

Bodies Across Borders: Oral and visual Memory in Europe and Beyond

“Bodies Across Borders: Oral and visual Memory in Europe and Beyond”, this is the title of our research project, which has started its third year of activity in June 2015. Human bodies that move across frontiers, both geographical and cultural, in and around Europe, within a global diaspora. But also bodies as texts, oral and visual. Bodies of memory, in the sense of the ancient Latin *corpus*. We construct textual bodies by collecting interviews, asking people to draw itineraries of their movements, and exploring archives of all sorts. The concept and practice of the “archive” is at the centre of our reflection. We also study video-art, so that we can find different forms of memory. The visual memories created by the artists are not to be confused with those we collect from the mobile subjects that we interview, but both share the specificity of visuality, which we would like to interpret. Borders are also the ones we try to cross between various fields of knowledge, in order to make justice to our texts and to the people with whom, in intersubjective relation, the texts are produced.

The memory we deal with refers to “Europe”, and the project’s aim is to understand what this term can mean today and in the next future for people who choose to stay in Europe, wherever they were born. “Moving” and “mobility” belong to everybody and sedentarism is not a permanent status. BABE intends to perform a visual and theoretical critique of the idea and practice of Fortress Europe, in the perspective of cultural history and centering on the present. Our fieldwork as well as our historical and methodological search have this intent. Much of our fieldwork takes place in schools, with teachers and students, both adults and minors. Through their testimonies we can at times perceive the flashing image of a new possible Europe - or more than one - which quickly disappears. The project intends to save, understand and elaborate the memory of this image and its projections into the near future. The BABE blog has more limited hopes, but the inspiration is the same.

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