

EUROPEAN



POLICYBRIEF

TRACES

Creating new imaginations of Europe by transmitting contentious cultural heritages in art-based transdisciplinary teams involving heritage providers, artists and researchers

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Introduction

In contemporary Europe, heritage can be mobilised to underpin divisive ideologies. Heritage providers need to counter exclusionary tendencies while acknowledging different or opposing positions. Innovative methods are needed with some urgency to encourage critical reflection, strengthen social cohesion and encourage new imaginations for an inclusive Europe.

TRACES responds to this challenge by addressing imaginations of Europe through conflict and difference. It embraces contentious heritages as a resource rather than rejecting them as an impediment. The research demonstrates that sensitive, arts-based public engagement with contentious heritage encourages self-awareness, critical reflection and dialogue across opposing positions as well as institutional change.

TRACES offers the format of creative co-production, a tried and tested approach to the transmission of contentious cultural heritages with the arts. It proposes for artists to work in transdisciplinary teams with scientists and heritage practitioners, supported by educators, ethnographers, and curators. The teams engage with museum or archival collections and communities, open up multiple perspectives, create public interfaces and involve new audiences.

TRACES promotes an inclusive, participatory and reflexive approach to the transmission of contentious heritage. It advocates open, pluralistic platforms, where entrenched positions can be tackled productively. Policy makers and heritage institutions are called upon to create conditions that enable the implementation of transdisciplinary teams with a strong artistic component over longer periods of time.

Evidence and Analysis

TRACES highlights the enormous potential of transdisciplinary teams in transmitting *contentious cultural heritages* with the arts. Europe's history is marked by conflict and difference, as well as periods of peace, convivial relations and remarkable inclusivity. This heritage is open to different, even controversial interpretations. The research addresses difficult, painful, or controversial aspects of Europe's rich heritage as a resource for participatory reflection and knowledge production. This was realised in transdisciplinary teams, working together as *creative co-productions*. A flexible, participatory, inclusive approach ensured that each TRACES team created an open, pluralistic environment where multiple perspectives on contentious heritage could be voiced and experienced.

The research demonstrates that contentious heritage, if transmitted sensitively using artistic methods, enables audiences and institutions to engage with difference and conflict in productive, rather than divisive ways. An integrated transdisciplinary approach encourages reflexive Europeanisation, leading to new imaginations for an inclusive Europe.

Systematic analysis of practice-based, theoretically grounded research actions revealed that special care must be taken in setting up transdisciplinary teams for them to be sustainable and successful. Heritage providers and policy makers are needed to embrace a conflict-oriented approach to heritage, and create the conditions for a creative, flexible, experimental approach to contentious heritage.

1. Rationale: Transmitting contentious cultural heritages with the arts

Using artistic approaches, TRACES studied the complex arrangements that are conducive to an agonistic approach to contentious heritage as part of imaginations of Europe.

TRACES expands on two discernible trends. Museums or archives increasingly involve artists to activate their collections. Critics have pointed out that conventional models of artist/ heritage provider cooperation, such as short-term artist residencies or uninvited interventions, are often found wanting regarding long-term sustainable impact on audiences as well as on the heritage institutions themselves.

Scholars of critical heritage studies, such as Sharon Macdonald and Michael Rothberg, emphasize the importance of difficult, awkward or multidirectional heritage. Heritage is widely seen as a dynamic process rather than a fixed entity. As Laurajane Smith has shown, the making of heritage is dominated by an authorised heritage discourse, but marginalised and other oppositional groups can insert their interpretations of history in various ways. Due to these power relations, heritage is always potentially or actually a field of contention. TRACES teams refrained from using this term in public representations. Instead, they preferred to refer to terms like silenced, awkward or difficult heritage. TRACES used the term contentious heritage as an analytical research perspective rather than a marketing tool.

As the current political climate in Europe shows, contention can take the form of discursive antagonism. Populist ideologies set 'the people' against 'the elites', long-standing populations against migrants, and so forth. Heritage displays and archival cataloguing systems often underpin such antagonisms on the cultural terrain. TRACES did not expect that art-based heritage work will *resolve* conflicts over contentious heritages such as, for instance, the conflict in Northern Ireland. Political philosophy offers a different approach to conflict. In Chantal Mouffe's *agonistic approach*, the task at hand is to create open, pluralistic and democratic

spaces, where opposing positions can be expressed. The aim is not necessarily to resolve the conflict, but to turn enemies into adversaries. TRACES developed practical processes to encourage this through specially set-up transdisciplinary teams in a variety of contentious heritage configurations. It analysed the institutional, methodological and ethical arrangements that are conducive an agonistic approach on the terrain of culture.

The agonistic approach reliefs heritage workers from the perceived inevitability to take sides in polarised antagonistic conflicts (either rooted in heritage or articulated with it). Instead, it integrates the conflict in the research process, in public interfaces as well as audience and stakeholder work. Highlighting heritage institutions as democratic spaces often leads to sustainable institutional change.

2. European imagination

TRACES promotes imaginations of Europe which are based on ways of dealing productively with conflict and difference and enable reflexive Europeanisation.

It encourages a relational approach Europe as proposed in the Michael Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory. This highlights the processual and hybrid aspects of Europe as an idea in a state of becoming. In contrast to a fixed European identity, it challenges existing regimes of truth about perceived normalities, narratives, belongings and exclusions.

The TRACES transdisciplinary teams brought forward different perspectives on European pasts and their present meanings. These included (post-)colonialism, the Holocaust and neglected Jewish presences in Europe, the repercussions of European nationalisation policies and so-called population exchanges in the 20th century, and the multilingual diversity in European border regions as well as urban centres.

Using Regina Römhild's concept of reflexive Europeanisation, art-based reflexivity encouraged new interpretations. TRACES highlighted the need for professional preservation and critical assessments of materials held in heritage institutions, which mirror the multi-perspectivity that characterises European culture.

An arts-based team in Slovenia studied the meanings and making of death masks. They found that on the level of everyday action and management, the post-socialist shared heritage is more relevant than religious or language group identities.

3. Context matters: Harnessing the transformative qualities of art

Why art? Artist-led engagement with objects, techniques or materials creates reflexive environments where conflicting positions are expressed, and new perspectives are found.

Artistic methods bring a new dimension to heritage work by embracing the material, the visual and the sensual. Contrary to the enlightenment paradigm, artists educate by creating ambiguity rather than clarification or closure. By competently handling materials, techniques, objects and settings, they create new languages that allow for unexpected perspectives on contentious heritages. Artists transgress conventional canons of display and representation and challenge hegemonic systems of truth which operate in displaying and staging heritage. Artistic meaning-making can be extended to and benefit from work with audiences and communities. TRACES found that creative co-productions *dis-articulate* objects from antagonistic

ideological frameworks, and re-articulate them with different, less divisive frameworks such as lived experience, craft or art. Teamed up with researchers and educators, art leads to epistemic change in the production of knowledge, where concepts such as emotions, embodied memories, storytelling and microhistory are included.

Rifts between communities, or conflicts over Europe's colonial heritage will not be resolved by artistic re-contextualisation. However, art does invite changes of perspective, de-ideologises the conflict, challenges the prescribed authoritative heritage discourse and transgresses entrenched positions.

***Dialogical Photography:** TRACES artists approached the conflict in Northern Ireland through prison art and -artefacts made by former inmates of the now derelict Long Kesh/Maze prison. Participants from both sides brought their own objects or made new ones, had them professionally photographed, and annotated them. Experiences of being a prisoner, a visitor or a guard were shared as part of the making process, rather than with the aim to provide evidence for a loyalist or republican position. The resulting postcard exhibition holds different experiences with this contentious heritage, neither condemning nor celebrating either side. It has been shown at festivals, in community centres and galleries.*

4. Integrated transdisciplinary teams: Creative Co-Productions

Integrated transdisciplinary teams transgress disciplinary compartmentalisation and established time schedules. They emphasise the relations between the specific competences of team members, the heritage objects, audiences, and the social, political and spatial settings in which the teams operated.

Artistic work in the heritage sector is often perceived as a mere “artistic upgrade” (Alenka Pirman in Hamm/Schönberger 2019) of existing heritages, institutions, objects or meanings. Conventional division of labour requires that artists, curators, archivists, educators, or scientists stick to their disciplinary remits in a clearly defined phase of the respective heritage project. In contrast, transdisciplinary teams, as exemplified in the TRACES creative co-productions, offer an integrated setting that enables art to bring forward sustainable change. As the relationships within and between institutions, professionals, audiences, and objects are re-configured, transdisciplinary teams can be seen as sites of institutional learning.

Configuration. TRACES anthropologist Arnd Schneider described the creative co-productive setting as a “veritable mise-en-scene, constituted by a relational ensemble of researchers, artists, educators, audiences and research subjects, both human and non-human”.

In creative co-productions, all participants engage in a reflexive process from the outset. Skills and expertise are geared towards a shared creative co-productive process. Stereotypical roles such as the ‘objective researcher’, the ‘practical educator’ or the ‘unconventional artist’ are challenged. Conflicts arising from the transdisciplinary setting, or the contentious topics can be time-consuming, and demand gentle forms of trust building.

TRACES analysis from the theoretical perspectives of anthropology, education and curatorial studies confirms that softening disciplinary boundaries generates new, combined forms of research, education, display, and ultimately new meanings. This impacts not only on the artistic product, but also on its institutional, educational and theoretical framing.

Integrated transdisciplinary teams encourage ethically responsible forms of involvement, mutual learning and research informed by stakeholders due to its in-built reflexivity. This is

particularly obvious in dealing with contentious collections, such as the skull collection in the Vienna natural history museum. In order to engage with them in a critical manner, they must be shown – but this poses the risk to reproduce the oppressive colonial framework that made these collections possible in the first place. The TRACES productions made this dilemma apparent in the set-up of exhibitions. Educational programmes engaged visitors in productive debate on the dilemma. In turn, active audience inclusion brought forward new perspectives which helped to analyse the theoretical concepts that underpinned the display.

Audience work, such as guided tours, and dissemination activities, such as a press conference, collective fieldtrips and stakeholder meetings are integrated in scientific and artistic research processes. Ethnographers and educators provide opportunities for self-reflection as *critical friends* (Endter/ Landkammer/ Schneider 2018). Participant observation is carried out as active engagement. Artists are embedding their creative work in a wider process of critical enquiry. Working with contentious heritages requires a high degree of sensitivity and reflexivity in relation to audiences and stakeholders, the overall political situation, and within the teams themselves. Opportunities for participation and reflexivity must be carefully planned, and experienced facilitators are crucial. In TRACES, the educational team provided invaluable impulses. They tailored formats for reflexivity to the needs of every transdisciplinary team and ensured that audience activity is organically integrated in the creative process.

TRACES has demonstrated that sustainable institutional change is possible. Curators developed new awareness on ethical issues regarding their own collections. Collections were changed, contentious items removed or annotated, cataloguing systems reviewed to facilitate access to previously untraceable objects, and a process to repatriate human remains/ ancestors was initiated.

Ethics of Display. *Vienna natural history museum owns a massive, 19th and 20th century collection of human skulls. The display is partly accessible to the general public. The collection is testament to European colonialism, the de-humanising approach of early anthropology, and the repressive treatment of marginalised groups. A TRACES team exhibited a 30 metres long photograph of the collection on the premises of Edinburgh University. The display was fitted with a serious trigger warning, contextualised with interviews from diverse perspectives, and provided a range of contextual materials including micro-histories, and guided tours for audiences to engage.*

5. Mixed methods in transdisciplinary teams

Transmitting contentious heritages with the arts requires methodological sensitivity.

The TRACES creative co-productions were based on inclusivity, participation, relationality and processuality. Based on these pillars, methods of engagement were flexibly tailored to the specificity of each site and contentious heritage configuration. Visual and object-related methods served as catalysts for knowledge production on conflictual or silenced pasts.

Artistic research

- A well-established artist collective can build on its own networks. Artists with less profile in their sites will seek to connect with existing institutions and communities.

- Objects are a good starting point for engagement and network building. They can be used to elucidate micro-histories using methods from ethnography, oral history or education. Artistic methods add a material dimension. A focus on materials and techniques shifts the focus away from often ideologised dominant narratives, and re-articulates heritages with a mode of artistic respect for craft, and materiality.
- Objects may be found in the hosting institution. Others may need to be traced in large and small institutions, private collections or forgotten archives. Tracing such objects should be regarded and documented as part of artistic or ethnographic research.
- Artistic work with objects can open up new perspectives on the contentious aspects of the heritage they represent. Techniques of estrangements are, for instance, photographing objects as portraits, or scaling up photos of small objects up to invite unexpected interpretations. Such artistically induced multi-perspectivity may lead to new analyses.

Conflict Learning. When visitors and participants of learning programmes are to engage productively with difficult heritage, learning situations need to allow for uneasiness and conflict to be voiced, taken into account and negotiated. However even education programs that try to open such spaces might not be able to follow through the idea of conflict. Facilitators, even though committed to dialogue and critical engagement, in practice often have difficulty to engage in controversy with participants. Opening productive conflict zones in educational programs requires trained staff, and stable working conditions.

Microhistories are suitable to address contentious, neglected or awkward pasts. Local histories and stories on everyday lives can travel from one context to another. They can reveal European dimensions and structural similarities of different contentious heritages. They can challenge hegemonic narratives. Microhistories can be used in a variety of ways. Biographies of people who are represented in archives or collections can be reconstructed and transformed into exhibitions or audience work. Visitors from different communities can be invited to collect and share microhistories. This allows for addressing minorities and encourage exchange between groups who would not normally engage with each other. Combined with a conflict learning approach, this allows participants to challenge preconceptions about “the other”.

Photography is more ubiquitous than ever, and often remains unreflected. In TRACES it was used in all stages of the research as a methodological as well as a creative medium. Mobile phone snapshots were used to document research processes. Objects such as bystander art or death masks were photographed as portraits. Participants decided on photographic settings and annotation of their own objects. The slow method of sun-printing was used in workshops to capture archival material. A camera was used as part of an exhibition display, and a large-scale photograph of a contentious collection was the heart of another exhibition.

6. The practical side: Setting up transdisciplinary teams / creative co-productions

In transdisciplinary teams, different institutional logics are at play and must be considered. Heritage institutions, academia and the art world each follow specific conventions regarding time scale, funding, expected outcome and impact/ evaluation. In the worst case, these can

obstruct one another, cement established hierarchies and thus impede the transdisciplinary work process. A solid understanding of institutional logics is a precondition for setting up successful transdisciplinary teams.

Heritage institutions are facing pressure to achieve public exposure, attract large numbers of visitors and reduce cost. They are often bound to national interests. This can lead to uncritical and sensationalist displays of collections. Under these circumstances, the profound expertise of curators, based on long-term access to the collections and objects, cannot fully unfold. Staff are often willing to engage in critical investigation into contentious heritage, experimental formats and, more broadly, sustainable institutional change. Nevertheless, accommodation of artist needs such as access to contentious collections and issues of copyright and budget can be slow, and must be resolved by new administrative arrangements. Artist participation is customarily restricted to short residencies (several weeks or months). Educators tend to be brought in to facilitate audience engagement only after completion of the project. Such compartmentalised, short-term modes of heritage transmission seriously limit opportunities for real transdisciplinary work and sustainable institutional change. Long-term creative co-productions significantly contribute to overcoming these problems.

In the art world, the outcome of an artistic research process is usually an artistic representation (exhibition, performance etc). The data produced during the artistic research process are rarely available for scientific analysis. Interaction with audiences and communities during the research process is limited by restricted time-scales and wo-manpower. Many artists juggle several short-term projects in precarious positions. Ways to protect their intellectual property in a co-productive working mode must be found.

In academia, the acknowledged end-product is publication, preferably in scientific journals. It can take months, if not years from submission to publication, and they target the scientific community. Popular publication formats, such as exhibition catalogues, are ranging low on the scale of academic recognition. Scientists need time to conduct analysis after conclusion of the artistic work.

Funding proposals require exact definition of tasks, milestones and deliverables. In contrast, artistic and ethnographic projects rely on open, flexible approaches with room for unforeseen research actions and results. Funding organisations should allow for artistic *structured openness*, open formats, flexible time-scales and variable outcomes.

7. Participation and citizen agency

A strong and inclusive civil society is a promising antidote to polarisation and exclusionary tendencies in Europe.

Transdisciplinary groups as designed and tested by TRACES, combined with a focus on contentious heritage, are enlarging the societal space where actual or potential conflict can be deliberated on the terrain of culture. They support or create open, pluralistic platforms, which contribute to social cohesion.

Establishing working relations with communities on contentious heritage is contingent on many factors. When collaborations do not work out as planned, a reflexive research approach can take this as a starting point for a better understanding of the respective heritage

configuration, and the project plan can be adapted. In some settings, it is possible to work with existing communities. In others, new networks emerge from contentious heritage activities.

Importantly, all TRACES teams were given maximum autonomy and responsibility within the H2020 funding framework. It is advisable to extend this to stakeholders and audiences, by including them as co-producers and experts. Working together on a shared project creates new relations within and between communities, authorities and institutions. If the respective project is 'owned' by a wide variety of partners and stakeholders, a continuation of the setting beyond the life-span of the project is more likely. Suitable occasions to come together can be created throughout. Besides workshops or conferences, presentations of plans, drafts or video roughs, shared research trips, organised visits to relevant locations, press conferences or rehearsals can be framed as interactive, co-productive situations.

A multilingual opera performance in a Friulian village, staged by a crew largely from neighbouring Carinthia, resulted in mutual visits beyond the initial project. Both communities speak a minority language. The interaction widened horizons, challenged preconceptions, and highlighted different attitudes to multi-linguality ranging from a site of struggle in Carinthia to a matter-of-fact cosmopolitanism in Friuli.

An artist collective in Ljubljana extended its team to include historians, librarians, and other long-standing senior heritage workers and community members. Each step in the research process was designed to encourage a shared process of knowledge production and network building.

In the small town of Medias in a pluri-ethnic region of Romania, a new community center was established on the premises of a dis-used synagogue. It hosts events such as film nights and concerts as well as artistic workshops, sometimes using archival materials from the synagogue. Local residents from different communities are supporting the project in conceptual and practical ways, for instance by suggesting events or participating in clean-up days.

In Belfast, an artist team approached existing organisations from both sides of the conflict in Northern Ireland to participate in a project on prison art. While some organisations declined, a more individual approach was successful.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

TRACES demonstrates that social cohesion can be significantly strengthened on the terrain of culture, namely by transmitting contentious cultural heritage with the arts through transdisciplinary teams. Divisive tendencies can hardly be countered by fact-based public education alone. The heritage sector can boost its impact by reaching out across entrenched positions, embrace difference, and strengthening civic networks.

By applying artistic methods, and supporting them through the expertise of scientists and educators, heritage work can provide experiences and offer opportunities for engagement to a wide range of citizens. To implement this approach, institutional, economic and cultural barriers must be overcome. To harness its full potential, TRACES recommends policies regarding institutional change, transdisciplinary cooperation and contentious heritage.

1. Creating conditions for transdisciplinary teams

The TRACES approach offers strategies for working on contentious heritages. This may in some cases require institutional change. Great care must be taken in creating the necessary conditions for successful transdisciplinary teams. This involves:

- **Assigning funding** to inclusive projects committed to a transcultural attitude and countering divisive tendencies, rather than those who emphasize essentialist understandings of culture and identity.
- **Responding to different institutional logics** of heritage sector, art-world and academia, even though this might require unconventional solutions and new administrative processes. Successful transdisciplinary teams require that the respective disciplinary logics, regarding timescales, methods and topic are respected.
- **Allowing flexibility** for teams to develop work in relation to the **specificity of each setting**. A process-oriented approach allows reacting appropriately and creatively to events in the field. Therefore, grants and stipends should refrain from insisting on detailed pre-designed outcomes and formats.
- **Emphasizing creative, artistic approaches**, even when their impact is not immediately measurable.
- **Embracing the challenge** of accommodating transdisciplinary work on contentious heritage as an opportunity for **institutional change**.
- **Establishing transdisciplinary teams** by including artists, educators, scientists and heritage practitioners as responsible partners from the beginning. It is recommended to recruit participants from inside and outside the institution. This combination has proved beneficial for institutional change and innovative outcomes.
- **Planning for transdisciplinary collaboration over extended periods of time** amongst artists, curators, educators, cultural policy makers, audiences, local communities, and finding administrative solutions where necessary. This ensures sustainable impact beyond one individual project. Team participants and advisors from different sectors must be embedded in the research process from the beginning.

2. Facilitating transdisciplinary teams

- **Ensuring that all team members are committed** to transgressing disciplinary boundaries and embracing an integrated approach. An open-minded, **experimental** general attitude is important.
- **Establishing terms of collaboration** collectively with all participants, rather than have them predetermined by the respective heritage institutions. Responsibilities must be clearly negotiated to minimise future conflict.
- **Ensuring that copyright** or creative commons arrangements for the use of research results and art projects are made.
- **Providing stable working environments** for the teams. Engaging with contentious heritage will create irritations amongst and beyond the teams. Stable conditions and active institutional support allow participants to respect each others' aims, methods and preferences, while agreeing ethical common grounds. Considering senior positions or long-term contracts for artists, educators and researchers is recommended.

- **Alleviating power relations within the teams** by facilitating maximum independence, e.g. by independent funding) H2020 funding gave the TRACES creative co-productions a degree of institutional independence, and control over the course of their project.
- **Involving audiences, partners and networks** in the process of research and knowledge production. It is recommended to build on and strengthen existing networks. This allows different communities to “own” the project, rather than experiencing themselves as mere visitors or spectators.

3. Ensuring reflexivity, participatory methods and communication flows

- **Actively supporting reflexivity.** Time and sufficient funds must be invested in reflexive team sessions, cross-team exchange and documentation. It is recommended to include digital and face-to-face formats. Reflexivity is a precondition for making methodological experiences transferrable through instructive materials, both on the academic and the practical level. Reflexivity is particularly important for transdisciplinary and spatially dispersed collaborations.
- **Drawing on the expertise of educators** throughout the project to establish participatory and inclusive modes of communication throughout. This must be seen as part of the research process, and will influence final outcomes such as exhibitions and performances.
- **Drawing on the expertise of ethnographers** and other qualitative researchers in creating spaces of reflection, maintaining an open-ended attitude regarding results, and holding a position in relation to the team that is distanced enough to transgress internal conventions, and at the same time inside enough to be trusted (“critical friends”)
- **Creating occasions for trust-building** to ensure motivation within the team by sharing process steps throughout.
- **Encouraging methodological mindfulness** and experimentation in tailoring methods and participant feedback sensitively to specific settings.
- **Allowing knowledge to circulate organically** beyond its local or national environment throughout the process, rather than restricting it to advertising the final product. This enables wider conversations about contentious heritages across Europe and ensures that the final product is informed by local, translocal and transnational discourses alike.

4. Strengthening agency by encouraging active community and audience involvement

- **Bridging the gap between communities and institutions** by establishing long-term collaborations between institutions and local activist and citizens organisations within communities which are implicated in debates on contentious heritages. Active, responsible collaboration has proved invaluable in building sustainable, strong, trusted relationships.
- **Working closely with audiences** and participants of different generations and social classes, political persuasions and genders by providing small, well organised and precisely announced recurrent events from the outset.
- **Strengthening community-led development approaches** creates synergies between institutions and the activities of citizens associations, artistic collaborations and art-based participatory activities. This can, for instance, include support for the creation

and maintenance of crucial points of infrastructure such as a community centre or the local bar. The scope of events must be carefully balanced to accommodate the needs of the resident community, governmental wishes for touristic development, the needs of institutions (for instance for large audiences), and the needs of tourists and visitors.

- **Including local knowledge and stories** about contentious heritages and their institutional representation in the research process and final displays, exhibitions and performances. This has the potential to alter entrenched positions, reassure communities of their own agency, and open up avenues for institutional change.

Research Parameters

TRACES conducted qualitative, practice-based, theoretically grounded research with a focus on, but not restricted to public and private collections. The research was situated in a variety of settings across Europe (urban/rural, local/transnational, global city/border region, community- and museum-based). It addressed contentious heritage configurations related to cross-European issues such as antisemitism, (post-)colonialism, multiethnicity and migration, nationalisms, or militarised conflict.

TRACES established exemplary transdisciplinary teams across Europe. In these **creative co-productions**, heritage institutions (museums, archives, art and cultural institutions), artists and researchers worked together for three years. Their remit was to co-produce artistic public interfaces in the heritage sector, extend networks, engage audiences and critically reflect about the process throughout.

The teams were supported by educators, ethnographers and curators. They had access to the reflexive expertise of ethnography and pedagogy, as well as expert dissemination. Each team worked hands-on with a variety of communities, stakeholders and experts. These included ethnographic or natural history museums, community- and private collections, as well as citizens associations.

The teams were given maximum autonomy within the H2020 framework. Each team tailored its qualitative methodological framework to a specific setting, and produced practical and theoretical knowledge independently.

The reflexive, interactive and participatory approach was designed to generate knowledge about each respective heritage configuration, the set-up of arts-based transdisciplinary teams in the respective institutional environments and innovative methods of audience involvement. Cross-project evaluations, such as the overall TRACES conferences, ensured that this knowledge was made transferrable.

The practical work resulted in 9 exhibitions, numerous workshops, conferences and performances, 2 databases and over 60 publications. The research shows that the co-productive approach yields considerable impact:

- **Absence as Heritage.** In a pluri-ethnic region of Romania, a new community centre was established on the premises of a disused synagogue, which is frequented by different groups. The team attracted donors and established an ongoing group for critical heritage work.
- **Awkward Objects of Genocide.** A Krakow-based international team made accessible material that was 'lost in the archive'. This enabled a new approach on the difficult issue of bystander memories on the Holocaust in contemporary Poland.

- **Casting of Death.** In Ljubljana, the TRACES approach was explicitly acknowledged as a case of good collaborative practice by the Institute of Contemporary History. The database, built during the research, became a sustainable part of the national repository DARIAH-SI, a part of the pan-European Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities DARIAH-EU.
- **Dead images.** A team working in Berlin, Edinburgh and Vienna on the visual representation of museum collections of human remains enabled museum professionals to reconsider their practices through artistic research and collaboration.
- **Transforming Long Kesh/ Maze Prison.** The team in Belfast developed the method of dialogical photography to activate art-based material as communicative and educational tools in a contentious heritage configuration. This generated a space to develop and exhibit visual narrations from multiple perspectives in an highly conflicted heritage configuration.

Complementing research actions

- **Performing Heritage.** A team in Klagenfurt studied citizen engagement and artistic practices in multi-lingual contentious heritage configurations. A public opera and a landscape exhibition in the Alps-Adriatic, and ethnographic research in citizens associations in London led to new findings on agency and creativity in urban and rural environments.
- **Bel Suol d'Amore: The Scattered Colonial Body.** A team in Rome engaged with Italy's colonial heritage in Libya at the Pigorini Ethnographic Museum. It's ethnographic-artistic approach was both personal and institutional.
- **The Museum as a Site of Unlearning.** An educational team worked with the Frankfurt world museum to further develop the method of conflict learning.

Project Identity

Project Name	Transmitting Contentious Cultural Heritages with the Arts: From Intervention to Co-Production (TRACES)
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Further downloads and publications: <http://www.traces.polimi.it/download-area/>