(No)Memory

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The subtitle of the new *Open* reads, 'cahier on art and the public domain'. A cahier on art and the public domain is not necessarily or exclusively about art in public space. The physical interpretation often associated with 'art in public space' is often too limited. In the new *Open* public space is seen as a component of the larger arena of public opinion-making and public life, an arena that can take multiple forms. Within this *Open* sees art not as an isolated phenomenon, but as a participant bearing joint responsibility, as well as in relation to other signification disciplines and developments. This does not imply that *Open* is an interdisciplinary cahier, but it does imply that it includes room for themes, visions and viewpoints that sometimes criss-cross these various areas. Something like this seems urgent in a time when all notions of publicness are being reappraised.

From this perspective *Open* 7 explores the current status of memory within art and the public domain. Public and collective forms of remembrance are definitely not static or neutral, but rather subject to socio-cultural, historical, political and technological forces, which continually redefine their conditions and limits and continually reconfigure memory. The current culture seems equally dominated by safe-keeping and remembering as by discarding and forgetting. Cultural heritage is a topic of interest, as is the search for workable memorials and contemporary monuments. Technology guarantees unlimited storage space for information and data. But at the same time the media and consumer culture contribute to a 'memorylessness' and transience that make it seem as though everything were beginning all over again.

The present pluriform and post-ideological public domain is not shored up by one single binding collective memory, but by countless material and immaterial memories. These short and long-term memories oppose or overlap one another. The current organization and experience of the public domain is defined in part by the tension that exists between individual and collective, between old and new, between autochthonous and allochthonous memories. Within the public domain, memory (its content, control or place) has an impact on the way in which we view each other, ourselves, our past and our future. He who controls the memories and archives of a society controls time and space. It is precisely for this reason that keeping them accessible and sharing them is something that concerns everyone.

How can active use be made of the information and the memories stored in the current 'memory places'? What is the role of art in this? Is such a thing as collective remembrance still possible? How can the cultural heritage be made accessible without turning city and country into one big open-air museum? And what are the implications of new media and digital storage technologies for the social and historical process of safe-keeping and remembering?

In *Open* 7 Rudi Laermans analyses the current 'heritage regime', while Frank van Vree examines the political significance of the contemporary monument. Cor Wagenaar argues for the use of time as an instrument in the Belvedere policy, in which the cultural history serves as a source of inspiration in the spatial planning of the Netherlands. The German media theorist Wolfgang Ernst demonstrates how the archive, in a digital culture, literally becomes metaphor. Jorinde Seijdel subjects Bill Gates's image archive to closer inspection,

while Sven Lütticken writes on the 'conspiracy of publicness' at work in the mass media. Geert Lovink interviewed artist and archivist Tjebbe van Tijen about his project *Unbombing the World 1911–2011*, which aims to document air bombardments all over the world.

This *Open* includes a separate supplement, designed by Lonnie van Brummelen, with a text on identity and local memory, entitled 'Wij' ('We'), by artist Arnoud Holleman, written for the *Proeftuin Twente*. In addition *Open* 7 includes shorter texts taken directly from actual practice or linked to (art) projects, and the books section has been expanded. There is a story by the photographer and writer Hans Aarsman, and the column on art as public space was written by philosopher Henk Oosterling. Nico Bick photographed several archives for *Open*, including the Amsterdam Municipal Archives and the National Archives in The Hague. This issue also includes a letter by Barbara Visser, written under the aegis of Sternet, the network of twelve distribution buildings of the former PTT designated as 'recent urban heritage'. Artists Joke Robaard and Nico Dockx produced contributions for *Open* based on their own preoccupations with the archive.

Jorinde Seijdel is an independent writer, editor and lecturer on subjects concerning art and media in our changing society and the public sphere. She is editor-in-chief of *Open! Platform for Art, Culture & the Public Domain* (formerly known as *Open. Cahier on Art & the Public Domain*). In 2010 she published *De waarde van de amateur* [The Value of the Amateur] (Fonds BKVB, Amsterdam), about the rise of the amateur in digital culture and the notion of amateurism in contemporary art and culture. Currently, she is theory tutor at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and Head of the Studium Generale Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. With Open!, she is a partner of the Dutch Art Institute MA Art Praxis in Arnhem.

Tags

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