



BULLETIN N. 3 – APRIL 2023

Speme

Questioning Traumatic Heritage: Spaces of Memory in Europe, Argentina, Colombia

What Speme is

**SPEME - QUESTIONING TRAUMATIC HERITAGE:
SPACES OF MEMORY IN EUROPE, ARGENTINA, COLOMBIA**

Speme is a four-year RISE 2017 EU-funded project for research, innovation and staff exchange between academic researchers and professionals working in the field of spaces of memory, museums and sites of commemoration in Italy, the Netherlands, Argentina and Colombia. The project's ultimate goal is to create new ways and forms for the transmission of traumatic memories **of the past in the present** through which contemporary social and political issues can be further interrogated.

You can visit our website to find out who we are, and which institutions are involved in the project: www.speme.eu



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A "new" start

After a temporary halt due to the Covid pandemic, the SPEME group resumed in situ activities, following the true nature of the project, which is precisely to foster exchange between academic researchers engaged in the study of memory, trauma and heritage.

In this third Bulletin we present and share the most relevant activities carried out from May 2022 to April 2023.

On site activities from May 2022 to April 2023 between Europe and Latin America

Amsterdam, May 2022

Amsterdam was the host city for the first post-covid presence activities of the SPEME project. In the Dutch capital, the project partners resumed fieldwork at traumatic memory sites and museums (e.g. Kamp Amersfoort, Kamp Vught) and discussed new strategies for transmitting the traumatic past through art and creativity. Among the main activities of the Dutch period, it is important to mention the on site exhibition "Objects and Stories" curated by prof. Ihab Saloul and his students from the UvA. Moreover we would like to mention the lectures by Camilo Forero (UNAL), entitled "The essentialism of the victim: dehumanising people" and that of Lorena Villate (Bogotá), entitled "Narratives of female exile as an act of political resistance: the Colombian case". Moreover, the group also visited the 'Revolusi' exhibition on the Indonesian revolution at the Rijksmuseum, as well as a visit to the International Institute of Social History to see the materials and collections on Colombia and South America. In addition, the partners had the opportunity to attend a presentation of recent works by Dutch-Indonesian artist Merapi Obermayer, who with her art she works on post-colonial issues, traumatic memory and personal history.



Merapi Obermayer in her art studio in Amsterdam



Lecture by Camilo Forero at UvA
(May 2022)

Bologna, June 2022

After the Dutch month, the team met again in Bologna to follow the Italian activities coordinated by the University of Bologna. In addition to fieldwork at sites of fascist and Nazi memory and trauma, the group had the opportunity to participate in a conference "Presences of the Pasts: Semiotic and Digital Approaches to Memory and Heritage", on the relationship between traumatic memories, post-conflict contexts and digital spaces, organised at the Centro Eco in Bologna.

The Italian period was also mainly devoted to the discussion and methodological exchange on the annual workshop: the podcasts organised in the various partner countries. In particular, the partners shared the process that led them to the construction and production of the audio products (a more detailed description of the workshop is on page 10).



The Speme team during the
fieldwork at "Binario 21"
The Shoah Memorial of
Milan (June 2022)



The Speme team during the fieldwork at "Campo Fossoli" (June 2022)

The Memory sites the Speme group visited in Bologna

- Museo Nazionale dell'Ebraismo Italiano e della Shoah - MEIS Ferrara
- Fondazione ex-Campo Fossoli
- Museo Monumento al Deportato politico e razziale (Museo Al Deportato)
- Binario 21 Memorial and Casa della Memoria
- Predappio

Bogotá, September 2022

The SPEME Colombia group organised many activities on the themes of memory and heritage during 2022.

However, here it is particularly useful to mention one of these events because it played a very important role in the transnational dialogue on the specific research topics of the SPEME project: the conference "Congreso Procesos de Memoria en América Latina y el Caribe. Encrucijadas y debates".

The event was organised by the Colombian ONALME group of SPEME, directed by Neyla Graciela Pardo Abril.

The aim of the project was to create a debate for a transversal reflection on memory processes in Latin America, the Caribbean and Colombia, through conferences, dialogues, workshops and visits to famous memory sites such as the National Museum of Colombia, the Bronx Creative District, Fragments and the Cloister of San Agustín, as well as the installation and visit of the exhibition 'Unearth and speak' by artist Juan Manuel Echavarría. The interventions of the authors involved were collected in the audiovisual book 'Reflections on Memory and Peace'. The most relevant presentations were selected for inclusion in the book in print "Procesos de memorias en América Latina y el Caribe".



Buenos Aires, March 2023

The month of March was dedicated to Argentine history and memory, with a particular focus on the forms of complicity and educational strategies adopted by various memorials and museums to transmit difficult and traumatic memories to different types of generations. In addition to site visits and dialogue with numerous educators, curators, museum directors, and activists, there was no shortage of scholarly discussions. In fact, two seminars were held in the first half of the month, one entitled.

'Caught between past and future. A workshop on changing the prospects of memorial systems' - ran by Michael Defuster (H401) and the other 'Imaginary Interviews with the Past' ran by Mario Panico (University of Amsterdam) where there were also present the students who participated in the Argentinian workshop.

Procesos de Memoria en América Latina y el Caribe.
Encrucijadas y debates



The Speme team during a workshop at the University of Buenos Aires (March 2023)

In the second half of March, the Buenos Aires group (coordinated by Lizel Tornay) organized an international conference entitled 'Arte y memoria,' in which scholars from all over the world discussed the relationship between artistic production and trauma. From a theoretical point of view, The conference was opened by a lecture by Griselda Pollock (professor emeritus, University of Leeds).

March was an important month because all partners began to reflect, from a comparative perspective, on the concept of implicating subject, as proposed by the American memory studies scholar Michel Rothberg. The partners discussed how (and if it is possible) to represent responsibility and complicity in the museums and memorials.



The Speme team during a workshop in Buenos Aires (March 2023)

Memory sites the Speme group visited in Buenos Aires:

- "Virrey Cevallos" Former Clandestine Center
- Parque de la Memoria (Ciudad de Buenos Aires)
- Memory Space "Olimpo" Former Clandestine Center
- Space of Memory "Casa Mariani Teruggi"
- Provincial Commission of Memory
- Ex-Esma - Espacio Memoria y Derechos Humanos
- Space of Memory "Orletti" Former Clandestine Center



Part of the Speme group in Buenos Aires (March 2023)

The workshop on the podcast in Buenos Aires (March 2023)



Publication

In January 2022, the speeme group reached another important milestone: the publication of an issue of the journal **Heritage, Memory and Conflict** devoted entirely to the project's themes



Published

Heritage, Memory and Conflict 2 (2022)
Spaces of Memory: Heritage, Trauma, and Art

Ihab Saloul, Patrizia Violi, Anna Maria Lorusso, Cristina Demaria

Papers published: 7 | Total pages: 76

The issue was edited by Cristina Demaria, Anna Maria Lorusso, Ihab Saloul and Patrizia Violi and features the following articles, all written by SPEME members

- **Constant consensus building: art and conflict in the ESMA museum and site of memory** by Alejandra Naftal
- **Trauma and allegory: truthfulness in fact and fiction. Making a private archive productive** by Lars Ebert
- **Hypermnesia and Amnesia: Remembering (with) the Body and Post-Conflict Memorials and Architectures** by Andrea Borsari and Giovanni Leoni
- **Art and memory: Magdalenas por el Cauca** by Neila Pardo
- **Memory, art and intergenerational transmission. Artistic practices with young people in memory sites in Argentina** by Lizel Tornay, Victoria Alvarez, Fabricio Laino Sanchis, Mariana Paganini
- **Entanglements of art and memory activism in Hungary's illiberal democracy** by Reka Deim

The project is "on-air"

Imaginary Interviews with the past: a SPEME podcast

This year's workshop was an innovative challenge for the speeme project partners, who measured themselves against a new tool that is very much in vogue in contemporary media: the podcast.

How is it possible to narrate traumatic events without using visual media? What are the methodological choices to be made in order to convey events that we have not experienced but which nevertheless characterise our present?

The workshop focused on the idea of promoting knowledge of one's own country's traumatic past (or, in some cases, present) among adolescents, through a non-unidirectional transmission, based on a process of empowerment of the participants' agency.

Starting from the assumption that much of the literature on traumatic legacies has been (and it is still today) based on the live narratives of witnesses; that it is precisely this practice of listening that is gradually being denied to the new generations, the idea of this project is to produce a sort of imaginary dialogue between boys and girls and those who lived through traumatic events in the past, or who are currently living in conflict situation but are in some way “unreachable”.

Usually the voices that are heard are those of the victims, in order to compensate them in some small way for the enforced silence in which they have been immersed. This often prevents us from understanding the processes that involved the perpetrators. Try to know their dynamics of involvement is certainly not useful for a process of redemption, but it can help to understand the way in which violent power concern the subjects. From this perspective, we would also discuss the figure of the “implicated subject”, who corresponds neither to the victim nor to the perpetrator, but who is today more relevant than ever for the younger generations.



The methodological
discussion of the podcasts
(Bologna, June 2022)

The first reason is related to the fact that the young people do not have directly experience of traumas, but at the same time they are often implicated, non-participating observers, of everyday micro-traumas – consequences of those of the past, of which the adolescents usually feel neither victims nor “guilty”.

The outcome of the workshop was discussed on several occasions among the partners, notably at a seminar in Bologna (June 2022) and one in Buenos Aires (March 2023).

The partners worked completely independently and adopted different methodologies to address the discussion on specific historical periods, while also independently managing the technical aspects of podcast production.

In particular, SPEME members had the opportunity to compare their choices with those of others on two occasions: in Bologna in June 2022 and in Buenos Aires in March 2023. In these meetings, the partners discussed the methodologies and practices implemented to disseminate content and optimise results precisely through dialogue.

To access the UBA podcast:
[Entrevistas imaginarias con el pasado](#)

To access the UNAL podcast:
[Capsulas](#)

To access the ex-ESMA podcast:
[Imaginary interviews](#)

To access the UvA and H401 podcast:
[Objects & Stories podcast](#)

To access the Unibo podcast:
[Imaginary interviews](#)