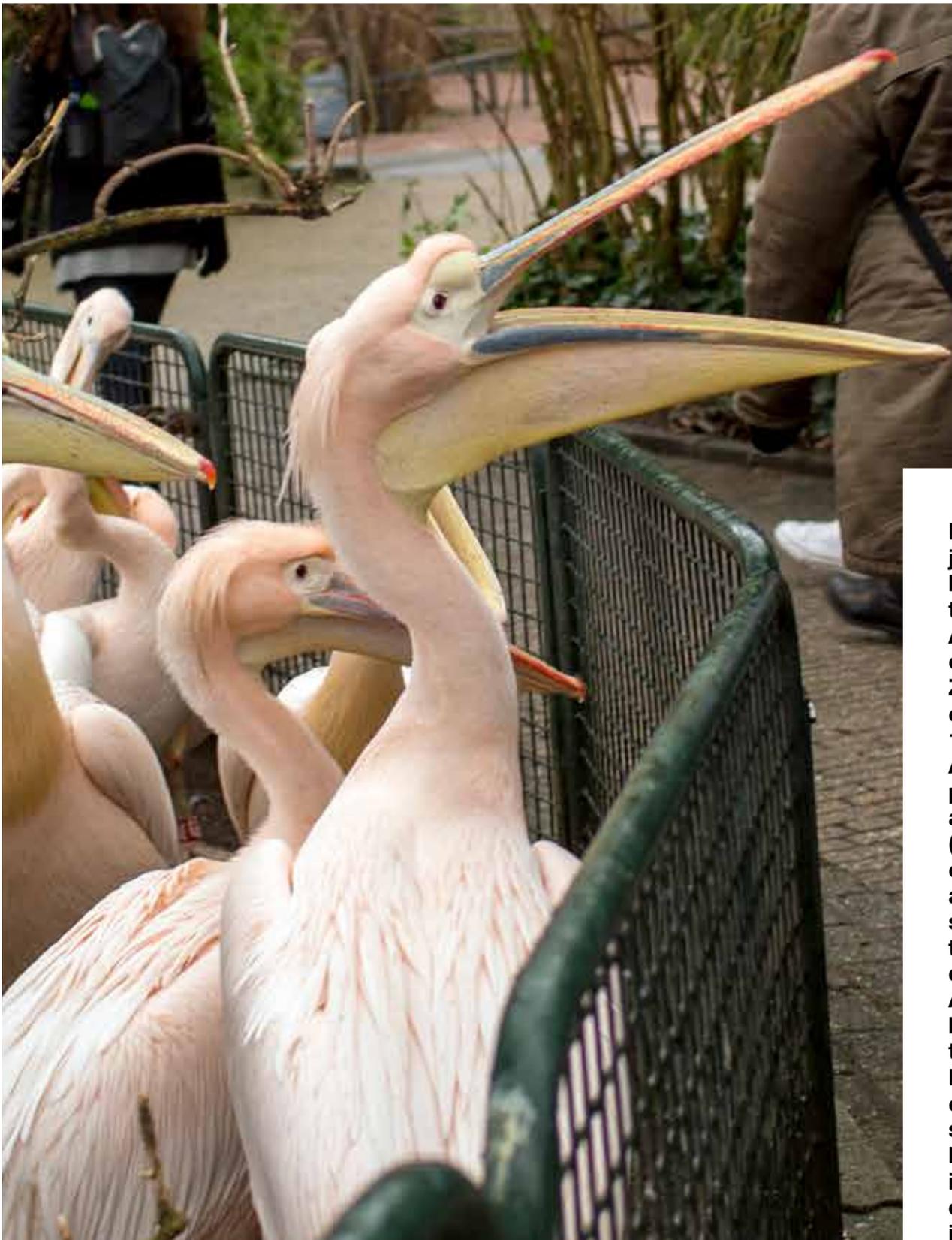


Amsterdam Artis Zoo

Winter School
January 2018



Nick Shepherd and Christian Ersten were joined by dance animateur Nicola Visser in leading the first winter school of the Master of Museology degree at the Reinwardt Academy. The winter school took place in collaboration with Artis Amsterdam Royal Zoo. Artis was one of the earliest museums of Amsterdam. In the past, it also held about 12,000 objects from Africa, Oceania, and Asia. Currently, it consists of a designed park, a collection of living animals, plants, and trees, a “dead” natural history collection (stuffed animals, geology, shells, skeletons), collections of art, history, and ethnography, and 28 national monuments. The issue at stake during the winter school concerned the idea of a zoo in the Anthropocene. How do we understand zoos in general, and Artis Zoo in particular, in an epoch in which human impact on the earth and its eco-systems is the main force to be reckoned with? How do zoos respond to the challenges of biodiversity and climate change? What should a zoo of and for the Anthropocene look like? Students worked through the ideas at the heart of the “zoo walk” via embodied research methods, as a way of imagining the zoo’s alternative futures in the Anthropocene.



Reinwardt Academy
Amsterdam University of the Arts

This insert is based on work done by students in the Master of Museology program at the Reinwardt Academy at the Amsterdam University of the Arts.



Artis Zoo and the Anthropocene – Camila Miorelli



The Anthropocene. Have you heard of it? If not yet, you will very soon. This term marks the beginning of our era as humans, or more specifically the moment when mankind began to reign supreme over environmental forces and to shape the natural world. It is easy to take for granted the idea of natural climate-shaping forces: meteors, volcanic eruptions, or hurricanes. But what was once awe of nature's raw and unrelenting power will soon be easily traceable to our own actions, or in-actions, in relation to climate change, natural conservation, or resource depletion.

While the foci of global change are usually computer-generated modules of sea-level rise, or metropolitan cities shrinking into desert wastelands, we must ask what will become of the animals in the Anthropocene. Or better yet, what of the zoos? Once cultural centers of entertainment or places to encounter "the other", zoos face a new challenge of remaining relevant, while remediating not only the ethical conditions involved, but the socio-historical and post-colonial aspects as well.

The graduate students at the Reinwardt Academy chose to tackle this topic in winter 2018 at Artis Zoo in the center of Amsterdam. This was done through a week of workshops involving self-guided tours through Artis, choreographic and movement-based workshops, and literature reviews from the likes of Naomi Klein and John Berger, as well as introductions into the concept of the Anthropocene.



One presentation that stood out was by a group of students whose aim was to challenge the "gaze" within the zoo and the often-overlooked aspects of surveillance, based on a Foucauldian standard. They asked us to empathetically reconsider our position "outside of the cage". Raising questions such as: What if an animal could stare back? What if the power control could be reversed? What if the object also becomes the subject? Can we reverse hierarchies and create equals?

The students aimed to answer these questions by staging a series of interventions to establish new forms of thought within the zoo. In the first one, the cafeteria would be turned into an experimental space. For some moments, the visitors stopping for



a bite to eat, unaware of their social placement, would be screen-captured and displayed for all the other visitors to see. With the aid of a time delay, the person's own reactions, interactions, and space negotiations would be live for all to see. This would be in the hope of bringing awareness to the "audience's" role in the zoo. The pervasive but neglected factor of presence becomes a moment of connection with the animals occupying and living in the spaces in the zoo.

In other ways, they also want to implement immersive-type experiences to begin to connect with the animals at Artis. Humans mainly use their sense of sight to explore the world around them, but what if our other senses were heightened, as with the eyes of a frog, or the magnetic fields of a crane, even the infrared abilities of certain fish. Activities, art installations, or even new forms of technology could present those realities. Through these role reversals, the zoo becomes a place of not only observation but also experience exchange.

raises, we can lend a thought to animal experience, and perhaps models of interaction or communication will seem ridiculous in the future.

In their proposal they also placed an emphasis on "blind spots". To achieve this, they would make use of architectural elements to encourage the visitor to re-navigate the zoo, as well as disrupt their own actions and aesthetics of power. The observer becomes the observed and has to deal with the uncomfortable position they are placed in when they find an area in the zoo, via pre-designated mapping, where they are watched, or cannot view any life at all. The group claimed this was a way to connect with the animal experience. In their role as caged animals, their docility prevents them from living a life as they would in a natural environment.

This is a very pervasive field, from science to literature. It links back to even the sub-atomic "observer theory", according to which particles behave differently when they are observed. Borges remarks upon this in his distinction of the "public" and "private" self. Do animals also have this luxury. Should they be excluded? After all, there was once a pre-modern idea that discounted people as "savage" and non-sophisticated, almost animal-like. We, as well, learn every day of new developments in science that teach us of the ability for advanced cognition and empathetic responses among animals. As our social consciousness

These types of exercises in architectural interaction and personally restricted subjectivity do not change the existing structure of the zoo, which can be useful for conservation purposes, breeding, research, and preservation. Instead they create activities and resources to re-use and re-imagine a space, which can sometimes elicit passive visitation.

Through these ideas, the zoo is re-invigorated as a space of reflection regarding not only the institutional reminders of the zoo's hierarchical structure but also a new perspective on the Anthropocene and the humans and animals who will dominate the new geological realm. Yet, for a theme

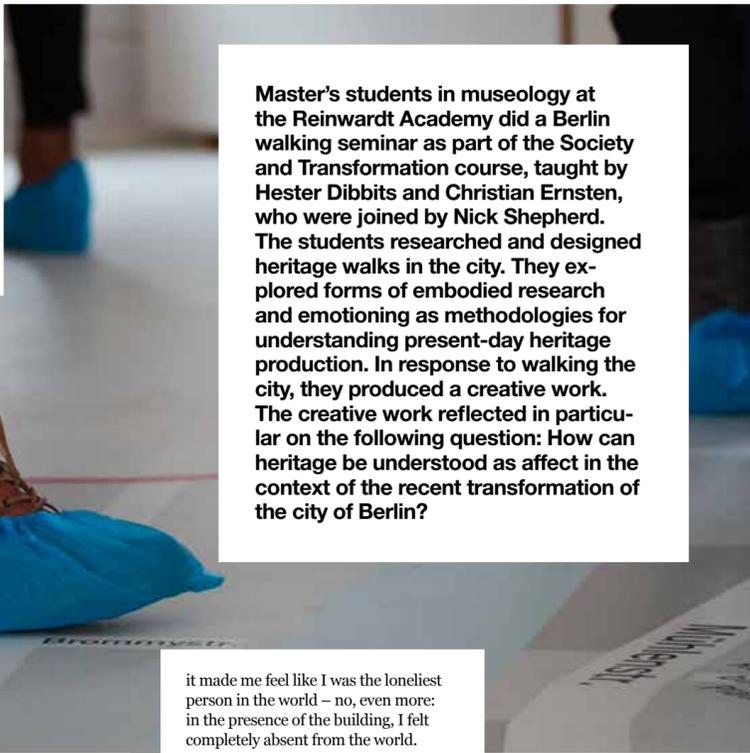
so desperately needing conversation, one must not neglect those unseen elements waiting at the edges of our reality. The universal impact of climate change, the dying of species and livestock, and the global migration crisis will not only affect our lives but also change forever the fundamental fiber of our societies and our global advancement.

In a changing world of rapid development and global neo-liberal policies, empathy needs to be at the forefront of interaction, and we can begin at Artis Zoo.



Berlin

Walking Seminar
March 2017



Non-linear meaning
– Lea Grüter

Master's students in museology at the Reinwardt Academy did a Berlin walking seminar as part of the Society and Transformation course, taught by Hester Dibbits and Christian Ersten, who were joined by Nick Shepherd. The students researched and designed heritage walks in the city. They explored forms of embodied research and emotioning as methodologies for understanding present-day heritage production. In response to walking the city, they produced a creative work. The creative work reflected in particular on the following question: How can heritage be understood as affect in the context of the recent transformation of the city of Berlin?

It made me feel like I was the loneliest person in the world – no, even more: in the presence of the building, I felt completely absent from the world.

I am wondering how the head in the window feels, if you become familiar with the details – the one thing that makes your corridor look different from the 13 other floors, the little flaw on the ground, or your neighbor's doormat. Probably the head celebrated a wedding here or the birth of a child or a new job, or cried for someone it loved, and probably the TV tower looks amazing in the sun from up there.



One day ahead of the walk, I met these guys sitting under the bridge next to the Alexanderplatz. They started talking to me after I left one of the huge GDR construction buildings, "die Rathauspassagen". I felt somehow very relieved to be interacting with other human beings after this experience of 13 floors of silent concrete. It felt like falling back into the world. We talked about their guitar and when I asked if I could take a picture of them for a project, they started to sing for me. Then I recognized the tag "Zauberer" – magician – behind the guy I was talking to (sitting on the drum) and right next to it, on the left, a little cross that indicated "x Bühne" – stage. This little concert on the magic stage under the bridge stuck in my head. It was a Russian song.

Telling a story is more akin to playing music than it is to the exchange of information. Why don't we play memory? Do we see our societal or collective memory as a reminiscence of the past, as a score in a drawer? A guarded object? Maybe the true memory lies within an encounter, within the narrative structure of a person, the way the story is told, the words, associations, the sounds, the materiality, in a laugh.

This photo is kind of eerie to me. If I don't clap my hands they will stay there forever and turn into stone like the people in Pompeii. Holding hands – in eternal present and lucid vulnerability. What do time and space mean then?

My family is from the west of Germany. I never experienced this as clearly as during our stay in Berlin. Germany for me most of the time was Germany. The GDR was something that existed in history books, "Ampelmännchen", and German movies such as *Goodbye Lenin* or *The Lives of Others*. When I asked my grandma if she had ever been to the GDR, her answer was a clear no. "You didn't just go there. No one went there." One of my best friends is from Dresden; she was born two years before the fall of the Berlin Wall, and her birth certificate still says: German Democratic Republic. I was born in 1991 into another world – in time and space.

"Why do we think the stories of life are just happening to us?" is a question by German philosopher and journalist Carolin Emcke that comes to my mind. We are telling them and we are able to rewrite them the way we would like to listen. Maybe we are too often scared to lose ourselves in listening – to lose the outer structure, our constructed frame that we are so eager to defend. It is not because we think of nothing but ourselves; I think most of the time we are really scared to be fragmented or even absent – but maybe only in this absence can we create something new, something we have not thought or done yet. Maybe only in this state, are we in the movement of meaning-making.



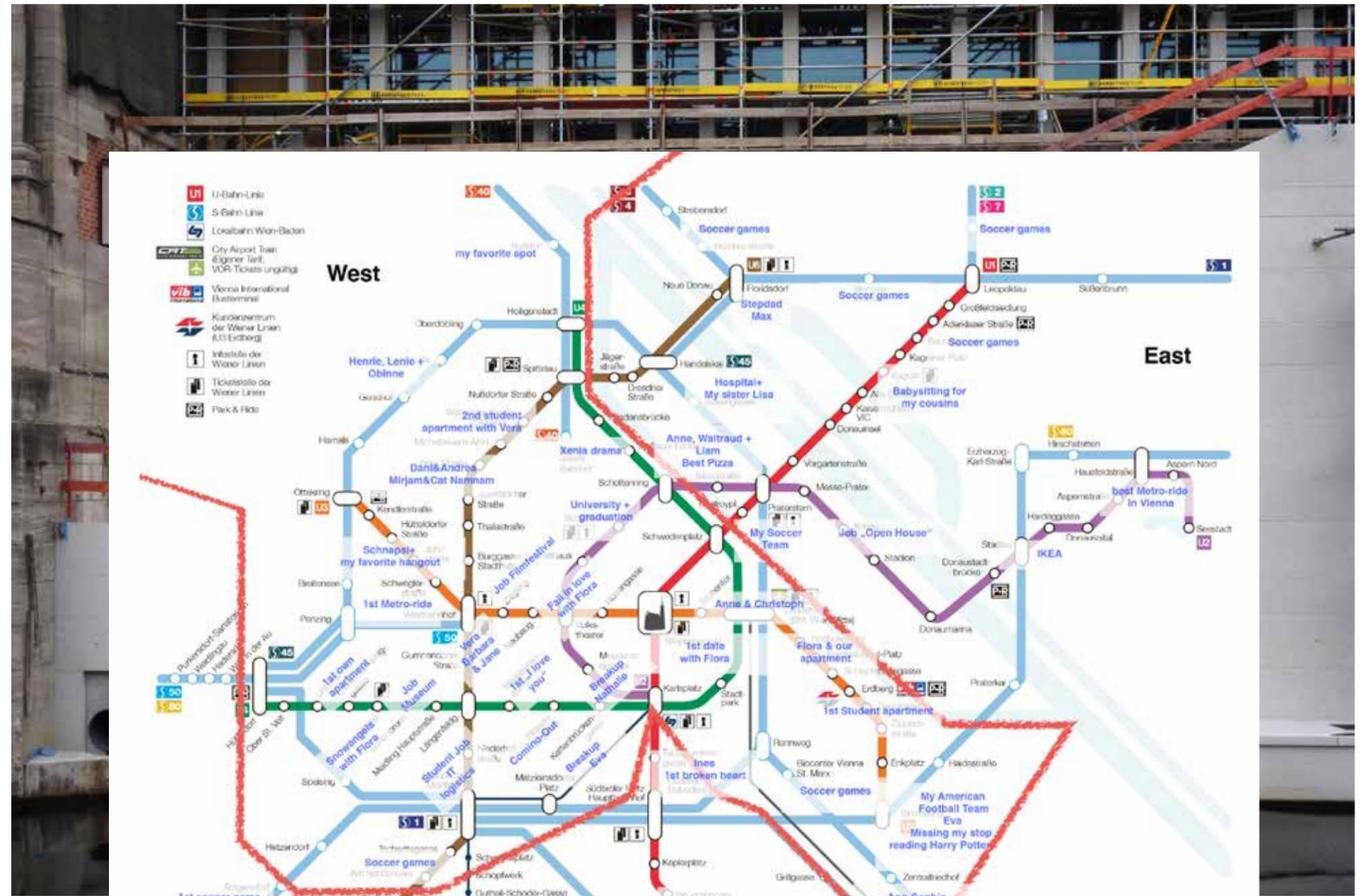
Concrete under construction – noise, a grey sky, and nothing to tell. The whole space we are walking on looks like no one has ever lived here and no one will. Someone once put a quiet humane-looking gothic church in this storage room and never took it back out, forgot it here right behind the pompous baroque Neptune fountain in its awkwardly exposed elegance.

The GDR building is a security "Bewachtes Objekt" – a guarded object. I am wondering why – yes, of course, it is a huge building – I lose myself only looking at the picture. But when you take a really close look, you recognize a tiny head in one of the windows. I am wondering if the head is looking at me or what it is looking for. I am wondering why this architecture blows me away. I darted through its corridors;

The same night, I asked my grandma how she met my grandfather for the first time; her answer was a laugh. My grandmother is a quiet tough woman; she is smart and witty and has a saying for every situation. But within this laugh was something innocent, excited, as if she had not yet experienced the things she had experienced. "Aber is egal. Es nützt nichts, ist vorbei." I never heard such a timid laugh from her before – "Jaja, alles vorbei." Yes, it's all over, but there was something in that laugh. I never met my grandfather, but still, I could somehow sense her memories. My grandma added: "Your generation cannot remember this time anymore. How could you?" I am not sure if she is right.

In one of my favorite German books, the author reflects: "Never will I forget that moment. I had invented something that was true. [...] Like an archaeological tool, my lie had scraped out an encapsulated detail and dragged it back from the depths of my memory. It was an incredibly liberating realization: inventing is remembering." [1]

Maybe the true thing about storytelling is that it follows our way of meaning-making. We never create meaning in a linear chronology. We go back and forth; we connect parts, remember, and rethink in a constant movement. Creating music, poetry, a movie, we are actively using this method of analytical empathy.



SCHNELLVERBINDUNGEN IN WIEN

Disconnected
– Christiane Lindner

I spent a week in Berlin thinking about the separated city. What struck me most were the personal disconnections that people had to endure. Family, friends, workplaces were no longer accessible. Like Berlin, Vienna was separated into four occupied zones after World War II. Like Berlin, it was surrounded by the Russian sector of occupied Austria. Unlike Berlin, however, Vienna was never permanently separated. But what if it were? How would my life in Vienna have been affected? I have lived in Vienna for 15 years – my whole adult life. I have studied, worked, played sports, made friends, and fallen in love. For this project I mapped my life in Vienna. I chose to make a personal metro map, not only because of the relation to my Berlin walk, but also because the metro system and its map are usually my entry point into making sense of a new city. I added the "Vienna Wall", as it would have been between the Russian zone and the others. This is what my life looks like, disconnected.

Mein Körper ist ein Kompromiss.*

*aus: »LOVE HURTS IN TINDER TIMES«
Ab 28.1.2017 an der Schaubühne



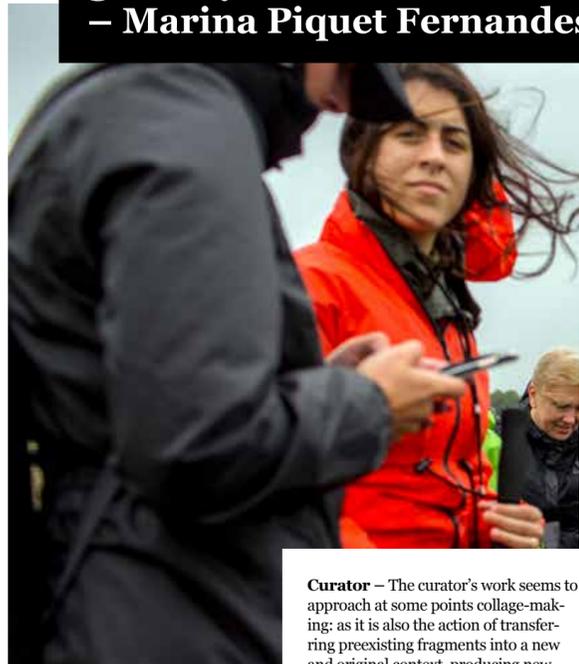
Groningen

Walking Seminar
September 2017



Master's students in museology at the Reinwardt Academy did a walking seminar in the province of Groningen, in the north of the Netherlands, as part of their introductory week. They captured their experiences, thoughts, ideas, traces, emotions, and memories as a first methodological exercise. Based on their notes, images, and sketches, they were asked to produce a personal/autobiographic/subjective research document. In addition, they were asked for an initial reflection on what it means to work in the heritage field.

A personal and preliminary glossary
– Marina Piquet Fernandes



Context – “The way things look is, in the broadest sense, a result of the conditions of their making” (Adrian Forty). When an object is decontextualized in a glass display, the focus is on its plastic and formal characteristics. How could the exhibition context also highlight its manufacturing process, its material, its historical and symbolic characteristics?

Cultural consumption – Culture once represented “anti-market values”, but nowadays, cultural centers and institutions have become many times indistinct from places of consumption. “Someday, all department stores will become museums, and all museums will become department stores” (Andy Warhol). What makes a museum a “place of interaction” and not just another “place of action” and consumption? What makes a museum visitor more than a viewer, a consumer? Even when the product itself is not being sold directly at a museum, by displaying it, the museum is somehow propagating an ideal of good design and relevance, stating that “this” is not just another object, but an extraordinary object, making the museum visitor (potential consumer) recognize and value the “quality” of a particular object or style.

Curator – The curator’s work seems to approach at some points collage-making: as it is also the action of transferring preexisting fragments into a new and original context, producing new meanings with this displacement. Collage (like the first cubist collages) can be potent and revolutionary, but other collage actions (like eclecticism in architecture collage, where buildings and objects were composed of parts from different historical styles) make the fragments lose their original meaning. Curating as a displacement operation can make the original fragments gain more strength or lose strength in their new ensemble.

Accessibility – “A lower selling price [of the objects] is not necessarily a negative thing, as it can also mean greater accessibility, and not just devaluation” (Boerma Antiek Hove owner). When the vintage object is in the antique shop, it is halfway between an everyday object (accessible) and a sacred museum object (inaccessible). Being in the antique shop gives it a certain status, but at the same time it remains accessible, for touch and purchase. Its future is still undefined, as it may be reinserted into the dynamics of use or end up in a museum collection.



Duality – Apparently, the “walking seminar” was supposed to engage simultaneously body and mind, in the same activity. At the end of the day, my impression was that it had highlighted the duality of these two different spheres, which we had experienced successively: body and mind, interior and exterior, domestic and wild, culture and nature. What would an intermediate experience be like? What kind of intermediate spaces and activities effectively engage body and mind? “Many people nowadays live in a series of interiors [...] disconnected from each other. On foot everything stays connected for while walking one occupies the spaces between those interiors in the same way one occupies those interiors” (Rebecca Solmitt).

Heirs – Educational programs should be one of the main actions in the heritage field. “Who will inherit heritage?” The conservation and maintenance of the material artefact (which in



some countries is still the main role of heritage institutions) becomes relevant when its value is assimilated and recognized by future generations.

Hybrid – The painter’s house was a domestic space but also a cultural space and, besides that, a commercial space (as it is where he sells his work). The idea of “hybrid” is often negatively associated with the loss of “purity”, but this “contamination” can generate more complex and interesting spaces. These old distinctions and programmatic divisions can be set aside sometimes in favor of the enrichment of certain experiences.

Interaction – The Groninger Museum is concerned with being an opinion-forming and provocative place, a place for exchange and conversation: for interaction. Many times we think about interaction in museums as buttons, lights, and opening drawers, but the interaction can be mental or social. Most people come to museums in groups, but the act of visiting museums is not frequently seen as a collective and social activity.

Intention – How to plan a memory and identity strategy, something that is usually a spontaneous process, without falling into “image-making” and other marketing strategies?

Mummification – The Open Air Museum: the city (as a) museum. When the urban space itself becomes a museum, then urban cultural heritage becomes a spectacle for tourists and visitors and it is excluded from the dynamics of urban life.

Ruins – “This is a country without ruins.” We could also understand the state of ruin of a construction as being more related to the absence of use and of people than merely to the state of material conservation. What are these other kinds of ruins?

Taste – Being surprised by the peculiar atmosphere of the Groninger Museum, in contrast to white-cube museums, was an exercise in getting rid of my personal tastes and preferences, of aesthetic judgments. Postmodern architecture as a system of communication, giving new meaning for old clichés. “You don’t need to like something to learn from it” (Robert Venturi). In all the institutions that we have visited (from the antique shop to the Groninger Museum or the Borg), I was wondering how much

the decisions were supported by some kind of “technical criteria”, and to what extent they were completely personal, related to personal tastes and preferences.

Traces – The “Mapping Slavery” project aims to “make traces visible” and to relate wealth and slavery in the region. A highlight was that it evidenced wealth as an important kind of heritage, generally not analyzed in these terms. Telling a story is important, but who is going to tell this story, why, and how? In the way the story was told, the slaves remained as abstract (and unbodied) as they were when presented in the old pictures we saw. They did not seem to have a name, a history, a past, a future. Where did they live? Where did they come from? Are there descendants in the city? Was the urban space shaped or transformed by their presence in a more direct way?

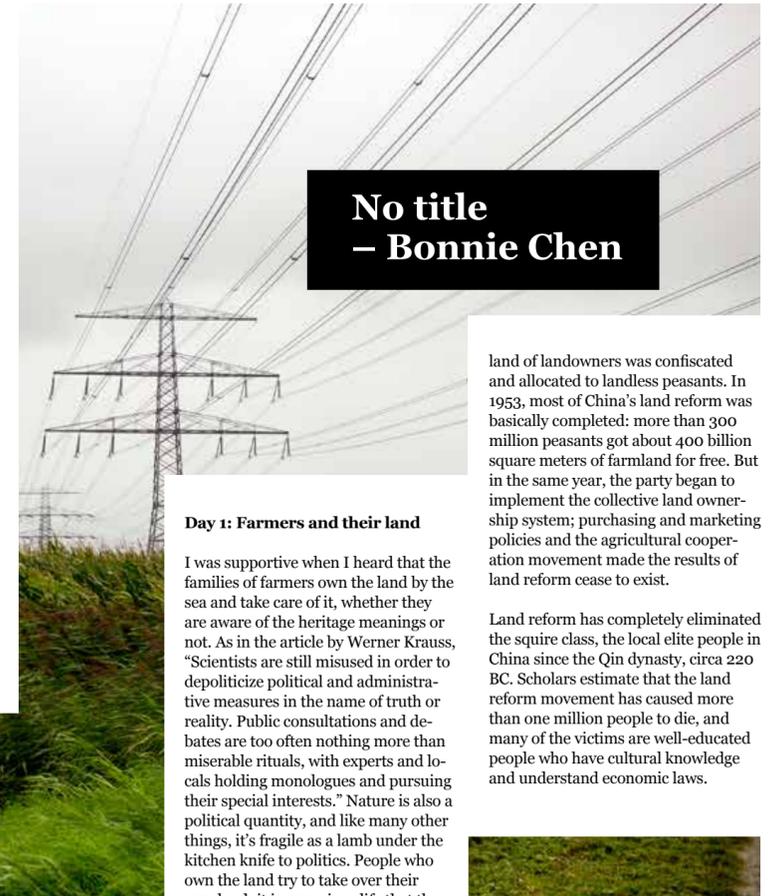
Use – If the church we had visited were a hospital or a school, the new proposed uses (children’s parties, etc.) wouldn’t have called our attention the way it did. It is interesting to realize the aura that a religious building still has, even for those who are not religious. The operation of taking an object out of daily use and putting it in a glass display gains new meaning when on the scale of a building. A certain kind of use should not be imposed, so a better option is developing a new use and purpose from the active participation of the community.

+ Other words for future additions to the glossary:

Conservation
Walking
Maintenance
Focus
Theatralization
Time/Distance



No title
– Bonnie Chen



Day 1: Farmers and their land

I was supportive when I heard that the families of farmers own the land by the sea and take care of it, whether they are aware of the heritage meanings or not. As in the article by Werner Krauss, “Scientists are still misused in order to depoliticize political and administrative measures in the name of truth or reality. Public consultations and debates are too often nothing more than miserable rituals, with experts and locals holding monologues and pursuing their special interests.” Nature is also a political quantity, and like many other things, it’s fragile as a lamb under the kitchen knife to politics. People who own the land try to take over their own land; it is a precious life that the Chinese no longer have.

land of landowners was confiscated and allocated to landless peasants. In 1953, most of China’s land reform was basically completed: more than 300 million peasants got about 400 billion square meters of farmland for free. But in the same year, the party began to implement the collective land ownership system; purchasing and marketing policies and the agricultural cooperation movement made the results of land reform cease to exist.

Land reform has completely eliminated the squire class, the local elite people in China since the Qin dynasty, circa 220 BC. Scholars estimate that the land reform movement has caused more than one million people to die, and many of the victims are well-educated people who have cultural knowledge and understand economic laws.

The land reform movement was carried out in the 1950s in China. The

student watching the paintings, and the youth asked the artist one question: "Where can I charge the batteries of my camera?"

The one difference here is that I'm aware of it, but the young kid has no idea about the full identity of the old gentleman in front of him. And every time we bump into a part of history in this way. When we entered the artist's room, his antique collections stood together with his television and other normal furniture. Personally, I think it's lovely for I understand the perspective of historical thinking. This spring I was doing my graduation research about the French painter Jacques Louis David; during the process he became a new friend of mine. When writing about an individual artist, the hardest thing is not to mix in too many personal feelings, but without enough attachment and affection, a writer does not know how to find out about those living lives under the earth of history. To see them as real humans again, their history becomes clearer, but not a far-gone world full of heroes and villains, which is more of a comic book.

After some walks in the wind and rain, it was good to stop at the church of Huizinge. The moment I saw the paintings by Michael Reynolds, I knew the church was still active, as a result of my major in art history. The pattern shows it comes from a contemporary artist who tried to analyze the medieval art style in northern Europe. And then the paper artworks by Miriam Geerts made my suspicion clearer. Unlike many modern art forms, artworks in church have their religious mission to send a message to people who come in; therefore they are more open to watching and understanding. On the other hand, believers' interpretations of the stories in the Bible keep changing; they're more or less influenced by post-modernism, abstract art theory, and the retro complex that became stronger after World War II. That is why art by Reynolds and Geerts is hanging on the wall of the church. People's view of religion sits on the same level with the arts, in a timeline that couldn't be far from the last century.

Churches, because of their role in society and community, just like small daily objects, will lose every meaning in everyday life then turn into so-called heritage when they are listed on the museum system.

Day 4: Slavery history in Holland

"I can't be a pessimist because I'm alive. To be a pessimist means that you have agreed that human life is an academic matter, so I'm forced to be an optimist. I'm forced to believe that we can survive whatever we must

When we pointed at the wide fields and said, "That is the land that belonged to those farmer families," I could recall childhood memories back home when my father pointed at the split fields and said, "These are the lands that USED TO belong to us." So I cannot argue reasonably about whether it's the right thing to do, to keep the land in a natural or agricultural way, because I'm not even a Pocahontas on my own land anymore.

Day 2: Different views of history

One thing I have already been saying for years is that to enjoy something simply is a precious opportunity; once you lose it, it will never come back again. When I was watching Menkemaborg and the Open Air Museum in Warffum, I felt it in both places. Through the filter of four years of art history study experience, Menkemaborg looks like Pieter de Hooch's paintings, and the houses from Warffum are like Van Gogh's.

In a way, one of the most obvious differences between these two museums is the class. Especially when they are both intended to be kept in a still scene of past lives. And in the middle of the tour is Boerma's antique store, which surprisingly reminds people that not every part of history is being kept and waiting to be seen.

History is not only the past. History can be present. And maybe that's why the name "everyday life museum" seems to have a conflict but still keeps the balance.

Day 3: Museum Helmantel and the modern church

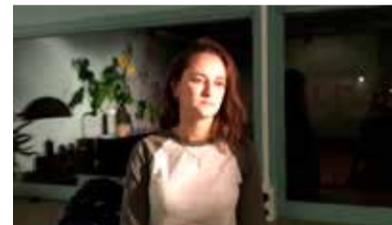
In Museum Helmantel, I wanted to buy a souvenir card, but no one was at the front desk. I saw the information on the card's back and found the webpage of Art Revisited, where they introduce Henk Helmantel as an artist both famous and important, who has also sold over a thousand copies of his book. Later, after visiting the place and talking with Mr. Helmantel, I went back to the cards shelf and picked one, paid €1.95, bought it from the artist himself.

It reminds me of the Gallery Quan Shanshi, a place named after the Chinese oil painter Quan Shanshi, who's also a respected professor teaching in my academy. Mr. Quan loves to watching the paintings and wandering around the exhibition in the art gallery; there is a permanent exhibition hall showing his works. Once when he was walking there, he met a young



Day 5: Kitsch

At the end of Friday's discussion, I was pretty close to the border of impatience. I like the light on Julie's face in the video, just like Vivien Leigh in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, when the



survive. But the Negro in this country, the future of negro in this country is precisely as bright or as dark as the future of the country. It is entirely up to the American people, and not representatives. It is entirely up to the American people, whether or not they are going to face and deal with and embrace the stranger they have maligned so long. What white people have to do is try to find out in their own hearts, why it was necessary to have a nigger in the first place, because I'm not a nigger, I'm a man. But if you think I'm a nigger, it means you need it. [...] If I'm not the nigger here and you invented him, you the white people invented him, then you've got to find out why. And the future of the country depends on that, whether or not it's able to ask that question."

I was tired and sleepy while in Groningen city. I caught clips of words like "not as heavy as in the US", "they contributed in the community, but on the other side they took money from slavery trade". And inside my head I heard the voice of James Baldwin on Boston public television: "The Negro and the American Promise".

Just because the situation here is not as obviously serious as in the Americas, it doesn't mean that it is reasonable not to fully face up to this topic, but only that it lies in varying degrees of ignorance. If we really want to face this history we have always been carrying, we should know that these accumulating problems will eventually break out, and we should not expect a gentle way to get through it; we should not dream that a final solution can completely fix it.

And I feel related to Baldwin more than to anything I heard or saw in the city walking, only because I take it as a case on the human. When I was trained to be a history researcher, I was told to not belittle any problems between individuals and crowds, for vaguely generalizing people into a number on your fingertip "is a thing only Nazis would do".



dimming light made her face fogged, and the actress said her lines in a fake French classy tone, to put a veil on life. And the movie and our discussion became a montage in my mind, with people talking about inspiration from literature works, which seems to make learning from life a brutal problem to face.

"Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. This is a fault. Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated. For these there is hope. They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only Beauty."

– Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Oxford World's Classics edition)

To embrace history is to understand that the pasts are corrupt without being charming. When a writer like Oscar Wilde said the word "cultivated", the loathing moved along the air. And these cultivated people put their hope in it, desperately, but they see in things only beauty and nothing else. It is not only unrealistic: it means doing work with castrated facts.