

AR-621

Unearthing traces - Part 2

Jalón Oyarzun Lucía, Ginalski Stéphanie, Invited lecturers (see below), Pedrazzini Yves

Cursus	Sem.	Type
Architecture and Sciences of the City		Opt.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	1
Session	
Exam	Written & Oral
Workload	30h
Hours	23
Courses	5
TP	3
Project	15
Number of positions	12

Frequency

Only this year

Remark

May 29th 2021 - The participation to the doctoral course Unearthing Traces #1 is mandatory to participate in this course.

Summary

«Unearthing Traces» propose to explore memory processes, power structures in archival practices in relation to built environments and material traces. This course is an on-site investigation on the material witnesses of Swiss colonialism in the built environment of Neuchâtel.

Content

Neuchâtel - Dismantling imperialist entanglement of archives and the built environment

Invited lecturers:

Isabel Barroz

Chantal Lafontant Valloton

Collectif 'De Pury'

Zarina Bhimji

With the "**SwissUniversities**"# doctoral courses "Unearthing Traces" we propose to explore and learn about memory processes, power structures in archival practices in relation to the built environment and material architectural traces. With the participation of a wide array of thinkers and practitioners in archival and artistic practices, historians and researcher in architecture and social sciences, the course explores how imagined records and traces can be composed and grounded in the context of academic research in order to implement them into an historical argumentation. A particular emphasis will be made on architectural and spatial traces and records both through the methodologies of urban critical and postcolonial studies and through questioning the imperialist dimensions of the architecture of archives and built environments.

After two days in the form of a conference, the fieldwork in Neuchâtel constitutes both an opportunity to actively apply these methodologies, and to question the colonial entanglements of Switzerland through a collective and embodied research process «in situ». Students across different disciplines - architecture, history, arts, political sciences - will be solicited, in order to decompartmentalize disciplines in this process.

The Centre d'Art de Neuchâtel (CAN) serves as a basis of this research day, while exploring the city with the aim to "unlearn"# our gaze and ask new questions. As one of the organizers is currently in an artistic residency at the CAN, it is a useful way of bringing together academic and artistic interventions.

Pedagogical outcome, assignment:

Estimated workload:

-Project: 15 (+ 26 hours of Unearthing Traces #1)

Each participant to this course is due to participate to Unearthing Traces #1.

Neuchâtel's strong bourgeois history of the 18th and 19th century is strongly entangled with colonial triangular trade, through the production of Indiennes in the Neuchâtel region, as well as through trading with "horlogerie" or colonial products like cacao (Suchard), coffee (Leopoldina plantation in Brazil), diamonds (David de Pury) or other raw materials such as wood or precious stones from and with former colonies (Surinam, Brazil or Latin America in general). The city's built environment is heavily influenced by capital that was flowing back to the city's construction of public buildings, health institutions or private villas, which later became museums (Villa de Pury/MEN). Also other infrastructural urban interventions in the 18th and 19th century of Neuchâtel were financed through profit with colonial trade and slavery based plantations in European colonies, like the detour of the river Seyon, that formerly flew through the city center. The goal of the workshop day in Neuchâtel is to encounter "in-situ" research methods applied in the city's architectural traces of colonialism (buildings, sites, monuments, etc).

During this day, the doctoral students are asked to document different sites with different means of representation (audio/visual/textual and how to make tangible and perceivable even hidden traces in the built urban environment and its historical/geographical layers (palimpsests).

In the aftermath of this day in Neuchâtel, doctoral students will choose a site: Either a site relevant to the question in the city of Neuchâtel or in the surrounding of their own living environment (if based elsewhere). They will then develop a multi-media work on how to document or tell the story of a specific site with a specific relevance to our set of questions. Methods that were inspired by the two-day zoom conference of "Unearthing Traces" build the basis of this task. This multimedia work of each doctoral student will be published on the website of "Unearthing Traces" as a growing archive. It will be developed as well in a printed publication.

Invited Lecturer

The choice of the (potential) lecturers is made in order to respect a gender balance, with both young and advanced researchers, coming from a diverse academic field (architecture, critical urbanism, contemporary history, gender studies, postcolonial studies, cultural studies, curatorial practices, memory studies, anthropology, archival studies, philosophy), as well as extra-academic practitioners (from architecture, artistic practices, association members and activists, film directors...). Furthermore, a particular attention has been drawn in order to invite people of non-western backgrounds.

Note

The participation to the doctoral course Unearthing Traces #1 is mandatory to participate in this course.

Keywords

Memory processes, revisiting historiographies, power structures in archival practices, architectural traces, decolonizing public space, Swiss colonialism, Material History

Learning Prerequisites

Required courses

Required courses: Unearthing Traces #1

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

- The Course aims at providing a theoretical, methodological and interdisciplinary frame to the PhD Students allowing for a critical understanding of their own archival research, and its relation their terrain of investigations; how certain realities are misrepresented by the archives, and how certain spaces demand for the unearthing of traces in the archives to decolonize them.

Resources

Websites

- <https://unearthingtraces.ch>