RIGA TALKS V
17.–20.10.2024
Memory Space:
Access Denied?

Session I
Memory Space: Access Denied?

Constructing memory space
and models of societal cohesion

Among the many gaps in Latvian society, one of the most publicly visible and politically sensitive is the differences of 20th century memories, which form communities of memory, boundaries and collective identities, formulate patterns of participation, and articulate demands in the public sphere.

Memories in a society filled with collective trauma constitute a fundamental problem of the consensus for future development and threaten the capacity to build on a consensus of equal memorial participation, as a recognition of the diversity of practices that can be articulated and publicly deliberated.

Instead of recognition, since 25 February 2022, memory communities and political elites have increasingly intensified the removing or substituting the 'Memory of the Other', in which the possibilities for cultures of interpretation of the past to dialogue, to reveal contradictions and to discursively treat tensions are diminishing. The shrinking and passivity of minority civil society is accompanied by a shrinking of memory space in urban spaces, media and public debate. These factors affect the young people's capacity, motivation and knowledge to know and thematise the Other's field of memories.

Session 'Memory Space: Access Denied?' will follow up on the publication 'Memory - access denied?' findings regarding the issue of memory inclusion in the Baltic States and Eastern Europe.

https://www.zinatnesgramatas.lv/lv/memory---access-denied_-sast--deniss-hanovs--igors-gubenko

Following questions will be explored in this session:

1. What is the current state of memory politics in Latvia? Actors, quality of their interaction, their messages;

2. How future memory actors are created - forms and contexts of youth participation;

3. How can cinema art shape the politics of memory and what has been done/not done so far?

Programme 17 October

4pm ------ Registration & Refreshments

5pm------- Introduction by founder of Riga Talks, cultural researcher Prof. Dr. Deniss Hanovs: Post-Soviet dynamics of memory politics in Latvia followed by panel discussion with film director Staņislavs Tokalovs, and social anthropologist Lena Hercberga

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7pm------- **Screening of documentary Everything Will**
               Be Alright (2023) https://rigaiff.lv/en/
               distribution/viss-bus-labi/

8.30pm---- **Wrap Up & Closing of Day I**

Programme 18 October

10am------ **Workshop / Dr. Lena Hercberga (Copenhagen,**
               Denmark) / 2 ha

Memory. Identity. Democracy: Russian-speaking youth in Latvia as an expression of today's pluralistic democracy

As part of her workshop, Lena tempts you to approach pluralism in a very practical and even physical way. She invites you for a walk. If the opposite of pluralism is the dominance of one fixed and "correct" point of view, a walking practice allows us to be outside of any fixed position and opens an infinite number of evolving points of views. Besides, walking together with others, or even better with strangers, allows us to see what we would not have noticed alone, simply because our perception becomes "blind" to the things that fall outside of or differ from what we consider to be "the norm". Walking with others challenges the centrality and uniqueness of our own experiences. Lena will guide the walk, but all participants will be equal contributors to this shared experience. The second half of the workshop will be held back in the memorial, discussing the walk and the individual experiences, connecting them with the topics of plurality, inclusivity, and democracy.

NB! Photos will be taken and audio recordings will be made during the walk. Prior to the workshop you will be asked to sign a consent form to give permission to process your personal data.

12am------ **Lunch**

2pm ------ **Workshop / Staņislavs Tokalovs**
               (Riga, Latvia) / 2 ha

Using memories presented and shared by the students, with the guidance of the tutor, through practical tasks each participant of the group will transform their memory into an audio-visual image. The goal of the workshop is to acquaint the participants with the power of language of audio-visual image and see the wide range of possibilities to use that language to capture and store memories, emotions and much more.

4pm / Coffee Break

5pm------- **VR presentations and conversation with**
               creative team

7pm------- **Wrap Up and Closing of Day II**

Session II
Memory work for civic and human rights education

Almost 80 years after the end of the Second World War, challenges posed by the post-witness era are pushing memorial sites and museums to critically reassess their educational programming.

In this section we will look at how the memory work can keep up with the pace of time at the memorial sites and museums in support of civic and human rights education.

One way to achieve more self-direction and decision-making in historical learning is through extended reality (XR). Both VR and AR, and mixed reality is being increasingly applied to stimulate the learning process especially among young people. Special emphasis in this session will be put on the idea of historic space as the last remaining authentication factor of Nazi crimes.

Drawing on the current research and practice in historical learning both in Europe and the U.S., at the center of which is question about self-directed, interactive, and voluntary learning, participants will have a chance to test new XR learning tools developed for the Žanis Lipke Memorial in cooperation with local and international partners, which tell the story of civic courage.

This session will be introduced on 18th October afternoon by Dr. Raivis Sīmansons, VR Curator at the Žanis Lipke Memorial, followed by presentationsand conversation with creative team of the following VR experiences:

Lipke Bunker VR (ctreative technologists Līga Vēliņa and Ieva Vīksne)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoYvtzl5k7E

Žanis: Through Our Eyes. Multi-Plot Documentary for Virtual Reality

(creative technologist Cory McLeod)

https://zanisvrdoc.com/

Programme 19 October

10am--------Workshop / Cory McLeod (Minneapolis, U.S.) / 2 ha

Hand-Made Digital Creative

For over 20 years, I've been immersed in the digital creative production space, witnessing incredible change and innovation. While these advancements have made creative output more accessible, closer to pixel perfection, faster, and more automated, they have also, perhaps unintentionally, diminished the individual style and craftsmanship of the production artist. However, amidst this wave of innovation, I've observed another trend that doesn't receive much attention—the merging of analog production processes with digital methods. This fusion allows for digital creativity that feels truly handcrafted.

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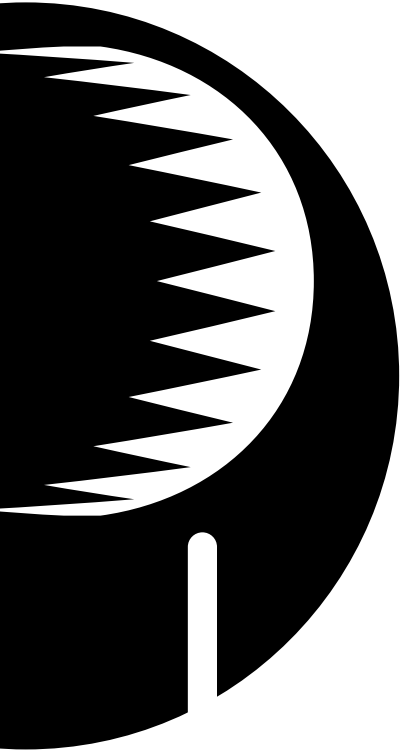
In my non-commercial work, I continuously explore methods, processes, and coding techniques that make digital art feel hand-made. In this workshop, I'll begin by providing participants with a high-level overview of some of the production processes I've developed through years of trial and error. These include hand-drawn character animations and rigging, perspective mapping, and coding. Afterward, I'll guide participants step by step through the process of creating virtual environments using real-world photography, archival images, PBR (Physically Based Rendering) painting, drawing, and 3D modeling.

Although the workshop is primarily geared towards gaming engine use cases, I'll also demonstrate how I apply these same processes in motion graphics and analog drawing.

About Cory McLeod

Cory is a Creative Technologist at Rise and Shine and Partners. His work has spanned new media art, theater, and performance, and for the past 20 years, he has worked primarily in the communication arts. His work has received multiple local and national awards and has been featured in publications such as The New York Times and Fast Company.

12am / Lunch

2pm / Workshop / Dr. Andrea Heubach and Elisabeth Anschütz (Silent Heroes Memorial Center, Berlin, Germany) / 2ha

Introduction: The Silent Heroes Memorial Center in the German Memorial Landscape

In our presentation, we will provide a brief overview of the history and work of the Silent Heroes Memorial Center within the context of Germany's culture of remembrance. During this brief talk, we will address the following questions: Why was the memorial established relatively late, and why is it located where it is? What is the mission of the Silent Heroes Memorial Center? Who are the "silent heroes"? What challenges do we face in our work, and how do we address them?

Workshop: „Historical and Civic Education at the Silent Heroes Memorial Center – Formats and Methods"

In this workshop, we will introduce the audience to the educational formats and methods at the memorial in which we aim to present both perspectives: the perspective of the helpers and the perspective of those in hiding. Our focus lies on a discussion on collaboration in the era of National Socialism, particularly the topic of "silent heroes." As part of the Riga Talks, we would like to introduce two methods used in our work and provide a practical insight into our educational approach.

4pm ------ Coffee Break

5pm------- Reflections on memory cultures in Berlin and Riga / Wrap Up and Closing of Day III

On Sunday, the 20th October,

10am------ Morning coffee at the Žanis Lipke Memorial

11am------ Guided tour to Uzvaras Parks (Victory Park) Frontiers of Memory: Examples of Difficult Heritage in Pārdaugava / Maija Meiere-Oša, educationist and researcher at the Žanis Lipke Memorial

*The languages of Riga Talks V are Latvian and English with simultaneous translation, if necessary.

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