

PARIAHS

D2.2 Guide

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DELIVERABLE

D2.2 Guide

WP2 Community Engagement

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Pariahs	101100380	Pariahs: Performing Europe's historical memory

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Statement of Originality

This deliverable contains original unpublished work except where clearly indicated otherwise. Acknowledgement of previously published material and of the work of others has been made through appropriate citation, quotation or both.

Deliverable 2.2

“Guide on new approaches in the performing arts from a social science research perspective for use by participating artists and partner organisations”

SUMMARY

Throughout the project's duration, local communities are involved in project activities. The project begins with a community-based artistic research project to record communities' historical memories of marginalised individuals. In all four project locations, groups of participants gathered and discovered historical memory and unspoken stories through interactive, participatory practices.

The purpose of this Deliverable which falls under WP2 “Community Engagement” is to utilise social science principles as effective and performative ways of observing, describing, and recording historical memory, comparing and contrasting, exploring and evaluating, interacting with others, and developing self-awareness and awareness of others across communities, languages, and cultures.

The document, building on D2.1 “Research Outcomes”, begins by presenting a further analysis of the research results per location, diving deeper into social science practices used and how four different case studies with different cultural values, habits and norms were approached. Its objective is to create a set of guiding principles - a methodology - for artists interested in recording historical memories that will be able (a) to give voice to all participants, with emphasis on those with less access or ability to reach platforms of social research, (b) to work directly with people by employing creative practices, (c) to help participants express their community stories, gain empathy, understand their culture, motivations, wants and needs.

The goal is for this deliverable to act as a means for artists and researchers to move away from assumptions about cultures and communities and gain the best possible insights into their lore, practices and understanding of their culture.

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INTRODUCTION

Pariahs is a Creative Europe co-funded project, implemented across the width of the European continent and attentive to a rich diversity of literacies and attendant methods which produced a sharp focus on the necessity for a shared and justly distributive future for communities and wider ecologies.

The outcome of Pariahs is the profound historical and present material connections between people, across the breadth and width of Europe made by those on the margins of history. The historical memory joining Eleusis, Yerevan, Mont-Dauphin and Maribor, four cities of disparate socio-political realities, is found in the connective tissue of *sharing* and *caring* for land and resources, ecology, transgenerational literacies and the loss of shared objectives. There is a common acknowledgement that the unheard and unseen histories of Europe continue to be told and preserved by Pariahs: groups, communities and individuals operating on the margins of history and in non-institutional settings. It is they who have woven the unbreakable webs of knowledge and preservation of memory paving the way for future connections and inter-dependencies.

This is further reinforced by the wide panorama of Pariah's locations: From Yerevan and Ayntab and from Maribor to Eleusis and Mont-Dauphin this research has analysed an immensely diversified data collected from schools (Maribor), community halls (Eleusis and Yerevan), UNESCO heritage (Mont-Dauphin), digital sessions (all sites) and, most interestingly, people's intimate home environments (Eleusis, Ayntab and Mont-Dauphin). This necessitated an outstanding variety of methodologies, drawing on disparate theoretical domains ranging from theatre, documented history, New Historicism, critical theory, European culture, languages and performance. The diversity of

locations, ranging between 44.6698° N and 38.0413° N coordinates with Yerevan on the edges, occupying 40.1872° N, coupled with the linguistic richness in *Pariahs*, dictated that the project was enriched, methodologically and theoretically. While initially we adopted a social science framework of interview and session-based qualitative research, the differentiated polities and cultures necessitated an exercise based on embodied, translingual, choral, cross-cultural and interpretative lines of enquiry. In practice, the interview and session format was maintained but it rapidly transpired that the productive outputs (recordings, interviews, choreography ateliers) had to be connected into an uninterrupted yarn which consisted of informal testimony, memory and transgenerational literacies.

Unearthing historical and collective memory on the concept of marginalisation presents the researcher with an acutely contrarian sociological engagement: the commitment to adhere to canonical expectations to both historical archive and margin or to explore productive instabilities between existing epistemological practices and ontological results.

Pariahs has enabled the space of ‘anti-discipline’¹ by centring three crucial components of performance: embodiment, presence, and transgression. Anti-discipline serves the space *outside* the canon: that which is not included in formal historical accounts, institutional settings and traditional pedagogy. It unveils the “anti-space” of any given and accepted space. This delicate task of amputating historico-cultural canonical text from (unofficial) testimony and performance, often delivered by those least likely to be included in such conversations, attends to transgressive politics and creates anti-discipline. It enables socio-economic diversity and profound engagement with civil rights and human rights. At the intersection of testimony, memory and performance, *Pariahs* has deployed allegory, hybridity, technological mediation, and recontextualization. While it has been essential to consider the connections and frameworks dictated by current political developments such as rapacious corporatism, aggressive foreign policies, war in Ukraine and Armenia and a fledgling social neoconservatism, the core of project has been served valiantly and boldly by the hundreds of participants and communities across Europe and the outcomes reflect the richness and diversity of the European continent in both history and performance.

OUTCOMES

Across the four cities of *Pariahs*, we have observed:

- the recontextualisation of the Pariah as a collective, resisting, conscious body of citizens which is not an individual protagonist of heroic acts but citizens seeking European-wide solutions with strong civic roots.
- The Pariah, in *Pariahs*, is the chorus of citizens seeking direct involvement in major societal events, socio-economic inequalities and distributive justice.
- a cross-sectional urge to return and retain an “autre mode de fonctionnement”, (another model of functioning).
- a model of centring local governance whose authority emanates from the margins and is reflective of the margins.

¹ Term borrowed from a formative moment of performance studies in New York in 1995 titled *Performance Studies international* (Phelan, 1993 and Dwight Conquerwood: Conquerwood, Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research TDR/The Drama Review Volume 46 (2002)

- a desire for autonomy in material and cultural production and for the production of history representative of the unspoken, the unheard and the unseen alongside the canonical and the archived.
- an off centring of the metropolis and the principles of metropolitan organisation and behaviour. This is not expressed so much as an alternative but rather as a close reading and a tighter adherence to the ideals of solidarity, land ecology and historically-forming cohesion.

There is a broad acknowledgement of this principle across the four participant countries of *Pariahs* and a shared concern in the loss of socialism *qua* sharing: the notion of prioritising shared land, resources, human connections and non-institutional historical cohesion. The intervention made by *Pariahs* has so far been to identify these connecting threads across the breadth of Europe and to synthesise the thematic and the aesthetics of how marginal histories are forming centres and off-centres in prohibitively difficult times.

The project began with an artistic research phase in which each community was heavily involved in participatory sessions in which collective and historical memories are explored, unearthed, and recorded. At the centre of the project were participatory community sessions and research. This approach assisted *Pariahs* artists and researchers to access the best possible insight into their core practices and optimal understanding of the communities and their contexts.

The goal in *Pariahs* was to create a methodology for recording historical memories that would be able to:

- a) empower all participants, with emphasis on those with less access or ability to reach platforms of social research.
- b) work directly with people by employing creative practices.
- c) introduce this methodology as a tool to help participants express their community stories, gain empathy, understand their culture, motivations, wants and needs

At the outset, the project tasks and objectives included that coordination and implementation of two community sessions per location would take place. The aim was to gather unspoken stories and collective memories of marginalised individuals who contributed to their local communities in a beneficial way. Whereas the requirement for two community sessions with acute participant preparation was deemed adequate in the first instance, it swiftly became evident that a much more profound engagement with each community and on various levels was crucial to access the complex networks of memory, testimony and transgenerational and marginalised historical understanding of Europe. The research was designed to record communities' historical and collective memories with a focus on marginalised individuals. *four community engagement sessions*"(two sessions in each location, totalling eight sessions) involving local community members gathered to discuss historical, collective memories and unspoken stories. The target groups had been identified and specified in the research framework, but those from disadvantaged backgrounds have been given priority in the session structure. Each location was researched in accordance with their own cultural, historical, linguistic, geographical and political realities of today.

The community connections discovered in *Pariahs* are founded on solidarity and a silent social contract expressed in new materialisms: texture, weavings, yarn, the body, the soil and their engravings in rock. This was mapped against the pathologies of centrally managed, digitally controlled histories. Across the four cities of Pariahs we have observed distrust and wariness at the mechanics of deterministic histories promised by unbridled market-led politics. Therein we also find a secret message of marginal values and natural laws connecting humans and societies which appear to supersede frontiers and regulatory frameworks.

This consortium has been able to create formal and functional models for conceptualising the field of cultural performance and the growing field of historical memory as past but equally as future and as imagining.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Research Preparation

For all four community research sessions, prior to the research, certain preparatory actions took place.

a. Setting the target groups:

Defining the respective target groups in all locations, their importance, their role in shaping historical and collective memory. Therefore, the partner teams and researcher began working on forming the research objectives and goals and what approach each target group would require.

Structure of the community research sessions:

- Introduction of the Pariahs project and its meaning to the communities, the Creative Europe programme, the participating partners, and the project objectives.
- Signing of consent and GDPR forms
- Community members meeting & greeting each other
- Discovering the collective memories with the local facilitators
- Coffee break
- Informal discussion after the sessions
- Participants provided feedback forms about the sessions

Personal interviews

Wherever a community session attendance was not possible (or advisable due to participant's special needs) interviews were conducted at participants' own home. Whilst researchers may have less control over the home environment, familiarity may help the respondent to relax and result in a more productive interview. Establishing rapport with participants prior to the interview was also possible in some cases as it can have a positive effect on the subsequent development of the interview.

ELEUSIS, GREECE

Overview

Eleusis is a town of mystery and tragedy. Located 22 km west of Athens, the city was the site of the cult of Demeter and the sanctuary in which the Eleusinian Mysteries were celebrated from the Bronze Age to the Roman Imperial period. Modern Eleusis is a major industrial town. Internal migratory movements redrew the Eleusinian cartography. Many Greek families of Asia Minor settled in Eleusis after the 1922 sacking of Smyrna and created the settlement of Upper Eleusis. During the Axis Occupation of Greece (1941–1945), resistance movements were established and soon after the conclusion of WWII, the city attracted workers from all parts of Greece to satisfy the demand for modern buildings and new structures. Industrial activity, however, developed anarchically on the antiquities and next to the residential area. Environmental pollution, archaeological discoveries and industrial formation shaped the image of contemporary Eleusis.

Two sessions were organised in Eleusis with a total of 30 people participating. The participants were carefully selected through digital campaigns, word of mouth and phone calls to CHORUS' audience, to ensure maximum attendance by those least likely to attend such events. Particular attention was given to people who experienced the events of the Farmakis period as well as the wider historical locus of post WWII Eleusis.

Secondly, individual interviews were organised with Maria Kastani of Chorus and myself to attend to the individual witnesses both in relation to an Eleusinian “pariah” Panayotis Farmakis and the formation of Eleusis as a neo-industrial hub in the post-war Attican region. Farmakis's context is explained later in this document (p.15). This has unearthed valuable testimony and evidenced the need for a personalised approach to new literacies and a common thread between marginalisation, internal migratory flows and Greece's rich archaeological landscape and the debate over its preservation.

Interview model

Preparation:

- Preparatory conversations with the *Chorus Organisation* and their performers on the historical and present realities in Eleusis.
- Re-contextualisation of the history of Panayotis Farmakis alongside Eleusis's historical past and the complexities of Eleusis's position as European Capital of Culture Europe and how this impacts marginalised collectivities and individuals in both political and commercial contexts.

Community research sessions

Two community sessions were organised by CHORUS on September 30th and October 1st in Eleusis, with 30 participants.

- Primary data

All participants were given the space and context for personal and often intimate iterations of their memories. Firstly these were centred on the figure of Panayiotis Farmakis, a marginalised figure that lived between the 1930s and early 1990s, who contributed immensely to the local community by preserving and discovering pieces of ancient artefacts and monuments, as well to community members personally, yet in most cases community members treated him violently and in a discriminating way.

Every participant in the session delivered their own personal memories and, slowly, a picture of Farmakis emerged against the backdrop of Eleusis's canvas post-WWII.

The questions were unstructured in keeping with the commitment not to reflect preconceived ideas and they were performed without organisation. The researcher selected not to introduce with an opening statement, considering the age bracket of the participants who often preferred to progress in their own way, following an initial prompt. Unstructured interviews are advised where depth is required about a specific area and each participant's individual perspective is crucial to the final interpretation.

- Interview development and informed consent process

Before each session, respondents were informed on the study details and the reasons for the research. Assurances were given repeatedly about confidentiality, ethical principles, anonymity (if desired) and confidentiality (where requested).

In full knowledge of the fact that this is a time-consuming model, it was however, deemed necessary for the community engagement in Eleusis to proceed with unstructured questions, in order to guarantee the connectedness between a marginality observed in Farmakis and the witnesses of the migratory flows of the 50s, 60s and 70s, alongside the commitment to identify commonalities across the four participating cities.

- Prompts

The prompts used to initiate a conversation on historical memory are based on social science frameworks: autoethnography, decolonial practice and critical theory. Given the context, the researcher allowed a natural conversation to evolve between participants, many of whom already had family or other personal / professional connections among them. Some definitions on the subject areas of the research were then established:

“Who was Farmakis to *YOU*”

“What do you recall of his life story”

“What was your part in it?”

“What was the political reality of the time?”

“Was he a man of the resistance”

A discussion developed which is recorded. All participants have signed the respective GDPR forms.

The researcher further proceeded to establish a connection between Farmakis and the concept of “pariahs” as to what extent he, as an individual, had impacted the community.

Lastly, they were asked

“What is a pariah?”

Led by the archaeologist, Mrs Orphanoudaki a thread emerged which proved to be the most crucial connecting element of the research. Mrs Ophanoudaki sought to extend the definition of both the *margin* and the *pariah*. A child of the internal Greek economic migratory flows, she shared her memories of segregation in housing and schooling and the expectations borne out of her reality and that which she shared for most of her generation in industrial Eleusis.

«Τα τσιμεντακια» *The children of the cement factory*

Mrs Orphanoudaki, an archaeologist and former Director of the Archaeological Site recounts:

We, the displaced Greeks, were the real pariahs in Eleusis. The Eleusinians pretend to have “embraced us. Nonsense. I’ll tell you about Pariahs. On the first day of primary school, the children of the TITAN factory workers were made to sit on the margins of the classroom regardless of height. Tall, short, we were all clumped together and truly despised by the teacher. She was a native of Eleusis. We were children of migrants. A few months later, after we had been taught diphthongs, the teacher asked us to read. They all read slowly, pairing together sounds: T + o + u make too, the little boy uttered. Then came my turn. Without hesitation, I read out the entire paragraph confidently.

“NO!” exclaimed the teacher. “You, Argyro”, and then slowly and decidedly as if voicing a threat and a command: “You will read slowly. Like all the other children”, and that, because I am a child of TITAN, a child of the cement factory.

- Findings

Maria Kastani, community member and participating artist in the project, remarks: “Farmakis had suffered serious physical and psychological trauma as a young man while engaging in the resistance through the period of the dictatorship. He survived in adverse conditions, facing huge issues relating to the aggression of local building contractors, antiquarians, indifference from residents, disparaging him while others treated him as a boogeyman for children to make them finish their dinner. Of course there were those too who loved him, respected him, cared for him and he in turn cared with the same devotion and love for his people as for the ancient marble pieces he used to collect and transfer to the Archaeological Site. And that was a revelation of the research.”

Farmakis’ portrait can be found in the work of Philipps Koutsaftis who directed a film dedicated to Farmakis. In “Mourning Rock” Koutsaftis’ passion for the personality of Farmakis is notable. Koutsaftis followed Farmakis for the years leading up to the latter’s death in a road accident. **His camera recorded the lone figure of a man, running away, escaping and searching for a refuge into a romantic past.** According to Director Koutsaftis who also participated in an interview, Farmakis was an admirable figure, a man of determination and knowledge wrapped in a very personal journey and characterised by his own fears against organised society.

CHORUS also conducted interviews with Eleusinians who had known Farmakis personally. Their testimonies describe a man infatuated with Eleusis’ ancient past and became its self-appointed guardian. His image as a hooded, **barefoot**, heavily dressed figure, **avoiding human closeness, weary of people’s intentions and forever** transporting small marble treasures in a small cart. This is beautifully depicted in Koutsaftis’s film. The archaeologist, Mrs Orphanoudaki records tense

moments of Farmakis attempting to stop construction on Eleusis modern building sites on account of archaeological finds he had just discovered.

- Methodology

33 personal interviews were conducted by CHORUS and analysed by the researcher.

A later chapter is devoted to methodological observations at the intersection of social science, ethnography and critical theory. In the case of Eleusis, it must be noted that in unstructured interviews, one of the most important skills is the researcher's ability to listen attentively to what is being said, and to perform quick interpretative bascules so that participants are able to recount their experiences as fully as possible, presumption, fear or bias. The researcher must therefore possess a repertoire of skills and techniques (further developed under literature review and methodological observations) to ensure that comprehensive and representative visdata are collected during the interview against a rigorous interpretative and comparative schema.

The questions were designed as a maieutical testimony to extricate a definition for the word pariahs by

A/ delimiting the personality and the person of Farmakis from popular culture and recording participants' memories of him

B/ extending the signification and its deduction to encompass other possible areas and integrate disparate understandings and realities for historical pariahs.

Communication campaigns were created in social media: on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X. Posters were printed, for the visibility of the Pariahs and Creative Europe programs.

- Aesthetic margins

- Interpersonally, the intimacy of testimonies hinted at the unspoken complexities of human relationships between the participants and Panayotis Farmakis as well as the participants and the wider migratory events directly affecting their families through the generations.
- Marble is Eleusis' mineral: For thousands of years Eleusis's metamorphic rock has supplied the material to record ancient history and mythology through sculpture and architecture and a transubstantiation of the Hellenic psyche in modern utterances, from matter into form. Through the early twentieth century and through to the present times, Eleusinian marble supplies the highest quality construction material which is the sign of modern Greek architecture, often to the cost of local community, well-being and resulting in human exploitation.
- The Greater Eleusis area had been a rural area for years, but in the post-war period has become increasingly industrialised, with key manufacturing sectors, basically metallurgical and chemical ones. The Thriassian plain, in particular, has been dramatically "attacked" by several large and small industries causing a decline in environmental standards (Moropoulou et al., 1998)

- The interwoven components of entrapment and the possibility of escape provide rich aesthetic overtones in Eleusis's geo-cultural aesthetic. Against the geophysical and political background, Eleusis presents the particularity of being between the Eleusinian mountains and the Thriasian Plain, at the northernmost end of the Saronic Gulf.
- Eleusis is a city of displaced people. Much as the marble and the notions of entrapment and encirclement are brought into relief, the Eleusinians are not linguistic, religious or ethnically profiled pariahs. They are but internally expatriated pariahs, banished and exiled through the vagrancies of economic reality and war.

CONCLUSIONS

In Eleusis we observe the central figure of Farmakis who personifies resistance, marginalisation and a desire to preserve archaeological literacies and, perhaps, unwittingly, advance community cohesion and allegiance. We also observe a common thread of silent marginalisation and collective trauma, often resulting in community solidarity.

We further observe that the activities of the marginalised communities of industrial and post WWII Eleusis were rooted in relationality, coalition-building, and an acknowledgement of difference.

There were strong testimonies of urban-neighbourhood experiences which resulted in the self-organisation of socio-political spaces.

On modern Greece's economic model of state-led and capital-owned enterprises, Eleusinian pariahs have been drawing on working-class self-activity to self-manage spaces of personal development and production.

We note five commonalities on the connective yarn of the Pariahs project which are observable across the four participating territories:

1. A sense of sharing of resources and ecologies against a post-capitalist/neoliberal political economic context
2. A yarn of collective memory which mobilises the potential of horizontal organising, and coalitional possibilities.
3. Though emerging in different national conjunctures and histories, Eleusis brings to the surface the resistive *and* creative dimensions of each marginalised experience.
4. A common root in deeply relational coalitions with an acceptance of difference.
5. An urgency to re-operationalise collective memories of the past to create the present and design the future beyond the legacies of canonical and oppressive histories and capitalist-centred actualities.

YEREVAN & AYNTAB VILLAGE, ARMENIA

Overview

The Republic of Armenia is a unitary, multi-party, democratic nation-state with a rich cultural heritage. The history of Armenia dates back to ancient times, with the first Armenian state of Urartu established in 860 BC. The Kingdom of Armenia reached its peak under Tigranes the Great in the 1st century BC and became the first state to adopt Christianity officially in 301 AD. The modern Republic of Armenia gained independence in 1991 during the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Today, Armenia is a developing country with a population of approximately 3 million people. Despite facing various challenges, Armenia has maintained a democratic system of governance, with regular elections and a multiparty political landscape. Armenia sits on the margins of Eastern Europe, a land of wine and grapes, mountains and monasteries and wonderful people. Yerevan, the capital city of Armenia, is more than 2800 years old. Founded as Erebuni in 782 BC by King Argishti I of Urartu, it has since grown into one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Located on the Ararat Plain, Yerevan is located in the southern part of the country, just less than 15 miles away from the border. The city is known as one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities in the history of humanity. Similarly to Mont-Dauphin, Yerevan is surrounded by beautiful mountains including the Big Ararat, the Small Ararat, Gegharnik Ridge and Mount Aragats.

Armenia is, by its very history, a Pariah on the margins of Europe, the old Soviet Union and the Ottoman Empire. The conflicts are still alive as this brief is compiled: The Artsakh region and the Muslim presence in Nagorno-Karabakh is pushing into Armenian territory with churches, cemeteries and historical monuments desecrated daily. 100,000 people are currently displaced and moving into the Armenian mainland under the most perilous conditions. Hence the Artsakh Armenians lost their homes and historical homeland, where they lived for centuries. It represents not just a territorial loss but also a loss of history, culture, and identity deeply rooted in the region.

During the research, the researcher was faced with challenges such as language barriers and trauma, though the women of Armenia that have been the primary target group have opened their doors to *Pariahs* with incredible generosity, warmth and a sense of accuracy and historical rectitude.

Two community sessions were organised by *Today Art Initiative (TAI)* language barriers and a war unfolding in real time on Armenia's eastern border.

The research in Armenia consists of individual interviews and 2 community sessions to explore the collective and community session of unspoken/forgotten historical memories of marginalised people in Armenia.

The research with these communities started back in April, 2023. It started with the individual meetings and interviews with the community members. All the interviews were recorded and participants signed respective GDPR forms.

Interview model

Preparation:

- Preparatory conversations with Today Art initiative and their artistic team on the historical and present realities in Yerevan and Ayntab.
- Identifying potential target interviewees and how to approach them
- Structuring the interviews
- Re-contextualisation of the Armenian historical past and the complexities it has been facing until today and how this impacts local communities and collectives in a way that collective marginalisation is experienced.

Research with individuals and community members started in April, 2023. A TAI appointed researcher visited each individual connected to *Pariahs* project to lead the interviews, translate and ask to share the memories about the factory or Cilician Armenia. The project principal researcher Effie Samara joined the individual interviews online and asked the questions to them. 12 interviews were conducted and recorded. Participants signed the respective consent and GDPR forms.

Community research sessions

Two community sessions were organised by *Today Art Initiative (TAI)* language barriers and a war unfolding in real time on Armenia's eastern border.

The sessions took place with the former workers of **Ayntab's Lace Factory/Community** and **repatriated Cilician Armenians** in August 11th 2023 and October 4th 2023 respectively.

A. To properly organise community sessions, TAI organised comfortable meeting venues in Ayntab village, which could accommodate up to 20 participants and refreshments for coffee breaks. Small collaborations with local specialists, municipal governments and institutions were established.

B. For each session TAI arranged all the necessary equipment for audiovisual documentation (some short videos) and recording systems. All the relevant materials were prepared in advance, the consent forms and feedback forms were translated, printed, filled in and signed.

C. The research with these communities started back in April, 2023 with the individual meetings and interviews with the community members. The researchers of TAI did an extended investigation about the historical memory of the marginal groups by collaborating with different institutions and experts, scientists, art/cultural critics and historians. The two aforementioned target communities were selected to continue the research with, and, along with the individual interviews, provided the whole content for the project development. The individual interviews were organised also through online meetings with the researcher, who was interviewing people and guiding the TAI artistic team to uncover the memory in a way that it would later become key material of memory and science. All the interviews were recorded and participants signed consent and GDPR forms.

D. Communication campaigns were created in social media: on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, LinkedIn and TAI's website. Posters and rollups were printed, for the visibility of the *Pariahs* and

Creative Europe programs. The Creative EU Armenia desk was informed and participated in dissemination.

- [Primary data](#)

Research and community sessions with former employees of the Ayntab Lace Factory and repatriated generations of Cilician Armenia took place on 2 different days:

1. Community meeting of former employees of Ayntab lace factory 11/08/23

After a long investigation and research, it was finally possible to find former workers of the Ayntab Lace Factory, who were already quite old. During the individual meetings with them, the Pariahs project was already introduced and discussed with them and they were informed about the community sessions and interviews. The meeting was held in Ayntab village, the members of the collective informed each other about the meeting, and it was also supported by the municipality of Ayntab. The participants arrived at the venue, most of whom were mostly women. Most of them haven't seen each other for decades after the factory was closed and they were very excited to see each other after so many years (up to 30 years they haven't met). So the first moments were about recognizing each other and talking about the changes of the appearances that they noticed. After this, they started talking about their memorable days during the years they worked at the factory, about the importance of the collective and the activity of the village, when the factory was operating and more than 500 people were employed there. The researcher joined the meeting through zoom and coordinated the main interview and spoke with everyone. The community members brought with them memories, photos from the working years and samples of textile/lace products, which they still keep in their homes as an important part of the memory of their working years.

2. With the repatriated generations of Cilician Armenia 04/10/2023

New Ayntab town-village and the establishment of the lace factory there is a remarkable and symbolic story. During the Armenian Genocide of 1915, thousands of Armenians from Cilician Ayntab, as well as from Urfa and Marash were forced to emigrate, leaving their homeland and their homes. A large number of these emigrants were exiled in several directions, of which a large number settled in Aleppo. These repatriated Ayntabian-Armenians and Diaspora Armenians, years later, are returning back to their homeland current Armenian territory and in 1969 they aimed to implement a plan to create a place on their native land bearing the name of their former birthplace. In 1970, by the decision of the government, the village of Noragyugh in Masisi region was renamed "New Aintap", getting the longing for their homeland in the name. As a reward for the historical event Armenians of Aintap decided to establish a lace factory here, with the aim of reviving the lacemaking and embroidery developed of Cilicia Aintap, which was being forgotten.

And again, after long research, after meeting with different specialists and exploring the network, it was possible for us to connect with the Syrian Armenian community, who now live in Armenia and master the forgotten forms of Ayntabian and Cilician embroidery and lacework. After individual interviews and extensive material gathering, they were invited to participant in a community session.

This time, the supporter institution of the meeting was “Aleppo” Compatriotic Charitable NGO. The venue of the meeting was the office of the organisation. An open call about this meeting was posted on TAI social medias and TAI’s website. On the day of the meeting, the community members came to the venue . They told about their memories and about the current and past difficulties of their life as marginal groups/communities.

The researcher joined the meeting through zoom connection and coordinated the main interview and spoke with everyone. The community members brought with them memories, photos from the working years and samples of handmade, lace and needlework created by themselves or old ones, which were left from their ancestors and forgotten.

All participants were given the space and context for personal and often intimate iterations of their memories.

The questions were unstructured in keeping with the commitment not to reflect preconceived ideas and they were performed without organisation. The researcher selected not to introduce with an opening statement, considering the age bracket of the participants who often preferred to progress in their own way, following an initial prompt. Unstructured interviews are advised where depth is required about a specific area and each participant’s individual perspective is crucial to the final interpretation.

- Interview development and informed consent process

Before each community session respondents were informed on the study details and the reasons for the research. Assurances were given repeatedly about confidentiality, ethical principles, anonymity (if desired) and confidentiality (where requested).

In full knowledge of the fact that this is a time-consuming model. It was, however, deemed necessary for the community engagement in both areas.

- Prompts

The prompts used to initiate a conversation on historical memory are based on social science frameworks: autoethnography, decolonial practice and critical theory. Given the context, the researcher proceeded to establish some definitions on the subject areas of the research:

“What is needlework to you”

“What are the connections between East and West/ Soviet Union and Europe”

“What was your part in it?”

“What was the political reality of the genocide?”

A discussion developed which is recorded and available to view.

The researcher further proceeded to establish a connection between the tormented past of the Armenian genocide and a modern city on the eastern frontiers of Europe whose young people aspire to connect, create and discover. There was a linguistic barrier as participants spoke principally in Armenian. Some were very fluent in English and French which enabled the researcher direct access to their testimonies. Lastly, they were asked “What is a pariah?”

- Findings

The researches were very important because they provided an opportunity to find and reveal the forgotten and untold stories of marginalised communities that have unwittingly shaped Armenian culture and history. For female factory workers, their work and feelings of fulfilment and importance were valued when they were interviewed by local and international researchers. The sense of citizenships, rights and responsibility for both communities also increased by participating in the organisational part of the session by providing feedback and post-session opinions.

As a result of the research, we had the concept and the fundamentals of the artistic part of the project, on which the exhibition and creative processes of the Pariahs project will be built for the artistic team of Armenia.

- Methodology

Primary data was collected in interviews and community sessions.

A later chapter is devoted to methodological observations at the intersection of social science, ethnography and critical theory. In the case of Yerevan, unstructured interviews were carried out with all participants which were video recorded and archived on Drive.

Methodologically, one of the most important skills in unstructured interviews is the researcher's ability to listen attentively to what is being said, and to interpret the cultural, social and linguistic undertones of interviewees to enable them to follow the project's objectives.

The researcher must therefore possess a repertoire of skills and techniques (further developed under *methodological observations*) to ensure that comprehensive and representative data are collected during the interview against a rigorous interpretative and comparative schema.

The questions were designed as a maieutical testimony to extricate a definition for the word pariahs by

- highlighting the paradigmatic transformation which occurred in Armenia due to deepening social polarisation and the seismic political shifts of the last 50 years which are recorded in needlework, art and across mediated representations.
- interpreting the reorganisation and fragmentation of urban and rural space, the appearance of new lifestyle and consumption practices, and the mediatization of social relations that took place in the latter part of the 1990s and early 2000s. In observing the transgenerational testimony, the effect of these transformations were weaved in the relationship between art and reality on the scene of contemporary representations.
- combining needlework, symbols, geophysics into a formative category for a new aesthetics (Harutyunyan, 2017)
- placing the focus on the rupture testimony of the formerly Soviet-led state apparatus and those who formed their historical memories during that time and asking how these memories find themselves in modern Armenian reality.

- exploring the political body of the alienated subject whose somatic functions are a site of violence, war, memory of genocide and post-Soviet modernism.
- a shaping of the aesthetic of the body in testimony and in its expressions in needlework as a means to expose the reality of war and the violence of ideology.
- curating testimony and expression as extensions of themes such as the search for the lost wholeness of the body and the collapse of collective action and its democratic representations.

- Aesthetic margins

- Marble and mountain are present in Armenia as they are in Eleusis and in Mont-Dauphin.
- Every woman's needlework carries heavy religious, iconographical, ritualistic and cultural symbols which extend their significance across all aspects of Armenia's dramaturgical landscape.
- The aesthetics found in historical and social contradictions of the period of transition from the perspective of the former Soviet republics affords us the imagining of a new Eastern European reality based on a dialectic of rupture and continuity.
- Contemporary art in Armenia is encapsulating the dilemmas of autonomy and social participation, innovation and tradition, progressive political ethos and national identification, the problematic of communication within Armenia and with the world outside of Armenia's borders, which is evident across the testimonies and materialisms studied in this project,
- Armenia dreams of subjective freedom and the imperative to find an identity in the new circumstances after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This historical study outlines the politics (liberal democracy), aesthetics (autonomous art secured by the gesture of the individual artist), and ethics (ideals of absolute freedom and radical individualism) of contemporary art in Armenia.

- Armenian Materialisms

- Armenia explores national identity and history through symbolisms. These are heavily dedicated to the legacy of the Soviet demand for ethnic representation, which is symbolised in oriental ritual.
- Traditional, religious and fertility motifs are strongly represented in the samples examined during interviews and sessions.
- Below are the most iconic words and symbolisms as narrated by the women whose needlework was shared with Pariahs.

METAX – (i) / SILK

“Every knot, every stitch has its own history”

Armenian Dragon pattern = Greek key

Days symbolised through colours

A historical cycle of relocation, vulnerability and unpredictability. The exodus from Artsakh is enormous

Every time she sews a cross, she has a strong feeling of calmness and strength to hope for peace.
“150 grandmother history is all that’s left, a way to prove to others that we have so many years of history. It’s the future”

Powerful, matriarchal structures

Sari pes like a mountain

The needle is my weapon; a way to live, survive and continue as a nation.

Work from Kylic (patchwork) agricultural patterns animals, trees and around of the patchwork is the WALL of the HOME

CONCLUSIONS

In Armenia, a nation torn apart by uninterrupted genocide, conflict, religious persecution and continued war, the margins are drawn by individuals operating under extreme conditions and within a collective of perilous political reality.

- The significance of a pariah as an individual transmitting historical memory has not borne out of the research in Armenia. The luxury of eccentricity and personal heroism is not available to Armenians and therefore no “protagonist” has emerged from this research.
- The aesthetic, political and economic operations of Armenian needlework creativity are aligned with larger social relations but also had to negate the everyday in order to establish art’s autonomy.
- The aesthetic convergences of opposing and, at times, irreconcilable binaries were taking place against the backdrop of the consolidation of a national representation of Armenia as a modern state with a long national history.
- All Armenia is a chorus of protagonists in never-ending conflict, international interests and shifting political tectonic plates.
- Armenia’s needlework bound to historical memory is marginalised in the sense that it is a contested representational space, a wonderful symbolic battleground for various historical narratives and ideologies, occupying poles between patriotism and consumerism.
- Lace and needlework art appears as an evolutionary convergence of tradition and contemporaneity. Armenians attempt transgenerationally, to reconcile tradition with progressivism and justify national identification in an increasingly globalising world.
- Aesthetically, contemporary art in Armenia has inherited a legacy from the Soviet demand for ethnic representation, which in turn had inherited the orientalist legacy of the Russian Empire. Both of these are present in the work examined in this project.
- The women’s testimonies at the sessions and the needlework presented across many thematic areas (marriage, fertility, death, seasons, harvest, weaponry and more) carries out a meaningful cultural function in national cultural politics and in collective historical memory.
- Marginalisation is conceived as constituted through the lived experience of direct action.

MONT-DAUPHIN, FRANCE

Overview

Mont-Dauphin is a fortified town built by Vauban in 1693 that is on the UNESCO World Heritage list. It is a unique village of 170 people in a spectacular mountain setting, with Mediterranean sunshine in the summer and blinding snow in the winter. The silence is deafening, and all of the structures reek of history. Mont-Dauphin is nestled in a magnificent natural setting in the heart of the Southern French Alps, in the Hautes-Alpes department. It was built to protect France on its Italian border in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. France's famous military architect, Vauban, chose the Plateau des Mille Vents to build Mont Dauphin, a fortified site designed for a civilian population but with a military garrison. Because the Italian border moved further away in 1713, Mont-Dauphin was never invaded. The fortress, built of pink Guillestre marble, has preserved a remarkable group of cultural heritage buildings from its military past as an impregnable citadel. Mont-Dauphin is now a hub for active, responsible, and outdoor tourism and a host of cultural events held in festival contexts. Mont-Dauphin will be able to connect internationally with people from various countries and cultures through Pariahs, externalise their expertise, increase their visibility, and explore the common ground we all share as Europeans.

Interview model

Three Mont-Dauphinois were interviewed by the researcher out of a total of 167 inhabitants of Mont-Dauphin: An artist, a former Libération journaliste, and a local historian. The researcher tried to establish a connection between the interviewees' perceptions of Mont-Dauphin as a historical town and its links to modern metropolitan France and attempted to extract a sense of a "Pariah" as either a specific personality or a sense of resisting collectivity.

Questions asked to participants:

Participant 1

- Est-ce que lâcher prise et sortir du cadre te perturbe ou t'enchant (te rend plus fort) ?
- Te sens tu formaté ? En quoi ?
- Qu'est-ce qui t'indigne? (Cf "Nuit debout")
- As tu peur du regard de l'autre ?

- *Does letting go and getting out of the frame disturb or enchant you (makes you stronger)?*
- *Do you feel formatted? In what?*
- *What are you indignant about? (Cf. "Nuit debout")*
- *Are you afraid of each other's gaze?*

Participant 2

- Cherche une chose en toi qui te rend unique, qui te fais sentir différent des autres
- Comment te sens-tu dans le groupe ?
- C'est quoi pour toi être en marge?
- Connais-tu des gens marginaux pour toi ? En quoi le sont-ils?

- *Look for something in you that makes you unique, that makes you feel different from others*
- *How do you feel in the group?*
- *What is it to be on the margins?*
- *Do you know marginal people according to you? How are they?*

Participant 3

- *C'est quoi la notion de mémoire collective?*
- *En quoi ces gens ont-ils influencé ta mémoire collective?*
- *Ta mémoire peut-elle naître sans le témoignage de la mémoire de chacun?*

- *What is the notion of collective memory?*
- *How have these people influenced your collective memory?*
- *Can your memory be born without the witness of the memory of each other?*

Community research sessions

2 community sessions (20 participants) took place in September 16th, 2023, during heritage days in Mont-Dauphin, and 2 dance sessions on November 17th and 18th, (17 and 20 participants), led by the project artistic team, choreographers Isabelle Bazin-Mazuel and Lisie Philip as a form of embodying the research.

- Preparatory conversations with *Ascendance* on the historical and present realities in Mont-Dauphin as a historical fortress, a modern autonomous model-city.
- Review of potential interviewees and continual re-examination of probing “land”, “movement” and “mountain” as a material connection between historical memory and future imaginings.
- Re-contextualisation of the historical past and the complexities of Amont-Dauphin’s anti-metropolitan positioning on the issues of historical literacy, ever-increasing abundance and land *qua* sharing.

The participants were divided into three groups, namely: earth/land, water, and reading the body. Further to the guidance below, the researcher constructed hermeneutic points for Mont-Dauphin which were based on artistic interpretation, semiotic points and interrogating history. The sessions were a combination of theoretical positioning and physical activities.

- Prompts

Quelles sont les éclats du verre de la mémoire historique écrits aux marges ?

What are the shards of the glass of historical memory written on the margins?

Comment ces éclats sont-ils transposés à nous? (objets, paroles, vestiges du passé colonial, héritages du sol et de l’eau ?)

How are these flashes transposed to us? (objects, words, vestiges of the colonial past, legacies of soil and water?)

Quelle est leur contribution à notre compréhension et notre apprentissage (de l'humanité et du non-humain, l'eau, la terre, la montagne)

What is their contribution to our understanding and learning (of humanity and the non-human - water, earth, mountains)

Group 1 (EARTH/LAND)

Demarcation of the purpose of space as an arbiter of vulnerabilities. They symbolise the transition from one space to another and, unlike fields or paths on either side, they generally evolve naturally over time, with little or no developmental structure.

To what extent does human language insulate us from the myriad signalling systems that buzz, scream, glow, pulse and swirl around us?

Who or what tells us the margins as the historical/canonical separation from what is non-historicized/anti-canonical?

What are the actions or means through which we realise this historical anti-canonism? (stories from the margins, of "witches", "crazy people", "diseases", undocumented)

Group 2 (WATER)

What does fear feel like?

What does safety feel like?

Are we at the end of something?

Who or what thing tells us the margins are the opposite of the centre?

What are the actions or means through which we realise these historical margins (undocumented)

How does water flow against history?

How do we find ways to learn from the collapse and ruptures we experience?

Why focus on repair if our only tools to repair are the ones that led us to this precipice?

How to disentangle knowledge (of the fortress, the mountain and the air) from geopolitics?

Group 3 (Reading the body, HUMAN AND NON HUMAN)

How might our ability to read (remembered, renewed and increased) and make meaning from non-linguistic semiotic systems enable new thoughts, new connections and new paradigms?

Is a life possible outside of language? Outside of writing?

Observe complete silence for 10 minutes. What do you hear?

How has human exceptionalism disconnected us from the non-human world (mountains, animals, etc.)

Who or what thing indicates to us the silences (margins) of history as the opposite of the historical official?

What are the actions or means through which we become aware of these (undocumented) historical silences?

Our obsession with rationality and the mastery of natural phenomena

Read the whistle of the wind

- Methodology

A later chapter is devoted to methodological observations at the intersection of social science, ethnography and critical theory. In the case of Mont-Dauphin it must be noted that "the body" is problematised as a locus, a witness and a transmitter of history. From the point of view of performance analysis, the "body" is considered from the point of view of the dancer/transmitter and from the perspective of the scholar.

The guidance was to create and share rhythmic patterns and compositional structures to mirror the sense of sacrifice (land, water, locality, autonomy) against the larger structure of administrative and bureaucratic metropolis (centralisation, digitalisation).

Choreography is seen by the researcher as an intervention and a hermeneutics of marginalised history.

doing – sitting, standing, writing, thinking, walking, climbing – it is a body profoundly engaged in cultural practice. Choreographic historian Foster notes, 'What markers of its movement might a bodily writing have left behind?' (Foster , 1995) Historically, in Mont-Dauphin the priority lay with defending territory, building on rock and feeding off the land. There are a series of 'material remains' through which a historian can reconstruct the bodies of the past.

CHOREOGRAPHING HISTORIES

The objective for marginalised historical and collective memory was to inform us about the history of fluctuating events and how to look for answers in the mountains, the water and the marble. Secondly, we aimed to create a "choreography" of and in dialogue about theory and practice, about past and future and about the most personal articulations of political forces and social power. According to the dance historian Susan Foster in expanding the notion of '*bodily writing*' in Mont-Dauphin. Mont-Dauphin, due to its geophysics and mountainous encirclements.

- Aesthetic Margins

- Mont-Dauphin, UNESCO protected heritage site and fortress city dating back to the late middle ages, occupies a privileged and yet marginal position ex-iled from the French metropolis.
- Mont-Dauphin is content to remain within its confines as a model of an "isle" against the wider Franco-metropolitan and post-imperialist tableau. Mont-Dauphin's inhabitants, currently 168 individuals, are educated, conscious of their civic and social advantages and their favoured status.
- Mont-Dauphin consciously shapes a French model of autonomous, conservationist ecology in collective consciousness. La danse a permis d'explorer assez loin la notion de marge: se donner la liberté de sortir du chemin, et d'y entrer; gérer un cadre/une contrainte ; se voir par le regard de l'autre.

- French Materialism

"Se nourrir de la dentelle".

Lace as textured nourishment weaves together the Mont-Dauphinois experience and the artists' impressions of Yerevan. Armenian lace is expected to feature in Mont-Dauphin's performances as both delicateness and marble-like embroidery. The symbols present in Armenian lace have heavily impacted the artists from Mont-Dauphin, in particular the textures of war, loss and resistance encapsulated by the motifs and stitches woven in the lace. Four different styles of lace are expected to be used for the choreography of Mont-Dauphin to represent the symbolisms, wealth and allegories which have marked the history of Europe across its Eastern parameter.

Isabelle Bazin-Mazuel, artist of the French team, has reported the phrase "La dentelle m'a sauvé" as uttered by Armenian women lace-makers during her sojourn in Yerevan. This echoes my own research in interviews where lace was referred to as a "weapon" and a "secret amongst women". The idea of being protected *inside of* and *by* the lace in the transmission of secret messages of national, cultural and historical interconnection by the women lacemakers reflects the power of the *Yarn-as-Connecting Fibre of History* (fil d'histoire).

The softness and discretion of the yarn ties in with the hardness of one of earth's most precious mineral rocks and both are heavily present in *Pariahs*.

- **Marble**

Marble is present in the geophysics, the history and the present reality of three out of the four participants of *Pariahs*.

The soil of **Yerevan**, **Mont-Dauphin** and **Eleusis** is oversupplied with marble's metamorphic rock. In terms of the choreography, what is noteworthy across the four participants of the project is that they are located between 44.6698° N and 38.0413° N coordinates with Yerevan occupying 40.1872° N. Despite completely different political realities, we observe similar conditions that have been, historically, and continue to be present for this metamorphism to occur: The calcite in the limestone recrystallising to form a rock that is a mass of interlocking the calcite crystals.

Notably, Mont-Dauphin is known for its pink marble, locally known as « marbre griotte », or « marbre de Guillestre ». Visually striking, this pink marble is visible on the squares of Guillestre, in the old quarry of Saint Crépin, and employed in the construction of the buildings of the fortress using the particular quality of marble.

Marble's impact through *Pariahs* is of the utmost significance in aesthetic production as well as in carving and inscribing historical memory.

- **Encirclés**

Encircling is the fourth element of my artistic observations. All four participant cities are encircled by mountains with Mont-Dauphin the most pronounced of all four. Mont-Dauphin is situated on a rocky platform between Agnel, Montgenèvre and the Vars. There is a sense of centre surrounded by equidistant points from all its diametrical segments and a sense of gravity and pull towards and away from the centre. Choreographically, attention is drawn to the significance of tangential intersection where the tangent serves, intuitively, as the straight line that "just touches" the curve at any given point.

Conversely, the sense of danger in the cases of Mont-Dauphin (fortress to all points) and Yerevan (attacked by all points). Eleusis presents the particularity of being between the Eleusinian mountains and the Thriasian Plain, at the northernmost end of the Saronic Gulf where the components of entrapment and the possibility of escape provide rich aesthetic overtones.

CONCLUSIONS

- Mont-Dauphin is a site of marginality and anchorage, away from the social and geopolitical concerns of metropolitan France.
- Community and Communitarity is the marginal element for the creation of historical memory in Mont-Dauphin. This is, in a way, paralleled within the Slovene community, in particular with regards to the marginality experienced by Mont-Dauphinois and Mariborians as communities “au sein d’autre chose” (at the heart of an-Other thing) vis-à-vis their respective metropolis, vis-à-vis Europe and the world.
- In Mont-Dauphin, an urge to return and retain an “autre mode de fonctionnement” is observed, (another model of functioning). This model presents a particularity both in terms of its centring of local governance, autonomy as well as material and cultural production and its off centring of the metropolis and the principles of metropolitan organisation and behaviour. This is not expressed so much as an alternative but rather as a close reading and a tighter adherence to the ideals of solidarity, land ecology and historically-forming cohesion.
- Discursively, the will for artistic and administrative autonomy opens up the possibility of revisiting historical experience critically and proposes an emancipatory vision for the future.
- Marginalisation for Mont-Dauphin is the collective which proposes a pragmatic political framework for the cohabitation of autonomous individuals, autonomous governance and conscious ecology.

MARIBOR, SLOVENIA

Overview

Slovenia is an ancient country, recognised as a newly composed promising community after the Yugoslav wars. In December 1991, the Slovenian constitution was adopted, and in January 1992, the European Union recognised it as an independent country; on May 22, 1992 The United Nations accepted it as a member on May 1, 2004 it entered the European Union . Slovenia is almost a natural border between the old Austria-Hungary and the Balkans.

It is a tiny country (20,271 km²), with a little over two million inhabitants. Landscape is spreaded between four contiguous geographical environments: the Alps in the North, the Sea in the West, the Plains in the East and the hilly-plain central and southern areas.

Today, Slovenia is a parliamentary democratic republic with the Prime Minister as the highest executive authority. The government has executive and administrative powers. The Prime Minister and ministers are elected by the Parliament. Intra-EU trade accounts for 67% of Slovenian exports. The most important sectors of the Slovenian economy in 2020 were industry (27.2%), trade, transport, accommodation and catering (19.1%) and public administration, defence, education, healthcare and social welfare (18.1%).

Community research sessions

The research focused on:

- Land and ownership
- Society and social organisation
- Education
- Margins

The memory of the Slovenian older generation was strongly influenced by the organisation of life in the former common state of Yugoslavia: For the first time in history, women were given the right to vote and workers were given the opportunity to take a direct stake in managing the country.

Their long memories of the country's cultural, political and agricultural traditions were formed through challenging historical times and events. The Slovenian nation has distinctly preserved its original national character. In the character there is no strong connection to specific personalities - revered or marginal. Slovenes remember the bad historical experiences of a small nation on the southern border of the former Austria-Hungary and the northern edge of the Balkans, in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. This period was experienced as the suppression of their own cultural and political character, the annihilation of the national essence.

Two community sessions were organised by Jasa on November 23rd 2023, with groups of school students and their history teacher, who had as a task to engage with their older family members and gather collective memory and historical facts. The project researcher joined via Zoom and led the session in English.

Before each session, respondents were informed on the study details and the reasons for the research. Assurances were given repeatedly about confidentiality, ethical principles, anonymity (if desired) and confidentiality (where requested).

- Primary data

All participants were given the space to express historical memory. Firstly, these were centred on the intergenerational interviews which had been carried out by the students prior to the community engagement session which. Every participant delivered their presentation and, slowly, a picture of modern Maribor began to emerge against a backdrop of modern Slovenia as a European country.

The questions were semi-structured, with the focus on:

- Land (natural conditions and ecosystems)
- Society and social organisation (political and economic organisation of society, weaknesses and strengths of life today and in the past.)
- Education (lifelong learning and spiritual standards, characteristics of Slovenians and Mariborians)
- Margins (pariahs, heroes, identity and history of their own nation)

- Prompts

The prompts used to initiate a conversation on historical memory are based on social science frameworks: autoethnography, decolonial practice and critical theory. Given the context, the researcher allowed a natural rhythm to develop between participants, given the classroom environment and the fact that all participants were presenting in English and not Slovenian. Then some definitions on the subject areas of the research were established:

“What is modern Maribor to *YOU*”

“What are the principal areas of convergence between you and your parents and grandparents’ generations?”

“In what ways do you see Maribor/Slovenia differently”

“What was the political reality of previous times in relation to the present?”

A discussion developed which is recorded and available to view. Participants have signed the respective consent and GDPR forms.

Then, a connection between participants and the concept of “pariahs” was established.

“Who transmits Slovenian history to you?”

“Are there heroes that you identify with Slovenian history and memory?”

“What is the importance of the collective / community vis-à-vis the individual?”

“What is a pariah?”

- Findings

As observed in Eleusis and in the Mont-Dauphin interviews, a thread emerged pointing to post-Soviet legacies encompassing patriarchal ideologies, ideas about land ownership, economic

order, pedagogical traditions and current approaches to globalism. Slovenia and, in particular, young Mariborians are proud, educated and determined. They do not espouse the concept of a “pariah” preserving historical memory.

These are the names that are most often mentioned in the preservation of Slovenian essence:

Primož Trubar, (Protestant priest), Anton T. Linhart (playwright), Valentin Vodnik, (priest and poet), Anton M. Slomšek, (priest and writer), France Prešeren, (poet), Vladimir Bartol (writer), Srečko Kosovel, (Enlightenment poet), Matej Bor (poet), Karel Destovnik Kajuh (partisan and poet), Neža Maurer (poet and writer), Boris Pahor (writer), Rudolf Maister (poet and Slovene general of Austria-Hungary the army that liberated the northern part of Slovenia). Among these enlightened individuals we recognise the “*red thread of resistance*” (anonymous interviewee, 23/11/23) and the desire to preserve the Slovenian language and preserve the sense of national identity.

Young Mariborians are eloquent in their determination to connect and progress in a modern society. At the same time they are conscious of their heritage, which is transmitted within family and community contexts.

- Methodology

Primary data was collected during two Zoom sessions held on 23rd of November 2023 group 1 (8:40 - 10:25) and group 2 (10:45 -12:15)

Research Preparation: Between 16 November and 23 November, students held conversations with older generations and prepared summaries-notes. They chose the topic according to their own preferences.

Students used the school's digital conference tool - a 360-degree camera and a microphone. Alongside the researcher, teacher Brigita Praprotnik and the representative of the organisation Jasa, Mateja Jamnik were present and coordinated the conversation when necessary. Participants from the same thematic group presented all their interview outputs, by sitting around a table with a microphone and a camera.

In the case of Maribor, semi-structured conversations were carried out in keeping with focusing on land, social organisation, education and marginalisation.

Methodologically, the researcher’s repertoire of skills and techniques (further developed under *methodological observations*) are crucial in ensuring that comprehensive and representative data are collected during the interview against a rigorous interpretative and comparative schema. The questions were designed as a maieutical testimony to extricate a definition for the word pariahs by

- highlighting the generational shift which occurred as a result of the post-Soviet era and Slovenia’s entry into the European Union.
- identifying the connective tissue between the reorganisation and fragmentation of collectively owned space, the production and management
- interpreting new lifestyles, mediatised, and young people’s consumption practices, with Instagram and YouTube

- weaving the effect of transformations in the relationship between historical memory and its quotidian practices.
- allowing the margin to emerge between the old Soviet-inflected regime and the potential for collective action
- seeking the semiotic and the practical “pariah” in the community.

CONCLUSIONS

- It transpires that this “pariah” is found in quotidian acts, in public spaces and in schools and homes. This “pariah” does not acquire a performative and theatrical dimension; they do not accommodate newly emerging forms of subjectivization.
Opposing the mass media’s sense of reality, Slovenian collective memory society relies on forms of public service, public manifestation which are based on the notion of a freely acting “modern” subject, without deference to heroic acts.
- Social cohesion and social organisation were heavily represented in Maribor alongside the transition between the social self of the former Yugoslav Republic and the current technology-driven, digitally imposed capitalist reality. Young and old alike agree that this is a necessary debate that must be conducted both in the context of Slovenia's historical consistency and its future as a European country.
- Regarding the role of the historical centre and the historical margin, Slovenes place the idea of socialism against a cruel backdrop of hard “capitalist menace” (23/11/23 session participant) as a thematic and intellectual *margin*. This “menace” in its reality and practices threatens to flatten tradition, language and character into one data-controlled unified model. Slovenian historical heroes who worked on the margins are philosophers, poets and writers who were able to articulate thinking beyond the accepted boundaries and challenge the dominant opinion.
- There was a distinct aversion to the idea of a “hero” or figure of historical significance. Even though the question was asked, the tenacity of groups to distance themselves from romantic personalities was obvious. The question of the creation of the new country of Slovenia was emphasised by the presence of two students who had just arrived in Slovenia.
- Overall, the sessions and anonymous feedback from students indicated that Pariahs provided an important opportunity to identify the intergenerational thread between the life experiences of grandparents, parents and youth, given their varying levels of exposure to war, new media, technology, education and modern European languages.
- Among the surveyed groups of grandparents, Slovenian historical memory was formed on the basis of geography and political upheavals in the centre of Europe. Deeply steeped in the history of Austria-Hungary in the north and the Balkans in the south, Slovenia's path in the twentieth century is torn between its loyalty to former socialism under President Tito and its newly acquired status as a full member of the European Union.
- The thread of a silent understanding of common “natural laws” pervades Slovenian life, and the traces, values and practices of socialism are vividly present in the Slovenian consciousness.

- According to feedback, Pariahs offered a space and opportunity for existential reflection, moral improvement, and reflection on our “global village” (23/11/23 participant) for dialectical and intellectual exercises. The participants concluded that the importance of memory now is to provide a precise connecting thread by fostering a "sense of transgenerational belonging" in which older generations transpose their domain of historical memory to current events. The strongest bond that binds older Slovenians is their commitment to solid principles of social cohesion and community. For young people, the transition from the socialist sphere to the new European world is characterised by a pronounced intergenerational anxiety regarding the level of disintegration and corrosion that "hard capitalism" will cause to Slovenian society.
- Given that all individual memories are socially conditioned, there is an acceptance that the questions raised by the Pariahs project have sparked an indispensable conversation about conventional literacies, old and new epistemologies, what to remember and what not to remember, and to what practices of remembrance. Citizens are expected to serve. In this sense, the "apostates" of Slovenia are collectively those who insist on "socialism within capitalism" (anonymous participant, 23/11/23); a non-partisan, unaffiliated ontology, which perpetuates solidarity, social values, and community and non-classist allegiance.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

How community-based artistic research methodology promotes and reinforces a distinct, shared, and integrated approach to cultural experience.

The research processes in *Pariahs* have produced innovations in the recontextualisation of historical and collective memory at the intersection of social science and the performative arts. At the intersection of social science, autoethnography and performance, below are the theoretical principles and techniques used by the researcher in navigating disparate cultural, geopolitical, linguistic and cultural fields.

Whereas participants may commit themselves to authentic testimony, there are many practical and cultural barriers in the process of accessing comparative and precise historical and collective memory. Ultimately, the objective was to synthesise heterogeneous and diverse threads across the diversified artistic disciplines of theatre performance and choreography. As analysed above, careful and skilful research, extensive guidelines and interviewing and synthetic approaches were deployed all across the project in both the interviewing and session process as well as the interpretative stage. The complexity, design, register and output of community participatory methodology has borne out four principal outcomes:

- the non-linearity of processes of transmission and transliteration.
- the emergent necessity for acknowledging, formalising and reorganising community testimony and the need to systematise the issue of documentation.
- the formalisation of the functions of mnemonic testimony, of spoken testimony and of new materialisms as testimony evidenced in weaving, sewing and Armenian needlework
- inaugurating place, proximity and personal testimony as methodological tools.
- the formal study of the pragmatics of community collaboration, planning and participatory design.

Furthermore, “*Pariahs*” has called for self-historization. Both the concept of the marginalised individual and history told through the medium of memory create the conditions for a self-referential matrix, a nonlinear way of guiding self-representation and self-archiving. Below is an outline of the theoretical tools deployed by the researcher in order to bring into alignment the diversity, non-linearity, self-referentiality and synchronicity of the participants and their respective socio-political realities. These were used across the project by the researcher in both the interview process and the final analytic stage.

Biomechanics

The social science method of *biomechanics* is aimed at dispensing skills after Meyerhold’s tripartite rhythm through to a design of a user-centred model of research floorplan. This was a system controlled by the player/witness/ activist’. Meyerhold’s method for researchers dictates three phases:

1/otkaz- (preparation) which, in my case was rigorous study and cultural tuning, not only of the contextual detail of each location and situation but also on a personal level: a study of participants as individuals or group

2/ posil (action) the means and mechanics by which communication occurs between researcher and participants as well as internal group processes and inter-relational tensions.

3/ tochka (end point)

Lecoq

Jacques Lecoq's theatre pedagogy examines previously uncharted genealogy of epistemic transmission. The method consists in Lecoq's enquiring into lines of descent within his own family tree and, secondly, analysing what is behind the process of knowledge transmission. He firstly studied knowledge transmission from (Lecoq) himself to primary inheritors, and then from primary inheritors to secondary inheritors. Following this line of enquiry, we are able to distinguish between first-hand witness accounts and intergenerational testimony across spatial and linguistic fields thereby developing a critical distance from testimony and historicity.

Lecoq's teaching is a web of tangled connections that are messy and impure. This research shows that the transmission process mirrors this conflict between preservation and disruption and attempts to understand the ways in which performance, history and pedagogy interact with the specific cultural context and, by extension, transcultural, transgenerational and transnational contexts.

Synchronic/Diachronic

The vertical and the horizontal axes of analysis form an interplay between the vertical, genealogical narratives of lineage that we find in Meyerhold and Lecoq and the horizontal/synchronic. Seeing improvisation and task-based practice presents a diachronic and a synchronic alignment towards the creation of historical memory. The diachronic (vertical/historical) as a persistent shadow of the horizontal (synchronic) is a defining element of critical reflexivity which supplies a constructive and complementary force to the immersive imperative.

This is particularly the case when we observe the emergence of social, political, and economic solidarity in *difference and diversity* away from synchronic/horizontal schemata and towards collective counter-metropolitan governance, communal ownership and decision-making and, ultimately, collective knowledge creation.

Theorising Bodies

Theorising bodies are specific subjects of historical study on the margins. This is a complex web of the present corpus of humans or non-humans, but also bodies within archives, historical bodies, absent or overlooked bodies. What begins to distinguish body-centred research is the very notion of 'body' as interpretable and flexible, yet materially and culturally specific. It often plays with the provocative tension between the notion of 'the body' that is capable of moving endlessly between contexts of use, slipping easily, and apparently without loss of identity, into multiple relational sets.

The table below sets out the corresponding categories of researcher and communities researched and describes some of the processes of examining these across geopolitical and intimate plains.

Theorising the political body

THE RESEARCHER	THE COMMUNITIES
<p>Political and social positioning of the researcher</p>	<p>Political and social positioning of the researched body Interpretation of somatic ideas and experiences. Trauma Ethical considerations on the researcher's own lived experience; negotiating between bodies absent and present; modelling non-fixed subjectivities</p>
<p>Historical and archival analysis of bodies Engaging researcher's own bodily knowledge in cultural analysis of historical embodiment.</p>	<p>Reconstructing historical bodies Recontextualising historical movement Identifying evidence of corporeal experience from the past in documented forms and word-of-mouth testimonies.</p>
<p>First-person methodologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● practical guidance on interaction through bodies ● ethnographic fieldwork ● Phenomenology of lived experience ● Inter-corporeal exchanges: sharing research through the body and through new materialisms. 	<p>Reflexive bodily awareness; participant observation; application of critical perspective upon lived experiences Autoethnographic storytelling Addressing absent bodies Collaboration that facilitates physical sensorial communication</p>

PROPOSED TOOLKIT

STAGE 1

Planning

Transcultural study

Translinguistic study

Transliterated study (if applicable)

Historical understanding and appropriate research

Commitment to explore productive instabilities between existing practices of meaning-making and research outcomes.

Development of ideas beyond the canonical and the archived

Correct balance between “doing and reflecting” depending on scale, context and resources.

STAGE 2

Participant immersion

Adjustment and fine-tuning of participant immersion (interviews at preferred locations, family and women-responsive environments, legal flexibility on withdrawal of consent)

Facilitation and participant focus

Integrity and ethics (varying on researcher’s academic or professional affiliation).

Balance of the margin against the centre on the basis of three foundational principles:

- **Embodied Participant** (*the sexed body, the disabled body, the non-verbal body, the dark-skinned body, the mutilated body*)
- **Economically Marginalised Participant** (*those unable to attend, those unable to “connect”, those unable to email or “text”, those without abode or means of transport*)
- **Civically Excluded Participant** (*the non-citizen, the non-juridical body, the stateless body, the orphaned body*)

STAGE 3

Biomechanics and webs of social and emotional connections

Social relevance

Authenticity

Relationality to community, context and time

Responsiveness

Adaptability

STAGE 4

Pause moment

Interim reporting (even if only internally deployed)

Observation and reflection discourses between partners/participants and researchers

STAGE 5

Feedback questionnaires with flexible narrative allowance

Re-contextualisation of observed outcomes within disparate and varied theoretical frames

CONCLUSIONS

“Pariahs” has been possible through the building of conceptual, interpersonal, and methodological bridges between spaces of meaningful difference. The European pluriverse has evidenced that it contests any dominant universal version of the human species, and with that perspective, it is concluded that Europe increasingly sees itself as a collective force on the margins of action. Work and attentiveness is needed for these margins to move in centrifugal and material directions in order to make a difference.

“Pariahs” has expanded on the latest methodological apparatuses² of embodied research, cross-border and intersectional research practices and innovative performance research. Through the careful articulation of ideas that have only abstract connections with the physical world – the stories of an afterlife, or the story of communism and rapacious capitalism – Europe has been organised and written across signs, devices, physics and metaphysics that are taken up to tell our European story and determine which story is told, who can hear it, and the way it is interpreted and, most importantly, which story remains buried. The literacies we pass onto future generations will focus our perception and our attention on the signs we can interpret. With these, we can make sense of things.

- Across the four participants of *Pariahs*, Slovenia, Mont-Dauphin and Yerevan/Ayntab portray the concept of the “pariah” as collectiver marginalisation at communal, local and national levels and refuse to act as the universal economic agent with consistent properties, with predictable behaviours and invariable outcomes. The figure of Farmakis in Eleusis presents an exception to this evidence, all other considerations notwithstanding. However, all four weave into a mode of resistance to the axiomatic assumptions of creating systems of supreme economic efficiency and they share the same ontological and epistemological anxieties about ecology, land and citizens on the margins of the metropolis.
- Organisational *solidarity in practice* emerges as a pariah of the modern European state across all four case studies. Communities are ambitious and educated. Their objective is actively and creatively to engage in social, political, and economic solidarity in *difference and diversity* by embracing collective decision making, counter-metropolitan governance, communal ownership, and horizontal formations.
- There is an acknowledgement of sharing commonalities even though in different contexts and different regions, while operating in diverse national settings.
- Marginalised groups or exploited individuals are becoming increasingly conscious of preserving historical memory and creating imaginings counter to neocolonial/neoliberal and centralised enclosures.

² The historian Yuvan Noah Harari argues that the singular characteristic differentiating humans from other species, allowing us to proliferate, explore, and ultimately become the most powerful species on our planet, is not the size of our brains, not our opposable thumbs, but our capacity to tell stories. The so-called Cognitive Revolution is estimated to have taken place between 70,000 and 30,000 years ago, and in this period, humans dramatically increased in population, in organisation, and in the harnessing of tools to extend their abilities. See Harari, Y.N. (2015). *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. New York: Harper Perennial.

- The emergence and putting into practice of solidarity and coalition-building.
- The empowerment of the four participating cities to engage across testimony, materiality, art and discourse in emancipative struggles against marginality and self-determination in liberational expressions of social, political, and cultural creativity. This was also evidenced across historical and interpretative bridges between the discursive (interviews, New Historicism, critical theory and ethnography) and the material (dance, pedagogy and textiles).
- Pariahs' visual, gestural, and aural literacies critically foregrounded the practice of creating new meaning through an engagement across diverse forms of representation and communication. Since the advent of highly influential conceptualisation of multiliteracies, literacies scholars, performers and the civic man have all acknowledged the interplay of these systems.
- The conceptualisation of “trans-interpretation” across domains, understandings, meaning-making and epistemologies that can arise from engaging with diverse European semiotic symbols, texts, languages, fabrics, yarns, dances, and marbles and re-representing them through other forms, hermeneutics and symbols.
- From Eleusis to Mont-Dauphin and from Maribor to Yerevan, a margin-(ality) is categorically and irrefutably a determining factor of the central structure, present at the centre of history and the centre of historical consciousness.

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