

Fellows



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PROJEKTTITEL

Landscapes of memory: Open-air museums and national identity in a transnational age

PROJEKTBESCHREIBUNG

Every year, all across Europe, millions of people walk through the gardens, barnyards, and reconstructed farmhouses of the continent's open-air folk museums. Visitors read the informational plaques describing rural family structures or techniques of fence-building, line up to buy freshly-baked rolls just pulled from an earthen oven, or simply enjoy the sunshine and the atmosphere created by the houses and barns that have been gathered up and collected in one spot. Some of the museums are laced with a strong sense of nostalgia while others use their exhibits to talk about poverty, gender, or class relations. Others turn to the future, linking a popular fondness for the trappings of old farm life to lessons about sustainable agriculture and animal husbandry. The stories attached to these places offer concise images of past life in the region, the province, or just one particular valley. Standing in the smoky kitchen of a rebuilt nineteenth century farmhouse, the layers of efforts that go into the creation of such places vanish in the specificity of a particular house or a particular region.

But these exhibits do not come out of nowhere. They are, of course, the result of decades of fundraising, research, building, planting, and all of the other kinds of work essential to creating such landscapes of memory, performed by small armies of volunteers, academics, curators, and others. Furthermore, many of these local, regional, or national representations of rural life are actually profoundly shaped by factors far beyond a given valley or province – namely transnational institutions and networks, as well as structural changes, including the rise and fall of the Iron Curtain and the emergence and expansion of the European Union, factors rarely incorporated into contemporary analyses of collective memory. How, then, are these ensembles of old buildings, craft demonstrations, and kitchen gardens shaped by these transnational forces? And how do these widely visited expressions of regional or national identity respond to broader structural changes, particularly the fall of the Iron Curtain and EU expansion?

CV

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Publikationen

(among others): Collective Memory and Locality in Global Cities, in: Patrice Petro and Linda Krause (eds.), *Global Cities: Cinema, Architecture, and Urbanism in a Digital Age*, New Brunswick, New Jersey 2003, p. 31–48; A Matter of Time: The Importance of Examining Collective Memory in Historical Perspective in Postwar Berlin, in: *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 18:2, March–June 2005, p. 37–71; *Structures of Memory: Understanding Urban Change in Berlin and Beyond* (Cultural Memory in the Present Series), Stanford University Press 2006; *The Heirloom Tomato as Cultural Object: Investigating Taste and Space*. *Sociologia Ruralis* (Forthcoming).

