Making Worlds: Representing Experience in Romani Contemporary Art

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MAKING WORLDS:
REPRESENTING EXPERIENCE
IN
ROMANI CONTEMPORARY ART
by
Rachel Susan Hawthorn
B.F.A. University of Colorado, 2004

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Colorado in partial fulfillment
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This thesis entitled:
Making Worlds: Representing Experience in Romani Contemporary Art
written by Rachel Hawthorn
has been approved for the Department of Art and Art History

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Date ____________

The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we
find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards
of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.
The Roma have historically been represented in art and literature as nomads, free from the burdens of civilized society, and one with nature and the elements. From the sixteenth century gypsy child sketched by Leonardo da Vinci to the carefree life of artists living *La Vie Bohème* in nineteenth century Paris, the "Gypsy" existence is one of myth. This narrative imposed on the minority Roma by the majority European public has little to do with reality. The history of the European Romani community is one of expulsions, pogroms, violence, and genocide. Despite attempts to establish guidelines for human rights during the expansion of the European Union, the oppressive and racist treatment of the Romani continues to this day.

While the history of art has enlisted the myth of the Gypsy in support of the idea of the modern, independent artist, the art world in practice has marginalized the Roma, labeling their creative work as folk art, outsider art, or kitsch. This thesis will look at three examples of public creative engagement of the Roma community: the Roma and Sinti memorial in Berlin, the First Roma Pavilion at the 2007 Venice Biennale, and the Reconsidering Roma exhibit in Berlin in 2011. Utilizing the structures of the international art world, the Roma artists involved with these events engaged the world community as a means of combating the prejudice experienced by many Roma today.

Through activism, the international the art world, and contemporary art, Roma artists, as members of Europe's largest minority, engage the concepts of space, the nation-state, and boundaries in the formation of identity. The issues addressed in this thesis are key elements in the broader pursuit of security and identity of the European Roma community. Their experience is an ideal case study of the larger questions of post-unification European identity.
This thesis would not have been possible without the support, encouragement, and love of my partner, James Michael Toburen. All you have done for me; I vow the same for you.

Madeleine, Munin, and Magnus, my beloved dogs, gave me the much-needed laughter to complete my work, and kept me healthy with enforced playtime.

Dedicated to the memory of
Noire
August 1993-December 2012
The best cat ever
I would like to thank my committee for their feedback, suggestions, and advice in the development of this thesis.
Dr. Deborah Haynes
Dr. Kirk Ambrose
Dr. James Cordova

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My peers, the faculty, and the patient and hardworking staff at the department of Art and Art History at the University of Colorado
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As a descendant of Catholic and Jewish Hungarians who had the foresight to choose America at the end of the 19th century, I cannot identify a specific beginning point for my interest in the topics engaged herein. However, I want to acknowledge the beginning of my scholarly interest and engagement with the importance of art historical study in the realm of social action through the writing and teaching of Dr. Dora Apel, at Wayne State University. Thank you for allowing a scattered undergraduate into your graduate level art history course thirteen years ago. Your work has been an inspiration.

Any omission of acknowledgment of generous assistance, guidance, and feedback is an error on my part alone, and for which I apologize.
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PREFACE
A Note on Language, Identification, and Location of the Topic

Readers of this text will notice the use of the terms Roma, Romani, Sinti, and others in reference to the Roma people. This preface is intended to address the complicated issues of naming and use of these terms, both as clarification, and to emphasize the non-homogenous nature of the Roma people. While some of my statements and assertions in this text can initially be read as sweeping generalizations, I begin here with the caveat that there is no singular Roma experience or identity, and this should be kept in mind throughout the entire text.

The framing of the identity of “Roma” or “Romani” is based on the origin of the Romani language, and its presence and usage to this day. The Romani language is situated on the Indo-Iranian branch of languages in the Indo-European language family, and has maintained much of the structure of address and gender as found in the Middle Indo-Iranian language system. This has been used to date the initial Romani migration from the central Indian subcontinent between the approximate years of 1000 CE and 1500 CE.¹ The language itself underwent transliteration and textual documentation in the late 1800s and early 1900s through the efforts of John Sampson and the Gypsy Lore Society in Liverpool, England, along with other groups during that era, along with an increased interest in folklore. Due to limitations on the scope of my research, I have not addressed the many problems inherent in the work of Sampson and the early Gypsy Lore Society.

As should be understood when speaking about any marginalized community, there is not a single and specific convention for naming that can be asserted across a broad cultural entity. In academic circles, “Roma” is the term used for political correctness and expedience to describe

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and refer to the entirety of the diasporic population. In actuality, the Roma are only a subgroup of the larger population of Romani people. In the English language, “Romani” and “Roma” have been in use since the latter part of the 19th century, and this appellation is still in use today. In the present text, I utilize “Roma” to either indicate a single member of the population, or as a defining title for the community at large (ie. Roma art, a Roma artist.) I use Romani as the defining title of the community, as in “Romani visual culture” and “Romani community.” Both of these conventions are drawn from the usage of the majority of my sources.2

“Gypsy” is a term that some community members use as part of historical reference. Others use it in terms of reclaiming an identity, though the term is generally considered pejorative. My usage in this text is only in terms of places it has been previously attributed, such as in quotations from a member of the community, or in terms of titles. I will quote someone who uses the term “Gypsy” as a self-referential term, and I will use it to situate the historical mythology of the Roma, but my use of the term is never contemporary or titular.

Some words used in the text are italicized. These are non-English words from various localities used to refer to the Roma population. These include the German Ziguener, Hungarian Cigany, Tsigane from the French, and Gitano from Spanish, among others, which all translate to a variation of the term Gypsy. Along with these terms, I have italicized all words that remain in the original language, such as la vie bohème, and titles of artworks not in English.

The word “Sinti” refers to specifically the Roma settled in German speaking areas, with a documented history of more than a century. The Sinti primarily speak the German language. Lovari, Kalderash, and other titles are clan or family groups, with a last name based on origin and trade, which is why they are not italicized.

Finally, the differences between the Roma community and the Irish or English Traveller communities are also an area of discussion and inquiry that are beyond this paper. In brief, the Roma people are identified as such by the origins of their language. The Traveller community from Ireland, as well as the German and Swiss Yenish, are also communities that have been labeled as Gypsies. The term has been explored in depth through the use of language, in addition to the assumed inclinations of peripatetic groups. In terms of this text, however, the distinctions between these groups are not explored, and anyone included as part of the discussion of Roma visual culture is addressed as such due to their own self-identification as Roma.

As an English-speaking scholar from an American institution, I must also address for clarity the selection of two English-speaking artists from an English speaking country for the focus of my study. While the broader intention of my thesis is to explore the construction of identity through the works of Roma artists, time, research, language, and technology all created barriers for my research. The two artists who are specifically addressed within this text, Daniel Baker and Delaine Le Bas, are particularly active in the international Roma arts community, travel frequently, and maintain an online presence and identity. I was able to communicate with them in depth regarding their work, without the additional barriers of language or technological concerns, which made the selection of their work easier for the focus of this text. Both Baker and Le Bas, as artists, and I, as the author, would argue that they are not examples, representatives, or icons of the Roma people. The discussion contained herein of the work produced by Le Bas and Baker is only an exploration of two of the many possible modes of artistic methodologies for activism, identity construction, and contemporary art. I look forward to more discussion of the Roma art movement in the broader contemporary arts, rather than identification of the multiple talented artists as ethnic or identity based producers of works.
CHAPTER 1
History And Memory

Muj šukkó, / kjá kalé / vušt šurdé; / kwit.
Jiló čindó / bi dox, / bi lav, / nikt ruvbé.

—“Auschwitz,” Santino Spinelli

An Unromantic History: The Marginalization of the Roma

Europe’s history is written on the skin of the marginalized. It has been burned into the memories of those who have carried the burdens of linguistic, racial, social, and economic difference throughout their existence. Those memories, and the experiences that shaped them, have not been recognized in a consistent manner, despite the constant and predictable response to most tragedies: a public call that events should “never again” occur, and that society should “never forget.” When the victims are a people already vilified and marginalized, these calls for justice often fade into the quiet night.

For nearly eight centuries, the Roma people have been characters in a constructed tale propped up by slavery and abuse, mistreatment and misinformation, effacement and denial. Despite the community’s best efforts, the majority population in Europe has utilized art, literature, laws, and brutality to uphold their view of the Gypsy. Romantic myths of a nomadic people with a penchant for crime and a lack of honor created the ideal scapegoat for social and economic problems throughout history, and variations on these narratives persist today across the European Union. The Roma have struggled to locate and project their own identity in a world that has repeatedly ignored their histories and denied them space in which to be present. From their origins in India, to a history of alternating periods of forced migration and settlement, to the

1 The poem by Santino Spinelli is written in Romani and English around the edge of the memorial. The Romani text above translates to: Sunken in face / extinguished eyes / cold lips / silence | a torn heart / without breath / without words / no tears.
centuries of slavery, to deportation and murder under the direction of the National Socialist
government in Germany, to current human rights abuses in France, Italy, Romania, Hungary and
the Czech Republic, the story of the Roma has been consistent in one way: it is not their own.

In a catalog essay written for the *Bohèmes De Léonard de Vinci à Picasso* exhibit in 2012
at the Grande Palais in Paris, Marilyn Brown presents the history of the nineteenth century
Gypsy, framed by the Orientalized perspective of the leading critic of that century, Théophile
Gautier:

> In their black diamond eyes breathes the antique and mysterious melancholy of the
> Orient, and stars glint in the dark night of their pupils…These children of *la bohème*
> have their hierarchy, their religion, their rites; their origin is lost in the night of time;
> their migrations inspire poetry.\(^2\)

This romantic view of the Gypsy rewrites the Roma reality with additional comments by
Gautier on the nature of the bohemian lifestyle that many nineteenth century artists willingly
adopted as a rejection of the new social order of the bourgeoisie in the urban Paris that Napoleon
III was assiduously cleaning up. The poor were pushed to the margins of the city as
Haussmann’s boulevards opened up areas of commerce and social engagement for the upper
classes. The Roma people, who had been documented throughout Europe for three centuries,
were among those pushed out toward the fringe. The new industrialization of many urban city
centers, most notably Paris, meant that many of the skills of itinerant workers were also
becoming obsolete, further minimizing the opportunities available for the community.

This pattern of simultaneous romanticizing and displacement happened all over the
European continent. As the economic environment shifted even more dramatically following the
First World War, the Roma and Sinti living in Germany were easy targets. By labeling them as

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racially inferior, the rising National Socialist government easily pressed forward with cruel scientific experiments, registration requirements, limitations on movements, segregation, isolation, and eventually murder. In 1938, when Himmler submitted his paper on the “final solution” to the “gypsy problem,” there was no need for a political campaign to convince the public of the dangerous nature of the gypsies. They were already a pariah in the eyes of society and the government. This negative stereotype persisted through the war and continues to color the experience of the Roma.

In 1999, and again 2004, large numbers of Roma fled Kosovo after outbreaks of violence against minorities. An expanding Roma refugee population in Berlin was created by the influx of Roma from the former Yugoslavian states. In 2010, the partially recognized state of Kosovo began the process of repatriating refugees with the full agreement and support of the German government even though the government of Kosovo had no way to guarantee the safety of the Roma upon their arrival. While some returned willingly or spontaneously, there were a number of refugees who were forced out despite their long-term presence in countries such as Germany. Upon their return to Kosovo, the Roma minority found the local political situation belied the national policies enacted for their protection, leaving them vulnerable with no social or structural support. There is evidence that the return action was not widely supported as

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Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD) ministers in various cities cited local authority in their intent to avoid “uprooting families and displacing children,” but the language of many in the government continued to frame the argument in terms of the prejudice against the Roma who “travel from other countries, work under the table, and cause fights in the neighborhood.”

Elsewhere in Europe, conditions for the Roma community steadily worsened. In Romania and Bulgaria, skinheads have attacked groups of Roma in the lead up to football matches. Between 2006 and 2009, Roma camps were firebombed multiple times, and violent mobs attacked Roma families in their own homes. Using anti-Roma rhetoric to garner support for their actions, the Italian government established an emergency order to evict the Roma from their homes and place them into controlled camps against EU policies.

Across the EU, violence against the Roma was not the product of simple outliers in belief, or rogue gangs, but symbolic of institutionalized racism. In 2009, Slovakian police officers humiliated and degraded a group of young Roma men in custody. The entire incident was filmed with a mobile phone, and the file eventually leaked to the press, which resulted in simultaneous outrage from human rights activists, and a lack of response from much of the general public. In 2010, the Romanian foreign minister suggested in a public speech that Roma have an inherent criminal element. When members of EU human rights groups and other public

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8 Bulgaria: Violence against Roma, including by extremist groups; state protection and treatment by police: 2008-2012, (UNHCR document, Published by Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada) http://www.refworld.org/docid/50a9ed2f2.html (last accessed May 19, 2013).


entities addressed the slur, the Romanian president defended the minister and his comment.\textsuperscript{11} Despite EU passports that entitled them to unrestricted passage through and presence in the country, French president Nicolas Sarkozy authorized policies for the deportation of Roma, essentially dropping them off at the borders of the former Balkan states with some pocket money and threats of violence and more if they returned.\textsuperscript{12} Despite campaign pledges to the contrary, this scenario continues under the current French president François Hollande,\textsuperscript{13} along with continued police harassment of the Roma according to the observer group Human Rights Watch, who have documented “ample evidence French police are targeting Roma because they are Roma.”\textsuperscript{14}

In the decades since the Holocaust, the academic study of memory, remembering, and trauma has become a popular yet messy field, where psychology, neurobiology, and ethics are tied up with critical theory, art history, and literary analysis. Though it is often referred to in the singular, the Holocaust is a series of events that occurred over the years of 1938 to 1945 that resulted in the death of six million European Jews. There is debate among scholars regarding what other events are included within the term, such as the mass starvation of Soviet prisoners of war or the forced work of political prisoners. In general, the agreement is that the event specifically refers to the mass extermination of the Jewish people, a framing that has received

\textsuperscript{11} Minority Rights Group International, \textit{Pro-Roma NGOs demand resignation of Romanian Foreign Minister} (February 24, 2010), http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=9674 (last accessed May 19, 2013).
\textsuperscript{14} Andrew Rettman, “EU Executive Leaves Roma Problem to France” (EUObserver.com, September 30, 2011), http://euobserver.com/justice/113779 (last accessed May 19, 2013).
criticism in recent years, especially from Roma activists, Polish Catholics, and other groups who also suffered.\textsuperscript{15} The history of the Holocaust has been and continues to be analyzed in explicit detail, but a thorough knowledge of the facts of the event, as described by Gary Weissman, is no substitute for knowledge of the experience.\textsuperscript{16} That is something only a survivor can know, and the facts and knowledge of the details can never replicate the experience.

Transmission of the memory of these experiences has been studied in terms of the use of historical narrative to preserve and form communal identity, most often toward the Jewish descendants of victims and survivors. Marianne Hirsch has written extensively on this issue, marking the knowledge of later generations as post-memory, the concept that memories of traumatic events continue to affect the lives of later generations, particularly those who were not present at the original experience or event. In Hirsch’s research, these memories are not passed through oral history, but through mediations in possessions, behaviors, and stories, most referring back to Holocaust experiences.\textsuperscript{17} For a people forced by laws and prejudice into a peripatetic lifestyle, this association of the transmission of memory with possessions and place has severely impacted the ability of the Roma community to be recognized as victims of persecution, never mind receiving any sort of reparative gesture on the part of many governments, for quite some time.


A Call To Remember, and Never Forget

Anyone walking through the northeast corner of the Tiergarten in Berlin in 2011 could have observed the sloppy, muddy construction site across from the Brandenburg Gate, barely hidden by the trees (figure 1). In the rushed and productive environment of Berlin construction and development, the site was remarkable only for the lack of progress made since first breaking ground in 2008. Directly across the busy Scheidemannstraße is the Reichstag, and on January 27, 2011, the internationally observed Holocaust Remembrance Day, the German Parliament was in session. Speaking in front of the assembled lawmakers, Dutch Holocaust survivor Zoni Weisz appeared as the first representative for the Sinti and Roma of Europe to ever speak at Parliament. Weisz was bringing attention to the failures of social and political policies in acknowledging the experience of the Sinti and Roma at the hands of the Nazi government. The muddy construction site in the shadows below was a prime example of these failures (figure 2).

Nearly nineteen years after it had initially been proposed, the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe Murdered under the National Socialist Regime was stalled and had been for several years. Lawmakers, contractors, and the artist bickered back and forth about budget, contract specifics, and other concerns. The lack of progress on the project was seen by many in the Romani community as evidence of the German government’s failure to address the greater issues of the Roma people.

The space designated for the Roma memorial is less than a half-mile from the famous Eisenman designed Jewish memorial mentioned in numerous guidebooks and texts on memorial culture, yet the story of the Roma memorial exists in a completely different political, social, and

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18 I use “Roma Memorial” here as shorthand for the entire name, which is Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe Murdered under the National Socialist Regime.
emotional space. In 1992, when the German government approved the plan for the Jewish memorial, they also expressed the intention to support the Roma memorial. However, the project did not break ground until 2008, three years after the opening of the Jewish memorial, and a year after the *Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime*. The next year, the memorial was placed under the supervision of the *Stiftung Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas*, the supervisory foundation for all three spaces. At the time of Weisz’s address to the German Parliament, nearly twenty years after its initial approval, the project to memorialize the experience of the Roma during the Holocaust remained incomplete. The Roma community was frustrated with the continued denial of their experiences, and the refusal to acknowledge the way the memory of these experiences continued to affect them.

The general narrative of Romani social memory has been linked to a lack of awareness of history, or an impulse to live in the present. A large number of publications repeat the myths and assumptions about the Roma people in order to maintain the ownership of the Jewish people over the identity as the sole victims of the Holocaust. Others appear unwilling to engage with the reality of the lives of the Roma, and choose to represent them as a people with a temporally limited space with an inherent lack of ability to engage in the construction of a collective memory.

According to these same sources, the individual events of deportation for the Roma also lack the specificity of the Jewish recall of the Holocaust and that to the Roma, deportation and

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20 Many authors have relied on previously published sources that propagate myths such as “Gypsies lie” (see Fonseca, Isabel, *Bury Me Standing: The Gypsies and Their Journey*, New York: Vintage Books, 1995), or “Gypsies don’t remember the past,” which is then perpetuated by additional repetition, such as in Inga Clendinnen’s *Reading The Holocaust*, which relies on Fonseca’s text. Scholars who work specifically with the Roma, including Michael Stewart and Ian Hancock, are especially critical of these works and the perpetuation of false scholarship present in much writing about the Roma.
mass murder were viewed as just another thing that happened, as these human rights violations are just the things that happen to the Roma. The attribution of the attitude of refusing history helps to reinforce the idea of the Roma as ungrounded, without an identity, culture, or community.²¹

Against the backdrop of a false construct of the Roma memory, the actual transmission of memories of the Holocaust through generations of Roma met with very real cultural and social barriers. In 2012, the Romani Elders, a contemporary Roma advocacy group, put forth a draft resolution for the European Parliament to recognize the Roma Holocaust. In this text, the Roma Holocaust is referred to as the Samudaripen, a Roma word that translates to “mass killing.” Yet, in other documents, the term porrajmos²² (or pořajmos) has been used to identify the Roma genocide. Romani Studies scholar and linguist Ian Hancock first used the term porrajmos in the 1990s, and attributed it to a member of a Kalderash family. Porrajmos, in the Romani language, refers to a general action of “opening up” or “ripping open” or “devouring.” It is with this final intention that the term is usually used, though primarily by scholars and academics. In addition to porrajmos and samudaripen, the terms kali traš (black fear) and berša bibahtale (unhappy years)²³ have been also used by other members of the Roma community. This diversity of language reflects the heterogeneous nature of the Roma identity. The documentation of such a disagreement regarding the various names attributed to the Roma Holocaust is evidence that


²² Ian Hancock, “On The Interpretation of a Word: Porrajmos as Holocaust.” Shared via personal correspondence with the author, April 17, 2013.

²³ These terms have been published in discussion groups and online conversations in Livejournal or on Twitter, but are not listed in academic sources, and should be read colloquially.
there are, despite claims to the contrary, memories and historical narratives that have been transmitted through generations of Roma. This reflects an all too common minimization of the historical narratives of marginalized communities.

The Roma language is complicated, a reflection of the diasporic\textsuperscript{24} nature of the Roma people. First identified as Indic in origin by Johann Rüdiger in 1782,\textsuperscript{25} the language has evolved by absorbing loan words from the societies in which the Roma have settled, much in the same way many languages developed. Textually, the language has been translated and transliterated at various points since the 1800s, with an eye toward the reflection of the language spoken by the local majority.\textsuperscript{26} As a result, many regions have forced out the use of Romani in public settings, which creates issues in the education of Roma children. In recent studies, the country of Romania has produced a society with near perfect literacy among the majority, while the Roma within the country’s borders and educational system have experienced a steady 30% illiteracy rate. This is a pattern replicated over many of the former Eastern Bloc states, where the school facilities for Roma children are often run down and neglected, as evidence of de facto segregation in many of the communities where they live. The economic and social status of many of the Roma communities often results in parents removing children from school and enlisting them in work in the service of the family. Rather than looking at the societal causes for this approach to work and education, public narratives instead assign the Roma a lack of respect

\begin{footnotes}
\item[24] There is some debate about the use of both the term diasporic in reference to the Roma community. I stand firmly on the side that asserts the right of the community to utilize diaspora, which comes from the Greek and means a population that is scattered or dispersed, with a common geographic origin, without reference to homeland or return.
\end{footnotes}
or need for education. This is yet another given excuse for the broader lack of knowledge about the history of the Roma in the 20th century in Europe, both within and outside of the Roma community.

The arguments of literacy, terminology, and attitude are often the ones applied to the situation by external sources, notably non-Roma ethnographers or others working in fields that take them into contact with the Roma. Some authors have generated dismissive language couched in terms that appear sympathetic at the outset, which instead maintain the construction of the Roma identity in terms that do not reflect reality and uphold prejudicial myths. As a result, much of the scholarship on Romani culture is spent in refuting previous assertions. In terms of actually addressing the commemorative process of the Roma and Sinti in the aftermath of the war, Michael Stewart has placed the argument into terms that fit within my exploration here: for the Roma, there was no space for the remembrance of the war. The Roma were publicly ostracized and targeted by many governmental entities before 1933. After the war, as survivors returned home, their stories were not given full weight to be discussed. Many non-Roma neighbors would assert, “we suffered too,” or that the survivor had “deserved” their deportation to the camps, based on a supposed genetic predisposition to criminality and lawlessness.

The construction of a memorial to the experience of the Roma under the Nazi government was intended to work as a corrective to these ideas of the Roma as an ahistorical


\[29\] Ibid.
society. Yet in 2011, primary sources documenting survivors and their memories of the war experience were becoming scarce as the survivor population aged and died. The intended space of memory was becoming a site of re-injury and as such symbolized the concerns of the Roma community throughout the European diaspora. The concerns raised in Zoni Weisz’s 2011 Parliamentary address were focused on the oppression and misrepresentation of the Roma throughout history, including the horrors of the Holocaust and how these issues continued to impact the community’s experience and identity in the years since 1945. This trend was present across the developing European Union with particular insult occurring in Germany.

The social view of the Roma and the lack of space for them to experience their past is part of what made the completion of the memorial so important to activists, survivors, and members of the Roma community. Many authors have addressed the construction of social memory through the performance of ritual observance, mnemonic devices, and other modes of transmission of experience. The assumed lack of these ritual observances and the non-discursive aspect of the Roma recall have been framed as evidence of a lack of history for the Roma. Drawing from his studies and engagement with multiple Romani groups in Hungary over several years, Stewart has pointed out what he defines as a paradox of the Roma experience: the Roma sense of history is not constructed in a typical “western” manner, ie. formal, performative, and narrative relation of the past to the present, yet the Roma maintain their sense of history in a non-narrative manner, with crystallized fragments of recall, often referred to as “flashbulb memories.” The narration of these brief incidental memories often results in their presentation as though they were complete entities, with no need for further elaboration, and they often appear in a stream of conversation manner as an aside. Though this trend is present in the groups studied by Stewart, the study does not define the larger experiences of social memory for the Roma. The
presence of “flashbulb” memories is also a common response for people with a history of trauma.

The second point addressed by Stewart is the manner in which the constructed narration of these memories and stories maintain the Romani awareness of their status as defined by others, namely non-Roma. To quote Stewart: “Why bother to remember, when the rest of the world does it for the Roma?”

Reframing The Roma

The Roma activist movement made its first step onto the international stage with the first World Romani Congress in London in 1971. In 1979, West Germans became more open to the conversation around Roma rights with the rebroadcast of the US miniseries Holocaust. The resulting questioning and self-analysis led to the 1982 admission by the German government of the race-based persecution of the Sinti and Roma during the National Socialist regime. With the initiation of the process to construct a memorial in Berlin and the establishment of international guidelines for human rights regarding Roma citizens of the European Union, the act of speaking out on the Roma experience became a matter of academic, social and cultural importance. The most recent addition to the international groups advocating for and by Roma members of society has been the development of the European Roma Cultural Foundation, established in Hungary in 2010, and the identifying of the Romani Elders in 2012.

The Roma civil rights movement considered the Berlin memorial, with all the related delays and concerns, a prime example of the lack of priority the Roma received in policy

30 Ibid. 576 – the terms of remembrance by the outside world is not only the history of the Roma Holocaust experience, but the history of the Roma. This train of thought presents the difficulty in establishing a personal identity when the external construction of the “Roma Identity” is already so pervasive.
decisions despite the large Roma refugee population in the country. In the years since 2005—the beginning of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, a program under which EU leaders expressed intent to support the human rights of the historically oppressed and violated Roma—the community had increasingly become the victims of violence and racist policies that excluded them from opportunity.\textsuperscript{31}

After the German government gave its commitment to the development of the memorial in April 1992, Romani Rose, a leading figure for the Roma and Sinti civil rights movement, selected Israeli artist Dani Karavan as the designer. Karavan was already an established artist at this time, with a portfolio of works specific to memorial actions, including Jerusalem City of Peace at the 1976 Venice Biennale, and Passages, a work constructed at Spanish town of Portbou on the border of France as a marker of the site of Walter Benjamin’s death. Karavan’s visual vocabulary is minimalist, and many of his works utilize the environment within which they are set. The design of the Roma memorial follows this same language. As an Israeli Jew with family who perished in the Holocaust, Karavan agreed to design the memorial because he felt “an incredible sadness for the people who may have been in the same camps as his grandmother, aunt, uncle, and cousin.”\textsuperscript{32} Karavan’s statement on the official site for the memorial describes it as:

\textsuperscript{31} The general polices that framed the initiation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion are available on their website, at http://romadecade.org. The specific statement of intent for the development of the Decade and the associated events, comments, and actions states: “The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015 is an unprecedented political commitment by European governments to eliminate discrimination against Roma and close the unacceptable gaps between Roma and the rest of society. The Decade focuses on the priority areas of education, employment, health, and housing, and commits governments to take into account the other core issues of poverty, discrimination, and gender mainstreaming.”

A clearing in the Tiergarten, lined with trees and shrubs, in the vicinity of the Reichstag building. A quaint, unimposing site, withdrawn from the bustle of the city… A site deprived of everything. No words, no names, no metal, no stone. Only tears, only water, surrounded by the survivors, by those who remember what happened, by those who know the horror as well as those who never experienced it… The whirling water swallows it all. All that remains is the sound of a lonely violin raising a murdered melody, poised in pain.33

The recognition of the Roma experience in the Holocaust has slowly become the framework for much of the contemporary activism of the Roma community. In ensuring that their experiences are placed on the same level as the Jewish experience, the Roma are striving to be placed on the same social level as all members of society. The Roma war for visibility and identity is being fought on multiple platforms, from policy actions by human rights organizations, to research by academics, to a vocal and visible presence by members of the community on various social media platforms. Activist Romani Rose has framed the need for this visibility and equality as an issue that is critical to all members of a democratic society:

The fact that anti-ziganism is not confronted with the same determination as anti-Semitism undermines the foundation of our democracy and the much-vaunted European community of values. An attitude of indifference towards the racism that is directed at our minority paves the way even to anti-Semitism in mainstream society. For, as historical experience shows, it is mainly Sinti, Roma and Jews that have to serve as ‘scapegoats’ time and time again for economic and social turmoil. In times of crisis we must fight against this with all our strength.34

This thesis takes the status of the Roma as excluded and marginalized as a starting point.

Utilizing the structures of the contemporary art world and engagement with politics, I explore the


construction of contemporary Roma identity in Europe by members of the community, rather than through the inaccurate historical framing by the majority populations. From the concerns set out by Zoni Weisz in his address at the Reichstag in 2011 to the current situation in France, the issue of Roma identity and presence has been accumulating attention for several years, though it has not yet become a movement on the order of the American civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s. This is not due to a lack of effort or engagement by multiple groups throughout Europe, but rather to the issues of engaging multiple social, linguistic, economic, and political entities around the recognition of a group that is also culturally, socially, and politically diverse.

In the next chapter, I examine the use of the international art world in constructing a dialogue. In *Paradise Lost, The First Roma Pavilion*, a collateral event at the 52nd Venice Biennale, the participating artists identified their Roma heritage and addressed the larger art world, directly confronting many of the stereotypes of *la vie bohème* and the “wild gypsy lifestyle.” This contestation of boundaries and limits in an international art forum plays a role in the construction of the contemporary Roma identity. Following the 2007 Biennale, I turn to the 2011 exhibit in Berlin, titled *Reconsidering Roma*. Preceded by a symposium on the Roma identity and various creative outlets (music, literature, and visual arts, among others), the exhibit brought together not only artists of Roma identity but also non-Roma artists engaging with the current political status of the Roma. In contrasting the two exhibits, I look into the issues around creating a specific space for Roma art, and address the concerns around the creation of a “cultural ghetto.”

In Chapter Three, I focus on the specific creative production of two Roma artists who engage with not only their identity as Roma, but also larger issues of representation and identity of the community. I begin with Daniel Baker and his research on Gypsy Visuality, which I then
contrast with the work of Delaine Le Bas and her engagement with the broader concerns of domestic security, marginalization, and displacement.

Delaine Le Bas and Daniel Baker have two very different styles and approaches to their creative work, yet both have engaged performance and space, demanding the engagement of the viewer. They both participated in the two exhibits explored in Chapter Two, though their work merits a look beyond those two specific frameworks. This is why I have chosen to focus on their creative output as part of the larger conversation around Roma art, the role that visual culture plays in the formation of identity, and the production of space for the Roma conversation around issues of identity, security, and human rights.

I conclude with a final review of the status of the Roma and Sinti memorial, some notes on performance, and the current situation of the role of personally engaged art with activism and identity, and I address whether the traumatic events of the past can be given space for recognition through the work of the present, and pose final thoughts on the role of the artist, curator, or other community member in creating this space.
CHAPTER 2
Paradise Reconsidered: Contemporary Romani Art

“...Europe secured its own status as civilized and cultivated by denigrating the Roma through a combination of hatred, fear and romanticized gypsy folklore.”

—Jury for 2013 Leipzig Book Prize for European Understanding

Invented Folk

“If the Balkans hadn’t existed, they would have been invented” is the famous assertion by Count Hermann Keyserling regarding the area where the European and Asian borders melt together. In her text on the region, Maria Todorova addresses this idea regarding the framing of the region as other with her own variation on Keyserling, “one cannot resist seeing the picture of an innocent Europa with Nordic features being seduced by a boorish Balkan serpent.”¹ Likewise, the Roma have been seen through a similar lens of difference and exclusion. Lacking a cohesive identity and textual history, the Roma have been the boorish, dark, and dangerous serpents of the fair history of Europe. German author Klaus-Michael Bogdal’s 2011 book *Europa erfindet die Zigeuner. Eine Geschichte von Faszination und Verachtung* (Europe Invented the Gypsies: The Dark Side of Modernity), winner of the 2013 Leipzig Book Prize for European Understanding, addresses this very idea. In it, he frames the history of European discrimination against the Roma, and posits it as the method through which the Europeans confirmed their modernity.² This framing is not just a societal formula, but the construction of Roma identity through art has also long upheld the idea of the wild, untrained gypsy.

There have been Roma artists as long as there have been Roma people. Documentation and scholarship have identified Antonio da Solario, an Italian trained painter in the sixteenth

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century who also went by the name *Lo Zingaro*[^3], or “the Gypsy.” Many of the Roma families throughout Europe travelled with the circus, theater groups, or as musicians, and their association with music and performance is still a strong connection to this day. However, when Roma visual production was collected or exhibited, the artists were often labeled naïve or primitive, and the works framed as outsider or folk art. The self-taught nature of Roma artists was often emphasized (often incorrectly) to underscore the perceived environmental and cultural origin of Roma creative output, rather than the individual artist’s skill, work, and creativity.

Following the First World Congress of Gypsies in London of 1971, the Roma and their creative output came to the attention of the general public. Artists such as Serge Poliakoff, Sandra Jayat, and János Balázs were quickly becoming favorites of collectors for their bold, abstract style that was similar to many of their contemporaries throughout the international art community. While Poliakoff rejected the identification of his work with his Roma heritage, becoming a canon artist in his own right, Balázs in particular has been identified as a “primitive” artist because he was “discovered” living in his caravan, isolated from society.[^4]

After the 1971 World Congress, Roma art was exhibited at the *National Exhibit of Autodidactic Gypsy Artists* in 1979 and 1989 in Budapest, Hungary. Reflecting again the myth of the creative outsider, these exhibits focused on the self-taught nature of the included artists, and were organized and presented in community centers and ethnographic museums.[^5] Rather than addressing the artwork as part of the contemporary art conversation, this framing treated the


works as though they were specimens of an exotic civilization. Though the third iteration of these exhibits was titled in a more socially acceptable manner in 2000, the Third National Exhibit of Roma Artists was still featured in a community center, rather than a museum of contemporary art.\textsuperscript{6}

This characterization of contemporary Roma visual art as primitive or folk art has been consistently applied in many cultural institutions. In his doctoral thesis, which addressed both representation and production of Gypsy visual culture, Roma Pavilion artist Daniel Baker wrote about the collection of Roma art in a museum of Roma Culture in England\textsuperscript{7} as an example of this type of classification. Rather than painting, sculpture, or other creative works, the collection represents Gypsy aesthetic output with dolls, wagons, and other artifacts of the Roma life. Examples of painting in this collection are limited to the ornamentation on the kitsch objects that are associated with the majority understanding of the Roma style, such as the designs and colors on the \textit{vardos}, or wagons. Though continental Europe has been more willing to engage with the visual culture of the Roma, this has not translated to open promotion. In 2006, during the planning process for the Roma Pavilion, the curatorial team visited Europe’s largest collection of Roma paintings in Budapest, Hungary, at the Museum of Ethnography. The work was not on display or accessible to the public, and instead was kept in a storage room in the basement of the museum.\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid. 14.
Paradise Lost: The First Roma Pavilion

On June 10, 2007, the island community of Venice, Italy, was abuzz with art tourists for another Biennial. The 52nd iteration of the international exhibit was curated by American art critic Robert Storr, and carried the primary title Think With The Senses – Feel With The Mind. Aside from the central exhibit and related events, the biennial included artists from seventy-six visiting countries and three continental/regional exhibits. Turkey and Lebanon were featured, and Storr included a contemporary art focus on the countries of central Asia, South America, and the African continent. This was the largest number of national pavilions ever to appear at the biennial, and the broadest representation of globalism in the history of the international art exhibit. As part of the biennale foundation’s plan for a global art scene, Venice organizers connected with those of the exhibits at Kassel, Basel, and Münster, for the purpose of creating a European network of contemporary art events, marketed under the concept of the European Grand Tour. Before the doors had closed on the 2005 biennale, Storr and his staff established plans for symposia and other engagements to provide the space for “new considerations of contemporary art.”

In addition to the central exhibit and the national and regional pavilions, thirty-four collateral projects were accepted by the curators of the biennale and included in the catalog. These projects, proposed by individual institutions and artists, engaged with inquiries into topics including death, mobility, technology, and identity. In the Palazzo Pisani San Marina, as one of the collateral projects, was the first exhibition of Roma contemporary art on the international art stage of Venice, The First Roma Pavilion. Timea Junghaus curated the exhibit Paradise Lost. Junghaus, a Hungarian curator of Roma descent, explained the title as a reference to “the fact

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that the majority society should at last give up not only the negative stereotypes of the Roma, but also the exotic ‘Gypsy Romances.’”

“What is Roma art?” This question, asked by Gottfried Wagner in a catalog essay for the Roma Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennial, highlights a continuing issue in assigning a specific cultural identification through any contemporary artwork. As might be expected of any group exhibition, the works presented at the Roma Pavilion varied widely in style, method, and intent. From the metal and wood sculptures of Romania’s Marian Petre (figure 3) to the video installation of Hungarian duo Norbert Szirmai and János Révész (figure 4), to artwork that curator Timea Junghaus identified as produced specifically for the Roma community, the exhibit addressed identity and experience from multiple perspectives.

Junghaus has published extensively on cultural difference, colonialism, and the representation of cultural minorities. Her work is simultaneously curatorial and activist: in 2006, she curated and authored the text *Meet Your Neighbors: Contemporary Roma Art from Europe*; while in 2008, as winner of the Kairos-European Cultural prize, Junghaus established a collection of contemporary Roma art, and initiated the development of the European Roma Cultural Foundation, of which she is the Executive Director. Her stated goal is to establish a museum of Contemporary Roma Art that can engage directly with the broader art world, rather than the false construct of artists of Roma origin as specimens of racial difference. The documents detailing the intention of the ERCF under Junghaus continue to assert this broader...
engagement as part of an activist movement, utilizing the art of the contemporary Roma to reframe the space within which the Roma community finds itself today.\textsuperscript{13}

In the exhibit catalog produced for the Pavilion, Junghaus lays out this ethnographic focus in the history of contemporary Roma artistic production, before emphasizing the Pavilion itself as the climax of what she refers to as the “cultural turn” of the 1990s in Europe.\textsuperscript{14} The shift to which she is referring included a change in scholarly research and interests in the cultural concerns based on the writing of authors such as Homi Bhabha, Hayden White, Pierre Bourdieu, and others\textsuperscript{15} that explore the experiences of minorities in Europe. This change meant that discussions of cultural democracy addressed concerns of ethnicity, society, gender, class, and other concerns. Attributed to the initial efforts of student groups and civil rights movements, the broader conversation was integral to the conversations around the issues of human rights and identity in the developing European states after the fall of the iron curtain. As a diasporic community in the broader European community, the Roma experience is a critical part of the continued conversation regarding the issues of colonialism, representation, space, and identity.

It is estimated that between eight and twelve million Roma live in the European Union, with large concentrations in Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, England, and Germany, among others.\textsuperscript{16} This broadly diasporic community is identified as the largest single

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\textsuperscript{15} Junghaus more clearly defines the “cultural turn,” and the use of these theorists in her essay for \textit{Meet Your Neighbors: Contemporary Roma Art From Europe}, translated by Árpád Mihály (Budapest: Open Society Institute Arts and Culture Network Program, 2006), 23.

\textsuperscript{16} European Commission, “EU and Roma – Tackling Discrimination,” The count itself is difficult to confirm due to the reluctance of many Roma to self identify to government census workers, a response to racism and political policies that have denied the population access to many of the opportunities that general EU citizens enjoy. This data
minority group in Europe.\textsuperscript{17} This diversity of location was reflected in the Roma Pavilion, which was framed as a transnational site of identity for artists of Roma descent. Beyond just diversity of location for the artists, the Pavilion also reflected a transnational approach through the support of organizations from multiple EU countries, including the Open Society Institute in Hungary, Allianz Kulturstiftung of Germany, and the European Cultural Foundation of the Netherlands. Curator Junghaus conceded that the ideal Biennale exhibit would have already included Roma artists in all or any of the national pavilions, as most of the represented countries have Roma citizens within their borders. Yet, while the participating artists of the Pavilion were from many of the countries included in the national pavilions at the 52\textsuperscript{nd} Biennale, the international art forum’s 110-year history never included a single artist of identified Roma origin. This pattern of exclusion from the contemporary art community was one of the primary issues that the organizers of the Roma Pavilion intended to address through their curatorial work.

The Pavilion was not the first effort to present Roma contemporary art as a valid part of the broader art world narrative. Since 2000 the European cultural scene has experienced a shift, with a growing interest in contemporary Roma visual culture, rather than the historic view of ethnographic representation. Exhibits such as Hidden Holocaust at the Mücsarnok/Kunsthalle Budapest in 2004 and Second Site at the Stephen Lawrence Gallery in London in 2006 represent what Junghaus termed a “paradigm shift” for the Roma artists, as opportunities for Roma artists to display their work within contemporary art spaces, utilizing the structure of the contemporary has been repeated in multiple locations, but the EC site on Justice provides an aggregation of research and reports on this topic at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/index_en.htm (last accessed July 9, 2013).

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
art institution.\textsuperscript{18} The 2007 Pavilion was a logical step toward the engagement of the international stage.

In presenting the Pavilion as a site that was not restricted by borders and national identity, Junghaus framed the exhibit of the artists in terms of post-colonial discourse.\textsuperscript{19} Though the Roma as a unified entity are not defined as a colonized people, the narratives of their identity, rights, and freedoms have historically been contingent upon the goodwill and discretion of the nations within which the individual groups reside. This variation of rights and representation, along with the multicultural aspect of the community, places the European Roma population into an appropriately post-colonial discourse, framed by contemporary notions of cultural identity. Stewart Hall, quoted briefly by Junghaus in the catalog, presents a concept of cultural identity as a “one true self,” a shared origin, hiding beneath the “artificially imposed selves” of the colonized.\textsuperscript{20} Hall’s concept of cultural identity grounds a group’s communal identity in ancestral and historical unity. Utilizing this reading of Hall, members of minority communities such as the Roma find their unifying element hidden by majority narratives. As a result, disenfranchisement and displacement frame their existence in the European diaspora. The exploration of contemporary Roma identity through art becomes one of the methods through which the community can work to uncover the unifying elements of their ancestral identity, and assert that identity on a broader public stage.

As the European Union expanded in the post-Soviet era, the broadening awareness of human rights and identity was just lip service where the Roma were concerned, and sometimes

\textsuperscript{18} Timea Junghaus, “Paradise Lost: The First Roma Pavilion” http://www.romapavilion.org/about_roma_art.htm#01 (last accessed July 15, 2013).
\textsuperscript{19} Junghaus, 2006. Junghaus has specifically addressed the choice of the term post-colonial (as well as diasporic) in her writing about the Roma community, which she identifies as being her heritage in addition to being Hungarian.
not even that. In response to this disparity, the Roma cultural movement began to spread through Europe, following the path of earlier civil rights efforts in the 1970s and 1980s in Germany. In 2005, with the support of George Soros’ Open Society Foundation, the World Bank, UNICEF and others, Roma activists engaged the pan-European community in establishing *The Decade of Roma Inclusion*,\(^{21}\) a social and political agreement between participating EU countries, Romani civilian groups, NGOs and human rights organizations. Eight European states signed the declaration in 2005, with the total number of participating states now standing at twelve.\(^{22}\) Each of the participating states developed a *Decade Action Plan* to address the economic and social disparity of the Roma within their population, with the intent to “accelerate progress toward improving the welfare of Roma and to review such progress in a transparent and quantifiable way.”\(^{23}\) The vision and values statement of the DRI prioritizes the participation of the Roma community with the guideline “Nothing about us without us.”\(^{24}\)

The participating countries of the Decade declaration included the importance of arts and cultural programming in their action plans, as a method of combating racism and social exclusion. According to the documents for one of the many conferences on engagement methods hosted by the DRI,

> …cultural exclusion may only be reversed by conscious and proactive efforts toward mentality change, on the side of both the majority and the minority population. And mentalities may only change if people have the opportunity to deepen knowledge of

\(^{21}\) Hereafter referred to as DRI or the Decade.

\(^{22}\) “The countries participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Spain. All of these countries have significant Romani minorities, and the Romani minority has been rather disadvantaged, both economically and socially. Slovenia and the United States maintain observer status.” Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 http://www.romadecade.org/about (last accessed May 21, 2013).


\(^{24}\) Ibid.
the other and mutual understanding through positive encounters. Arts and culture provide the ideal platform to make this happen.\textsuperscript{25}

The 2007 Pavilion was one of the first major cultural events of \textit{The Decade of Roma Inclusion}. To facilitate a cultural presence of the Roma in Europe, the Pavilion provided the platform for the artists to assert their position \textit{in the space} of the art world. Rather than relegating Roma cultural production to the peripheral exhibition space of ethnographic museums and community centers, the Roma artists featured in the pavilion utilized the structure of the international art world to take control of their own identity construction and representation.

In her curatorial essay for the Pavilion, Junghaus addressed criticism about the potential for a separate space to act as a “cultural ghetto,” segregating the artists from the larger exhibit space of the biennale. Arguing that prior evidence had shown contemporary Roma artists had not been easily integrated into the national structures at the biennale, and individual artists lacked the access to the necessary infrastructure of a large international campaign, Junghaus proposed the dedicated Roma Pavilion as a space to introduce Roma artists to the international scene.\textsuperscript{26} Robert Storr, director and chief curator of the 52\textsuperscript{nd} Biennale, also acknowledged the importance of the Pavilion as a dedicated space,

\begin{quote}
\ldots there is no other nation that has lived in intercultural spaces longer than Roma\ldots They can be from India, from Central Africa, from the edges of Europe, but they have been there for many years and that is why it is important to present them at the Biennale, as an acknowledgement of their existence.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

Within this framework, the \textit{Paradise Lost} exhibit at the Roma Pavilion presented a groundbreaking international exhibit comprised entirely of Roma artists. Sixteen artists from

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{26} Paradise Lost, First Roma Pavilion, \textquote{News} http://www.romapavilion.org/news.htm (last accessed May 21, 2013).
\item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
eight countries (Great Britain, Romania, Serbia, Hungary, Finland, France, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the United States) exhibited work in the pavilion, addressing their experience and identity as Roma. This contemporary Roma identity, which Junghaus asserted would “serve as a model for a modern, transnational European identity”28 was part of the organizers’ message to the majority world to reject the historical mythos of the Gypsy in exchange for the identity of the Roma as “civilized, successful individuals, whose dignity is complete and worthy of acknowledgement.”29

“Marking out is never an innocent act.” Gottfried Wagner, director of the European Cultural Foundation, quotes Balkan philosopher Maria Todorova in his opening essay on the risks and intentions of the Roma Pavilion, which was included in the catalog.30 The risks included the valid questions of the impact the exhibit would have on the daily reality of the Roma in terms of human rights and access in their lives in the broader European context. It also addressed the potential for the Pavilion to be seen as a “well-intentioned, extraterritorial exercise” by the art world.31 In order to address these risks, the programmatic plan included multiple projects alongside the exhibit itself to address engagement with the social, art, and political realms. The Roma community has consistently lived at the margins of European society. By asserting their identity through the cultural realm of the international art market, the community has unequivocally demanded recognition of their identity as a transnational, pan-European diasporic public.

Among the many opening events at the Roma Pavilion, a panel discussion on the topic “Separate but Equal?” addressed the topic of the Roma-specific space, and whether it created

29 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
inclusiveness or prevented it. As one method of addressing this criticism and to engage outside of the boundaries of the Biennale, the Pavilion staff released a monthly email newsletter, *Roma Pavilion News*, which included information on the events accompanying the exhibit, and reports from the site. The Roma Cultural Participation Project of the Arts and Culture Network Program, Open Society Institute, Budapest, also reached out to the broader art community through the implementation of a scholarship program for young curators and art critics. The program intent was to award a €1,500 prize to the under-35 author of the “best - most thorough, analytical and constructively critical - review written about Paradise Lost–The First Roma Pavilion” as judged by a panel of international curators and art professionals. After the Biennale wrapped up in Venice, a selection of the artworks traveled to additional sites for exhibition through the next year.

Though the Pavilion was intended to specifically focus on the work of the Roma artists, additional programming was used to situate the Roma experience. From August 29 to September 8, 2007, in the attic of the Pavilion, the exhibit *No Roma!* featured an installation of film footage documenting the Roma holocaust, racial experiments of the 1930s, and Leni Reifenstahl’s *Tiefland*. Contemporary clips of hate-speech and incitements of violence pulled from sites such as YouTube were intermixed with these historic documents to remind the visitor that the racism and prejudice against the Roma is not relegated to the past, but is still ongoing. The exhibition installation, a series of cupboards and drawers that partially obscured the monitors and screens, was a reference to the Deutsche Kinemathek (German Film Museum) exhibition on National

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Socialism which also used drawers and cupboards to call forth the idea of the “archive, but also of a morgue.”

The European Union is a construction of the contemporary nation-states of the European continent, with ordering and alliance formed by economic and social beliefs. Yet, the individualized nations are a prime example of the concerns with the application of borders and boundaries in the service of the greater good. The European continent has been a migratory route and settlement site for multiple groups for thousands of years, and many of these groups still exist today, including the Roma. Many of these groups are categorized as unlanded minorities, for their identity exists beyond the constructed boundaries of the European nation-state. As a result, these groups have become the target of much of the discriminatory policies and speech of the broader European community, and in many cases have become the scapegoats of contemporary social and economic failures. In the frame of a reunited east and west in the years since the fall of the Soviet Union and the Berlin wall, the boundaries and borders of Europe have become more fractured, resulting in many of the issues seen in communities reconstructing identity in a post-colonial present.

The pan-European search for identity in states newly freed from the constraints of Communism is abruptly colliding with the economic reality of class and cultural divisions. Ethnic and class groups, including the Roma, are taking advantage of the broad conversations around civic engagement and human rights, demanding that they be given space at the table. This demand is evident in other programming surrounding the Roma Pavilion, including a roundtable held in mid-September of 2007. At hand were participants from the Roma Pavilion and the

Armenian Exhibition, another space for engaging the identity of a European minority group without defined statehood. Michael Toss, the director of Allianz Kulturstiftung, one of the sponsoring organizations, addressed the success of the Pavilion as “a genuine European pavilion highlighting the artificiality of national borders and the fiction of ‘otherness’ in Europe today.”

Future Fictions

This “fiction of otherness” is present in the academic literature and culture studies material and has been for several decades, but the Roma community provides a contemporary example with which to engage in the direct questions of identity in a post-Soviet Europe. As a people with roots in South Asia who have consistently been placed into a position of subordination to the majority, the Romani experience exemplifies the position of the subaltern. Despite their presence throughout the European continent, without a defined identity as “colonized” people, constructions of colonial and post-colonial identity resonate in the Romani experience, as the various communities settle into Eastern Europe or migrate across the borders of the newly defined “western” Europe. The geographic spread of the Roma over the past 700 years has done nothing to elevate them to a position of power within the European social structure.

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35 This use of the term subaltern is in reference to the post-colonial studies approach utilized by authors such as Antonio Gramsci and the subsequent work of the Subaltern Studies Group, which includes scholars such as Eric Stokes, Gyan Prakash, Edward Said, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The focus of their work is the social history of the non-elites of South Asia, in opposition to the colonial Marxist history of the British Colonies.

36 Recent scholarship, such as the work of Robert J. C. Young, Stephen Morton, and Joanne Sharp have continued to criticize the Eurocentric framing of the term subaltern, yet in this case, I believe the Pan-European presence of the Roma helps to better illuminate the disenfranchisement that the label has traditionally referenced. See: Joanne Sharpe, Geographies of Postcolonialism, (SAGE Publications, 2008); Stewart Hall, “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power,” Race and Racialization: Essential Readings (Canadian Scholars Press, 2007); Robert J. C. Young, Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction (Oxford University Press, 2003).
The value of the Roma Pavilion to the larger Romani diaspora is that of a fixed space of experience, collection, and recollection. As a general rule, the history of the Roma is missing from national narratives and formal histories, except when the references are pejorative. This lack of a concrete history has been used to (incorrectly) point to an ahistorical approach to memory and identity for the Roma. As a group that is continually being destabilized, the Roma concept of history and collecting can be best considered using Arjun Appadurai’s writing on the archive. The concept of the archive, according to Appadurai, is not historically a space of recollection for the migrant population. In this case, memory, personal or social, is “almost always a memory of loss.”\textsuperscript{37} The Pavilion, in these terms, provides a space for documentation of the cultural production of the Roma community, both in the narrative of the past, and as an archive for the future.

Over centuries, racially motivated laws have kept a large number of the European Roma population from settling into one place and developing their own history and narrative of place. This forced history of migration has created a gap in the larger social history of the Roma, with regard to the construction of collective memory. According to Pierre Nora, social memory is crystallized within spaces or sites, such as the archive, commemorative monuments, or through ritual practices.\textsuperscript{38} Despite their diasporic spread, and the previously mentioned faulty scholarship that denies the Roma a sense of history and tradition, the community does have ritualistic practices that resonate in certain segments of their collective society, such as the pilgrimage to


the French commune Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, for the yearly festival of Saint Sarah.\textsuperscript{39} There are also festivals and annual events that are ritualistic social gatherings around the idea of place for varying clans of the Roma. The Kalaidzhi, for example, gather yearly outside of Stara Zagora in Bulgaria for the negotiation of bridal contracts.\textsuperscript{40}

As an event framed by the Decade of Roma Inclusion, the cultural perspective of the Pavilion existed alongside the activism and human rights development of the community. The value of cultural recognition of a social group helps frame their presence in the terms of production, engagement, and visibility. The ERCF mission statement addresses this in particular, by acknowledging the number of institutions already working on the various issues of housing, education, health, and human rights. By partnering with these social institutions in the cultural aspect of the community, the Roma are not only able to survive, but also can pursue the opportunity to thrive.

Within the broader narrative of the international art world, the Roma identity in this setting is engaged in taking the space that is theirs. By drawing on the collective Roma social memory in multiple forms, the artists have documented the centrality of the Roma identity as present, rejecting the exclusionary framing of otherness. For the Roma, who have historically been represented and mediated through art and culture by the majority, the Pavilion was an inversion of that representation, and a piece of the construction of what Appadurai called the

\textsuperscript{39} Pavilion artist Gabi Jimenez illustrated this event in one of the pieces he exhibited at the biennale. (Figure 5) St. Sarah is considered a patron saint of Catholic observant Roma. She is understood to be an Egyptian or Roma servant of the three Marys of the commune: Mary Magdalene, Mary Salome, and Mary Jacobe.

“diasporic public sphere.” In contrast to the standard practice of national pavilions found at the Biennale, the Roma Pavilion was a true display of diasporic reality and identity.

Despite the success of the Pavilion, which had over three thousand visitors in the first three weeks, the Roma experience did not undergo a sea change, either in the arts or with regard to human rights. The Human Rights First 2008 Hate Crime Survey on Violence Against Roma documented that during the 2007-2008 reporting period, Italy (home to the Venice Biennale) was the site of the most egregious violence against the Roma, both in terms of physical violence, assault, and inaction on the part of authorities to stop such aggression. Unruly mobs in Italy have launched violent attacks on Roma in their homes, burning their communities to the ground; a situation not helped by the Italian government’s open use of incendiary language around the expulsion or forced removal of Roma people within the cities. In 2009, the second Roma Pavilion was cancelled just weeks before the opening of the Biennale, while in Italy the Roma themselves were subject to human rights abuses according to EU general policy, including illegal fingerprinting and registrations of both adults and minors.

In response to the 2009 cancellation, Ivor Stodolsky and Marita Muukkonen of the arts site Perpetuum Mobile coordinated the Perpetual Romani-Gypsy Pavilion, a broad arts action engaged with the approval and cooperation of several of the national pavilions, including Greece, Estonia, Poland, Turkey, Serbia and others. In the short time between the cancellation of the Roma Pavilion and the opening of the 2009 Biennale, the curators of the Perpetual Pavilion printed postcards detailing the specifics of the Roma situation in Europe and delivered them to

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43 The specific information for the site is difficult to locate, but the announcement and postcard for the Perpetual Gypsy Pavilion are located at http://perpetualmobile.wordpress.com/the-perpetual-gypsy-pavilion/, with further information available at http://www.perpetualpavilion.org/ (both accessed May 21, 2013).
participating pavilions. Coordinators at the various participating pavilions explained the intent of the postcards and their representation of the Perpetual Roma Pavilion, and asked participants to voluntarily submit their fingerprints on the cards, and send them through the post free of charge (figure 6, 7). The planners from Perpetuum Mobile also expressed the intent to create a “Gypsy” residency at various sites of engagement, beginning with Finland, followed by Bulgaria, with others following in the lead up to the 2011 Biennale. 44

In 2011, the Roma Pavilion returned to Venice as a two-fold collateral project entitled Call The Witness. The Pavilion itself was physically located in the conference room of the UNESCO Venice office, and was thereby restricted due to the function of the space, which had to continue to operate as a conference room. During the biennale, the space featured an exhibit by nine artists and arts collectives. Due to the limited access and the conceptual concerns of the space allocated to the Roma, the second pavilion also engaged the biennale as a digital venue which the curators archived online at callthewitness.net. This archive includes the recording of performances and statements by artists, activists, and testimonies gathered over the three-day preview period before the official opening of the Biennale.

Taking inspiration from the concept of the Kris-Romani, the Roma community’s judicial court, the Call The Witness participants gathered to provide testimony and to witness the experience and situation of the Roma in society and the art world. The testimonials ranged from a reflective performance between artist Daniel Baker and non-Roma artist Paul Ryan, 45 to the poetic reading of a litany of quotes about the Roma by activist Robert Kushen. The resulting digital trace gathered on the web allows the community to see the archive less as a collection of

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44 The site for Perpetuum Mobile is a continually active wordpress site, but does not appear to have further information about the “gypsy” residencies, beyond the initial planning.

45 Baker and Ryan have a history of working together, and I utilize some of their material in the next chapter regarding Baker’s doctoral thesis on Gypsy Visuality.
the past, and more of an example of migrant aspirations and what Appadurai has termed “the memory gap.”

This treats the archive as a site of a deliberate project with the intent of looking forward, rather than a collective trace of the past.

The First Roma Pavilion at the 2007 Venice Biennale did have the intended effect of generating further conversations and inquiries into Roma visuality. In Berlin, the conversation had already been particularly active, and continued with the opening of Gallery Kai Dikhas, a contemporary art gallery focused on representation of Roma artists. The social issues of the Roma experience, from the incomplete memorial, to the status of Roma refugees from the former Yugoslavian states, were addressed at the 2011 exhibit *Reconsidering Roma*, at Kunstquartier Bethanian in Berlin. The exhibit featured non-Roma artists engaging with the issues of the Roma alongside and in conversation with artists of Romani origin. In the catalog for the exhibit, Lith Bahlmann, the curator, stated her specific intention to address and engage with the history created by the first Roma Pavilion, including the concerns regarding a strict “cultural ghetto” that was the fear of a specifically Roma exhibit. With that in mind, I will turn now to the *Reconsidering Roma* exhibit, and the engagement of the Roma experience.

*Meet Your Neighbors: Reconsidering Roma, Berlin, 2011*

In November of 2011, ten months after Zoni Weisz’s address of the German Parliament, the Allianz Cultural Foundation and the German Federal Agency for Civic Education hosted a symposium entitled “GYPSY? What is that Supposed to Mean? Image and Self-image of

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47 From the gallery’s English language information page: “The gallery KAI DIKHAS will show constantly changing exhibitions of Roma and Sinti artists from all over the world. It becomes ‘the place of seeing,’ so the translation of the name of the gallery from Romany.” http://www.kaidikhas.com/en/gallery (last accessed May 21, 2013).
Europe’s Largest Minority.” The two-day symposium addressed many of the concerns of the Roma community, from representation in literature, to the failure of the German collective memory to acknowledge the Roma Holocaust. The symposium concluded with the opening reception for *Reconsidering Roma*, an exhibit of contemporary art investigating aspects of Sinti and Roma life.

In her introduction to the catalog for *Reconsidering Roma*, curator Lith Bahlmann places the exhibit within the recent history of the Roma in Europe. Kunstquartier Bethanien, the art studio space that was the site of the exhibition, can be read as a trace of this history. Previously, the space had sheltered some of the Roma refugees from the Yugoslavian civil wars who were living in Berlin, before they were evicted as part of the German government’s repatriation agreement with Kosovo. The criticisms Weisz presented during his address to the government and the issues surrounding the incomplete memorial were part of the conversation of the symposium participants, and the exhibit itself reflected many of these concerns.

After the 2007 Venice Biennale and the Roma Pavilion, Roma Art became an art world buzzword, with numerous exhibits exploding onto the international scene. Yet despite the attempt by the organizers of the Roma Pavilion to place the contemporary output of Roma artists into dialogue with the broader art world, the label of outsider or folk art was still consistently applied to the artists, and the exhibits themselves were presented in terms of ethnography, kitsch, or fascination with the other of the exotic Gypsy. At the symposium itself, a panel including Daniel Baker, Delaine Le Bas, and Timea Junghaus, all participants in the 2007 pavilion, addressed the question of Roma specific art spaces, and whether this created an artistic ghetto, or an opportunity for emancipation.

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In response to these questions, *Reconsidering Roma* was intended to engage not only with the political and social history of the Roma, but also to act as a platform for addressing the role of the Roma artist in conversations around production of visual culture. The exhibit was accompanied by a catalog that featured the work of the artists, alongside curatorial essays, interviews with the artists, and political and historical essays on the diverse Roma population of Europe. The conversation presented by the exhibit and symposium continued the trajectory initially set forth in 2006 by Timea Junghuas and Katalin Székely as the editors of *Meet Your Neighbors: Contemporary Roma Art From Europe*. In that text, not only was the intent to present the work of contemporary Roma artists to the broader community, but also to engage these artists in conversation with each other, as part of the engagement of the international art community.

As an extension of this conversation, the curators of the *Reconsidering Roma* exhibit rejected ethnic framing of the participants, and instead featured artists who engaged with the issues and experiences of the Roma community, regardless of their origin. The exhibit at large addressed the issue of Roma identity through a topical approach that investigated the construction of such identities through media, self-representation, myth, and art. These topics were also covered in the catalog through essays on the problematic representation of the Roma in *National Geographic* magazine, the relationship between gender and ethnicity, and the issues of politics and history.

The symposium included participants across a broad swath of influence. From artists to representatives of major Roma civil groups, to political representatives for states and the European Union, the participants addressed not only the question of Roma and Sinti identity, but

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also the shaping and framing of that identity through the art, literature, and life experience of a new generation. The focus was on the transnational identity and production of Roma and Sinti artists and scholars, and their own response to the politics of the European Union, immigration issues, and the constructed identity and stereotyped representation of the Roma.

The symposium opened with statements by Wolfgang Ischinger, the Global Head of Government Relations and Public Policy, Allianz Culture Foundation, and Thomas Krüger, President of the German Federal Agency for Civic Education. Krüger in particular reiterated the importance of the treatment of the Roma throughout Europe as a guide for the future success of Europe as a democratic idea. Over the next two days, the discussion continued with the panel topics of “European and National Strategies: Balance, Perspectives, and Demands,” “Roma Literature: The Challenge of Writing in Constant Exile,” and “Roma Art: A Means of Emancipation or a path to a Folklore Ghetto?” The “Strategies” panel discussed the European Union’s approach to the issuing and enforcement of policies that promote the inclusion of minorities, and whether these policies actually work. The panel on Roma literature engaged the myth that the Roma do not have a literary history, and the issues of a cross-cultural discussion around a literature that is laced with marginal dialects and a minority language. The art panel directly addressed the issues that Reconsidering Roma was also concerned with: the past need for a Roma art space, and whether that time had reached its conclusion. In terms of the presentation of Roma visual culture, when would the project of “introduction” cease and the work of integration be complete? How could the work of representing Roma visuality move from being the work of “Roma Artists” to being the work of “artists of Roma descent”?

The questions regarding the use of Roma identity in creative work and the visual production of the Roma were part of the greater curatorial concern of the Reconsidering Roma project team, made up of Lith Bahlmann and Matthias Reichelt. To answer the question, the curators selected seventeen artists and arts groups based on the topic of their work, rather than their identity. In a move that appears to align completely with the intention to avoid the “cultural ghetto,” the artists are not identified in their biographies as Roma or not, unless the artist used that identification originally.

The work in Reconsidering Roma covered multiple modes and methods, from the Mirrored Books glass paintings of Daniel Baker (figure 8), to the paintings of Karl and Ceija Stojka (figure 9, 10), to photography, video, installation, and performance, including many of the artists that exhibited in the Roma Pavilion. The subject matter, while all focused on the Roma, was not always explicit in the intent, or even unified in the approach. Because of this, I will address briefly a few specific pieces, before moving on to the larger question of the cultural ghetto.

The handling of Roma identity issues by videographer Tamara Moyzes reflected her broader catalog of work on multiple issues of peripheral identities, including the effects of racism, nationalism, the situation of the Roma, and queer identity. Miss Roma,51 one of Moyzes’ video pieces in Reconsidering Roma, was drawn from the experience of Jana Buchlová, the woman crowned Miss Roma 2006. The video begins with an extended shot of Buchlová’s face, and then cuts to a screen listing several places that Roma are banned from entering in the Czech Republic. Through a series of time-lapse images, a makeup artist transforms Buchlová into a blue-eyed blonde that resembles a modern Barbie doll (figure 11). The implication of Buchlová’s

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ability to be transformed into the Aryan ideal highlights the racially motivated nature of the laws prohibiting the movement of Roma minorities through public spaces within the Czech Republic. The impact of the video lies both in the quick physical transformation of Buchlová, which she endures in an almost static, vacant manner (her only real movement is the gesture of putting in the blue contact lenses that cover her naturally dark brown eyes) but also the realization that the laws restricting her movements are current and contemporary to the video, and exist in the twenty-first century.

The work of Moyzes can be read as a lens upon the Roma experience specifically within the Czech Republic, and as part of her larger conversation around the marginalized in society. The concerns of the Roma from the external view were a strong counterpoint to the work of Roma artists themselves, who also engaged with the contemporary issues of displacement, identity, and racism. Where the non-Roma artist observes, watches, and points to the things they deem “wrong” in society, the Roma artist speaks from experience, and the biography of that experience becomes a part of the work. Curator Bahlmann was very specific in her intent to use the exhibit as a space for the “Roma Experience,” a spectrum of stories that includes the human rights abuses experienced by the Roma in the past and current society. Yet, as artists observing and speaking for another, the artists of non-Roma identity walk a fine line. When speaking from a location of privilege, observation and witnessing must be understood as the artist’s interpretation, not as a stand-in for the voice of a marginalized community. Likewise, the viewer must also recognize that the individual Roma artist is not a spokesperson for an entire society, culture, or ethnic group.

The artists in this exhibit engaged with their Roma identity as a means of framing a discussion, and opening up a dialogue, which offers the potential for those with varying
backgrounds to access the topic of discrimination in order to move forward on the issues of humanitarian and social improvement of the lives of the Roma.\(^{52}\) This dialogue is present when an artist speaks through their work, but it can also be found in their words. A survivor of Auschwitz, Ravensbruck, and Bergen-Belsen, Ceija Stojka is often considered the grand dame of Roma artists. After the liberation of the camps, Stojka and her family returned to their work as horse-traders in Austria. In 1988, Stojka began painting and writing, and her work deals frequently with the volume of memories and experiences that come from her time in the camps. Her largest body of work is a set of paintings entitled *Even Death is Afraid of Auschwitz*, several of which were included in the exhibit (figure 10).

Stojka and her brother both exhibited work in the exhibit, but Ceija Stojka was also the subject of two films by Viennese director Karin Berger, whose work draws on a multi-year friendship between the two women.\(^{53}\) *Ceija Stojka: Portrait of a Romni*\(^ {54}\) provides the narrative of Stojka’s life as Roma, with the overlay of the contemporary issues of engagement between the Roma community and the “gadje,” or non-Roma. The friendship between the two women is clear in the frank nature of the narrative and the engagement of the broader boundaries of the two worlds. The inclusion of Berger’s 2005 film, *The Green, Green Grass Beneath*\(^ {55}\) fleshes out the experience and history of the Roma in the body of a living person. In both films, the tattooed

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\(^{52}\) Even now, as a researcher who has engaged with this topic, I still question the appropriateness of a “Roma Experience” exhibit. I comment further on this in the conclusion.

\(^{53}\) By stating that Ceija Stojka was a subject in the exhibit, I want to strongly assert my view that this work was done in a way that was compassionate, and respectful, and exhibited as a partnership. Much of the filmwork includes Stojka’s own words, and the affection and comfortable relationship between Berger and Stojka provided a level of access that would be exploitative in less equitable relationships.


numbers on Stojka’s left arm are visible, yet Berger’s direction and engagement with her subject allows the stories that Stojka tells to become the focal point of the film, rather than allowing the trope of the “Holocaust Survivor” to be her defining role.\textsuperscript{56}

\textit{Out of the Ghetto: Presentation and Representation}

Between documentation of the Roma experience, and speaking as Roma, both \textit{Paradise Lost} and \textit{Reconsidering Roma} were direct engagements with the issues of representation of the Roma by the non-Roma majority. The question that Bahlmann posed with \textit{Reconsidering Roma} was whether the Roma Pavilion set up a precedent for the “cultural ghetto,” and did \textit{Reconsidering Roma} address it fully? As an example for comparison, one can look at the exhibit \textit{After Auschwitz} at the Northern Centre for Contemporary Art in Sunderland, UK, in 1995,\textsuperscript{57} which included primarily (though not all) Jewish artists. The exhibit catalog features essays on many of the same issues as the \textit{Reconsidering Roma} catalog, and the conversations around the \textit{Roma Pavilion}: the Holocaust as a moral and educational value to the future, issues of witnessing trauma, memory and counter-memory, and more. The artists deal with similar issues, both looking back as a retrieval of memory, and looking inward as a method of engaging identity. Examples of this include the work of Susanna Pieratzki, a German-Jewish photographer who addresses issues of her place as a child of Holocaust survivors with intimate photographs of her own parents; or the archival work of Christian Boltanski. Texts that gather the work of Jewish artists and their engagement with these questions are also common, especially production from

\textsuperscript{56} A brief note: Ceija Stojka died January 28, 2013, three months after the Memorial in Berlin was completed, 1 year and 1 day after a performance by Delaine Le Bas regarding the incomplete memorial, and thirteen months after the close of \textit{Reconsidering Roma}: http://digitaljournal.com/article/342419 (last accessed May 21, 2013).

\textsuperscript{57} Monica Bohm-Duchen, ed., \textit{After Auschwitz: Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art} (London: Lund Humphries Publishers, Ltd., 1995).
Europe in the 1990s as the Soviet Union began to dissolve, and greater openness was seen across the board.

The 1970s had a similar thrust in terms of women artists, beginning with the feminist art project at Fresno State under Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro. The idea of a “____-only” space is still prevalent in many areas of discourse, study, and production.\(^{58}\) The problem arises when the artists are segregated by their identity, or included only to fulfill diversity quotas. Then, even in the art world, having “Roma-only” spaces are no better than showing Roma art in ethnography museums. However, providing a space that allows visibility and access to a marginalized community allows for a multi-faceted benefit: the artists are able to realize their works within a larger space, with greater visibility, and the public can be educated about a minority group beyond the basic assumptions and frameworks. With broader visibility, the Roma become more than just a community in need, and instead become a visible sector of society. As evidenced by the exhibition records of two of the artists that participated in both the exhibits considered here, Daniel Baker and Delaine Le Bas, the structure of the art world is one that can be accessed by artists of Roma descent, rather than the limitations of the term Roma artist. In the next chapter, I will look at how these two artists of Roma descent specifically engage with their identity and experience as Roma, while also participating actively in the larger realm of the contemporary art world.

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\(^{58}\) This discourse is present in discussions around transgendered identity and women-only spaces, such as the “womyn-born-womyn” policy at the Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival. More details here for those interested in the back story of this aside: http://eminism.org/michigan/faq-intro.html (accessed July 9, 2013).
Nous avons pris une route dans le nuit sans savoir où elle pouvait mener. 
(We took a road at night without knowing where it might lead us.)

—“La Longue Route” Šaban Iliaz¹

The Myth of the Gypsy Artist

The last few months of 2012 were relatively mild in Paris, though that could hardly be considered a blessing for the hundreds of Roma camped out at Place de la Bastille in protest of the anti-Roma police actions of President Hollande’s government. Meanwhile, inside the Grand Palais, a walkable five km away, the Bohèmes De Leonard de Vinci à Picasso exhibit was a textbook example of the mythology applied to the Roma. Robert Carsen’s exhibition design created a theme-park-like fantasy of the travelling nature of the gypsy, from the “gypsy music” playing overhead, to the worn and dark brown carpet meant to symbolize a dusty road, to the snippets of poems, proverbs, and quotes by Romani poets on the walls. Rather than exploring the work of the Roma throughout history, the exhibit instead illustrated the majority perspective, featuring images of the Roma painted by artists from Leonardo to Picasso, and the adoption of the “bohemian” lifestyle by the artists of the 19th century. The only artist of Roma origin even shown or mentioned in the exhibit was German Expressionist Otto Mueller, with a brief mention of the Nazi exhibit of degenerate art, and barely three sentences about the experience of the Roma and Sinti in the Holocaust.

The current narratives of the art world around Roma art have had a tendency to focus on the experience of the Roma during the Holocaust, which may be a result of the familiarity with the topic of the Holocaust (as opposed to the experience of what is, as I have already mentioned,

¹ The quote featured in this epigraph is one of the many featured in the exhibit at the Grand Palais, as described in the opening paragraph.
a broad and diverse group that is difficult to classify.) To speak of and interpret or engage in discussion around a past event may be considered easier than engagement and discussion of issues of continuing discrimination, harassment, and marginalization. Yet, the whole of the Roma contemporary cultural production is not focused on the history of the Holocaust, but the broader conversation of the past, present, and future of the Roma, including the failure of attempting to address Roma art as a homogenous cultural product.

To explore more in depth what some contemporary Roma art looks like, I turn in this chapter to two Roma artists from the UK. I will note that their work is not “Roma Artwork” but instead decidedly contemporary art made by two English-speaking, academy-trained, internationally exhibited contemporary artists of Roma heritage. Daniel Baker and Delaine Le Bas are both quite prolific in the production and exhibition of their work. To highlight, however, the issues with a blanket statement about “Roma Art,” I address here the similarities (as contemporary artists) and the extreme differences of their work as well. Daniel Baker works with a highly symbolic and theoretical language to intimate meaning, and produced many of his paintings as part of his PhD thesis and project for the Royal Academy of Art. Delaine Le Bas utilizes the material of nostalgia and popular culture to jar the viewer, often relishing the opportunity to make the viewer uncomfortable. While both artists were among the many selected for exhibition at the Roma Pavilion and Reconsidering Roma, I am exploring here their broader history of production in order to analyze two specific (but not inclusive) methods of working through the concepts of “Roma Art.”

Boundaries and Borders: Daniel Baker

London-based artist Daniel Baker has exhibited internationally and worked as both a curator and community activist. He has been involved in many projects and publications
regarding the role of art in the enactment of social agency, including work on the planning and execution of the Roma Pavilion. His engagement with the Roma community is not restricted to art, however, as Baker received his PhD from the Painting department at the Royal College of Art in 2011,\(^2\) writing a thesis on Romani visual culture, a project that developed out of prior research conducted for his MA in sociology. Baker’s doctoral thesis included attention to his experience with the First Roma Pavilion, discussions of other artists and their work, and development of methods of looking and engagement that built upon the use of semiotics and Alfred Gell’s art nexus with concepts of artistic agency. In both his research and his creative work, Baker has addressed the isolation of Roma artists and artwork through the use of terms such as outsider, naive, and primitive. He states that his thesis takes “as its starting point an examination of Gypsy artifacts with the intention of forming new evaluations of Gypsy art and a new understanding of Gypsy culture.”\(^3\)

In describing his work, Baker indicates that 2004, three years prior to the biennale, his work was arriving at a transitional moment.\(^4\) At this point, his earlier method of process painting was winding to a close, and he began to transition to an integration of that method with the mirror images that he continues to produce, and which he exhibited in Venice in 2007. For

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\(^2\) I spoke with Dr. Baker about the specifics of his thesis, and whether his PhD could be defined as being “in” a certain field. He responded, “The introductory chapter to my thesis states that my methodology comprises three strands of research: fine art practice, written theory and curatorial practice. My research was carried out in the department of Painting at the Royal College of Art and is considered what is known in the UK as PhD by Project. This means that the final examination is part written thesis and part practice based outcomes; in my case a final exhibition as well as documentation of the various art and curatorial projects conducted throughout the research period. My two examiners were a contemporary art practitioner and a Professor of philosophy. Given the eclectic nature of this kind of Doctoral research I would say the my PhD operates at the intersection between contemporary art practice and the anthropology of art. It could be deemed art historical but is intended as much a tool for artists to consider their own practice as it is a way of analysing existing artefacts.” Daniel Baker, personal correspondence with Rachel Hawthorn, July 8, 2013.


\(^4\) Personal correspondence with the artist, March 30 through April 4, 2013.
Baker, the use of process was specifically an examination of identity and the formation of boundaries. By utilizing the historically specific method of process art, Baker focused on the materiality and space of the work. Space, in this usage, is not only a physically defined boundary of a painting or sculpture, but the visual and contextual referents that also frame both the creation and interpretation of the work.

These references are seen in the early works of Baker, such as *Poured Painting, Red, Black, and White*, of 2003 (figure 12). By defining the rules and conditions of the work’s creation at the outset, Baker establishes a narrative that mirrors the engagement of the body through the public space. His process, when successful, explores both the symbolic and material qualities of the paint:

Through the control and containment of paint, attempts are made to avert disruption and to maintain harmony through negotiation. The works that succeed are those that preserve distinct divisions between the separate elements involved whilst at the same time exploring their relationship.

The paintings can be seen as the exploration of the Roma identity in the boundaries established within the public realm. On the prepared and sanitized ground, the influx of the paint becomes the figure in space and place. The graphically bold segments taking up the visual area of the surface are carefully controlled by Baker to limit their interaction. Yet, the spaces can be read as bold engagements with the “other.” The encroaching segments are bounded and bordered, as seen in *Red, Black, and White*, as well as *Poured Painting: Blue, Black, and White*, also from 2003 (figure 13). The borders barely contain the color fields inside, and the incursions into the paintings’ primary spaces are ordered, yet still imply the tension of engagement. Baker has placed this bordered and bounded method of abstraction into context with the visual language of the Roma that he later observes as part of his doctoral thesis.5 This boundary is

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Baker’s interpretation of a compositional context within which to read the “Gypsy’s desire to preserve cultural identity from the perceived threat of assimilation.”

In another of Baker’s process paintings, *Poured Painting: Vein* (figure 14), the controlled border disappears. The spread of the paint across the surface in a web of interconnected veins connects this work to Baker’s later glass paintings, which include layers of gestural abstraction and indexical signs of Roma culture. The controlled abstraction in this painting reads as a larger gesture of the demand for space, and the potential connectedness of the Roma community through blood, language, and social experience. In 2004, after the exhibition *When In Rome III*, curated by Raimi Gbadamosi at Castlefield Gallery, Baker shifted the full focus of his studio practice to the glass paintings as an articulation and exploration of his Roma origin and identity.

The *When In Rome III* exhibit directly engaged issues of the artist from marginalized segments of society, framed by the social and political space of contemporary British art, and the problematic of the labels “other” and “outsider.” With these same conceptual questions and framing, Baker continued his exploration of Roma visuality both as a studio practice and academic inquiry. His visual work at this time included the use of the indexicality of the image via Peircean semiotics, utilizing the signifiers of Roma cultural and creative production to frame and redefine meaning. The glass paintings that utilize both the gestural action painting and the artifact-based imagery rely heavily on signs – both in the literal sense and terms of semiotics. In his *Looking Glass* series, Baker simulates the aged and damaged surfaces of mirrors as a ground on which to apply text, color and images. Working backwards from the glass surface through the

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6 Ibid.

7 The sign as artwork is a common theme for marginalized communities. Another collateral project at the 52nd Venice Biennale was the work of Edgar Heap of Birds, a Native American conceptual artist, who created site-specific signage throughout Venice during the Biennale to engage with historical parallels of domination of majority cultures. This work is documented in Robert Storr, *Think With The Senses. Feel With The Mind. Art In The Present Tense. Participating Countries, Collateral Events, Volume II, 52nd International Exhibition Catalog* (New York: Rizzoli, 2007), 268-269.
image, text, and to the ground, Baker places the substance of these works between the glass and the silvering, creating a boundary space within which the meaning is applied. In his statements about the work, Baker has directly pointed to this space as a signifier of the liminal space within which the Roma people find themselves in contemporary society - romanticized on one hand, yet ostracized and vilified on the other. In addition to the conceptual boundaries in this work, Baker draws on the visual culture of the Gypsy community, from the textual references warning gypsy caravans to stay out of certain public spaces (figure 15), to abstractions that draw on the decorative elements on caravans, such as non-figural scrollwork, birds, animals, and other motifs (figures 16-17). 

For Baker, creating work that demanded and engaged space through process was a step toward the examination of the Roma identity that became the major element in his professional practice. The societal boundaries experienced by the Roma constantly shift, which creates a destabilizing effect on their social development. With Baker’s mirror paintings, the destabilized self of the (implied Roma) viewer sees the breakdown of the ground, through the imperfection of the image. In the mirrored surface, they see their own image reflected, even beyond the limitations of the warning text. The mirror acts as both a boundary and a doubling of space.

Baker’s statement on his work in the catalog for Paradise Lost addresses the idea of negotiation of boundaries, a key element of the Looking Glass series. The Roma themselves have been stripped of the opportunity and space to create and embody their own identity and frame the boundaries, as the non-Roma majority blocked the community from access to the space of being in the world. This displacement of the Roma, both in reality and metaphorically, has a profound impact on the Roma sense of self. It is this inability to see and define oneself that Baker conveys

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8 Baker, 2011.
through his mirrored works. The reflective space is distorted and obscured by the warning text that the viewer, in the shoes of the Roma, cannot see anything but the message of negativity. The message is the ground, rather than the viewer’s identity, and the reflection is interrupted.

To further investigate the application of a semiotic lens to Baker’s work, I turned to Baker’s own doctoral thesis from 2011, *Gypsy Visuality: Gell’s Art Nexus and Its Potential for Artists*. Baker utilizes the work of Charles Sanders Peirce in the interpretation of agency as a method to analyze visual recurrences (or even repetitions) in the visual culture of the Roma community, supplemented by his own research in the *Gypsy Visual Culture Fieldwork Survey UK 2006*. Baker asserts that a Peircean analysis of visual art is strengthened by the addition of Gell’s work on agency. His resultant analysis aligns his creative work with the analytic methods he used within his dissertation with other artists’ works. Because of this, it is reasonable to read his work through the intention of agency on the part of the creator (Baker), through the language of the artifact (the mirror), to the repetition and doubling of the space occupied by the recipient (viewer.)

Baker also asserts that his analysis (of both his own and others work) is best augmented by the Triadic Analytic Guide (TAG) formulated by Baker’s fellow researcher Paul Ryan. Ryan developed this method out of dissatisfaction with the appropriateness of applying Peircean semiotics to the visual arts. The TAG method allows the viewer, participant, audience, creator or other identified roles to shift through various positions of relationality to the object of study. Rather than a broader conception of the signifying system within which a viewer might exist, the TAG method engages the viewer along the shifting trajectory of the encounter with the art object. TAG is an adoption of the three Peircian divisions of the sign: object, interpretent, sign;

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which is then broken down into nine parts that include the analysis of the qualities, physicality, and argument of the work being analyzed, in a way that accounts for the perspective of the different relational positions. \(^{10}\)

Baker’s position as artist, advocate, and researcher makes the study of his work elemental to this analysis of the construction of identity through the contemporary artwork of the Roma, yet his role in both the creation and analysis of Roma art and visuality can be read as a potential hazard of the art historian’s work of analysis. Baker utilizes an explicitly theoretical approach that, as an art historian, I was immediately drawn to. I understood the implications of signification, sign, interpretent, and the performative roles within which the viewer and artist could shift when interacting with his work. Indeed, the most visceral moment of experience one can observe with Baker’s work is that he insists upon the breaking of the metaphorical “Fourth Wall” in the exhibition space.

In the Looking Glass series Baker addresses the sign as signifier through the individual pieces, yet the engagement with implied social boundaries is an additional signified in his installation process. The specific references of Baker’s signs speak to the traveller and Roma communities, and speak to the installation of boundaries and limits on movement through signage, an inherently hegemonic act. Signs are placed in public space to provide order, and at the boundaries of private space to define limits. In addressing these power structures through the use of signs, Baker has assigned a new layer of meaning to the message read within the signed images. Rather than a fixed installation of the work, the viewer is invited to step into the physical space of Baker’s sign paintings, and encouraged to shift them, rearrange them, and re-order the textual references. This appeal to engagement moves the viewer outside the traditional

\(^{10}\) Baker, 2011.
framework of the “Viewer/Object” dichotomy that is present in theories of looking. Baker’s continued use of these theories in viewing other works, however, continues to pose questions about the implications of using of a theoretical approach in reading contemporary aspects of Roma visual culture, and Baker’s work within that reading.11 This restructuring of the defining order of signs is in direct opposition to the understood use of signs in the public sphere.

The application of a framework of analysis onto a larger quantity of artwork labeled as “Gypsy” artwork, or to assign a series of understood intentions regarding “Gypsy Visuality” would at first appear to read as limitation on the acceptable nature of the work. It asks questions such as who is or isn’t a Gypsy, and does their work fit the mold? Yet, many methods of structural analysis follow this same pattern. Questions and answers of closer looking establish whether someone is a surrealist, impressionist, or part of the relational art movement. Upon closer look, however, Baker isn’t determining or denying identity to anyone, but rather utilizing both his own work alongside that of others to engage with both the cultural implications of being an artifact, but also the implications of being analyzed as representational.12 Baker draws on Gell’s idea of distributed agency in this manner, where the person is a primary agent, and things are secondary agents. By identifying the “Gypsy artifact” and its role in agency for the Roma community, the visual nature of the artwork becomes a link between individuals, in both communicating identity and reflecting it. The implication of contemporary art practice in the engagement of these ideas provides a space for the interruption and disruption of that communication.

11 In my reading, I see much of the value applied by Ryan’s TAG method recreated in the work of Mieke Bal on Peirce, Saussure, and Visual Arts, in that the object is always redefined by location of the reader, and the ground is seen as a common, social phenomenon. For more, see Mieke Bal, “Peirce, Saussure, and Visual Art,” On Meaning Making: Essays in Semiotics (Salem, Oregon: Polebridge Press, 1994), 165-178.
To return to Baker’s specific work, the idea of the communication and disruption provides an entry into the works he exhibited at Reconsidering Roma. These pieces continued the method of working with glass and mirrors, but became more intimate: each work was to be read as a book cover, in reverse. The titles all reference pejorative statements and issues regarding the Gypsy community, while highlighting the community’s lack of access to education, a situation created by de-facto segregation in many communities. The works themselves are shimmering and beautiful, and the medium and message disrupt the trajectory of the applied identity from the external majority.

*Outside On The Inside: Delaine Le Bas*

Delaine Le Bas, a key figure in the world of contemporary Roma art, was among the Roma artists exhibiting at both the Roma Pavilion in 2007, and the Reconsidering Roma exhibit in 2011. Le Bas is an ideal counterpoint to Baker’s work, as their styles are completely different, yet they are both engaged with the issues of Roma representation, identity, and community. Le Bas identifies her family history as Roma, and as such engages with the language, visual history, and experience of the Roma people from the position of the insider. Using media ranging from embroidery and textile work to bricolage, painting, and video, her work wrestles with ideas of nationhood, race, gender, and issues surrounding the experience of the Roma people. Le Bas, like many Roma artists, has been characterized as a producer of “Outsider Art,” a problematic term that initially identified those working outside the formalized art world structure, such as the mentally ill, folk artists, or children. This appellation can be challenged with a glance at her resume, which details an exhibition and publication record from 1998 to the current date, and seven years spent in art schools in the UK. She is well represented through multiple international
galleries, including Berlin’s *Kai Dikhas* gallery, which draws its name from the Roma word for “A Place of Seeing”.

Where Daniel Baker’s work relies heavily on theoretical readings of technique and semiotics, Le Bas has an approach that is visceral and sensorial. The visually aggressive nature of her work, when combined with the subject matter, has invited responses in both positive and negative extremes. Utilizing the origins of the outsider artist label as well as the contemporary recapturing of it, Le Bas directly addresses the concept of the “outsider” in her work through the use of mundane and found objects and domestic craft. Her work has been described as lush and ephemeral, with a shade of darkness. This is the dichotomy of the cultural romance around the Gypsy and the reality of the exclusion and intolerance that the Roma experience in their daily lives. In the *Reconsidering Roma* exhibit, Le Bas continued her conversation with the stereotype of the Roma as homeless and wanderers, with *Witch Hunt*, an installation piece that continually evolved over each iteration, from the first installation at Aspex in Portsmouth in 2009, to the *Reconsidering Roma* exhibit, and more (figures 18-20). The sheer volume of texture, text, and transmission in the *Witch Hunt* installation calls to mind the early work of Tracey Emin, positioning the viewer in the dual space of nostalgia and discomfort.13

When I describe Le Bas’ work as visceral, sensorial, and even confrontational, I acknowledge that I run the risk of creating the potential to assume that it is also raw or less thoughtful than Daniel Baker’s text pieces. This would be a gross misinterpretation. Le Bas is calculating and precise in her use of the found object, raw material, fabric scraps, and traditionally “feminine” techniques such as sewing. The implied domestic in her installation

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13 One of the Emin works that comes to mind in particular for me in this comparison is the 1998 piece *My Bed*, an installation piece of Emin’s own bed with detritus of daily wear and mental instability, which is viewable online at [http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/tracey_emin_my_bed.htm](http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/tracey_emin_my_bed.htm) (last accessed July 15, 2013).
spaces are specific referents to the transitory space of the Roma in Europe, as well as other marginalized populations.

The work itself is poetic on the surface, with the presence of nostalgic china patterns, the glitter of sequins, and images of the Union Jack, but just under the surface (barely hidden) Le Bas strikes at the viewer with the core message of her work. *A Nation of Dog Lovers* (figure 21) is one of these pieces. A British flag is taped up to the wall, appliqued with images of leashed dogs and a stereotypical British Bobby. Initially, the piece recalls the many kitsch objects, such as pillows, teacups, or tea towels, produced for commemoration of the marriage of royalty, or celebrations such as the Queen’s jubilee. The resemblance is interrupted by the state of the flag, however, which is dirty and torn. The message is that for Le Bas, the British psyche is hypocritical, treasuring the dog on a leash that defecates on the street and sleeps in the family bed, while the Roma community is considered dirty and criminal, and needs to be evicted and suppressed. The inversion of the treatment of humans and dogs in this setting is only the beginning of the aggressive undertones in Le Bas’ work. In fact, the work may have been all too aggressive for some members of the public, as *Nation of Dog Lovers* was stolen from the Roma Pavilion in 2007 during the run of the exhibition.

In 2011, Le Bas worked with Angela Kingston and others to publish a book documenting the progression of the *Witch Hunt* project. The book opens with a text from Kingston, describing her initial experience of the installation, and drawing comparisons between the domestic nature of birds and humans:

In the case of the weaverbirds and other avian species…the male constructs the outer part of the nest…it is (the female) who furnishes it with inner layers of softer lining…Humans make our own architecture…the construction done by (male)
specialists. Then there’s the work that women have traditionally done, of layering the hard outlines…with softer linings.14

The text by Kingston is followed by three other textual pieces (one in Romany, two in English) written by Le Bas’ son, Damian James Le Bas, which further establish the narrative of the Witch/Gypsy myth that is the foundation of Witch Hunt. The final text piece before the images is a typewritten letter to the gallery regarding “the exhibit” – which notably never mentions Le Bas or her exhibit by name. In this letter, the writer conflated the exhibit with the politics of the “green spaces” that housed Roma and traveller camps, and in a brilliant stroke of naïve hypocrisy, draws comparisons to Le Bas’ work and the stolen Elgin Marbles, finding Le Bas lacking against the “balance and harmony” of the marbles. According to the writer, the stolen Greek works are “civilized and civilizing art,” and she chides the artist, “It is a shame that the last bastion of uncorrupted rurality must exist only in the mental space of the arts…”15

In this and much of her work, Le bas directly addresses the nostalgia toward the folk myths of rural England as pastoral, and the Western European tradition that views Elgin marbles as the epitome of British art. The manner in which she does this is appropriately conveyed by the response to the letter writer included at the back of the Witch Hunt book, authored (ostensibly) by England’s most famous gypsy, Emily Brontë’s Heathcliff. In a tone that reads as dry sarcasm, mockingly informative, and yet with no small amount of humor, Le Bas as Heathcliff textually conveys the intent of her visual work.16

Kingston’s description of the installation of Witch Hunt exists in the space of experience and memory, with tactile language: first describing a soft, sheltered place, with drapery and fabric simulating the walls of a dwelling, with the outer walls of the shelter present in their

14 Angela Kingston in Delaine Le Bas, Witch Hunt (Portsmouth: Aspex, 2009), unpaginated.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
absence (figure 18). The fabrics utilized by Le Bas combine in a riot of memories: daisy print tablecloths, embroidered textiles that replicate the work of preparing for a future marriage and homemaking role, as well as images of foxhunting, cottages, and natural scenes. These are the images of the English pastoral, yet the reality for Le Bas is not this nostalgic perfection. She relates tales of being bullied at school, being called a “gypsy witch,” and the residual effects of these traumas. The underlying darkness of the trauma of otherness is what gives her work its power. This same sort of tension between the sensual and the traumatic is mentioned in other reviews of Le Bas’ work as well. Textile artist Elvis Robertson wrote of another Le Bas installation in 2009:

The work of Delaine Le Bas has haunted me for some time now. It is vigorous and frenetic, urgent, direct and unapologetic. At times it is dark and disturbing, but then there are flashes of pure childish joy. These two qualities play together through her work like children toppling through emotions, joyous then suddenly nasty, jokes that go too far, games which end in tears.17

Moving into the center from the shimmering surface of nostalgic fabrics, the Witch Hunt installation includes female mannequins, dressed in the patterned housedresses of a by-gone era, masked and hooded with brightly colored silks (figure 22). In the middle, a rocking horse bears the weight of a third mannequin, smaller and childlike, with its head encased in stockings, the neck through a carnivalesque frame reminiscent of stocks or a guillotine. The delicate pastorals draping the area are in sharp contrast to the tension provided by the physical bodies of the Gypsy woman as represented by the mannequins. These bodies directly invade upon the nostalgia of the English fabrics and the childlike hiding space. The difference is especially jarring, highlighting the lack in the nostalgic history of the pastoral, where the body of the Gypsy is excised.

The tension of this work also relies on traditional divisions of the female body from the larger social sphere. In the catalog for the *Reconsidering Roma* exhibit, Rafaela Eulberg explores the female gypsy body as a double jeopardy of othering.\(^\text{18}\) The Gypsy, already an outsider, has historically been portrayed as a danger to society, with the assumption that their itinerant nature is grounds for an inherent lawlessness. By the same token, women have also been portrayed as dangerous, wild, and needing to be civilized and controlled. Women’s stitchwork of the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century (as portrayed in the poem *Aurora Leigh* by Elizabeth Barrett Browning\(^\text{19}\)) was a means of control, to keep the hands of gentle ladies from being idle, and their eyes and minds away from the temptation of the outside world.

The double negative\(^\text{20}\) of the female gypsy body bears the burden of wildness, uncultured and untamed, but also of the mystical, misunderstood, and extremely sexualized being. One only needs to review the representations of the female gypsy in *Carmen*, Victor Hugo’s La Esméralda in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, or artists’ representations such as Theodor von Holst’s *The Wish* (figure 23) and Courbet’s *Gypsy in Reflection* (figure 24) to see the trajectory of Roma representation by the majority. Voluptuous women with exposed breasts and long hair engage in fortune telling, lies, and theft, which are presented as the natural inclination of the sexually charged and dangerous Gypsy woman.

Le Bas responds to the prejudice of these ideas with the constant influx of traces of English material culture, and textual exhortations that conflict with the pastoral view of history.


\(^{19}\) This comparison is made by Kingston in the text for the Witch Hunt exhibit: “...And last / I learnt cross-stitch, because she did not like / To see me wear the night with empty hands, / A-doing nothing.” – *Aurora Leigh*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, public domain.

\(^{20}\) In this use, I do not mean two negatives equaling a positive, but rather the squaring of negative and negative to exponentially increase the negative view and experience of being both female and gypsy.
The World of the Gypsy Romance? (figure 25) portrays this aggressive conflict with the past through Le Bas’ use of found objects. The foundation of this work is a found painting with a stereotypical gypsy woman as the subject. She is centered in the frame, her black hair soft and curled around her face and shoulders, and pinned back by a brilliant red flower. Strong features and heavy eyes frame her face. Her ears, neck, and wrists are adorned with gold coins and jewelry, while her white blouse slides down, revealing her right breast and nipple. Le Bas has taken the sexualized image, and overlaid it with a measure of violence, in the form of red paint smeared across the pursed and pouting lips of the woman. The paint drips down her face, and is splattered and smeared across her blouse, implying the blood spatter of a domestic assault or street fight. Directly to the left of the woman’s face, a slash tears into the canvas of the painting.

The association of this painting with sexuality is drawn directly by Le Bas in her most recent work, To Gypsyland,21 a “studio practice and archive project” co-produced with London artist and curator Barby Asante. Begun in January of 2013, To Gypsyland exists as an archive on the Internet, and has also engaged with community members in various locations. This painting in particular was shared on the website in March as a visual accompaniment to a text about gypsy sexuality, with requests for comment. To Gypsyland also highlights ideas of the migratory, the socially engaged, and the spatial response of the body in space, beyond the specific identity of the Roma artist. In an interview with Glasgow Tramway, a community art center in Glasgow, Le Bas describes this latest work as a transitory project that is specific to each exhibition space and community, rather than a work created in London and simply displayed in the various spaces. Paired with this kind of socially engaged conversation, the project also includes a curated collection of stereotypical Gypsy artifacts intended to engage the viewer with their prejudices of

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21 To Gypsyland, by Delaine Le Bas, co-curated by Barby Asante, simultaneously online and at various locations throughout 2013, http://togypsyland.blogspot.com/ (last accessed May 21, 2013).
the Roma identity. Many of the objects of this curated selected were from Le Bas’ exhibit at the Roma Pavilion in 2007, and later works.

The archiving, reusing, and reframing of materials used in previous works is part of Le Bas’ practice, along with her sourcing of found objects and thrift shop pieces. Her use of the found, the discarded, and the unwanted is a specific comment on the experience of growing up as a Roma, and a reflection of the social situation of the Roma in England and the greater European diaspora. As a community forced into constant migration through the enactment of various racist laws throughout history, the Roma (like many other marginalized communities with migrant histories) have developed a habit of recycling and reuse, but this again is not a signifier of a specifically Roma way of looking at the world. In fact, Le Bas is quick to caution that her Roma identity is one of the many topics that she engages. Rather than affirming and elevating Roma identity as a label, Le Bas uses her history as a door through which she enters into larger conversations around identity, exclusion, and racism:

Looking at my art as a whole you wouldn’t say, ‘She must be a Gypsy.’ My work is a lot to do with other social and political issues. It’s about anyone who is on the outside, whatever his or her situation might be. I’m a strong believer that even though you come from a community you’re still an individual. I leave the boxes for everyone else. I just think of myself as an artist, whether that’s a contemporary artist, an outsider artist or a Gypsy artist.22

To think of Le Bas’ work in these terms, as an artist, rather than an outsider or Gypsy, is to see the larger perspective intended by the curators of the Reconsidering Roma exhibit, and also to see her work within the trajectory of contemporary art. The focus on social commentary and critique is an approach being used by many contemporary artists, especially in terms of community engagement.

To look at the specific social and community aspect of Le Bas’ current work, *To Gypsyland*, it helps to understand the general concepts of social art. Primarily, social art is an outgrowth of the ideas around relational aesthetics, yet with a conscience. Opposition to the white-cube, antiseptic nature of modernism, social art is less engaged with creating a product for consumption and profit, and more with the engagement of community and ideas. A tangible piece may be produced as part of the process (much like the documentation produced from the performance works of the 1970s) but the tangible piece is not the focus of the artist’s intention.

In the *To Gypsyland* project, Le Bas has specifically discussed the community focus of the work. Rather than creating a piece in London, for example, to ship to a gallery for exhibition, the project continually evolves and changes throughout the installation and exhibition period. The initial installation only begins after Le Bas has spent time in the community, and her work at each installation site reflects that time. The most recent installation, at the Tramway in Glasgow, included photography and video that Le Bas created during her initial days in Glasgow, as a reflection of her movement through the space and participation and engagement with the community (figure 26). Additionally, she engages directly with cultural groups and programs, such as the DreamMakers, a project by Eva Sajovic and the Contemporary Arts and Learning space. DreamMakers works with UK teens from 13-19 years in age, using art and curation to explore the topics of “identity, community, dreams and aspirations.” In this instance, the DreamMakers joined Asante and Le Bas in Glasgow for work on images and identity framed by “conversations with a gypsy.” Le Bas shared some of the works from the

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24 The project site is located at http://dreammakersuk.tumblr.com/ (last accessed May 21, 2013).

participants, including two images from a young girl that included her own words (written in Romanes and left untranslated) as well as an image from a young boy named Farzad, with the text:

That photo is reminding me about my country. It used to be a very fashionable country. People were working with no problem and women could go to school (paired with a black and white found photograph.)

It reminds me of a girl that had acid put on her face. Women can't go to school and do their education now. (paired with a clear plastic mask with “GYPSY” written across the forehead.)

Performing the Archive: The Essence of Social Memory

The goal of Roma activism in the last thirty-five years has been recognition, equality, and visibility. As a diasporic community united more by difference than similarity, it is not possible to assert a single “essence” in relation to the existence of the Roma, other than their near ubiquitous exclusion from many institutional structures of success, including that of history. In discussing the erasure and effacement of the Roma Holocaust from collective social memory, it is possible to understand the concerns around creating a social identity for the Roma community. The simultaneous erasure of individual identities and the overlay of myth and stereotypes from external sources has created an extensive displacement of identity. To regain a foothold in history, the Roma community has moved to performative acts of memory and social presence.

In his 2003 text Archive and Aspiration, Arjun Appadurai addressed the existence of the archive as a neutral entity. In this sense, the archive is only given value by its use and understanding through public access. However, the authority of that use-value is given through the act of collection by those with the power to determine what elements of daily public and

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26 Posted by Delaine Le Bas at http://togypsyland.blogspot.com/2013/05/to-gypsyland-with-dreammakers-at.html (last accessed May 21, 2013).
private life are worth preserving. In light of this awareness, Appadurai calls for the act of archiving to be read as an intervention. It is in this interventionist vein that the work of Daniel Baker and Delaine Le Bas should be read.

For Baker, the construction of a defining framework of Gypsy Visuality is the application of traditional theoretical approaches to a marginalized group. By elevating the work to the level of academic study and affiliating the disparate artists in his doctoral thesis through visual analysis, Baker highlights the difficulty in asserting a folkloric definition on a broad spectrum of creative output. By participating in the Call The Witness exhibit in 2011, Baker continues the archival inquiry. The work created on site evolved as a measure of intervention against the current status of the Roma, and a method of preparing a message toward the future. As Maria Hlavajova, Artistic Director of Call The Witness, wrote in the opening statement for the exhibit, the central project was based on a reinterpretation of Dutch artist Constant Nieuwenhuys’ unrealized 1956-58 project, Design for a Gypsy Camp. Nieuwenhuys’ ultimate goal with that project was a desire to acknowledge the diasporic in all human beings,

…caught as if simultaneously inside and outside of the hegemonic order, ‘…becoming nomads once more, wandering over the earth, not looking for rest but for dynamic motion’…embrace[ing] alterity as a pivotal prerequisite for the possibility of another, better world.’

The digital nature of the archive that endures after the completed exhibit is the trace of the event, and in the words of Appadurai, the “anticipation of collective memory.”

Similar to the collecting approach of Call The Witness, the newest work of Le Bas is in its essence an anticipatory gesture. Rather than making the space fit the work, Le Bas is reacting to the present and future of the community, becoming at one with it in her representation and

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29 Ibid.
30 Appadurai, 2003, 16.
also engaging with the community at large through the archiving of her work online. This online gesture is also emblematic of the interventionist impulse, which allows Le Bas to exist in a fixed, yet migratory, studio space. The digital archive of Le Bas’ work, as well as the conversations captured from the 2011 Pavilion, exist outside of a boundary of national identity, statehood, or specific place. They can be engaged in a transnational and timeless space that relies on nothing other than the knowledge of their existence, and the material to access them. The works in the digital archive do not need to be transported, curated, collected, funded by an institution, or judged against a collecting plan. In this manner, the work of these artists of Roma descent is a gesture to intervene into the future of their identity, and craft a space for memory.
Chapter 4
The Circle Is (Not Yet) Closed

“The genocide of the Sinti and Roma was carried out with the same motive of racist ideology, with the same intention and determination for a methodical and total annihilation as it was with the Jews. They were murdered systematically, from infants to the elderly, everywhere within the area of National Socialist occupation.”

—Federal Chancellor Roman Herzog, 16 March 1997

“We have set our sights high, but the goal is simple: let us ensure that Roma enjoy the same rights and opportunities as anyone else. Roma are no different from anyone else. Give them a chance to study and they will learn. Give them a chance to find a job and they will work...”

—Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, Córdoba, 8 April 2010

The Inaccessibility of Witnessing

While visiting Berlin for the opening of Reconsidering Roma, Delaine Le Bas and other participants visited the construction site of the Roma and Sinti memorial. Standing under the grey November sky, Le Bas was struck by the contrast between the clean and open spaces of the other Berlin memorials they had passed on the way, and the “rubbish strewn building site” of the incomplete Roma and Sinti memorial. Recent photographs of the site by Matthias Riechelt, included in the Reconsidering Roma catalog, had depicted a small fox moving about the space, investigating the stalled work and stacked materials open to the elements.

Starting with the idea of the fox as a spirit of the past, as well as the words of Ceija Stojker, “Even death is afraid of Auschwitz,” Delaine Le Bas developed another performance piece, which she presented January 27, 2012, at the still incomplete memorial site. Drawing on the idea of a circle closing on history and the present experience of the Roma, Le Bas embodied


2 Quote by Ceija Stojker in Karin Berger film “Portrait of a Romni”, quoted by Delaine Le Bas in text regarding performance, also the title of a series of Stojka’s paintings.
a shaman, lifting and rotating a steel ball, reflecting the sky, trees, and the cold and imposing Reichstag behind her.³

…I saw the sky reflected in the ball thousands of souls called out to me, they must not be forgotten they deserve to be remembered and their memory cared for, we must never forget them. We are alive, here and now and we must all be part of making sure that the future does not repeat the past.⁴

When one considers that Le Bas was performing an act of memory at the still incomplete memorial in 2012, one year after the Reichstag address by Zoni Wiesz, it becomes clear that the issues at the forefront of the Roma community’s concern have once again been forgotten. The work of the artists and curators discussed in this thesis has been critical to the public awareness of the issues of the Roma community, yet the diversity and discontinuity of the larger diaspora can make the ultimate goal of complete integration and acceptance seem a Sisyphean task.

To clarify: after the 52⁰ Venice Biennale and the Roma Pavilion, the integration of Roma artists into the international art scene and the national pavilions was not realized. In 2009, the Roma Pavilion was cancelled at the last minute. That same year, the exhibit at the Hungarian pavilion can be read as a counterpoint. Artist Péter Forgács presented *With Time—The W-Project*, a series of pseudo-anthropological photos taken from a Nazi archive in Vienna. The subjects of the photos are presented in such a mass that they become a simultaneous trope and yet remain individual points of identity. Meant to be read as a meditation on cultural prejudice and visual stereotypes, the works stands in sharp contrast to what is excluded: any mention of Roma victims, or the lack of the Roma at the Biennale. While the 54⁰ Biennale precipitated yet

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³ “Today the role of shaman takes many forms - healer, ceremonialist, judge, sacred politician, and artist, to name a few.” *Shaman The Wounded Healer* by John Halifax, from Delaine Le Bas statement about the performance.

⁴ Delaine Le Bas performance text.
another return of the Roma Pavilion and the performance of the archive and identity, this year’s Biennale has no plans for a Roma specific project or exhibition.5

What are the issues that continue to disrupt the forward movement of the Roma community? According to an essay published in 2011, the main concerns are: “insufficient data on the current status of the Roma; the absence of a Roma civil rights movement; and the continuous prejudices of the non-Roma, which have not received enough attention in current policies.”6

The inability to address all of these points on a transnational scale is partially a reflection of the nature of the diversity of the European Union, but also a reflection on the nature of witnessing. As mentioned in the first chapter, the Holocaust and other traumatic events are popular topics of study, yet there is no amount of study and witnessing that can provide a true knowledge of the experience of the community. As a final example within the art world, I refer to another piece that was part of Reconsidering Roma.

This work was also at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and I saw it in person – or at least I think I did. The issue is that when I was there, it was a cold and rainy day, I was already exhausted after walking through the Cindy Sherman retrospective, and didn’t know very much about the Sanja Ivekovic retrospective going on in the main hall. I remember walking through a few related pieces, and then standing at the balcony, looking at the tall tower installed in the center of the space. I wandered through the edges of the exhibit, looking at the newspaper clippings and work. In light of this thesis, it pains me to think I didn’t give this work enough

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5 Email correspondence with Paolo Scibelli of the Biennale Foundation, April 17, 2013.
thought. However, the point remains the same: as someone who was researching work in this vein, I wasn’t aware of the full implications of the work. What message would someone with no direct interest or connection take from the work?

Ivekovic is a Croatian artist and photographer, and one of the leading art figures to come out of the former Yugoslavia. For the *Reconsidering Roma* exhibit, she displayed her *Rohrbach Living Memorial* video. The installation is a conversation among three points – first, a vintage photograph of Roma families waiting to be deported to a concentration camp from the town of Rohrbach in Austria; second, a video of the current citizens of the town, recreating the photo, wearing the triangle armbands that would identify them as *Ziguener*; and third, the viewer. Viewers are left to explore their own emotions, searching for a sign that the citizens in the reenactment video feel a sense of gravitas and somber reflection on the event of the moment. Yet, the emotion isn’t there. These citizens are wearing modern clothes, sitting calmly, mostly bored, just waiting it out until they can go home again. They do not feel the pressure of deportation or threat of death. A modern viewer in New York City wouldn’t either. However, for the Roma in Europe who are continually subjected to racist social and political policies, and violence at the hand of neo-Nazi thugs, the horror of the original photograph isn’t that hard to imagine.

In reality, there is an even deeper layer of connection between the people in the performance, the photograph, and the broader conversation around the Roma in Europe. In the *Reconsidering Roma* catalog, an interview with some of the participants in the performance details information that is even more horrifying than one would imagine when just watching and waiting as part of an artist’s performance:

I always tried to find persons who were willing to…write an account of what happened to my mother in the concentration camp. …Leni Riefenstahl, the Nazi propaganda
director...worked in Salzburg to produce... “Tiefland.” In that film, my mother was given the role of a Gypsy woman who fell in love with a poet. She (Riefenstahl) chose her extras from the assembly points where Roma and Sinti were already waiting to be transported to the concentration camps. ...My grandmother was picked as an extra, and so was my great-grandmother. And they were both gassed to death, but not my mother. ...until she died she (Reifenstahl) always said: ‘I have seen all my Gypsy extras live and well, and they are fine,’ ...which of course was a lie.7

Ivekovic’s intention with this work was not only to create an “anti-memorial” or a counter-monument with the performance, but also to allow the participants to engage with the topic of racism and discrimination, and their own relationship to the issue. And yet, my own reaction to the work the first time I saw it highlights the issue with activist and socially engaged work. Not only is the onus on the artist to create the work, but it is also on the public to properly receive the work, and to engage with it. However, this is not to say that the work of the activists, artists, and scholars working on the Roma situation in Europe is wasted.

On October 29, 2012, German Chancellor Angela Merkel gathered at the small clearing in the northeast corner of the Tiergarten along with noted German politicians, human rights activists, and leading figures of the Romani movement for the official unveiling of the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Murdered Under the National Socialist Regime. At the ceremony, Chancellor Merkel addressed the importance of completing the memorial and acknowledging the Roma experiences of the war, saying, “It is a German and a European task to support (Sinti and Roma) wherever they live, no matter what country.”8 Romani Rose, the activist responsible for the early initiative to create the memorial, spoke of the importance of the memorial in the light of the larger European Roma experience:

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In Germany and in Europe, there is a new and increasingly violent racism against Sinti and Roma. This racism is supported not just by far-right parties and groups; it finds more and more backing in the middle of society.\(^9\)

The completion of the memorial made news in several papers, but the primary conversation regarding the opening event was that it was finally finished, followed by a brief statement on the 500,000 Roma deaths at the hands of the National Socialist government. The history of the Roma in the Holocaust was not part of the broader collective memory of Europe, and still remains a minor story. However, as one of the steps toward inviting a deeper conversation on Roma identity, the activist efforts to demand acknowledgement in Berlin mean that the \textit{Memory to the Sinti and Roma of Europe Murdered under the National Socialist Regime} is now a visible piece of that identity. With the external acknowledgement of the past, there is now space for the establishment of narratives and memories.

\textit{Remaking A World}

Now, a visitor to the Tiergarten will find a wall of sandblasted, opaque glass panels separating the northeast corner from the street traffic on the north side, and from pedestrian foot traffic on the south side. The south wall along the pedestrian walkway details a chronology of the Roma and Sinti experience from 1933 to 1945. The wall is interrupted with a rust colored metal frame opening onto the quiet and grassy field beyond the wall (figure 27).

Irregular forms of paving stones spread across the field, gradually uniting into a smooth surface around the centerpiece of the space (figure 28). The outer edge of a black metal pool meets the ground mere inches above the paver tiles (figure 29). Just inside the external frame of the pool, text floats above the surface of the water spilling over the edge, with words in German and English, a poem by Italian Rom Santino Spinelli:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ibid.}
\end{quote}
Sunken in face / extinguished eyes / cold lips / silence / a torn heart / without breath / without words / no tears.

The pool’s black metal surface creates the impression that there is no limit to the depth of the water, which appears black as well. The reflections of the sky and trees are dimmed into a monochrome texture. In the center of the pool a black triangle stone sits just above the water line, and upon it rests a single fresh blossom (figure 30).

The air around the memorial is quiet, the surrounding walls muffling the noise of the city just beyond. This allows the sound of a faint violin to drift through the space, which expands the memorial beyond the basin itself. As visitors move throughout the field, the pavers underfoot spread away from the memorial, with select stones carved with the names of the concentration camps of the Nazi extermination program.

Russell West-Pavlov summarizes many of the important social aspects of space in the introduction to his 2009 text, *Space in Theory.*\(^{10}\) The shift from the concept of space as nothing, absence, or as a container has occurred under many of the same conditions as the development of the Romani activist movement, expanding since the 1960s and 1970s, with structuralist concerns alongside the development of human welfare issues and a renewed evaluation of the concept of the public. The issue of space, or lack of it, is framed by this conceptual development: rather than a container within which things exist or happen, space is the fabric of social existence. The Romani community has experienced the oppression of the dominant cultures in the various spaces they have moved through. As minorities, they have worn the categories placed upon

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\(^{10}\) Russel West-Pavlov, *Space in Theory: Kristeva, Foucault, Deleuze* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 16-33.
them, or have grown “broad shoulders,” to appropriate an Austrian term.\textsuperscript{11} The Roma Civil Rights movement that led to the development of the memorial, and to larger conversations about human rights for the Roma, is an active inversion of that oppression. Rather than being defined by what they are not, or in opposition to the majority, the Roma are \textit{taking} space. The completed memorial exists as a product of the Foucaultian \textit{condition of possibility} to create discursive space for the larger Roma community.

The second part of the discursive space equation is the network of statements produced by the conditions of possibility. This includes the textual responses that followed the opening of the Memorial, included in the Braus editions catalogue of critical essays on the event of the opening, which reflect on the process of designing the space, and on the limitations of memorialization and commemoration. The previously mentioned activist Romani Rose and artist Dani Karavan were among the contributors, and were joined by Tímea Junghaus, curator of the first Roma Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, and by Delaine Le Bas.

The work of the artists and curators discussed in this text should not be read as evidence, examples, or icons of a Romani art movement. Instead, they should be seen as actors on many stages, including the Romani human rights movement, the Hungarian (or German, or Croatian, or Czech, etc.) arts scene, and the contemporary art world. The central and unifying theme of their work (and what drives their inclusion in this text) is the element of contemporary worldmaking, or world-picturing – to reference Terry Smith\textsuperscript{12} – that is in all of their actions. From Junghaus’ creation of the Biennale’s Roma-only art space with work ranging from formal,\


high-art to “kitsch” with an appeal to a specific set of patrons; to Baker’s intersection of theory, practice, art, and anthropology in both studio and curatorial practice; these artists and curators should be seen as snapshots of the larger world of identity construction in contemporary art and visual culture. As seen with the work of Delaine Le Bas and many of the works in Reconsidering Roma, the political involvement of Roma artists does not arise from their ethnic identity, but from the direct communication of lived experience. Every person I interviewed, researched, and wrote about here speaks from his or her own location of experience. An ethnic identification as Roma is only one aspect of that experience, and not even a unified aspect at that. The work that Baker, Le Bas, Junghaus and others are producing builds a visual lexicon of the Roma, their lives and identities. This visual language is one part of the establishment of the place of Roma in contemporary society. The many contemporary artists currently working to represent their experience as Romani are not trying to create defining factors of the Roma visual culture. Rather, they are creating elements toward a broader international context, in both political and art world narratives.


Figure 1
Roma Memorial Construction Site, April 2012
Photograph © 2012 Deutsche Well/DPA Picture Alliance
http://www.dw.de/sinti-and-roma-memorial-suffers-repeated-delays/a-15907775
Figure 2
Construction site of the unfinished Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Murdered under the National Socialist Regime, undated photo
Photo by ERCF, Berlin, 2012
http://www.theromanielders.org/content/menu_149/press-folder
Figure 3

In Memoriam, 2003
metal, 185 x 19 x 19 cm
collection of the artist
photo: Marian Petre
Retrieved from
http://romapavilion.org/artwork.htm
Fradi [FTC, Hungary] is better, 2002
Selected Stills
DVD, 15 min 37 sec, Black Box Foundation
Director: Norbert Szirmai, Camera: János Révész
Saintes Maries de la Mer 2 – The People, 2000
acrylic on canvas, 146 x 114 cm
collection of the artist
photo: Gabi Jiménez
Postcards From Venice, 2011
Perpetual Gypsy Pavilion
Side A
Retrieved from http://www.perpetualpavilion.org/?page_id=2
The **Perpetual - Gypsy Pavilion** is an initiative with and of Romani people.

In 2009, the Venice Biennale is taking place amidst extreme violations of the human rights of the Romani People (Gypsies) in Italy and in other European countries. 2007 saw the acclaimed first Roma Pavilion in Venice. The late cancellation of the the planned Roma Pavilion 2009 makes the dire situation all the more acute. Alternative projects have had very little time.

In response to this state of affairs, we are calling on the public and the art community to **fingerprint yourself & return this card** in support of the project for a Perpetual Gypsy Pavilion.

This designation carries within it the hope and demand that no matter what the organisational, financial, artistic or political situation, a Romani pavilion or representation will have a presence within the established art context.

Further - it leads to the demand that Romani artists to be represented in the National Pavilions of their countries of residence, which is happening in the mediated shape of the Postcard, which you hold in your hands, for the first time in 2009.

**Several renowned artists, thinkers, curators, public figures and national pavilions have already declared their solidarity.**

Planned events at the Venice Biennale 2009 will be announced as they are confirmed. Post-Venice Gypsy Pavilions are already planned for Helsinki and Belgrade, and more are to follow in the lead up to Venice 2011.

Read more at [www.PerpetualPavilion.org](http://www.perpetualpavilion.org)

1. In your opinion how should Romani artists be represented at the Venice biennal?

2. Please name Roma Culture/art projects and artists you know?

3. Name three obstacles to Roma integration in Europe.

**Postcards From Venice, 2011**
Perpetual Gypsy Pavilion
Side B
Retrieved from [http://www.perpetualpavilion.org/?page_id=2](http://www.perpetualpavilion.org/?page_id=2)
Selection from Mirrored Books, 2008–10
Daniel Baker
Series of 50 “book covers”
enamel and silver leaf on Perspex (acrylic glass)
variable dimensions
Image retrieved from http://www.reconsidering-roma.de/kuenstler.html
Deutschland 1992
Karl Stojka
Oil on Wood
100 x 100 cm
Image retrieved from http://www.reconsidering-roma.de/kuenstler.html
Selection from “Even Death Is Afraid of Auschwitz” 1997-2004
Ceija Stojka
ink on paper
30 cm x 40 cm
retrieved from http://www.reconsidering-roma.de/kuenstler.html
NOT ALLOWED IN:

Shop for knitting and textile goods – Brno, Czech Republic,
Disco Alfa – Plzeň, Czech Republic,
Diablo dance club – Ostrava, Czech Republic,
Restaurant Sport – Náchod, Czech Republic,
Mисicland Imperium – Louny, Czech Republic,
Taxi – Prague, Czech Republic.

Stills, Miss Roma, CZ 2007
Tamara Moyzes
1:41 min, Video
Video available online, uploaded to YouTube December 17, 2007 http://youtu.be/y2pLWNJiP-s
Images retrieved from http://www.reconsidering-roma.de/kuenstler.html
Poured Painting: Red, Black, White 2003
Daniel Baker
Eggshell paint on Medium Density Fibreboard
Image provided courtesy of the artist
Figure 13

Poured Painting: Blue, Black, White 2003
Daniel Baker
Eggshell paint on MDF
Image provided courtesy of the artist
Figure 14

Poured Painting: Vein 2003 (detail)
Daniel Baker
Acrylic on Card
Image provided courtesy of the artist
Sign Looking Glass 2005
Daniel Baker
Enamel, silver, and gold leaf on Perspex
21x87cm
Image provided courtesy of the artist
Figure 16

Horses Looking Glass 2007
Daniel Baker
Enamel, silver, and gold leaf on Perspex
100x113 cm
Image provided courtesy of the artist
Figure 17

Gold Roses Looking Glass 2005
Daniel Baker
Enamel, silver, and gold leaf on Perspex
100x100 cm
Image provided courtesy of the artist
Figure 18

_Witch Hunt 2009_, installation view
Delaine Le Bas
Image by Tara Darby
Image provided courtesy of the artist
Figure 19

*Witch Hunt 2009*, performance view
Delaine Le Bas
Image by Theo Sims
Image provided courtesy of the artist
Witch Hunt 2009, detail view
Delaine Le Bas
Image by Delaine Le Bas
Image provided courtesy of the artist
A Nation of Dog Lovers 2007
Delaine Le Bas
Image retrieved from Roma Pavilion website media files
Original stolen during exhibition
Figure 22

*Witch Hunt 2009*, installation detail, work in progress
Delaine Le Bas
Image by Delaine Le Bas, provided courtesy of the artist
The Wish 1841
Theodor Von Holst
Image retrieved from Holst Birthplace Museum Website
Figure 24

**Gypsy in Reflection 1869**
Gustav Courbet
Image retrieved from Google Art Project under Creative Commons Licensing
The World of the Gypsy Romance? 2007
Delaine Le Bas
Image by Delaine Le Bas
Image provided courtesy of the artist
Film still from "Glasgow Gypsy Tryptic" 2013
Filmed by Delaine Le Bas
Editing and Sound by Damian James Le Bas
Posted on the To Gypsyland project site May 20, 2013, at http://togypsyland.blogspot.com
Figure 27

The memorial just before the inauguration, October 2012
Photo: Marko Priske
Figure 28

Press Photo: Sinti and Roma Memorial, Stones, October 2012
Photo: Marko Priske
Figure 29

Detail of the Memorial pool’s edge
January 2013
Photo by Rachel Hawthorn
Figure 30

Reflections in the pool, with the central flower detail
January 2013
Photo by Rachel Hawthorn