

The public-panel-relay - a summary for collaborators

As adapted for 'Moving memory: difficult histories in dialogue '
Anique Vered, April 2016, Montreal

BACKGROUND

(How) can you communicate different histories of suffering in shared space?

Moving memory: difficult histories in dialogue' is a collaborativemulti-sited research exhibition about the Armenian and Roma genocides that proposes creative solutions to museological and scholarly conflicts around commemoration. The exhibit, a mix of performance and interactive digital media installations, will take place in the Centre for Ethnographic Research in the Aftermath of Violence (CEREV) exhibition lab as well as opening up into a live conversational happening in the foyer of Concordia's EV building. By literally moving memory, this project interlinks physical, discursive, and digital spaces of representation, catalyzing the movement of ideas and historical narratives locally and transnationally, and prompting audiences to think through histories of violence in relation to, rather than in opposition to one another. The exhibit launches on June 6th, 2016 as part of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies conference being hosted by Concordia University and UQAM.

In addition to the exhibition, the live public event is designed to extend the exhibit into Montreal's cityscape and increase its public reach, and will manifest as a 'public-panel-relay'. This unique form opens *Moving Memory* into a conversational happening with conference participants and passers-by, as well as with a partner in Armenia via live-web streaming and remote public response.

THE PUBLIC-PANEL-RELAY: WHY?

It could be said that with the developments of a globalized, hyperconnected world, knowledge is no longer a possession of those privileged to have access to it, but rather, knowledge is now a network. In this network of knowledge, information is exchanged through diverse and vastly-connected communities; where the pace of technological development and its associated trends are seeing historical borders such as the nation-state and class divides dissolve, to make way for accessible education and public opinion.

At the same time, the *knowledge economy* that has emerged out of neo-liberalism is commodifying knowledge and its creation, whilst pushing institutional learning towards entrepreneurship and industry, and away from scholarship. In this context, students are driven to acquaint with knowledge and creation in the same way they might any commodity; to be acquired, used and dispensed of in line with their immediate self-interest.

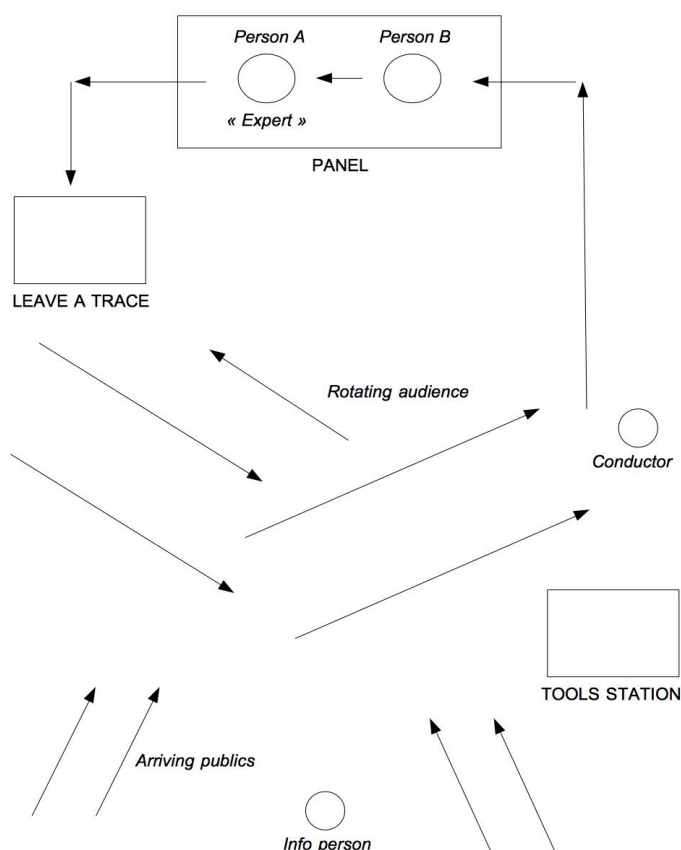
The public-panel-relay has emerged as a response to these challenges; an attempt to collaboratively create an environment in which diverse people can reimagine knowledge

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creation, exchange, and its impact. To do this, the public-panel-relay experiments with a cross-section of 'experts' and an engaged public audience, to re-orientate collective understandings of a particular topic. (In the case of *Moving Memory*, the topic being memory and victimhood.)

By undertaking this collective reconceptualization of a particular topic, the public-panel-relay intends to break down hierarchies of authority, to bridge public and academic space, and to push the boundaries between digital and analogue realms. Intrinsic to the public-panel-relay is the hope that traces of its experience can be carried out into the network of knowledge and catalyze inclusive and dynamic approaches to people and their communities.

THE PUBLIC-PANEL-RELAY: HOW IT WORKS - IN-SITU



The panel-relay:

- Position A: someone that 'knows something' of the topic, *memory*, speaks about it for 3minutes while

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- Position B: someone that 'knows nothing of that something and knows something else' listens.
- As the 3 minutes come to a close, Position A offers either three parting words or a gesture/ movement to hand over the relay baton to Position B
- Position A then descends from the panel to *Leave a trace*, and the person in Position B moves into Position A - of someone that 'knows something' - while a member of the audience, then moves into Position B - someone that 'knows nothing of that something and knows something else'.
- The role of the person that has been in Position B and is now in Position A, is to share an evolved perspective on the topic; taking in what they already 'knew' and letting it mingle with what they've just heard.
- After 3 minutes, Position A steps down, Position B moves into Position A and another audience member moves into Position B.
- The new person in Position A then speaks to the topic from what they understand while the person in Position B listens.
- After 3 minutes the person in Position B moves into Position A and on it rotates.

Important factors:

- *Participation on the panel*
 - Pre-selected 'experts' on the topic of *memory* will include up to 5-7 scholars selected by the *Moving Memory* team.
 - These chosen 'experts' will be tactically placed in the relay by the Conductor, Anique Vered, and it is supposed that members of the audience all have their own 'expertise'. The distinction between a chosen 'expert' and a public 'expert' will not be made nor announced, nor will the relay necessarily happen in alternating order. The improvisational component activated by the Conductor is integral to the process of re-orientating knowledge on the topic.
 - To participate on the panel, audience members can simply see the Conductor on the right side of the panel.
 - There will be limited seating and the audience is invited to move their positions every time the panel-relay moves. This allows the flow of information exchange to be supplemented by the flow of the people's bodies; whilst also de-formalizing the environment, offering people a comfortable pathway to step up to participate.
- *Tools station*
 - It is proposed that audience members who choose to participate in the panel-relay choose a particular lens to base their 'expertise' on. Lens examples (such as culture, perception, character, politics, fact etc.), as well as tips and prompts are available as a guide for audience members choosing to participate.

- *Leave a trace*
 - When people descend from the stage, they are invited to briefly leave a trace of their knowledge-exchange experience via a side table with pens and a recording device - whether it be some text, an image or diagram, or a recording.
 - These traces will be included in the '*Network of Knowledge*' on the topic that can be shared and grow beyond the live event. The '*Network of Knowledge*' is an interactive documentation platform, data visualisation and virtual dialogue that Anique is developing across numerous public-panel-relay iterations.

- *Arriving and leaving*
 - Passers-by can watch and participate in the event at their leisure. There will be an *Info Person* at the edge of the event providing people with information on the public-panel-relay through a simple handout and verbal explanation.
 - Passers-by will be engaged through two 'spruikers' promoting the event and inviting people to watch, as well as event signage throughout the venue.
 - Additional promotion to the broader public will be utilized to engage potential audiences and public participants through the Critical Heritage Studies Conference and CEREV networks.

Live event components:

The event will take place from **1pm – 2:30pm, Tuesday June 7, 2016 EST** in the foyer of the EV building at Concordia's Sir George Williams campus. Language of the live event will be in English.

12:45am – 1pm	Virtually connect with international partners	
1pm – 1:15pm	Gather	
1:15pm – 1:30pm	Welcome and warm-up	A brief welcome will be given by Anique to explain how the event works. Two warm-up exercises with the potential participants/ audience will also be facilitated to create an environment where people feel ready to participate in the event.
1:30pm – 2:20pm	Public-panel-relay	This will allow for 15 people to participate in the panel-relay at 3 minutes each.
2:20pm – 2:30pm	Closing discussion	A brief discussion will be facilitated to close the event and allow for reflections by the panelists and audience.

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