop art projects and reflect on global justice. Creative Court works from the understanding that empathy and reflection are crucial qualities for peaceful coexistence, and that art can incite these qualities.

While the project is embedded in the field of Artistic Research, it takes an interdisciplinary approach, working with academics in the fields of Critical Heritage Studies, Anthropology and History. Empirical findings are documented and fed into the scientific research, while jointly contributing to the analysis of the process as well as the outcomes.

The conflictual, controversial or contested aspect of the heritage derives from the different narratives about the past and the different levels of (dis)comfort with which the past is being perceived and transmitted to future generations. When these different narratives meet, it is likely to cause painful clashes, in many cases rooted in a lack of knowledge about the feelings of the other, sometimes complemented by a lack of acknowledgement for the way in which one's own positioning is being perceived by the other.

### Currency and self-reflexivity

The workshop sessions with the participants are documented. The scholars involved will continuously reflect on the process with the facilitators and organisers, on their role in it, and their own possible preconceptions. A diary, from which to quote in the last phase of the project, will help with the development of theatrical installations.

### Main method of dealing with conflict

It is our conviction that sensory approaches can break through eligible thinking or preconceived notions and bring to the fore the subconscious. Creative Court will develop performative methodologies, in order to substantiate new directions for societal reflection on our colonial past and for encounters that transcend emotions. In our approach we will look for ways to get very close to conflict, during which process feelings of polarisation will rise. Subsequently, Creative Court will work on depolarising them using dialogue, dramatherapeutical and Polarized Theater of the Oppressed techniques (a method for conflict transformation through theatre developed by the Palestinian-Israelian peace movement Combattants for Peace) and jointly reflecting on the process afterwards.

## 5. Hrant Dink Foundation

The Cultural Heritage Map of Turkey is one of the products of Hrant Dink Foundation's cultural heritage inventory research since 2014. The map records Armenian, Greek, Syriac, and Jewish cultural heritage in order to make visible the multiple cultures and facets of different communities in Anatolia. Information on public buildings such as churches, schools, monasteries, cemeteries, synagogues, and hospitals has been gathered from primary and secondary sources, as well as from various archives, and has been shared through this online map. The Cultural Heritage Map of Turkey is a work in progress; it will live and flourish, first and foremost, by way of the contribution and feedback of its users. There is also a second layer on top of the inventory where the field experience of a later research, creative reuse of sites of memory research concentrates on the revival of memory is shared.

### Thematic tags

Civic space & gentrification  
Nationalism & Revisionism

### Target group

Society of Turkey, decisionmakers (for advocacy), international stakeholders (for their renovation and preservation), tourists, academics, historians, architects and NGOs.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

<https://hrantdink.org/en/>  
[@HrantDinkFnd](https://www.facebook.com/hrantdinkfoundation)  
<https://www.instagram.com/hrantdinkfoundation/>

The topics that are studied were brought together through consultation with locals while researching the Armenian culture in Anatolia. The findings are presented in the form of stories and city tours, accompanied by 360 degree panoramas, videos, audios and photographs. Going beyond tangible cultural heritage, this work also contains findings on the intangible cultural heritage. By locating the places where Armenians lived between the Ottoman and Republican times on an interactive map, this work also uses new media forms having in mind revival of the memory.

<https://turkiyekulturvarliklari.hrantdink.org/?lang=en>

No such inventory was created in Turkey or elsewhere. This is the first online interactive map of non-Muslim cultural heritage of Turkey.

The cultural heritage structures built by non-Muslim communities are mostly unknown. Most of them are destroyed, some of them are still in racks or in ruins while some of them are standing and can be saved. Rendering the invisible visible is important and encouraging the local populations to rethink the creative reuse of some of the structures that are still standing but not used will be vital to promote the cultural heritage and encourage its creative reuse for the benefit of the local population.

### Currency and self-reflexivity

We try to do field research as much as we can, we get in touch with local communities in different cities, listen to their expectations and also monitor the interest in our online map. We strive to add new dimensions to the map such as oral histories, 360 panoramic visuals, and memory tours.

### Main method of dealing with conflict

Working in other cities can be challenging in Turkey. Finding the right local stakeholders, building a relationship with local NGOs, academics, experts from the cities that we are working on enables us to build confidence. Finding the right and adopting a constructive language and talking with people rather than talking to them helps us to avoid conflicts.

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