

PERFORMING ARCHEOLOGY

Excavations as a Display Project

A conference organized by HEAD – Genève
Interior Architecture Department

Monday-Tuesday 8th-9th December 2025
HEAD-Genève, Design Room, Avenue de Châtelaine 7, 1203 Genève

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Image credits: National Archaeological Park of Locri Epizefiri and Bova Marina (Calabria, Italy).
Photo: Filippo Romano

PERFORMING ARCHEOLOGY

Historically regarded as a discipline of collection, documentation, and interpretation, archaeology has increasingly embraced the embodied, spatial, and dramaturgical dimensions of its practice.
Since the 1990s, performance archaeology has challenged traditional paradigms by considering the excavation site not merely as a source of data, but as a temporal and material stage where knowledge, presence, and representation intersect.
In parallel, interior architecture-understood as the practice of reactivating existing spaces without new construction—has emerged as a key framework for transforming archaeological sites into interpretive environments. Stratigraphy, artifact discovery, site protocols, and tools become scenographic elements within open-air museums that communicate research in real time.

The symposium *Performing Archaeology: Excavations as a Display Project* explores the performative turn in contemporary archaeological practice, foregrounding the convergence of excavation, scenography, and spatial design. This seminar traces a path from the material traces of antiquity to experimental media, questioning how archaeology can be a dynamic practice of storytelling and sensory engagement.
Bringing together researchers, designers, and practitioners, the symposium critically examines how excavation itself becomes a performative act. It interrogates the implications of this shift for memory, identity, and the materiality of heritage in the digital age, with a particular emphasis on the contributions of interior architecture to the theorization and mediation of archaeological space.

Over different sessions, the seminar will gather voices from art, design, history, and archaeology to reflect critically on how performative methods transform our understanding of heritage and space.

Roberto Zancan, Taiana Broillet, Damien Greder
- Scientific Comitee of the conference

Monday 08 of December 2025

11:00 - 11:15
Javier Fernandez Contreras, Head of Space Design / Interior Architecture, HEAD – Genève
Anthony Masure, Responsable de l'Institut de Recherche en Art & Design, HEAD – Genève
Introduction

11:15 - 11:45
Taiana Broillet, Alumni, BA of Arts in Interior Architecture HEAD - Genève
Damien Greder, PHD candidate IHEID, Interior Architecture, HEAD – Genève
Roberto Zancan, Professor of History and Theory, Interior Architecture, HEAD – Genève
Excavation as a display project

Session 1 - ARCHEOLOGY : A SOCIAL MEDIATION DISCIPLINE
11:45 - 12:15
Jane Thompson, Senior heritage manager for the Packard Humanities Institute, founder of Instead Heritage
Performing heritage, a force for good in a changing world

12:15 - 12:45
Carolina Megale, Director of Civic Archaeological Museum of Rosignano Marittimo
The excavation yard between participatory archaeology and narrative space

12:45 - 14:00
Round-table luncheon

Session 2 - FROM DIG TO DISPLAY: INTERVENTIONS IN ARCHEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS
Chair: Roberto Zancan, HEAD – Genève

14:00 – 14:30
Cinzia Dal Maso, Freelance journalist
The artist as "umarell": from critical observation to active involvement

14:30 – 15:00
Mladen Banjac, Director of Students Cultural Center, Academy of Art, University of Banja Luka
Pioneer Archeology and its consequences: colonial practices and identity crisis

Short break

15:45 - 16:15
Salvator-John Liotta, Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Nantes, ULB-La Cambre Horta
Architecture for Archeology

16:15 - 16:45
Catrin Huber, Fine Art Departement, Newcastle University
Expanded Interiors: contemporary site-responsive practice in dialogue with Roman interiors at Herculaneum and Pompeii

Short break

17:00 - 17:15
Sean Silva, Department of History, Princeton University
To Pitch a Tent upon Antiquities: Embodied Nomadic Experiences of Inhabiting Ancient Architecture in the Long-Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire

17:15 - 17:30
Ioanna Diamanti, Architect and Researcher (Architectural Association, London)
Staging Histories: The Serpent Column and the Politics of Archaeological Display

17:30 - 17:45
Keren Kuenberg, CEI, Iscte - University Institute of Lisbon
Intense Care: Touch, Time, and Displaced Stones

17:45 - 18:00
Mina Zarfsaz, College of the Arts, Rowan University
Archaeology of the Not-Yet-Found : Performative Depositions in collide i+i

Tuesday 09 of December 2025

Session 3 - ECOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS: PRACTICE IN ACTS
Chair: Taiana Broillet, Alumni, BA of Arts in Interior Architecture HEAD - Genève

09:00 – 09:30
Claudia Pizzinato, Archeologist, University of Cà Foscari Venezia
Instant sharing in archeoological surveillance: a challenge

09:30 - 10:00
Alice Vacilotto & Dirk Steuernagel, Institut für Klassische Archäologie, Universität Regensburg
Lived experience of an archaeological site: the 'Mutteron dei Frati' between excavation and local community

Short break

10:15 - 10:45
Denise Ottavia Tamborrino, Director of the Museo Nazionale Etrusco "P. Aria" e Parco Archeologico di Kainua, Marzabotto
Kainua. User Manual, A project of participatory landscape construction in the archeological area of Kainua in Marzabotto.

10:45 - 11:15
Elena Trunfio, Director of the Parco Archeologico di Locri Epizefiri e Bova Marina, Ministry of Culture
The National Archaeological Park of Locri Epizefiri in Calabria: for a new vision of the future

Short break

Session 4 - TEMPORAL AND TANGIBLE: STAGING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SPACE
Chair: Roberto Zancan, HEAD – Genève

11:30 – 12:15
Alba Balmaseda Dominguez, Dipartimento di Architettura, Università degli Studi di Roma Tre
Performing Water : Sharing Embodied experiments
12:15 – 12:45
Jared Fantasia, FAUP - Faculty of Architecture, University of Porto
Staging the Submerged: Cofferdams as Curatorial Infrastructure
12:45 – 13:00
Liana Psarologaki, Buckinghamshire New University
Post-capitalist Designing [Dis]order; Dirty and Insular Archaeologies of the Future

Break 13:00 – 14:00

14:00 – 14:15
Aylin Atacan, Department of Greek and Latin, University College London
The Ten-Second Stage: Ruins, Travelers, and the Photographic Body

14:15 – 14:30
Eytan Mann, TU Delft and Architecture Archives of the Future
Alona Nitzan-Shiftan, Technion and ETH Zurich
All That Is Solid Melts into Air : Persuasive Media at the Archaeological Site of the City of David, Jerusalem

14:30 – 15:00
Round Table discussion

Break 15:00 – 15:15

Session 5 - AUGMENTED REALITY AND VIRTUAL REALITY : EMBRACING THE PAST
Chair: Damien Greder, HEAD – Genève

15:15 – 15:45
Manik Tadevosian, TUMO Center for Creative Technologies
The Armenian Heritage Scanning Project

15:45 – 16:15
Yoni Santos, Head of espazium-education & founder of data-room.xyz
Performing Realities : from archived spaces to activated narratives

Short Break

16:30 - 17:00
Patrick Michel, UNIL - University of Lausanne
The Baalshamîn Temple of Palmyra: a case study of Immersive and interactive devices for Cultural Heritage

Abstracts



Image credits: "Views to the archaeological site of Herculaneum and the island of Capri beyond from the new public spaces of the Via Mare district. Credit: Ottavia Semerari/Packard Humanities Institute"

Jane Thompson
Senior heritage manager for the Packard Humanities Institute, founder of Instead Heritage

Performing heritage, a force for good in a changing world

The heritage sector is thriving. Success stories abound the world over where heritage becomes the mainstay of local economies and community wellbeing as business innovation, the creative industries and the contemporary arts breathe new life into heritage places. However, there are also cases of forgotten or contested heritage, or heritage that has become a victim of its own success, from over visitation to over development, and with negative repercussions not just for the heritage itself but for the wider setting and the communities that reside there. Such issues often require us to develop collaborative methodologies for reinterpreting heritage places.

Through case studies and conservation and management theory, this paper seeks to take a step back and explore approaches to managing change in and around heritage places in the twenty-first century to try and answer some of the core questions raised by the seminar 'Performing archaeology'.

Heritage sector approaches are rooted in eliciting historical narratives and safeguarding existing or past social practices. However, closer alliances between heritage and contemporary creative sectors could be the springboard for better reconciliation of heritage with changing societal values but also the means to ensure the cultural sector as a whole is the cornerstone of the wellbeing of communities and the environment in the present and the future.

Jane Thompson brings together more than two decades of site experience with international-level research, policy work and capacity development initiatives in the cultural heritage sector. In her long-standing collaboration with ICCROM, she co-authored milestones in World Heritage resources, including the 2011 Capacity Building Strategy, the 2013 UNESCO Management Manual and the 2015 Sustainable Development Policy.

In 2014 she became Course Director for Heritage Management at the Bocconi University and was nominated on to the 'Superior Council for Cultural Heritage and Landscapes' of the Italian Ministry of Culture. In her nearly 25 years overseeing initiatives for the remains of the Roman city of Herculaneum on behalf of the Packard Humanities Institute, this public-private partnership has become one of the world's most significant for archaeology. Her expertise in management, sustainable development and impact assessments for World Heritage has led her to consult for state parties and UNESCO worldwide including Italy, Sri Lanka, Cyprus, Norway, Lebanon, Montenegro, North Macedonia and currently Mauritius, and in recent years drawing on a strong interdisciplinary and intersectoral pool of expertise as founder and team leader of Rome-based Instead

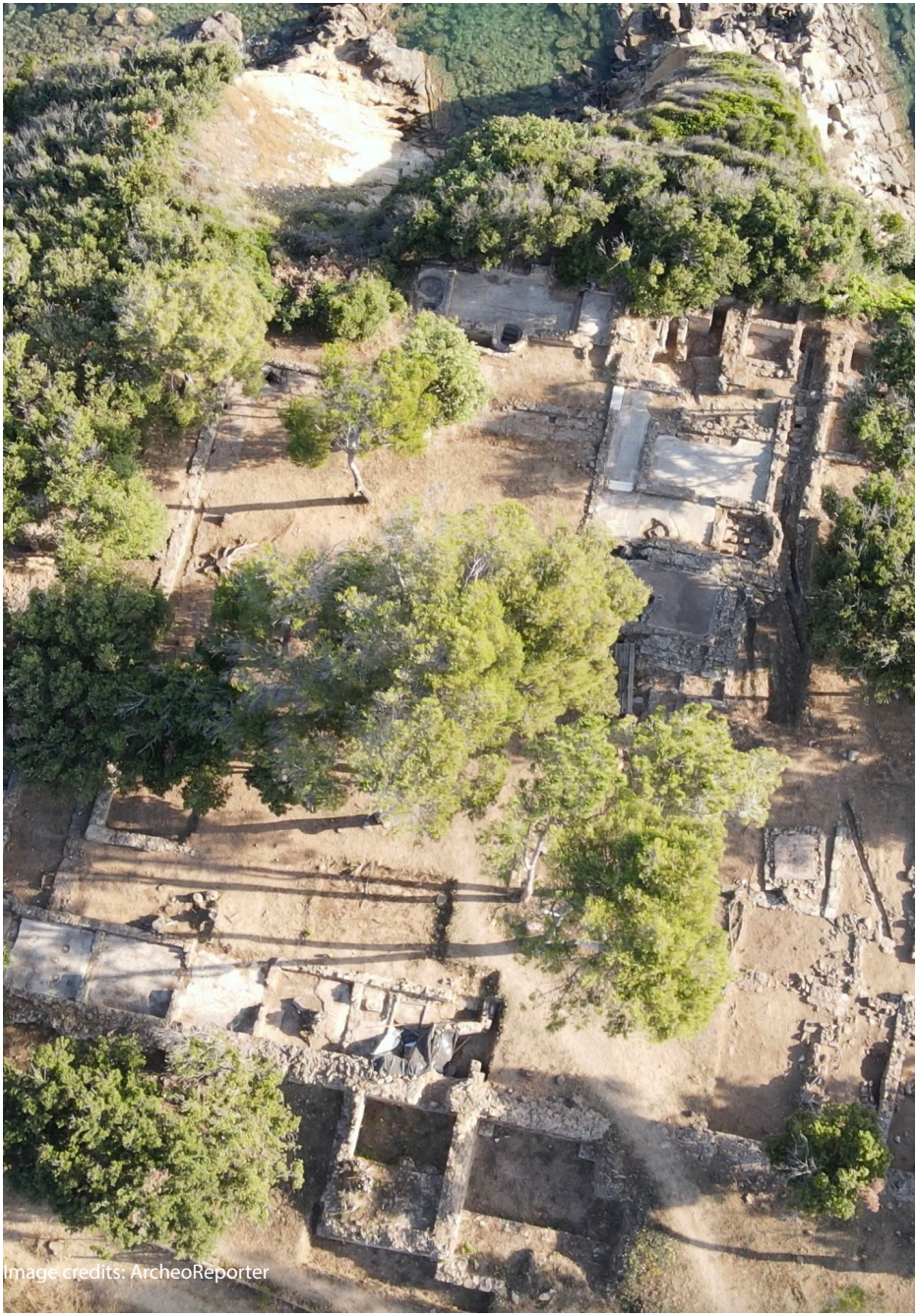


Image credits: ArcheoReporter

Carolina Megale
Director of Civic Archaeological Museum of Rosignano Marittimo
The excavation yard between participatory archaeology and narrative space

The paper offers a reflection on the archaeological excavation site, viewing it no longer as a mere closed research location accessible only to professionals, but as a space for the total sharing of archaeology. This approach aims to transform the process of fieldwork into a multisensory, in situ experience that is accessible to the public.
The analysis focuses on shared archaeology initiatives at the coastal Etruria sites of Poggio del Molino (Populonia) and Vada Volaterrana (Rosignano Marittimo). Through the adoption of participatory protocols, situated narratives, and the use of contemporary representation technologies, strategies have been developed to make the «invisibles» of History visible. The ultimate goal is to stimulate active public reflection on the interpretative process and strengthen the bond of identity between the territory and its heritage.

Carolina Megale is a classical archeologist. She is the Director of the Civic Archaeological Museum Palazzo Bombardieri in Rosignano Marittimo and coordinator of the System of Participatory Museums and Parks of Tuscany. She directs the scientific and community engagement activities at the archaeological area of Poggio del Molino in Populonia. She is the author of numerous scientific, popular, and public archeology publications and has edited, among others, the archeology handbook *Fare l'archeologo. Per passione e per mestiere;* with Stefano Monti, she co-authored the *Manuale di management per l'archeologia. Processi e procedure per l'archeologia nella società contemporanea* for McGraw-Hill. She serves as Scientific Director for the series *Medito - Landscapes of Mediterranean Central Italy*, published by Brepols; Editorial Director for the scientific popularization series *Uomonatura. Archeologia* in published by Pacini Editore; and is a member of the Scientific Committee for the journal Rassegna di Archeologia. She collaborates with several sector journals, including ArchaeoReporter and Labsus.



Image credits : Crypta Balbi, Rome. Photo: Cinzia Dal Maso

Cinzia Dal Maso
Freelance journalist

The artist as "umarell": from critical observation to active involvement

A century ago, Roman artists sought to document Mussolini's demolitions in order to preserve the memory of what was being lost, but also to record new discoveries and show how the urban landscape was changing. It was not mere observation, but a deeply personal act of protest: a civic and social mission.

A kind of continuity between that attitude and the current work of artists and architects who collaborate with archaeologists to prevent excavation or restoration sites from becoming isolated from their surrounding landscape, and from the citizens who inhabit it. Recent examples include the construction sites of the Metro, the Crypta Balbi, or Palazzo San Felice. Art is not a show but a means of helping the archaeological site to communicate with the people. It does not create a one-way movement, but a two-way exchange. And a most fruitful one.

Cinzia Dal Maso is a journalist and writer whose work explores how cultural heritage can be communicated and reimagined in contemporary life — a field she also teaches at several universities. She contributes to leading Italian newspapers, including *La Repubblica* and *Il Sole 24 Ore*, and creates narrative experiences for museums and cultural institutions, finding innovative ways to connect the past with the present and to make culture more accessible to everyone. Together with Luca Peyronel (University of Milan), she is also the editor in chief of «Archeostorie. Journal of Public Archaeology» (https://archeostoriejpa.eu), a peer-reviewed and open-access journal, which promotes a vision of scientific research on the past as a service offered to society. She is also the director of the homonymous online magazine (www.archeostorie.it), which endorses storytelling as a tool for fostering dialogue between past and present. Along with the Centre for Public Archaeology Archeostorie®, she develops communication projects for museums, archaeological sites, archives, libraries, associations.

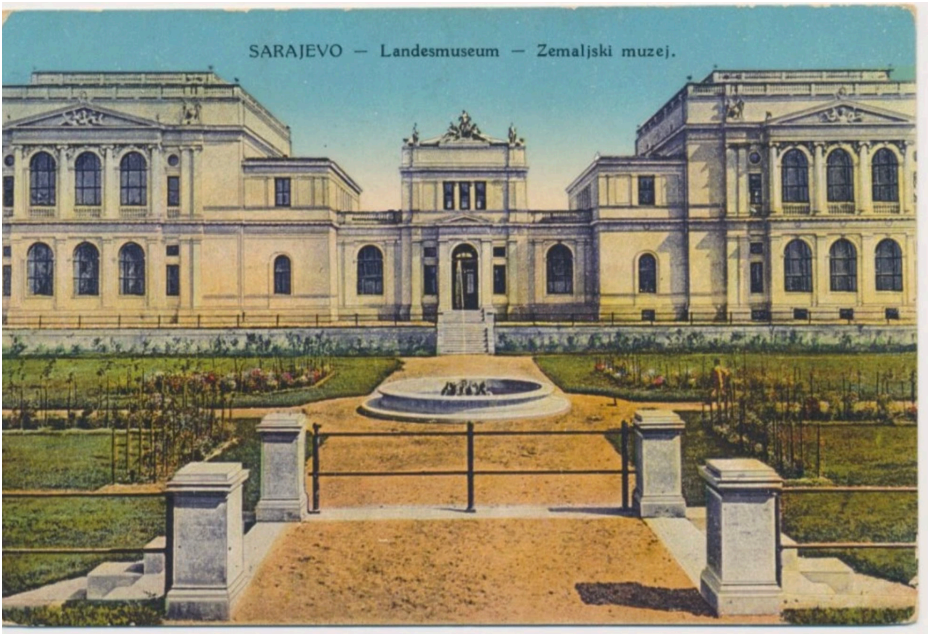


Image credits: Zemaljski Muzej Sarajevo Postcard - University of Banja Luka, Academy of Arts Archive

Mladen Banjac
Director of Students Cultural Center, Academy of Art, University of Banja Luka
Pioneer Archeology and its consequences: colonial practices and identity crisis

After the Occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria Hungary in 1878. first modern institutions were developed by the new authorities, including the first cultural institutions such as museums and galleries. Also, this is the time when the first profesional archeologists conducted first excavations and research throughout the new territories.
Since this was pioneering work they were free to do as they wanted, focusing on enriching the Empire's collections. Until recently this period was seen as an age of progress after the „dark ages" of Ottoman rule. But lately this hypotesis is being reconsidered. Recently resercehrs in humanities have started considering this period as one of colonial occupation. Following the story of Ćiro Truhelka, first curator of newly opened National Museum in Sarajevo and first archeologist we can see colonial practices while conducting Empire's cultural policies and its consequences on modern Bosnian society.

Mladen Banjac is art historian and independet curator currently working as director of Students Cultural Center and Assistant Professor at Academy of Art, University of Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Previously he was working as senior asociate at Republic Institute for Protection of Historical, Cultural and Natural Heritage of Republika Srpska and as senior curator at Museum of Contemporary Art of Republika Srpska. He graduated at Department of Art History at Faculty of Philosophy at University of Belgrade. Currently he is writing his PhD thesis at Unversity of Hildesheim, Germany.
As a curator and art historian he focuses on contemporary Bosnian art, mainly working with young and emerging artists. He curated and co-curated more than 30 exhibitions including the Bosnian Pavilion at 57th Venice Biennale. He was also part of a team of researchers engaged in enlisting Bosnian medieval monuments Stecci as the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Currently he is researching Austro Hungarian colonialism in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its cultural policies in the late 19th and early 20th century. He was part of more than 20 projects both in Bosnia and Europe, including UNESCO Peace Bulding programs, Creative Europe, and many others. He was Secretary on ICOM National Committe of Bosnia and Herzegovina and jury member of European Museum Academy for Best Art Museum Awrd.



Image credits: Shelter in the site of Valle dei Templi, Agrigento. Photo: Kaoru Yamaoka

Salvator-John Liotta
Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Nantes, ULB-La Cambre Horta
Architecture for Archeology

The construction of three shelters in the Unesco's heritage Valle dei Templi of Agrigento marks an experimental initiative by the Park Agency to introduce innovation in archaeology. The "Architecture X Archaeology" workshop examined current approaches to protecting archaeological landmarks, aiming to define new modular and flexible solutions adaptable to different site needs. Politecnico di Milano, the University of Palermo, and Tokyo University collaborated on experimental prototypes for safeguarding archaeological finds and excavation sites.

The shelters created—functional and aesthetically valuable—form the first nucleus of a contemporary architecture park within an archaeological setting, demonstrating the potential of integrating architecture and archaeology for research and analysis.

Salvator-John A. Liotta is a practising architect based in Paris and a full professor currently teaching studio design, materials and construction at Ecole Nationale Superior Nantes-ENSAN. He concomitantly serves as an associate professor at the ULB-Faculty of Architecture La Cambre-Horta, founder of Liotta Architecture and a correspondent of Domus magazine. Liotta has published several books including *Patterns and Layering: Japanese Spatial Culture, Nature and Architecture* (Gestalten), *What is Co-dividuality? Post-individual Architecture, Shared House and other stories of openness in Japan* (Jovis Verlag), *Tokyo Architectures : un guide d'architecture moderne et contemporaine* (Lézard Noir).

Liotta Architecture, an emerging yet acknowledged firm, is based in Paris and has developed and built projects for housing, cultural and educational facilities in France, Italy, Japan, Germany, Spain and Morocco.



Image credits: Expanded Interiors at Pompeii. Photo: Amedeo Benestante

Catrin Huber
Fine Art Departement, Newcastle University

Expanded Interiors – contemporary site-responsive practice in dialogue with Roman interiors at Herculaneum and Pompeii

Expanded Interiors was an interdisciplinary, AHRC-funded research project drawing contemporary site-responsive, fine art practice into a unique dialogue with ancient Roman wall paintings and architectural remains at the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Herculaneum and Pompeii. Its practice-led, interdisciplinary, experimental approach explored dialogue with Roman interiors and decorations - and in particular Roman wall paintings - as a means to critically reflect upon contemporary and historical practices, while responding to the complex nature of these iconic archaeological sites within a contemporary context. What does this collision of old and new bring to the discussion of 'Performing Archaeology'.

Catrin Huber is an artist and Professor in Fine Art at Newcastle University who often develops work in dialogue with specific places, exploring their contexts and histories, and their architectural features and idiosyncrasies. She works across a range of media: paintings, installations, textiles, fictional dialogues/texts, and more recently film. Colour, materials, and emotions loom large, and bring sensory and psychological intensity. Huber has initiated, led, and worked on several international research and exhibition projects concerning artistic interventions into architectural and archaeological space:
For *Screaming / Dreaming* she re-imagined the Antikensammlung in the Kunsthalle zu Kiel as a space to weave together new and old stories, colliding contemporary artworks, ancient statues, women from Greek tragedy, and the architecture of the Antikensammlung.
For *ARC-funded Expanded Interiors* she brought contemporary, site-responsive installations to two Roman houses in Herculaneum and Pompeli, exploring the relevance of Roman wall painting / interior decoration for contemporary fine-art practice.
Huber studied at the Royal College of Art, London, and the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Kunste Karlsruhe. An Abbey Fellow at the British School at Rome in 2008, she is now a member of the Abbey Council. Her work has been exhibited internationally, and it is held in national and international public and private collections.

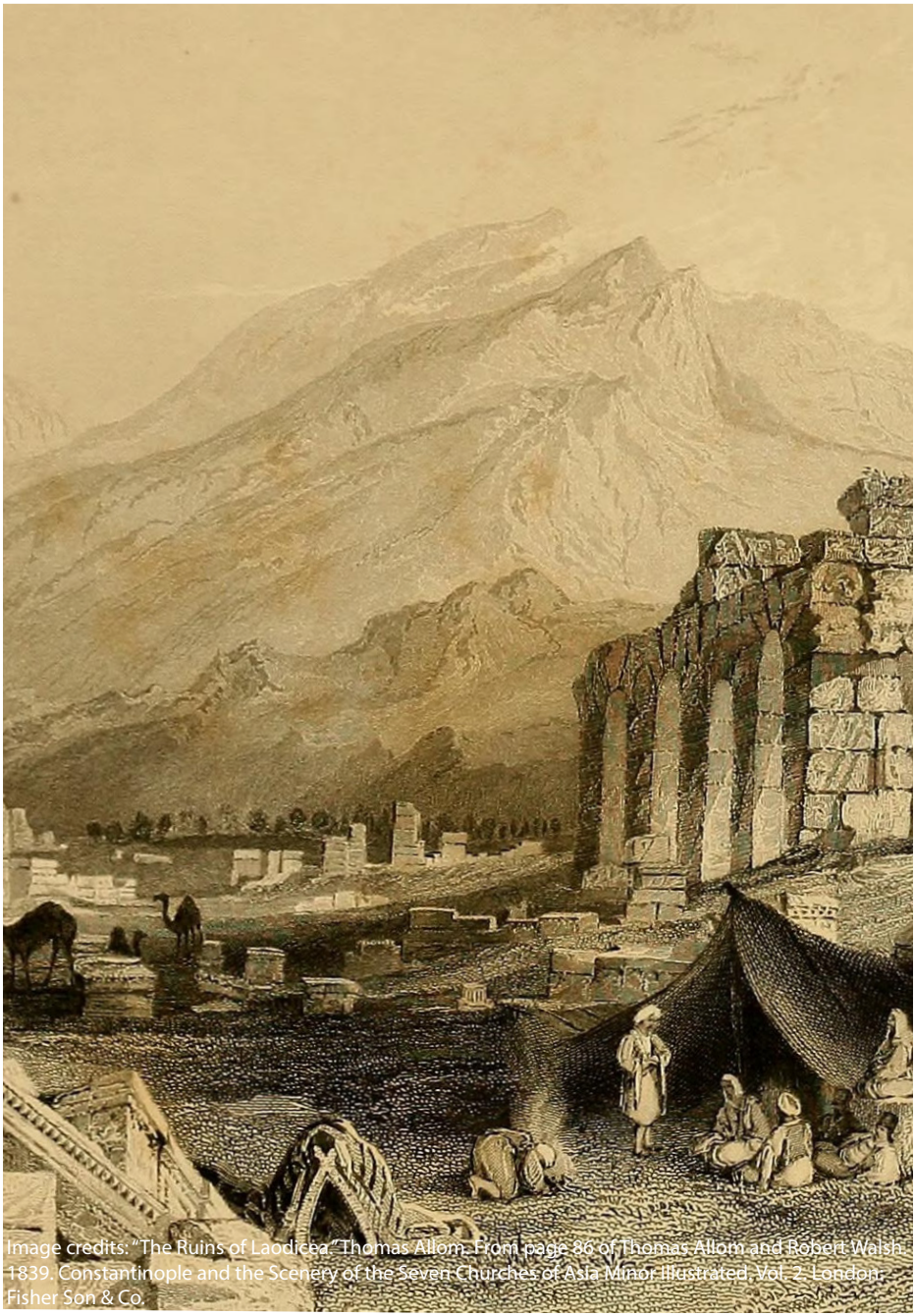


Image credits: "The Ruins of Laodicea" Thomas Allom. From page 86 of Thomas Allom and Robert Walsh. 1839. Constantinople and the Scenery of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor Illustrated, Vol. 2. London: Fisher Son & Co.

Sean Silvia
Department of History, Princeton University

To Pitch a Tent upon Antiquities: Embodied Nomadic Experiences of Inhabiting Ancient Architecture in the Long-Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Empire

What does it mean to tent upon antiquities? For nineteenth-century French archaeologists Emmanuel Pontremoli and Bernard Hausoullier, it was performance of archaeological conquest. For many contemporary nomadic communities in Anatolia, ancient architecture was not ruin, but a seasonal inhabitation. Ancient sites temporarily filled with life as nomads transformed them into interior architecture to inhabit.

Heritage law, excavation, and forced sedentarization has largely ended such practices today. To find traces, I read nineteenth-century illustrated travelogues against the grain with a phenomenological lens. The nomads, as inhabiters, held embodied knowledges of ancient architecture as venues they knew how to convert into interior architecture, as places of day-to-day life. There are parallels between nomadic experiences and those of excavation teams who seasonally inhabit a site during excavation season. Nomadic histories can thus shed light on archaeological experiences as well.

Sean Silvia is a PhD Candidate in History and a Seeger Hellenic Studies funding recipient at Princeton University. He studies reuse of ancient architectural remnants, with particular focus on the long-nineteenth-century Ottoman Aegean Sea region. This year he is joint research fellow at the British Institute of Archaeology in Ankara and ANAMED in Istanbul. He earned a Classical Archaeology MSt at Oxford University, and BA in History and Archaeology from the University of Southern California.



Image credits: Sebah & Joaillier, Yılanlı Sütun (Serpent Column), ca. 1880s. Public domain. Courtesy of Eski İstanbul (www.eskiistanbul.net)

Ionna Diamanti
Architect and Researcher (Architectural Association, London)
Staging Histories: The Serpent Column and the Politics of Archaeological Display
This paper examines the Serpent Column in Istanbul's Sultanahmet Square as an object where archaeology, politics, and performance converge. Cast in bronze in 479 BCE and first erected at Delphi before being relocated to Constantinople (now Istanbul) by Emperor Constantine I in 324 CE, the monument's trajectory—from Greek votive to Byzantine trophy to Ottoman talisman—encapsulates a complex biography of displacement, appropriation, and re-signification.
From the nineteenth-century imperial excavations that reframed it as a relic of classical Greece to the Turkish Republic's modernist heritage projects and UNESCO's global preservation regime, the Column's meaning has been continually rewritten. Through these episodes, the paper argues that archaeology itself functions as an apparatus of political imagination, transforming the recovery and conservation of the past into acts of staging and reinscription within the public realm. The Serpent Column emerges as both artefact and agent of historiography—its layered histories exposing how excavation continually restages the past.

Ioanna Diamanti is an architect and researcher educated at the Architectural Association in London (MA History and Critical Thinking) and the National Technical University of Athens (MArch). Her work explores the intersections of historiography, architectural theory, and heritage, focusing on how displaced



Image credits: Stroking Time digital stone detail, Keren Kuenberg and Shir Senior

Karen Kuenberg
CEI, Iscte - University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal
Intense Care: Touch, Time, and Displaced Stones

The erosion of a stone is not seen in real-time. Only through centuries, currents, and people do present actions become visible; thus, the stone allows us to experience a different scale of time In archaeology, a stone is considered a finding only after human contact. The fifth stop of Via Dolorosa, in Jerusalem, was smoothed by centuries of pilgrims' strokes. The stone absorbed human touch, as well as the stories we attached to it.

The installation Stroking Time (2022) performs a duality between physical tactile and digital fabulation. Each stone «borrowed» from the territory's edge has its own device, a private machine. The stone-stroking movement is a minor, almost microscopic act of design, transforming mindless action into intentional forming of nature: a durational, violent act of «care». This presentation will trace the process of creating this work, moving between historical research, geology, and digital speculation as an alternative approach to engaging with archaeology.

Keren Kuenberg is an architectural researcher and curator. She is currently a PhD candidate as part of the AfDevLives project, ERC-funded, based in Lisbon. Previously, she worked as an associate lecturer at the RCA London, worked for museums (such as the CCA Montreal and the HKW Berlin), universities, as well as non-profit organisations. In various projects, Keren works on investigating multi-narrative histories through scanning methodologies interwoven with oral histories.



Image credits: Mina Zarfsaz, Cosmic Light Maps: A Time Portal Poiesis (2024). Projection mapping on the Edelman Planetarium façade, Rowan University. Photo by the artist

Mina Zarfsaz
College of the Arts, Rowan University

Archaeology of the Not-Yet-Found : Performative Depositions in collide i+i

Archaeology of the Not-Yet-Found reimagines archaeology as a performative and speculative practice by asking: How might present gestures—digital residues, poetic fragments, planetary debris—become the ruins of tomorrow? This presentation examines the public art project collide i+i, which redefines archaeology as an embodied excavation of living archives—acts, traces, and memories that may never be unearthed. Two key activations, Cosmic Light Maps and Poiesis Fossilis, stage archaeology across different temporal horizons. The project reframes accumulation and latency as temporal conditions, proposing archaeology as an ethics of making traces for the future—an invitation to sense and imagine what may remain when discovery is no longer the goal.

Mina Zarfsaz is an interdisciplinary artist, designer, and educator whose research-based practice explores how embodied engagement and speculative design activate alternate forms of knowing and belonging. She is Assistant Professor of Design at Rowan University, where she directs the Institute for Innovative Media, Materials & Design (IMMaD).



Image credits: DR221GIR-TON Trincea 16 June 20121; Photo: Claudia Pizzinato

Claudia Pizzinato
Archeologist, University of Cà Foscari Venezia
Instant sharing in archawological surveillance: a challenge

75% of archaeologists in Italy are freelancers, and most of them work in the field of civil excavations linked to the construction of new private and public works of various kinds, aimed at renovating buildings and updating or building new infrastructure and underground services. Works involving excavations very often or almost always involve the professionalism of freelance archaeologists, and very often these excavations reveal materials, structures, and traces of more or less ancient pre-existing civilizations.

By law, the finds are the property of the state, and therefore of everyone, and should be made accessible and visible to all. But how can a construction site where excavations are being carried out for purposes other than archaeological ones be made accessible? How can the local community and others be involved in the operations taking place under their balconies or in front of their homes? How can a temporary exhibition be organized which, like temporary shops, will have a very limited duration, as civil works cannot be suspended for too long? And how can we make a visit enjoyable and understandable? How can we advertise it?

The ethically responsible archaeologist knows that the true and ultimate purpose of their work is to communicate it to the public, to the whole community, to humanity. It would be nice to be able to show it, at least to those who are lucky enough to have the opportunity and interest to witness a discovery live.

Claudia Pizzinato, Freelance Archaeologist; Research Fellow for the project *Changes Cultural Resource Management and Active Citizen Participation*, since 2023. Secretary of ANAsub; Member of the Board of Confprofessioni Veneto. She collaborates with the Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape of Veneto (since 1994), Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lombardy and Abruzzo, providing supervision of onshore and underwater construction sites and directing archaeological excavation sites. Between 1998 and 2000, he led and directed an archaeological field school (land and underwater) on the island of Krk (Croatia) on behalf of the UNESCO office in Venice. Between 2008 and 2010, she conceived and directed an interdisciplinary project for the protection and conservation of the major archaeological sites in Libya on behalf of the Libyan government. She collaborated with ERPAC-Friuli Venezia Giulia in organizing the exhibition *In the Sea of Intimacy. Underwater Archaeology Tells the Adriatic* (Trieste, 2018); and participated, in a managerial role, for ERPAC- Friuli Venezia Giulia and Informest in the Interreg Italy-Croatia project Underwatermuse-Immersive Underwater Museum experience for a Wider Inclusion.



Image credits: Visit to Mutteron del Frati. Photo: Alice Vacilotto

Alice Vacilotto & Dirk Steuernagel
Institut für Klassische Archäologie, Universität Regensburg

Lived experience of an archaeological site: the 'Mutteron dei Frati' between excavation and local community

Archaeology is fascinating but, at the same time, difficult to understand (for non-experts) and to communicate, especially when research is ongoing, and archaeological excavations resemble real 'construction sites'. How can a site be made accessible while research is in progress? What actions should be taken to involve the community in a process of shared and participatory knowledge?

From the very outset, the excavations of a Roman villa near Bibione (San Michele al Tagliamento, Venice), carried out by the Universities of Regensburg and Padua in cooperation with the archaeological heritage authority, have attracted considerable interest from the local public and regional media. The archaeologists were rather surprised by this strong reaction, which concerns not only the archaeological site – located in a very special landscape setting – but also their practical fieldwork, which many people follow during guided tours and via social media channels. This raises questions about the role that public perception can and perhaps must play in the conception of fieldwork projects.

Dirk Steuernagel has been professor of Classical Archaeology at the University of Regensburg since 2010. He has lead fieldwork projects in Italy and Turkey. His main fields of interest are ancient urbanism, sacral and domestic architecture, as well as the archaeology of pre-Roman Italy.

Alice Vacilotto has been a research assistant for the Bibione project at the Institute of Classical Archaeology of the University of Regensburg since 2022 and adjunct lecturer in Valorisation of Cultural Heritage at the University of Padua since 2024. Her main areas of research and interest are landscape archaeology, urban planning in the ancient world and the enhancement of archaeological heritage.



Image credits : Kainuas Archieological site. Photo: Riccardo Simion

Denise Tamborino

Director Museo Nazionale Etrusco "P. Aria" e Parco Archeologico di Kainua, Marzabotto

Kainua. User Manual, A project of participatory landscape construction in the archeological area of Kainua in Marzabotto.

The project aims to offer a possible interpretation of how landscape, green architecture, and contemporary art can provide new ways of understanding cultural heritage, bringing to the forefront the idea of the city and the layers connected to urban life. What does it mean to move through a city (invisible to the eye) whose urban fabric is known but has not yet emerged to the surface?

Reading the city as it re-emerges through maintenance and "care" practices makes it possible to reinterpret the archaeological site and to propose a vision of the landscape as a living and communal space for visitors. Through a series of actions carried out in a specific area, practices of conservative management emerge — characterized by deliberately modulated and softly composed interventions, some of which are realized through participatory processes. The landscape, understood as a scape, thus activates processes of re-signification of heritage and becomes a medium for its contemporary reinterpretation.

Denise Tamborrino is an architect, PhD in History of Architecture and Urban Planning, and postgraduate in Museum and Art Anthropology. Since 2012, she has been an Official at the Italian Ministry of Culture. Since 2015, and served as Director of the National Museums in the Metropolitan area of Bologna for the Direzione Regionale Musei Emilia-Romagna. From 2019 to 2022, she was a Member and Vice-President of the Technical-Scientific Committee for Contemporary Art and Architecture at the Italian Ministry of Culture.



Image credits: Archaeological site of Locri Epizefiri. Photo: Filippo Romano

Elena Trunfio
Director of the Parco Archeologico di Locri Epizefiri e Bova Marina, Ministry of Culture

The National Archeological Park of Locri Epizefiri in Calabria: for a new vision of the future

Since 2023, the Archaeological Park has undergone several redevelopment projects aimed at improving accessibility for all categories of users. The project stems from a new concept based on the interaction between archaeology and landscape, and is project by a multidisciplinary team.
The project for the «new» Park, developed with the local and scientific community and with professional associations, through the tools of landscape architecture design, aims to create a favorable context for experiencing the park, thus opening itself to contemporaneity, to a new landscape perception of walking, communicating history, and enjoying the site.
An approach that aims to break away from the traditional concept of an archaeological park to develop new meanings, updating the historical dimension of the place to the needs of the contemporary community.

Elena Trunfio, Director of the archaeological parks of Locri Epizefiri and Bova Marina(Calabria) is an architect specialized in architectural restoration, with a Phd in History of Architecture. He earned his doctorate in 2016 with a thesis on the Norman sacred architecture of the Strait of Messina (Italy). Since 2018 she has been an architect official of the Ministry of Culture serving at the Regional Museums Directorate of Calabria and, since 2021, director of the archaeological parks of Locri Epizefiri and Bova Marina. As Director, she is responsible for both scientific research and the promotion of the two parks, through the creation of scientific projects and cultural promotion activities.
Alongside her professional work, she also conducts research, focusing on the history of late antique and medieval Mediterranean architecture. She is an expert in Norman architecture, particularly sacred and fortified architecture. She is currently investigating the relationship between archaeology and landscape.
She collaborated with the University of Reggio Calabria, where she was a lecturer in the History of Architecture. At this moment, she is a visiting professor at the University of Tuscia of the archaeology and landscape course. She has authored a monograph and numerous



Image credits: Alfonso Salamone, 2022 - Experiment: Natatio (Caracalla, Rome)

Alba Balmaseda Domínguez
Dipartimento di Architettura, Università degli Studi di Roma Tre
Performing Water : Sharing Embodied experiments

In archaeology and architectural studies, we strive to understand heritage through material remains. These provide us with information about what these spaces were like and what spatial practices were carried out there. However, this approach has limitations in that some layers cannot be understood from a material perspective, but rather through the lived, sensory and bodily experience of a place.

She encountered this challenge while working on her doctoral thesis *Cities, Bodies and Water: Urban Bathing as a Spatial Practice* (Roma Tre University, 2025). At one stage of the research, it became necessary to shift the focus beyond the material realm toward the spatial practices associated with it. This is how Performing Water was born: an embodied methodology that approaches space through performance exploring the immaterial, fluid, and emotional layers of water (Neimanis, 2017).

Thus, through site-specific actions in water-related sites across Italy, Greece, and witzerland, Performing Water investigated how corporal engagement could, on the one hand, contribute a layer of embodied knowledge of heritage and, on the other, reactivate it as an inclusive archive of experiences. In these performances, the body became an instrument of perception and understanding, tracing hydrological memories inscribed in both built and natural environments, while water was understood as a medium that stores narratives, shapes practices, and defines collective rituals.

She brings this method to the seminar to share with other scholars and explore how applying it to the notion of excavation in water-related spaces might reframe "excavation" as a performative act—one through which temporal, fluid, and communal relationships with water are revived through embodiment and imagination. Compared to resource-intensive operations such as material or digital reconstructions, this approach offers a modest yet generative alternative: a poor pedagogy, where participants engages through embodied experience and collectively co-produce a situated understanding of heritage.

Alba Balmaseda Domínguez is an architect, researcher, and educator from Spain, currently Art & Science Fellow at the Istituto Svizzero in Palermo. Her work explores the commons, the relationship between body-space, and spatial practices through design, performance, and full-scale construction. She holds a PhD in Architecture (2025) with a dissertation on urban bathing. She founded her own independent practice in 2014 after graduating from the Polytechnic University of Madrid. She has taught at ETSAM, IUAV, the University of Stuttgart, and TH Nürnberg, and conducted research at Vastu Shilpa Foundation, Tokyo Wonder Site, and FH Postdam. She is a co-founder of Performing Space Association

Image credits: Aerial View of Excavation in San Marco in Boccalama. Photo: Jared Fantasia

Jared Fantasia
FAUP - Faculty of Architecture, University of Porto
Staging the Submerged: Cofferdams as Curatorial Infrastructure

This paper explores how cofferdams operate as performative excavations that transform infrastructure into spaces of display, narrative, and embodied experience. Using San Marco in Boccalama in the Venetian Lagoon (45°23'19.6"N 12°16'53.3"E) as a case study, Larssen sheet piling enclosed and drained a vanished island, reimagining the lagoon floor as interior space: walkable, interpretable, then surrendered again to the tide.

These islands of void are more than technical work zones; they act as provisional scenographies where absence and presence are choreographed. Here excavation is not only retrieval but performance, as sediment is displaced, water withdrawn, and artifacts revealed under staged conditions. Read through an architectural lens, the cofferdam creates conditions of possibility, forming a time-bound architecture that makes submerged ground accessible and reframes it as a museological environment in which heritage is uncovered, narrated, and experienced in real time.

Jared Fantasia is an architect and PhD candidate at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Porto. He combines archival and interdisciplinary research with curatorial and para-architectural interventions as both a lens and a medium to interrogate and create dialogue around complex, layered histories of memory and power across multiple spatial and temporal scales.



Image credits: Interior view of LIDL Mesambelies store, in Heraklion Crete, Greece, with the excavated archaeological site curated as part of the underground car park. Photo: Liana Psarologaki

Liana Psarologaki
Buckinghamshire New University

Post-capitalist Designing [Dis]order; Dirty and Insular Archaeologies of the Future

This contribution to the Performing Archaeology Symposium aims to instigate discussion around post-capitalistic places and spaces that underdetermined and disruptive and hidden behind insular identities that are timeless (archaic and contemporary), and specifically to challenge the stagnated binary between the concepts of order and disorder. It will introduce the extraordinary case of symbiotic and mutual disruption of the cultural and the capitalistic in a LIDL store on Crete. Most probably within this context of social responsibility and care, or perhaps out of contingency during convoluted planning, the local LIDL store in the suburb of Mesampelies includes a curated archaeological site in its indoor parking.

The findings include a 27m long stone-paved road discovered at the foot of the natural slope of the building site from late protogeometric years until the late Roman years. Such disruption, a performative disorder, is for urbanists Peter Sendra and Richard Sennett in their book a designing disorder which is born out of and only exists as part of the advanced capitalism it was aLorded by in the first place. A curated archaeology of this sort, one can argue is a dirty archaeology, drawing from Helene Frichot's 'dirty theory' an anti-system of thinking and creating that aims to aims to transcend disciplinary and ideological boundaries and challenge the normative in the status quo. Dirtiness implies a permeable boundary between the contemporary and the ancient. It allows an otherwise elevated experience of spiritual connectedness to the past to become entangled with the exhaustive feeling of performing everyday labour – the shopping, the parking, the homecoming after work. This will hopefully conclude in an engagement provocation for discussion under the contested term of performative disorder brought by curated archaeological excavation and contemporary transient interiority.

Dr. Liana Psarologaki is an architect (UK-Greece), artist, and interdisciplinary scholar, currently associate professor and research and impact lead at Buckinghamshire New University, UK (BNU). She was previously the founding Head of Architecture at the University of SuLolk UK, Chair of Education RIBA East Region (2020-2022), and finalist for the second Greek International Women's award in Design (2021). She is author of two books: *Cultures of Erudition and Desire in University Pedagogy* (Routledge, 2022) and *Site Reliant Immersive Experiences* (Bloomsbury, 2025). She leads the international multidisciplinary collective "A Woman's Labor" under the umbrella of the Centre of Excellence of Health Inequalities (BNU), and her work examines how people sense, experience and live in different places, spaces and environments from an ecofeminist and posthuman perspective.

ITALY - POMPEII



Temple of Isis. Pompeii.

Image credits: Temple of Isis, Pompeii. Photograph: Unknown

Aylin Atacan
Department of Greek and Latin, University College London
The Ten-Second Stage: Ruins, Travelers, and the Photographic Body

This paper explores nineteenth-century travel photography in Pompeii as a proto-performative archaeological practice that staged both ancient space and modern subjectivity. Long before immersive digital reconstructions and experiential site activations, travelers enacted a participatory form of display through the embodied act of posing among ruins. By treating excavation sites as theatrical sets and ruins as scenographic backdrops, travelers became performers in a spatial narrative that fused antiquity with modernity, collapse with rediscovery, absence with presence. In many images, the very mechanics of photography materialize this performance: with outdoor exposure times often averaging around ten seconds, travelers held their bodies in deliberate stillness before excavated walls, transforming the act of standing among ruins into a temporal gesture of witnessing, presence, and self-inscription. Drawing on archival photographs, guidebooks, and visual devices such as panoramas, dioramas, and magic lanterns, this study traces how Pompeii's excavation site and ruins entered a trans-European visual economy that mobilized architecture, tourism, and emerging optical technologies. Travelers, positioned as "visual conveyers" of antiquity, helped construct a shared imaginary of the ancient city by re-framing archaeological spaces through the camera lens. Their choreographed poses, props, and attentive engagement with ruins demonstrate early forms of affective site activation, where bodies and monuments co-produced meaning. Rather than functioning merely as records of place, these images perform the past. They situate the visitor as witness, spectator, and narrative agent, foregrounding travel photography as a medium of spatial storytelling and a precursor to contemporary practices of immersive archaeology. The ruins of Pompeii became a stage, the camera a tool of scenography, and the traveler an actor in a historic landscape re-animated through presence, posture, and perspective. By reconsidering these photographs as performative excavations, where looking becomes touching, posing becomes interpreting, and framing becomes remembering, this research proposes historical travel imagery as an early model of archaeological display practice. It invites architecture research to view archives not as passive documentation but as generative material for activating heritage through embodied, narrative, and spatial imagination.

Aylin Atacan is an architectural historian whose research interests include the history of classical architecture, visuality and architectural representation, spatial narrative, cinema and architecture, and silent film studies. Currently, she is a Postdoctoral Research Assistant on the ARC-funded project Museum of Dreamworlds: Silent Antiquity Films in the BFI National Archive (2023-2027). Her recent work includes a chapter titled *Hareketli Imajlar-Sessiz Anlatilar: Erken Dönem Sinemasinda Antik Kent ve Mekân Temsilleri* published in *Sinema ve Mimarlik* (2023); a paper presentation, *The film L'esclave de Phidias and the Dialogue Between Antiquity, Cinema, and Landscape*, at the workshop *Silent Antiquity Prints Unique* to the BFI National Archive, hosted by the University of Bologna at the *Cinema Ritrovato Film Festival* (June 2025); and an invited lecture, 9.5mm to 35mm, *Rome to Greece: Architecture, Classical Antiquity, and the Silent Screen*, organized by the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain (November 2025).



Image credits: Eyan Mann, Alona Nitzan-Shiftan

Eytan Mann
TU Delft and Architecture Archives of the Future
Alona Nitzan-Shiftan
Technion and ETH Zurich

All That Is Solid Melts into Air: Persuasive Media at the Archaeological Site of the City of David, Jerusalem

Archaeology in the City of David functions as an immersive script that stages Jerusalem's past as a sensory narrative. Through projection mapping, choreographed lighting, cinematic sequences, and AI-assisted reconstructions, above ground and underneath, visitors are guided to experience Jewish biblical sovereignty as continuous and self-evident. These designed atmospheres fuse archaeological remains with persuasive media, producing conviction somatically rather than argumentatively. In this entanglement of heritage agencies and the settler NGO Elad, digital scenographies authenticate selective histories while erasing Palestinian presence. The result is a hyperreal landscape in which virtual and material layers reinforce one another to naturalize political claims and render Jerusalem as already resolved, post-conflict, and emptied of contemporary contestation.

Eytan Mann is an Assistant Professor of Architecture at TU Delft and a member of the Architecture Archives of the Future group. His work examines digital technologies, archival media, and computational methods in architectural historiography, focusing on transmedial research and new interfaces for interpreting heritage.
Alona Nitzan-Shiftan is Professor of Architecture at the Technion and currently a visiting professor at ETH Zurich. Her research addresses architecture, heritage politics, and critical historiography. She is the author of *Seizing Jerusalem: The Architectures of Unilateral Unification* and leads the Arenson Built Heritage Research Center.



Image credits: St-Hovhannes-church-Sisian, high-resolution 3D model

Manik Tedevosian
TUMO Center for Creative Technologies

The Armenian Heritage Scanning Project

The Armenian Heritage Scanning Project, launched in 2020 by the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies and carried by the Armenian Cultural Heritage Institute, is a multi-year initiative dedicated to preserving and reactivating Armenia's architectural heritage through advanced digital documentation technologies. Employing laser scanning and photogrammetry, Armenian Cultural Heritage Institute team undertakes regular field missions across Armenia, creating high-resolution 3D models and establishing a digital archive of endangered monuments with millimeter-level precision.

To date, over 270 historical sites in Armenia and Artsakh have been doc mented, with plans to make these digital models publicly available through an open-access online platform. Beyond heritage documentation, the project serves as a catalyst for innovation, supporting both academic research and creative exper mentation, and exploring how heritage can inspire new forms of contemporary expression. At the 2025 Venice Architecture Biennale, for example, an AI model was trained on the collected data, exploring the ways in which technology can act as both a preserver and a disruptor of tradition. By combining rigorous documentation and experimental creative process, the Armenian Cultural Heritage Institute seeks to demonstrate how innovative approaches can unlock untapped creative and educational value, transforming preservation from passive documentation into active cultural genertion. This model suggests new possibilities for heritage institutions worldwide, positioning cultural preservation as a foundation for future creativity.

After earning a Master's degree in Political Science and International Relations from INALCO, Manik Tadevosian specialized in cultural programs and international development projects, with a particular focus on cultural heritage preservation. She previously worked in the Culture and Solidarity Partnerships department at the Institut français in Paris, contributing to initiatives that safeguarded and promoted cultural assets. In 2025, she joined the TUMO Armenian Heritage Scanning team as Project Coordinator, bringing extensive experience from both public and private sectors in implementing, coordinating, and monitoring projects aimed at preserving and promoting cultural heritage.



Image credits: Roman Amphitheatre of Nyon (VD), Switzerland: view of some users discovering the immersive experiences, 2020 © data-room.xyz / Photo: Olivier Lovey

Yony Santos
Head of espazium-education & founder of data-room.xyz

Performing Realities : from archived spaces to activated narratives

« Performing Realities » explores how the digitization and re-contextualization of a place transform space into a genuine cognitive device where the documentary, the speculative, and the performative coexist. Through four in situ projects — from the Roman amphitheatre in Nyon to Geneva's subterranean spatialities — this series of experimentations outlines a method of contextual augmented narratives articulated through three operations: capturing a site (archive), revealing its narrative layers (interpretation), and activating these narratives within the physical environment through immersive technologies. These hybrid environments establish forms of co-reality, overlaying multiple storylines and turning the visitor into an actor-interpreter. Grounded in research-creation, these approaches generate a true spatial performativity and make visible layers of history, practices, and possible futures. They thus become political tools, capable of opening new forms of understanding, debate, and governance of place.

Yony Santos is a Geneva-based architect working at the intersection of pedagogy, digital innovation, and spatial narratives. Head of ESPAZIUM-EDUCATION and founder of DATAROOM, he has taught at EPFL, HEAD - Geneva and the Academia di Architettura in Mendrisio. Author of the publication A Matter of Data, he regularly writes for various editors, moderates roundtables, and takes part in public debates. His work explores the links between physical and digital realities, fostering a critical perspective on immersive environnments.



Image credits: UNIL - Projet Collart Palmyre - Archéovision

Patrick Michel
University of Lausanne

The Baalshamîn Temple of Palmyra: a case study of Immersive and interactive devices for Cultural Heritage

The temple of Baalshamîn in Palmyra was destroyed in 2015. From 2017, the University of Lausanne launches the Collart Palmyre project in order to digitize the archaeological archive of the Swiss Archaeologist Paul Collart. Under the direction of Patrick Michel, the archive has been published online and accurate 3D modela of the temple have been produced. Web based technologies have been used in order to creat a dynamic and diachronic modelling of the temple. using one set of data, it was also possible to create a VR and an AR immersive device used both in research as in dissemination programmes. Bringing together researchers and local communities it was also possible to integrate stotytelling in the immersive experience.

Patrick Maxime Michel, PhD, studied classical and Near Eastern history and archaeology. He holds a DAS in cultural heritage law. He has taught in Switzerland, in Italy, in the UAE and in USA, particpated in archaeological projects in Syria and Jordan, and directs the Collart-Palmyre Project and NUCLEUS.

Peforming Archeology
Excavations as a Display Project

A conference organisated by HEAD – Genève
Interior Architecture Department
08-09.12.2025

Scientific Comitee: Roberto Zancan, Taiana Broillet, Damien Greder

Scientific Deputy: Taiana Broillet

Organization: Lucie Landenbergue, Christelle Granite-Noble, Alexandra Miskufova, Valentina De Luigi

With the financial support of the Swiss National Science Foundation (FNS)

Special thanks to Lada Umstätter, Director, HEAD – Genève

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