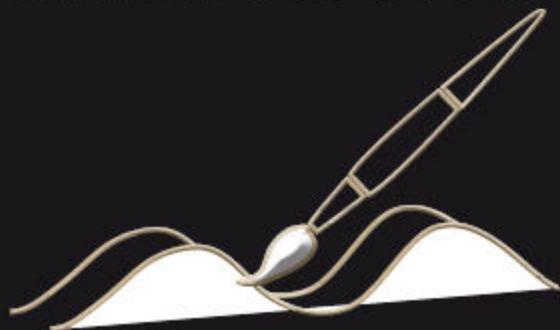




Contributors: Douglass Bailey, Peter Blella, Cătălina Dănilă, Ian Dennis, Iván Drufovka, Paul Evans, Claude Heath, Michaël Jasmin, Judy Macklin, Mark Macklin, Steve Mills, Pavel Mirea, Simon Thorne and Angela Walker.

The Măgura Past and Present project is the Cardiff University partner scenario of the Art-Landscape Transformations EC project 2007-4230. The project is a partnership between the School of History and Archaeology, Cardiff University, the Muzeul Județean Teleorman, Alexandria, Romania and the Școala de Arte și Meserii Măgura and residents of the village of Măgura, Romania. Between February 2008 and February 2011 the project participants conducted a series of artistic and scientific interventions in and around Măgura and in the Muzeul Județean Teleorman. This book presents reflections by some of the project participants on the art residencies, workshops and exhibitions they were involved with and addresses issues to do with intervention, national and international collaboration, participation, and the relevance, meaning and accessibility of artistic and scholarly outputs to diverse audiences.

Funding provided by the Art-Landscape Transformations EC project 2007-4230, Cardiff University partner scenario: Măgura Past and Present. European Union Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency Culture Programme (2007-2013).



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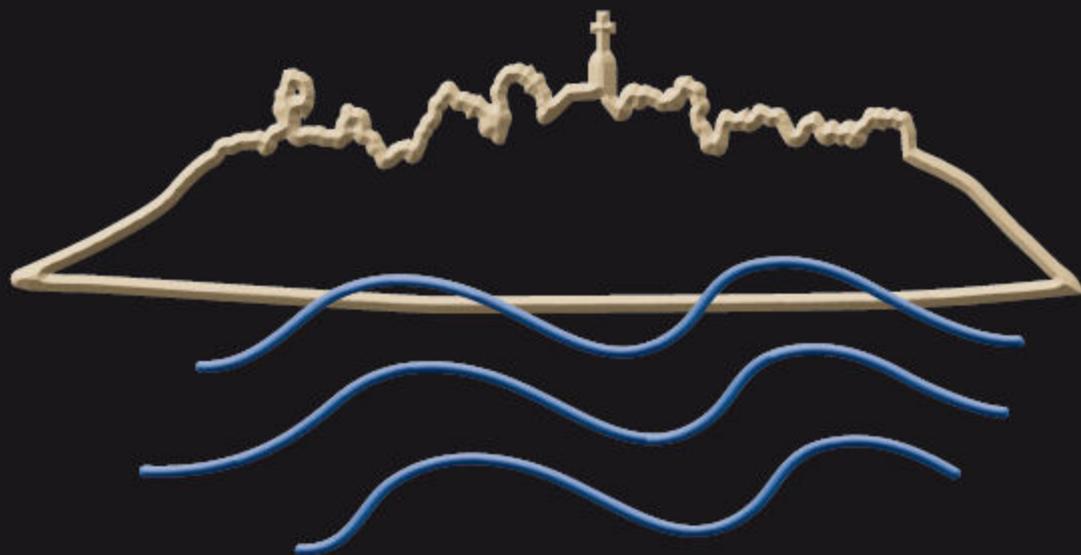
Interventions: Măgura Past and Present

Edited by Steve Mills

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Renaissance



**Interventions:
Măgura Past and Present**

Edited by Steve Mills

Editura Renaissance
București
2011

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**For the people of Măgura, past and present.
Thank you for permitting, contributing to and participating in the interventions.**

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The Mayor of Măgura: Atanase Ionescu.

The Director of the Școala de Arte și Meserii Măgura: Lidia Măldăianu.

The teachers and students of the Școala de Arte și Meserii Măgura.

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Dumitru and Liana Bărbuș: shepherds

Ecaterina and Ștefan Geantă: bread baking and egg colouring

Vulpe Valentin: Peter Biella collaborator

Claudia Băjan: Peter Biella collaborator

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Mirel Lungu: priest Măgura-Bran - "Sfânta Maria" (Virgin Mary) church

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Angela Walker: University of Sheffield, UK

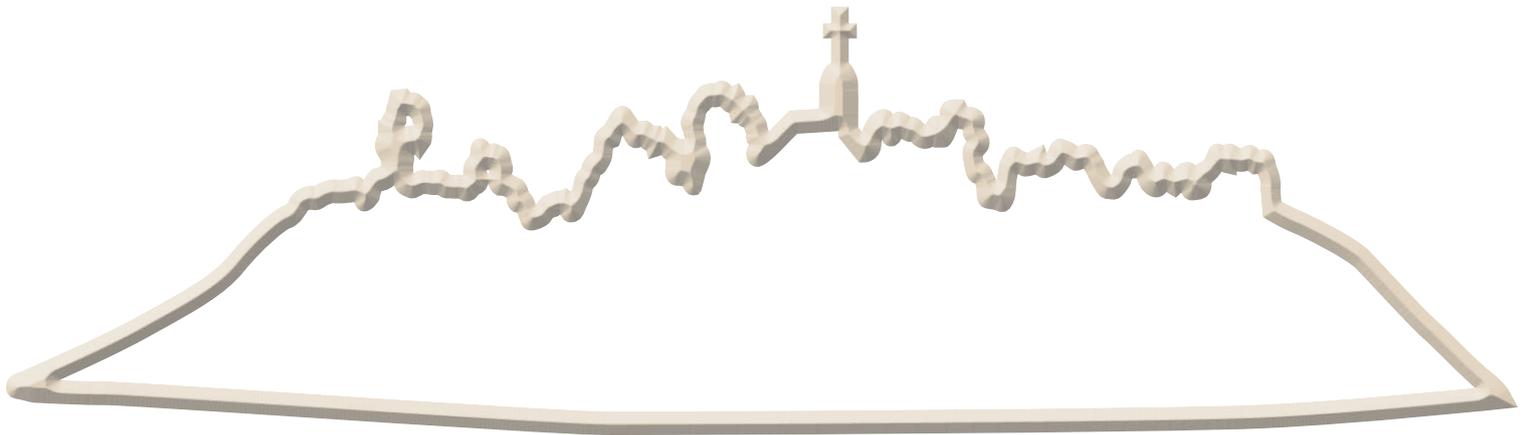
Local media partners

RNMR (Rețeaua Muzeelor din România)
Cimec (Centrul de Memorie Culturală București)
Teleormanul
Gazeta de Teleorman
Mara
Cronica Română
Adevărul Alexandria
Alexandria TV
Media Sud Alexandria
Radiocultura
Roșiori News
Astăzi.ro
Ziare.com
ArtSpirit

Activities

2008	
Oct - May 2009	Analyses and reconstruction of prehistoric pottery contributing to an exhibition in the museum. Report distributed May 2009. L. Thissen, P. Mirea
2009	
May - Jun	Ethnographic filmmaking and photography in Măgura, 'Eternity was born in the village' film produced. P. Biella, I. Drufovka, D. Bailey
Jul	Un sighted-tactile drawings. C. Heath
Jul - Aug	Fieldwork in Măgura and museum. Audio/visual documenting; prehistoric plant use and stone tool analysis; exhibition, conference and workshop preparation; publicity. S. Mills, D. Bailey, E. Țânțăreanu, P. Mirea, M. Macklin, J. Macklin, A. Pannett, A. Walker, P. Zaharia, A. Ionescu
2010	
Apr	Conference at museum: 'Human changes and interactions in the rural cultural landscape'. E. Țânțăreanu, R. Nemțeanu, P. Mirea, P. Zaharia, A. Ionescu + 20 participants
Apr	Project web site development starts. C. Henley, S. Mills
Jun - Jul	Further analyses and reconstruction of prehistoric pottery. L. Thissen, P. Mirea
Jul	Community drawings workshop at Măgura School. P. Evans, L. Măldăianu + 47 participants
Jul	Pottery workshops at Măgura School. C. Dănilă, L. Măldăianu + 47 participants
Jul	River, mosaics and soundscape workshops at Măgura School. J. Macklin, M. Macklin, S. Thorne, L. Măldăianu + 47 participants
Jul	Pit-firing workshop at Măgura School. S. Mills, C. Dănilă, P. Mirea, P. Zaharia, L. Thissen, A. Pannett, A. Walker, L. Măldăianu + 47 participants
Jul	Land-art in Măgura. M. Jamin
Jul	Soundscapes in Măgura. S. Thorne
Jul	Fieldwork in Măgura and museum. Audio/visual documenting; prehistoric plant use and stone tool analysis; conference planning; publicity; developing web presence and multimedia representations of Măgura. S. Mills, D. Bailey, E. Țânțăreanu, P. Mirea, A. Pannett, A. Walker, A. Ionescu
Jul - Apr 2011	Exhibition space renovations start at museum. P. Mirea, S. Mills, E. Țânțăreanu, P. Zaharia, F. Otomega, T. Măzărar, L. Nicolescu, M. Dumitru, C. Dănilă, D. Nicolae, E. Pășcălău, C. Tudorică
Nov	Conference at museum: 'The Lower Danube in prehistory: landscape changes and human-environment interactions'. P. Mirea, S. Mills, P. Zaharia, E. Țânțăreanu + 36 participants
Nov	Măgura Past and Present project temporary exhibition opens at museum.
Dec	Photograph exhibition opens at Măgura School: 'A history in images. People and places from Măgura'. E. Țânțăreanu, P. Mirea, L. Măldăianu
2011	
Feb	'Human changes and interactions in the rural cultural landscape' conference proceedings published.
Apr	'The Lower Danube in prehistory: landscape changes and human-environment interactions' conference proceedings published.
Apr	'Interventions: Măgura Past and Present' book published.
Apr	'Eternity was born in the village' DVDs distributed.
Apr	'Măgura' and 'Some spaces' soundscape CDs distributed.
Apr	Plant use report distributed.
Apr	Stone tool report distributed.
Apr	'The brain of the archaeologist' land art book published.
May	Permanent Neolithic exhibition and multimedia open at museum and Neolithic exhibition booklet distributed.
May	Măgura Past and Present web site online.

What is Măgura?



What is Măgura? And who do we think we are?

By Steve Mills & Douglass Bailey



When we first went to Măgura in 1998, as western European team-members of the Southern Romania Archaeological Project (SRAP), we did not know what to expect. We were equipped with archaeological theories, methodologies and equipment; we had an academic agenda, had secured research funding and obtained all the relevant permits and so were prepared for fieldwork, as prepared as we could be in that first season. But we had no knowledge, experience or expertise that could have prepared us for the village, its people, history, politics and daily routines. We came for the archaeology not for the village and with hindsight that reflects some short-sightedness on our part. The same cannot be said of our collaborators from the Teleorman County Museum; they have worked with people from the village for many years and have built up strong relationships with them. Thus the museum staff became the mediators between the village and the foreign archaeologists. Consequently, and with the exception of the project directors, the team were largely shielded from the necessity of engaging and negotiating with people from the village and thereby freed to get on with the archaeological research. This was not an arrangement we had requested, although it certainly helped, but it is how it worked out.

Over the intervening 12 years, however, the situation has transformed significantly. In returning every year for continued fieldwork we have gradually thrown off our protective shield, met and worked with many people from the village, enjoyed each other's company, overcome language barriers and slowly built up a relationship with many based on friendship and trust. We have been welcomed into the village and done our best to reciprocate where we can. But that does not mean that we have done nearly enough. We have only ever visited Măgura, we have only ever intervened; we are not from, nor part of, Măgura. We remain transitory interlocutors on the periphery.





When we first started the Măgura Past and Present project in 2008, as archaeologists and artists of various kinds, we did not know what to expect. This was a project in which none of the participants had any previous experience. The research aim of the wider EU-funded Art-Landscape Transformations project was to use art (understood in a broad sense) to transform a selection of landscapes within Europe, with a particular emphasis on local heritage, for the benefit and welfare of rural communities. Ten partners were involved in the project (from Ireland, France, Latvia, Portugal, Sardinia, Spain and the UK) of which the Cardiff University Măgura Past and Present project was one. But how do you successfully blend art and archaeology on the one hand, and in a way that is relevant, accessible and meaningful to the people of Măgura on the other? Who gets what from such an endeavour? Who are we doing this for? What are the priorities? What will be the outputs? Who is the audience? What is, and who is in, the community with whom we seek to engage? And, what is Măgura? What are the boundaries (spatial and temporal)? How do we define it? Does it require defining? What aspects of Măgura do we work with? As scientists we are used to, and safe in, working within (or challenging) defined frameworks and clearly defined study areas. If our framework (or study area) is now loosely Măgura, what does that mean?



None of these questions have ready or easy answers, but we had an opportunity with this new project to at least begin to explore some of the possibilities. Many of these issues grew from our developing relationship with, and understanding of, the village and its surrounding archaeology and landscape, but that we had not been able to address as part of the SRAP. We were excited at having this opportunity.

From the start, this project has begged the question, who are 'we'? Those who are part of the group 'we' has changed in tandem with the lifetime of the project as it has evolved and transformed. We has included at various times and in various combinations (and in no specific order): the museum staff, archaeologists, scientists and artists; the Mayor; the school director, teachers and school children; the man who delivered the wood for the pit-firing event; the people passing by and watching the workshops; the people who read the newspaper reports and watched the TV news bulletins; the hotel manager and staff; the conference delegates; the graphic illustrator who compiled this book; the web master; the financial support team and the auditor; the other Art-Landscape Transformations project partners; and the unknown audiences of our exhibitions, film, music, books and website. So it has become difficult to determine who 'we' are at any given time during this project; the membership has always been fluid.

So, it would seem, we have a project without robust subject parameters, without rigidly defined spatial or temporal boundaries and without a defined team. An interesting, certainly flexible, if somewhat challenging, remit!





The 'we' originally cast as principal investigators came up with a working outline at the start of the project, an excerpt of which follows.

“The interventions will take place in the prehistoric and historic landscapes of the village of Măgura and in the neighbouring valley of the Teleorman River in southern Romania. Participants will come from the local village, the regional and national capitals (Alexandria and București), and other member states (France, England, Wales). The subagenda for the intervention is to question the political and historical power that people commonly ascribe to historic (and prehistoric) monuments, and to re-assert the value and power of events and activities of a more transitory and temporary nature. The aim is to provide contexts in which the inhabitants of a rural village in southern Romania can become authors, artists, and actors within the creations of their own histories while working in collaboration with personnel from the county museum and from foreign universities. The interventive acts will relocate and democratise the authority of making history and of authoring representations. Once taken from the formal institutions of knowledge (the museums, academies, universities) and the institutional authorities (professors, experts, specialists, foreigners), authority will be given to the local inhabitants of the village, with particular empowering of the village children.



In standard institutional terms, the village's (pre)historic identity rested primarily on the presence of pre/proto/early-historic monuments: early Neolithic pit-hut sites from the Criș, Dudești and Vădastra Cultures (6000-5000 BC); a late Neolithic settlement tell of the Gumelnița Culture (4800-3800 BC); and Iron Age and Roman phase burial mounds. Unacceptably, previous work carried out by west European teams on the prehistory of the village and surrounding landscape had excluded the local people from full participation in the research projects: workers were hired to do manual labour (shovelling, sifting, guarding the excavation sites), or land owners were paid subsidies for the loss of crops that would have been grown on land under excavation.

The interventions' stance is to discard the regularly assumed evolutionary and developmental importance of the major technological, economic and political advances (or as some wish to term them the revolutions). Thus the interventions do not assign any significance to the transition from gathering to producing food (the basis for the Neolithic revolution at c. 6000 BC in temperate Europe), or to the emergence of metal working (of copper, gold and then bronze and finally iron), or to the establishment of urban centres, or even to the changes in national political philosophy (from totalitarian socialist, to communist, to post-communist, to European Unionist). The Măgura interventions set to one side these large-scale trends, and focus instead on the local, the particular, and the specific.

The critical stance is that the village only has one moment of history and that moment is today. If the village has a past then that past can only be recognised by us living and working in the present, thinking about and studying objects, finds, distributions of activities that we hold (or reconstruct) in the present. The decision to focus on the singularity of time at present and to work at the level of the particular, all fashion the work of the Măgura interventions so that they can seek out, engage, and evoke the small-scale specifics of life and intentionally ignore the seamless, but false, veneer of coarse-scaled understandings of life in Romania at the start of the twenty-first century.



By taking this position on the contemporary past of Măgura, the interventions demand the juxtapositioning of diverse and separate representations, images, objects, media, and material or immaterial experiences. The different actions of the Măgura interventions swirl around a common process: transformation. Whether it is the transformation of a raw material (such as flint or clay) into a tool or a pot, or whether it is the transformation of the real-time reality of a dirt road in the village via moving digital images, the commonality rests in the realisation that all of the interventions' actions examine, engage, or create transformative processes." (Bailey and Mills 2007, unpublished project notes).

To what extent are these inspiring and well intentioned (though extra-academy) aspirations relevant or appealing? Some of us who are involved with the project are academics and these are the kinds of issues we wrestle with and argue around; they provide the bait for us to offer our academic teeth. But are we (the academics) using this opportunity as a means of furthering our research agendas and of patting ourselves on the back in the process? This kind of project seems to tick the right boxes in terms of impact and engagement. After all, we have spent many years doing our research and now we find ourselves with an opportunity to 'give something back' and to explore new academic territory in the process. Of course, all of this is true, how could it be otherwise? There is nothing that needs to be defended.



With that said, we are faced with an important question. As academics, are we capable of thinking and working outside of our research agendas, as is implicated in the above proposal; can we integrate ourselves sufficiently to be able get to the local, the particular and the commonplace? It would seem that that is what is required and what we are advocating. A difficult request. Perhaps with hindsight, having now completed this project, this is not always possible. Part of the problem is in the proposal itself: we are re-acting. We have created something that needs to be confronted, changed and transformed and, consequently, we can only ever leave ourselves with the option to intervene rather than to integrate. Academia is entrenched in a situation where there is a requirement to demonstrate 'impact and engagement'; we have to continuously create, and ingratiate ourselves in, that 'we' with whom we wish to work. This is in part a consequence of communication and dissemination; we do not speak the right language for much of the time. Being part of 'we' is not a given, it has to be continuously negotiated and it must be something we earn. This may be a situation of our own making; it may not be. But if it is, it is certainly not limited to academics. Importantly, how much of this resonates in the thinking, aspirations and lives of the people of Măgura? That is an issue that, perhaps, none of us are yet ready, qualified, or experienced enough to truly engage. This project has certainly made us face these issues head on, even if we have not yet found satisfactory resolutions to them.





At various stages in the past, and during the lifetime of this project, we 'foreign' archaeologists, scientists and artists have faced accusations of having a colonialist attitude to our research; going to Romania, doing our work and then leaving, without leaving very much. To an extent there is some truth in this, but only if we should be considered guilty for having an interest in the archaeology of southern Romania, of being fortunate enough to be in a position to secure funding and adhering to the funding remit, and of showing a willingness to collaborate with Romanian institutions of various kinds. If we are to transcend modern political, ideological and physical boundaries in our research (as discussed above), and if we try to avoid imposing similar boundaries, knowingly or otherwise, on our interpretations of the past, then international collaboration of the kind we have been pursuing is essential. But as already acknowledged, we can always do more to make participation more inclusive and outputs more accessible and the Măgura Past and Present project has enabled us, collectively, to work towards achieving this.



Throughout, the project has demanded considerable negotiation and compromise on the part of all involved. The extent to which different participants have been able to contribute towards project activities and outputs has varied for reasons to do with expertise, access to resources, location and time. And, out of necessity, some have been organisers and others participants. With co-operation and support from the Mayor, the school Director and priests in the village, responsibility for the project workshops, conferences, exhibitions, and the books, film, website and music, lay with the museum staff, archaeologists and artists. This is not to suggest that, without us, the people in the village could not achieve all of these themselves if they had the necessary resources and expertise. Through this project we hope that there has been some transfer of knowledge and enthusiasm that will enable and incentivise more people in the village to pursue similar kinds of activities in the future. With respect to this book in particular, all essays have been written in English by the archaeologists and artists; that is by the interveners and not by people from the village. This is deliberate to enable us, the interveners, to explore the concept of interventions and to reflect on the results and implications of our having intervened. We acknowledge, however, that this book would likely be a more balanced reflection of the project as a whole if it included an equal range of contributions by people from the village. To rectify this deficiency, a future book, or similar output that mirrors this one, could be written in the Romanian language and produced by people from the village presenting their experiences of the project, and views of its implications and consequences. We hope to be able to facilitate this in part by inviting people from the village to contribute, in ways of their choosing, to the future bi-lingual project website.







Referring back to our working proposal above, how much of its agenda have we been able to achieve? We would like to think we have come some way during this project in transcending boundaries, and in empowering people from the village to be able to engage in processes of the interpretation, creation, and authorship of their heritage. We deliberately choose not to label this as progress because it is an ongoing transformative process, and because, really, it should have started many years ago. If nothing else, there has been some blurring of divisions between the categories of archaeology and art, of academics/specialists and villagers, and of locals and outsiders. Teamwork of various kinds has resulted in workshops, conferences, exhibitions, books, a film, music and a website. We leave it to the reader to decide whether, combined, this range of activities and outputs can be considered a success.

We cannot be certain, but it seems to us (authors) unlikely, that an international, collaborative project of this nature would have succeeded in Măgura ten years ago. Previous work in and around the village by the Teleorman County Museum, the National Historical Museum of Romania and then by the SRAP paved the way, establishing strong working relations and, more importantly, instilling a sense of trust. The timing of the Art-Landscape Transformations project was fortuitous in that it was at about the right time, for all concerned, to begin exploring opportunities for wider participation, for re-negotiating and consolidating collaboration, and for knowledge transfer.

So what is Măgura? And who do we think we are? It is probably not possible to answer these simple questions. Perhaps it is not sensible to forward them as questions. If there are answers they are some way off in the future and not to be found in this book. We have learnt a lot through our workshops, conferences, exhibitions and other activities. Whether that learning is about the village, its archaeology or about art, or is more to do with the ideas, application and outputs of this project (or indeed if, in the end it is only about us), is an ongoing discussion.

Regardless of what we may, or may not, have 'revealed' about Măgura, we have all intervened in various ways into the project Măgura Past and Present. Some of those interventions are presented in this book, and we invite you, the reader, to now intervene and dwell on what is Măgura.







Hands on



A hands-on experience: marking time in Măgura

By Paul Evans



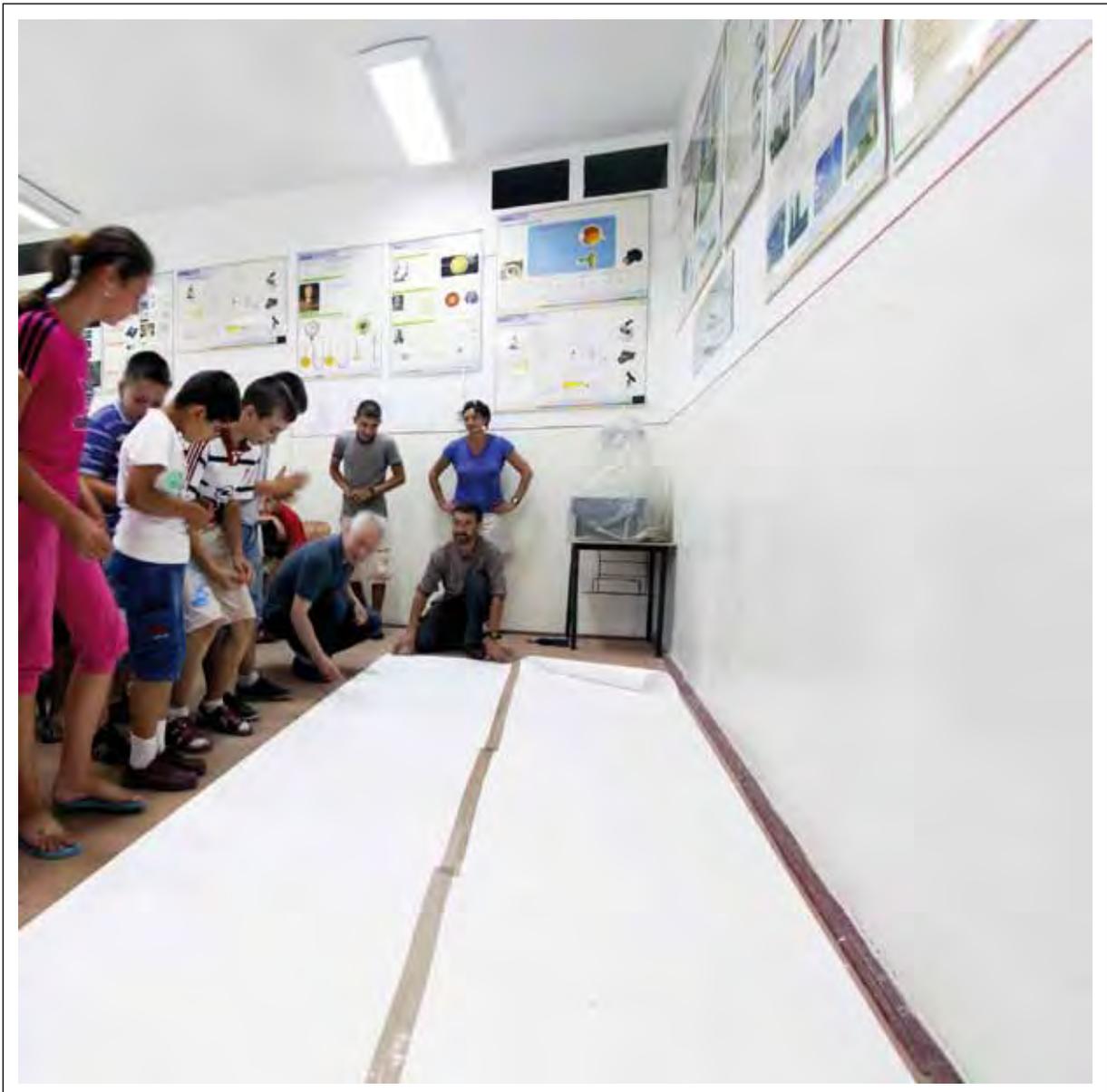
I would like there to exist places that are stable, unmoving, intangible, untouched and almost untouchable, unchanging, deep rooted: places that might be points of reference, of departure, of origin ... (Perec 1974, 91).

From *Species of Spaces* by Georges Perec



Taking in the panorama from the tell (a man-made hillock) that underlies the village church, one can't help but sense an almost tangible permanence emanating from the landscape surrounding Măgura.

But this, in contradiction to the desired-for *untouched places* in the above quote from Perec, is clearly a landscape that has been *touched* by the hand of people. The mound indicates, by its relatively modest physical presence, a history of settlement going back over 8,000 years. Throughout this time human eyes have overlooked the ever changing meanders of a river whose constant evolution predates us but which has slowly lain down, in gravel and sand, the conditions and context for human occupation.



What were the first marks made here by members of our species? What were the first signs of our passing through? One might, perhaps, think of footprints in mud or snow, or perhaps envisage the impression of a warm body lain in a soft bed of gathered leaves or rushes; but these marks would have been made without intention. In fact the *intention* might have been to avoid creating signs that might have been read by predators or by other, potentially hostile, groups of human beings.

I first saw the *Gulgum Manja* or Cave of Hands in the Grampians National Park, Western Victoria, Australia (a place that the indigenous peoples call *Gariwerd*) around 15 years ago. It consists of a frantic mass of right hand prints made on blood-red sandstone. What makes the *Gulgum Manja* so affecting to modern eyes is the presence of the hands of men, women and children – it is a succession of family albums made by the impressions of warm flesh pressing on

cool sandstone. Although these vibrant shadows (made, in fact, by the delicate act of blowing paint from the mouth to leave a stencil/shadow shape of fingers, thumb and palm) were kept at a distance of somewhat more than arm's length



by an ugly metal grill (installed to protect the paintings from modern vandalism), they still had a direct, physical and palpable power to communicate meaning.



The choice of site, sheltered as it is from the elements that might weather away these marks, would clearly suggest a desire for permanence, an intention to create something deep rooted; a place to return to, perhaps repeatedly over time, to imprint a collective identity upon a space, to leave a special mark for a particular people within their land. Other hand-stencil paintings occur in other cultures and date from other times. They are separated by continents and by many thousands of years. There is a Cave of Hands (Cuevo de las Manos) in the province of Santa Cruz, Argentina, which dates back over 10,000 years – predating the human activity that has been documented within Teleorman County by two millennia. Going back even

further into deep time, hand stencils can be seen in close juxtaposition to the famous, 25,000 year old horse paintings of Peche Merle, which lie deep in caves beneath the Lot Valley in Southern France. They are part of a sublime series of interventions made by people from the Gravettian culture.









In David Lewis-Williams book *The Mind in the Cave*, he interprets this particular juxtaposition between hand prints and horses as a 'meaningful composition' perhaps representing a shamanic *dissolving* of the thin membrane between the 'spirit world' and our own, which existed here, for them, in these underground chambers and passages (Lewis-Williams 2002, 218).

Michel Lorblanchet who, according to Lewis-Williams, had considerable anthropological experience in Australia, investigated the blown handprints in Peche Merle in the light of what he had learned about aboriginal painting techniques:

The method of spit painting seems to have had in itself exceptional symbolic significance to early people. Human breath, the most profound expression of a human being, literally breathes life onto a cave wall (Lewis-Williams 2002, 220).

Even so, Lorblanchet, who used chewed up charcoal in his experiments, was





apparently discouraged from using Manganese dioxide - a common pigment in use during the Upper Paleolithic - on account of the fact that accidental swallowing might result in serious health problems!

How might an intervention from the past breathe new life in the present? The intention of 'Cave of Hands', the workshop, was to carry this cultural idea from the landscape of southern Australia into a very different place, into the classroom of a village school in southern Romania. By including the hands of teachers, parents and the archaeologists and artists sharing these moments in time, in this space, the idea was to fix something transient in a very simple and direct way, in a *form* that bypassed any problems of verbal communication

I was delighted by the enthusiasm with which all members of the community entered into this task, by the ease with which the idea was communicated and by the very apparent pleasure that our participants showed when



making their mark. What seemed most important here was not only the individual contribution but also the 'co-operative mode of making'. Again, in *The Mind in the Cave* Lewis-Williams states that the blowing of the paint need not to have been done by the person holding his or her hand to the rock; perhaps it could have been blown by an officiating person, perhaps the participants took turns (Lewis-Williams 2002, 219)?



What remains both then and now is the proof of physical contact, proof of participation.

Of course there is one very different process at work today. The object created in Cave of Hands the Workshop has been *fixed*. Firstly, physically with hairspray bought in Alexandria and then through digital photography. It doesn't need a rock shelter to survive. Through meticulous documentation it has become *history*; and by collecting the names of the participants we have preserved them, in contrast to the anonymity of





the subjects of its ancient precedents. Evidently this changes its nature considerably, because the Cave of Hands Workshop is a product of the living, we can't *imagine* the nameless ghosts waving to us from those subterranean passages.

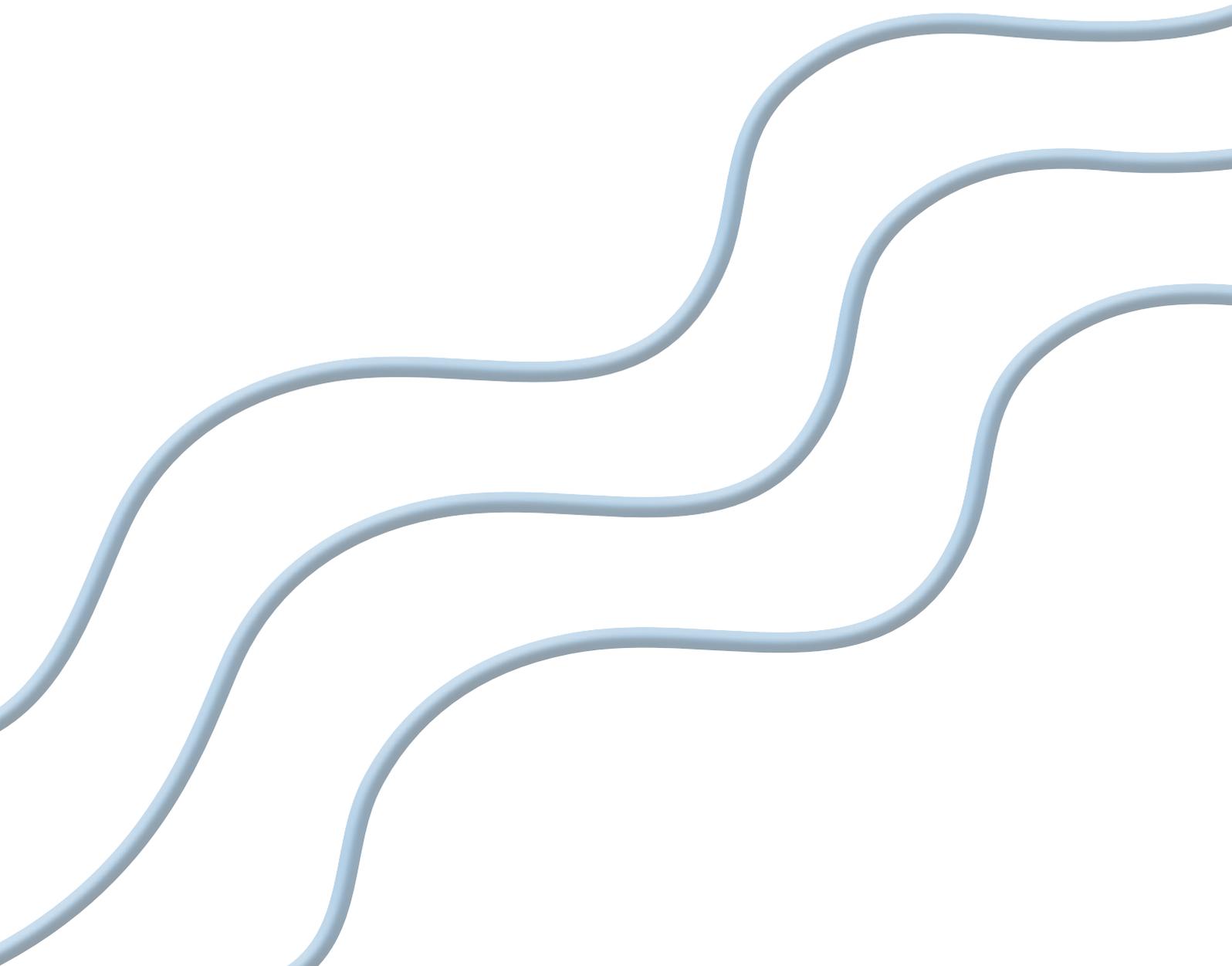
Handprints like the hands of a clock, fixed in their moments yet endlessly indicating the passing of time.

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Rivers - lines of time



Rivers - lines of time: you
can never dip your hand in
the same water twice

By Judy E. Macklin and Mark G.
Macklin



Context

'Intervention' can be variously considered as 'interference', 'involvement', 'intrusion', 'interpolation' and 'mediation', and as a practising artist (Judy Macklin), geoscientist (Mark Macklin) and educators we approach art-landscape transformation or intervention (as here defined) from differing viewpoints arising from our contrasting experiential and working paradigms. To collaborate effectively and harmoniously required adopting a common point of departure and our working methods had to dovetail, in order that our joint intervention became greater than the sum of its component parts. This short essay articulates our different starting points in tackling a potentially highly complex interdisciplinary project, and how these were resolved to our mutual satisfaction, (or not!) and to the perceived benefit of the school children and teachers of the village of Măgura. It is structured around the themes of interference, involvement, intrusion, interpolation and mediation, in the context of exploring self, place and time with the school children of Măgura through the vehicle of its past and present riverscape.

Starting points

Judy Macklin: "For my part, I am quite uncomfortable with the notion of implementing change in a circle of influence outside my 'home ground' especially if it appears abrupt and invasive. However, to be involved in a process which is given more time, presents gentle introductions, and has the opportunity to alter perceptions even before it begins then please count me in! I was fortunate to be introduced to the village of Măgura during a visit one year ahead of the main activities planned for artists, which gave me a useful insight into the context of this project. It was crucial to see the people and the settings in which they worked and to gauge where they come from (historically, geographically and academically) and where they are going (culturally and

politically). It was only at this point that I could see value in working to facilitate change turning 'home ground' into 'common ground' for all participants."

Mark Macklin: "Rivers can transform the local and wider landscape on a temporary or permanent basis. They do this by erosion and movement of soil and sediment around river catchments during floods, and through deposition in new forms such as bars or islands. These landforms are not only aesthetically pleasing but can also be analysed and interpreted to reveal how and when they were created, thereby providing an environmental history. Rivers produce a palimpsest of 'marks' in the landscape commonly in the form of abandoned channels (palaeochannels) that display a wide variety of geometrical shapes and patterns. These can be 'read' using aerial photographs, satellite images, Google Earth, old maps as well as on the land surface using GPS and field walking. Their 4D (space-time) relationships can also be deciphered by analysing and dating sediment, wood, bone and artefacts that infill these abandoned river courses. These materials record and preserve changes in the landscape resulting from both human activity and climate-related changes in flooding regimes. One important and potentially controversial topic that I wished to address explicitly through the Măgura riverscape intervention was how its inhabitants, who live adjacent to and use the Clanița and Teleorman river valleys for farming and water, perceive change in their local river landscape and understand the factors that control it. Given the growing concern of the effects of global warming on extreme events, particularly the occurrence of catastrophic floods and droughts, it was considered timely to explore these issues with the local children and their relatives. Greater localism and community involvement in managing the worst effects of climate change is being increasingly advocated by environmental managers worldwide. I saw the Măgura intervention as an opportunity to test the reality of this approach using art as a medium by which to explore contemporary people-river interactions and as a means of better communicating complex 4D concepts."

Common ground

Our joint intervention had three primary objectives and each was realised through a series of artworks created by the school children. First, we wanted to inspire in the children a sense of self. This was obviously contingent on them growing up in a rapidly changing agricultural community, in a small Romanian village at the beginning of the 21st century. Second, to research and develop with them a greater awareness of the local riverscape highlighting links with pre-history and human responses to environmental change in the past. Third, using modern and ancient found objects collected from the Clanița river, to explore the concepts of uniqueness and cultural change using the river as a metaphor – a line of time.

The venue for our intervention was the village school and the adjoining Clanița valley, and a four day workshop was run from 17th to 20th July 2010 involving 30 children and their teachers. The following participatory activities were used to explore the issues of self, place and time in Măgura and its riverscape, and to create a shared cross-generation experience.

A sense of self

The children initially made their own concertina sketch book in which to complete activities as well to record information they had collected. These books proved to be an exceptionally useful tool for translation when copying down tasks from the black board).



This was greatly helped by the fact that our translator was the English teacher at the school. To develop ownership of the sketch book, portraits of friends and self-portraits were completed on the first few pages; drawing from direct



observation to facilitate individual expression and to establish a common visual language. Feathers, discarded by the large local population of geese, and ink were used to encourage a relaxed approach to drawing as well as to develop mark making skills. To reinforce the notion of 'self' the children were given a number of replica Neolithic figurines from the local museum at Alexandria and invited to create their own version using self-hardening clay. This promoted an investigation of identity to fire up their imagination and to get them to focus on form, shape and pattern. Wood and flint tools were used as a further reminder of what it might have been like to work with clay during prehistory. Drawings of the figurines were made in the childrens sketch books and notes on why and who first made these types of objects.





A sense of place

To begin with the children looked at a large-scale colour air photograph of Măgura and the Claniţa valley and were asked to interpret what they saw and to point out any manmade or natural features in the landscape. We then outlined how river landforms were created in the Claniţa valley and how we can 'read' and produce cultural and environmental narratives using air photographs and satellite images. The children put themselves geographically in context by identifying and marking on the photograph where they lived. Virtually all of the children, with very little guidance from us, could do this and demonstrated a surprisingly (to us) high level of 'innate' (none of them had seen



an aerial photograph of this kind before) spatial awareness and abstraction. Building on this exercise, a larger-scale group piece was created, in which the children worked in willow charcoal and chalk to produce their own interpretative aerial representation of the village and its surrounding landscape. Searching for a shared visual language to describe sight and sound, we then took all of the children on a walk along the banks of Clanița river, and across the adjoining Islaz (floodplain-common land), in order to collect contemporary manmade or 'special' (to the children) natural objects, to view Neolithic artefacts





preserved in river deposits and to discuss favourite haunts for playing and fishing. The walk began with a brief explanation of the geomorphological development of the river and its archaeology. Children completed activities along the way, settling for a while at their favourite spots to make sketches or to gather plastic, ceramics, glass, shells and other contemporary finds for the mosaic. At the end of the guided walk the children were shown a Neolithic site where contemporary river bank erosion had exposed a vast array of broken pottery, bone and worked flint.

site where contemporary river bank erosion had exposed a vast array of broken pottery, bone and worked flint.



For homework the children were given the task of asking the oldest member of their household to note down their memories of the Clanița river, particularly how it had changed and recollections of notable past floods.



A sense of time

The primary purpose behind the children making their own figurines and gathering 'finds' from the Clanița river was to represent themselves as well as the past and present Măgura landscape, in the form of a group mosaic. This depicted the river walk and was strategically constructed from 12 small (20 x 20 cm) wooden tiles that allowed the children to work in pairs or groups of three.



To connect individual tiles the course of the river was sketched and then marked by shiny, blue-coloured, glass tesserae. Next, the children washed and cleaned the contemporary found objects, laying them out carefully to inspect them in a fashion reminiscent of archaeologists working at an excavation.





These, together with their own figurines and small Neolithic pottery shards donated by the Alexandria museum, were then carefully glued onto the wooden tiles. The separate mosaic tiles fitted together in a form to constitute the river walk along the Clanița as experienced individually and by all of the children.



Last, we wanted to leave a more permanent legacy of our riverscape workshop at Măgura and after discussions with both children and teachers a new school sign was made using the remaining glass tesserae. The children's art work was displayed as part of an exhibition in conjunction with a major international archaeological conference held at the Teleorman County Museum in Alexandria held in November 2010. Both children and teachers attended the opening of this meeting.



Postscript

Judy Macklin: "As an artist it is the people encountered during a new project that sparks engagement, and ultimately, aims and results. It was a pleasure for me to meet experts in very different fields and to seek insight through conversation and joint investigation. The crossover between archaeology, art and geomorphology was particularly rewarding. It enabled linking research that unearthed fragments of the past with contemporary practice, through handling clay for pots and figurines, baskets for making moulds, pits for firing, land art to alter the landscape of the present and geomorphologists to interpret the landscape of the past. It strikes me that nothing should stand alone in seeking to understand the transition from prehistory to present; how the touch, the smell and the sound of the human being must resonate gently from the buried earth and be uncovered by river erosion or archaeologists scratching for evidence. I wonder at the optimism of disciplines which seek to understand cause and effect but only reveal a reverberation that transmits a sensation which is audible and tactile, embodied in flint, beads, barley, fire pits and figurines. Imagining it all embraces eternity and transcends the individual by reaching out towards understanding our globally shared human condition back into deep time.

My intension to was purposively slight. and grow a sense of and a sense of time meeting people and ground. Creating in various media spent together but different experiences

intervene or transform I sought to discover self, a sense of place as a response to discovering common words and pictures commemorated time ultimately I hope that were experienced

differently. You can never dip your hand in the same water twice!"

Mark Macklin: "My lasting impressions of the intervention were primarily threefold. First, the boundless enthusiasm and energy of the children who participated in the workshop. Second, their complete lack of self-consciousness in creating a huge range of novel and sometimes idiosyncratic artwork that managed to capture the essence of Măgura and its surrounding landscape. Last, but not least, the very strong sense of community in the school fostered by a group of highly dedicated, caring and professional teachers who gave the children the support and confidence to fully engage and benefit from the workshop. Albeit from just a four day 'snap-shot', Măgura appears to be a resilient community that on the basis of its human capital and spirit, as well as its 7000 year long history as a settled and special place, has the capacity to successfully adapt to rapid environmental and economic change. However, as is often the case, I may see this more clearly as an outsider looking in and the ultimate challenge for Măgura may be seeing and realising its own potential. If our intervention fostered this self-belief, in any way, then it can be judged to have been a success."



Lost in
eternity



Lost in eternity

By Peter Biella & Iván Drufovka



PB: *Labyrinth* – that was my idea for the film – travel the path to the center... but there is no center. It would be about windows, routes, plum brandy. We didn't know the Romanian poet Blaga when we began, but the moment his poem was quoted on camera we knew we had the title of our film.

The Soul of the Village

Lucian Blaga

*Daughter, put your hands on my
knees.*

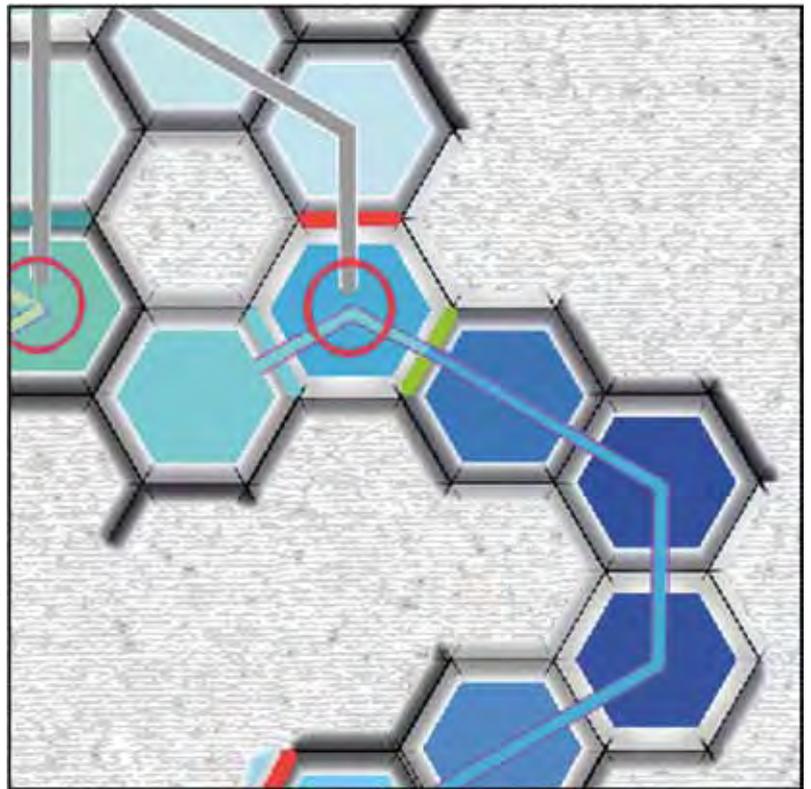
*I think eternity was born in the
village.*

*Every thought is more silent here,
and the heart beats more slowly,
as if it were not in your breast
but somewhere deep in the earth.*

*Here cure thirst for salvation,
and if your feet are bleeding
you sit on a hearth's clay apron.*

Look, it is evening.

*The soul of the village is fluttering by
like a shy smell of cut grass,
like a drop of smoke through
thatched eaves,
like the tumble of lambs over tall
tombs.*



Fragment of the shooting script for *Eternity was Born in the Village*

ID: September 18, 2008

–Hi, Iván. It's Peter? How are you?

–I'm fine...and yourself?

–I'm fine, thanks. So I have a question. Would you be interested in shooting a film in Romania?

It's about a village called Măgura. Near Bucharest.

–Yes, well, it sounds good... and what is the film about?

–Mm well beauty, poetic fences and animals.

–Beauty... poetry? That's nice. I mean, what's the story?

PB: Iván has been making programs for *The History Channel* and *Arts & Entertainment*: they say if you don't have stories and a message people won't watch. I have been making ethnographic films for other anthropologists. We are not quite so rigid.

ID: And I was also wondering – but I didn't say it to Peter out loud right away on the phone – like,

are we going to have characters to tell us something about themselves, or the country's history? Are we going to explore what people lived through under communism and twenty-four years of Ceaușescu's brutal dictatorship? Are we going to have a case study of a family and its history?

–No, Peter answers me. No story this time. Just images of the village. The images will guide the film; we'll follow them.

–Mm. Right, okay. When would we go? For how long? Who are we working for?

–... Summer 2009... 3 weeks... European Union. Douglass Bailey, Department chair at my university...

–Let me think about it. I'll call.





Heathrow Boom Pole Vortex

Of course I wanted to go. All the details were arranged. Like our other films, Peter would shoot and I do sound. We would co-weave, co-direct, co-edit with or without a message.

My uncertainty never exactly went away. No story to follow... no knowledge what the film was going to be about. Beauty and poetry, yes, but aren't those cultural abstractions, culture-specific abstractions? How are we going to make a film without a verbal narrative, without social conflicts to expose, with no on-camera expert to give us the answers to the human drama?... No narrative arc – no “Problem, Elaboration, Resolution”? Windows? Plum wine? “It's very Romanian”? Okay, all right.

Saturday, May 16, 2009, 9:30 AM, my plane lands at Heathrow Airport, London, United Kingdom. I started up through security carrying my sound gear and the Mac computer for editing the unknown film. At customs every cable, battery, and connector was meticulously inspected. The computer was turned on, the sound mixer was turned on. What is the equipment for? Why am I travelling to Romania? I answered all of their questions politely. I had had no questions, and I had had no trouble getting on the plane in Philadelphia. Just be patient. Running through my bag the officer finally found the microphone boom pole. She began to inspect it, and pulled it out, collapsed. Collapsed, it's about three feet long.

She had never seen a boom pole in her anti-terrorist training. With her permission, I took out the microphone, connected it to the front of the pole. Doing so, I explained that you extend it over your head so that you can reach the source of sound without getting the mike in the way of the camera. Then I showed her - I snapped it out about nine feet over her head.

At that instant two policemen dove on me - one yanked the pole out of my hands – the other held my arms. They thought it was a weapon -- (I was going to microphone the officer). Now there were four of them - a customs supervisor arrived. Still remaining sort of calm, I said that recording sound was my livelihood and that without my boom pole I would have to find a Romanian broomstick as a substitute!

PB: Iván and I have been making movies together since 1985. Our first one was in a Costa Rican rain forest, and we did buy a broomstick in Costa Rica then because we didn't have anything else. But life has been good and twenty-five years later we have been able to afford to buy the real thing.

ID: All calm again, the supervisor smiles persuasively and tells me that I cannot carry the boom inside the plane because it could be used as a weapon. One of the less sympathetic officers takes this as his cue and throws my (\$200) instrument into the trash. I must have flinched or made some kind of face because the supervisor took pity and proposed that if I wanted to I could go back into the terminal, get a carrying case of some kind for the boom, and have the airline store it in the baggage compartment along with everything else.

I decided not to argue – well, I couldn't argue since I was powerless. Strangely, though, they had made me feel like a criminal, a boom pole terrorist. How could anyone believe that my 28-ounce hollow tube was a weapon of mass destruction!. An officer escorted the boom – and me – to the airline booth where, without blinking an eye, they gave me a plastic bag to put it in. My fear of doing sound with a broom stick for the second time in my life faded as the bag slowly disappeared on its way to Romania, bumping down into the dimness of the airline terminal bowels.

PB: It's not that stories don't happen – there's one born every minute. This was one at Heathrow before we even got started! But how could I tell a story about Romania? What I know about Eastern Europe I learned mostly in fairy tales, including those in the *New York Times*. I could appreciate what I saw, be sensitive... artistic... about it, but my research is in East Africa. Had I ever met a Romanian? Yet, with a camera I can make good things out of fences and windows. Anyway, maybe 'beauty' isn't just a culture-specific abstraction, after all. It would be interesting to explore that.

ID: I sat down to wait and six hours later Peter arrived from San Francisco. We decided not to talk too much about the film. We let the three and half hour flight to Bucharest fly away in the drowsiness of the long day of travelling across continents. Images of the Ceaușescu regime wandered in my sleep and I wondered if we would be confronted by the echoes of its horrors in the landscape of the people's soul.



Măgura by day...labyrinth?

Landing at 11:35 pm, we cleared customs –boom pole intact. Our ride was late, no problem, but it eventually arrived with the archaeologist Pavel Mirea who had agreed to help us.

We arrived at the Măgura home of Florentina and Nicu Chelu about 2:00 am. They were very welcoming – especially Florentina – and after food and drink we deposited our gear, were shown the bedroom and our rather small bed, and wished goodnight, and we slept well.

Until a few moments later when the morning started at 5:00 am with the symphony of the roosters crowing to each other as if gossiping about my boom pole and the new day's plans. Crowing would be one of the relentless sounds throughout the weeks in the Teleorman River Valley, throughout the film, regardless of climate, position of sun or location. It was the national anthem.

From our first early morning in the village of Măgura, from Sunday to Sunday to Sunday to Sunday, we heard our hostess relentlessly circling outside from one end of her property to the other. Drawn in tow always was Petra, her mother-in-law, who came to be our friend. For hours, Florentina's hoe slap-chipped the new creases in the soil for each tomato seedling; then she had to call the



Florentina in charge

chickens, ducks and turkeys to be fed, hurry the husband, bawl out the dogs. All the living beings – plants, animals, humans, even filmmakers – awaited her word, needing to receive our orders of the day from her, expecting her to wake us from our dreams. It was as if without her none of us could ever be a part of the eternal scheduled landscape.

Our names joined the ranks of ducks and chickens, all of us a part of Florentina's daily cry: "Peter and Iván, breakfast is ready!" [*Peter și Iván micul dejun este gata!*] "Peter and Iván, lunch is ready!" [*Peter și Iván, masa de prânz este gata!*] "Peter and Iván, dinner is ready!" [*Peter și Iván, cina este gata!*] "Peter and Iván, do you want coffee?" [*Peter și Iván, vrei cafea?*] All very loud! And so on. Yet not even the volume could stop us from understanding her communication,



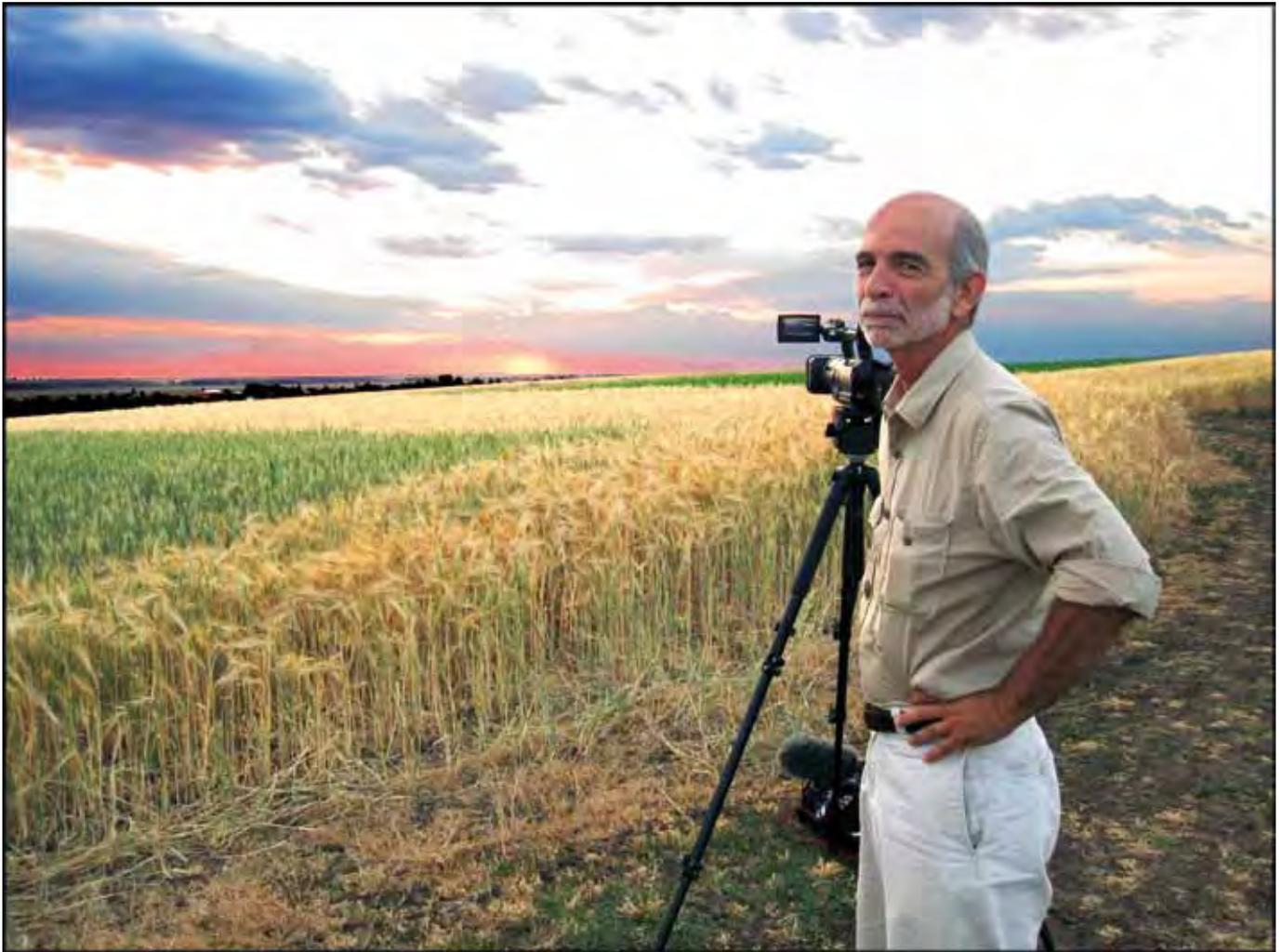
Ivan and Neighbours



Teleorman River Valley - Neolithic and Iron Age sites abound

not our ignorance of Romanian, not the fact that we were still full from the last gigantic meal, not even Florentina's complete disinterest in the fourteen hours of lovely footage we shot in her tomato garden, her home and her village. Her meals were delicious and plentiful, but the kitchen was a forbidden zone. I tried a dozen times to assist in the cooking, but as with every other space in her realm, there she insisted on total control. Nothing seemed ever to stop with Florentina, or her husband, or Petra, or the boy who drove us through the fields, the widow down the road with whom I sat.

First morning, breakfast – raw tomatoes, hard-boiled eggs, cucumbers, peppers, bread, cooked ham and coffee. We ate, then organized our space: computers and backup drives unpacked and plugged in. We decided to take the day off – at least to rest, and take a walk around.



Peter spending time with eternity

The village is a labyrinth of dirt roads, pathways, fences, fields. Houses of different shapes and colours, set at each side. Some of the village's inhabitants walked. A few moved by automobile and others navigated the roads in horse-drawn wagons.

We dawdled through the countryside, high sun frozen, surrounded by golden light of every hue. We saw the hills with green and summer wheat weaving stalks to the rhythm of the wind and song of the birds. An old man and son proudly driving their truck-tire carriage, transporting hay. We saw children running every direction, laughing. People of all ages walking toward the village store, which was just a few steps from our new home. At a distance labourers cutting hay and feeding more animals.

Forever animals everywhere. Shepherds calling to each one of them by name, buffalo or goose, walking nose-to-toe, all guiding their keepers, feeders, eternal beings. An old woman gathering her train of chicks. A gypsy-driven covered wagon, laden with wares. In these images and sounds – an instant of the landscape of the thread of our weaving of *Eternity* born in Măgura. A single space in time, grain of sand, embracing epochs of catastrophe without their horrors, those to remain hidden behind the faces and beneath the topsoil, the calamitous stories and messages of history that were not this time invited to the film.



Links, nodes and labyrinths in *Eternity was Born in the Village*

Tuesday, 08 February, 2011 16:28
[Show Details](#)

Re: Lost in Eternity, Take 2

Stephen Mills

To: Peter Biella, Ivan Drufovka

Cc: Douglass W Bailey

Dear Peter & Ivan,

Thank you again for your essay for the Magura project book, it makes a great contribution. We are now working on its layout in the book.

Having read it more thoroughly, there is a point I would like to discuss with you.

It concerns the part of your essay telling the story of the microphone boom incident at Heathrow. Apologies, I am undoubtedly missing something here, I appreciate the story-telling value but I am not sure how this is relevant to Magura and the project's work there. To help me with this, would you be kind enough to let me know a bit more on how it contributes and why it is important to include it? It is our intention that the book be very much focussed on Magura.

Hope that is OK? I look forward to discussing this further with you.

Best wishes
Steve

Dear Steve,

Ivan and Peter have read your email and we've agreed to write you a joint letter in reply.

Concerning the deletion / transformation of the section on the boom pole in Heathrow. Of course, this is the most curious part of the essay, and it did not emerge by accident. There are two parts to the reason why we both think it belongs there – first, because of the film's mild attack on "narrative theory" and the dependence on story in literature; and second, because of the *Eternity* film's serious interest in what might be called theological questions of eternity and infinity.

We fear that if you are not sympathetic to what we are saying, expanding on our ideas will not help, so we're going to keep this short.

The essay is playful, like most of the film. It contrasts *Eternity* with films made for *Arts & Entertainment* and *The History Channel*. These channels and regular TV films are obsessed with story, storyline, plot points, characters, three-act structures and all the other elements that make *Avatar* structurally almost identical to *Tootsie*. In such films, one develops a theme in which a character is presented with a crisis of his or her own design, tries to solve the crisis and in doing so develops a deeper crisis, and then resolves both in an unexpected and elegant way.

Stories are entrancing because they keep the audience safely ensconced in the plot while also guessing madly and being confounded and then satisfied when the original premise and problem persist transformed and are resolved in that same old beautiful way.

Eternity does not do this – it follows a vignette structure with occasionally reemerging faces. It only gives a sense, not a story, of a village. It flies in the face of expectation. As such it calls the animosity of some viewers and the praise of others.

The film and the essay do sustain one character, an appreciation of the labyrinthine mixtures of the past and present, the roadways, the cattle paths and the airline contrails. Our essay begins in the labyrinth of our script, then the labyrinth of Heathrow's terrorist-fearing vortex, the labyrinth of the Măgura city map and the labyrinth of the film. Thus Heathrow in the essay is a stand-in, a metaphor, a *mise-en-abysme* of all that the filmic labyrinth offers.

We might add that the boom pole story does also echo in a more standard narrative way with the entire essay – and the entire film. I refer to the fear of boom pole terrorism and the terror of the Ceaușescu regime. There is a Kafka like quality to the boom pole story that could not be unfamiliar to anyone who has lived a lifetime in Romania. And, though, as we say in the last line of the essay, that horror was not this time invited to the film – still its omni-presence could not be denied any more in Măgura than in dear old London.

This point is not overtly made in the essay, and, likewise, in the essay's labyrinthine tale about making the film we never arrive at the destination of the film making. The essay, like the film, teases, and gives vignettes and offers tastes. The essay pretends to begin a vast novel with the plot-line hook of terrorism in chapter 1, which then vanishes into air and turns out to have as little pertinence to anything as does the waddling of geese or the seemingly endless amount of time that it takes to boil an egg. These motifs are both plot-non-elements to which the film pays inordinate attention. (Note, too, that the boom pole does reemerge in the essay, re-voiced, like a labyrinth of sound– in the photo of Ivan).

Furthermore, the essay makes quite a point about the omnipresence and in a particular sense the irrelevance of stories. In honoring the task of narrative-bating undertaken by this film, we authors of the essay disavow telling the story of making a film that doesn't tell a story. Citing boom poles, we gaily acknowledge the presence of stories, their universality, but emphasize the fact that they can be and will be topsy-turvied here.

Let us turn briefly to the second point, the non-linear, eternity-baiting angle of our decision to include the boom-pole non-story. The film is based on the premise that "eternity is born in the village." As such, the film proposes that there is such a thing as eternity, that we mortals can know it pretty well by its traces in villages (perhaps also elsewhere) and that, as Blake says, it is found in an hour. But this hour (or 40 minutes in our case) is as thoroughly out of ordinary time and place as one might expect from anything as elusive and ephemeral as eternity. An essay about a film about a forever time-not-now deserves to begin with a tale of an anywhere place not-here. What after all is the meaning of infinity in a grain of sand except that every-which-part is always already the same – Heathrow or Măgura?

The essay is like reverse engineering the film's computer code. You take the film apart and see that it is about the non-place ever-time, with Iron Age (way back when) and Tuica (just right now), with socialists selling their wares (right up here) and customs officers scaring the bejesus out of us (way down there) yet still finally, as befits a democratic nation guided by law, letting it be possible.

Perhaps the reader is not ready to see what we're getting at, or simply thinks we have not got at it; perhaps the reader is not ready to attribute some kind of spiritual/theological motive to what appears to be a trivial digression about an over-zealous customs officer. But at least we have told you what we were trying to do, shown you the reason we chose a seemingly outrageously non-pertinent incident on which to hang our hats and hang our case for *Eternity*.

P and I

Sounds like
nothing



Sounds like nothing

By Simon Thorne





Here is a landscape where, if you use your eyes, the evidence of its transformation over time is not difficult to see. But what if you use your ears instead? If, instead of focussing on looking, you bring the same care and attention to your listening, then is it possible to hear those same continuities and disruptions? If I now assume a particular professional perspective, as an artist who deals in sound, then how is it possible to create any kind of connection between a prehistoric society, about whose aural culture we can say very little, and a marginal rural community in modern Europe? The sounding world occurs by virtue of our inclination. We hear what we are predisposed to listen to. As a composer what strategies of listening can I bring to bear that can make connections? The archaeology of artefacts is made possible by the endurance of objects. Because things tend to stay where I put them then if I am meticulous enough in my observation I can construct an entire worldview out of the rubbish that got left behind. If I listen carefully enough, can I say similar things about the sound world I find myself surrounded by?

The archaeology of aural culture is a matter for conjecture. It is perfectly plausible that the Neolithic people knew the sounds of flutes and drums. Going on the extant evidence of other forms of cultural expression it is impossible that they did not practice music. But to speculate what the music was is a matter of poetic interpretation that only serves to fuel our own romance with the archaic and the primitive. If music is a special case of human expression that occurs as a consequence of our sensitivity to sound, here it is too soon to ask what that music could be. By way of setting out the particular landscape that is in front

of me now, it is more appropriate to begin by asking how common auditory systems build a picture of the world around us and in what way an environment shapes its own sound world – in other words to notice how I am listening to the place where I am.



While sounds have duration, they do not in themselves endure. I listen to the wind rustling the leaves in the tree. I hear the herd of hooves trampling over dry grass. Even from a long way off I can hear the hammer and the blowtorch as the workers weld a new roof for the church. As the events unfold that bring them into being, so sounds arise and they disappear. Here, unless I adopt

a conscious mode of abstract listening (which we composers are trained to do), whereby I hear sounds as a throng of purely acoustical sensations, I am inclined to register the auditory events that make up the acoustical world as the sounds of things. Together they make up the sonority of a landscape at a moment in time. More than that, sounds give voice to the landscape. By virtue of sounds occurring when things do things to things (the axe splits wood, the rain pelts the roof of the church), what there is to hear is a portrait in sound of the life of an environment. Taken as a field of listening, the auditory landscape



occurs as an immersive environment that surrounds me. This is distinct from the visual field which can only ever be that which I see in front of me. Inside of this field some sounds occur as highly localised and specific - the sound of my own footfall as I amble along the dirt track. Others - like the aeroplane that pervades the audible spectrum long after the object itself has disappeared over the visible horizon - occupy a vast field of dispersal. Nevertheless, like the visual field, the auditory field has a boundary. Even the sound of the aeroplane will eventually disappear over the auditory horizon. The question is what lies beyond? The common answer is silence.

The auditory field that I find myself immersed in as I write is in a constant state of fluctuation at the limits of this horizon. This is for two reasons. Firstly, there is a certain threshold of audibility that a sound must cross for me to be able to register it. Here the question of distance is critical. As I am sitting in front of my computer screen the impedance hum that suddenly seems to have afflicted the left channel of my multimedia set-up is enough to obliterate the police siren that is screaming down the road outside. But if I wander into the kitchen to make a cup of tea then the perspective is entirely altered. The police siren is still



with me, but the impedance hum has completely disappeared. There is a new hum which is the sound of the fridge motor. It should be clear by now that the environmental auditory field, unlike the field of physical objects to which it is correlated, is inherently unstable. Nevertheless I am perfectly able to calibrate my perceptual framework to this. Even with my eyes shut, I am readily able to navigate according to the aural dimensions of the occurring world.

However the horizontal limits of the auditory field are also calibrated to the inclination of my listening. For all that there is to listen to, as I write this now, I hear none of it. In the circumstances of my thinking what to say that has any consequence, silence acquires the contours of there being nothing to hear. As I write so I actively seek this out. Otherwise I cannot hear myself think. It is a personal thing. Others don't. They need the distraction of noise to encourage the verbal flow. The cocktail party effect (Augoyard & Torgue 2006, 28) describes the human capacity to apply highly focussed listening attention to a narrow band of the auditory field by disregarding irrelevant information coming from the surroundings. In that it specifically refers to our apprehension of speech, we are perfectly able to conduct a conversation in an otherwise prohibitively noisy environment. But the tactic would seem to be more pervasive. Not only do we tend for the most part to disregard the



throng of acoustic sensations that make up our listening in favour of a direct causal correlation (as in *the sound of...*), we are highly effective at screening out unwanted noise, even to the extent that we heard nothing at all. What we hear serves to monitor the kind of listening intention that we bring to the world at any given moment. So is it the case that the sound of silence and the sound of nothing at all are one and the same thing?

A sound occurs as the irruption of an event. A sounding landscape is made up of a contrapuntal web of events that can be expressed as an evolving network of durations. To capture this is to record a map in time. Sounds arise, disappear, and are replaced. Certain sounds have a quality that endures. The babbling stream is ubiquitous. Other sounds become obsolete. In Europe at the onset of the twenty first century the sound of the horse and cart is already picturesque. According to this logic, the past is intrinsically silent. So too is the majority of any given environment at any given moment. The act of recording may serve as a tool of preservation. But it is important to recognise that already, from the outset, this occurs as an act of interpretation. Unlike the physical site report which, for the reasons outlined above, can lay claim to a certain objective neutrality, sound recording assumes a point of orientation which is a position of listening. While the site report refers to a terrain that enjoys a certain physical stability, the sound recording frames a moment in time that vanishes as soon as the recorder is switched off. In this respect, what got recorded is entirely arbitrary, indeterminate flow. But the replay button now allows access to a chunk of auditory history that can be repeated much

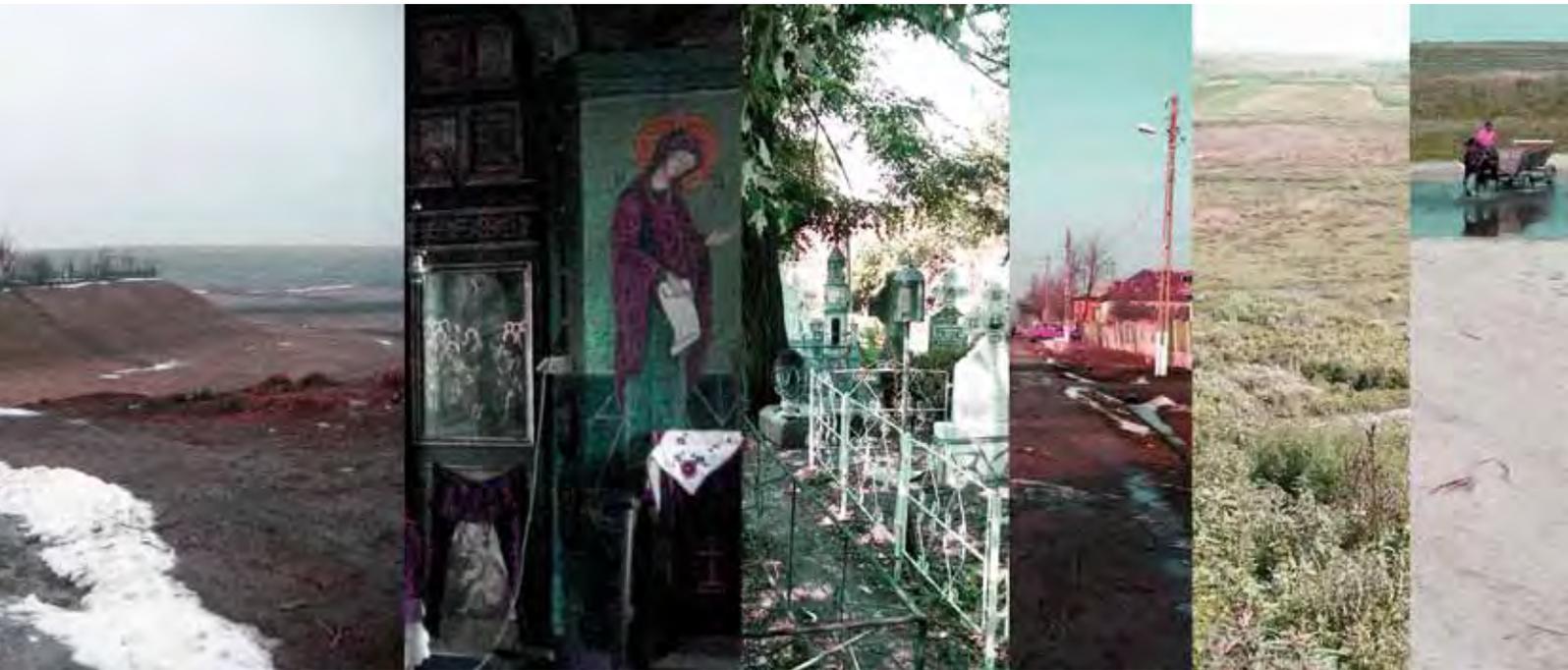
like any other musical composition. The sense of what got recorded emerges after repeated listenings, as our ears become attuned to the unfolding narrative of nothing in particular (Brian Eno speaks of this as a deliberate tactic of training in aesthetic perception, in Toop 1995, 129). Uncoupled from its visual location, what kind of sense can we make of the background noise of life carrying on?

This is a question of rhythms and speeds. Sounds have duration. The agglomeration of durations gives rise to rhythms inside of which it is possible to perceive repetitions, patterns, cycles and tempos. Rhythms acquire qualities, but only in relation to other rhythms. If I am willing to listen carefully then out of a chaotic, arrhythmic stream of background noise I can begin to distinguish and discriminate. The mechanism that allows for the perception of this is rooted in the function of memory. It is the stuff of music. But in the absence of any conventional musical material to attend to, what qualities does a musical listening to the sound of nothing in particular begin to reveal? What new knowledge is to be gained by considering the rhythms of everyday life as somehow musically expressive? Put differently, is it possible to discern a relationship between musical time and lived time?



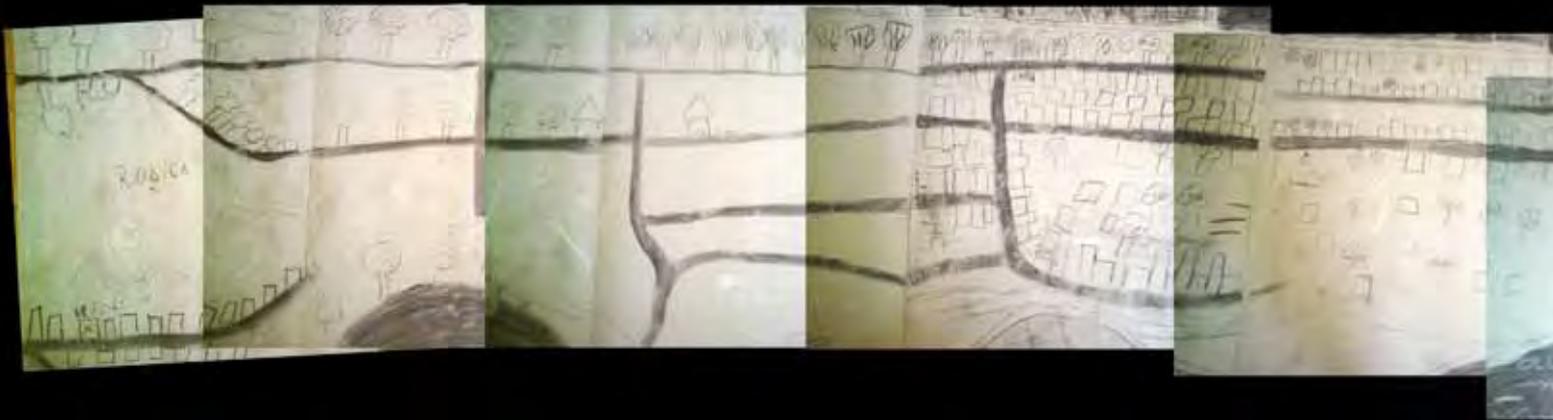
Lefebvre states:

Centuries were required for musical time to discern itself from verbal time; which is to say for musicians and music to give themselves proper and specific rhythms, distinct from spoken rhythms, gestures (and the written) (Lefebvre 2004, 61).



This presupposes a codified aesthetic domain that allows for music (along with all other art forms) as a special case. But one could equally paraphrase and invert Lefebvre's statement. There is a case to be made that millennia were required for verbal time to discern itself from musical time: which is to say for humankind to invent for itself the spoken rhythms, gestures and writing proper and specific to representation, and distinct from the inflections and measures of immediate physical expression. Here to talk of a musical landscape ceases to have anything to do with historical codes of aesthetic representation. It is to talk of the dimensions of sensuous perception as they are given in an immediate apprehension of sound. This creates the appropriate space for subsequent questions to emerge that relate specifically to aesthetic design. This is the starting point for my work as a composer that begins to engage with the lived continuity that is Măgura.

The outcome of residency in Măgura in July 2010 resulted in three projects. A sound map of Măgura was drawn in collaboration with the children of the village school. Another sound map was made from audio recordings of the landscape. Audio recordings were also made of specific silent spaces. So what got done?



Drawing Măgura: a sound map

What does it mean to make a map? What does a map record? What does a map not record? If you want to make a map of Măgura for the rest of the world to see then what do you want to show them? If you want to show them the trees, then how can you do this accurately? How can you show the trees in summer and the trees in winter? Can you create a map that records the passing of the seasons? If this is to be a map of sounds then how can you draw them? How do you represent the sound of a goose to a deaf person? What are its qualities? Where on the map should it be placed?

Looking at an already existing map of Măgura, two lines stand out. There is the dead straight line of the main street, and there are the tightly convoluted meandering curves of the Clanișsa river. These are visual continuities that can anchor a coherent collective effort. If maps tend to survey the landscape from above then it seems appropriate to be doing this drawing on the floor. We will negotiate the space accordingly. If what we produce through our teamwork is to be more than a photographic record then it becomes a





question of texture and of time. Charcoal and chalk are unstable media that demand an expressive approach to the drawing of lines. The instruction is to be meticulous. This is inherently impossible. What comes to be embedded in the map is the gestures of its authors. The outcome is a collective drawing – a composition that can equally be considered as a notation. Here the map has the potential to be read as a score. It remains to be discovered what kind of music could be made from it.

Recording Măgura: a sound map

If the process of drawing Măgura has the intention to create a geographical map of sounds, then the process of audio recording is with the intention of creating an equivalent geography in sound. In cinematic terms what got recorded is wild track atmosphere. But without the audio-visual coupling that turns this into the backdrop that lends authenticity of location to foregrounded narratives, what there is to listen to has the status of pure background. From this as yet undifferentiated perspective what is the nature of the sonic landscape that is distinctive? What are its particular rhythms and qualities? If this is to be considered as music, then what kind of music is it?



Recording was done by walking the landscape: a process of eavesdropping that was a deliberate tactic of peripheral listening on the edge of the scene. Sound walks repeated at different times of day produce different landscapes. Slowly the rhythms of the environment begin to reveal themselves. The rhythm of the goatherds bringing their flocks down to water has the regularity of clock time. The regularity of thunderstorms as they accumulate in the afternoon is a different meteorological time. On the days when there is no thunderstorm there is a seamless transformation between the calling of crickets and cicadas that signals the transition from afternoon into evening.

The rhythms have qualities but only in relation to other rhythms. So careful listening shows the landscape to have a particular tempo. The far side of the valley has a slowness that is measured out by the sporadic buzzing of insects and passing aeroplanes. At prescribed times the barking of dogs signals the wandering of flocks and herds that picks up speed as the flocks wander closer to water.



The river is a line of demarcation. Its sound is an endlessly unfolding continuity. Listening to the fluctuations of its density becomes a monitor of the state of the weather that has already been. It is a record of the past as it flows into the present. At the same time it is an attractor to all the flocks, herds and swarms that are teeming around it. Depending on the time of day there is much competition for what it offers.

The main street records a passage from the feral to the domestic. Human voices gain the upper hand, subduing (as in causing to be quiet) and containing the



roaming flow of animals and birds. At the same time the interplay of speeds is self-evident in the counterpoint of modes of transport. Momentarily the Doppler shift of passing cars masks and obliterates the sound of anything else. By contrast, the sound of a horse drawn cart retains a certain transparency. We are still able to listen to it, even before it passes over the auditory horizon at the brow of the hill.

Documenting silence: the resonance of empty spaces

Drawing and recording the aural environment of Măgura has to do with capturing the sounds of nothing in particular – the sounds of everyday life as they occur in a natural landscape. But what if I now turn my attention to interior spaces and record the sound of what is, to all intents and purposes, silence. To varying degrees, enclosed spaces display the property of resonance. This can be understood as a system of standing waves that give rise to a resonant frequency. The room has a characteristic frequency that becomes excited and starts to reverberate when another frequency, that is equal or almost equal to the characteristic frequency of the system, is introduced into the system. So by recording the room and subsequently playing the recording back into the room what is built up over time is a feedback process that is exactly calibrated to the dimensions of the system. The room begins to sing in its own voice.

Along the way, minute perturbations of the system (as for example the almost inaudible sound of the rustle of wind in the trees outside a church, or the subfrequency oscillations that are the barely perceptible residue of a thunderstorm) become recorded into the system. Subsequent recordings amplify the perturbations in a way that further destabilises the system. It is as if, left to its own devices, a room generates its own mute music. We can only listen in wonder in anticipation of what this will be.







A scientific experimental method involves a degree of manipulation of physical reality. By way of verifying a hypothesis, scientific experiment involves a staging of reality in such a way that it conforms as closely as possible to a theoretical description (Prigogine and Stengers 1984, 41). Aesthetic experiment is of a different order. John Cage describes the idea of an experimental music as “an act the outcome of which is unknown” (Cage 1955, 13). This is to advocate the case for an experimentalism that is not predicated on success or otherwise in the demonstration of a hypothesis. But in postulating a process that is indeterminate in respect of its outcome, then according to what criteria can we judge something to have occurred. As Cage asks: what has been determined?

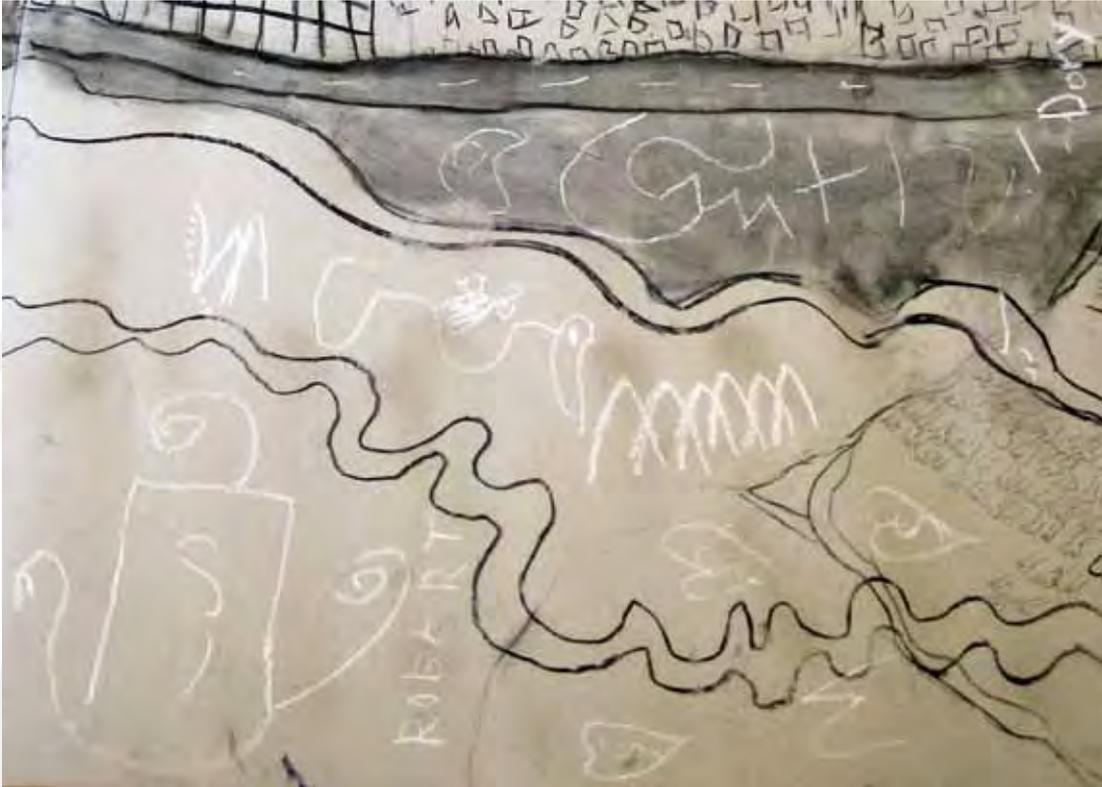
In the case of recording the intrinsic resonant properties of empty spaces and calling it music then the outcome is latent within the architecture of the space. The process of recording serves as a tool of revelation. So what is revealed? What there is to listen to is a sonority that evolves over time. Its duration is the consequence of successive unfolding iterations that reveal the latent properties of an enduring physical space. To call this music is to invite a kind of listening attention whereby it is given to the listener to invent appropriate structures of attention within the frame of what he or she is willing to accept music to be. There is a process of documentation in play but, much like a series of Chinese boxes, what is being documented is the documentary process itself. At this point the question as to whether the environmental context that is the source and origin of the recording is intrinsic in generating that listening becomes a topic for debate. If there is any aesthetic worth in the proposed listening experience then am I listening for the *sound of...* or am I simply listening to sound?

In the case of drawing and recording sounds as they arise within a landscape, what is preserved is indeterminate according to the indeterminate nature of life as it unfolds. What sense I bring to the situation is after the event and here there is an aspect of authorial prescription that comes into play. By inviting a group of children to construct a large floor drawing over a sequence of sheets of paper what emerges is an artwork which, while it sets out to document a physical location with some degree of accuracy, is nevertheless the outcome of a collective act of expression. It is exhibited as such. If this is an invitation to music then it is by way of metaphor: to hear the music in a landscape by way of reading.

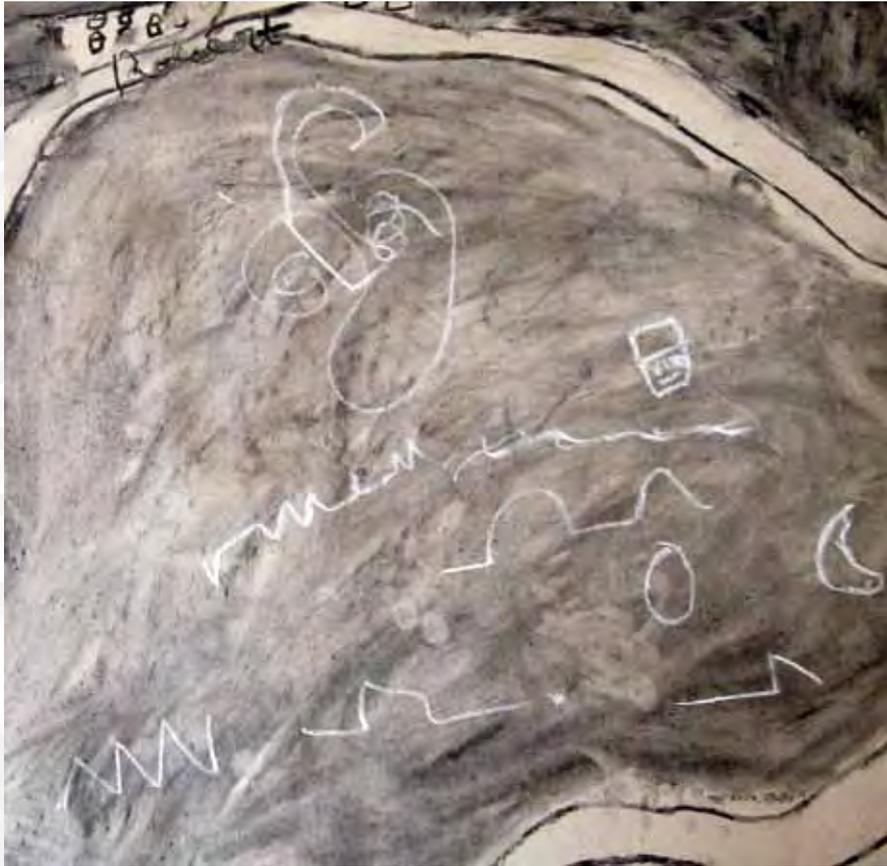
In constructing an audio portrait of the same landscape, the process is one of radiophonic montage. So in this case there are two narrative considerations. As it is created, the Măgura village soundscape unfolds as a physical journey from the far side of the Clanița valley to the village of Măgura. It also unfolds as a passage in time from dawn until dusk. Here the invitation to listen



musically plays itself out along the various kinds of patternings that can be discerned in the oscillation between listening to the *sound of...* and the intrinsic qualities of the sounds in themselves. Moreover the work is designed to be heard in the first instance as an audio component within a museum exhibition. So it is constructed with a particular ear for its acoustic transparency. The intention is that it be listened through, much like looking through a window, creating a counterpoint with the already occurring environmental sound of the museum space.



Here the project returns to the primary archaeological context that was its point of departure, but now framed in relation to a prospective audience. What contribution can listening to the present make to our understanding of the past? Close observation of the sound of nothing has the effect of throwing attention back onto the act of listening itself. When nothing in particular is given to us to listen to, then we have the choice as listeners to be interested and to find satisfaction in our own disinterested listening, or not. When this is adopted as a compositional principle, the task ceases to



be one of presenting an interpretation but of creating a context wherein the listener is satisfied to dwell within a field of listening. The aspiration is that what has been presented occurs as an opportunity to expand the field of listening in a way that gives voice to the past by virtue of our being in relation to it. If we wish to hear that voice, then we must first be willing to interrogate our habitual deafness to our surroundings.

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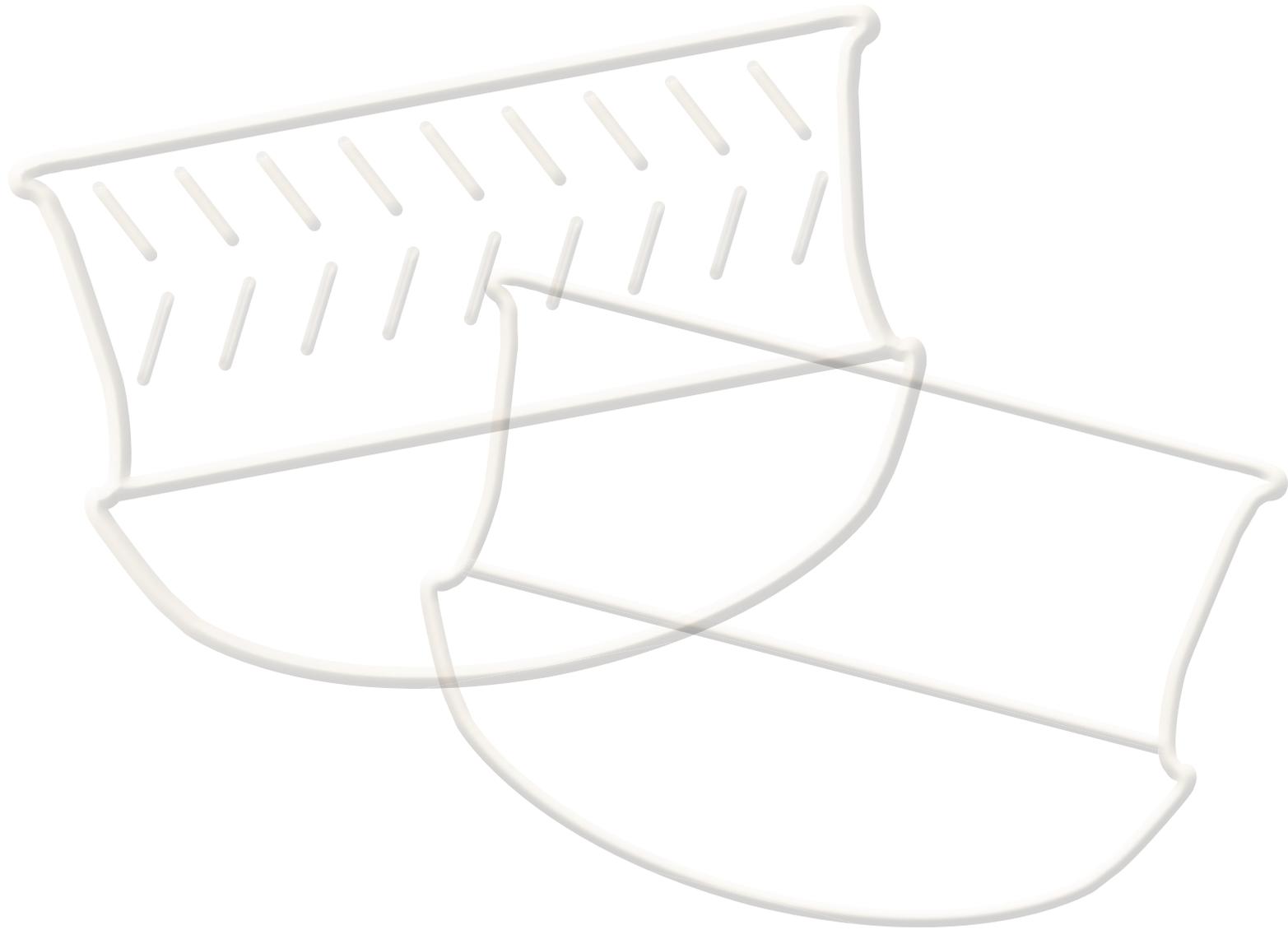
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My beautiful
pot



Why is my pot more
beautiful than yours?

By Cătălina Dănilă



The earth is power; it conveys mass, concentration, weight, stability, force, calm, fertility, rebirth. The piece of clay, fresh and generous, held in the hand gives us all its energy to build a world of our own, to receive ideas, to nourish ourselves and to resist. It's like a counterpoint when we walk, listening tenaciously to the law of gravity that is impressed upon us. It propagates the energy that we consume for living, breathing and thinking.

It is the element from which we all are born and where we will all return. Still, the earth would not be like this without water, air, sun and fire. It would not bear life, it would not represent anymore the motherly environment that nourishes and vivifies everything. It is the element that reminds us pregnantly of our childhood. The earth attracts us like the seed that tries to penetrate it, and take from it all that it needs to germinate and to reach the light and warmth of the sun. The earth gives us safety and certitude; everything that it is and that it will be.



It exists, we see it, we touch it, we smell it and we hear it's 'voice' calling for us to mould it into shapes – we are a group of ceramicists – children, artists and archaeologists. We metamorphose one into the other; the children become little artist-archaeologists, and for us adults, childhood transposes us into universal fools of ingenuity. The children are truly special. We begin from lines and dots to decipher together the shapes and colours that will guide us to successfully finishing our clay pots.

Alongside the archaeologists Meli, Steve and Laurence – Alexandra, Dana, Narcis, Roxana and Marius are only a few names of the 17 children that have joined. They are inquisitive and thirsty for knowledge. Students of grades 5-8 from the village of Măgura, Teleorman County, immerse their small and delicate hands into the moist and fresh clay during the workshop *The transformation of clay: shaping, decorating and firing of pots*. I see them working with feverish energy, their impatience driving them ahead, and us adults always circulating around them, making efforts to keep up with them. For each pot that their hands mould, they put in an immense quantity of work, starting with a story that they aren't sure of, and finishing with the materialisation of their thoughts that







miraculously shape up, receiving contour and colour. Sneaking peeks at their neighbours from time to time, and wondering constantly which pot is better? The clay, moulded with passion, takes on the most unexpected of shapes.

Small or large, the clay that we are playing with remains our friend forever. With every piece lifted, polished and caressed countless times to extract the essence that it represents, it reveals to us the secrets of long lost worlds, worlds only seemingly departed, waiting for the archaeologists to wake them from their sleep so they can reveal their beauty again.

The earth grows from inside, its surface washes away, it becomes young and then old. So the thousand-year-old ceramics tell us about creation, love, inner nutriment and death, and, in the same way as our work today, they connect our souls with the ancient ones.

For each and every one of us, from the uncertainty and drowsiness at the beginning, to each piece of clay shaped and lifted to the sky, we are transformed with the confidence and certitude that our pot will be the best of the best. Even though we are exhausted from work and emotions, a sense of inner joy fills our hearts at the end of the day when, after we have embellished them with paint and decor, we admire our little pieces of clay transformed from Cinderellas into princesses.





But the surprise of the day remains the clay tablets into which everyone impressed their hands and where our fingerprints remain forever. The tablets, together with the pots of clay, will finally meet the flames that will enable them to endure.

Our thoughts take flight and fix themselves onto the day when our little creations will emerge from the oven. Only a day separates us, a day perfect for the clay to release its moisture and prepare itself to be fired.

And the time finally comes and two huge ovens appear in the form of big pits with ventilation openings. Near them dozens of little eyes look carefully at everything, from the immersion of the pots to their extraction, and I remember a story that I will tell you now briefly, that of the talking pot:

'...and one night the pot whispered into my ear "You can't understand. I wasn't a pot from the beginning. Once I was a lump of red clay." The master took me and rolled me, beat me hard, battered me repeatedly, and I cried "Don't do this! I don't like it! Leave me alone", but he just smiled and said to me gently "Not yet." Then ah, I was placed on a plate and moulded, moulded and moulded some more. "Stop! I am getting dizzy! I will be sick!" I cried. But the master just shook his head and said quietly "Not yet." He battered me again and hit me and shaped me until I acquired the shape that he wanted. Then a well-deserved break gave me the impression that it was over. But he took me again, he brushed and coloured me everywhere, the smells were horrible. I thought I would suffocate. "Oh, please stop it, stop it" I cried. He just shook his head and said "Not yet." And he put me into the oven. I have never sensed such heat. I cried, I knocked and I kicked the door. "Help! Take me out of here!" I could see him through an opening and I could read his lips when he was shaking his head from one side to the other "Not yet."



I begged him. I insisted, I yelled, I cried, I was sure that I would not escape this time. I was ready to give up. Then the door opened and he took me out and placed me on a shelf, where I cooled, and I waited asking myself what is he going to do to me now? Then he took me and polished me with wax, lots and lots of wax until I got tired, but an hour later he gave me a mirror and he told me "Look at yourself." And I looked. That is not me, that can't be me. It's beautiful. I am beautiful! I am magnificent! I am divine!

He told me gently "I want you to remember, I know that it hurt when you were rolled, battered, hit, spun, but if I had left you alone you would have dried away. I know that you were dizzy when I moulded you, but if I had stopped you would have crumbled and ripped yourself into pieces. I know that the smells weren't good for you, that I brushed and coloured you all over, but if I hadn't done this you would have never truly hardened. You wouldn't have gained the shines in







your life. If I hadn't put you in the oven, even when I knew that it was hurting and very hot and unpleasant, you would have cracked; you wouldn't have survived too long because that fortification wouldn't have lasted. Now you are ready to go out into the world. Now you are what I had in my mind when I first started working with you." '

This old story, from across time, made me think that, just as in our time, people 4, 5 or 6 thousand years ago were experiencing the same transformation and evolution. And like all of us, each child moulded his or her piece of clay; each made his or her pot. In time, each and every one is 'moulded' becoming beautiful, magnificent, or even divine, aspiring to be the best.





For pits' sake



For pits' sake

By Cătălina Dănilă & Steve Mills



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Two pits like two red burning devil eyes, that seem to look inside our souls loom upon the hard-packed ground of the school yard, and for their sake we stay until late into the night, leaving our thoughts to wander in the heat emanating from the glowing coals. Thoughts about history, the Neolithic, ovens, children and ceramics. Thoughts about a small group of people gathered from all over the world so as to be able to rediscover a long-lost history. Tiredness slowly creeps in and then calm engulfs us all. All vision seems to be focused inside the ovens and the fire breaks down the last remaining drop of day time energy.

I alone circle around them like a gondolier, rowing with a long stick in the red flaming embers. Words are lost in the heat of the fire. It burns and burns for hours the clay moulded by us during the day. I lay alongside them pieces of wood as an offering. I am devoured. Again and again so that the embers can grow and the two dragon eyes gain in strength. The clay pots submerged in the red steaming lava crackle slowly and tunelessly in the night. They are the atoms caught in the dance of transformation, step by step, from alpha to omega.



I wonder if morning will catch us and the memory of the past day will loom over me. I extract from it fragments of an incredible day, a tumultuous day, full of children. Day started with excitement and expectations. For the sake of the ovens we get up and dig deep, to be able to rebuild maybe the simplest model ever created, a hole. In fact, we get greedy and we dig two so that the pots can get enough air to breath. Being the magicians that we are, we use our powers to give them oxygen to breath underground through three long and thin canals that reach the surface. Then we give them our clay pots to hold and to cherish. The sparkle lights up and becomes a roaring flame and everything becomes distorted. The transformation begins with fire and it's going to take some time.







Fire, our friend, thought of and placed wisely in the shape of an oven lives its life modelling others. It conferred upon people a different meaning. It gave people a philosophy of life and a new purpose to humanity. Over time it granted us our daily bread and heat and it enriched the clay giving it a new found beauty.

Ovens, from their primarily pit-like shapes to the more refined types we know today, make more and more miracles come to life.



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There is nothing simple about a pit.

Despite being the best part of a year in the planning, having the collaboration of a team of archaeologists, school teachers, technicians and artists, and with good weather (for most of the day), modern tools, and plentiful food and drink, there was nothing simple about it at all. It was hard physical work, emotionally charged, there were moments of despair, uncertainty, disagreement and frustration; it was exhausting. That said it was ultimately incredibly rewarding for all involved. It's amazing how much sociality can be generated from the simplest of interventions into the ground: pits.



Surely it's just a case of digging a hole in the ground isn't it? You would think so. After six years of excavating early Neolithic pit features at Teleor 003, just outside the village, you would think we would be reasonably prepared and know what to expect. In addition, in 2004, Loe and Bram, two of our ceramic specialists, had successfully fired pots in a pit in an experiment by the banks of the Clanița River. It all seemed quite straight forward and simple then. So, it's not as if we did not have any experience with this kind of thing. But this event, this intervention, was on a grander scale and on public display within the school grounds. This time the village was looking on. With all the flyers and posters advertising the event in the previous weeks, and the local press now covering our workshops, we really had to get this right. Oh, how we hoped we would get this right and that the weather would be on our side.

So the inspiration for this pit event? Well, for some of us archaeologists, it was born from thinking about Teleor 003 and the early Neolithic, following so many discussions on site and in the museum. What are all these pits about? So much was invested in pits time and again, over hundreds of years, how do we get our heads around that? Then there were the summer solstice parties in Cardiff 2008-10, with a fire-pit; we made a movie, a pit-story. So maybe this event could take it further? What is it actually like to plan, dig, use, discard, and remember a pit? What impact does a pit have physically, emotionally, socially, temporally, spatially and in memory? Of course we are not Neolithic, and the answers we crave will not come from such an event, but it may make us think in new ways, make pits more tangible, more alive.

Before the pits there was the making of the clay objects to be fired, but you know about that already.



For just two small pits, two small holes in the ground, there ended up being far more planning and people involved than we had envisioned. Just the planning and supervision involved the following: one museum director, one school director, at least six school teachers, three school technicians, one village mayor, one supplier of clay lining, one supplier of wood, two museum drivers, one ceramic artist and at least six archaeologists. Then the participants: 30+ school children, numerous children's parents and guests, and the other five members of our team of artists and archaeologists. And then the materials: two hire cars, one van of wood, many bags of clay lining, many digging tools, pit-ventilation materials, two barbeques, several tables, many chairs, rope fencing, a music system, and a lot of food and drink. Not sure who was in charge of the weather, but, for most of the day, whoever that was did a good job.



There were the logistics of moving wood, of organising people, of moving delicate ceramics, and, of course, of imposing suitable measures for health and safety purposes (probably not something high on the Neolithic agenda).

There were misunderstandings on the day on the procedure for constructing the pits. This resulted in tension, and some heated discussion. There were inevitable time delays; everything was running late, when will it be ready? Moments of frustration. It's all getting too complicated; we don't even know if this ventilation system was ever used, will it ever work? All these changes, transformations, are intervening in our original idea.

We'll go and dig our own pit then, and do it our way. Well we started, but we didn't get very far: ground too hard, sun too hot, the wrong tools. Ok, provided it's a truly a team effort, let's go back to the other pits and lend a hand. Ultimately, and thankfully, a compromise.



Such a sense of relief when, finally, we added the pots and the fires were lit. Of course, no sooner was everything up and running, the weather turned, an absolute downpour, a meteorological intervention. But it did not last long. When the rain stopped, the feast began, with eating, drinking, singing, and dancing. And later that evening, after the children had left and many others had been ferried home, some of us stayed late into the night watching and tending our pits, drinking beer.

The next day, so hot, too hot, rope off an area, keep the children out of harms' way. Painful, smoky, dusty, burning – I hope this has worked. Anticipation, suspense, what will come out? I hope for the children's sake at least some pots have survived. I can see them... It seems to have worked, relief! Such relief.







Just a hole in the ground?

Our pits inspired an intervention into media. We now have thousands of photographs and many hours of video and audio recordings that document the event, press releases that report on the event, and the posters and flyers that advertised the event. Not sure what we will do with all these media, but some of them have been used in exhibitions at the museum, in project books, a project DVD and on the project website. The rest, well, we will keep them, one day they will come in useful (just like all those other countless digital photographs). Like the pottery born of the event and now on display at the museum, the other media are something we were able to take away with us, we can re-visit and manipulate them and we can use them to remember and re-think our pits. But the ultimate media were the pits themselves; they mediated ideas and they provided an intervention into communication. Such a wide range of modes of communication became possible by digging those pits; we are still exploring those communication possibilities now.



And so from the pits as media were born other media. Remediation: how a form of media draws upon, emerges from and transforms an earlier form of media. Stone and wooden tools refer back to the human body; clay back to wood and stone; metal back to stone; drawing back to carving; photographs back to drawing; video back to photographs. All our media refer back to our pits and all our pits refer back to Neolithic pits and they refer back to... So, it would seem that not much has changed, only the media.

Metal to dig, wood to burn, fuel to light, barbeques to cook, tables, plates and cups to present, display and consume, gloves to extract. The transformation of clay and an intervention into technology and materials, in so many ways have our pits permeated our lives in these last few days. And there's more...

The transformation of energy. During the course of our workshop our pits ignited potential and kinetic energies of various kinds. Those energies were transformed, enjoyed, marvelled at, feared, and endured. Mental energy expended in the planning, organisation and supervision of the event. Physical human energy expended in the digging of the pits, the building of the fires, the placing of the pottery, the lighting and tending of the fire, the removal of the pottery after firing, the back-filling of the pits. The fire itself, a physical energy transforming wood, charcoal, cardboard and paper into heat. The heat from the fire then transforming the physical chemistry of the pottery. And through a feast, we replenished, recharged, ourselves as we watched the flames dance before us.





Digging down to build up, transforming and manipulating gravity and verticality. To build our pits we dig down, with gravity on our side. Using shovels we raise up the soil (spoil?), against gravity. Within the pits we build up the wood for the fire, against gravity. Once alight, the flames and smoke rise, against gravity. With time, the contents of the fire gradually die down, with gravity. Finally, with our help, the pottery rises up from the pits, against gravity. Gravity and verticality, there is so much about pits that enable us to experience and explore these concepts, these forces.



So our two pits were interventions into the museum, the school, the village, into ground, media, technology, energy, verticality and gravity, and then finally into memory. Once you know about them, they don't go away. Even when back-filled, buried and the surface ground used for something else, they don't go away. Even if you have no real interest in them, you don't understand them, they don't go away. In fact we did bury our pits, we even had a ceremony, and they are in the burial ground of the schoolyard, where many other things are left, lost or retired. You can bury a pit in the same way that you can bury a person, an animal, a tool, a gift or an offering. And they don't go away. Our pits are gifts to ourselves and to Măgura. They could be excavated in the future; we know they are there and the whole process could start again...



Many people got many different things from our pit event; many others probably got very little, if anything, from it. For some it was engaging, educating and exciting, for others irrelevant, inane or perhaps irritating. I doubt there can be a consensus. I doubt there is any need for a consensus. No size fits all pits.

For some of us, having now intervened into pitting, the event has transformed our ideas about pits. Pits encourage doing, action, verbs, all those words that end in 'ing'; digging, building, placing, lighting, watching, tending, eating, drinking, singing, dancing, shouting, arguing, burning, removing, rejoicing, backfilling, exhibiting, writing, reading, remediating, remembering. The simplest of monuments can articulate such a complex interplay of social actions and relations. There is so much more to think about now that we have intervened.









I am almost certainly thinking about this too much, but I do it for pits' sake.

Just a hole in the ground? Certainly, but there is nothing simple about a pit.







Tree of hands



The tree of hands

By Cătălina Dănilă



I love trees. I love them and I will love them forever. Maybe it's because their lives are similar to ours. We grow from seed, we rise to the sky, we bear, in turn we shed our seed and we die. I think that each and every one of us has been a tree in another life, there is a resemblance. Our fingerprints are like those of the trees, personal and circular, changing shape and size from one year to another. Through time people and trees have been linked not only in psychology, but also in philosophy, religion and other sciences.

All of us together, we grow and develop inner powers, feeding on the nature that surrounds us, on plants, herbs, flowers and trees. Life is balanced. The Taoist philosophy tells us that trees are the most spiritually developed plants: they are constantly meditating, the subtle energy being their natural language. When our capacity of understanding this language grows, we can start our relationship with them. It's a relationship of mutual benefits which deserves to be cultivated. Researchers in the field of philosophy have reached the conclusion that trees are not only an actual lung of the earth, but also a source of influence on the human psychological balance. On one side this is because of the beautiful spectacle that they present and on the other side this is due to the positive energy that they generate.

In India, over five to six decades ago, a miraculous phenomenon was taking place. At each strike of the bell from the Faridpur temple, a glorious tree was bowing its branches to the ground in a prayer like ritual. Now only its forehead silhouetted against the sky reminds us of those mythical times. The Romanian poet Nichita Stănescu said that ... *“he hasn't got many friends, instead he has without number, one of them being the tree GICĂ”* (Stănescu 1985). It was such a great love...



IDENTITĂȚI ÎN LUT: COPACUL MĂINILOR

Workshop coordonat de Cătălina Dănilă
cu participarea Școlii de Arte și Meserii Măgura

IDENTITY IN CLAY: THE TREE OF HANDS

Workshop coordinated by Cătălina Dănilă
with the participation of Școala de Arte și Meserii Măgura

In the same context, from the workshop *The transformation of clay: shaping, decorating and firing of pots*, with the participation of the Măgura School of Arts and Crafts, was born the workshop *Identity in clay: the tree of hands*, where together children, artists and archaeologists worked to transform an abstract concept into tangible objects.





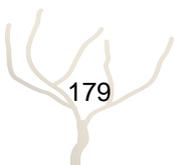




The fruits of the tree of hands are our palms. We created them and we deposited them together on its branches, investing the tree with our personalities, with the stories that we have lived, we live and we will live, with our past, our present and our future. With love we have pressed our hands into the soft clay discs and with great curiosity we looked upon the impression of our fingerprints, searching for lines, signs and symbols. We were making comparisons and we were exchanging opinions like some great sages of life. With trembling hearts we waited to take away from the flames the moment of our existence; it will endure for eternity.







Like in the autumn when the trees cover us with their leaves, in the same way we have covered this tree with the fruits of our labour. Throughout history the open hand was associated with the truth, good faith, friendship and courage. Our tree is rich. In it everything overlaps. From its branches hang the destinies of big people and little people that have met and known each other, created and evolved together, through the core of a few hot summer days.

And then they come to my mind, like a long lost echo, the verses of the poet Nichita *"I approach the stones and keep silent,/ I take the words and I draw them into the sea./ I whistle to the moon and I raise it and I transfigure it/ into a big love"* (Stănescu, N. 1964) ...like the prayer of a tree.

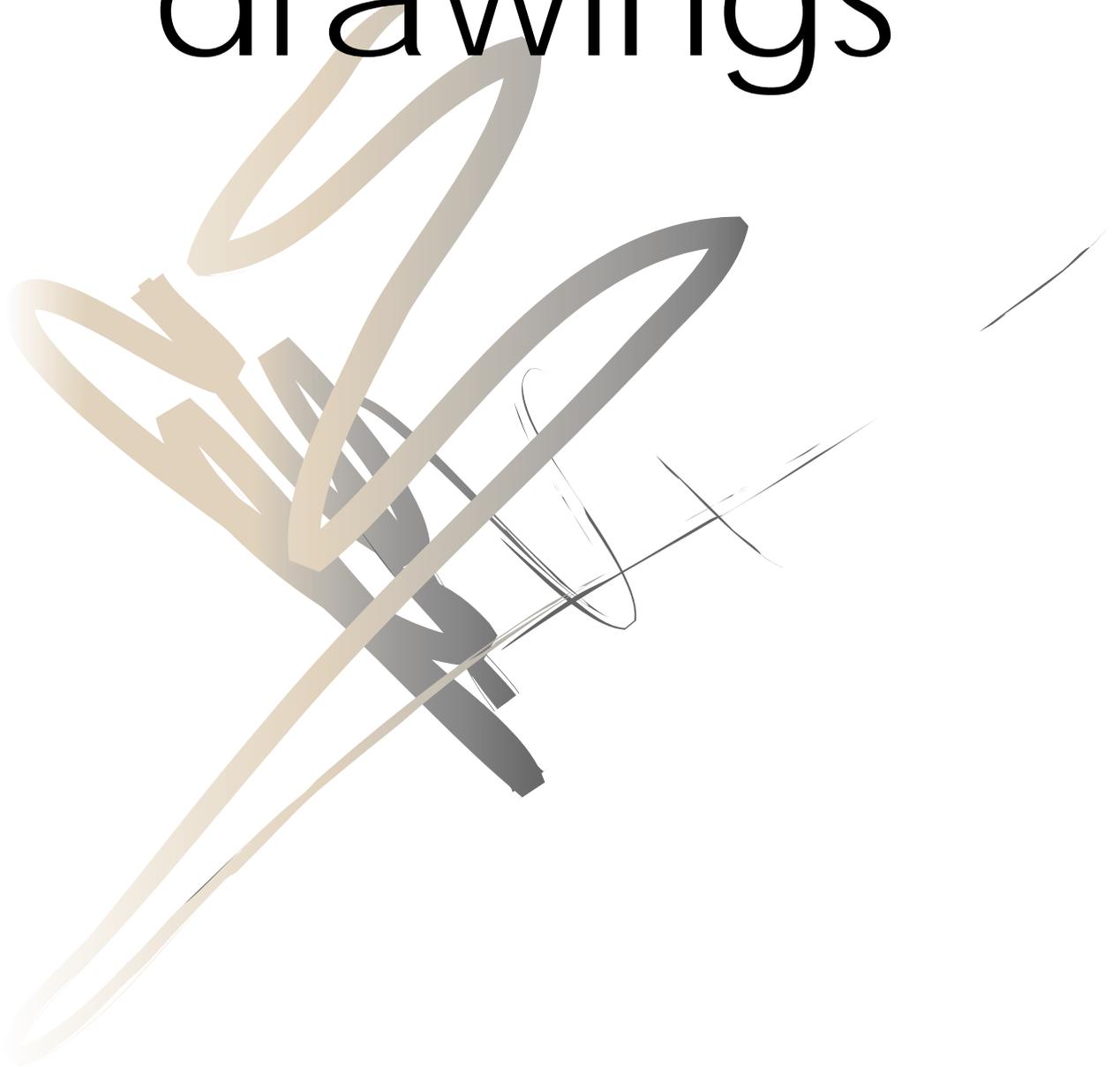


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Un sighted tactile drawings



Un sighted tactile drawings of prehistoric archaeological objects

By Claude Heath



It is not often that you hear an archaeologist say words to the effect: We are not like other organisations; you can touch our prehistoric objects. Would you like to visit our dig in Romania and draw some of them by touch?

Douglass Bailey, the archaeologist in question, had just seen my talk at the conference at the Courtauld Institute in London, when I had spoken about making a blindfold drawing in 1997 of a plaster copy of the four-inch high Venus of Willendorf. The drawing of the Venus had been a detailed tour of the contours of the sculpture, sequentially drawn while turning through 180 degrees, as if she was swinging around from left to right. It had seemed to reanimate the figurine. While I have been making work in a variety of other ways since then, we agreed that it was worth revisiting the blindfold drawing technique, as an opportunity for a new approach to these artefacts. The best way to work was going to be to draw what I felt, with no prior knowledge of these objects.



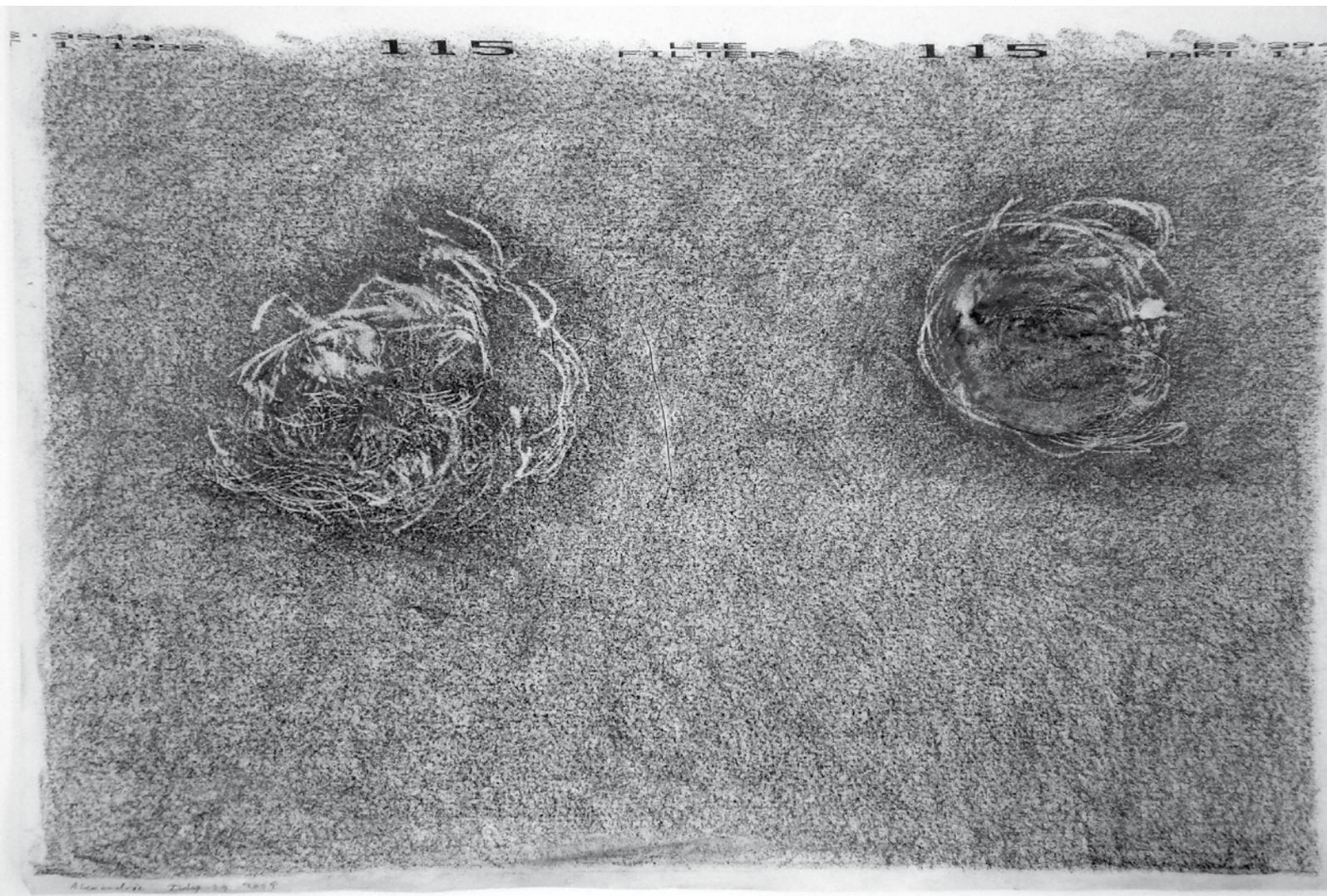
The first object that I was presented with was hidden in a cardboard box, it weighed heavily in the hand, a chunk of rock with a sharp edge, bound to a wooden shaft by a frayed but tight cord. I guessed that it was a flint axe-head with a modern handle. Steve Mills and his resident team of archaeologists working at the Muzeul Județean Teleorman in Alexandria, Romania, were under instruction not to tell me anything about the objects that had been chosen for me to draw. In the heat of the first day, we set up a desk area that was screened off by hanging cloths, so that I could work with my arms out of my sight, and not see the objects or the drawings. I preferred to work without a blindfold, with my hands inside the tented working area.



Drawing a flint axe-head begged an obvious question: what tool do you use to draw a tool? Or could I use the instrument itself to draw? I used the flint cutting edge to incise and tear the paper, while carefully avoiding putting the object at risk of damage by using soft layers underneath the paper. Rocking the gently curving edge repeatedly across the sheet, in a slow grinding action using the handle end as the fulcrum, left a trail of indentations and tears that reshaped the paper into strange furrows. The lacerations reveal the smallest details about the individual chipped planes that constitute the cutting edge.



Other drawings of this and other objects used scalpel blades to cut the paper, or smaller flints that were dragged and scraped into the paper surface. Pressing and embossing was another approach, until it began to resemble by touch the shape of an object. Ink drawings were made looking for the inflections on surfaces of objects - when drawing unsighted these surfaces seem to be inscribed with tantalising but inconclusive clues as to the meaning of these things.







The objects chosen for me to draw were a mix of prehistoric things as well as thematically related modern ones that could not have survived such a length of time, such as a three-legged wooden stool – a traditional design and still used in the region. There were also flint tools along with their cast off parts. Also dry clay forms, one of which was rough and friable like a dry cake, complete with hand print in the centre. Another was moulded smooth, as if made by compressing clay between the palms, then punctured with holes, with the imprints of fingers present.







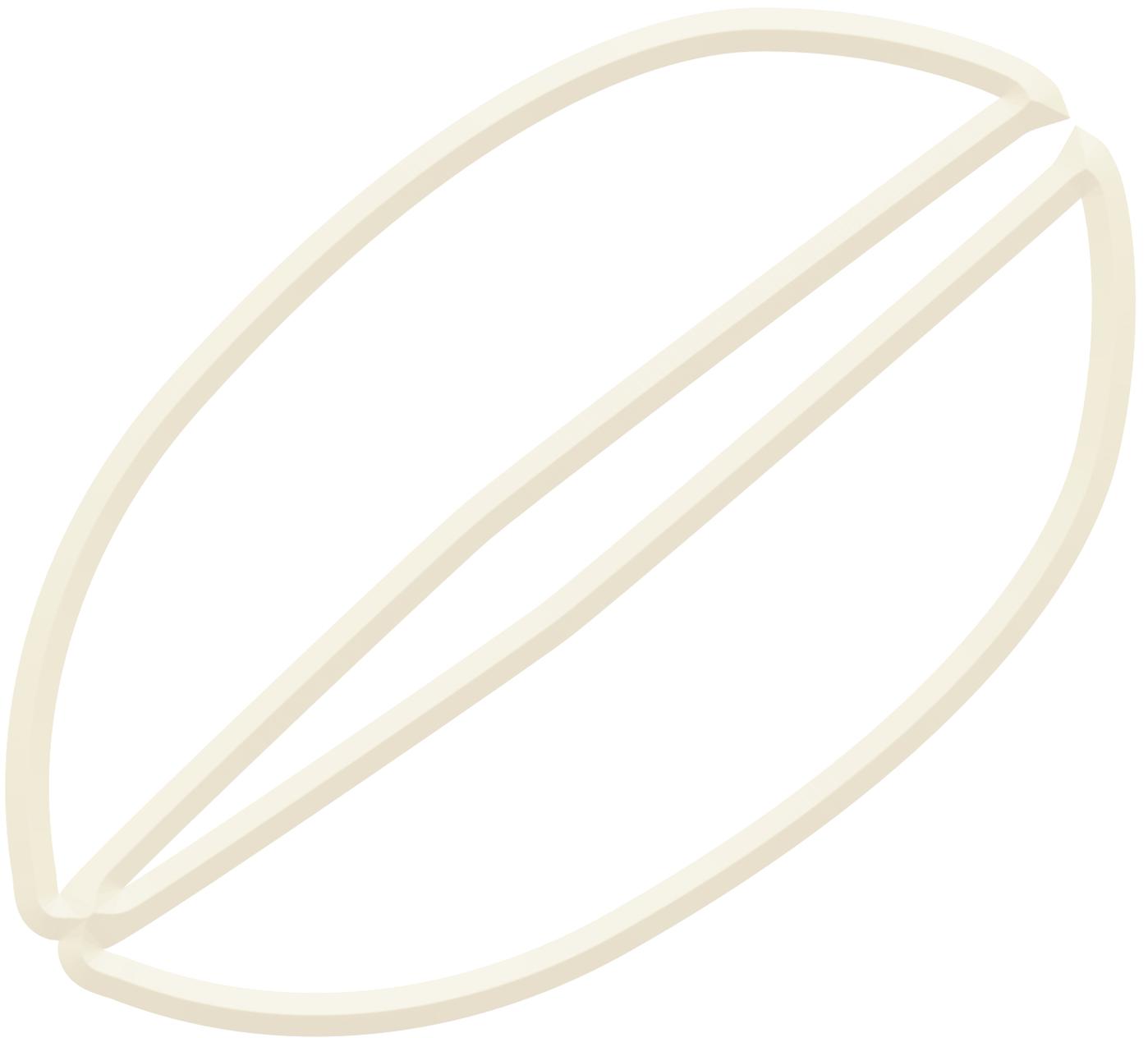
The final object was a slightly larger-than-life sculpture bust on a base, which necessitated working while wearing a blindfold, because its scale was too large for the screened-off area. Coming to terms with it by touch was in itself a task, with strong impressions conveyed to me via my hands and fingertips. It had a massive beaked nose and chin, a thick cloaked surface over the shoulders, like wings dropping by the side of a large bird of prey. The hands clasping a scroll, like talons onto the broken branch of a tree. All of this convinced me that the maker of this portrait had intended it as a satiric image. Finally I discovered the name 'Nicolae Ceaușescu' spelt out in relief-lettering along the base. This was an object that I did finally see before leaving Romania, and it did not appear to be barbed or ironic in the way that I had imagined.





Thank you to the Cardiff University School of History and Archaeology, Professor Douglass Bailey of San Francisco State University, his colleague at Cardiff, Dr Steve Mills, and everyone at the Muzeul Județean Teleorman, Alexandria, who were so helpful to the project.

Heavy
residue



Whilst sorting the heavy residue, a particularly exciting process that sorts the wheat from the chaff (or the men from the boys), a number of cereal grains were recovered including a relatively well preserved einkorn grain. The little charred and damaged grain, which looked as if it had seen better days, suddenly took on a whole new visage. It is often all too easy to forget how valuable and precious preserved botanical material is, particularly at the end of a gruelling flotation season or when sitting in a lab detached from the archaeological site. What are often ignored are the processes by which material enters the archaeological record and the seemingly endless transformations it endures.

In order for an einkorn grain, and indeed other botanical material, to enter the archaeological record, a series of events must occur in a particular way at what appears to be exactly the right time. First the botanical material must become charred. This occurs through the process of accidental burning. For example, material could fall from a cooking vessel into the cooking fire or the material could have spilled onto the floor during the food preparation process and been swept up with other fallen debris and been cast into the fire for disposal. Or the botanical material could have been charred due to the accidental burning of an entire storage granary.

Once botanical material has become charred, there are a number of ways in which it can come to be deposited at a specific location or *context*. If the charred material remains contained within the ash from the cooking fire and the ash deposit remains undisturbed within the confines of the hearth, the material is considered to be *in situ* in a *primary deposit*. Alternatively, the ash

deposit may easily be swept from the hearth environment and be placed in a rubbish pit or may simply be strewn onto the floor adjacent to the hearth and trodden into the surface. When material is extracted from its primary deposit and is deposited at a new location, it becomes known as a *secondary deposit*. To be able to reconstruct and interpret past human activities and processes, it is necessary to be able to distinguish and understand the difference between primary and secondary deposition.

Once the material has been deposited, whether in a primary or secondary context, it is often assumed that this is where the buried material remained until recovered by archaeologists; alas this is not always the case. The charred material is still susceptible to further disturbance. The area may be disturbed by *anthropogenic* or human activity such as redevelopment either at a time contemporary to when the cooking hearth ceased to be used, or in a later succession of periods. The charred remains may have also been subjected to *bioturbation*, that is, disturbances by other living things such as growing tree roots or burrowing animals; activities that could potentially move the remains from their burial contexts.

The area of Teleor 003 under excavation revealed no evidence of in situ burning, and was comprised primarily of pit features. The combination of the lack of in situ burning and the presence of pit features, suggested that if charred botanical material was present, it would be housed within a secondary deposition context. The charred material from the Teleor 003 excavations was initially recovered as bulk soil samples following a systematic sampling strategy. Soil samples were

extracted from each prehistoric excavation unit ranging in size from 0.25 litres to 80 litres (the average measuring 24 litres) (Walker and Bogaard 2010).

In order to analyse charred botanical material it is necessary to separate the material from the soil in which it is housed. This separation is achieved through the process of flotation. Overall 158 samples were processed by flotation; the samples derived from 28 pits, and represented over 3700 litres of soil (Walker and Bogaard 2010).

The object of flotation is to retrieve microscopic material by simple and efficient methods which are practical and economical and most importantly are as free as much as possible from human bias (French 1971, 59). Flotation is often carried out by a mechanical process using a 'water-separation' machine more commonly referred to as a 'flotation tank'. Versions of the flotation tank that are employed in the field are often constructed from a 40-50 gallon barrel. Water is pumped into the tank through a set of perforated curved or angled pipes (situated halfway up the tank interior) and is projected upward towards the top of the tank; this action essentially creates a Jacuzzi effect within the tank. As soil samples are poured into the tank, the movement of the water agitates the soil allowing lighter material such as charred botanical remains to float to the surface.

The flotation tank is designed to allow water to overflow at a specific point along the rim of the tank. Floating material flows across the overflow point and is collected in two sieves (usually of 1 mm and 0.3 mm mesh sizes) positioned on





the outside of the machine; the material collected in the sieves are known as *flots*. Within the tank itself an inner mesh (ranging in size from 0.5mm to 1mm) retains the heavier material housed within the soil sample; this material is known as the *heavy residue*. Material from the flot sieves are parcelled up into labelled fabric bundles and the heavy residue is spread out onto plastic sheeting; both are left to dry before commencing the next stage of processing.





After the heavy residue has dried, the material is sieved using 4mm and 1mm sieves (botanical material is retained in the 1mm sieve). The material from the 1mm sieve is then divided into smaller portions or *fractions*. A single fraction is chosen at random and is checked for the presence of botanical material, which is then removed and sent to the lab for analysis with the flots material. Once all the recoverable items have been removed from the heavy residue it is thrown away. The process of searching and removing botanical material from samples is known as *sorting*.

After the flots have dried, samples are transferred to clear re-sealable plastic bags and are sent to the lab for processing. The flots are sorted in the lab using a low-power stereoscopic microscope. Botanical material extracted from the samples is divided into the categories of: cereal grain; cereal chaff; pulses; collected plants and wild taxa (weeds) ready for full identification.



Full identification of botanical material is carried out with the aid of a reference collection comprised of modern reference material and with textual and pictorial references such as floras and seed atlases.

By understanding the processes by which botanical material enters the archaeological record, can be disturbed or transformed by human or natural processes, is recovered, processed and analysed, it becomes clear just how valuable, important and precious this material is. Also of fascination is the transformation of the way in which the material is perceived. At the time of charring, the material is undoubtedly viewed as a waste product, as something unimportant – a by-product of a common, frequently conducted domestic practice, but to the archaeobotanist it becomes something else. The material provides the opportunity to gain insight into plant use and cultivation practices of prehistoric people, in this case, of the early Neolithic inhabitants of the Telemann River Valley. We can begin to consider the range of crops and plants cultivated and collected for consumption, plants that were collected for other uses other than food and even to gain insight into cultivation practices such as management strategies. We can begin to reconstruct the climate

and landscape in which these people lived and can, when combined with other forms of archaeological evidence, begin to appreciate their efforts and acknowledge challenges encountered and mastered as they lived their daily lives.

Close examination of the einkorn grain that was recovered during the sorting of the heavy residue associated with Flot 3016 (Unit 1724, Complex 35) aided in reminding me why I became fascinated in archaeobotany in the first place and in doing so served as the inspiration for my contribution to the Art-Landscape Transformations project: Mägura Past and Present. Initially the einkorn grain was illustrated following standard botanical illustration conventions.





The purpose of an illustration of this type is to effectively convey the appearance of a plant part as well as acting as a valuable visual reference source to archaeobotanists when identifying ancient plant remains (Goddard and Nesbitt 1997, 13).

The illustration alone however, was not quite enough to convey the understanding of the transformation processes experienced not only by the cereal grain but those encountered by myself as both the archaeobotanical analyst and illustrator/artist. A second piece was required that brought together several concepts. The piece comprised an enlarged version of the dorsal view of the einkorn grain as depicted in the botanical illustration. Rather than inking in key features of the grain, the discarded element of the heavy residue (from which the grain was originally extracted) was used to produce a relief image of the grain. The basic concept of the piece was essentially to transform and reinforce the value of botanical material by creating an image of a product (the einkorn grain) from the by-product (heavy residue) that was discarded as part of an archaeobotanical transformation process.

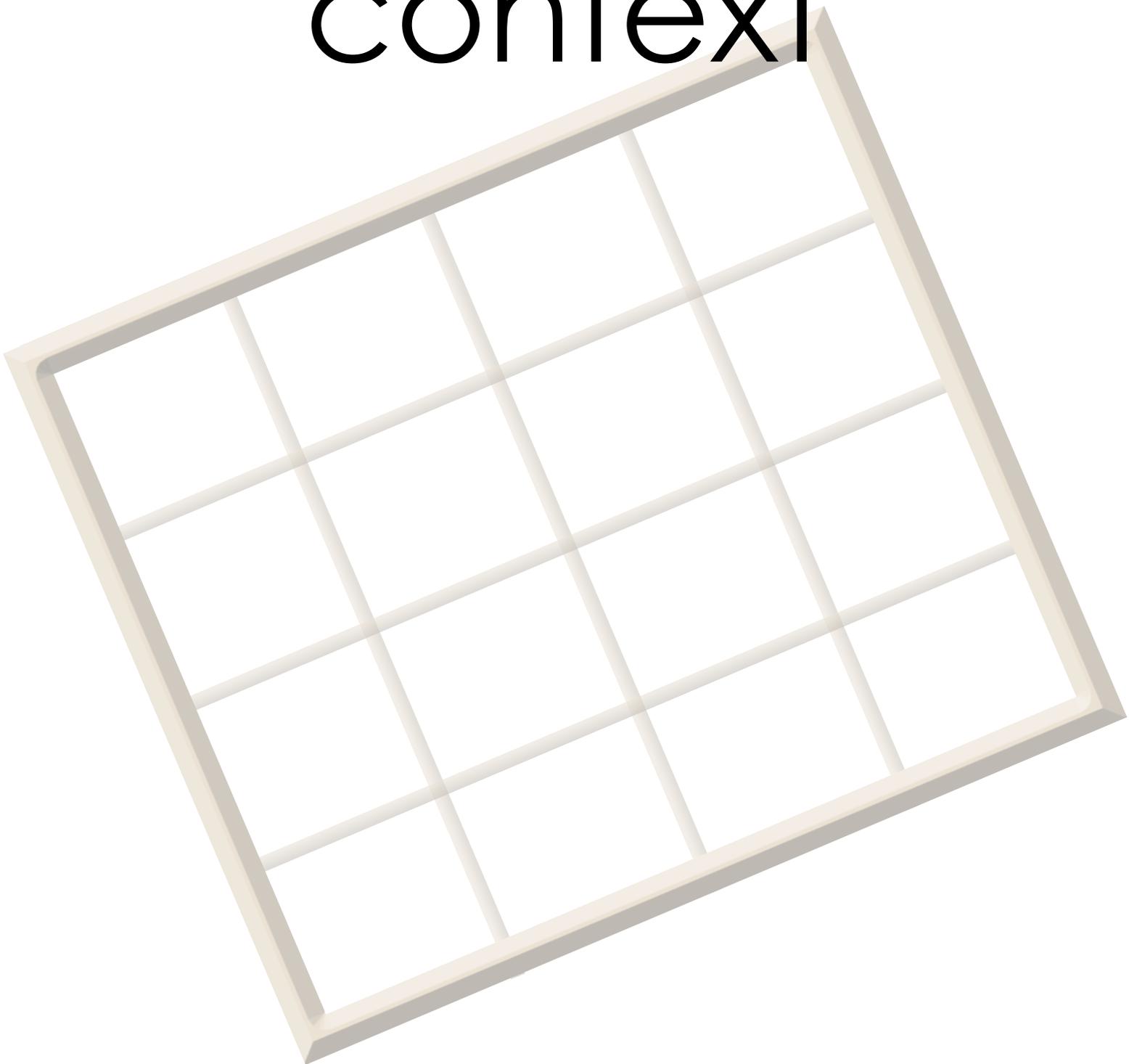
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The grid in context



The grid in context

By Michaël Jasmin



The human fact par excellence is perhaps less in the creation of tool than in the domestication of time and space (Leroi-Gourhan 1965, 139).

Art – Archaeology – Landscape

I. Practicing Art and Archaeology

During my visit to the village of Măgura in summer 2010, I brought in my suitcase two areas of expertise: a university training in archaeology and an on-site artistic practice. This means that while looking at the landscape I can perceive it through the lens of an archaeologist: I contemplate places in order to isolate material culture remains from different pasts. But while looking at the landscape through the eye of an artist I will let my mind wander and produce more fictional images. Still, both approaches deal with telling: one with history, the other with stories.

So, how can such a double archaeological and artistic approach interact with the observation of landscape? How do they give way to the production of images that will challenge our perception of the landscape?

In the specific work realised at Măgura I was interested in anchoring it in archaeological procedure. So I oriented my work to create a dialogue within the archaeological sphere. This background determined the development of my on-site creation.





Art – **Archaeology** – Landscape

II. Archaeological procedure between research and creation

TIME and SPACE in archaeology

Anyone dealing with archaeology feels intimately that TIME is central to the discipline. Indeed, archaeology appears embodied into the past. The times encountered by archaeologists are heterogeneous, stratified and interpenetrated. So it seems that archaeology is fundamentally and merely about Time. Although this is quite correct, even more fundamental to archaeology is SPACE, and how time coagulates, mixes and physically alters space and matter. The relationship of archaeology with the concept of space also oriented my work around the village of Măgura. This is a way to remember that, before dealing with TIME, archaeologists are first of all dealing with the SPACE around them and its measurement and localisation.

My work relates to the concepts of space and landscape on three levels: the natural landscape within the regional Teleorman valley; the cultural landscape within the village of Măgura; and the archaeological settlement tell seen as an artefact (i.e. as the expression of a past and present cultural production).

Space and context in the village of Măgura

One aspect of my intervention at Măgura is the importance of the concept of GRID in archaeological practice. Grids are widely used in archaeology from large-scale (invisible) grids to map the sites, to small-scale grids (1 by 1 metre) used to draw excavated features and objects.

Archaeologists use at least two separate levels of grid. The first allows us to locate a place on a map using a shared international geographic system (e.g. as UTM (Universal Transverse Mercator), or WGS1984 (World Geodetic System) for the GPS system). The second level of grid is a local one. A grid (or carroyage) is installed by surveyors to cover the excavated site using, for example, 5 by 5 metre squares. This grid enables archaeologists to localise every excavated area and to map the objects inside the archaeological space.

These grids help archaeologists build perceptions of regional and local space. They allow archaeologists to organise, separate and then categorise these spaces. Grids are instrumental in enabling archaeologists to contextualise. And CONTEXT is the cornerstone of the archaeological approach, allowing interpretation of the connections between excavated features and objects.

Finally, these grids help archaeologists to conceptualise, visualise and reconstruct the spaces of the past.







The present uses of the settlement tell

The use of the space of the settlement tell (or artificial hill) is central in the daily life and understanding of the villagers of Măgura. Its unusual shape and its location, very close to, but still separated from the village, make it something unique and particular. The multiple uses of the settlement tell are significant. The top of the tell has a church and a cemetery and is used for religious purposes. Consequently it is a place with a very specific role in the life of the people from the village (associated with fundamental moments in life and death). The tell is also obviously an archaeological site. And last but not least, it has been used as an artistic space: with an artist (myself) using the tell slope as a board for a message and a land-art creation.



Art – Archaeology – **Landscape**

III. Interventions in the landscape

During my residency in Măgura, I developed an on-site installation. This intervention in the landscape had two dimensions: a physical on-site intervention and a visual photographic approach. These two works were closely connected and explore the concepts of space and grid. They are two different ways to intervene in the landscape: by the hand and by the eye.

a. Transforming the landscape: “37097.48776”

In-context or out-of-context?

The installation “37097.48776” is an application of the concept of the grid exploring framing at the largest scale. These numbers, their size (5 by 20 metres), their location and environment (on the slope of a Neolithic site), seem to be totally out of context. At the same time, however, they are precisely in context as these numbers refer to the spatial location of the tell in the UTM (Universal Transverse Mercator) grid co-ordinate system.

So this work contains a double perspective on the meaning of on-site: first by its physical location and second through its information content. These numbers connect the local with the global enlarging the locally made digits to the size of an international shared grid. This intervention in the landscape, with its spatial information on the tell, translates a series of numbers into a worldwide reference.



Branding the tell

The removal of the first surface layer of the tell (the turf) without disturbing the archaeological layers beneath is also a way to brand the site. This is a direct parallel with archaeologists when they leave a site after excavation: the place is left as an open space with disturbed earth that can be seen as scars. This act of 'tattooing' the earth can also be considered as the first step of a landscape transformation.







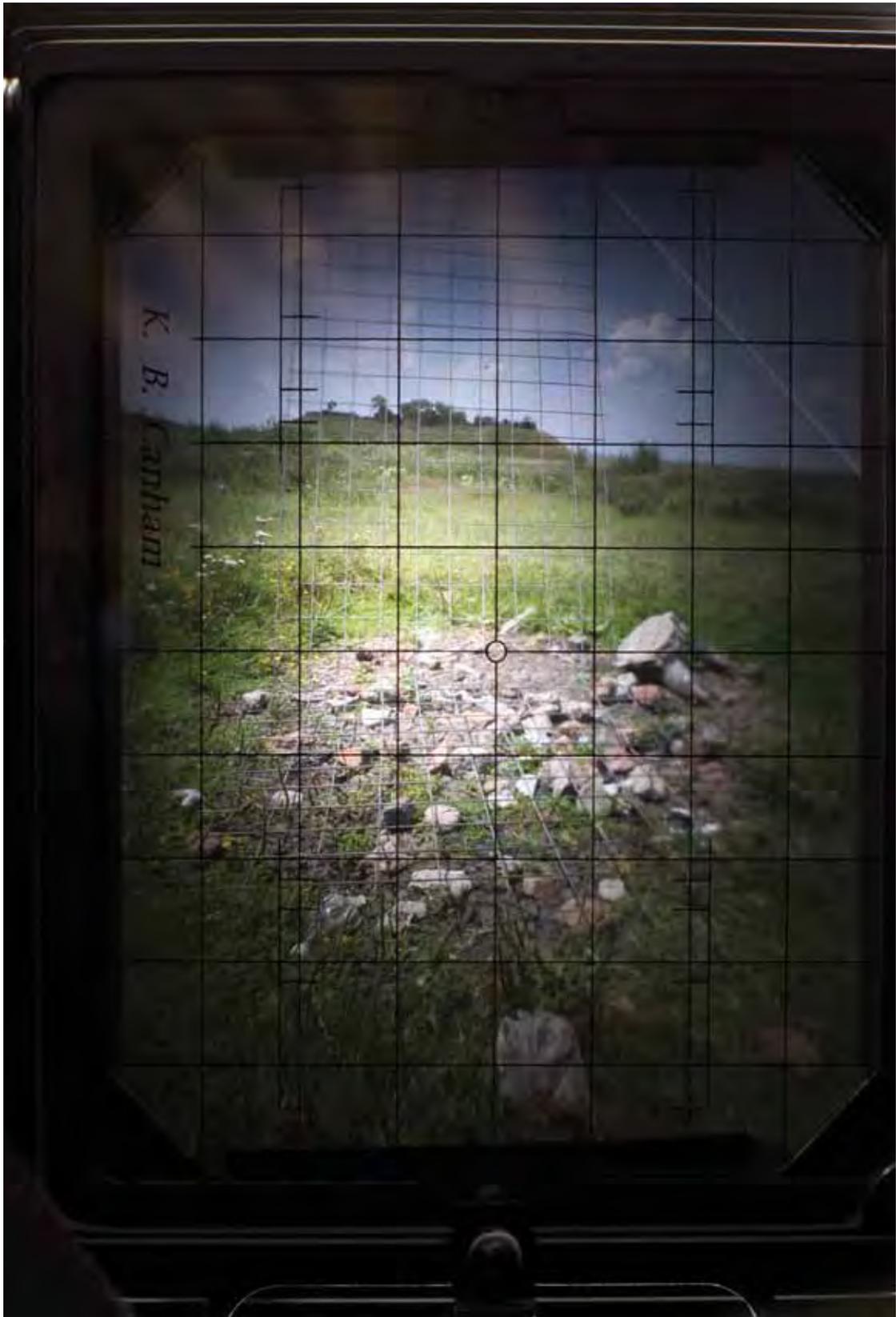
b. Transforming our perception: the grid and the visualisation of the landscape

By looking at different places through a grid, or by using an existing grid like strings in the visual space, the four pictures of the village and the tell play with the idea of grid in the present village of Măgura and its surroundings. These images question our way of looking at the landscape imposing a translation of viewpoint from 'on the ground' to 'in front'.

For further information see Jasmin 2011.





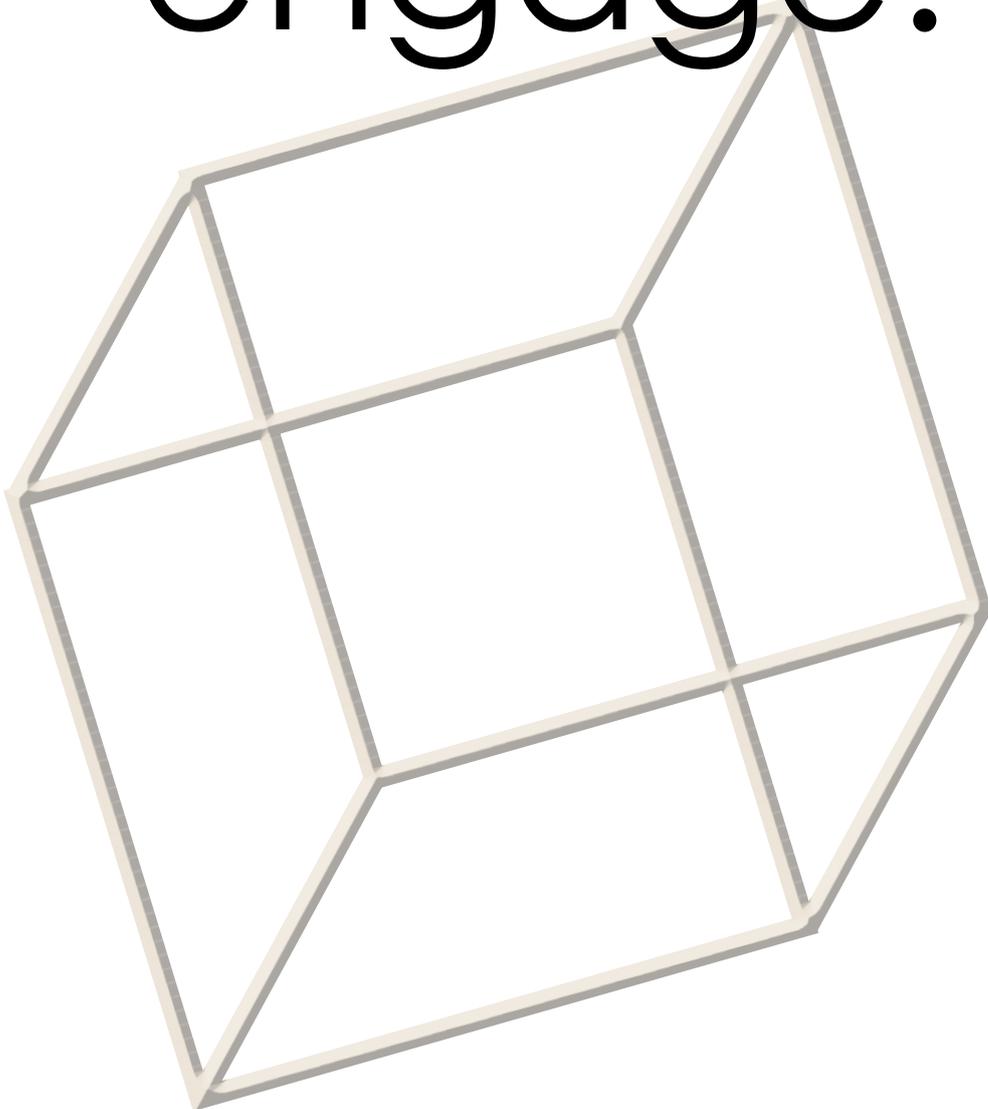


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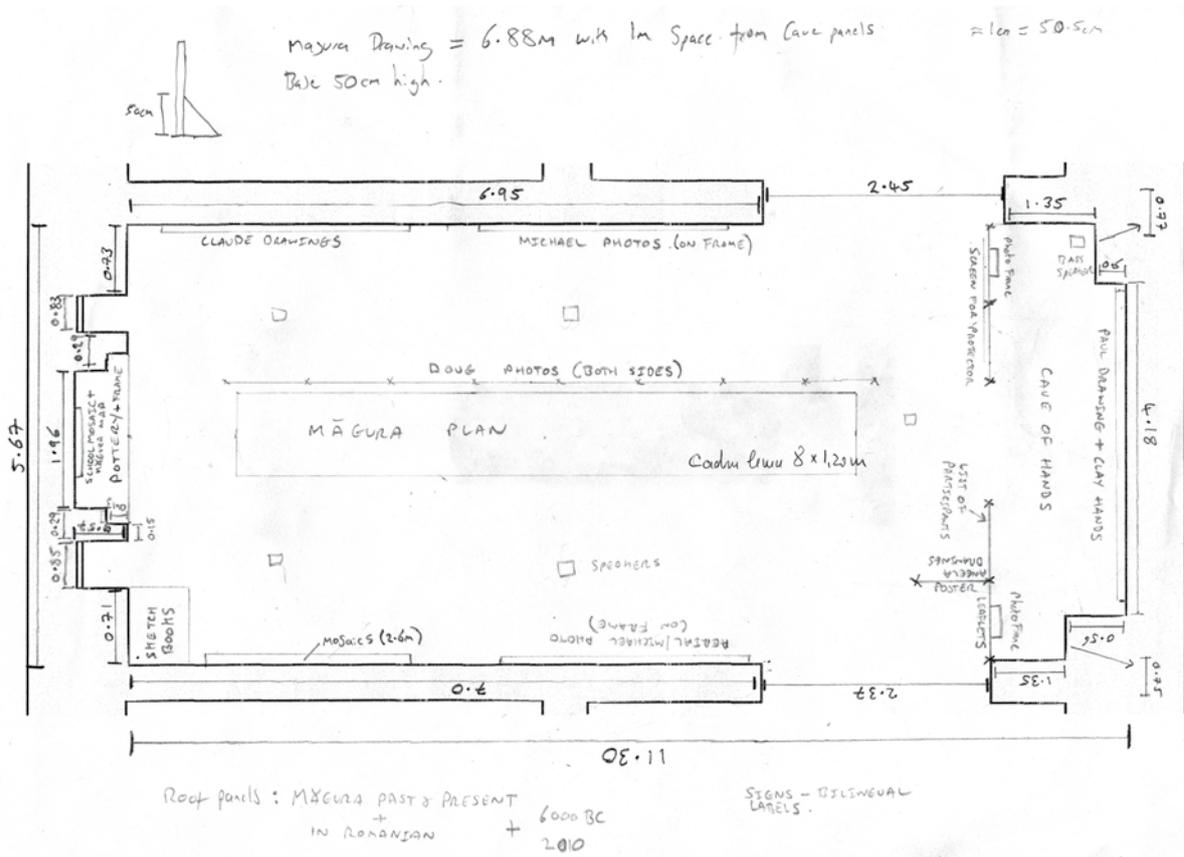
Space-museum
continuum:
engage!



The space-museum continuum: engage!

By Pavel Mirea & Steve Mills





1	2	3	4
MAGURA TRECUT SI PREZENT	MAGURA TRECUT SI PREZENT	MAGURA TRECUT SI PREZENT	MAGURA TRECUT SI PREZENT
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5	6	7	8

All eyes are lifted from the paper crowded with drawings and plans. Lines and signs complicated and juxtaposed describe shapes and symbols revealing, in a technical language, what will happen to the space. And each element and design cries "beam me up..."

Yes, this is the space, "the final frontier", and its transformation will be the last phase of the project.

This space has witnessed many transformations. A laboratory space for the Museum and the Southern Romania Archaeological Project (SRAP) where thousands of pieces of pottery, bone, stone, building material and plant remains were carefully washed, sorted, counted, weighed, measured, drawn, catalogued and stored. A seminar/conference room hosting presentations about Alexandria, Teleorman County, archaeology and local identities with delegations from Romania, Europe and further afield. As an artistic space for participants of the MPP project it became a place to nurture thoughts, craft expertise and create new associations and meanings. As an engagement space for the *Night of the Museum* event, held every year in May, people from Alexandria participate in a range of educational and performance activities.

So what was the building originally built and used for before becoming a museum? Twenty-five years ago it was a school-workshop hall filled with lathes, milling and drilling machines, planers and other mechanical equipment, and where students learnt how to use these machines. It was a space where students were educated to become good members of the 'working people' and worthy defenders of the 'new socialist order'. It was not just about work but also about ideology. But times have changed and the engine noises have been transformed into whispers, questions and exclamation.



We remember the students and children talking, shouting, singing, laughing, bickering, grumbling, but always learning; we remember so many questions. This has always been a space that generates questions and, we would like to think, not a few answers. We hope more questions will be transformed into answers in this space and that people will “seek out” new ideas that, dare we say it, “...boldly go where no one has gone before.”

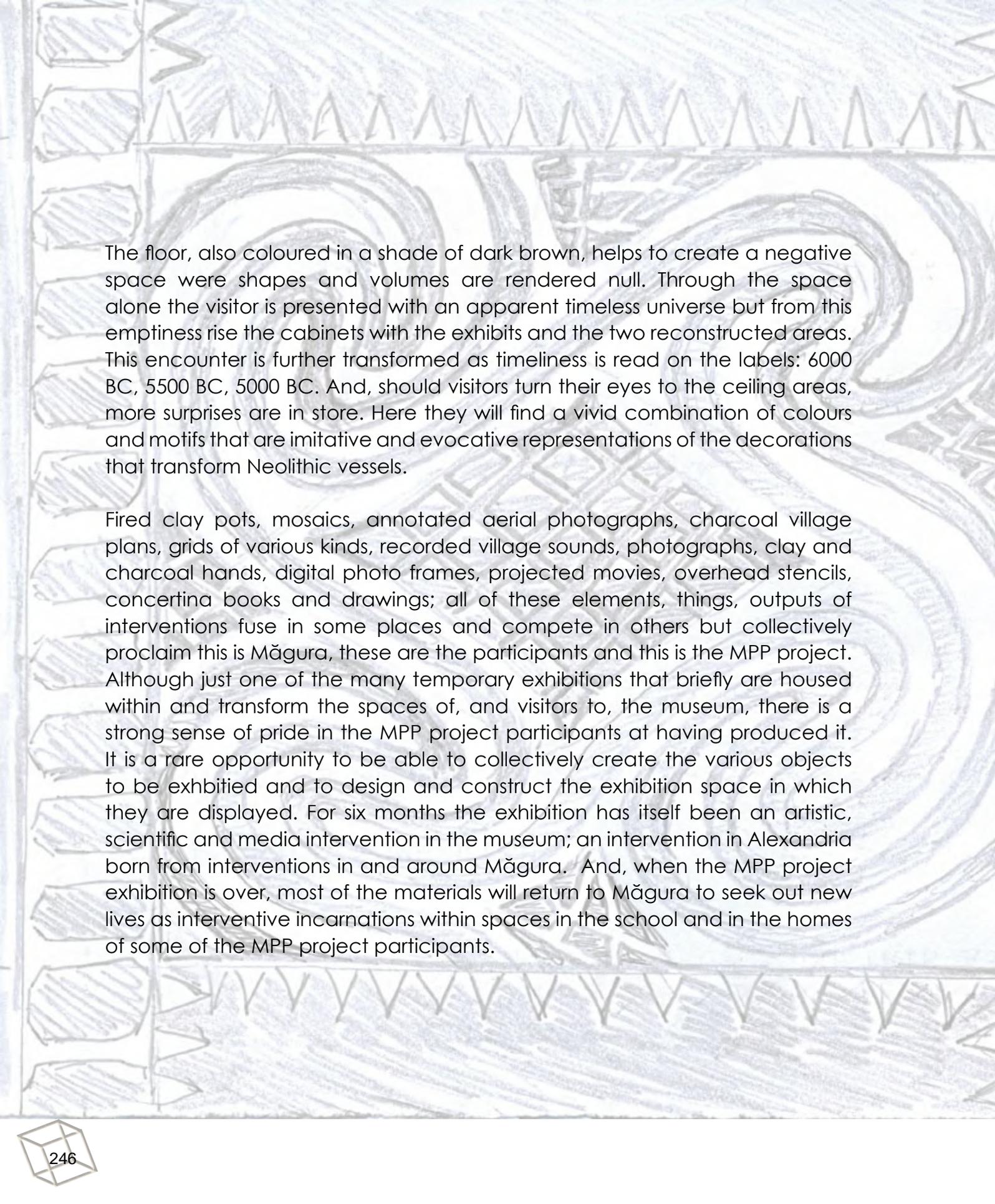
Before the MPP project, and probably before the SRAP, the members of the museum staff had a dream of how the various spaces on the first floor could eventually be used. For various reasons it has taken many years for this dream to be realised. There have been many discussions, 'business meetings', frustrations and negotiations until the scribbles on countless spare pieces of paper that accumulated over the years have eventually led to plans, formal designs and finally action. Transformations are rarely easy and usually, if and when they succeed, are a hard-fought battle won.







After many days, weeks and months the space has gradually transformed. The ceiling, the walls, the windows and the floors have equally experienced the changes. The walls are newly painted in shades of brown. These earthy colours suggest to the visitor the feeling of returning to the earth where archaeological remains are discovered. This return is achieved gradually because each room is painted in a different shade: from the lightest brown suggesting more recent times to the darkest brown suggesting more ancient times.

The background of the page is a light blue-grey illustration of a Neolithic site. It features a central area with large, concentric circular patterns, possibly representing a circular structure or a specific site layout. This central area is bordered by a horizontal band containing a series of sharp, triangular peaks pointing upwards, resembling a fence or a decorative border. Above and below this band are areas with various geometric and organic patterns, including rectangles, zig-zags, and wavy lines, suggesting different types of Neolithic artifacts or site features.

The floor, also coloured in a shade of dark brown, helps to create a negative space where shapes and volumes are rendered null. Through the space alone the visitor is presented with an apparent timeless universe but from this emptiness rise the cabinets with the exhibits and the two reconstructed areas. This encounter is further transformed as timeliness is read on the labels: 6000 BC, 5500 BC, 5000 BC. And, should visitors turn their eyes to the ceiling areas, more surprises are in store. Here they will find a vivid combination of colours and motifs that are imitative and evocative representations of the decorations that transform Neolithic vessels.

Fired clay pots, mosaics, annotated aerial photographs, charcoal village plans, grids of various kinds, recorded village sounds, photographs, clay and charcoal hands, digital photo frames, projected movies, overhead stencils, concertina books and drawings; all of these elements, things, outputs of interventions fuse in some places and compete in others but collectively proclaim this is Măgura, these are the participants and this is the MPP project. Although just one of the many temporary exhibitions that briefly are housed within and transform the spaces of, and visitors to, the museum, there is a strong sense of pride in the MPP project participants at having produced it. It is a rare opportunity to be able to collectively create the various objects to be exhibited and to design and construct the exhibition space in which they are displayed. For six months the exhibition has itself been an artistic, scientific and media intervention in the museum; an intervention in Alexandria born from interventions in and around Măgura. And, when the MPP project exhibition is over, most of the materials will return to Măgura to seek out new lives as interventive incarnations within spaces in the school and in the homes of some of the MPP project participants.

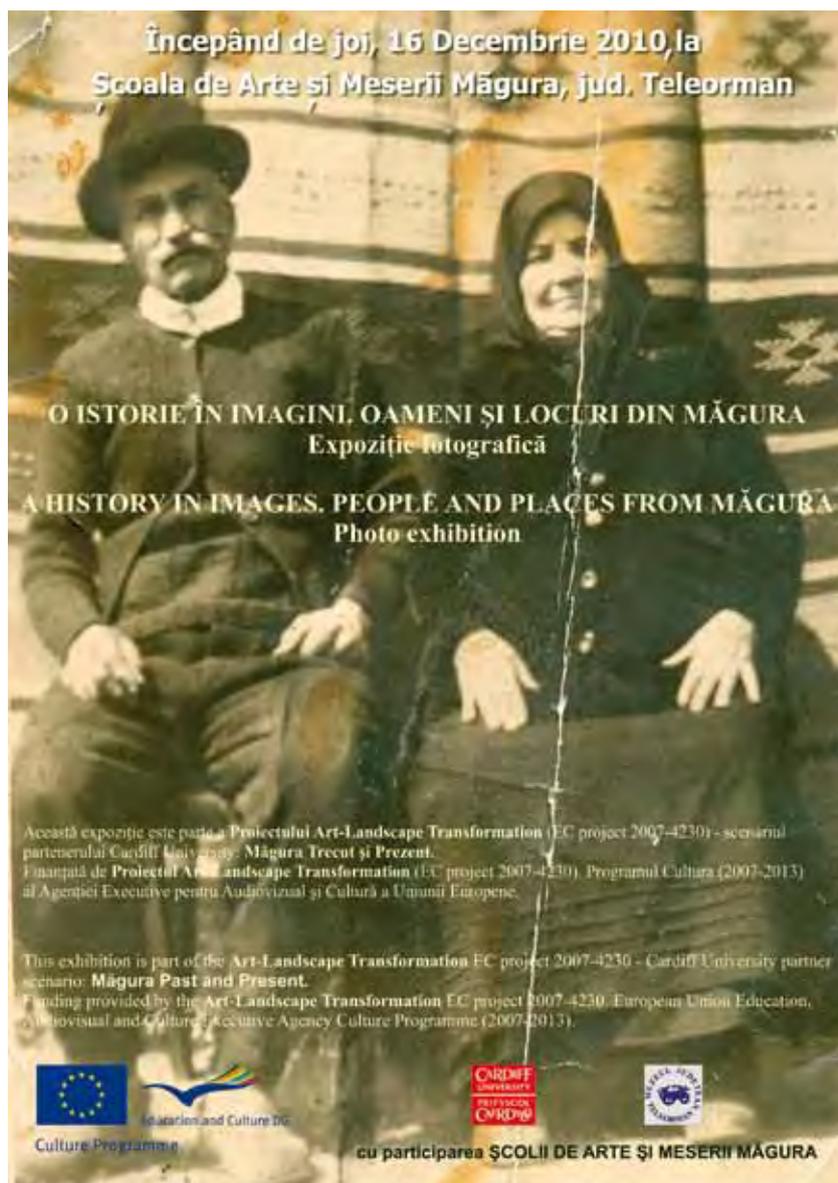




There is the important, and sometimes contentious, issue of ownership when creating an exhibition of outputs produced by many different participants. Who owns what? Who has copyright? With respect to contractual obligations, all outputs are the property of the MPP project as a collective and of the European Community more widely; no one person has ownership or copyright over of any one object or output. This agreement has taken some negotiation at different phases of the project because artists are used to owning their creations and museum staff their exhibitions and archaeologists and scientists are used to claiming some ownership of their data, interpretations and rights to publication (and in some cases of archaeological sites and associated material culture). So do the MPP project participants own their drawings, sound recordings, clay objects, mosaics and photographs? Yes, but we hope all participants appreciate that any one output (e.g., an individual or collection of drawings, a clay pot or a series of photographs) is only meaningful in the context of, and as a contribution to, the combined output of the project. This is in keeping with the spirit and purpose of the project; anything else falls short. This integration of ideas and outputs is what the project exhibition aimed to disseminate: Măgura Past and Present is about a rural community and its relationship to landscape, heritage and place and the processes and challenges involved in collaboratively trying to define, interpret and represent that.



Is this collective aspiration a return to a socialist ideal? Individual and group expressions and opinions have been actively encouraged throughout the MPP project, but we acknowledge that they can only flourish and be contextualised in relation to some larger endeavour. It is not so much what any individual creates that matters, but in how that individual creation is effective in, and becomes part of the negotiation of, what constitutes the expression of a community and its relationship to place at any given time. To be of positive value, intervention requires considerable and continuous negotiation and compromise and all three must go hand in hand. This is rarely easy to achieve and it remains to be seen to what extent the MPP project, its variety of outputs and the exhibitions, has been able to succeed in this and instill enthusiasm for similar and better projects in the future.



**Începând de joi, 16 Decembrie 2010, la
Școala de Arte și Meserii Măgura, jud. Teleorman**

O ISTORIE ÎN IMAGINI. OAMENI ȘI LOCURI DIN MĂGURA
Expoziție fotografică

A HISTORY IN IMAGES. PEOPLE AND PLACES FROM MĂGURA
Photo exhibition

Această expoziție este parte a Proiectului Art-Landscape Transformation (EC proiect 2007-4230) - scenariul partenerului Cardiff University: Măgura Trecut și Prezent.
Finanțată de Proiectul Art-Landscape Transformation (EC proiect 2007-4230), Programul Cultura (2007-2013) al Agenției Executive pentru Audiovizual și Cultură a Uniunii Europene.

This exhibition is part of the Art-Landscape Transformation EC project 2007-4230 - Cardiff University partner scenario: Măgura Past and Present.
Funding provided by the Art-Landscape Transformation EC project 2007-4230, European Union Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency Culture Programme (2007-2013).

Culture Programme

cu participarea ȘCOLII DE ARTE ȘI MESERII MĂGURA

As with all the other interventions, many people have played their part during the design and implementation phases of these museum space transformations: Ecaterina Țânțăreanu, Pompilia Zaharia, Florin Otomega, Traian Măzărar, Liviu Nicolescu, Cătălina Dănilă, Constantin Tudorică, Emil Pășcălău and Ducu Nicolae. This list is only the start, to be more comprehensive we have to include all of the contributors who have played a part however big or small: the Mayor, School Director, teachers, school children, other participants and hosts from Măgura, and the other MPP project archaeologists, scientists and artists. Furthermore, this is only one output from one partner scenario in the wider Art-Landscape Transformations EC project 2007-4230; the list of participants continues to grow.

The finishing touches are now being applied to transform the museum spaces. The MPP project participants eagerly await the opening day. That day will be the end of one phase and the start of the next; being a continuum there is still a long way to go...

But for the time being we have done our intervening and now is the time for visitors, we hope, to "Engage!"

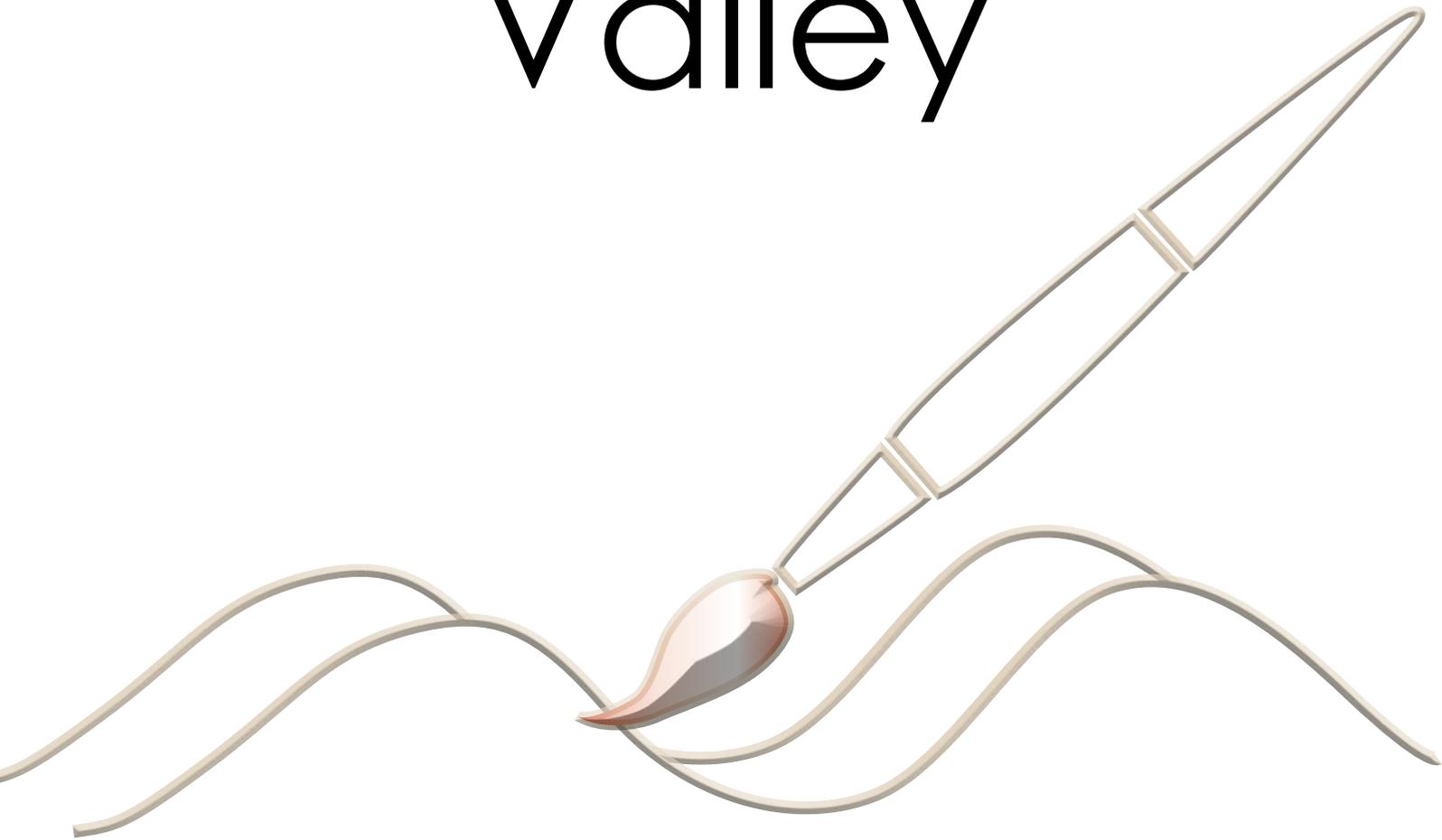




MĂGURA PAST AND PRESENT



Land art in the Teleorman Valley



Identification of rediscovered land-art in the Teleorman Valley

By Douglass Bailey



In the 1960s and 1970s, Bogdan Păcăliciu, a previously unknown local dissident artist created a series of important works in Teleorman County; none of the works survived the political control of the time or of the years since. Based on an anonymous tip, the *Măgura: Past and Present* project has been able to locate three of Păcăliciu's lost works and thus to contribute to the ongoing revision of Romanian art history. Absent from all official accounts of pre-1989 artists, Bogdan Păcăliciu and his work offer a unique insight into the underground pulse of contemporary art within the totalitarian dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu.

Long forgotten and now the subject of significant erosion and land slippage, the three works were made on the southeastern terrace banks of the Teleorman River Valley. The first work (pictured here) is substantial in size (the layered parallel cuts run for over 300 metres). A team of French and Italian experts from the European Union's Committee for the Interpretation of Local Artistic Traditions (based in Brussels) made an emergency visit to the valley in fall 2010 to document the land-art; that team suggested that the work represents an important statement about the layering of society and the role that the earth played in giving a veneer of naturalising organicism to the political processes of social sedimentation in which the supposed horizontal distribution of social diversity is exposed by the vertical separation of each social stratum from the one below it. More detailed analysis by local Romanian scholars will commence soon.

Biographical information about Bogdan Păcăliciu is sparse: born in Alexandria in 1942, he moved with his family to București when he was 12. He graduated from the Școala Superioară de Arte din București and then the Institutul de Arte Plastice Nicolae Grigorescu (under the tutelage of Cornel Medrea). The last documented reference to Păcăliciu is his being awarded a national sculpture scholarship in 1964. The Muzeul Național de Artă Modernă plans to hold a symposium on the newly restored artist and his work early in 2013. A spokesman at the MNAC called the discovery of the work in the Teleorman Valley, "one of the most significant additions to our knowledge of major artists of twentieth century Romanian art."





Afterword – virtually there

So, your impressions of Măgura Past and Present?

Well, I have never been to Măgura, perhaps I never will, but in thinking about, designing and compiling this book I am virtually there, at least in a conceptual and artistic way.

By reading the varied contributions and seeing the accompanying images and drawings, and by typesetting the book and designing the graphics, I have gained respect for and some, albeit limited, understanding of a Romanian village community and its relationships to its surrounding heritage. No substitute for being there, and, of course, in this book it is portrayed through the ideas, words and images of non-residents, of those who have intervened. But, short of actually visiting Măgura, the series of interventions presented in this book may be the closest I am able to get for now.

As an archaeological illustrator, experienced in working with colleagues to produce archaeological books and posters for diverse audiences, the invitation to work on this book was a welcome change. In ways not always possible in the production of archaeological literature, it has encouraged me to think about and allowed me the opportunity to explore a variety of artistic modes of expression and presentation that aim to disseminate and generate enthusiasm for ideas to do with the past, the present, heritage, people and place. Furthermore, and equally importantly, it has made me think more about the role of, and the valuable contribution made by, archaeological illustration. It is interesting that, in thinking of the integration of art and archaeology as being in some ways something new, we tend to overlook how fundamental art, at least in the form of archaeological illustration, has always been to archaeology and the presentation of landscapes and heritage. Art and archaeology are everywhere integrated: in, for example, books, leaflets, posters, signage and museum exhibitions. Much more could be done in recognition of this.

Without ever having been to Măgura, I am now an MPP project participant; an intervener entangled in transformative processes and one of those transitory interlocutors on the periphery. I am a member of that 'we', of that community, who survey, excavate, sample, analyse, draw and try to interpret and scientifically and artistically represent the simple but nevertheless challenging, and still as yet unanswered, questions: What is Măgura? And who do we think we are?

Ian Dennis & Steve Mills
Cardiff, February 2011

