**CIMS 2021 PG SYMPOSIUM**

‘Contested Memories of Monuments and Public Spaces’

**Friday 7 May 2021, 16:00 (GMT)**



The Cultural Identity and Memory Studies Institute (CIMS) welcomes staff and students to this online interdisciplinary symposium which draws on the work of PGRs, independent researchers and staff at St Andrews to explore timely discussions about representations of history and memory in monuments and public spaces.

**Brought to you with financial support from the St Leonard's Doctoral and Postgraduate College Community Fund**

**16:00-16:05.** Welcome

**16:05-16:55.** 20-minute presentations and 10-minute discussion

1. Clare Fisher (PhD candidate in Art History): ‘Monument to…? Commemorative Entanglements and Kara Walker’s *Fons Americanus* (2019)’
2. James J. Fortuna (PhD candidate in History): ‘Identity and Infrastructure in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and the New Deal USA’

**16:55-17:00.** Break

**17:00-17:50.** 20-minute presentations and 10-minute discussion

1. Dr Brigid Lynch (PhD graduate in Spanish, Modern Languages): ‘Paratexts, postmemory and ruination in *Nae Pasaran* (2018)’
2. Dr Tilman Schwarze (PhD graduate in International Relations): ‘Monumental space and discourse of hope: critical reflections on the Obama Presidential Center and its visions for urban space on Chicago’s Southeast Side’

**17:50-18:00.** Break

**18:00-18:30.** Discussion about embodied forms of research

Dr Victoria Donovan (Senior Lecturer in Russian, Modern Languages) and Darya Tsymbalyuk (PhD candidate in Modern Languages & International Relations) will lead a discussion around their collaborative paper, ‘From “ruin porn” to the zabroshka erotic’, and explorations of derelict sites/ruins. Participants are encouraged to read the paper and instructions before the event.

**18:30-19:30:** Keynote lecture by Prof Silvia Federici (Hofstra University).

Register/Questions: cims@st-andrews.ac.uk Follow us on Twitter @StCims

1. Clare Fisher (PhD candidate in Art History): **‘Monument to…? Commemorative Entanglements and Kara Walker’s *Fons Americanus* (2019)’**

**Abstract**: The past five years have seen monuments and public statues move from being largely ignored local objects to the front pages of the national news. In the United States, these debates have centred largely on monuments to the former Confederacy, a nation founded on the perpetuation of slavery. In the United Kingdom, monuments celebrating those involved in the transatlantic slave trade and the development of the British Empire have become the focal points of critical review. This paper takes the contemporary artist Kara Walker’s recent installation at the Tate Modern, *Fons Americanus* (2019), as a case study for exploring the expanded terms of this debate. Based loosely on the Victoria Memorial located outside Buckingham Palace, Walker’s three-tiered working fountain offers an alternative vision of Britain’s imperial past, one that foregrounds the systemic racism of the present. Rethinking arguments of false equivalency, this paper examines Walker’s use of the memorial fountain model to emphasize the entangled nature of tradition and its relation to white supremacy. Drawing insights from posthumanist studies (Alaimo, 2016), the paper considers the critical potential of employing materiality as an aesthetic and argues that *Fons Americanus* challenges the fixity of boundaries, both bodily and geographic, in ways that call on us to further question our relation to monuments in the environment.

**Bio:** Clare Fisher is a PhD candidate in the School of Art History at the University of St Andrews funded by the Scottish Graduate School of Arts and Humanities. Her research focuses the concept of monumentality and how it influenced debates about sculpture in the United States from the Civil War to the present day. She is currently a committee member of the doctoral and early career researchers’ network for the Association of Art History and was previously a Graduate Researcher for Monument Lab in Philadelphia, PA.

1. James J. Fortuna (PhD candidate in the School of History, St Andrews): **‘Identity and Infrastructure in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and the New Deal USA’**

**Abstract**: Both in history in popular memory, the built landscapes of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany have come to be associated with monumentality. There is no denying that the overscaled and classically-inflected statuary, administration buildings, athletic arenas, and Party rally grounds of interwar Italy and Germany reflected the ideals and aspirations of the regimes which sponsored their construction. But how did the often overlooked, yet no less ambitious infrastructure programs of each regime work to promote a similar sense of state-authored national identity? In many instances, these projects were so seamlessly integrated into the landscapes of everyday life that they remain able to escape the public scrutiny of other sites of contested memory studied by scholars such as Clare Copley, Hannah Malone, and Andreas Huyssen. This paper will challenge the application of conventional notions of ‘monumentality’ to the architectural production of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany by arguing that the revitalization and introduction of railways, motorways, rest stops, bridges, and transportation hubs was of no less importance to the construction of national identity than their more high-profile counterparts. Taking the three-way comparative approach of Wolfgang Schivelbusch as a model, it will also introduce some analysis of the coast to coast (and indeed, extra-continental) state-funded infrastructure projects of the New Deal United States. Given that the infrastructure produced at the urging of the Roosevelt administration has been more readily appreciated for its pragmatic than monumental function, this analysis will serve as a sort of foil by forcing us to rethink what we understand about the role of monumentality in the Fascist and Nazi built environment. This paper will tease out several central themes which ran through each state-organized initiative and question how abstract concepts such as ‘Volksgemeinschaft’, ‘romanità’, and ‘unhyphenated American’, functioned as a sort of connective tissue between infrastructure and identity.

**Bio**: James J. Fortuna is a PhD candidate at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. His research considers the cultural, diplomatic, and spatial history of twentieth-century Europe and the United States, with a particular focus on the public architecture of the interwar period and its relationship to the (re)construction of national identity. His doctoral dissertation considers the ways architectural form and urban design were deployed as tools of diplomacy at the international expositions held between 1933-42. The project seeks to recast the historical role of these events while investigating potential links between the ambassadorial, domestic, and even imperial elements of state-sponsored design promoted by Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and the New Deal USA. Before coming to St Andrews, James served as an adjunct assistant professor within the Faculty of Humanities and Foreign Languages at Santa Fe College in Gainesville, Florida. His recent publications include a study of the regionalist architecture produced by the Civilian Conservation Corps (*Environment, Space, Place* 13.1) and the role of exposition architecture in the development of Fascist design between 1933–42 (*Modern Italy* 25.4).

1. Dr Brigid Lynch (PhD graduate from Modern Languages, St Andrews): **‘Paratexts, postmemory and ruination in *Nae Pasaran* (2018)’**

**Abstract**: Released in early 2018 and directed by the Belgo-Chilean Felipe Bustos Sierra, the feature-length documentary *Nae Pasaran* chronicles the industrial action taken by trade union members at the Rolls Royce factory in East Kilbride from 1974-78, in protest against the Chilean dictatorship. The child of exiled Chilean parents, Bustos Sierra mobilises the micro-histories of this action which have long circulated within the transnational Chilean exile community, piecing together the truth of its affective and material consequences in both Chile and Scotland through oral testimony, archival media footage and animation. At the centre of the film’s narrative is the recovery of an inoperative Rolls Royce aircraft engine from a Chilean junkyard and its subsequent return to Scotland where, following the film’s success, it was installed as a permanent monument outside South Lanarkshire College in 2019. This paper will explore how the documentary and its paratextual afterlives fostered a reanimation of solidarity which led ultimately to the creation of this public monument. Moreover, it will reflect on how the historicist discourse of solidarity within Busto’s Sierra’s film articulates a narrative of positive ruination in the present, grounded in the transnational labour of memory.

**Bio**: Dr Lynch completed her PhD at the University of St Andrews in August 2018, where her doctoral research focused on cultural articulations of historicity and non-verticalist social activism in the decade following the 2001 economic crisis in Argentina. In 2019, her thesis was awarded the Annual Publication Prize of the Association of Hispanists of Great Britain and Ireland and will be published as a monograph by Legenda in 2021, entitled Horizontalism and Historicity: Cultural Dialogues of the Post-Crisis Era. Her current research interests include representations of public history in popular cultural texts, such as the themed and immersive spaces of leisure during the Kirchner era in Argentina, from 2003 to 2015.

1. Dr Tilman Schwarze (PhD graduate from International Relations, St Andrews): **‘Monumental space and discourse of hope: critical reflections on the Obama Presidential Center and its visions for urban space on Chicago’s Southeast Side’**

**Abstract**: “Our goal is not to just create a monument to my presidency, but rather to describe for anybody who visits how Michelle and I stood on the shoulders of those who had fought the good fight before us.” Building on Henri Lefebvre’s theory of *The Production of Space*, this paper analyses how the Obama Foundation mobilises a discourse of monumentality and hope in promoting its Obama Presidential Center (OPC) on Chicago’s Southeast Side. In 2016, the Obama Foundation announced that it would build the OPC into Jackson Park on the city’s Southeast Side. Although initially promoted as a Presidential Library to store presidential documents and artifacts, the OPC design has since then transformed into a $500 million, 20-acres mega-infrastructural project, encompassing a 235 feet museum tower, a forum, several parks and gardens, and recreational facilities. This paper deciphers how the OPC is discursively framed and envisioned as a monumental space of hope to, firstly, celebrate African American history and, secondly, to become the urban centre through which the economic resurrection and renewal of poor and disadvantaged communities on Chicago’s South Side should take place. This paper connects debates of monuments and their socio-political and cultural importance for society with the urban question under late-capitalism, elucidating that monumental buildings, too, need to be conceptualised as parts of urban growth machines which seek to fundamentally transform poor disadvantaged communities long stigmatised and demonised as urban “ghetto spaces” through gentrification-centred redevelopment efforts.

**Bio:** Dr Tilman Schwarze is currently a Fellow at the St Leonard’s Postgraduate College at the University of St Andrews, UK and an Associate Lecturer for Regional Development at the University of Applied Sciences, Bremen, Germany. He holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of St Andrews (2020). His research focuses on the social production of space in disadvantaged African American community settings on Chicago’s South Side, the role of territorial stigmatisation for the (re-)production of socio-economic precarity, and public housing transformation and its impact on metropolitan development in Chicago. Further, his research investigates the role of social media (particularly YouTube) for the criminalisation of drill music artists in the UK. He is interested in examining how YouTube videos function as a resource for the criminalisation of drill by police and prosecutors who present drill lyrics as personal testimony that is robbed of its fictive qualities, and makes rappers vulnerable to prejudicial ruling and discriminatory treatment within the criminal justice system.

1. Darya Tsymbalyuk (Phd candidate in Russian) and Dr Victoria Donnovan (Senior Lecturer in Russian). **Public Engagement Event: Discussion about embodied forms of research**

**Abstract**: Written as a result of collaborative research with artists and cultural practitioners, ‘From “ruin porn” to the zabroshka erotic’ focuses on art practices of engaging with ruinations of Soviet industrial sites in the Donbas region of Ukraine, once an exemplary region of Soviet modernization and industrialization and since 2014 a place of an ongoing military conflict. Problematising the aesthetic of ‘ruin porn’, we read the practices of our collaborators through Audre Lorde’s notion of the ‘erotic’ instead and foreground embodied experiences and acts of care through which the group engages with the Soviet past.

A list of prompts will be sent for the engagement with a derelict site in your town to everyone registered for the event. **We do NOT ask to go inside and expose oneself to danger**, yet we will offer several ideas to inspire us all to safely experience ruins through the ‘erotic’, learning with our bodies, embracing smells, sounds, and touch. We ask all people registered to send documentations of their ruin explorations to dt43@st-andrews.ac.uk and vsd@st-andrews.ac.uk a day before the event. During the presentations we will discuss the ideas from our papers and experiences of explorations.

**Bio**: [Victoria Donovan](https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/modern-languages/people/russian/vsd2) is a Senior Lecturer in Russian at the University of St Andrews. Her current research explores the visual heritage of industrialization with a focus on Ukraine’s Eastern Donbas region. Placing the Donbas case in a comparative research frame, her work underlines the common experiences and challenges faced by post-industrial regions across Europe and demonstrates industrial heritage’s potential for generating new thinking about post-industrial regions and fostering new forms of creativity. She has collaborated on a number of projects in this area, including the Carnegie Trust-funded [Enthusiasm](http://www.stefhancaddick.co.uk/new/enthusiasm/), the GCRF-funded [De-Industrialization and Conflict in Donbas](https://crscees.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/monotown/), and the [House of Europe-funded (Un)archiving (Post-)industry](https://www.lvivcenter.org/en/chronicle/news/?newsid=3416).

**Bio**: [Darya Tsymbalyuk](https://risweb.st-andrews.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/darya-tsymbalyuk%28f9bde0f1-15f9-4f00-8bb8-209b9ce85eae%29.html) is a PhD student at the University of St Andrews. Through research and art she explores multispecies stories of displacement from Donbas, Ukraine. She is interested in expanding cultural memory of the region to include nonhuman memories contained in the vegetal nature of coal, which she researches through engagement with scholarship in paleobotany. In addition to her PhD project, Darya also collaborates on an animated film [Displaced Garden](https://yutopiafilms.info/Displaced-Garden), that tells the story of displacement of people and plants. Together with Dr Victoria Donovan and a group of cultural practitioners, Darya has been working on a collaborative research project that explores legacies of visual representations of Donbas in new cultural imaginings of the region.