PRESENCES OF THE PAST

This section explores various ways in which the past and its histories can intervene in the present, with the potential for these effects to extend into the future. Spaces can serve to authenticate and preserve memories. In this context, architecture's role, both as a spatial practice and a spatial witness of the past, is particularly significant.

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Time Capsules: Actualizing Collective Memories

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Abstract: In today's crisis-ridden world, contemporary architecture exhibits a pull toward investigative, counter-present, and speculative scenarios extending equally into the past and future. In particular, present-day efforts to grapple with the histories of colonialism and with ecological issues raise questions about the societal role and impact of architecture as an interventional practice of remembrance and imagining. This article looks at architectural and scenographic installations dedicated to reconstructing marginalized cultural spaces and narratives. It explores how representational and performative processes of anchoring the past in the present intervene in dominant views of history, and create space for alternative narratives that, in turn, provide new windows onto the current state of society and diverse possibilities for the future.

Keywords: Real-Time Systems; Decentered Spaces; (P)Re-Enactment; Material Trajectories; Plurality of Times; Polychronic Narratives; Excluding Connections.

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Introduction

> »[…] it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, […] what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories« (Haraway 2016: 12).

The current ecological, social, political, and economic tensions are challenging architecture's potential as a means of intervention in new ways. The climate disaster and its ripple effects, the rise of populist governments, and armed conflicts – the assumed certainty of a stable social and economic order across industrialized societies has now been rocked to its core. Although the days of utopian visions may be over, the scale and number of today's crises inevitably lead to the question of what a completely different world might look like. This also seems to be associated with a shift in the societal legitimation of architecture. Architecture is increasingly expected to have an explicit political or social effect. Thus, projects that center representational and medial processes of investigation, intervention, and transformation as core parts of design are particularly in demand right now. Understood as a tool for »political intervention«, architecture then traces the upheavals taking place across the globe, exposing specific abuses in politics, economics, and society and holding those responsible to account (Fuller/Weizman 2021). Such interventions include open-source research by collectives such as Forensic Architecture or Killing Architects: They can be perceived as »counter-investigations«, as assaults on the state's monopoly on the production of truth (ibid.: 161). By way of architecture, they attempt to furnish proof of politically motivated acts of violence and human-rights violations, which become valid in truth commissions or court proceedings. As Lisa Stuckey emphasizes, these interventions react to the promises of the welfare state to solve crimes (2021: 46). Their goal is political and aims at a socially effective redistribution of forensic authority (Rothöhler 2021). As a result, their work can lead to fierce controversies and spark discussions that transcend the boundaries of architecture and design.[1]

1 In December 2023, RWTH Aachen University cancelled a planned guest lecture by Forensic Architecture, known for their investigations of Israeli activities in the West Bank and Gaza. The University management expressed concern about inadvertently supporting anti-Israeli sentiment following the Hamas attack in October. The move has been criticized as a violation of freedom of expression and academic freedom.

Considering our crisis-racked present, there is an increasing movement toward such interventions that use creative forms and methods to intervene in specific political and societal situations, bringing change for the better through artistic action (Otto/Zorn 2022), but that is not all. Increasingly, projects and procedures are being developed that do not pursue an explicit political agenda but nevertheless, or precisely as a result, derive their specific interventionist potential from this. In these projects, architecture is not a tool to produce measured evidence, but rather an act of preserving and enhancing memories of marginalized groups. The following text is dedicated to them and based on three case studies. They refer to historic constellations, materials and narratives with a view to capturing and articulating the diversity of perceptions of political histories, everyday realities, and colonial pasts. They are brought into focus against the backdrop of two interrelated traditional strands of research on collective memory: Maurice Halbwachs's sociological studies on the *mémoire collective*, and the theoretical concept of »cultural memory« that Jan and Aleida Assmann developed at the end of the 1980s. Halbwachs's thesis of collective memory as a repertoire of identity-related narratives about the past, which are shared by a social group, is key here (1950). On this basis, Jan and Aleida Assmann address the foundation, ceremonialization, and visualization of memory by way of cultural formation (J. Assmann 1992; A. Assmann 1999). These memory concepts are extended as part of the »transcultural turn« at the beginning of the 21st century to include a cross-border, transnational dimension. Cultural memory becomes dynamic, the content, meaning, and functions of which need to be repeatedly negotiated. New concepts of memory have been introduced, such as »global memory« by Homi K. Bhabha (2009), »multidirectional memory« by Michael Rothberg (2009), and »transcultural memory« by Astrid Erll (2011). These new definitions give rise to a growing interest in minority cultures of remembrance that were previously politically suppressed.

The case studies discussed below refer to this diversification of concepts and address the ethical implications of cultural remembering and forgetting. To that end, they develop counter-present and speculative scenarios that reach into both the past and the future. Jan Assmann describes stories about a common past that offer guidance in the present and hope for the future as »counter-present« (1992: 79). In this sense, the scenarios suggest missed opportunities and chances not previously utilized to renew cultural knowledge and develop options for action to change society (A. Assmann 1999: 140).

Real-Time Systems

As Astrid Erll emphasizes based on art historian Aby Warburg's term »social memory«, the key to the continuity of past social and mental cultural aspects lies in their ability to be remembered via objects and carriers, matter, and media of memories. They act as repositories and agents of historical dynamics and provoke social interactions (Erll 2011: 19). The intervening power of projects in contemporary arts that see themselves as acts of collective memory also lies in this double play between storage and agency. They draw their potential for intervention primarily from their material obstinacy and performative dynamics, challenging familiar perceptions, disrupting routine actions, and interrupting expected situations. At the heart of projects like these lie processes of translating collectively meaningful spaces and events from the past into bodies, materials, and action (Baecker/Paul/Sick 2020: 11). This approach uses practices that move away from the notion that intervention is merely an activity that raises awareness of imbalances or issues intending to remedy or prevent them. Instead, the piecing together of past spaces and events is turned into physical experiences to unlock new perspectives on historical narratives. This kind of reconstruction is shaped by key factors including the materials used, the participants involved, and their situatedness. The resulting architectures intervene in a given situation or context by literally taking action and presenting themselves in two ways: First, they appear in a sociocultural context as a material and spatial event that takes place in the real world and in real time and sets atmospheric, affective, and social processes in motion, initiating reflections on historical narratives. Second, they convey an idea of the complexity of the reconstructed occurrences that can now be re-experienced.

These kinds of interventions can be viewed as real-time systems, an aesthetic concept first put forward by art historian Jack Burnham and then further developed in the 1960s by Hans Haacke (Fry 1972). Haacke advocates a paradigm shift from the perception of the artwork as a static object to the understanding of an interactive field involving the flow of information, energy, and matter: »A ›sculpture‹ that physically reacts to its environment and/or affects its surroundings is no longer to be regarded as an object. The range of outside factors influencing it, as well as its own radius of action, reach beyond the space it materially occupies. It thus merges with the environment in a relationship that is better understood as a ›system‹ of interdependent processes« (quoted in Celant 1969: 179). The relationship bet-

ween system and material is hugely significant here: It implies, inter alia, aesthetic, media-theoretical, ontological, economic, ecological, and political questions. Through its materialization, the system becomes »real«, »not imagined« (ibid.). Haacke frequently uses ephemeral or movable materials which, due to their nature being characterized by the process, specific properties, and behavior, establish system contexts or intervene in existing ones.

His intervention *GERMANIA* in Germany's pavilion at the 45th Biennale d'Arte di Venezia in 1993 is one his most powerful real-time systems in respect of memory culture and politics, activating historical material. The pavilion's marble floor panels installed during the Nazi-era were ripped up and windy stacked to raise awareness of the national appropriation of art. The specificity of this intervention was that it fully involved the visitors: Every step in the pavilion created either a muffled or shrill thudding and rattling effect of the loose tiles, so that visitors involuntarily paused to avoid causing even more noise and shards (Matzner 1994: 22–23).

Unlike symbolic political interventions and emblematic architecture, real-time systems articulate dynamic social occurrences and are open to various influences, including those from the participating audience or public. This gives them a broader significance in that they do more than embody gestures of accusation and revelation. Rather, their interventionist potential is drawn from the fact that they give rise to sociomaterial configurations and practices that are tested and updated experimentally within the framework of the intervention. Three recent real-time interventions in art and architecture that relate to the concept of collective memory as part of protest movements, sustainability debates, and post-colonial discourses will be analyzed to illustrate this.

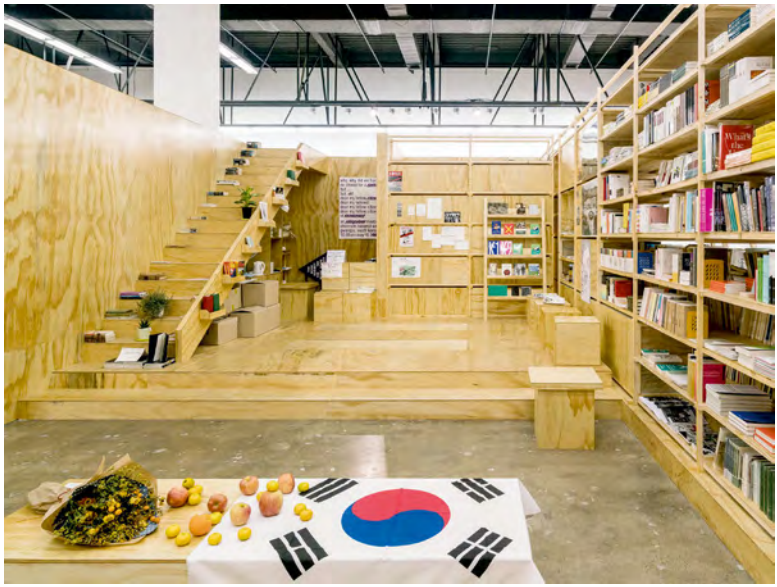
(P)Re-enacting Spaces

Grappling with marginalized cultural spaces is a central aspect to real-time interventions, just as it is to dominant spaces. The question of where these marginalized spaces are located has been articulated in cultural and spatial studies with terms such as »beyond«, »in-between«, »liminal«, »interstitial«, and »third space« as used, for example, by literary scholar Homi K. Bhabha at the beginning of his book *The Location of Culture* (1994: 1–4, 36–39). All these descriptions focus on borderlands that are both material and imaginary. They lie between the clearly defined spatial arrangements pre-structured within society and are therefore generally forgotten or deliberately set aside

(Möntmann 2022: 34). The term »interstice« or »in-between space« stands for two things here: First, it is a sphere of overlapping and entanglement of ways of life, semantics, and worldviews with different cultural coding and second, it is a concrete place where people come together, forging a sense of community for marginalized groups (Wirth 2012: 12).

In interventions, these kinds of in-between spaces are identified and analyzed, deconstructed and reconstructed, recontextualized and updated. This form of »re-enactment« should be viewed not as an attempt to create a faithful reproduction, but rather as an interpretation using new means, in an expanded or changed context (Baecker/Paul/Sick 2020). It opens up opportunities to reveal the underlying power systems that created these spaces through processes of exclusion, along with shared memories of events that occurred there. The hypothesis is that architectural »re-enactment« becomes effective as an interventional practice if and when creative processes are used to do more than spark discussions of different perspectives on historical spaces and narratives, but instead go beyond to critically explore contemporary social and cultural contexts based on these spaces and narratives. In this regard, the reconstruction of these spaces is less a method of researching memory from the standpoint of cultural studies than a tool for intervening in processes associated with the culture of remembrance. It can be viewed as an artistic practice of »doing memory« and as a »performative practice of remembrance embedded in a hegemonic base narrative and […] intervening in that narrative« (Virchow/Thomas 2022: 68).

This kind of practice of remembrance is fostered by the installation titled *NOKDU Bookstore for the Living and the Dead* (2016) by artist Dora García and architect Olga Subirós. The work is a life-size replica of the iconic NOKDU community bookstore in Gwangju, South Korea (fig. 1). As Nina Möntmann points out, the store was a refuge for members of the protest movement during the brutally suppressed Gwangju uprising against the ruling military dictatorship, which had imposed martial law on May 18, 1980 (2017). The bodies of demonstrators killed in the crackdown were also displayed there. However, the bookstore, reconstructed in simple wood, is not so much a memorial as a venue for talks, discussions, and workshops on the history of the uprising and the narratives of its survivors, as well as on Korean politics and feminism (fig. 2). Much like Pierre Nora's »lieux de mémoire«, this placeof remembrance is more than just a geographic location or a physical space; it is also an occurrence, an institution, ritual, and object in its own right (1990: 7). Inspired by this understanding, García describes the bookstore as »a knot



1.– 2.
Dora García, NOKDU *Bookshop for the Living and the Dead, Installation, architecture by Olga Subirós, 11th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea, 2016.*
© Doyun Kim (García Lopez 2016).

where an infinite number of events, history flows, narrative lines, life stories, ideas, desires, sorrows, positions, memories, longings, collide« (2016: 1).

The reconstructed store melded books for sale with documents and posters from the original store. There were also replicas of everyday items belonging to the demonstrators in the 1980s, along with coffins, flags, and funeral shrouds created especially for the installation in memory of the failed uprising. As a result of the compilation of historical documents with reinterpreted objects from the past, the bookstore developed its affective content and simultaneously established distance from past events to create concern and reflection among the participants. This arrangement highlighted the idea that the outcome of the 1980 uprising could have been different, that it would not have been crushed by the military, and that the democracy movement could have prevailed instead.

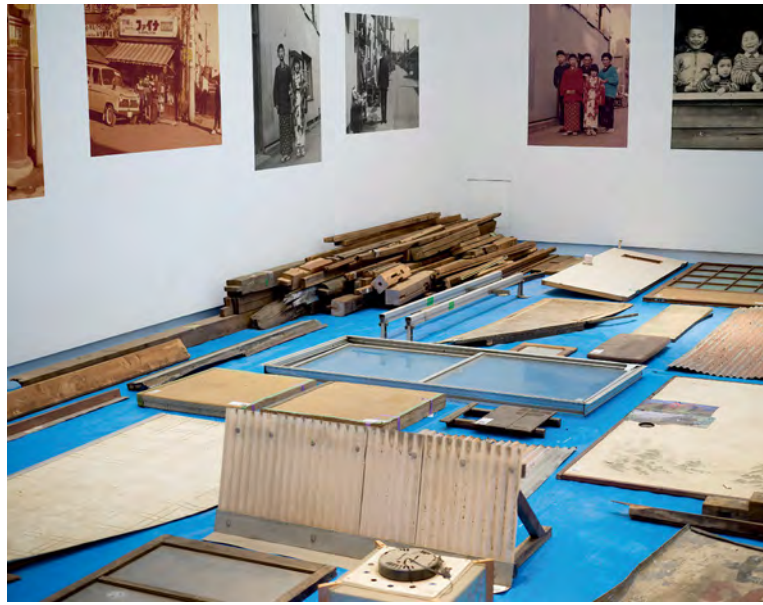
Cultural theorist Ariella Aïsha Azoulay has coined the term »potential history« for this view of history, in which alternative histories and unrealized visions of the future – previously excluded from the dominant construction of the past – are reclaimed as potential materials for acts of collective self-empowerment (2019). To tell these different stories, the *NOKDU Bookstore* is separated from the canonical writing of history as a fragment and released as a »time capsule« containing heterogeneous objects and documents (Möntmann 2017). Such time capsules preserve the energetic potential of an event in the material: They contain a »mnemonic energy« – as Jan Assmann says based on Aby Warburg – that can be discharged again under changed historical circumstances and at a different location, whereby the past is brought to mind, i.e. embodied and experienced, and thus shapes the new (1995: 129; Warburg 2000 [1924–29]). The result is neither a copy nor a quotation of the event, location, or its objects, but rather a complex temporal interweaving. These time capsules are »construction[s] of the past relating to the present and future« (Virchow/Thomas 2022: 74); they confront historical facts with the present by rejecting the inevitability of past events and proposing a conditional future. Thus, the *NOKDU Bookstore* in Gwangju raises the hope that the democratic movement in South Korea will be revived in the current struggle against corruption and for social justice. Its reconstruction can be understood as a »pre-enactment«, in which the lost battles of the past are perceived as incomplete tasks for the present and carried into the future through the media of architecture and performance (Marchart 2022).

Material Trajectories

The re-enactment of past architectures by deconstructing and updating their elements proves to be an especially impactful practice of »doing memory«. In places that have been scenes of economic, political, and social upheaval in the past, the material relics of these changes are all the more evident as interventions in existing architectures and urban spaces. When such relics are set in relation to each other and made publicly accessible like documents in an archive, the lived realities inscribed in them can be reconstructed, affording space for collective imagining of new ways to use these elements.

A Japanese project titled *Co-ownership of Action: Trajectories of Elements* created such an interplay of cycles of materiality and remembrance (Kadowaki 2020). For this contribution to the Japanese pavilion at the 17th International Architecture Exhibition in 2021, the Takamizawa House in Tokyo was dismantled into its components and shipped to Venice, where it was presented with archaeological rigor and partially reassembled into new architectural structures (fig. 3). The work echoed an old idea dating back to the World's Fairs of the 19th century, but instead of reconstructing a temple or a traditional Japanese house, it traced the history of development in post-war Japan through the story of a typical home. The materials and elements, which varied greatly in age, were arranged to show the various conditions of the house in a peculiar kind of simultaneity. The elements offered a high-resolution image of past activities, not only in the form of well-preserved individual objects, but also in their relationships to each other. Like in a kind of vivisection, the additions and modifications made to the house reflected life stories on the micro scale even as they showed the distortions and dislocations of modern Japanese society on a macro level.

The project drew its interventional power from the procedural execution of the actions – from the dismantling of the house to the rearrangement of its elements and the reuse of the materials in a different context. By way of example, dismantled materials were put together into artificial landscapes that served for recreation and exchange. After the exhibition, the elements and materials were reinstalled in the community area of a housing complex in Oslo (Nilsen 2022). Thus, the project showed not only how used materials can be repurposed in the future rather than discarded, but also how new social spaces can be created for future urban societies with relatively little materials.



3.
Kozo Kadowaki, Jo Nagasaka, Ryoko Iwase, Co-ownership of Action: Trajectories of Elements, Japan Pavilion, 17th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, 2021. © Carolin Höfler.

In a new configuration, material fragments also become part of a new narrative about how different cultures can be reflected in the architecture and spatial structure of cities, and how their interaction can have a sustainable and productive sociospatial impact. In this reading, the reused materials become collective artifacts, telling a changing history as they bring together disparate context-dependent meanings. This form of actualizing past architectures follows a new logic, namely a relationship to the past shaped by a self-aware re-engagement with history (Möntmann 2017). In this way, it undermines the modern era's promise of progress, presuming that past and future no longer relate to each other as »the old« and »the new«, with the old making way for the new. In this non-linear understanding of temporality, the past is not simply over. Rather, the deconstructed architectures give the past a meaning in the present, which offers the potential for speculative future designs.

Weaving Worlds

This way of engaging with history marks a break with the concept of chronology and genealogy in favor of actualizing historical fragments and is specific to an understanding of architecture as an interventional practice of remembrance and imagining in the postcolonial age of globalization. Contrary to the dictum of »learning from history«, this process of breaking free from chronology toward multiple temporalities allows for an understanding of history as a complex fabric woven from open threads and polychronic narratives that can still be diverted in different directions through practices of re-enactment, re-experience, and actualization (Möntmann 2017).

Kabage Karanja and Stella Mutegi of Cave_bureau, a Nairobi-based practice of architects and researchers, recently designed a literally interwoven space as a historical scenario (Kallehauge/Wedel Bruun 2023: 152–161). The project explores how colonial stories about the use of previously overlooked landscapes are made visible and how practices of spatial restaging can intervene in dominant historical narratives as a methodical »unlearning«. Their investigation centers on the extensive volcanic cave systems around Nairobi and on the southern coast of Mombasa, which are known to have been home to the first hominids (fig. 4). Less well known is the fact that in the 17th and 18th centuries, these caves served as a transit point and prison for slaves who were loaded onto ships and transported to slave markets. In the mid-20th

century, the caves were a hideout for fighters in the »Mau Mau« anticolonial independence movement, making the caves a symbolic place in the history of Kenyan resistance and the birthplace of the modern nation of Kenya.

In an exhibition at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk, near Copenhagen, the architects recently visualized this history of Kenya's caves in the form of a hanging mesh structure as a life-size reconstruction of a segment of the Shimoni Caves (fig. 5). The spatial structure, inspired by the traditional weaving techniques of the Maasai, encompassed some 300 square meters. It was co-developed by architecture students from the Royal Danish Academy and woven by hand from a three-dimensional (3D) laser scan and digital mesh from the cave. Rattan was the material for the structure, using the ancient triaxial weaving technique of Kagome. A specially designed computer program was used to translate the complex shapes into weave patterns.

The weaving process transformed the cave into a translucent textile-based space, creating a physical and sensory experience of the traumatic history of the indigenous people of East Africa. This production process invoked positions and projects that focus on a new ecology of materials, seeing weaving as a way to explore the relationships between people and the environment they inhabit. In an essay on »Architecture as Weaving«, Timothy Ingold describes two ways of thinking about architecture. He distinguishes between a world that arises »through the hierarchical assembly of preformed parts into larger wholes« and one that is woven from »ever unspooling threads […] growing all the while without ever reaching completion« (2013). Weaving is often used as an emancipatory, decolonializing practice in contemporary art projects to test new ways of relating to each other socially. The Shimoni Caves model evokes similar readings – from weaving as a practice that fosters community and culture to the woven object as a topographic map and collective psychogram. In a metaphorical sense, it shows how multifaceted topographic, political, and cultural connections created a complex, densely interwoven system over the centuries. This suggests a culture in which extreme interconnectedness creates stability, both literally and metaphorically.

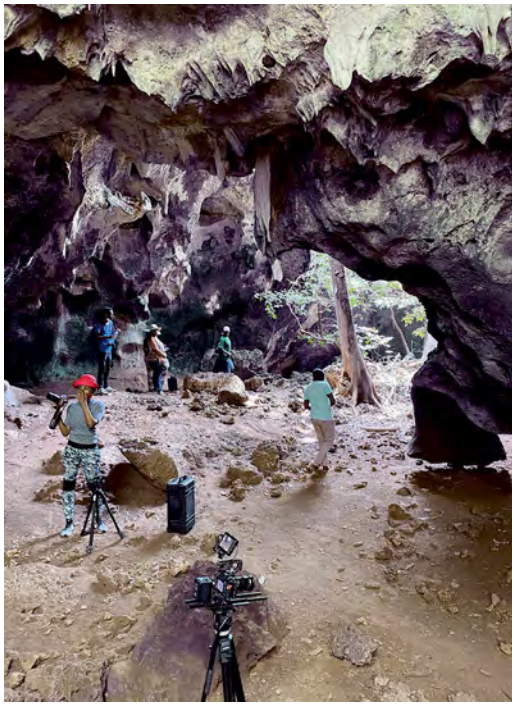
Excluding Connections

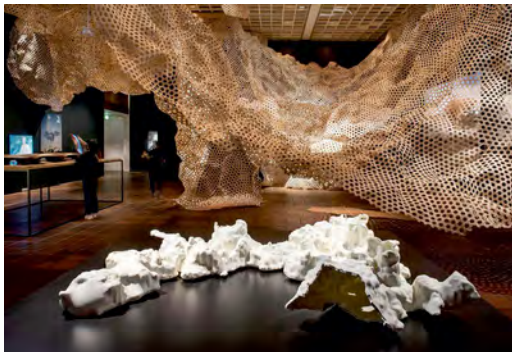
With the reconstruction of the Shimoni Caves, the architects created a transnational, interwoven structure of relationships through architectural history and reactivated a universal historical narrative based on the connections

between the architecture of early hominids and all gods: In one drawing, the caves are related to the Pantheon: The subtractive architecture, characterized by a collapsed cave roof, is surprisingly similar to the Pantheon dome with its oculus (Kallehauge/Wedel Bruun 2023: 42–43). The vast interwoven spatial structure is also reminiscent of early human habitations as described in art theory and art history texts from the mid-19th century. For example, Gottfried Semper explored the relationship between textiles and architectural space, arguing that knotting and weaving were among the oldest human skills and the origin of masonry building (1851). A key element of his theory was that of material change (»Stoffwechsel«), a phenomenon in which structural forms originally associated with the techniques used to work with one material were transferred to others. On this basis, he theorized that »modern« architecture had its origins in the nomadic architecture of weaving and knotting.

The woven model of the Shimoni Caves alludes to these historical constructs of the 19th and early 20th centuries in which non-European arts were placed at the dawn of art, thereby labeling them as »pre-art« or artisan crafts. According to Susanne Leeb, non-European arts and cultures had to be both integrated and rejected for art history to become established as, in their own self-image, a universally valid academic discipline (2015). The Shimoni Caves model subtly undermines these dual practices of connection and exclusion: Since the woven work can only be created using advanced 3D scanning and modeling technologies, in the linear logic of progress, it stands less at the start of the architectural history than at what is currently its end. In this way, the dismissive dichotomy of prehistoric versus historic, premodern versus modern, is carried on ad absurdum.

The figuration of the excluded connection is invoked again when the model reconstruction of the Shimoni Caves draws attention to the unequal destruction of ecosystems in the fight against climate change. The Kenyan government, with the support of the European Investment Bank, plans to produce geothermal energy over a large area near the caves – with serious consequences for the vegetation, animals, and people, especially the Maasai. This puts actions aimed at achieving a global energy transition in diametric opposition to protecting the indigenous culture and resource-conserving practices of the Maasai (Kallehauge/Wedel Bruun 2023: 10–11). Once again, Cave_bureau looks at the closely related processes of connection and the exclusion of non-European cultures in the light of »universal« development





4.
Cave_bureau, Mapping of the Shimoni »slave caves« in Mombasa using laser-scanning technology, 2021. Photo: Kabage Karanja.
5.
Cave_bureau, The Anthropocene Museum – Cave, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, 2023. Life-size model of the Shimoni »slave caves«, woven in rattan (above). © Kim Hansen/Courtesy Louisiana Museum of Modern Art.

goals and sets them in opposition to the future scenario of a mesh structure made of woven lines of movement – as a form of interruption and resistance.

Conclusion

What term used for intervention could be set alongside the projects discussed here? In principle, the works presented intervene in a reality with which they remain closely enmeshed. They do not aim at an abstract surmounting of problems produced by a concrete reality. Rather, they challenge prevailing problem-solving paradigms and relate to a reality that is always in flux, and consequently to a future that cannot be anticipated. In this sense, they break with the traditional genealogical principle of history and with the expectation that the present and future must be innovative. Instead, they deconstruct and expand historical narratives and develop counter-present and speculative scenarios based on revitalized and incomplete stories of the past.

Nearly forty years after the Gwangju uprising, the reconstruction of the *NOKDU Bookstore* glanced at the past but also looked into the future of South Korea's democracy movement – at a time when thousands of Koreans were again taking to the streets in Seoul and other South Korean cities to protest against the country's widespread corruption. The bookstore's re-enactment placed the events of the Gwangju protests in the context of current protests and explored the role of artistic and architectural work in political movements and their potential to convey translocal solidarity. In contrast, the *Co-ownership of Action* project, which dismantled a Japanese residential building to its components and rearranged them at other locations, addressed the tracking down and visualizing of new experiences via historical materials from everyday buildings against the backdrop of ecological thought and design approaches. The histories of components and objects regarding material, production, and practical utilization were placed in relation to each other and an architecture of the future was imagined that activates memories and experiences through the (re)use of its elements to ensure material longevity. The *Shimoni Caves* project ultimately used a large-scale meshwork to expose spaces of memory in southern Kenya, the perception and development of which had previously been politically and culturally suppressed. The example of the caves demonstrated the traces and inscriptions that the colonial era has left behind on the landscape, infrastructure, and public space but also in dominant historical narratives. It signaled the necessity of understanding the colonial thought patterns and spatial concepts that are still

effective today, as well as their power structures, to become aware of them, to discard them, and to assert non-hegemonic epistemologies that have been fought against and marked as »other« by Western discourses.

What the three case studies have in common is the generation of collective acts of remembrance and thus the shaping of possible scenarios for the future. All three interventions convey an image, material, and spatial memory that transcends countries and times. A transcultural »overlapping community of memory« is contoured and constituted in all three (Erll 2011: 20). They are based on a model of collective memory that is less a fixed repository than a principally open and changeable fabric of mental, material, and social phenomena.

Their interventionist potential lies in reinterpreting marginalized cultural spaces and collective events and making them tangible in physical or material form, thereby establishing effective action for shaping alternative futures. All three interventions can be understood as real-time systems, according to Hans Haacke, which physically and socially react to and influence their environments and contexts. The reconstructed bookstore evokes memories of past anti-government protests and their spaces in South Korea and acts as a real material and spatial event by provoking assemblies and encounters, not least with a view to fostering social and artistic resilience against current and future tendencies toward the dismantling of democracy. The reconfigured elements of the Japanese house show that historical materials are not limited to the role of bystanders, but rather directly involve them. Integrated in the moving arrangement and transformation of the elements, viewers and spectators become participants and ultimately interact with the materials, following their ongoing histories of use, and adding new ones. The large-scale woven model of the *Shimoni Caves* involves the bodies of the producers and recipients in the created material-atmospheric situation. Such works could be described as immersive, whereby immersion means an actual, physical immersion in the material events of a real milieu. Ultimately, one does not face these interventions to consume them visually, but one enters them to physically participate in them. This situates such interventions within the performative practices of rehearsal – acting out a past that was experienced or went differently, and a desired but unforeseeable future (Marchart 2022). In this view, an egalitarian society, resource-conserving architecture, and an adaptable and participatory city are not mere fictions. Rather, they arise in the process of material reinterpretation of the past itself – as a »real utopia« in the present (Wright 2010).

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