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## **Tunneling through Urban Modernity**

Lanng, Ditte Bendix; Olsen, Tina Vestermann; Wind, Simon

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Holes & Tunnels

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# EDITORIAL

At some point in *Yellow Submarine* (1968, GB, 87'), the Beatles end up trapped in the 'Sea of Holes' and cannot find a way out. Then, thanks to Ringo's genius (he seizes one hole and puts it in his pocket) the band manages to get back to Pepperland. Holes, in their manifold displays, functions, meanings and shapes, are a common feature in cinema, literature and popular culture more generally. In the social sciences and urban studies, however, they remain rather out of sight. This marginal position can be partially explained by the lack of materiality that defines a hole – an empty, interstitial space – and by the merely instrumental function humans often assign to them.

In this issue, we investigate holes and tunnels – kinds of 'prolonged holes' – by highlighting their positive, 'socially productive' function: far from being neutral, irrelevant spaces, holes and tunnels can be regarded as thick spaces, whose atmosphere activates all our senses. Also, holes and tunnels are artefacts that question the usual relation between space and time by constantly reconfiguring it, as they redefine the memory and the perception of places. They are both *conceived* and *lived* spaces, caught in intense social interactions. As core elements in life-stages rituals, holes and tunnels are often at the heart of conflicts and tensions: they can define, amplify, or overturn, social hierarchies, exercising a simultaneously conjunctive and disjunctive function – similar to what Levi-Strauss said of the fog, which connects us while making us mutually invisible.

The first article in this issue, written by one of the two editors, provides a first attempt to draw a phenomenology of holes by highlighting their significant social dimension. Understood in their metaphorical and practical meaning, holes interestingly recall geographer Edward Soja's concept of *thirdspace*. In the second essay, Stef Jansen retraces the story of a specific tunnel, the one dug under the runway of the Sarajevo airport

during the Bosnia-Herzegovina war in the early 1990s. What became known as the 'tunnel of salvation' actually had a more ambivalent function, as Jansen points out: the control over the flow of goods and people through the tunnel cemented an unequal distribution of its benefits in the form of profit and rent, to the point that one should speak, as the author suggests, of a 'tunnel of accumulation'. Through the prism of accumulation, tunnel trade allows insight into the role of retail in a predatory war economy which laid the foundations for lasting structures of inequality and domination in the Bosnian society.

Moving to Lampedusa, that iconic border of Europe, Jacopo Anderlini and Luca Giliberti relate the story of a hole, both real and metaphorical, based on an ethnographic research they have conducted on the small Italian island. At the centre of the story is a breach in the hotspot's fence that allowed migrants to escape and reach the island's main village, especially during times when the detention centre was overcrowded. Until 2020, before the Covid pandemic, the hole in the hotspot fence thus functioned as a 'release valve' for internal tensions at the centre – including riots, etc. – enabling some forms of contact between migrants and local inhabitants. During the pandemic, however, local authorities began major renovation works, which led to the closure of the breach: at that point, the authors argue, the hotspot turned into an actual prison, a locked structure preventing any kind of relationship and porosity between the centre and the rest of the island. According to the authors, this also reveals the pandemic as a key moment for new violent policies and practices of migrant containment.

Another well-known place of walls and tunnels is the Israeli-Palestinian region: Antoine Hirel and Damien Simonneau discuss this situation through the lens of a theatrical play by the Israeli dramatist and director Yuval Rozman,

*Tunnel Boring Machine*. Through the image of the tunnel, a central component of the piece's staging, Rozman creates a 'third space' that reinvents connections and reflects on the fantasy of 'alternative' relationships with neighbouring 'others' – not only in political terms but also as (often illicit) affective and sexual intercourse. Holes and tunnels can have political significance essentially because they have a history. In her essay, Jiayi Jin focuses exactly on the individual and collective memory of underground urban structures, including underground cities built in times of war. It is the case of the Peel Street Caves at Nottingham, UK. A project for the restoration and museification of this kind of spaces, considers Jin, inevitably proceeds through the creation of a connection between the visible and the invisible and the reconstruction of a new collective and individual memory.

A phenomenological and sensory approach to the tunnel is attempted in the essay by Ditte Bendix Lanng, Tina Vestermann Olsen and Simon Wind. The authors deal with a 1970s concrete subway in the outskirts of a Danish city. If we observe the tunnel at bodily scale, the authors write, it exceeds its function as a mere vector for transport: it also becomes a place of 'dwelling', a powerful and ambivalent urban space, magnifying the atmospheric and social intensities, as

people in flow cannot avoid the intensity of meeting locally with other people. The illusion of a frictionless physical space is superseded by the urban reality of the tunnel: the empty space is filled with the intensity of frictions caused by the sensorial and social ambiguity and the common disorder of the city.

In the closing article, Antonello and Jacopo Boschi also deal with urban pedestrian subways, reflecting more generally about their strange relationship to art. In regard to the artistic interventions through which many local administrations often attempt an impossible 'rehabilitation' of these humble spaces, the authors argue that the function of art as a tool for recovering marginal and neglected spaces cannot be imposed managerially; rather, such function can only proceed through an horizontal perspective, as a process that encompasses different social, urban and architectural actors.

In her visual contribution, Léa Byczinski has created for *lo Squaderno* an impactful photographic encounter with the network of tunnels under the Mulhouse market in France that leads us into the dense, dark and damp materiality of urban underground spaces, as well as into their mysteriously quiet atmosphere.

LN & AMB

## EDITORIALE

A un certo punto di *Yellow Submarine* (1968, GB, 87'), in ogni caso verso la fine del film, i quattro Beatles finiscono nel Mare dei Buchi, da cui non riescono a trovare una via d'uscita: solo grazie all'intuizione di Ringo, che prende un buco e se lo infila in tasca, il gruppo riesce finalmente a far ritorno a Pepperland. I buchi, nelle loro molteplici manifestazioni, funzioni, significati e forme sono un elemento spesso presente nel cinema, nella letteratura e in generale nella cultura popolare; e tuttavia rimangono piuttosto fuori campo nelle scienze sociali e negli studi urbani e spaziali. Questa marginalità può essere spiegata, almeno in parte, con l'assenza di materialità – quella di uno spazio vuoto o comunque interstiziale – che definisce i buchi e con la funzione puramente strumentale che

spesso gli esseri umani attribuiscono loro.

In questo numero abbiamo voluto indagare i buchi, e in particolare i tunnel – sorta di "buchi prolungati" – evidenziandone la funzione positiva, intesa come spazialmente produttiva: lungi dall'essere neutri e innocui, buchi e tunnel si costituiscono invece come spazi densi, la cui atmosfera mobilita tutti i nostri sensi. Buchi e tunnel sono artefatti che chiamano in causa la relazione allo spazio e al tempo e la riconfigurano continuamente, ridefinendo la memoria e la percezione dei luoghi. Spazi *pensati* e allo stesso tempo spazi *vissuti*, essi possono essere attraversati da interazioni sociali più o meno intense: elementi centrali nei rituali che scandiscono le fasi della vita umana, buchi e tunnel sono spesso

al centro di conflitti e tensioni sociali; possono definire, amplificare o ribaltare gerarchie, esercitando una funzione contemporaneamente congiuntiva e disgiuntiva — come la nebbia per Levi-Strauss, che unisce proprio mentre rende reciprocamente invisibili.

Il primo articolo di questo numero, scritto da uno dei due curatori, è un tentativo provvisorio di definire una fenomenologia dei buchi evidenziandone la dimensione fortemente sociale: intesi tanto in senso metaforico quanto situato, essi richiamano infatti il concetto di *thirdspace* del geografo Edward Soja. Nel secondo contributo, Stef Jansen ripercorre invece la vicenda di un tunnel specifico, quello che venne scavato sotto la pista dell'aeroporto di Sarajevo durante la guerra in Bosnia ed Erzegovina nei primi anni Novanta. Quel che divenne noto come il "tunnel della salvezza" ebbe in realtà, sottolinea Jansen, una funzione ambivalente: il controllo sul passaggio di merci e persone attraverso il tunnel creò disuguaglianze in termini di profitti e rendite, al punto che si dovrebbe parlare per l'autore di un vero e proprio "tunnel dell'accumulazione". Visto attraverso la lente dell'accumulazione, il commercio attraverso il tunnel "della salvezza" si salda a quella economia predatoria di guerra che pose le basi per durevoli strutture di disuguaglianza e dominazione nella società bosniaca.

Spostandoci a Lampedusa, iconica frontiera d'Europa, Jacopo Anderlini e Luca Giliberti ci raccontano, sulla base su un'etnografia da essi condotta nell'isola, la storia di un buco al tempo stesso reale e metaforico: si tratta — o meglio si trattava — di una lacerazione nel recinto dell'hotspot di trattenimento dei migranti che consentiva a questi ultimi, soprattutto in tempi di saturazione del centro, di fuoriuscire e raggiungere il centro abitato dell'isola. Fino al 2020, prima della pandemia, il buco nel recinto dell'hotspot funzionò pertanto come una valvola di sfogo per le tensioni interne al centro — incluse rivolte etc. — consentendo ai migranti di sviluppare qualche relazione con gli abitanti locali. Durante la pandemia, le autorità iniziarono una serie di lavori di rinnovamento, durante i quali venne anche chiuso il buco nel recinto: ciò trasformò infine l'hotspot in una vera e propria prigione, una struttura chiusa che non consentiva più alcuna relazione di porosità tra isola e migranti, confermando tra l'altro come

la pandemia abbia rappresentato un momento chiave di inasprimento delle politiche e delle pratiche di contenimento dei migranti.

Altro luogo di muri e tunnel è il conflitto Israele-Palestinese: ne parlano Antoine Hirel e Damien Simonneau attraverso la lente di una pièce teatrale di Yuval Rozman, *Tunnel Boring Machine*. Ricorrendo alla metafora del tunnel come elemento centrale della messa in scena, Rozman crea infatti un "terzo spazio" che reinventa le connessioni, riflettendo sulla fantasia di relazioni "alternative" — non solo politiche ma anche affettive, sessuali etc. — con "altri" sempre così vicini. Se buchi e tunnel hanno dunque una portata politica, ciò è essenzialmente perché essi hanno una storia. Nel suo contributo, Jiayi Jin si focalizza proprio sulla memoria individuale e collettiva delle strutture urbane sotterranee, incluse le città sotterranee costruite in tempi di guerra. Questo è il caso delle Peel Street Caves a Nottingham, nel Regno Unito. Un progetto di ripristino e musealizzazione di spazi di questo genere passa inevitabilmente per la creazione di una connessione tra il visibile e l'invisibile attraverso la ricostruzione di una nuova memoria collettiva che stimoli anche quella individuale.

Un approccio fenomenologico e sensoriale al tunnel è tentato anche nel contributo di Ditte Bendix Lanng, Tina Vestermann Olsen e Simon Wind. Gli autori si occupano di un sottopasso di cemento degli Settanta situato nella periferia di una città danese. Osservato su scala corporea, il tunnel non può essere più concepito come puro strumento di trasporto: esso diventa anche un luogo dell'"abitare", spazio urbano potente e ambivalente, che amplifica le intensità atmosferiche ma anche quelle sociali, visto che le persone in transito in esso non possono evitare la prossimità con altri. L'illusione di uno spazio fisico privo di attrito, mostrano gli autori, va sostituita con la realtà urbana: lo spazio vuoto del tunnel è riempito dall'intensità dell'attrito, dall'ambiguità sensoriale e sociale e dal disordine comune della città. Anche Antonello e Jacopo Boschi, nell'articolo conclusivo, si occupano di sottopassaggi pedonali urbani, riflettendo più in generale sul loro strano rapporto con l'arte. Alla luce degli interventi artistici attraverso cui le amministrazioni comunali spesso tentano un'impossibile "riabilitazione" di questi modesti spazi, emerge una constatazione: secondo gli

autori, infatti, la strada dell'arte come strumento di recupero di spazi marginali e trascurati non può essere imposta dirigisticamente, ma può configurarsi solo in un processo che tenga conto di diverse istanze sociali, urbanistiche e architettoniche, in una prospettiva cioè inevitabilmente orizzontale.

Per illustrare questo numero, Léa Byczinski ha realizzato per *lo Squaderno* un lavoro fotografico

che propone un'esplorazione della rete di tunnel sotto il mercato di Mulhouse, conducendoci nella materialità densa, oscura e umida degli spazi sotterranei urbani, ma anche nella loro atmosfera misteriosamente calma.

LN & AMB

# Phenomenology of holes

**Lorenzo Navone**

*There's a hole in my life* sang The Police back in 1978. Holes in the ground, whether natural or artificial, are artefacts that virtually all human beings have been confronted with at least once in their lives. Holes may be dug on the beach or in a mountain, for fun or to facilitate land crossings, in search of natural resources (aquifers, minerals, metals, precious, rare or fossil materials), to store radioactive or toxic waste, or to escape from a condition of captivity. They may serve as refuge during conflicts (trenches, cellars, air-raid shelters), as both hiding places and dwelling spots. Tunnels, which are the most technologically advanced expression of the hole, are an integral part of our imagination and daily spatial experience. In social and anthropological spatial research, however, they have been so far marginalised.

In his essay on the spatial ordering of society, Georg Simmel (2018) defines space, not as Kant did, in terms of aprioristic category of knowledge, but as something substantial, close to the senses: according to Simmel, space is the formal outcome of reciprocal interactions. In other words, by defining space as a sociological and psychic category, rather than a geometric or geographical one, Simmel upturned Kantian philosophy, anticipating the spatial thinking of Henri Lefebvre (1991). In Lefebvre, space is clearly neither neutral nor abstract: it must be understood as a social product, namely, the result of social action *and*, simultaneously, as a means to define and orient those very relationships that produce it, according to an infinite dialectical spiral.

Which role do holes and tunnels occupy in this scenario? According to Simmel, reciprocal action between human beings is perceived as *filling* space. However, holes seem to indicate a condition of existence typified by an *emptying* of space. If the extraction of substance is a precondition for the 'social filling' of holes, what kind of relations do tunnels determine, and what kind of social relations produce them? In Lefebvre's terms, what are they ends and means of?

## Fixing a hole

In their many shapes and functions, holes are polysemic objects that occupy a special place in our lives as well as in our imagination. On the one hand, railway and motorway tunnels are symbols of development, a token of the engineering progress defining industrial modernity: the Channel Tunnel, the miles of motorway and railway tunnels dug across the planet, the underground public transport networks branching out beneath most metropolis, etc. On the other hand, holes often represent, not only in film and literature<sup>1</sup>, the *topos* of escape (from prison, from internment camps...). They are the underground route towards freedom, or the spectre of an undesired foreign body entering

Lorenzo Navone (PhD in Sociology, University of Genoa) is currently lecturer in Sociology of Conflicts at the Lab for interdisciplinary cultural studies (LinCS - University of Strasbourg/CNRS) and fellow researcher at the Institut Convergences Migrations. His research focuses on borders, walls and tunnels and their effects on human mobilities and international migrations, through the lenses of ethnographic research style.

[navone@unistra.fr](mailto:navone@unistra.fr)

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<sup>1</sup> To mention a few, think of the movies *Le trou* (1960), *The great escape* (1963), *Escape from Alcatraz* (1979), *Escape to Victory* (1981) and, more recently, the book *The Underground Railroad* (2016) by Colson Whitehead.



into the social fabric – whether a migrant, a terrorist, or more generally an ‘other’. From a peephole in the doorway, from a crack in the floor, it is possible to spy on a neighbour or a stranger without being seen; from the central tower of the prison, the guard oversees the prisoners’ cells, exercising that particular form of power – *visible and unverifiable* – that typifies the *Panopticon* (Foucault 1975). Forefathers of closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems, panopticons feature holes endowed a particular visual regime, which allows for no reciprocity.

Tunnels sometimes draw a thin line between death, life, and survival. On 20 December 1973, in Madrid, a tunnel dug under the road surface nearby 104 calle Claudio Coello was blown up by ETA as Prime Minister Luis Carrero Blanco’s car passed by, killing him and indirectly leading Spain to the end of the Franco regime. In the course of armed conflicts, tunnel control often constitutes a prime stake of struggle: such was the case during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina when, between 1992 and 1995, a tunnel dug under the Sarajevo airport’s runway allowed the evacuation of wounded persons as well as the supply of weapons and goods essential for the survival of the people secluded in the Bosnian city under Serbian siege (see Jansen, this issue). Since the 1990s, along the border between Egypt and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), cross-border tunnels were dug between the two sides of the city of Rafah to allow Palestinians in the Gaza Strip to survive. However, these tunnels have also been targeted with bombing, flooding and demolitions, seen by the Israelis as helping the Palestinian militant organisations (Pelham 2012). Tunnels can also constitute an interstitial urban space converted into a place of survival for the most precarious, marginalised and criminalised segments of the population (Voeten 2010): from New York to Bucharest, sewer pipes, abandoned railway tunnels and other neglected underground places are turned into residence for communities of orphans, homeless, runaways, migrants and other ‘disgraceful’ individuals expelled from ‘legitimate’ society.

Holes and tunnels have a strong symbolic and metaphorical value: on the one hand, they form thresholds across states of consciousness and life stages; on the other hand, crossing a tunnel or digging a hole can be like a challenge to be overcome through a rite of passage. Following the White Rabbit down his hole, Alice ends up in Wonderland; *The Tunnel*, a novel by the Argentinian writer Ernesto Sabato, uses the tunnel as the illustration of the main character’s manic-depressive state. In common parlance, ‘seeing the light at the end of the tunnel’ is a metaphor used in the context of Near Death Experiences, and evokes a kind of transformation or rebirth (Martial *et alii* 2017). Birth itself, in the case of mammals, occurs by passing through a sort of tunnel, the cervix. After death, burial constitutes one of the world’s most widespread treatments for the disposal of human corpses, a ritual that generally takes place through the act of digging a ditch and its subsequent filling with the remains of the deceased person, as well as objects, earth and stones. Mass graves’ discovery is a frequent post-war legacy; the exhumation of buried bodies can be a tool for forensic investigations, historical reconstruction and also for post-conflict reconciliation.

In borderlands, tunnels are often used to smuggle rare or prohibited goods but also as a clandestine way of crossing (Campbell 2009; Spener 2010). Along migration routes – for instance between Mexico and the United States or between Serbia and Hungary – several clandestine tunnels have recently been discovered, probably dug by migrants themselves in order to cross the border. Often referred to as a gateway for ‘terrorist infiltration’ from hostile countries, in Israel as well as in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the so-called ‘terror tunnels’ provide an opportunity to fuel the rhetoric about the threats to national security and integrity represented by such artefacts and by those who use them. Thus, holes and tunnels can justify the building of increasingly sophisticated and deep barriers, equipped with radars, night-vision cameras, thermal sensors and vibration detection systems, such as the fence under construction at the border between Iraq and the KSA. If walls are the expression of a desire for protection from external threats, tunnels can be accordingly interpreted as a metaphor for



male penetration (Brown 2010; Hirel & Simonneau, this issue)<sup>2</sup>.

Networks of passages, conduits, cisterns, crypts, catacombs and underground bunkers can be found in many cities around the world. Today, they acquire new meaning thanks to their conversion into attractions aimed at capturing groups of tourists and enthusiasts in a constant pilgrimage. From Naples to Paris and Istanbul, these underground artefacts come to constitute an exotic-speleological counter-field to the 'official' city over ground.

The tunnel networks of urban public transportation are mostly taken for granted, yet through a compression of space and time, they provide an experience quite similar to flying: by transferring people from point A to point B, they obliterate everything on the surface between the two points. Heterotopic spaces, where the climate and humidity are constant and the weather does not exist, where lighting is artificial and the transition between day and night is dismissed as a purely anachronistic convention, the underground mazes existing in many cities are not only anonymous gateways to the underground platforms: such modern passages increasingly represent a kind of anti-city, implosive and entropic. The *Underground City* in Montreal, Canada, also known as RÉSO, is perhaps a paradigmatic example of this warped, downward reflection of the city: from being a *non-place* (Augé 1995), namely a space for the daily transit of commuters and the circulation of tourists, this subterranean town has rather reconfigured itself as an immense and growing *anti-place*, an underground phalanstery defined by a compressed and claustrophobic sociality, dedicated to the *loisir* as to an ephemeral and peripatetic consumption (Benjamin 1962).

*If it is true that holes and tunnels are the product of social relations, it is also true that, in turn, they do produce specific social relations marked by fluctuating intensities, ranging from mutual indifference to more lasting and deeper ties*

Whether understood in a metaphorical or literal sense, holes and tunnels are therefore an ambivalent and polarising object: sometimes their excavation is the object of celebratory narratives of human talent, such as the St Patrick's Well in Orvieto (Italy); sometimes, it is a source of contestation and deep social conflict, as in the case of multiple infrastructural mega-projects, for instance the Turin-Lyon high-speed railway tunnel currently under construction.

## Conclusions

If it is true that holes and tunnels are the product of social relations, it is also true that, in turn, they do produce specific social relations marked by fluctuating intensities, ranging from mutual indifference to more lasting and deeper ties. Holes and tunnels are artefacts that constantly re-articulate the relationship between space and time, according to a logic that does not simply stem from a purely binary matrix: holes and tunnels simultaneously separate and unite, fragment space and reconnect it, establish temporal continuities and discontinuities, differentially allocate resources and knowledge, and eventually contribute to defining, consolidating or overturning social hierarchies. In conclusion, holes and tunnels emerge and are constituted as a prismatic, trialectic space, somewhat akin to what geographer Edward Soja has defined as *Thirdspace*, namely an irreducibly social space, a combination of physical and mental, real and imaginary, a space where "everything comes together [. . .]: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history" (Soja 1996: 56-57).

<sup>2</sup> In the field of cinema, the best-known example of this metaphor is the entrance of the train into the tunnel in the ending scene of Alfred Hitchcock's film *North by Northwest* (1959). See: <https://youtu.be/ZbCca1RYtao>

# Fenomenologia dei buchi

*There's a hole in my life*, cantavano i Police nel 1978.

I buchi nel terreno, naturali o artificiali, sono artefatti con cui quasi tutti gli esseri umani si sono confrontati almeno una volta nella vita. Scavati in spiaggia o nelle montagne, per gioco o per attraversare più velocemente un territorio, alla ricerca di risorse (falde acquifere, minerali, metalli, materiali preziosi, rari o fossili), per stoccare residui radioattivi o tossici, per evadere da una condizione di reclusione o usati come riparo durante i conflitti (trincee, cantine, rifugi antiaerei), come nascondiglio o come luogo di residenza: i buchi e i tunnel, che del buco sono l'espressione più tecnologicamente avanzata, sono ormai parte integrante del nostro immaginario e della nostra esperienza spaziale quotidiana. Eppure, essi sono rimasti finora in una posizione piuttosto marginale nella ricerca sociale e nelle riflessioni antropologiche sul rapporto tra gli esseri umani e lo spazio.

Nel capitolo di *Sociologia* dedicato agli ordinamenti spaziali della società, Georg Simmel (2018) definisce lo spazio non come una categoria aprioristica della conoscenza, nel senso di Kant, ma come qualcosa di materiale, più vicino ai sensi: esso è per il sociologo tedesco l'esito formale delle azioni reciproche e delle interazioni umane. In altre parole, Simmel opera un ribaltamento della filosofia Kantiana definendo lo spazio come una categoria sociologica e psichica, più che geometrica o geografica, e in qualche modo anticipa il pensiero spaziale di Henri Lefebvre (1976): per il filosofo e sociologo francese lo spazio, infatti,

non è qualcosa di neutro e astratto, ma è da intendersi come un prodotto sociale, ovvero come risultato dell'azione sociale ma allo stesso tempo come mezzo in grado di definire e orientare quelle stesse relazioni che lo producono, in una sorta di spirale dialettica infinita.

Quale ruolo possono occupare buchi e tunnel in questo quadro? Se per Simmel l'azione reciproca tra esseri umani è percepita come *riempimento* dello spazio, i buchi sembrano costituire uno spazio sociale specifico, la cui condizione di esistenza è invece caratterizzata dallo *svuotamento*. Se l'estrazione di materia è premessa al loro "riempimento sociale", che tipo di relazioni essi determinano e quali tipi di relazioni sociali li producono? In altre parole, di cosa essi sono il fine e il mezzo?

## Fixing a hole

I buchi, nelle loro molteplici forme e funzioni, sono un oggetto polisemico e occupano un posto speciale nella nostra vita come nel nostro immaginario. Da una parte, nella loro versione ferroviaria o autostradale i tunnel possono essere intesi come un simbolo di sviluppo, del progresso ingegneristico che caratterizza la modernità postindustriale – il tunnel della Manica, le chilometriche gallerie autostradali e ferroviarie scavate in tutto il pianeta, le reti di trasporto pubblico che si diramano sotto le grandi capitali. Dall'altra parte, il buco si costituisce spesso, non solo nel cinema e nella letteratura<sup>1</sup>, come il *topos* dell'evasione (dal carcere, dai campi di prigionia...), della via sotterranea alla libertà, ma anche

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<sup>1</sup> Nel cinema, per citarne alcuni: *La grande fuga* (1963), *Fuga per la vittoria* (1981), *Il buco* (1960). In letteratura: *La ferrovia sotterranea* (2016) di Colson Whitehead.

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come lo spettro dell'ingresso indesiderato nel tessuto sociale di un corpo estraneo, sia esso il migrante, il terrorista o più generalmente *l'altro*. Da uno spioncino sulla porta di casa o da una fessura nel pavimento è possibile spiare un vicino di casa o uno sconosciuto senza essere visti; dalla torre centrale della prigione il sorvegliante controlla le celle dei detenuti esercitando quella particolare forma di potere, visibile e inverificabile, che caratterizza il *Panopticon* (Foucault 1993: 219). Antesignano dei sistemi di videocamere a circuito chiuso (CCTV), il buco definisce in questi casi un particolare regime di visibilità, che non ammette alcuna reciprocità.

Il tunnel è talvolta una linea sottile tra la morte, la vita e la sopravvivenza. Il 20 dicembre del 1973, a Madrid, un tunnel scavato sotto la strada all'altezza del numero 104 di calle Claudio Coello fu fatto esplodere dall'ETA al passaggio dell'auto del primo ministro Luis Carrero Blanco, uccidendolo e conducendo indirettamente la Spagna alla fine del regime franchista. Durante i conflitti armati il controllo dei tunnel costituisce spesso il fine e il mezzo di una lotta che si svolge nello spazio al di sopra di essi: è il caso della guerra in Bosnia ed Erzegovina quando, tra il 1992 e il 1995, un tunnel scavato sotto la pista dell'aeroporto di Sarajevo ha consentito l'evacuazione dei feriti e il rifornimento di armi e dei beni necessari alla vita degli abitanti imprigionati nella città bosniaca sotto l'assedio serbo. Fin dagli anni Novanta, al confine tra Egitto e Territori Palestinesi Occupati, i tunnel transfrontalieri scavati tra le due sponde della città di Rafah hanno consentito la sopravvivenza ai Palestinesi della Striscia di Gaza, ma sono anche stati obiettivo di bombardamenti, allagamenti e demolizioni, perché sospettati di alimentare economicamente e militarmente le organizzazioni palestinesi (Pelham 2012). I tunnel possono costituire anche uno spazio urbano interstiziale che si trasforma in un luogo di sopravvivenza per i settori più precari, marginalizzati e criminalizzati della popolazione (Voeten 2010): da New York a Bucarest fognie, gallerie ferroviarie abbandonate e altri luoghi sotterranei dimenticati dalle autorità si trasformano in luogo di residenza per comunità di orfani, homeless, runaways, migranti e altri soggetti espulsi dalla società "legittima".

Il tunnel ha un forte valore simbolico e metaforico: può costituire una *soglia* tra stati di coscienza

e fasi della vita, ma il suo attraversamento può rappresentare anche la prova da superare in un rito di passaggio. E seguendo il Bianconiglio nella sua tana che Alice finisce nel Paese delle Meraviglie; *Il tunnel*, romanzo dello scrittore argentino Ernesto Sabato, è l'immagine dello stato maniacale e depressivo del protagonista. Nel linguaggio comune, il "tunnel della droga" indica una condizione di dipendenza, mentre "vedere la luce in fondo al tunnel" è una metafora usata nell'ambito delle "Near Death Experience" ed evoca una sorta di trasformazione o rinascita (Martial *et alii* 2017). La stessa nascita, nel caso dei mammiferi, avviene passando attraverso una sorta di galleria, il collo dell'utero. Dopo la morte, la sepoltura costituisce uno dei trattamenti più diffusi al mondo per la deposizione dei cadaveri, rituale che avviene perlopiù attraverso lo scavo di una fossa e il suo successivo riempimento con le spoglie del defunto, terra, oggetti. La scoperta di fosse comuni è un'eredità postbellica frequente; la riesumazione dei corpi sepolti può costituire uno strumento d'indagine, di ricostruzione storica e anche di rappacificamento in seguito a un conflitto.

Nelle zone di confine, i tunnel sono spesso usati per il contrabbando di merci rare o vietate ma anche come strumento clandestino di attraversamento (Campbell 2009; Spener 2010). Lungo le rotte migratorie – per esempio tra Messico e Stati Uniti o tra Serbia e Ungheria – negli ultimi anni sono stati scoperti diversi tunnel clandestini, scavati probabilmente dagli stessi migranti per attraversare la frontiera. Spesso indicati come porta di accesso per "infiltrazioni terroristiche", in Israele come in Arabia Saudita i "tunnel del terrore" costituiscono l'occasione per alimentare la retorica sulla minaccia alla sicurezza e all'integrità della nazione che essi rappresentano, tanto da giustificare l'edificazione di barriere sempre più sofisticate e profonde, dotate di sensori termici e di sistemi di rilevamento delle vibrazioni, come quella in costruzione al confine tra Iraq e il Regno Saudita. Se i muri sono espressione di un desiderio di protezione dalle minacce esterne, i tunnel possono allora essere interpretati come una metafora della penetrazione maschile (Brown 2010)<sup>2</sup>.

2 In campo cinematografico, l'esempio più noto in tal senso è l'ingresso del treno in galleria nella scena finale del film *Intrigo internazionale* (*North by northwest*, 1959) di Alfred Hitchcock. Link: <https://youtu.be/7hCra1RYtao>







Reti di cunicoli, condotte, cisterne, cripte, catacombe e bunker sotterranei sono presenti in numerose città di tutto il mondo e assumono oggi un nuovo significato, grazie alla loro riconversione in attrazioni in grado di attirare comitive di turisti e appassionati in un pellegrinaggio costante. Da Napoli a Parigi a Istanbul, questi manufatti *underground* costituiscono ormai un controcampo esotico-speleologico della città "ufficiale", quella *overground*.

Oggetti ormai scontati nel panorama sub-urbano, attraverso una compressione dello spazio-tempo le reti di gallerie per il trasporto pubblico metropolitano consentono un'esperienza del tutto simile a quella del volo: trasferendo chi vi entra dal punto A al punto B, obliterano tutto quel che si trova in superficie tra i due punti. Spazi eterotopici, dove il clima e l'umidità sono costanti e le intemperie inesistenti, dove l'illuminazione è artificiale e il succedersi del giorno e della notte è archiviato come pura convenzione anacronistica, i labirinti sotterranei presenti in molte città non costituiscono soltanto un'anonima via d'accesso alle banchine della metropolitana: questi moderni *passages* rappresentano sempre più una sorta di anti-città, implosiva ed entropica. La *Underground City* di Montreal, in Canada, nota anche come RÉSO, costituisce forse un esempio paradigmatico di questo riflesso deformato e verso il basso della città: da *nonluogo* (Augé 2018), ovvero spazio di transito quotidiano di commuters e di circolazione di turisti, questa città sotterranea assume oggi una dimensione di immenso e crescente *anti-luogo*, un falansterio sotterraneo caratterizzato da una socialità compressa e claustrofila, dedicato al *loisir* come a un consumo effimero e peripatetico (Benjamin 1962).

Che sia inteso in senso metaforico oppure situato, il tunnel risulta quindi un oggetto ambivalente

e polarizzante: il suo scavo è talvolta oggetto di narrazioni celebrative dell'ingegno umano, basti pensare al pozzo di San Patrizio a Orvieto; altre volte è fonte di contestazioni e profondi conflitti sociali, come nel caso di diversi progetti infrastrutturali, per esempio il tunnel ferroviario ad alta capacità (TAV) tra Torino e Lione.

## Conclusione

Se è vero che buchi e tunnel sono il prodotto di relazioni sociali, è altrettanto vero che essi producono a loro volta delle specifiche relazioni sociali caratterizzate da un'intensità variabile, che va dall'indifferenza reciproca a legami più duraturi e stretti. Buchi e tunnel sono artefatti che riarticolano continuamente la relazione tra spazio e tempo secondo una logica che non può essere ricondotta a una pura matrice binaria: separano e uniscono allo stesso tempo, frammentano e riconnettono lo spazio, creano continuità e discontinuità temporali, distribuiscono in maniera differenziale risorse e saperi, contribuendo a definire, consolidare o ribaltare gerarchie sociali. In conclusione, buchi e tunnel emergono e si costituiscono come uno spazio prismatico, trialettico, assimilabile in qualche modo a quello che il geografo Edward Soja ha definito come *Thirdspace*, ovvero uno spazio irriducibilmente sociale, combinazione di fisico e mentale, reale e immaginario, ovvero uno spazio in cui "tutto si riconcilia: soggettività e oggettività, astratto e concreto, il reale e l'immaginato, il conoscibile e l'inimmaginabile, il ripetitivo e il differenziale, struttura e *agency*, anima e corpo, coscienza e inconscio, disciplinare e transdisciplinare, la vita quotidiana e la storia infinita" (Soja 1996: 56-57).

# Tunnel of Salvation, Tunnel of Accumulation

**Stef Jansen**

The memorial complex *Tunel spasa* ['Tunnel of Salvation', usually advertised in English as 'Tunnel of Hope'], next to Sarajevo Airport, is a major draw for tourists in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). During school terms it is also a destination for educational visits. This was not always the case. Having served as a key channel to and from besieged Sarajevo during much of the 1990s war, the Tunnel fell into disrepair for most of the first postwar decade. In the early 2000s the family who owns the house in Butmir where the wartime Tunnel had emerged from under the airport runway started a small private museum. With some limited donations, it mainly attracted diaspora visitors and infrequent tourists. When I first visited in 2009, for 5 Bosnian Marks you could visit an exhibition of military equipment, tools, photos, videos, media clippings, signatures of famous visitors, and so on. You could also walk through a reconstructed stretch of the Tunnel. Family members were happy to chat. They stressed the site's historical significance and complained of disinterest by authorities. A few years later, as tourism to Sarajevo from Western Europe, Turkey, the Gulf states, East Asia and elsewhere grew exponentially, the site was integrated into a memorial initiative managed by Canton Sarajevo. Some foreign development funding was secured and, in addition to the exhibition in the house itself – largely unchanged – multimedia rooms were built and a further stretch of the Tunnel was reconstructed. Signage on local roads was improved, parking lots expanded, a café added, and the entry fee raised to 10 Marks. You can have a virtual peak at [here](#).

Stef Jansen is a social anthropologist. He is Professor at the University of Sarajevo (BiH) and Honorary Professor at the University of Manchester (UK).

[stef.jansen@ff.unsa.ba](mailto:stef.jansen@ff.unsa.ba)

The memorial complex *Tunnel of Salvation* emphasises the historical significance of the Tunnel in relieving the almost complete isolation of besieged Sarajevo in the second year of the war. After a referendum that registered support by 62% of the total electorate, the government of the Republic of BiH had declared independence in 1992. Serbian nationalist forces (ultimately becoming the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS)) sought to prevent any effective sovereignty for this Republic. They declared Serbian autonomy for ethnically cleansed territories under their control, which included some quarters of the capital and almost all of its surroundings, thus laying siege to Sarajevo.<sup>1</sup> In June 1992 they handed over the airport to UN forces, who used it, amongst other things, for the delivery of humanitarian aid. At that time the areas at the two tips of the airport were held by VRS, whereas the two sides across were controlled by the government forces of the Army of the Republic of BiH (ARBiH). For the latter the only passage in and out of the capital that would not breach frontlines led across the airport. Countless people risked life and limb in clandestine passages across the runway. Sometimes chased by UN soldiers, and exposed to VRS sniper fire, this is how ARBiH soldiers moved between operations, civilians escaped or returned, and many carried foodstuffs from the much better-supplied area of Butmir and beyond to sell in the shortage-hit besieged city.

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<sup>1</sup> On the siegeline and its postwar transformation into internal polity borders, see Jansen 2013, 2018.



It was in this context that the project for a passage under the runway emerged. By June 1993 an 800m tunnel, about 1.50 metre high and 1 metre wide, linked a building in Dobrinja, part of besieged Sarajevo, to a house in Donji Kotorac, Butmir, outside of the siege. A public secret, relatively less vulnerable to VRS attack due to the proximity of UN forces who tolerated it,<sup>2</sup> it remained in function until the end of the war in late 1995. The Tunnel suffered continuous water problems, but over time it was improved with pumps, rails and mining cars, phone cables, an oil pipe, electricity lines, lighting, and so on.

*The Tunnel suffered continuous water problems, but over time it was improved with pumps, rails and mining cars, phone cables, an oil pipe, electricity lines, lighting, and so on*

Mainstream historiography, of which the memorial complex is an exponent, celebrates the ingenuity of the Tunnel's makers and relishes in numbers (so many man-hours to construct it, so many passages a day, so many tonnes of food, so much fuel, etc). Above all it underscores

the significance of this lifeline for the defence of besieged Sarajevo and for the survival of its long-suffering yet determined inhabitants. It is here that the label *Tunnel of Salvation* predominates and much existing scholarly writing also uses this register in its focus on questions of memorialisation and tourism.<sup>3</sup>

Here I turn to a complementary historiography of the Tunnel. Found in unauthorised recollections by Sarajevans, in some critical media reporting and in a few scholarly studies<sup>4</sup>, this too focuses on the passage of persons and goods in and out of besieged Sarajevo, but it revolves around questions of control over such passage and, particularly, of its primary beneficiaries. For some, this historiography shows, the Tunnel of Salvation also functioned as a Tunnel of Accumulation.

All passage required army-issued permits, in principle free of charge. Indeed, the Tunnel was initially presented as military infrastructure only. Yet, unsurprisingly in a situation of extreme shortages, returning ARBiH soldiers used their luggage quotas to bring in goods not only for family consumption but also for resale. Civilians joined in as a continuous stream of petty trade developed, with payments in cash or in kind to the soldiers and military police officers who guarded access to the Tunnel. Such bribes were sufficiently high for some people to continue using the much more dangerous over-ground runway option. Underground, petty traders were soon joined by more ambitious entrepreneurs who mobilised their connections within the higher echelons of the political-military-economic establishment in besieged Sarajevo to bring vast consignments of food, drink and luxury goods into the city for resale.

Through the prism of accumulation, a closer look at this large-scale Tunnel trade provides insight into the functioning of a predatory war economy that laid the foundations for lasting structures of inequality and domination. Various forms of accumulation characterised that war economy. I will mention three. One was widespread looting from flats, offices, shops and public institutions. Often vividly remembered by Sarajevans as a kind of free-for-all, this was increasingly structured according

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2 People did get killed at its entry points. A shell killed nine persons in 1995.

3 E.g. Tanović 2019; Volčić et al. 2014.

4 See <https://bhdani.oslobodjenje.ba/bhdani/arhiva/tunel-na-kraju-svjetla> for an archived version of a 1996 article by journalist Vildana Selimbegović in the magazine *BHDani*. Some reference to the Tunnel is made in Mann 2006 and in Donia 2006. The most comprehensive treatment in English is included in Andreas' provocative analysis of the siege of Sarajevo (2008). Bojčić-Dželić and Kaldor (1997) offer an early analysis of the economic dynamics of the war in BiH. Pugh traces their institutionalisation after the war (e.g. 2004). For ethnographic studies of lives in Sarajevo, see Maček (2009) on wartime and Jansen (2015) on postwar lives in the apartment complex where the wartime Tunnel entered the city.

to a hierarchy of permission. A second and perhaps the most crucial component was the appropriation of Yugoslav socialist 'social property' by ethnonationalist political parties (in Sarajevo: the Bosniak nationalist *Stranka demokratske akcije* (SDA)). The case of the Tunnel allows us to highlight a third vector of accumulation in the making of Sarajevo's war economy and its implications: 'siege profiteering' through retail trade (Andreas 2008: 60).

Some retail trade had always occurred throughout the siege. Sarajevo was never completely cut off. Some frontlines functioned as occasional trading points where money, goods, people, arms and munition changed hands. Some streams of humanitarian aid entered circuits of for-profit circulation, at the point of distribution on the UN-controlled airport or at a later stage. Competing armies also took their cut in return for allowing it through. Yet if goods entered besieged Sarajevo right from the start, the 1993 opening of the Tunnel dramatically changed the course of such trade. Consumer prices in the city fell drastically. Shortages were reduced. While it is hard to assess the effect that the Tunnel had on the military course of the war, there is little doubt that this lifeline constituted salvation for many through access to goods for subsistence and petty trade. In the process, it entailed accumulation for a selected few.

Tunnel trade served as a catalyst for a specific form of accumulation, enabled by the particular conditions of siege. The key infrastructure for this trade did not require investment by aspiring entrepreneurs: a transport route had been constructed with non-transparent military funds and unpaid labour. The Tunnel was the exclusive supply route for bringing in major quantities of goods with reduced dependence on deals with the besiegers and/or the UN. In terms of market, goods were sold in besieged Sarajevo, which literally housed a captive pool of consumers. Having been exposed to extreme shortages for over a year, they were hungry or at least tired of monotonous humanitarian food and ready to spend whatever they had on whatever was on offer. There was hardly any competition to turn to and profit margins were extreme. Through a single entry point the Tunnel thus enabled a virtual monopoly of supply to a guaranteed customer base in a situation of shortage: an exquisite opportunity for enrichment.

These conditions stipulated that a key factor determining one's business prospects was privileged access to the Tunnel. In non-transparent wartime hierarchies, those who were best placed to profit from Tunnel trade were entrepreneurs who could pull strings in the top echelons of the political-military-economic SDA establishment. Soon after its opening, it became possible to secure exclusive use of the Tunnel for a certain duration. All other traffic would be halted for a number of hours. Passage, of course, required payment to those who regulated it. Such collection of rent made control over Tunnel access itself the object of contestation between competing factions within ARBiH. And while individual soldiers manning entry and exit points took fees or donations in kind, this trading scheme was increasingly incorporated into more encompassing hierarchies, with orders coming 'from above'. Media reports and occasional comments suggest that major entrepreneurs managed to hire not only the Tunnel for hours on end, but also military units to carry through their goods. Tunnel trade thus provided a mechanism for the accumulation of wealth within a restricted circle, which contributed to a process of socioeconomic differentiation that was central to the formation and consolidation of a ruling class.

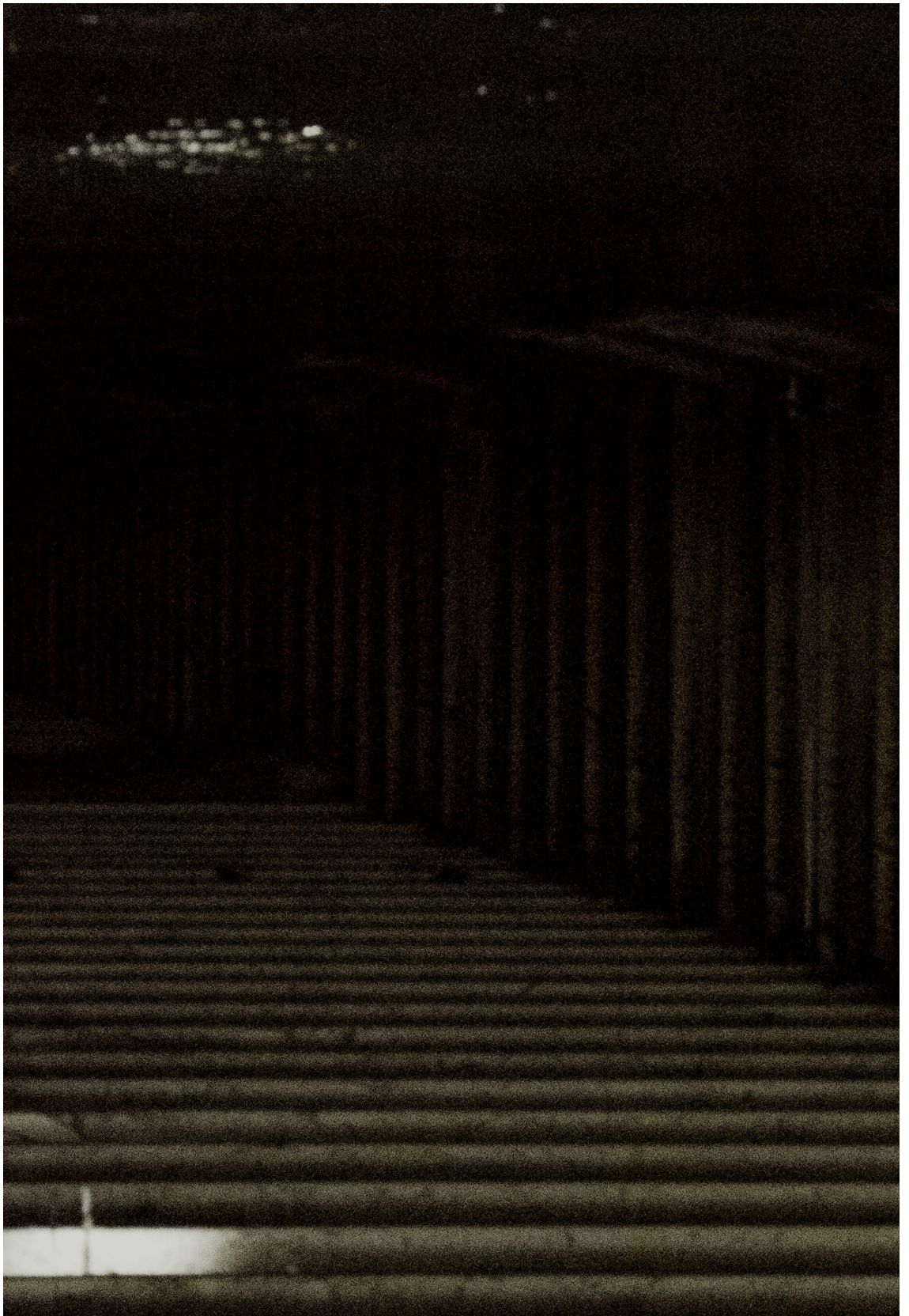
Mainstream historiography emphasises how the wartime Tunnel brought salvation to the hungry, isolated, exhausted citizens of Sarajevo. In many ways it did. It is no surprise then that many seek to claim credit for this lifeline. This is particularly so amongst a range of leading figures associated with SDA, which ruled ARBiH-held territories during the war and which, despite some electoral setbacks, continues to function as a node of formal and informal political and economic power in those territories. Still today, SDA figures seek to incorporate their selfless role in the Tunnel project into

their CV, regularly rolling it out to beat others in the patriotism stakes. As part of this, bitter disputes continue to rage between them about who first came up with the idea of a Tunnel (me! no, *me!* no, an Iranian advisor with experience of war in Beirut that / spoke to! no, *me!*) and about who did most of the digging (my ARBiH division! retired miners! no, *my* ARBiH division!). In that way, the glow of the Tunnel of Salvation is reproduced as a reservoir of moral-patriotic capital. What these people are less likely to speak of is that this project of salvation entailed accumulation on a massive scale. The muddy 800m underground stretch and its integration into a highly specific war economy under the aegis of the SDA establishment has allowed personal enrichment for some of them. And structurally, the circulation of money, favours and protection in hierarchically facilitated Tunnel trade must be included as a constitutive factor in any understanding of configurations of inequality and domination in Sarajevo until today.

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*Léa Byczynski, étudiante à la Haute École des Arts du Rhin (HEAR), explore de nombreux médias, et conjugue dans ses différents travaux l'usage de la photo et de la vidéo. Dans une approche documentaire et plastique, elle dévie les éléments de leurs contextes, joue sur les différents niveaux de lecture. Elle s'interroge sur la mémoire, la confusion et le flou qui accompagne ce travail de mémoire. La dimension visuelle prend alors le dessus pour créer des sensations, des réactions... Pour nourrir ce numéro et accompagner les textes d'une approche visuelle, elle est allée explorer le tunnel sous le marché de Mulhouse...*





*Léa is currently attending the Haute École des Arts du Rhin (HEAR). In her works, she explores different media and combines the use of video and photographs. Through a plastic and documentary approach, she decontextualizes the elements and plays on their multiple interpretations. She questions memory, confusion and the fog stemming from this effort. The visual dimension takes the upper hand in creating sensations and reactions.*

*In order to nourish and illustrate the current issue of Lo Squaderno, she decided to take a walk underground by exploring the tunnel under the Mulhouse market.*



### ***Dans le tunnel sous le marché de Mulhouse***

*Les bruits de voiture, en marchant dans le tunnel, on entend des bruits, on sent les odeurs du marché, du dessus de la ville.*

*La vie du tunnel, et ses multiples existences qui se révèlent.*

*La glace des poissonniers qui tombent, la vie sous-terrainne, informelle...*

*L'instant, l'expérience, l'occasion...*

*Plusieurs mondes dans un même tunnel...*

*Continuer à explorer, raconter une seule même histoire...*

*L'entrée du tunnel, la lumière vive, la progressivité du tunnel... l'ombre et la lumière*

*Dessus - Dessous, perte du sens...*

*La dimension réaliste des éléments s'évapore, perte des mesures, quels objets... jouer avec les dimensions, les échelles, les sens, modifier les perceptions, s'accrocher à des éléments ...*





*D'où vient la lumière, elle vient d'ailleurs... l'ambiance du tunnel, au milieu...*

*Fissure de lumière*

*Des formes, qui s'imposent, se révèlent...*

*Multiplés interprétations, jouer avec la gravité...*

*Le tunnel n'est pas linéaire, il est sinueux... ne permet pas de distinguer la fin...  
le bout du tunnel.*

*Puits de lumières au plafond... épier la ville vue d'en bas... du dessous...*

*Deviner ce qu'on voit de dessous....*

*Une silhouette dans le tunnel... l'espace qui se réduit, et s'étend... dimension spatiale,  
interstellaire.... Découverte d'un terrain inconnu... exploration ...*

*S'approprier, se familiariser avec le terrain... apprivoiser le terrain...*

*L'eau dans le souterrain : un détail de l'ensemble.... Faisceaux lumineux ...*

*Les ombres des passants...*

*Texte de Victoria Sachsé et Léa Byczinski*





# The hole in the hotspot

## Undocumented migration in Lampedusa between insularity and detention

**Luca Giliberti &  
Jacopo Anderlini**

Over the last thirty years, Lampedusa – Italy’s southernmost island in the middle of the Mediterranean, located closer to Tunisia than to Sicily, with a population of about 6,000 – has consolidated its position as the *gateway* to Europe, becoming the embodiment of the idea of the border, its “quintessence” (Cuttitta 2012), inextricably linked to images of landings and the arrivals of waves of “clandestine immigrants”, amidst the on-going “spectacle of the border” (De Genova 2013). At the same time, from the perspective of countries of origin, for many North Africans and sub-Saharan, the name of Lampedusa is connected to the imagery of the crossings to Italy narrated in numerous songs and amateur videos. In fact, Lampedusa is a proscenium for violent border procedures, on the one hand, as well as mobility practices that contest the ideological and political boundaries of nation-states, on the other.

The ramping up of militarization materialized in the replacement of Centre for Temporary Stay (CPT) with Centre for First Aid and Reception (CPSA) and then the so-called *hotspot* (Orsini 2016). The hotspot approach started in 2015 in Italy and Greece, following the European Agenda on migration, and has at its core the management of irregularised mobility (Anderlini 2020). The hotspot’s main function is to contain undocumented mobility and discern between “economic migrants” and “asylum seekers”, channelling them into different paths, ranging from deportation to asylum reception. The containment function of hotspots derives, largely, from their position at the margins of the geography of the State and its jurisdiction, configuring these places as ‘thresholds’, simultaneously part of the State and at the same time exceeding its legal order, being subject to an exceptional rule that put them under a unmediated sovereign grasp in a remote territory (Anderlini and Di Meo 2021).

This article stems from an ethnographic research which has begun in Lampedusa in December 2020, at the height of the pandemic, and still ongoing, based on various stays, made of participant observation in key places on the island linked to the migration issue (hotspot, piers, squares, etc.), thirty-five semi-structured interviews and repeated encounters with privileged actors (island inhabitants, local representatives, law enforcement, hotspot social workers, members of solidarity networks, migrants, etc.). This text focuses on a famous *hole* in the fence of the hotspot centre – well known to NGOs<sup>1</sup>, journalists<sup>2</sup>, and researchers (Aime 2019; Elbek 2021; Giliberti and Queirolo Palmas 2022) – which, for many years, allowed migrants to leave the centre when it became too overcrowded and the

Luca Giliberti (PhD) is Postdoctoral Researcher and Adjunct Professor in Sociology of Cultural Processes at the University of Genoa, where he is member of the Visual Sociology Research Group. He is also Research Fellow at University of Côte d’Azur-URMIS (“Unité de Recherches Migrations et Société”) and at the “Institut Convergences Migrations” (Policy Department). His research interests are transnational migrations, racialization, borders and solidarity with migrants in transit.

[luca.giliberti@edu.unige.it](mailto:luca.giliberti@edu.unige.it)

Jacopo Anderlini (PhD) is Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Education Studies at the University of Genoa, where he is member of the Visual Sociology Research Group. He is also part of the research group on the analysis of digital technologies C.I.R.C.E., of STS-MIGTEC (International Research Network on STS and Critical Migration Studies). His main research interests are border studies, refugee studies, migration, critical theory on technologies, social and political philosophy.

[jacopo.anderlini@edu.unige.it](mailto:jacopo.anderlini@edu.unige.it)

<sup>1</sup> See: <https://inlimine.asgi.it/hotspot-di-lampedusa-sempre-piu-un-lungo-di-confinamento-chiuso-anche-il-buco-nella-recinzione/>

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.avvenire.it/attualita/pagine/lampedusa-accoglienza-invisibile>; [https://www.repubblica.it/solidarieta/immigrazione/2019/03/23/news/lampedusa\\_si\\_teme\\_che\\_i\\_migranti\\_della\\_mare\\_jonio\\_siano\\_detenuti\\_arbitrariamente\\_-222299649/](https://www.repubblica.it/solidarieta/immigrazione/2019/03/23/news/lampedusa_si_teme_che_i_migranti_della_mare_jonio_siano_detenuti_arbitrariamente_-222299649/)

conditions inside deteriorated to inhuman levels<sup>3</sup>. Until 2020, before the pandemic, the hole enabled to lower the tensions inside the centre (often giving way to riots and arsons), and was thus implicitly tolerated by the authorities, who used its presence instrumentally:

In the hotspot there is room for 220 people . . . but when in two weeks 4,000 people arrive as it happened recently, what can you do? On Nov 3, 867 people landed. You should separate those who have scabies, tuberculosis, covid . . . But it's impossible, where do you put them when they arrive in such numbers? Then they sleep everywhere, even outside the facility. It creates a mess, people get pissed off. If they manage to get out through the hole, it's good, it lowers the tension a bit. And it's clear that the institution knows when they go out. (Marco<sup>4</sup>, hotspot social worker)

*A famous hole in the fence of the hotspot centre for many years allowed migrants to leave the centre when it became too overcrowded and the conditions inside deteriorated to inhuman levels*

When the exit of migrants becomes functional to the management of the hotspot, the institution allows it as an "hidden practice". As a member of the Lampedusa solidarity network states: "The institution has never

taken responsibility, they never let them out in an official way... if they have to go out, they use the hole. There is also a psychological aspect: going out through the hole and not in a formal way keeps them subtly in check" (Valeria, Lampedusa Solidale Forum). Giusi Nicolini, former mayor of Lampedusa – known as the "welcoming mayor" – points out that the hole is an *escamotage* to unofficially allow migrants to leave:

We all know that, especially in certain times, they have to go out; so the hole is an *escamotage*. Everyone knows it exists . . . When I was mayor, there were tourists who came to my office, in the middle of August, reporting the presence of migrants in the island. I used to point out that the centre is not a prison adding, smiling: "Madam, don't miss the morning at sea for that".

The hole thus takes the form of a flexible *laissez-passer* device in an island that nevertheless remains a prison – making evident the relationship between insularity and detention (Mountz 2011). Indeed, as Lucia, an advocate of the Borderline Sicilia network, notes:

Apart from going for a walk, taking a breath of air, buying cigarettes: where can they go? Lampedusa is an island and, even if they leave the hotspot, they are stuck... Do you know what the truth is? The hotspot is Lampedusa.

In this prison-island, the facility remains formally closed, but when needed it can be informally opened. The hole is thus part of a policy that loosens the grip to be more effective, but also part of an exception allowed by the institution itself (Queirolo Palmas and Rahola 2020). The hole also operates a selection between migrants, as Antonella, coordinator of the Waldensian Church's Mediterranean Hope project, tells us:

The hole is for an elite. Young, male, reckless, healthy. A woman with a baby cannot get out of the hole. The hole is the representation of the hypocrisy of this country. No one has ever come out of the main door of the hotspot in Lampedusa.

In our fieldwork diary, we noted:

For being the most famous hotspot in Italy, it appears small and particularly close to the town centre, which you can reach in 20 minutes on foot. We look at it from above in search for the hole everyone talks about. On the hill there is broken glass and the remains of bivouacs, as well as abandoned blankets. A dozen soldiers in camouflage watches it from above: an attempt to get out would not go unnoticed. Inside there are Police, *Guardia di Finanza* and *Carabinieri* officers. The main concrete building is being renovated, after it was set on fire in a riot years ago. On the sides we see prefabs, like container modules, and colourful

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://www.agrigentonotizie.it/cronaca/lampedusa-hotspot-rifiuti-urina-migranti-ammassati-appelli.html>

<sup>4</sup> Except for public figures, the names of the persons interviewed are fictitious, out of respect for their privacy.



cloths lying on metal ladders. A large fence, fifty metres long, protects part of the structure. We look for the hole in the smaller, “jumpable” nets that surround the buildings without finding it. In any case, we have been told that for some time now, with the pandemic measures, the hole no longer exists. On the one hand we chase the material existence of this passage, on the other we are aware of its metaphorical character and how much the hole speaks to us figuratively of the discretionary nature of the devices of migration control. (Field diary, December 2020)

We finally enter the hotspot, after receiving the long-awaited authorization from the Ministry of the Interior: we are probably among the few researchers able to access it in years. One of our first guides is Iris, a social worker in her twenties, which shows us the different areas of the centre. We walk along the perimeter fence and start to look for the hole. We ask her about it, and she replies: “Some colleagues that have been working here for years, told me about a hole used by migrants to go out for few hours. I think it was tolerated when there was tension in the centre. However, I’ve never seen it. It has been fixed, I guess. No one can go out if not for transferral”. We continue to observe the fence, asking ourselves if the causes of the tension have been eliminated as well, or whether a new phase in containment strategies has arisen. (Field diary, March 2021)

The public health management related to Covid-19 marks a before and an after in the relation between migrants and the island. Until the first wave of the pandemic, migrants were a visible presence in Lampedusa, participating in the local economy with their purchases and creating relationships with a part of the inhabitants (Elbek 2021): a certain porosity was generated between their trajectories and the island life:

Before Covid-19, the young people went out frequently and we had dinners together . . . The Tunisians, in particular, go around, participate in the local economy ... The Mediterranean Hope office functioned as an Internet point for the people coming out of the hotspot. A lot of them came to use the Internet, there was a big word of mouth among them ... Now they don't let them out anymore and the office no longer functions as an Internet point. (Marcello, Mediterranean Hope)

Previously, migrants often came here to the churchyard . . . The police came here to check on them. Here in the parish, we often had meetings, dinners . . . Sometimes we found ourselves watching comedies in Arabic. (Don Fabio, Lampedusa Solidale Forum)

The visible presence of migrants around the island was not appreciated by the tourist sector as well as part of the local population. Totò Martello, at the time mayor of Lampedusa, told us:

Here we need a locked hotspot: where do you put the migrants? In the town? They have to be locked in there and then transferred elsewhere . . . The policemen create the problems: they should control the hotspot, make sure migrants don't leave, but they don't.

The mayor implies that generating a bit of alarm allows to keep a public focus on the immigration phenomenon in the political realm and also the border economy which nourish the island. Ayoub, a UNHCR officer within the hotspot, noted:

The mayor is right that people should not leave the hotspot. If they go out, it is obvious that the tension increases. People exiting create problems for the authority. Local inhabitants call the police as soon as they see them around.

With the pandemic outbreak and the state of emergency, Italian authorities closed ports to incoming rescue ships. From April 2020 until May 2022, quarantine ships were introduced as “floating hotspots” where migrants, regardless of any Covid infection, were transferred directly from the hotspot after undergoing screening procedures. This measure, besides representing a deprivation of freedom for migrants unduly stranded at sea, facilitated the repatriation mechanism, with an exponential increase in deportations of Tunisians<sup>5</sup> (Anderlini and Di Meo 2021) and a worsening of migrant containment (Tazzioli and Garelli 2019).

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5 See: <https://inlimine.asgi.it/molti-rimpatri-poche-garanzie-unanalisi-dei-dati-sui-rimpatri-dei-cittadini-tunisini-degli-ultimi-mesi/>

At the same time, in the midst of the pandemic era – which produced a divide in contemporary migration policies (Giliberti and Queirolo Palmas 2022) – at the Lampedusa hotspot, renovation and adaptation works have started, announcing greater security and implicitly evoking the closure of the famous hole<sup>6</sup>. “The building renovations remove all ways out . . . It will be much harder to get out when they are finished”, says Ayoub. Since the structure renovation, the hole has been shut and no more migrants have been seen wandering around the island, realising mayor Martello’s dream: the hotspot effectively turned into a real prison, a sealed facility that no longer allows any relationship between the island and the migrants. The pandemic and its management have acted as contrast agents able to enlighten the contemporary measures of mobility containment within the European border regime and have thus produced an increasingly inhabitable space for people on the move (Anderlini 2022). The closure of the hotspot’s hole represents symbolically the growing violence in the policing of European external borders.

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<sup>6</sup> See: <https://www.lasicilia.it/news/cronaca/364117/lampedusa-al-via-i-lavori-di-adequamento-dell-hotspot-capienza-salira-a-354-migranti.html>

# Tunnel Boring Machine

## Play as third space to reconnect Palestinians and Israelis

**Antoine Hirel &  
Damien Simonneau**

The stage curtain is still shut at Phenix theatre in Valenciennes (Northern France), as we enter the hall in the dark before the play starts. The play's main character, Khalil, a Palestinian from the West Bank, begins to tell his story. He was born the same day as the Sabra and Chatila massacre<sup>1</sup>; now, his father wants him to fight against the occupation, to fight against Israel. But Khalil has also another story to tell. At that point, the curtain opens to the sound of an Arabic voice, singing softly what we can identify as a religious song. An impressive installation comprising a multitude of big white metallic tubes knotted at centre-stage, like the focal point of the scene, is revealed. Like an optic illusion, the installation, by stage-designer Victor Roy, offers the symbolic representation of a tunnel. The action of *Tunnel Boring Machine* is set here, in a French theatre, far away from the real tunnels of Palestine used mainly by Hamas to reach into Israel or Egypt.

In 2017, Israeli artist Yuval Rozman<sup>2</sup> authored and staged the play, set in a fictional tunnel underneath Ramallah where gay men come to seek rough sex. Within the complex and multifaceted situation that characterizes the region, the artist, exiled in France, imagines a doomed love story between a young Palestinian (Khalil) and an Israeli soldier (Nadav), as told from Khalil's point of view. Rozman displaces his own point of view (the colonizer's) to create artistic and emotional vibrations, and keep at distance any simplistic political narratives about the occupation. Rozman himself served in the army in Rafah (Gaza) and deserted in 2004; also, he lived a similar love affair with a Palestinian boy. In the theatrical tunnel, the author evokes his own political disillusion when it comes to love and war: Nadav, the Israeli soldier, dies after their sex night. The story tells Khalil's quest to recover Nadav, and simultaneously find out about his own identity. Khalil's story pivots around the taboo of homosexuality in Arab culture, and the quest for liberation, and the tunnel offers the perfect spot for such a quest.

A tunnel boring machine is a big mechanical equipment used to make huge holes for large infra-structures such as trains, powerhouses etc.; but its acronym, *TBM*, is also used in the French gay community to describe a big masculine attribute (*Très Bien Monté*), particularly used on gay dating apps. Yuval Rozman uses the tunnel as both a sexual metaphor, and a place of transgression. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict looms large over the play: indeed, the whole story revolves around Khalil's ways of dealing with political and identity oppressions, mainly focused around his sexuality. Khalil goes to the tunnel to have sex with men. The tunnel thus becomes the geographical personification of body and sexuality, as it permits connections and exchanges between people. Rozman reintroduces the Israeli occupation inside bodies and sexual practices, where the dominant side (Israel, Nadav) is

Antoine Hirel is a freelance theatre artist and researcher based in Paris. His academic research and artistic pieces both focus on living arts and performances, sexuality and visual studies.

[hirel.antoine@gmail.com](mailto:hirel.antoine@gmail.com)

Damien Simonneau is associate professor in political science at INALCO (Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales) and associated researcher at Institut Convergences Migrations (Collège de France) in Paris. His research focuses on border security, especially in Israel-Palestine.

[damien.simonneau@inalco.fr](mailto:damien.simonneau@inalco.fr)

<sup>1</sup> This massacre happened in September 1982, when a Christian militia helped by the Israeli army assassinated Palestinians in a refugee camp in Beyrouth, to fight and destroy the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization).

<sup>2</sup> More of his work: <https://www.104.fr/artiste/yuval-rozman-biographie.html>



the TBM, the one who penetrates and literally occupies the body of the other one (Palestine, Khalil). Both the body and the tunnel materialize a space where self-identities can be questioned and put into perspective thanks to the presence of the other and his otherness: the tunnel is a space located in-between those two locked-together populations, the Israelis and the Palestinians.

### Third space

Like many other artists who criticize Middle-Eastern politics, Yuval Rozman chooses to insist on what connects Israelis and Palestinians, instead of what separates them. By resorting to the metaphor of the tunnel, he twists our way of questioning the situation. He puts on stage a *third space* to express

*The tunnel creates new fictions around it, which are the preconditions for the emergence of a third space*

his own disillusion as well as a series of fantasies about other possible love, political and cultural relations. In 1994, the Indian-American post-colonial thinker Homi Bhabha developed the theory of *third space*.

For Bhabha, multiculturalism is a way for a society to keep control over the different cultures that cohabit in it, under a dominant grid. Society accepts cultural diversity as long as it can frame it with hegemonic rules; but this multiculturalism does not afford real multiplicity, as it does not permit any exchange across cultures. In *TBM*, the tunnel is the geographical embodiment of such a theory embedded *into* ourselves. *Third space* is not a geographic place, rather, it is that moment when two different cultures cross over and create a new *hybrid* one. Theatrical *third space* also recalls Michel Foucault's *heterotopias*.

In the play, Khalil puts at a distance his own Palestinian identity, because instead of fighting his so-called enemy like his father wants him to do, he has sex with him. He meets his body and his desire, they create a connection, an exchange underneath the wall that is supposed to separate them. By rejecting a supposedly essentialist behavior, and by satisfying his desire for men, Khalil illustrates Bhabha's theory of *third space*: what happens in the tunnel between Khalil and Nadav opens a space that lays out a new dimension. Rozman's gesture suggests a non-binary simplification of the situation: after the orgasm, Nadav says to Khalil that he should move to his country, where gay men and sex parties are "incredibly awesome". But Khalil responds: "You, Israelis, you like to see us as poor little oppressed things to save. But thanks, we don't need your help!"

### Beyond separation

Through the sexual encounter between Nadav and Khalil in the tunnel, Rozman also subverts one of the dominant paradigms of the Israeli military occupation, the principle of separation materialized in the West Bank Wall. The still incomplete "security fence" (in Hebrew, *gader ha bitakhon*) was erected in an architectural reshaping of the West Bank to enforce a separation policy first designed in the early 1990s during the First Intifada, then in the framework of the Oslo Accords (1993) and finally amplified during the Second Intifada between 2000 and 2005. The security fence was publicly ratified by the Israeli Cabinet on April 14, 2002 and is part of an array of military tools that include checkpoints, curfews, house demolitions, targeted killings, and intelligence operations to respond to asymmetrical terrorist threats. Twenty years later, Israelis commonly believe that the lowering of the number of attacks is due to the fence. The first collective meaning attributed to the Wall is thus the protection of citizens from "infiltrations", as they are described on the official governmental website<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> "The sole purpose of the Security fence . . . is to provide security. The Security fence is a central component in Israel's response to the horrific wave of terrorism emanating from the West Bank, resulting in suicide bombers who enter Israel with the sole intention of killing innocent people", from <http://www.securityfence.mod.gov.il/pages/eng/purpose.htm> (accessed 1 Feb. 2016).

The wall reassures Israeli citizens of the capacity of their State to restore public order. The image of the “infiltrator” (*mistanenim* in Hebrew) dates back to the 1950s, when Palestinians fighters committed attacks inside the newly constituted Israeli territory. In the eyes of Israelis, the materiality of the Wall is a marker of the political will to implement the separation from the Palestinians. According to the rules of the occupation, Khalil and Nadav should have never met, as there should be no geographical place for their encounters.

In terms of common representations, the wall also offers Israelis the illusion of a border with Palestinians even though the separation of the populations is implemented thanks to different architectural and legal tools: it goes with the bypass road infrastructure in the West Bank; the permit system imposed to Palestinians to enter Israel and the “seam zone”; military orders forbidding Israelis to enter area A and partly area B (from August 1, 2002); and the law of Nationality and Entry into Israel enacted by the Knesset on July 31, 2003, terminating family reunification between Israeli citizens and Palestinian from Gaza and the West Bank. Indeed, the West Bank Wall project reorganizes and complicates the territorial organization of the occupation of the West Bank. The building of settlements is ongoing, Israelis are allowed to travel to such settlements, and the Israeli army is present on both sides of the fence. Most settlers are integrated to the Israeli side through a snaking route which also creates enclaves for Palestinians (Petti 2019). From the Israeli point of view, the wall defines a space of protection and projects risk onto the Palestinian side, thus pushing the conflict to the other side. The separation policy implements a system of exclusion of a population situated on the inside of a space still under Israeli control. As Stéphanie Latte Abdallah & Cédric Parizot (2015) put it, “the barrier does not create a clear distinction between an Israeli territory and a Palestinian territory, nor an outside and an inside”. The fence does not really separate but rather radically constricts and controls the flow of people, goods and interactions between Israelis and Palestinians. Palestinians can still pass through this porous barrier, so the issue is not (only) to disconnect or segregate them, but rather to govern their mobility and trajectories. The two populations are still interacting and connecting, as *TBM* illustrates and fantasizes.

## **Interactions and dependency**

When focusing on what connects, the gaze is reversed and the potential to reinterpret the relations between the two populations arises. Like in many other border places, tunnels and holes subvert separations and walls. They are commonly associated with an imaginary of fear, as with the “infiltrations” from Gaza, which made possible, for instance, the abduction by Hamas in 2006 of an Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, through one such tunnels. The Gaza Strip is often described as a maze of tunnels, especially dug under the border with Egypt, near the city of Rafah. Tunnels are used since the early 1990s to smuggle goods and maintain cross-border family ties. The phenomenon accelerated since 2007, in a context of economic blockade imposed on Hamas-controlled territory. Tunnels are often destroyed by the Israeli army through bombings, house demolitions or specific military operations, such as Operation Rainbow (2004) or Protective Edge (2014). Their existence generates an informal economy based on a network of operators, builders, owners, and users.

Holes in the wall are a key component of separation, if we consider smuggling activities, especially in southern Hebron in the West Bank / North of Negev. Here, an informal border economy has developed since the late 2000s to dispatch goods and Palestinian workers to Israel. All of this is well known by the Israeli army. Such networks are also infiltrated by Israeli security services to gather information on potential attacks, and thus reinforce control.

However, in the play *TBM*, the tunnel is not one-way; exchanges are mutual, not led by fear but by the search for the other. The tunnel creates new fictions around it, which are the preconditions for the emergence of a *third space*. The theatre inherently invents something unreal and new, and enables

the audience to relate to the director's understanding and fantasy. Minorities such as queers and blacks need hidden places underneath the dominant white heterosexual grid to exist, to resist and invent a *third space*. The tunnel thus makes the invisible visible: theatre becomes itself the tunnel where a ballet of different bodies, cultures and identities meet. Moreover, Rozman's play denounces the biased representations that he experienced as an Israeli, and he is not the only artist trying to question and reinvest those representations, such as Avi Mograbi, Eyal Sivan or Amos Gitai to name some Israelis, or Montasser Al-Sabea in the Gaza Strip. By situating his play in a tunnel, Rozman uses the existing infrastructure – signifying economic activity to the Palestinians and fear of attacks to the Israelis – to fantasize alternative relations. Art joins critical research and analysis of the occupation, deconstructing dominant myths and narratives, and proposing new ones.

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# Peel Street Caves and Archives Centre

## Creating a new memory of underground spaces

Jiayi Jin

*It also happens that, if you move along Marozia's compact walls, when you least expect it, you see a crack open, and a different city appears. Then, an instant later, it has already vanished.*

Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

### The perception of underground spaces

Memory can be considered as one of the most abstract processes of the human mind, it is a structured process that can relate to actual physical structures as it creates the foundation of ourselves and our environment. Memory is where the cities arise from their history to create an experience to be perceived in the future. The memory of the underground city in general is passed on natural and cultural aspects that started with nature itself (the caves) and developed with the culture of the modern city. Further, each space and structure had its own events that created its memory (Boschi, 2021). There is no doubt that the nature of the subterranean layer is distant and mysterious due to the hidden nature that separates it from our daily perception, although this situation has not always been the case.

From a historical point of view, the underground spaces have been the shelter, as going under the surface of the Earth was seen as a survival and protection method. However, by the arrival of the industrial revolution, the surface became more valuable (Lawrence, 1994) and the underground took the role of a network— for sewage, trains and storage, which resulted in associating the underground city with darkness, filthiness and coldness, affecting the human perception and thereby the memory of the underground city (Boschi, 2021). During the First and Second World Wars and the Cold War, the underground was used as a military layer. Major constructions were developed in order to create bunkers, air-raid shelters and military bases, like the Maginot Line in France and the NATO headquarters in Limburg, The Netherlands.

Edward T. Hall, anthropologist and cross-cultural researcher, explained that the perception mechanism of humans evolved into two systems: distance receptors and immediate receptors (Hall, 1966). The evolution of the human receptors and senses has shaped the perceived world and the space occupied, as each receptor and sense have their space that they demarcate and function within. The immediate receptors usually perceive a space rather than make one. For example, the skin perceives the thermal space through the exteroceptors that sense heat, cold, and humidity, while the kinaesthetic space is perceived through motion using the muscles to create the perception. Likewise, the tactile space is created by using the skin and muscles as receptors to perceive warmth and texture (Hall, 1966). As described by Antonello Boschi, an architect and associate professor at Pisa University,

Dr. Jiayi Jin is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Architecture and Built Environment, Northumbria University. Her research is transdisciplinary, spanning the fields of architectural theory, spatial morphology, digital technologies, social sciences and cultural studies. Former to her appointment at Northumbria University, she was leading the research project *Augmented Spaces* (funded by AHRC, NESTA and Arts Council England) at the University of Nottingham as a R.A., and engaged in several research projects on emergent ways of designing the interactive space grounded in the field of Human-Computer Interaction at the Mixed Reality Laboratory (MRL). She has an architecture and idea studio *Inter-lab*, founded in 2014 for practice-based projects covering museums & exhibitions, architectural design, urban studies and planning.

[jiayi.jin@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:jiayi.jin@northumbria.ac.uk)

the perception in the underground spaces takes another dimension as the human most critical sense, vision, becomes limited due to the light conditions. As a result, in a dark environment the vision focuses more on shapes and edges, instead of colours. Then, the human perception mechanism depends on the thermal, kinesthetic, and auditory receptors, which also suffer from insufficiency resulting in a lack of sensory stimuli. This translates into eyesight problems, like blurriness, weak hearing, neutralising of smell and disorientation as human beings lose the sense of time and seasons due to the lack of daylight (Boschi, 2021). Blinded persons and people who spend more time in the darkness learn to recognise higher audio frequencies and become alert to thermal changes while

*The usage of the underground as war shelters and bunkers became also associated with war and conflicts*

moving in the darkness activate the kinesthetic receptors, which allows them to make stable movements (Hall, 1966). The underground space, therefore, becomes perceived differently since the human receptors have their limited space, result-

ing in segmenting the actual underground space. Moreover, perceiving the underground space from the upper layer is usually restricted, as it limits itself to the two dimensionalities of the entrances, which already largely disappeared from the upper city, or remain closed amid safety fears.

From a cultural point of view, our perception is influenced by literature, cinema, myths, and stories. Here, underground spaces such as parking and metro lines have been connected with criminals, illegal deals, and attacks. Fear becomes a physical and psychological barrier to the underground spaces, linking the physical environment with darkness, filthiness, dampness, and mysteries. The ancient classical myths about the cavern of the gods and the religious traditions which share the idea of burial space make underground spaces reflect fear and hesitation (Boschi, 2021). The usage of the underground as war shelters and bunkers became also associated with war and conflicts, as shown in a painting by Henry Carr (Figure 1). The limitation of the human sensory system and the cultural and historical imaginary of the underground has affected human perception, which in turn affects the memory humans hold of the underground (Hall, 1966). Therefore, the memories created in the subterranean layer become fragile, due to their association with darkness, fear, isolation, and invisibility. On the other hand, underground structures convey memories that often come with historical events and stories from families, regions, and nations in the form of collective memory.

### **The collective memory of the underground**

Collective memory is created by a social group based on specific relationships. Halbwachs (1980) argued that collective memory is evoked and preserved in physical objects through their permanence in the environment, which confers them stability. Permanence and stability translate into familiarity and comfort. According to Halbwachs (1950, 1980, p.130), 'when a group is introduced to a space, the group transforms the space into which it has been inserted and yields and adapts to its physical surroundings. It becomes enclosed within the framework it has built'. The group's image of its external milieu and its stable relationships with this environment becomes paramount in the idea it forms of itself, permeating every element of its consciousness, moderating, and governing its evolution. Cities, districts, buildings and interiors thus become part of the spatial image of a group's collective memory, which clarifies the inhabitants' sensitivity towards their environment and the changes that might occur in spatial settings, such as the demolition of a particular building, or the construction of a new one.

Jan Assmann divides collective memory into communicative and cultural memory (Assmann, 1995). While communicative memory relies on the recent past, cultural memory transmits itself from one

generation to the other through sacred scriptures, ritual activities, or the hieratic language of forms inside a canon of architectural and artistic types (Assmann, 1995). The Italian architect Aldo Rossi had already introduced the concept of collective memory into the architectural field with his 1966 book *The Architecture of the City*. Rossi argued that collective memory appears in urban artifacts that relates to collective imagination and the continuity of urban structure, shaping 'the soul of the city'. An urban artifact stands for its individuality, its locus, its design and memory (Rossi, 2007). The city becomes the collective memory of its people when it associates itself with objects, places and events, as many guidelines to establish the urban structure and its artifacts, either individual or collective.

Marcel Poète (1929) and Pierre Lavedan (1959) also addressed the city as a man-made object that needs to be researched through time development while considering that its past and future are only partly experienced in the present (Chizzoniti, 2018). This means that the object's history is made as long as it is in use. When a particular object has served its function and form, history transforms into a memory be activated by the object. In this notion, collective memory is thus the outcome of processes involving events, time and space created with history of a specific physical structure or artifact.

The collective memory of the underground city is influenced through time. Taking into account the notion of the social group addressed by Halbwachs, Assmann and Rossi, it becomes clear that, for instance, war-time bunkers and air-raid shelters embody a specific collective memory, since they were used collectively. That explains why the negative images created around war-related underground spaces, and transmitted through the collective memory, resulted in the neglect and abandonment of those structures.

## **Towards a new Memory through the design project: Peel Street Caves and Archives Centre**

Michel Foucault developed the concept of counter-memory to define resistance against history (Weedon & Jordan 2012). For Foucault (2021) counter-memory challenges the topics at stake in collective memory, creating broader social connections in society (Weedon & Jordan, 2012). With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, for instance, James Young dwelt on the notion of counter-monument (Young, 1992). As Anna Saunders stated in her book *Memorizing the GDR: Monuments and Memory after 1989*, a counter-monument is a phenomenon that can develop a sense of confidence and self-consciousness in society. (Saunders, 2018). Foucault's concept could also create a link to a counter-architecture to re-establish relationships with the underground city. Thus, abandoned underground air-raid shelters and bunkers can create new individual and collective memory through new spatial architectural experiences.

This concept was adopted for the design project of Peel Street Caves in the city of Nottingham, UK. Peel Street Caves are the largest of Nottingham's four remaining sand mines and cave complex. Situated to the west of Mansfield Road, the mine is 200m from end to end. The mine was in use from around 1780 to 1810. A map of 1844 shows a number of properties on Mansfield Road, some of these have basements cut into the sandstone which open out into the sand mine, as shown in [Figure 2](#). In the Second World War the caves were used as air raid shelters along with 75 other sandstone caves, two new entrances and associated tunnels were cut to give alternative access routes at the northern end, lighting fitted, and blast walls were added (Waltham, 1994; Lomax, 2013)

After the war, the caves were almost forgotten until 2010, when the project "The Nottingham Caves Survey" sought to produce digital 3D scans of the site. By the time of the project the caves were in a poor condition, unsafe and lacking ventilation. Its tunnels look like smoke rings breaking apart and slowly looping inside the earth; their near-endless recursivity makes it almost impossible to see where they begin. The Peel Street Caves and Archives Centre project explores the ideas of underground urban space and sustainable adaptations through the manipulation of the Caves. The new



design proposal focuses on adapting the existing environment to create a new type of memory – a counter-memory that allows us to rethink the abandoned underground structure. The focus of the design is directed to the creation of new spaces, reusing the tunnel's quality as part of new functions. A new memory of the underground city can be developed by combining individual exploration and collective memory. Individual perception is afforded by free exploration allowing people to experience the vast dark underground space (Figure 3). Materiality, darkness and spotlight are the main ingredients to develop the interior space, which can also become an ideal place for meditation exercises.

The project also stimulates the collective memory of World War II. It involves eyewitness accounts of wartime and objects from the Nottingham Castle collection. With 3D light projections and augmented reality, animated scenes of air raid shelters are recreated. Along the visit, these animated 'performances' with the wall memorial on the caves' facades allow visitors to interact with the experience of the events that took place during the war (Figure 4). Apart from audio-visual content, the visiting journey is also filled with authentic artefacts of the war period, these artefacts are able to engage the viewer (or toucher) in more than one way. While initially they might be purely appreciated in a visual (or haptic) context, they are also plainly able to morph into influencers of emotion or inspirers of sensorial engagement.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Building on Halbwachs' and Rossi's theories of memory, underground urban structures can be said to convey collective memory. The collective memory becomes a part of the object enabling it to embody memory narratives. However, in the case of underground structures, particularly war-related structures, individual and the collective memory are affected by human perception, cultural aspects, and events related to the history of these spaces. In this context, counter-architecture can help re-establish a relationship with the underground city creating a new memory (individual and collective) through new spatial architectural experiences.

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# Tunneling through Urban Modernity

**Ditte Bendix Langg,  
Tina Vestermann Olsen  
& Simon Wind**

## **Introduction: The tunnel in the modern city**

Mobility and spatial ordering are epitomes of the modern city, its territory zoned in functions, divided and connected by transport lines. In the modern city technologies and techniques for seamlessly transferring people and objects elsewhere more quickly and easily across time and space have been in high demand. The tunnel, a technological mundane artefact in modern urban transportation systems, affords an overcoming of the constraints of space and time. As a typological element it offers a universal solution in the systematic ordering of segregated transport modes.

In the aftermath of this modern urban project, urban spaces dominated by movement have often been criticized for being overly functionalist and formalistic in organizing what was perceived at the time as the ideal everyday life and society. Critiques are bold. Already in her 1960s address of the rise of the car-based city, journalist and activist Jane Jacobs warned of the production of the “suburban anti-city” (Jacobs 1961), suggesting that when car transport gained the upper hand in urban planning, the sociality and sensoriality of urban spaces was lost. Likewise, in his recent review of contemporary critiques of urban space, urban design scholar Matthew Carmona (2010) summarized the wide-reaching spatial impact of the private car on modern cities, producing urban fragmentation and car-reliant environments with deteriorated in-between spaces. A modern city pedestrian tunnel may be said to be one such aseptic in-between space. In the modernist design of pedestrian underpasses an assumption of the “transported traveler” (Ingold 2007, p.78) is inscribed; humans on the move are considered particles to shuffle across the city in frictionless transport networks, and in the layout of the city, tunnels have been assigned the role as instrumental means through which to organize these human particles in safe and efficient ways.

But, as anybody who has walked or cycled through a tunnel knows, at the scale of the body, the tunnel as a pure instrument for transport is challenged. Through such inhabitation – upon recognition of situated, embodied experience – a tunnel unfolds as a powerful and ambivalent urban space, magnifying the atmospheric intensities of urban absences and presences.

Tunnels exhibit a simultaneous spatial and sensorial intensity. As thresholds in urban landscapes, they landmark journeys of urbanites on the move – familiar yet distinct urban spaces. For some, perhaps, a tunnel is a humble transition point on the way home, for others, indeed, a hangout spot, or an eerie passage of anxiety; for most, probably, just another mundane urban artefact. Yet, it is an urban spatial artefact unlike most – one that is experienced from within, through its very enclosure performing powerful intensities on everyday life atmospheric landscapes.

Below we bring forth three tunnel vignettes from an embodied encounter with a 1973 concrete-cast

The authors work across practice and academia with the city, its design and transformations, and its mobilities and intricate situated everyday life practices. Ditte Bendix Langg, Ph.D., is associate professor in Urban Design at Aalborg University, Denmark; Tina Vestermann Olsen, Ph.D., is assistant professor in Urban Design at Aalborg University, Denmark; Simon Wind, Ph.D., is special consultant in mobility at the City of Aarhus, Denmark.

[dbla@create.aau.dk](mailto:dbla@create.aau.dk)

underpass in a suburb in Denmark (see also Lanng 2014). The vignettes offer insight into how the tunnel is a space of ambivalent atmospheric formations and deformations as it is inhabited on the move, from within. (Figure 1)

### **Moving through [Sunday, 14/09/14, 12:32]**

Vignette 1. Alone in the tunnel; I hear my own footsteps, not too loud. Outside the sun is shining; it's mid-day and quite warm. Upon entering the tunnel, I feel chilled immediately.

The concrete walls have ribbed patterns, and layers of graffiti, bright colourful ones on the top. I step on something slightly soft – a bit of dirt that fills out the strip between footpath and bike path.

Some lamps in the tunnel appear broken, others emit a vague light and I have to squint to see any details. It's dim in here. My eyes have gotten used to it by now, and it is not as pressing as I first found. Ahead of me, at the end of the tunnel, on the contrary, the light is white and strong.

Tunnels are largely experienced from within. Upon entering the interior space of a tunnel, the outside is suspended. The effects of weather are dimmed. A clinical artificial light replaces daylight, dusk, or the darkness of the outdoors. An “empty and cool spatial atmosphere” may emerge; in a tunnel an “aseptic and claustrophobic expression” may be expected (Hasse 2012, p. 154)<sup>1</sup>. However recognisable, these ex-situ adjectival approximations of tunnel atmosphere only partially capture the affective tonalities of a tunnel (see Albertsen 1999 and Anderson 2009, on the ex-situ representation of atmospheres). The experiential urban space is complex, ephemeral, and open-ended.

The subject's own moving presence into the tunnel takes centre stage. Her eyes gradually adapt to the changed light conditions, altering her perception, while she moves, alone and in relative stillness in the cool narrow concrete container. Movement, materiality, and the subject come together and condition a situated embodied and multi-sensorial immersed experience of the tunnel. The tunnel's affective tonality is particularly intense, it emanates a strong enveloping presence.

The architectural spatial material arrangement of the tunnel artefact conditions the ‘making’ of the event of space; it performs as a ‘setting of conditions’ (Böhme 2013, see also Zumthor 2006) for the embodied sensorial passage. The bodily mass, size, and scale of the envelope – the interior rectangular shape of the tunnel – is a key material condition. Although overall tunnel dimensions may in some cases appear lavish, the internal space oftentimes emerges as a narrow, long hole, with a distinct contrast to the open urban landscape in either end.

The event of space is potent in tunnels. Here, people in flow cannot avoid the intensity of coalescing with other people and things in a particular compressed place for a particular time. Physical presence of people, compressed in the tunnel turns it into a space of proximity: of activity, odour, movement, sound, even touch. In the situation of absence above, it is the traces of others, signs of past use which manifest as layers of worn graffiti, broken lamps and trash that deflect on the tunnel atmosphere. Moreover, temperature, sounds – or absence hereof – and light that enters the tunnel shape the spatial feel. Small lamps struggle to illuminate the tunnel, especially during daytime when their faint glow is overpowered by daylight pouring in at the ends of the tunnel. At night this may be enhanced; “emotionally threatening spaces” (Hasse 2016, p. 187) may be engendered.

In the situation described, activity is almost absent. It is a pocket of time where the subject is alone in the tunnel, and the atmosphere becomes laden with a ‘sound of silence’, only interrupted by the footsteps of the moving tunnel inhabitant herself, shoes on the asphalt floor. It is a temporal, affectively powerful, soundless situation, contrasted by many other urban situations where we find ourselves embraced by “the density of micro-event, the loss of intervals and pauses, the reverberated sound of

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by the authors from German: *leeren und kahlen Raumatmosphäre* and *aseptischen und klaustrophobischen Eindruck*.

enclosed space and the fast pace of street life” (Thibaud 2011, p. 5).

Vignette 2. The event of the scooter; behind me I hear a faint, but distinct, recognisable noise. Louder, coming closer, quickly.

Now the sound is enveloped, like me, it has increased into a roar. As the scooter passes by, the motor noise is deafening. The tunnel seems to vibrate. The hard, smooth concrete walls and ceiling and floor reverberate with it for some time after the scooter has gone by. I'm alone in here again, left with a strong smell of petrol that, like the echo, is a remnant of the scooter.

The event of the scooter spurs a gradual and forceful stirring in the tunnel. Its aggressively sounding engine is momentarily conjoined in concert with the concrete container in a strong auditory reverberation, amplified and distorted by the smooth hard concrete surfaces.

Stillness and loneliness have gone, the sound of light footsteps barely noticeable; now the tunnel is a forceful echo chamber of movement and materiality. With its multi-sensorial spectacle of sound, two-stroke petrol smell, rapid movement, and the sudden co-presence of another person in the narrow, enclosed space, the event of the passing scooter effectively deforms the tunnel atmosphere. It is a combination of the scooter's pace, its decreasing and increasing distance, and its trajectory, with the experiencing subject's own movement through the tunnel – at a much slower pace and parallel trajectory.

Vignette 3. Exit; I take another few steps before the natural light overwhelms my view.

I squint my eyes again, other senses come to life. I feel a touch of wind on my skin, the fresh air, and above me, clear skies. I take a deep breath, as if clearing my nose and lungs of the stale tunnel air. And still, the fragrance of petrol, mixed with a scent of leaves and grass. I hear some kids far away, shouting. There's a man sitting on a bench, can of beer in his hand.

The exit of a tunnel is a highly sensory and affective threshold. During the day, the bright light at the end of the tunnel provides an abrupt transition as one emerges from it. At night, the sense of the open horizon, the skies, and the liberty to move more freely constitute a remarkable shift. Nearing the exit in the situation described above, the walk pace is increased, just a bit, in anticipation of the bright natural light and imagined more fresh air than inside the tunnel. The exit itself evokes a feeling of relief and a pleasant sensation of being 'out'.

## **Conclusion: Making atmospheric intensities**

The pedestrian underpass of the modernist city is a rational transport artefact par excellence. Conceived as an ordering element to fix the urban flow, its modernist typological mundanity manifests in concrete and asphalt the modern city vision of seamless traffic efficiency. But the tunnel does not eliminate old-fashioned sensorial and social ambiguity and common disorder of the city. On the contrary, when transgressing the blinkered perspective resulting from a primacy given to these built-in transport benefits in our understanding of the tunnel, it can be conceptualized as a key frame of view into the dream of the modern and the frictionless. What reveals itself through that frame of view, is that in the tunnel, arguably, the modernist dream collapses: despite the narrow script of the tunnel, as a frictionless physical space it is an illusion. On the contrary, as the vignettes above demonstrated, the space is filled with the intensity of friction.

This should not, however, be considered a final defeat for the modern city. Rather, perhaps, we could consider the persistence of the ambiguous eventfulness of urban presences and absences that cannot

*Humans on the move are considered particles to shuffle across the city in frictionless transport networks, and in the layout of the city, tunnels have been assigned the role as instrumental means through which to organize these human particles in safe and efficient ways*



be fully repressed, not even – not at all! – in the cool concrete container. As architectural scholar David Leatherbarrow has insisted in his reflections on architecture's working beyond the scripted intention, such a "defeat of a work's apparent singularity often leads to a victory for the patterns of life it accommodates and represents." (Leatherbarrow 2009, 7).

The tunnel exceeds any modern design script and unfolds as an unfinished and hazy urban space. It presents itself as a liminal threshold; there is a clear 'before' and 'after'. There is also a clear 'during' or 'within'. The cool concrete container affectively tunes the space. Sometimes the feel of the tunnel changes abruptly and instantaneously, sometimes with anxious tonality, at other times gradually and slowly, almost below our conscious awareness. The compression of space admits no escape from the sensorial impressions that are multiplied and intensified in the tunnel.

The tunnel is not only a transport artefact par excellence. Within the simple object and its utilitarian function, a potent and ambiguous social and sensorial space happens. Through its instigation of a range of emotions it encourages critical contemplation about the otherwise reductive labelling of mundane transport spaces. In the tunnel, even minor absences and presences incite circulatory processes of forming and deforming powerful atmospheric intensities of the city.

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# Chiedi alla pioggia

I sottopassaggi fra ripari, squallori quotidiani e aspirazioni artistiche

**Antonello Boschi  
& Jacopo Boschi**

A cavallo fra buchi, tunnel e gallerie, i sottopassaggi seguono per certi versi la vicenda dei sistemi distributivi nelle abitazioni e nei musei. Non si è trattato di un vero e proprio distacco dal passato se si pensa all'architetto francese Julien Guadet, capace di sostenere come l'architettura moderna fosse nata nell'Ottocento, e più precisamente in quella specie di rito di "passaggio" della casa — si passi il *calembour* — fra le stanze *en enfilade* e il percorso creato per rendere autonomo ogni ambiente.<sup>1</sup> Si trattava di muri, porte e finestre disposte, allineate e con cadenza regolare che in seguito avrebbero dato vita a spazi fluidi, aperti, tipici della pianta novecentesca. Una delle caratteristiche che distingue il percorso, è la direzione, con i buchi che possono essere verticali od orizzontali — questi ultimi sorta di corridoi con due fori alle estremità — le gallerie fatte di negozi e talvolta di illuminazioni zenitali e, infine, i sottopassaggi quasi sempre privi di aperture a vantaggio di una solidità tecnica ma carenti di attrattività.

Proprio in ragione di questa mancanza, si impone il paragone fra il corridoio della casa, e come detto anche di tanti musei — si pensi agli spazi serventi e agli spazi serviti della Galleria degli Uffizi — e alla città nel suo insieme fatta di case e strade. *In fondo* Le Corbusier quando parlava della *rue corridor* sosteneva che non si trattava di una superficie, ma di un volume la cui sezione era data da una riga che dalla facciata, attraversando la strada, si congiungeva alla facciata opposta. E quei canyon urbani di *Giungla d'asfalto*, tanto cari a William Burnet<sup>2</sup>, erano divenute "condutture che aspirano gli uomini"<sup>3</sup> — prima all'aperto e poi sottoterra.

A volte servono per attraversare strade troppo grandi per essere superate a piedi, nei tempi ridotti di un semaforo, a volte sono il collegamento nei tempi veloci delle linee della metropolitana, cambiando se necessario anche le caratteristiche del piano di calpestio che può diventare obliquo a seconda dei dislivelli da superare tra una linea e l'altra. Così se il corridoio di Scola è il luogo della narrazione di ottanta anni di vita di una intera *famiglia*, e quello del Louvre filmato da Godard di *Bande à part*<sup>4</sup> diviene, con la sua corsa per le lunghe sale espositive, il palcoscenico della ribellione di quegli anni, ecco che la maggior parte delle scene della pellicola *Christiane F. — Noi i ragazzi dello zoo di Berlino* è girata attorno allo Zoologischer Garten, nodo dello spaccio e della prostituzione degli anni Settanta.

Antonello Boschi (1964) si laurea a Firenze con Adolfo Natalini dove consegue il Ph.D in Progettazione architettonica e urbana. Suoi saggi, lavori e recensioni sono state pubblicate sulle più importanti riviste internazionali. Tra gli scritti recenti *Abbandoni e resistenze. Note per una fenomenologia della facciata nel Novecento* (Pisa 2020), *Poetics of Underground Space* (Londra 2021). Attualmente è Professore associato alla Scuola di Ingegneria di Pisa, dove insegna composizione architettonica.

[antonello.boschi@unipi.it](mailto:antonello.boschi@unipi.it)

Jacopo Boschi (1998) studia a Firenze e nel 2021 si laurea in Storia e Tutela dei Beni Artistici con una tesi su Marco Zanuso. Oltre che di architettura si occupa di fotografia e di arte contemporanea.

[jacopo.boschi@stud.unifi.it](mailto:jacopo.boschi@stud.unifi.it)

<sup>1</sup> Julien Guadet, *Éléments et Théorie de l'architecture, Librairie de la construction moderne*, Paris, 1901-4.

<sup>2</sup> William Riley Burnet, *The Asphalt Jungle*, Pocket Books, New York, 1949; trad. it. *La giungla di asfalto*, Mondadori, Milano, 1955.

<sup>3</sup> Max Picard, *Die Flucht vor Gott, Erlenbach-Rentsch*, Zürich-Leipzig, 1934; trad. it. *La fuga davanti a Dio*, Edizioni di Comunità, Milano, 1948.

<sup>4</sup> La scena ha avuto degli epigoni, se non addirittura citazioni letterali, come in *The Dreamers* di Bernardo Bertolucci, Regno Unito-Francia-Italia, 2003.

La tetra fermata, i binari, i sottopassaggi e i vicoli tratteggiati nel libro e svelati nella pellicola, hanno finito per incarnare il degrado delle grandi città europee: “andammo in un locale che era già aperto della stazione della metropolitana, fermata Zoo . . . Mi colpì subito lo squallore. Era la prima volta che ero al *Bahnhof Zoo*. Era una stazione enormemente squallida. C'erano barboni buttati nel loro vomito e ubriachi dappertutto”<sup>5</sup>

Gli eredi del *flâneur* benjaminiani, hanno preso ben altre strade rifugiandosi in “pratiche di vita alternative, solitudini dolorose, forme di esclusione sociale”<sup>6</sup> Non parliamo solo di coloro che sono costretti

*Non è ancora ben chiaro il motivo per cui svariate amministrazioni comunali scelgano di ornare tunnel e sottopassaggi con performance più o meno a tema*

a vivere per strada da difficoltà economiche, e quindi barboni, clochard, *homeless* – parole che alludono a luoghi, tempi e modi di vivere solo apparentemente simili – ma anche situazioni familiari, perdita del lavoro, fragilità psicologiche, né camminavano “con passo cadenzato e sguardo

leggermente inclinato verso l'alto, in modo da portare al centro del campo visivo l'architettura e lasciare il piano stradale al margine inferiore della vista”<sup>7</sup>

Così, un poco alla volta, i *passages* parigini sprofondati nelle viscere della terra sono divenuti non solo luoghi di passaggio, ma luoghi abbandonati (senz'altro, spaccio, prostituzione), luoghi di vendita (bacheche, vetrine, negozi), luoghi d'arte (vera o presunta).<sup>8</sup>

Pensiamo a quell'autentico groviglio di percorsi che si dipanano fra la stazione di Santa Maria Novella e Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia a Firenze. Vi si possono leggere addirittura i passaggi temporali fra un'epoca e l'altra con alcuni tratti rimasti come in origine – sestini di cotto a terra, mattonelle in klinker marrone alle pareti, bacheche in alluminio anodizzato oro e soffitto in intonaco – percorsi segnati da vetrine più o meno datate e controsoffitti lamellari, per non parlare dei tentativi di riecheggiare nella pavimentazione dell'atrio il capolavoro di Michelucci e Gruppo Toscano, mescolandola con pilastri in alluminio dal vago sapore “egizio”, talmente riusciti da necessitare un *restyling*. E se certe aree non sono poi così attraenti, c'è tutta una serie di tunnel e sottopassi che sono divenute terre di nessuno. Di giorno si finisce per camminare al centro evitando le richieste di denaro, sigarette, o la vendita di cianfrusaglie in cerca solo di una via di fuga<sup>9</sup>; di notte, come tutte le zone avvolte dall'oscurità appaiono i *writer*, ombre che si impossessano non solo di palazzi, contatori, cartelli, ma anche di sottopassi, luogo fisico ma anche sorta di tela bianca da riempire con tag, graffiti, colori.

Accanto a questo esempio che riunisce molti dei luoghi comuni sull'argomento, c'è poi la tendenza a evitare il recupero di certe porzioni sotterranee con operazioni spesso ambigue, servendosi dell'ala protettrice del mondo dell'arte. Non è ancora ben chiaro il motivo per cui svariate amministrazioni comunali scelgano di ornare tunnel e sottopassaggi con performance più o meno a tema. Per quanto

5 Christiane F. [Vera Felscherinow], *Wir Kinder Vom Bahnhof Zoo*, Hamburg, 1978; trad. it. *Noi, i ragazzi dello zoo di Berlino*, a cura di Kai Hermann e Horst Rieck, BUR, Milano, 2021.

6 Gianpaolo Nuvolati, *L'interpretazione dei luoghi. Flânerie come esperienza di vita*, Firenze University Press, Firenze, 2013.

7 Guy Debord, “Théorie de la dérive”, in *Les Lèvres nues*, 9, novembre 1956, poi in *Internationale Situationniste*, 2, dicembre 1958; trad. it. “La teoria della deriva”, in *Internazionale Situationnista 1958-1969*, a cura di Mario Lippolis, Nautilus, Torino, 1994.

8 Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, a cura di Rolf Tiedemann, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1982; trad. it., *I «passages» di Parigi*, a cura di Enrico Ganni, Einaudi, Torino, 2002.

9 A volte la vendita di oggetti inutili può essere sinonimo di socialità come lo erano le grida di ambulanti, arrotini, pescivendoli, venditori di carbone, nelle strade di Londra. Cfr. Richard Sennett, *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City*, Penguin, London, 2018; trad. it. *Costruire e abitare: etica per la città*, Feltrinelli, Milano, 2018.

l'intento appaia lodevole — la riqualificazione di queste aree dovrebbe passare attraverso anni di politiche urbane e interventi mirati — nella maggior parte dei casi non bastano quattro passate di vernice, o di bomboletta spray, per cambiare il volto di un'area. Soprattutto in Italia, sono innumerevoli i tentativi di creare degli spazi "artistici" che materializzano l'incapacità di restituire dignità ai luoghi. L'arte contemporanea, si sa, è materia sfuggente, talvolta complessa, spesso incomprensibile ai più. Sembrano passati secoli dal terzo episodio delle *Vacanze intelligenti*<sup>10</sup> nel quale i coniugi Remo e Augusta Proietti non capiscono il significato dei buchi di Charles Simonds<sup>11</sup>, un'installazione della Biennale di Venezia creata rompendo il muro di una sala e lavorandola dall'interno con la creta. *Dwellings* è per loro solo una crepa in una parete che poco ha a che fare con l'abitare e il paesaggio, tanto da affacciarvisi dal lato sbagliato, ovvero dall'esterno.

E a proposito di buco, il termine è sinonimo di rifugio tanto quanto lo è di pericolo. Nel primo caso Leanne Wijnsma<sup>12</sup>, alla ricerca della libertà, scava letteralmente la terra e ne filma la progressione, l'andamento, la profondità raggiunta. Nel secondo, lontano dalla tradizione artistica come linguaggio, ma non concettualmente distante, la *Descent into Limbo* di Anish Kapoor<sup>13</sup> è la dimostrazione tangibile di questo fatto. Probabilmente, la disavventura occorsa a un malcapitato turista italiano nel 2018<sup>14</sup> — Alberto Sordi avrebbe commentato "non vi fate conoscere da tutti per quelli che siamo!"<sup>15</sup> — deriva anche dal particolare colore usato dall'artista angloindiano, il *Vantablack*, una tonalità di nero in grado di assorbire quasi interamente la luce.<sup>16</sup> L'occhio umano non è così in grado di percepire lo spazio e la profondità, rendendo lo spazio bidimensionale, e lasciando solo un cerchio nero sul pavimento. Capitolomboli a parte, l'intento è veramente quello di riprodurre una discesa agli inferi, riprendendo l'idea da un'opera omonima quattrocentesca di Andrea Mantegna<sup>17</sup> in cui Cristo porta con sé in Paradiso gli "abitanti" del Limbo, i non battezzati, tirandoli fuori proprio da un buco.

Tutto questo per dire che la strada può essere sì quella dell'arte, ma a patto che chi interviene sul tema del corridoio, del sottopasso, del tunnel<sup>18</sup> lo faccia con spirito critico e non banalizzando i contenuti: artisti come Bruce Nauman<sup>19</sup>, Marina Abramovic<sup>20</sup>, Ilya Kabanov, Joseph Kosuth<sup>21</sup> o James Turrell<sup>22</sup> — solo per citarne alcuni — pur nei diversi linguaggi, materiali, tecniche, esprimono tutti questo spirito. Quello che è certo è che i risultati appaiono migliori quando le arti, intendendo tra queste ovviamente anche l'Architettura, lavorano di concerto. È il caso della stazione Toledo della metropolitana di Napoli, firmata da Oscar Tusquets e impreziosita dalle opere di William Kentridge, Achille Cevoli ma soprattutto da un etereo paesaggio a pannelli luminosi di Robert Wilson<sup>23</sup>, o del

10 Trattasi del terzo episodio del film, *Dove vai in vacanza?* di M. Bolognini, L. Salce, A. Sordi, Italia, 1978.

11 Charles Simonds, *Dwelling*, scultura in argilla, XXXVIII Esposizione internazionale d'arte, Venezia, 1978.

12 Leanne Wijnsma, *Escape*, performance, 2013-.

13 Anish Kapoor, *Descent into Limbo*, cemento e pigmento, 600,0 x 600,0 x 600,0 cm, Kassel, 1992.

14 Il turista, precipitato in una cavità sferica del diametro di quattro metri e affiorante nella sala attraverso una apertura di due metri nel pavimento, se la cavò con una serie di contusioni.

15 *Fumo di Londra*, di A. Sordi, Italia-Regno Unito, 1966.

16 Brevettato dalla Surrey NanoSystem, il *Vantablack* è il nome commerciale di una serie di rivestimenti neri capaci di assorbire la quasi totalità dello spettro dei colori, circa il 99%, oltre a resistere a temperature estreme e condizioni climatiche avverse.

17 Andrea Mantegna, *Discesa al limbo*, tempera su tavola, 38,8 x 42,3 cm, 1492.

18 Cfr. Lili Zarzycki, "Tunnel vision", *The Architectural Review*, 1480, giugno 2021: 68-72.

19 Bruce Nauman, *Performance Corridor*, legno e cartongesso, 243,8 x 609,6 x 50,8 cm, Guggenheim, New York, 1969.

20 Marina Abramovic e Ulay, *Imponderabilia*, performance, Bologna, 1972.

21 Ilya Kabanov, Joseph Kosuth, *Corridor of two banalities*, installazione di 112 tavoli, Centro per l'arte contemporanea, Ujazdowski Castle, Varsavia, 1994.

22 James Turrell, *The light inside*, neon, 624,8 x 335,3 x 3596,6 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1999.

23 Robert Wilson, *By the sea... you and me*, stampa digitale su pannello lenticolare, retroilluminata con sistema LED, 195,0 x 2400,0 cm, Napoli, 2012.



Cuyperspassage di Amsterdam di Benthem Crouwel Architects con Irma Boom<sup>24</sup>. Entrambi di ispirazione marina utilizzano materiali diversi per rappresentare il movimento dell'acqua: il sottopasso olandese usa lungo la parete toni più tradizionali proseguendo con le piastrelle in ceramica un'opera di Cornelis Bouwmeester<sup>25</sup> che raffigura la nave Rotterdam in acque tempestose, mentre il corridoio del piano intermedio della fermata partenopea si avvale, nell'epoca della sua riproducibilità tecnica<sup>26</sup>, di pannelli lenticolari stampati digitalmente e retroilluminati a formare un mare appena increspato.

E se proprio non si hanno le idee chiare, perché non ricorrere a installazioni provvisorie, capaci di ricostruire il senso del passaggio come fa Steve Massam a l'Aia sulla Buitenhof: quella che un tempo era la prigione più famigerata d'Olanda, la Gevangenpoort, viene in qualche modo ricreata attraverso grandi bulbi gonfiabili che stringono d'assedio l'edificio, abbracciandolo con il solo contatto di aria e tela. *Tunnel*<sup>27</sup>, questo il nome dell'opera, non fa altro che esprimere un giudizio sulla durezza degli eventi accaduti fra queste mura, generando una autentica *bubblelecture*. Rimovibile.

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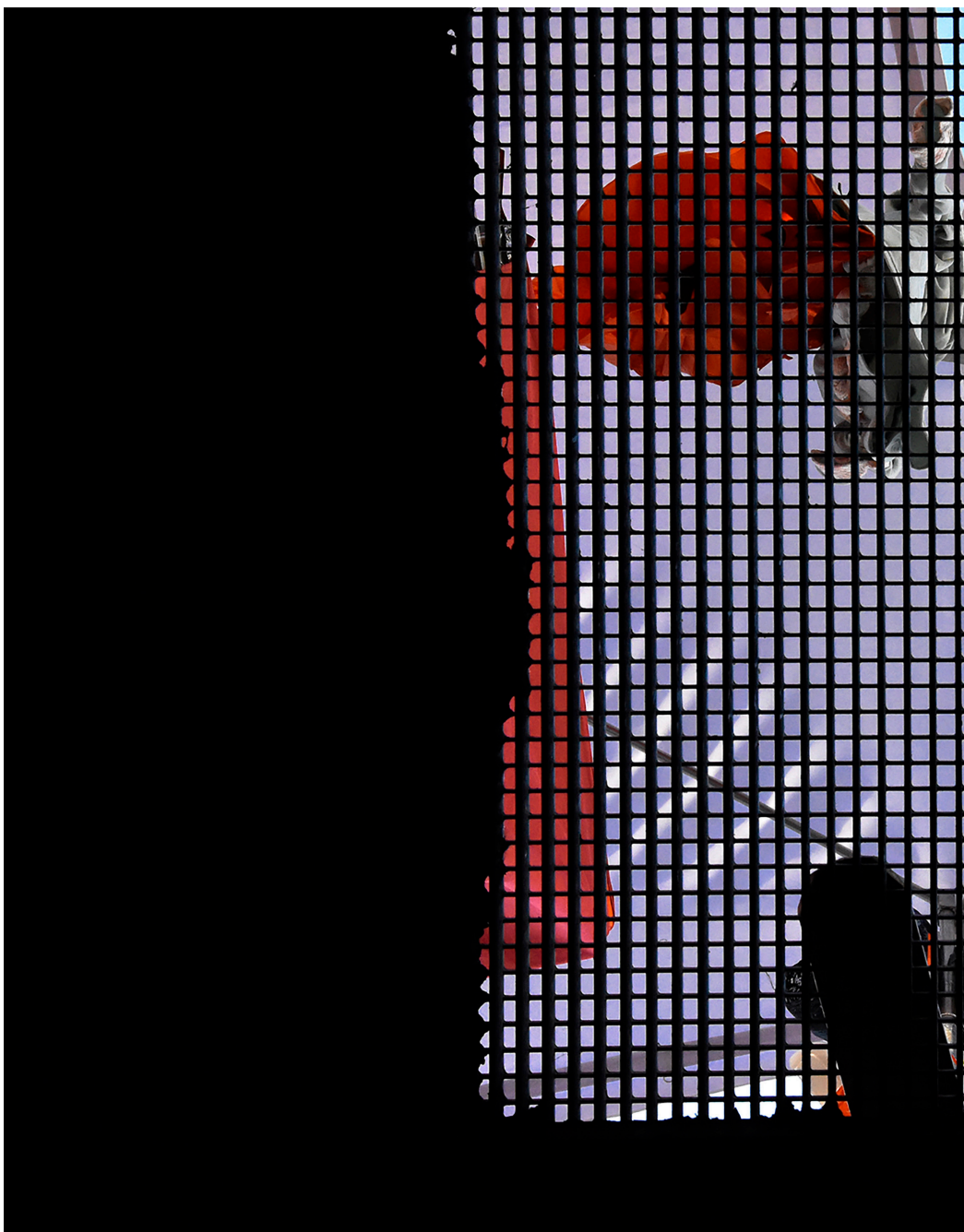
24 Irma Boom, *Warship Rotterdam and the Herring Fleet*, piastrelle in ceramica, 300,0 x 11000,0 cm, Amsterdam, 2015.

25 Cornelis Bouwmeester, *Tegeltableau met's Lands schip Rotterdam en de haringvloot*, pannello di piastrelle, 155,0 x 194,0 x 5,5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, circa 1700-25.

26 Cfr. Walter Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, Suhrkamp, Berlin, 1936; trad. it. *L'opera d'arte nell'epoca della sua riproducibilità tecnica*, a cura di Francesco Valagussa, Einaudi, Torino, 2011.

27 Steve Messam, *Tunnel*, poliestere, 950,0 x 400,0 x 400,0 cm, l'Aia, 2022.





**lo Squaderno 63**

***Holes & Tunnels***

**edited by // Lorenzo Navone & Andrea Mubi Brighenti**

**Guest Artist // Léa Byczinski**

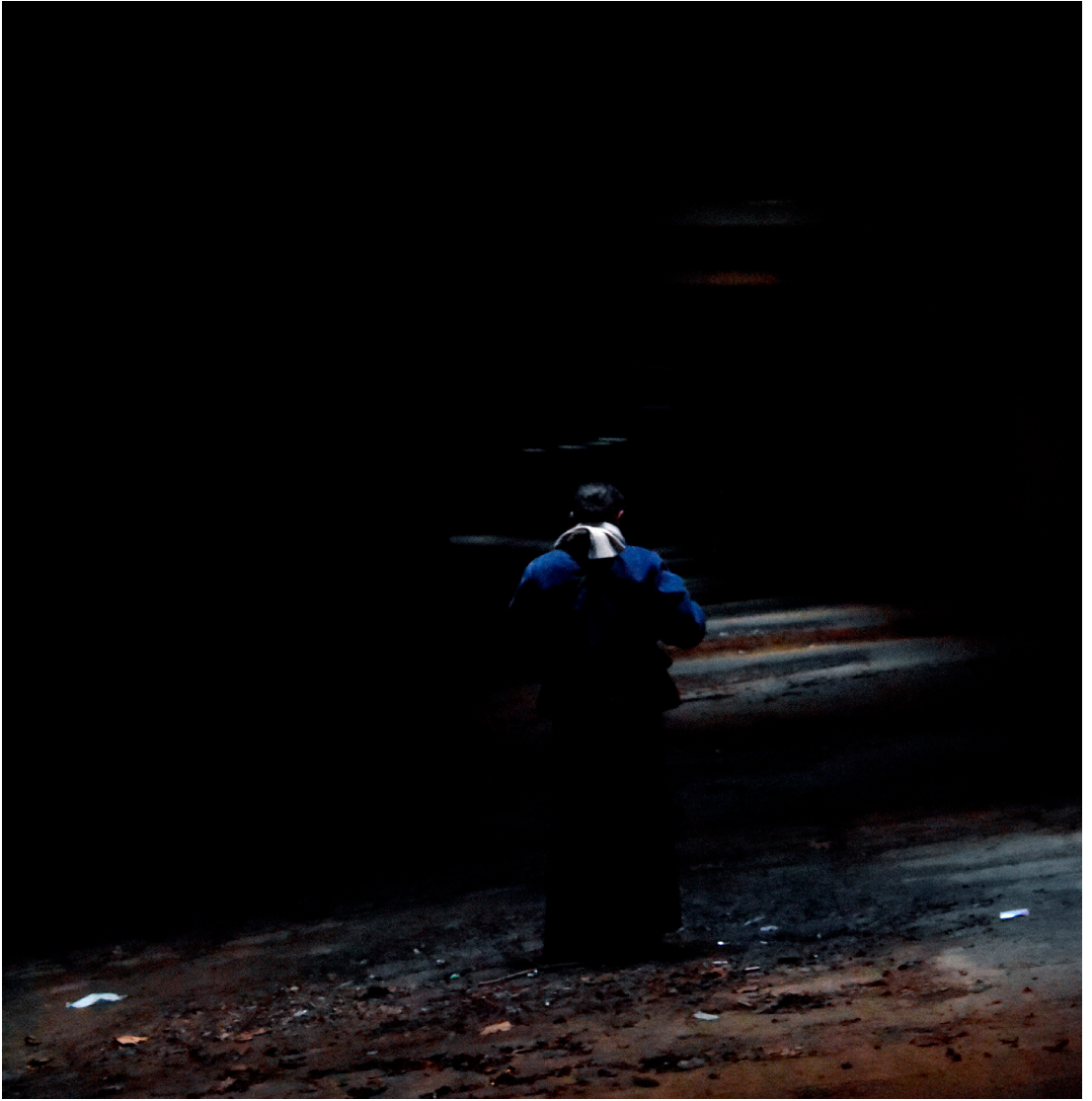


*Io Squaderno* is a project by Andrea Mubi Brighenti, Cristina Mattiucci & Andrea Pavoni.

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Contact | [losquaderno@gmail.com](mailto:losquaderno@gmail.com)





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In the next issue:  
*Ghosts [phantasmagorias]*

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