Art of Remembrance

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

Foreword

Art of Remembrance brings contemporary artistic creation into direct dialogue with the memory of the Second World War. Conceived as a travelling exhibition rooted in four emblematic sites of European remembrance, the project invites artists to engage with history not as a fixed narrative, but as a living field of reflection, interpretation, and questioning.

As the events of World War II move further away in time, the challenge of transmitting their meaning becomes ever more pressing. Museums and memorial sites play a crucial role in preserving historical knowledge, yet they are also confronted with the need to reach new audiences and to speak to the present. Art of Remembrance responds to this challenge by opening spaces where artistic practice can intersect with historical memory, allowing new forms of sensitivity, emotion, and understanding to emerge.

The memory of the Second World War faces expected challenges, such as the disappearance of eyewitnesses, something no society is ever truly prepared for. But it also faces unexpected challenges, such as the emergence of artificial intelligence, now capable of generating “historical” images that never actually existed. In this context, the work of artists grounded in the material reality of historical sites takes on essential value.

This exhibition is the result of a close collaboration between artists, curators, historians, and remembrance institutions across Europe. Through site-specific residencies in Poland, France, Italy, and Belgium, the artists were invited to immerse themselves in distinct historical contexts, archives, and landscapes of memory. Their works do not illustrate history; rather, they translate its traces into contemporary forms, offering personal and plural perspectives on the legacy of the war. It is a project through which contemporary visitors can fully grasp what the war truly was: an event that affected every dimension of life, intimate, social, material, and environmental.

Art of Remembrance is also a European project in the deepest sense of the word. By bringing together different national histories and experiences, it highlights both the diversity and the interconnectedness of Europe’s wartime past. The exhibition does not seek to produce a single narrative, but to create a shared space of reflection, where memory can be questioned, confronted, and reimagined through art.

We would like to warmly thank the artists, the partner institutions, the members of the jury, and all those who contributed to making this exhibition possible. Our gratitude also goes to the European Union, whose support through the Creative Europe Programme made this transnational collaboration possible.

We invite visitors to approach the works presented in this catalogue with openness and curiosity, and to allow art to become a medium through which remembrance continues to evolve.

Introduction

Remembering Through Art

The memory of the Second World War occupies a singular place in Europe's cultural and intellectual landscape. More than a historical event, the war has become a foundational reference point through which questions of violence, responsibility, resistance, trauma, and reconciliation continue to be negotiated. Yet memory, as historians and theorists have long observed, is not a stable repository of facts. It is a dynamic, contested, and evolving process, shaped by institutions, narratives, generations, and cultural forms.

Thinkers such as Maurice Halbwachs have demonstrated that memory is fundamentally social, constructed within collective frameworks rather than preserved in isolation. Later scholars, including Pierre Nora, have drawn attention to the transformation of lived memory into *lieux de mémoire*, sites where memory is crystallised precisely because it is no longer organically transmitted. In the context of World War II, museums, memorials, archives, and commemorative rituals have become essential custodians of historical transmission, ensuring factual accuracy and ethical responsibility.

At the same time, historical scholarship, from Marc Bloch to Carlo Ginzburg, from microhistory to contemporary memory studies, has shown that the past cannot be reduced to a single narrative or perspective. History is plural, layered, and often fragmented. It is precisely within these tensions, between evidence and interpretation, between absence and presence, that contemporary art finds a productive space of intervention.

Art does not compete with history, nor does it seek to replace it. Rather, it operates in a different epistemological register. Where historiography strives for critical distance and methodological rigor, artistic practice engages with affect, intuition, and ambiguity. Art allows what Paul Ricoeur described as a "hermeneutics of memory", a mode of understanding that acknowledges both the necessity of remembrance and its inherent incompleteness.

Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, artists have repeatedly returned to the legacy of war as a way of confronting loss, silence, and the limits of representation. From post-war abstraction and conceptual practices to contemporary installation, and participatory art, artistic responses to conflict have often focused less on depicting events than on addressing their afterlives: traces, ruins, absences, and inherited memories. In this sense, art becomes a space where historical time and present experience intersect.

However, this transition from history to contemporary art did not happen easily, as the subject matter is profoundly painful and the leap from written testimony to aesthetic form seemed insurmountable. The question arose very soon after the war and can be summed up as follows: can one create art *after* Auschwitz? The term is used here metaphorically to designate the Final Solution, even though the site itself represents only part of the historical reality of deportation, extermination, and the war more broadly. This initial interrogation was followed by another question, one that concerns us more directly here: can one create art *with* Auschwitz? We recall the debate sparked by the exhibition *Mémoire des camps*, which raised the issue of using historical photographs of the camps within contemporary artworks. Over the decades, contemporary art has established

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itself as a possible response, and it has even become a desirable one, particularly as the generation of witnesses disappears and we move from a living, historical memory to a cultural memory.

The project's artists have been able to work within a path already opened by their predecessors, such as Anselm Kiefer, Zoran Mušič, or Miroslaw Balka. Ultimately, contemporary art serves the historical narrative by offering an essential contribution: by bringing the artist's sensitivity and perspective, it respects the sites, the sources, and the witnesses. From this principle, the conceptual and material horizon expands considerably, making use of contemporary media such as video and, above all, combining them in an alchemy that the visitor ultimately experiences as natural.

As the decades passed, contemporary art established itself as a possible response, and even a necessary one, in the face of the disappearance of the generation of witnesses, at this crucial moment of transition from historical memory to cultural memory.

Ultimately, contemporary art serves the historical narrative by making an essential contribution, provided that, while enveloping it in the artist's sensitivity and perspective, it respects the sites, the sources, and the witnesses. Starting from this premise, the conceptual and material horizon expands considerably, through the use of contemporary media such as video and, above all, by combining them in an alchemy that visitors will ultimately experience as natural.

Art of Remembrance situates itself within this lineage. The exhibition emerges from a conviction that remembrance sites are not only places of preservation, but also spaces of dialogue, capable of hosting new forms of interpretation without compromising historical integrity. By inviting artists into four distinct sites of World War II memory, the project proposes a model of engagement rooted in immersion, research, and encounter.

The residencies at the Sybir Memorial Museum, La Coupole, the Nuto Revelli Foundation in Paraloup, and Bastogne offered artists access not only to archives and collections, but also to landscapes, testimonies, and local narratives. Each site carries its own historical specificity (among others; deportation, occupation, resistance, liberation), yet together they form a constellation of experiences that reflect the complexity of Europe's wartime past.
The works presented in this catalogue do not seek to illustrate history or to offer didactic conclusions. Instead, they function as interpretive acts, translations of historical material into contemporary visual, spatial, and conceptual languages. They invite viewers to reflect on what remains visible and what has disappeared, on how memory is transmitted across generations, and on the role of art in sustaining ethical engagement with the past.

In bringing together contemporary artistic practices and sites of historical remembrance, Art of Remembrance affirms that memory is not only something to be safeguarded, but something to be continually re-examined. It is in this ongoing process, between history and art, knowledge and experience, that remembrance remains alive.

Introduction

About the project

Art of Remembrance is a transnational artistic project that combines contemporary creation, historical research, and public presentation. Its core activity consisted of four artist residencies hosted at World War II remembrance sites in Poland, France, Italy, and Belgium. The artists, selected via an open call by an international jury, were invited to engage during their residencies with archives, collections, landscapes, and local expertise, developing site-specific works in close dialogue with historians, curators, and local communities.

Beyond the residencies themselves, the project unfolded through several complementary activities. A curatorial framework was developed to accompany and connect the individual artistic processes, ensuring coherence while preserving artistic autonomy. Opportunities of exchange between the artists were organised throughout the project, fostering dialogue across practices, sites, and national contexts.

The artworks produced during the residencies were brought together in a travelling exhibition, conceived to circulate between the partner institutions and beyond. This exhibition format allows the works to be encountered in different geographical and historical settings, reinforcing the project's transnational dimension and encouraging comparative reflection on memory and history.

In parallel, the project included public presentations and mediation activities, as well as the production of a dedicated publication and digital content. Together, these elements form a multi-layered approach to remembrance, combining artistic creation, historical context, and public engagement within a shared European framework.

Sybir Memorial Museum, in Białystok, Poland (c) Sybir Memorial Museum

The Residencies

At the heart of Art of Remembrance lies the conviction that artistic engagement with historical memory cannot be reduced to distant observation or purely archival research. The project therefore chose the residency as its central working method, privileging time, presence, and encounter as essential conditions for creation.

Residencies at sites of remembrance offer artists more than access to historical sources. They create the possibility of inhabiting a place shaped by history, walking its landscapes, sensing its material traces, and encountering the institutions and individuals entrusted with preserving its memory. In this context, history is not only something to be studied, but something that is felt, observed, and negotiated in situ.

Each of the four host sites embodies a distinct chapter of World War II history: deportation and forced displacement, occupation and technological warfare, resistance and civilian engagement, liberation and its aftermath. By situating artists within these environments, the project encouraged an engagement with history that is at once grounded and specific, attentive to local narratives while remaining open to broader European resonances.

A key dimension of the residency process was dialogue. Artists were invited to meet historians, archivists, curators, educators, and members of the local community. These encounters allowed historical knowledge to circulate beyond institutional frameworks, revealing personal memories, ethical questions, and unresolved tensions that continue to shape how the past is remembered today. Such exchanges reinforced the idea that remembrance is not static, but continuously constructed through conversation and interpretation.

Equally central to the project was the decision to invite artists to work in countries other than their own. This deliberate displacement introduced a productive distance, one that enabled artists to approach each site without the weight of national familiarity, inherited narratives, or commemorative routines. As outsiders, the artists brought with them different cultural references, historical sensibilities, and artistic languages, allowing new questions to emerge.

This external approach does not aim to override local perspectives, but to place them in relation to other experiences of the war. In doing so, Art of Remembrance embraces a multiperspective approach to memory, one that acknowledges the plurality of histories while resisting the temptation of a unified or simplified narrative. The residency becomes a space of translation, where local memory is refracted through individual artistic sensibilities shaped by transnational experience.

The works presented in this exhibition are the outcome of this process: not as direct representations of historical events, but as responses shaped by immersion, dialogue, and reflection. The residency framework allowed time for hesitation, doubt, and reinterpretation.

By grounding artistic creation in place, while simultaneously opening it to external perspectives, Art of Remembrance proposes a model of remembrance that is both situated and open, rooted and relational. It is within this tension that contemporary art can contribute to keeping historical memory alive, not as a closed chapter, but as an ongoing question.

Exhibition

Rather than approaching the Second World War as a closed historical chapter, Art of Remembrance engages with memory as an ongoing, fragile, and contested process. The exhibition is grounded in the conviction that remembrance is shaped not only by official narratives or monumental forms, but also by material traces, intimate gestures, and modes of attention that persist across time. Contemporary art is here understood as a space in which these residual forms of memory can be held, reactivated, and critically examined.

Across the exhibition, artists turn their attention to what has endured rather than what has disappeared. Trees bearing scars of explosions, growth rings infused with shrapnel, underground architectures reclaimed by clay and vegetation, diaries written in extremis, songs and gestures transmitted across generations, domestic objects repurposed for survival. These elements form a quiet but insistent vocabulary. Memory emerges not as a fixed narrative, but as a layered process shaped by care, repetition, material persistence, and transformation.

A recurring thread is the tension between visibility and invisibility. Several works foreground what usually escapes monumental forms of commemoration: quiet acts of remembrance carried out within families, women's roles in resistance and survival, non-human witnesses such as animals and landscapes, and the slow temporalities through which trauma is absorbed and transmitted.

By working at a human or intimate scale, the artists resist heroic representation, favouring proximity, attention, and embodied experience.

The works are striking in many ways, but above all because they reveal the extent to which civilians were affected in their personal environments. These works cast a powerful light on a shared experience of war, lived across Europe and unfolding in multiple dimensions.

The exhibition also reflects on the ethics of representation. Faced with histories of extreme violence, the artists avoid direct depiction of atrocity. Instead, they employ suggestion and metaphor, allowing viewers to encounter memory through affective and perceptual engagement rather than didactic explanation. In doing so, the works open spaces for reflection that are both personal and collective.

Art of Remembrance does not seek to unify Europe's wartime past into a single narrative. On the contrary, it embraces plurality and difference, acknowledging that remembrance is shaped by geography, culture, and generational position. The exhibition proposes contemporary art as a space where these multiple histories can coexist, where memory is not resolved, but held, questioned, and kept in motion.

Rebekka Bauer

Residency Site: Paraloup, Nuto Revelli Foundation, Italy

Rebekka Bauer is a German visual artist whose work spans photography, installation, text, performance, and artist publications. She lives and works in Munich and Leipzig. Her practice is rooted in an exploration of memory culture, with a strong focus on personal and intergenerational history. Often working with archival materials, found objects, and autobiographical references, Bauer examines how intimate experiences intersect with broader historical forces – especially those related to the legacy of the Second World War.

Bauer studied stage design and fine art in Salzburg, Vienna, and Leipzig, and her works have been presented in numerous exhibitions and festivals in Germany, Austria, and other parts of Europe. She has also published multiple artist books and contributions in collaborative publications. Her projects often delve into the affective textures of family memory, with attention to gender, care, and the domestic sphere, translating complex emotional narratives into tactile and spatial forms.

Website
http://www.rebekkabauer.de/

Artistic Process and Residency Experience

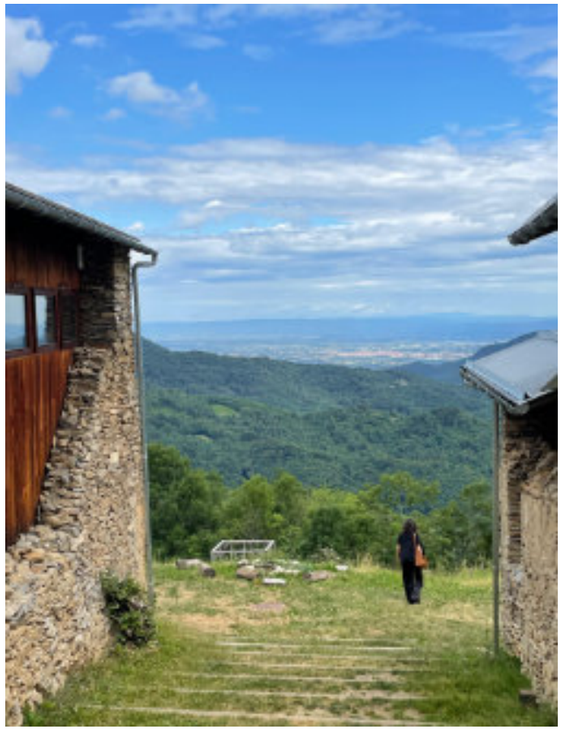
Rebekka Bauer's residency in Paraloup was shaped by a sustained engagement with the mountain landscape, local antifascist memory work, and the biographies of women involved in the Italian Resistance. The remoteness of the site fostered both solitude and interdependence, a condition Bauer identifies as central to understanding partisan life in the mountains, where autonomy and collective reliance coexisted. Time spent living and working in Paraloup allowed her to experience this tension directly, informing a practice attentive to rhythm, repetition, and everyday gestures.

Encounters with historians, families of former partisans, and members of the cooperative active in Paraloup played a central role in her process. Rather than approaching the site as a fixed historical location, Bauer treated it as a living environment shaped by continuous acts of care, maintenance, and transmission. These contemporary practices of collective life became inseparable from her historical research, reinforcing her interest in forms of resistance that unfold outside heroic narratives.

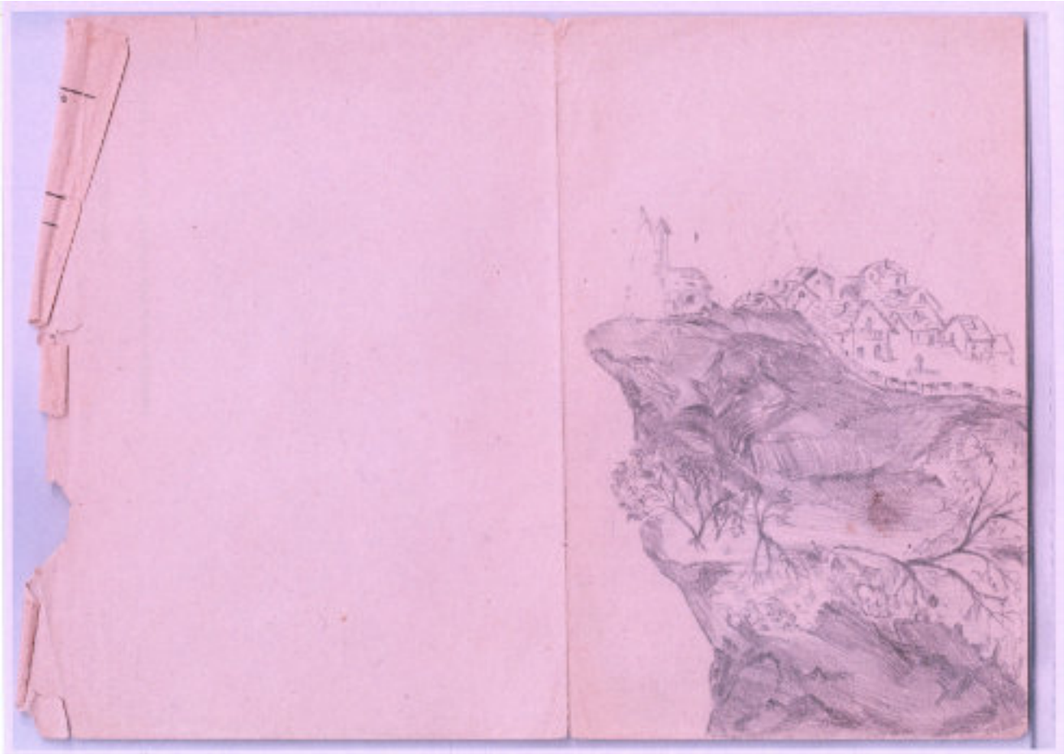
Central to Bauer's research was the figure of Lidia Beccaria Rolfi, partisan, deportee to Ravensbrück, and later a public witness. Through diaries, drawings, correspondence, and family photographs, Bauer examined how remembrance extends far beyond the wartime period, sustained through decades of testimony, education, and emotional labour. Particular attention was given to Rolfi's writings produced during her imprisonment, where learning, imagination, and attention to everyday life functioned as strategies of survival. For Bauer, these practices reveal resistance not only as an act of opposition, but as a long-term commitment to care, responsibility, and relational endurance.

Throughout the residency, Bauer combined archival research with walking, observation, and material collection. Allowing distance and reflection to shape the final form of the work, she approached artistic production as a slow process in which historical material, personal encounter, and contemporary ecological concerns gradually converged.

Rebekka Bauer during her residency in Paraloup Italy (c) Nuto Revelli Foundation, 2025



The Artists



Rebbekka Bauer, Holding a pencil (2026)

Lidia Beccaria's original diary

The Artwork

Bearing Lidia Beccaria Rolfi is an installation work composed of drawings, photographic images, text, glass, and organic materials. The installation unfolds in three interconnected elements, each addressing different dimensions of memory, care, and resistance.

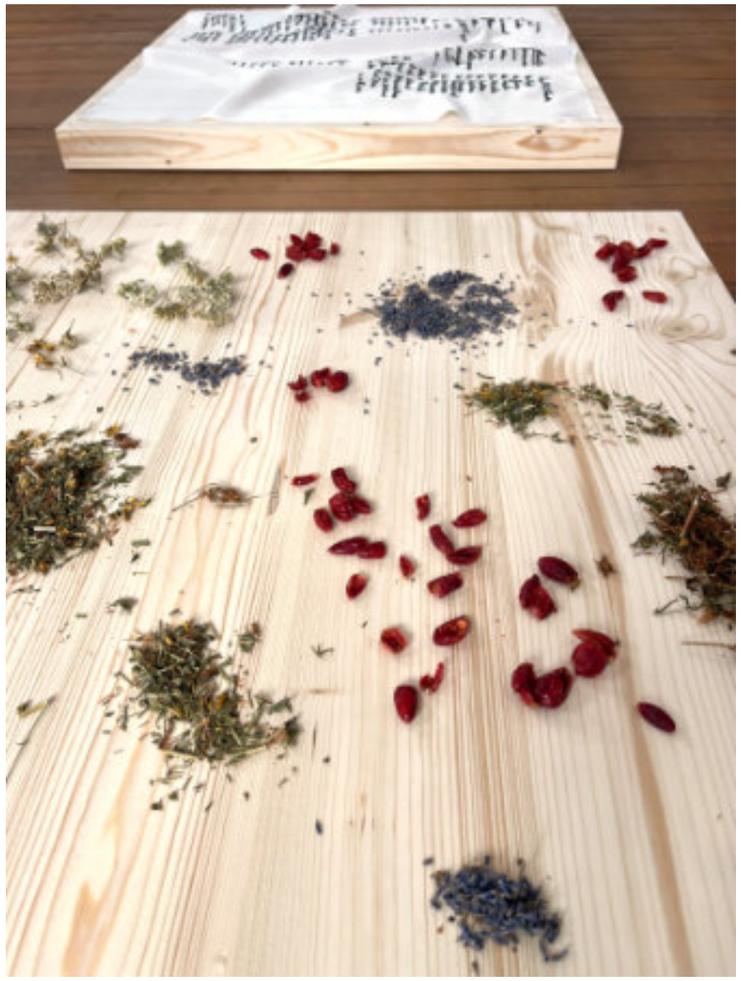
Holding a pencil presents reproductions of drawings made by Lidia Beccaria Rolfi during her imprisonment in Ravensbrück. These imagined landscapes, often resembling the Piedmont region she came from, functioned as mental refuges and survival strategies. Printed on A3 paper in soft, translucent colors, the drawings are displayed in a non-monumental manner, emphasizing vulnerability, ephemerality, and the provisional nature of memory.

Stratum, Substratum consists of photographs from the Rolfi family archive, screen-printed onto colored, mouth-blown glass plates with deliberately broken edges. The images show Lidia Beccaria Rolfi at different stages of her life, alongside fellow survivors with whom she maintained lifelong bonds. Installed upright on the floor, the glass plates evoke both the intimacy of private archives and the precariousness of memory. This reflects the fragility of transmission and the continuous labor required to keep remembrance alive.

Tissue centers on a handwritten text from Lidia Beccaria Rolfi's diary, listing days of the week, domestic spaces, verbs, and foods in French and German. Enlarged and placed on a plinth on the floor, the text recalls her effort to learn the language of the oppressor as a pragmatic act of survival, while also expressing hunger and longing. Next to it, herbs and plants collected at the Paraloup site are carefully arranged. These materials, selected for their healing, symbolic, and nutritional qualities, connect historical experiences of deprivation with practices of nourishment, and ecological knowledge.

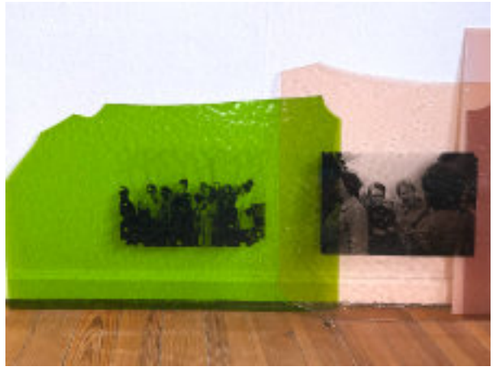
Together, the elements form a quiet yet insistent constellation that foregrounds women's work, learning, and care as political practices. Rather than representing resistance through heroic gestures, Bauer's installation emphasizes persistence, intimacy, and everyday acts as fundamental forms of resistance, both in the past and in the present.

The Artists



Rebekka Bauer, Tragkraft
(Carrying capacity) (2026)

Rebekka Bauer, Tissue (2026)



Rebekka Bauer, Stratum, Substratum (2026)

Raphaël Dallaporta

Residency Site: Bastogne, Belgium

Raphaël Dallaporta is a French artist and photographer known for his rigorous, research-driven approach to contemporary visual art. Drawing on archaeology, history, and science, he collaborates closely with researchers to develop visual protocols that transform hidden or forgotten objects and territories into still lifes and landscapes.

He studied at the Ecole des Gobelins de l'image in Paris and later at Fabrica in Italy and was a resident of the Villa Medici (French Academy in Rome). Raphaël Dallaporta's work has been widely exhibited internationally and is held in major public collections, including the Centre Pompidou, the Maison Européenne de la Photographie (Paris), Photo Elysée (Lausanne), the New York Public Library, and the Getty Center (Los Angeles).

His projects range from large-scale immersive films to time-based installations rooted in photographic investigation, and his monographic publications have received significant critical acclaim. Working across media, Dallaporta consistently challenges viewers to reconsider the relationship between technological progress and human evolution.

Website
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Artistic Process and Residency Experience

Raphaël Dallaporta approached his residency at the Bastogne War Museum as a slow, site-based investigation rooted in the landscapes of the Belgian Ardennes. His guiding question was: what remains when human witnesses have disappeared? As if naturally so, trees – along roadsides or forests on former battlefields – have asserted themselves as central figures in his research. As living, silent presences, they bear history inscribed not through narrative, but through matter.

Working outward from the Bastogne War Museum, Dallaporta explored multiple sites marked by the final phase of the Second World War. In a region where military history and heroic narratives remain strongly present, he deliberately sought to shift attention away from feats of arms toward anonymous, often overlooked forms of testimony. Close collaboration with the museum's team and local experts allowed him to build trust, access archives, and move fluidly between historical research, fieldwork, and artistic experimentation.

At the *Bois du Beleu*, Dallaporta investigated the launch, on 8 September 1944, of the first operational V2 rocket, an event that simultaneously marked the violent birth of the space age and the death of seven civilians in the Paris suburbs. On this former secret launch site, he photographed two centenarian conifers whose asymmetric growth still bears the scars of the fire caused by the rocket launch. The trees' discreet deformations link a biological stress embedded in wood to a decisive rupture in human history: a weapon of war that would later underpin space exploration.

At the *Bois Jacques* battlefield, Dallaporta turned his attention to contemporary gestures of remembrance. Here, no trees date back to the fighting itself; all have regrown since. Instead, visitors spontaneously assemble crosses from fallen branches, inscribing their own acts of memory into the landscape. These fragile, anonymous rituals became a key focus of his work.

Archival research also played a central role. An aerial photograph taken in January 1945, showing the village of Bizory during the final phase of the Battle of the Bulge, prompted reflection on distance, abstraction and the military gaze. Encounters with historians, forest rangers, school groups, and visitors shaped a practice attentive to dialogue, transmission, and shared presence. Throughout the residency, Dallaporta understood each gesture, photographing, collecting, cutting wood, or designing commemorative moments, as part of a broader effort to render a traumatised territory inhabitable again.

Raphaël Dallaporta working on his *War Tree* project (c) Raphaël Dallaporta, 2025

André Wangen, last living eyewitness of the first V2 launch on 8 September 1944, photographed at Bois du Beleu in 2025.

1944 archive photo of a two-tone camouflaged V2 rocket.

Raphaël Dallaporta, Space Age Dawn (L'aube de l'ère spatiale) 2025

Raphaël Dallaporta, Stations of the Cross (Chemin de croix) 2025

The Artwork

The works produced by Raphaël Dallaporta form a set of photographic pieces and sculptural elements that treat the Ardennes landscape as a living archive of war. Rather than monumentalising conflict, the works reveal how violence persists through time in subtle, often invisible ways, embedded in trees, soil, and images.

In *Space Age Dawn* (*L'aube de l'ère spatiale*), two piezographic prints depict century-old conifers standing on the former V2 launch site of the Bois du Beleu. Their asymmetrical growth patterns are the lasting traces of the fire caused by the rocket launch on 8 September 1944. These images place the fragile lives of two trees in relation to a major technological threshold: the first human-made object to reach space, achieved through a weapon of war. The photographs displace the narrative of progress from machinery to living matter, allowing time itself to register history.

Stations of the Cross (*Chemin de croix*) consists of fourteen piezographic prints documenting improvised wooden crosses assembled by visitors in the Bois Jacques battlefield. Made from branches gathered on site, these modest memorials form a contemporary ritual rooted in nature. Structured as a sequence of fourteen "stations," the series situates Dallaporta's work within the continuity of these anonymous gestures, where remembrance is enacted through repetition rather than fixed form.

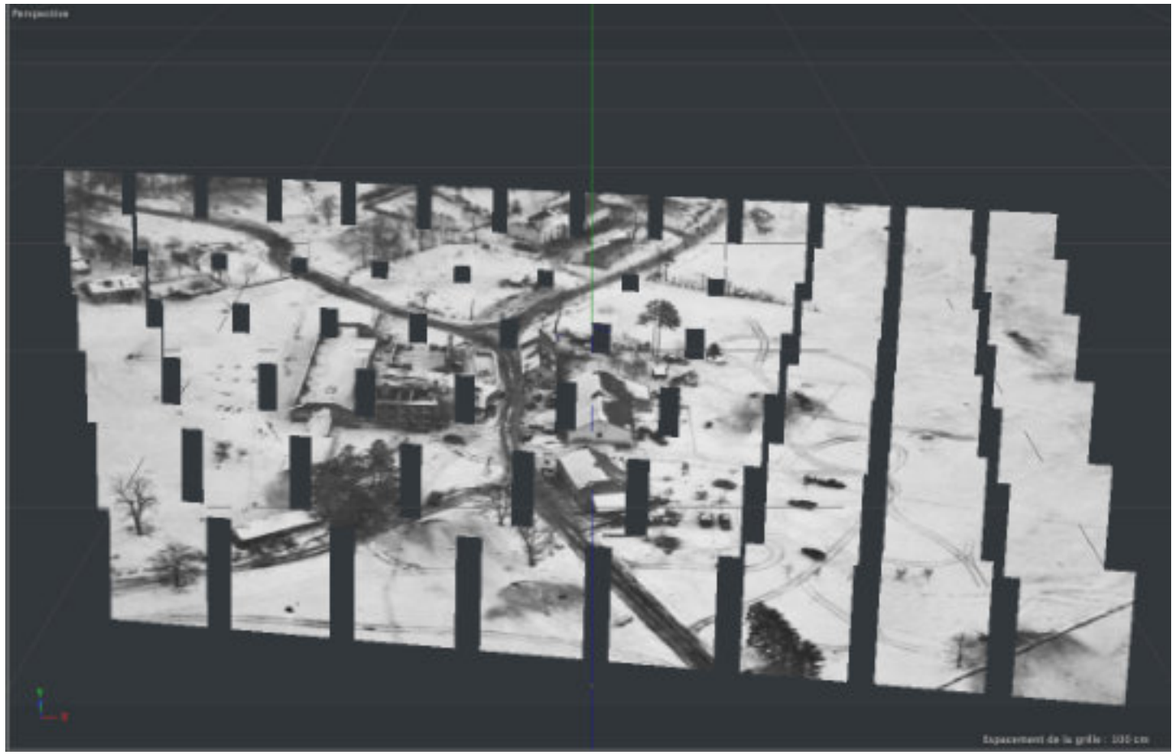
In *War Tree* (*Arbre de guerre*), Dallaporta presents a section of an oak trunk containing shrapnel embedded during the fighting of 1944–1945. Barely perceptible from the outside, the metal fragments are revealed through the cut surface of the wood, where bluish oxidation runs along the growth rings. The work exposes a memory inscribed deep within matter, transforming the tree into a silent witness and a natural record of time, violence, and regeneration.

Finally, *Bizory (1945)* reinterprets a wartime aerial photograph as a fragmented installation composed of sixty-three framed prints aligned on the floor. The image can only be reconstructed through the viewer's movement, as shifting distance and perspective gradually reassemble the landscape. This transformation turns a strategic military image into a physical, perceptual experience, where history is no longer observed from above but rebuilt step by step through proximity and attention.

Across these works, Dallaporta foregrounds duration, anonymity, and material persistence. By engaging trees, through archives and landscapes as witnesses, his practice proposes remembrance as an attentive act, one that listens to what continues to grow, endure, and silently transmit history long after violence has passed.

The Artists

Raphaël Dallaporta, War Tree
(Arbre de guerre), studio view and detail, 2025.



Raphaël Dallaporta, Bizory (1945) (2025)

Dating from January 1945, this aerial view of Bizory shows the village
being crossed by vehicles from the U.S. 6th Armored Division @ NARA

Juhana Moisander

Residency Site: Sybir Memorial Museum, Poland

Juhana Moisander is a Finnish artist whose practice centers on immersive video installations that integrate sound, performance, and scenographic design. His work investigates the psychological dimensions of collective memory, cultural myths, and social rituals, often drawing on references from art history, religion, and folklore. Moisander creates carefully composed, atmospheric environments where viewers are invited to reflect on the emotional and symbolic undercurrents of shared human experience.

He holds degrees in fine arts and media studies from institutions in Finland and has exhibited extensively in Finnish museums and international venues. His works have been featured in solo exhibitions at EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Mikkeli Art Museum, Gallery Hippolyte, and others, and are held in several public collections. Moisander's approach blends choreographed movement and audiovisual elements into multi-layered compositions that explore the tensions between past and present, power and vulnerability, individual and group.

Website
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Artistic Process and Residency Experience

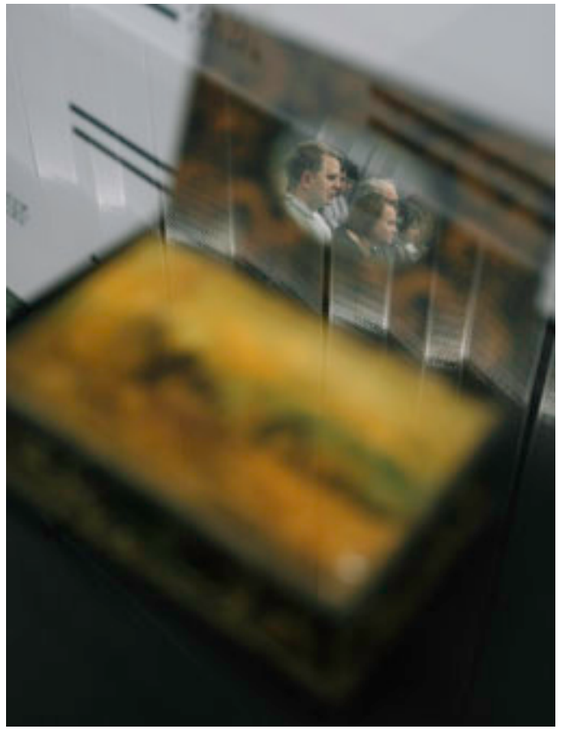
Juhana Moisander's residency at the Sybir Memorial Museum in Białystok unfolded through a close engagement with a site marked by successive histories of deportation, displacement, and violence. The museum focuses on the fate of local populations deported to Siberia under Soviet rule and later subjected to Nazi occupation, histories that resonate strongly with Moisander's own background as a descendant of Karelian evacuees. This parallel between Polish and Finnish wartime experiences provided an important conceptual anchor for his work.

Moisander approached the residency through a combination of historical research, architectural observation, and artistic experimentation. His first visit to Białystok in summer 2025 allowed him to explore the museum's collections and discuss possible themes with the curatorial team, crystallising the core idea of the work. A second stay in late 2025 was dedicated to filming and testing installation possibilities within the museum context. Throughout the process, the artist was attentive to the political sensitivity of remembrance in Poland, where narratives of martyrdom and heroism remain strongly charged. Out of respect for local audiences, he deliberately avoided direct representation of horror, choosing instead to work through suggestion, symbolism, and emotional resonance.

Central to Moisander's methodology is the use of video, sound, and spatial composition as a unified, site-responsive whole. During the residency, he collaborated closely with a local actress and her young son, rehearsing and filming a restrained, intimate scene that draws on everyday gestures and interaction. The working process was deliberately slow and adaptive, shaped by the rhythms of the child's presence and by repeated reflection on how image, sound, and space can convey historical trauma without illustrating it directly.

The residency thus became a space for careful translation: between personal and collective histories, between past and present, and between culturally specific references and a broader European visual language.

Juhana Moisander during his residency at the Sybir Memorial Museum, Poland (c) Sybir Memorial Museum, 2025



Juhana Moisander, MATKA (2025)

The Artwork

MATKA is a video installation designed to be adaptable to different architectural contexts. The title carries a double meaning: in Polish, matka means “mother,” while in Finnish it signifies “journey.” This linguistic coincidence, discovered by Moisander through archival testimony at the Sybir Memorial Museum, became the conceptual starting point for the work. In one deportee’s account, the rhythmic sound of a departing train was described as repeating the word ”mat-ka”, linking maternal presence, forced travel, and loss.

At the center of the installation is a filmed scene of a mother holding her child, a composition referencing the *Pietà*. Rather than replicating the religious motif, Moisander uses it as a visual point of entry deeply embedded in Polish cultural memory. The figures are rendered at human scale and projected within a darkened, enclosed space, encouraging an intimate encounter between the viewer and the image. The stillness of the scene, combined with subtle bodily movement, evokes care, vulnerability, and suspended time.

Sound plays a crucial role in the work. Moisander draws on the tradition of children’s songs and lullabies as carriers of collective memory and emotional resilience. The installation incorporates a well-known Polish lullaby whose gentle form conceals unsettling narrative turns, echoing the sudden rupture of deportation and the collapse of familiar logic. Sound functions not as an illustration but as an emotional interface, connecting individual experience to historical displacement.

Rather than presenting historical events directly, *MATKA* addresses the aftermath of war through metaphor, repetition, and affect. With the combination of maternal imagery, song, and spatial containment, the installation reflects on how trauma is transmitted across generations and how memory persists in bodies, rhythms, and language. The work proposes remembrance as a shared, fragile space, one shaped as much by care and presence as by loss.

Gail Ritchie

Residency Site: La Coupole, France

Gail Ritchie is a Northern Irish visual artist based in Belfast. Her practice explores the emotional impact of conflict, memory, and loss through a combination of drawing, sculpture, installation, and research. With academic training in both political science and fine art, Ritchie brings a multidisciplinary perspective to her work, investigating how histories are internalized and remembered across time. Her approach is deeply reflective and often engages with archival materials, personal narratives, and spatial environments that hold symbolic or emotional weight.

Ritchie's work has been exhibited widely across the United Kingdom, Ireland, and internationally, including in exhibitions and projects focusing on remembrance, military experience, and the Troubles. Her long-standing interest in the ways memory is shaped by place and material culture continues to inform her evolving body of work. Her work is held in collections such as the National Museums of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Government Collection. In 2025, Gail Ritchie received the Major Individual Artist Award from the Arts Council Northern Ireland in recognition of her artistic practice.

Website
http://www.gailritchie.com/

Artistic Process and Residency Experience

Gail Ritchie's residency at La Coupole was shaped by prolonged immersion in a site where architecture, technology, and violence converge. From her first encounter with the monumental underground structure, the scale and density of the site, its tunnels, archives, and surrounding landscape, became central to her research. Rather than following a linear path, Ritchie adopted an open and exploratory working method, allowing ideas to emerge gradually through repeated visits, observation, and creation.

Having access to the archives and to closed sections of the tunnels, as well as to the expertise of the La Coupole team, enabled her to move between historical material, architectural experience, and contemporary interpretation. Her daily presence on site, travelling from Saint-Omer, working in a small studio within the museum, and observing visitors, anchored the residency not only in research but also in lived experience.

A recurring tension in Ritchie's engagement with La Coupole was the coexistence of opposing narratives: scientific ambition and forced labour, technological progress and human suffering, dreams of space exploration and the realities of exploitation. The archive revealed fragments that resonated deeply, from Maurice Bourdon's recipe notebook, an act of imaginative survival under deprivation, to photographs of Hector, a laboratory rat sent into space and later killed. These encounters sharpened her interest in how lives, human and non-human, are shaped, instrumentalised, and transformed by systems of power.

Time and transformation emerged as key structuring concepts. The site itself has undergone multiple transformations, from quarry to rocket base, from bombed ruin to museum reclaimed by nature. Ritchie's residency allowed her to think through these layers slowly, letting materials, metaphors, and questions accumulate. Her process, rooted in drawing, modelling, and assemblage, treated creation as a form of thinking: provisional, associative, and attentive to the unresolved nature of memory.

Gail Ritchie during her residency at La Coupole, France (c) Gail Ritchie and La Coupole, 2025

Gail Ritchie, Hector (In Memorium 1961) (2026)

The Artwork

Ritchie's works developed during the residency form an interconnected body of drawings, sculptures, and assemblages that reflect on transformation, vulnerability, and what she describes as "creaturely life", existence subjected to forces beyond one's control. Rather than producing a single monument, her practice embraces intimacy of scale and material sensitivity as a way of commemorating lives rendered invisible.

Several works draw directly from archival material. *The Party* (*La fête*) consists of a ceramic plate referencing a decorative object linked to Nazi Germany, partially repainted using the camouflage colours of the V2 rocket. Placed on a plinth and accompanied by an aluminium egg, the work juxtaposes domestic decoration, militarised aesthetics, and Maurice Bourdon's imaginative recipe writing, where culinary fantasy functioned as resistance under conditions of deprivation.

In *Hector (In memorium 1961)*, a life-sized aluminium rat wearing an anti-gravity suit is suspended in space. Based on an archival photograph, the sculpture memorialises Hector, a laboratory animal used in the French space programme and later dissected. Ritchie draws a parallel between Hector's fate and that of forced labourers at La Coupole, both treated as expendable bodies without agency, instrumentalised in the name of progress.

The drawing series *Crater / Creatura* explores different forms of voids and wounds: the tunnels beneath La Coupole, the bombed wartime landscape, the cratered surface of the moon, and an egg-shaped imprint formed by dropping an egg into concrete powder. Together, the drawings connect geological, architectural, and bodily forms of rupture, linking terrestrial and celestial landscapes to histories of violence and aspiration.

Macha is an assemblage of a taxidermy crow, a wire nest made from industrial scrap, and a concrete egg. It extends these reflections into the realm of reuse and survival. Referencing both resistance iconography and the contemporary wildlife reclaiming the site, the work brings together fragility, adaptation, and endurance.

Across these works, Ritchie resists monumentalisation. Instead, she foregrounds transformation, material re-use, and small-scale gestures as ways of addressing historical violence. Her practice attends to the lingering scars left on bodies, landscapes, and memories, proposing commemoration as an ongoing, attentive process rather than a fixed form.

The Artists

Gail Ritchie, The Party (La Fête) (2026)

Gail Ritchie, Macha (detail). Aluminium nest with concrete egg. (2026)

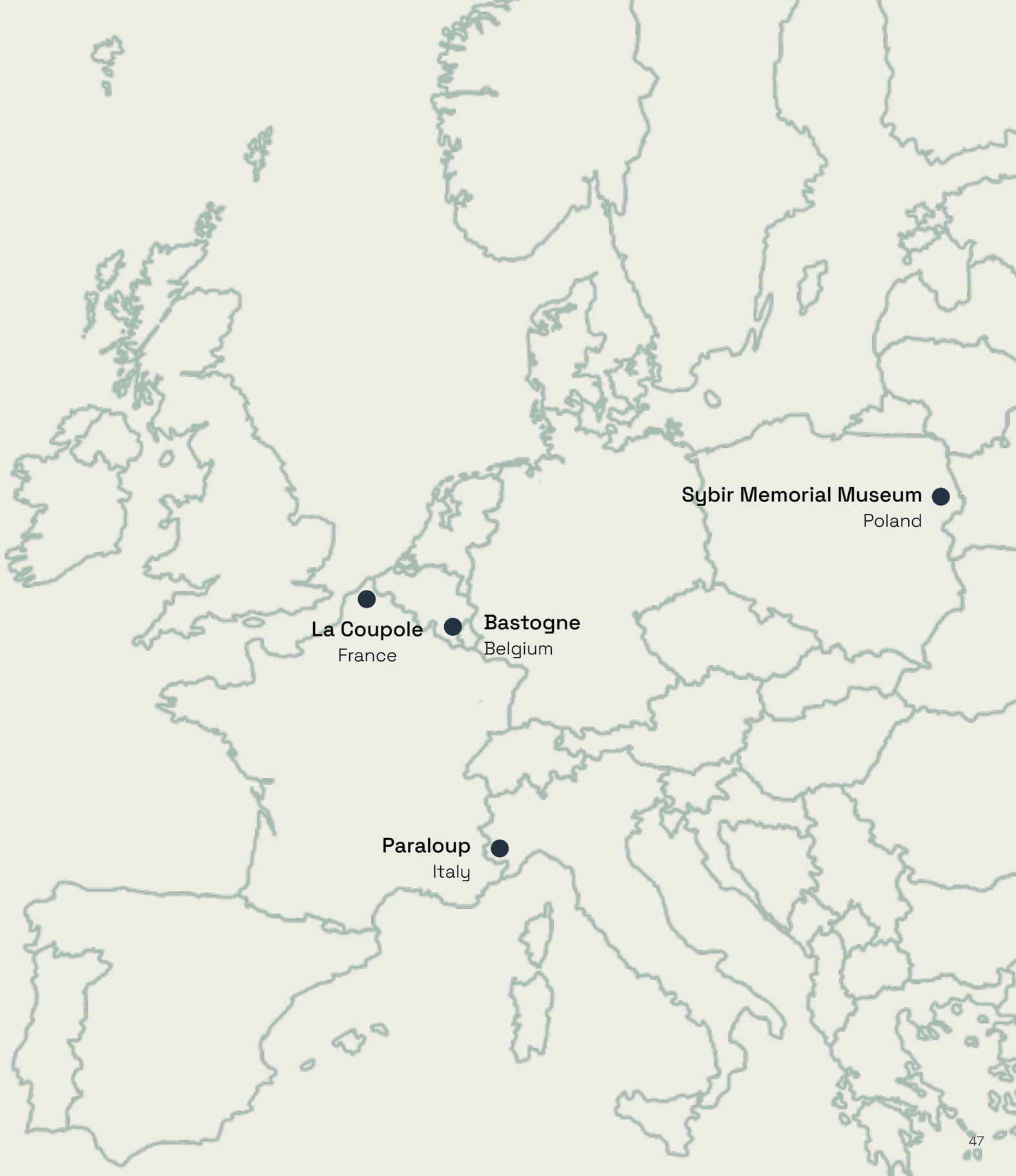
Gail Ritchie, Landscape of War. Pencil on paper. (2026)

The Sites of Memory

Hosting sites

The sites presented in this section are not neutral backdrops, but active spaces where history continues to resonate. Each of them carries a specific wartime past, shaped by resistance, deportation, occupation, or violence, while also being embedded in contemporary practices of remembrance, research, and transmission.

By hosting the artist residencies, these sites became places of encounter between historical knowledge and contemporary artistic practice. Their landscapes, architectures, and archives informed the works presented in the exhibition, grounding artistic responses in material reality and lived memory. Together, they illustrate how sites of memory function not only as repositories of the past, but as evolving spaces where remembrance is continually reactivated and reinterpreted.



Paraloup - Nuto Revelli Foundation

Exhibition: April-May 2026

Description
Paraloup, restored and managed by the Nuto Revelli Foundation, is dedicated to preserving the memory of the Italian Resistance and promoting dialogue about the values of justice, inclusion, and freedom. The site serves as a cultural and educational hub, connecting history with contemporary issues through exhibitions, workshops, and public events. The Nuto Revelli Foundation, named after the writer and partisan leader Nuto Revelli, extends this mission by fostering research, community engagement, and artistic expression. Paraloup offers visitors the chance to explore its restored structures, learn about partisan history, and engage with its rich cultural programming. It hosts residencies, lectures, and creative initiatives, ensuring that the lessons of the Resistance remain relevant to new generations. Paraloup is partnering with the Fondazione Polo del 900 who will host the travelling exhibition at its cultural centre in Turin, Italy.

History
Paraloup, a former partisan stronghold located in the Alpine region of Piedmont, Italy, is a site deeply connected to the legacy of the Italian Resistance during World War II. It was here, in the remote and rugged mountains, that the *Italia Libera* brigade gathered to fight against Nazi fascism. These young partisans played a vital role in the struggle for freedom, embodying courage, resilience, and the pursuit of justice.
The site preserves and shares the stories of these individuals, focusing on their efforts to resist oppression and their impact on Italy's liberation. Paraloup also highlights the challenges of life in the mountains during the war, offering insight into the sacrifices and solidarity of those who resisted in these harsh conditions. Today, it stands as a tribute to the enduring spirit of resistance and a reminder of the cost of freedom.

City: Rittana - Cuneo
Country: Italy
Websites: paraloup.it and nutorevelli.org
Address: Località Paraloup – 12010 Rittana (CN) and Corso Carlo Brunet, 1 – 12100 Cuneo (CN)

Photos: Paraloup hamlet and exhibition, Italy (c) Nuto Revelli Foundation

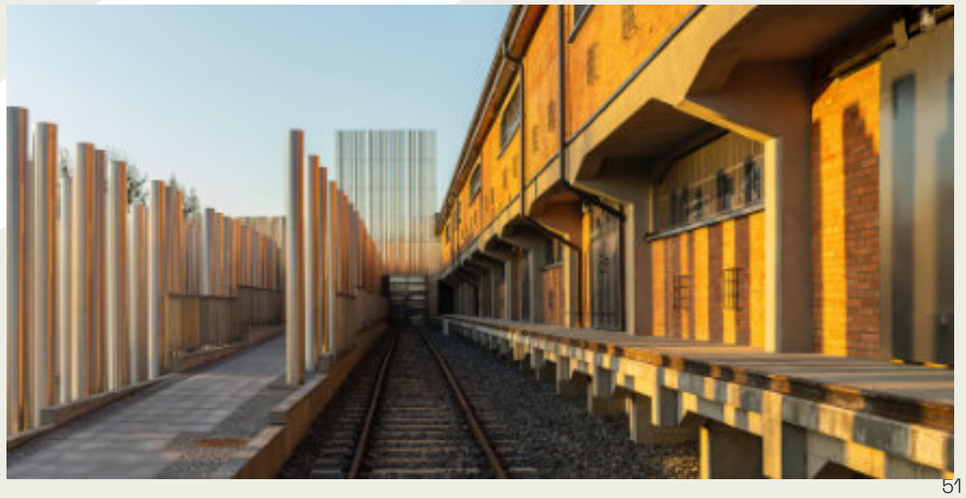
Sybir Memorial Museum

Exhibition: June 2026

Description
The Sybir Memorial Museum is dedicated to documenting and sharing the history of forced deportations from Poland, ensuring that the voices of those affected are heard and remembered. Its mission is to educate visitors about the human cost of political repression and to foster reflection on themes of displacement, resilience, and survival.
The museum features immersive exhibitions, combining historical artifacts, multimedia displays, and personal testimonies to create a moving narrative. It also organizes educational programs, workshops, and commemorative events, offering opportunities for deeper engagement with this challenging history.

History
The Sybir Memorial Museum in Białystok, Poland, represents a profound tribute to the experiences of Polish citizens deported to Siberia and other remote regions under Soviet and Nazi regimes during and after World War II. Located near a historic railway station from which deportations began, the museum tells the stories of forced relocations, survival, and resilience amidst unimaginable hardships.
Through its exhibitions, the museum captures the personal and collective experiences of those sent to labor camps and exile. It sheds light on the complex geopolitical context of the time, highlighting the impact of Soviet and Nazi occupations on Poland and its people. The Sybir Memorial Museum ensures that these stories of suffering, endurance, and hope are preserved for future generations.

City: Białystok
Country: Poland
Websites: sybir.bialystok.pl
Address: Węglowa 1, 15-121 Białystok



Photos: Sybir Memorial Museum, in Białystok, Poland (c) Sybir Memorial Museum

Bastogne

Exhibition: July-August 2026

Description
Bastogne today offers visitors a comprehensive exploration of its wartime history through a network of sites and museums that bring the Battle of the Bulge to life. At the heart of this experience is the Bastogne War Museum, where immersive exhibitions and personal accounts provide a detailed understanding of the events and their impact on soldiers and civilians.
The town's history is further enriched by other key sites that deepen the visitor's experience. The Bastogne War Rooms present a fascinating look at the strategic decisions that shaped the battle, while the 101st Airborne Museum honors the role of the American paratroopers through vivid recreations and historic artifacts.
Bastogne Barracks, a restored military site, provides insights into the logistical efforts that supported the Allied forces, showcasing vehicles and weaponry from the era.
Other sites such as Jack's Wood, the German Cemetery in Recogne and Peace Wood, remain poignant reminders of the intense fighting that took place in the surrounding countryside.

History
Bastogne, located in Belgium's Ardennes region, holds a central place in the history of World War II as a key site during the Battle of the Bulge. This fierce and decisive conflict, fought in the winter of 1944-1945, marked Nazi Germany's final major offensive on the Western Front. Bastogne became a critical target due to its road junctions, which were essential for German forces to advance.
Surrounded and under siege, the town's defenders, including the 101st Airborne Division, faced relentless attacks, brutal winter conditions, and dwindling supplies. Despite these challenges, they held their ground until General Patton's Third Army broke through to liberate Bastogne.

City: Bastogne
Country: Belgium
Website : bastognewarmuseum.be
Address : Colline du Mardasson 5, 6600 Bastogne

Photos:
- Mardasson Memorial, (Battle of the Bulge Memorial) ABMC (c) Bastogne War Museum
- Bastogne War Museum Exhibition (c) Bastogne War Museum
- Bois Jacques, battlefield near Bastogne (c) Bastogne War Museum

La Coupole

Exhibition: September-October 2026

Description

La Coupole's mission is to educate and inspire reflection on the history and the consequences of World War II. The museum preserves the stories of the Nazi occupation, deportations, and the technological ambitions of the war, providing visitors with a deeper understanding of this key period.

The museum features immersive exhibitions, a planetarium linking wartime rocketry to space exploration, and events that engage visitors of all ages. Educational workshops, research opportunities, and a rich archive enhance its role as a center for learning and remembrance. La Coupole offers a meaningful experience for those seeking to understand the complexities of WWII, its human cost, and its enduring impact on the modern world.

History

La Coupole is a powerful symbol of the technological and human dimensions of World War II. Built in 1943-1944 by Nazi Germany, this vast underground bunker was intended as a launch base for V-2 rockets targeting Allied cities. Although it never became operational due to Allied bombings, the site represents the dark intersection of scientific progress and warfare.

The museum also delves into the occupation of Northern France, highlighting the resilience of local communities, the impact of Nazi policies, and the role of forced labor in the construction of the bunker. It further explores the global consequences of the V-2 rocket program, which marked the beginning of modern rocketry and influenced the space age. La Coupole provides a comprehensive view of WWII's legacy, connecting its military, social, and technological aspects.

City: Wizernes
Country: France
Website : lacoupole-france.com
Address : Rue André Clabaux, 62570 Wizernes, France

Photos: La Coupole Exhibition and Bunker (c) La Coupole

Credits

Curator

Isabelle Benoit

French-Swiss exhibition curator and cultural director specializing in historical and artistic projects. After studying political science in France and Germany, she completed a PhD at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, on historical museums and holds a certificate in art law from the University of Geneva. Since joining Tempora in 2006, she has overseen the development of major exhibitions and heritage initiatives across Europe, combining contemporary artistic expression with historical narratives. She contributed to landmark Museum of Europe exhibitions and curated major international art and photography shows. Between 2010 and 2017, she led the design of the permanent exhibition at the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk.

Jury

Prof. Krzysztof Pomian

French-Polish philosopher, historian, and essayist specializing in the history of ideas, museums, and cultural memory. Over his academic career, he taught at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń and served as research director at the Centre National pour la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in Paris. His research explores the relationship between knowledge, collections, and historical consciousness, with particular attention to the role of museums in shaping collective memory. He contributed to the development of the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk as a member of its Scientific Committee. His influential book *The Museum: A World History* examines the evolution of museums as spaces of knowledge, remembrance, and public engagement.

Aurélie Clemente-Ruiz

Museum director and curator currently leading the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. With a background in anthropology, history, and museology, she has built a career developing exhibitions that connect historical perspectives with contemporary societal questions. Before her current role, she headed the museum department at the Institut du Monde Arabe (Paris, France)), where she curated major exhibitions addressing identity, migration, and cultural heritage. Her work emphasizes innovative museum programming and interdisciplinary approaches that engage diverse audiences. Through immersive and reflective exhibition formats, she promotes dialogue between past and present, positioning museums as spaces for critical reflection on cultural diversity, human history, and contemporary global challenges.

Dorothea Schöne

Art historian, curator, and museum director specializing in modern and contemporary art. Since 2016, she has served as Director of Kunsthaus Dahlem in Berlin, a museum dedicated to postwar modernism and its historical context. Her curatorial and scholarly work examines artistic production in relation to cultural memory, 20th-century European history, and museum responsibility. She has collaborated with leading cultural institutions on exhibitions addressing provenance research, restitution, and museum ethics. Combining academic research with public engagement, she promotes interdisciplinary dialogue between art, history, and society. Under her leadership, Kunsthaus Dahlem has become an important platform for critical reflection on historical narratives in contemporary art.

Yevheniia Havrylenko

Art curator, researcher, and cultural manager specializing in contemporary art, museum studies, and international artistic collaboration. Currently Guest Art Curator at Kunsthaus Dahlem in Berlin, she develops exhibitions exploring history, exile, and artistic production shaped by conflict and displacement. She has curated projects for institutions including the City of Cologne, Haus Kunst Mitte, and Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin, focusing on themes of war, migration, and memory. Her projects include exhibitions on Ukrainian artists and artistic responses to war, as well as video art programmes presenting perspectives on displacement and resilience. Prior to working in Germany, she was closely involved with the M17 Contemporary Art Center in Kyiv.

Bram Groenteman

Dutch curator and art historian specializing in modern and contemporary art, exhibition design, and historical memory. He served as Curator at *Nationaal* Monument Oranjehotel in The Hague, a former Second World War prison dedicated to remembrance and resistance history. Previously, he also worked at the Amsterdam Museum, contributing to exhibitions exploring cultural heritage and urban historical narratives. He has collaborated with institutions such as Kunstmuseum Den Haag, the Ludwig Museum Koblenz, and the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas. Holding a Master's degree in Curating Art and Cultures from the University of Amsterdam, his work focuses on heritage interpretation and innovative approaches to public history.

Credits

Project partners
Tempora (Belgium)
LRE Foundation (Netherlands)
Sybir Memorial Museum (Poland)
La Coupole – Centre d'Histoire (France)
Nuto Revelli Foundation, Paraloup (Italy)
City of Bastogne (Belgium)

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