

MEMORY OF DEFENCE

26.03–26.09.2021



PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ARCHITECT- TURES

MEMORY OF DEFENCE: PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ARCHITECTURES

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The consideration of the specificity and singularity of a place is, in large measure, what gives rise to the applicable or architectural principles. The possibility of spatial division implies a considerable increase in the number of what might be referred to as singular points. The concept of *locus*¹ notably elucidates an important interrelation, and it leads us to some of the ideas that are central to this project. Building on some of the ideas of Aldo Rossi, the exhibition is shaped by reflections on a certain type of functionalism, on the monument versus the anti-monument and, particularly, by a focus on the need to recover the value of collective memory. We propose an itinerary that begins with the ambivalence of time and space: without moving from where we are, we return to the thirteenth century, or journey to Palestine, Kosovo, and New York while staying in our present day. In this manner, we follow lines of thought that reveal urban, physical, and geographical fissures that are the expression of the visible and invisible borders of our time. Once again before us is the chasm that separates the realm of politics from the social realm; in other words, makes visible the separation between human rights and the system that objectifies us.

In the classical world, the choice of location was governed by the *genius loci*, a divinity who presided over everything that

Antoni Muntadas, *Closed/Locked*, 2020. 60 photographs printed on wood, 30 photographs measuring 29.7 × 42 cm each and 30 photographs 42 × 29.7 cm each. A newspaper with a selection of Muntadas' *Closed/Locked*, photographs, 2020, with fragments of texts by Beatriz Colomina. 21.7 × 42 cm each. Print run: 20,000 copies. Courtesy of the artist

1. Aldo Rossi analyses the concept as a designator of the relationship between a specific local situation and the constructions within it. The authors make reference to Rossi, A. *La arquitectura de la ciudad*, Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2015, while the translation makes reference to the English language edition, Rossi, A. *The Architecture of the City*, MIT Press, 1982.

unfolded within. This served as the justification, the reason for building a temple, or the city itself, in a specific place. The spirit performed the function of protecting the place; this function leads us to a consideration of the need for protection and defence. Protection from what? Defence from whom?

The remnants of the old walls, elements of protection and defence from potential external threats, are still present in many cities. They are testimony to a past way of life which was altered by the social hygiene movements of the nineteenth century. Rapidly expanding in the century that followed, these movements advocated for oxygenating the historic centres, ordering and aerating the urban fabric. Displaced from use, most city walls became part of the historic heritage which makes up a scenography that today serves as a tourist attraction. Es Baluard Museu, the place that we inhabit² today, was built over a defensive structure, and its walls are literally integrated within the architectural ensemble that was once the fortification of the city of Palma. Its situation and its very name are the result of this process of adaptation.

Thus, in a way, we are inhabiting an example of architecture of defence and —despite the fact that where there were once fortifying walls, there is now a museum— the wall as a defensive element continues to be relevant today. Is it then relevant to speak of defensive architecture today? Is there any relation between the medieval walls and the wall that separates Palestine and Israel, or the barbed wire fences of Ceuta and Melilla?

Our present is characterised by a considerable multiplication of borders and separatory structures: after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, there were six; today, in 2021, with the growing militarization of border checkpoints, there are sixty-three. In the sense that a wall is a structure of isolation

2. We use the word *inhabit* and not *occupy* to emphasize the intrinsic function of the museum understood as an institution in the service of society; the museum is and must insist on being a place that advocates inclusive humanitarian values.

that creates a limit, it might refer to a visible or invisible limitation, a frontier that may be physical geographical or cultural.

“Memory of Defence: Physical and Mental Architectures” has the intention of serving as an invitation to reflect, from our contemporary perspective, on the necessity for architectural elements—literal and figurative—that justify political actions with the promise of protection. This approach leads us to the need to examine the object that threatens our security, and to reiterate the question: from what or from whom do we protect ourselves?

The exhibition is organized in three differentiated areas that allow to delve deeper into the dichotomy inherent in the motivations for building defensive structures. As the exhibition unfolds, there is an emphasis on the tendency to defend ourselves not so much or not only from physical aggression but, rather, from the fear caused by the proximity of foreign ideas and their potential assimilation. In other words, the possibility that they might modify our own ways of thinking and acting.

In way of an introduction, the first exhibition space contains works that take us to different historical moments and, on the one hand, reflect the need of erecting fortifications and, on the other, allow us to see that the connections with the past are stronger than we might imagine. The thirteenth-century fresco of the Conquest de Mallorca, reproduced for the first time expressly for this exhibition, presents us with contradictions. Whom does the wall defend? The island had been under Muslim rule for over three centuries at the time when it was attacked; the assault in the name of religion—Christianity—was motivated by political and commercial reasons. Catalan and Provençal merchants competed with those from Mallorca. The Balearic Islands were considered a pirates’ and corsairs’ nest that made it difficult to trade with North Africa and the rest of the Mediterranean area. The conquest was an act of retaliation, but it also represented the start of a campaign intended to obtain a trade monopoly of with Syria and Alexandria and strengthen commercial

exchanges with Italy and the Mediterranean. In the paintings, we see the Arab settlers defend themselves from the towers of the wall against the assault of Christian warriors. What is their story? Who are the ones protecting themselves from *the other*? Who are that *others* here? Their point of view was excluded from the Euro-centric view of the world left to us, in this case, by Christian chroniclers.

Only in much later texts written in the twentieth century, such as Maalouf's *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*, do we find the testimonies of Arab historians who were contemporaries of the events. These writings return to us that "other" view, and lead to the conclusion that the events of that time not only shaped the Western world and the Arab world, but that they conditioned and continue to condition the relationship between the two today. Maalouf writes: "It seems clear that the Arab East still sees the West as a natural enemy. Against that enemy, any hostile action —be it political, military, or based on oil— is considered no more than legitimate vengeance".

The exhibition responds to an interest in giving visibility to the contradictions and paradoxes contained in history. Following this course takes us to Frantz Fanon, and to acknowledging that we are heirs to actions of colonialism and occupation. It obliges us to consider our identity as based on actions that wield the flag of defence and conceal destruction. To contemplate the West from beyond the wall is to accept that part of our history is built by interested inventions, supremacist asseverations and, especially, by the silencing of facts.

Plans, maps, and photographs from different periods show scenes in which the fear of the other is manifest. In the present day, it is not difficult to visualize contexts defined by restriction and isolation; the pandemic creates a fragmentation of the sense of community and exacerbates isolation and individualism, connecting us again with a past in which multiple diseases such as the plague or the flu afflicted the known world. Today we speak of lockdowns and

containment measures in districts of our cities, but then, too, there was a need to build *lazarettos*.³ One of these may still be distinguished, just outside the city constricted by its wall, in a painting that depicts the 1652 epidemic in Mallorca, with an allegorical figure of a skeleton with a scythe auguring death. On the other hand, an anonymous map from 1776 shows the locations of the quarantined ships in the port of Palma. These materials, together with a series of documents, for the most part from the Archivo Intermedio Militar de Baleares [Intermediary Military Archive of the Balearic Islands], present images in which architecture is expanded by the operation of the *del locus*, invoked at the start of this text.

The works of Jorge García introduce the contemporary counterpart of the first environment of the exhibition. The artist unifies past and present by creating three-dimensional representations of the layouts of medieval trenches, bringing out a critical gaze that considers the impact of structures of power on our relationship with ourselves and everything that surrounds us.

Wall reappears in the second exhibition environment, pointing to the double function that hides behind them in old fortifications, contemporary bunkers and prisons. The bars of Juan Genovés's *M.131*, a work that shows a multitude that flees from and denounces the Spanish dictatorship, are an example of the artist's political realism. Genovés not only reflects on the discontent and fear of Spanish society during Franco's regime; he shows how architectural elements become emblematic of repression. Peter Halley, in *Six Prisons*, uses geometry and colour to represent our society's time-space with an anthropological approach, and critiques the stifling and occlusive political and social order in which we live. His rectilinear shapes are a plastic rendering of the complexity of urban landscapes: cells with no connection, no entrance or exit. They bring to mind what our own homes had become in times of

3. A facility for the isolation of the sick from the healthy, among other uses of the word in English.

confinement, and are much like the architecture of some projects meant for the working class and, especially, architecture conceived as prison.

This area of the exhibition closes with the project that has been developed by the Museum's department of education. Not only does it once again bring into focus the site of the current discussion, it includes collected testimonies of people who have lived through the transformations of this site and its environs: from walls to hospital, barracks, and now, museum. People whose military service brought them here, historians who have fought to defend the neighbourhood's memory and testimonies of those who remember the cruel reality of war. This part of the exhibition emphasizes to the need to keep memory alive, as well as preserve and reactivate it.

The third environment presents installation works and a videographic project. Delving deeper into the subject of defensive architecture, we travel to territories that have recently witnessed armed conflict, from the Middle East to Kosovo. The stress here is on the importance of realizing that there are many ways to militarize a state without adding the word military to its self-definition, if it is done in the name of defence and with assurances of the legitimacy of the resulting destruction.

Lida Abdul filmed the suburbs of Kabul in 2006. She shows us see the arid and desolate post-war landscape, after the fall of the Taliban regime five years earlier. The ruins are the consequence of successive wars. The title, *War Games (what I saw)*, refers to the remnants of her country after the war. The destructive force unleashed on architecture has its parallel in the force used on the population. The Afghan people must reconstruct the buildings, raise the fallen walls, in a climate of precariousness and political instability. Every fragment of ruin speaks of the vulnerability that defines their present.

Lest we forget that reality is always and without exception the sum of individual stories and experiences, Roy Dib takes us to Lebanon showing us a similar scene. While, on

the one hand, borders and walls reappear, this time between Lebanon, Palestine, and Israel, on the other, we learn of a couple's imprisonment. In *Mondial 2010*, two Lebanese lovers relate with the camera their journey on the road to the Palestinian city of Ramallah. In a place where homosexuality is a crime and any interaction with citizens of enemy states is forbidden, travel from Lebanon to Israel or to Palestinian territories can be synonymous to death. Dib reveals these invisible borders, which continue to be part of many contemporary societies. As Gayatri Spivak would say, we want to hear the voices from the other side of the wall.

Marwa Arsanios, in turn, speaks of ecofeminist subsistence strategies in collaborative experiences. She leads us to a women's settlement in the north of Syria (Rojava) and the work of an agricultural cooperative near the Lebanese border, focusing on the different aspects of this economic and social alternative in an area of conflict. The difficulties have to do not only with the economic, but also with the gender gap. Is it possible for women to be self-sufficient in these territories?

Continuing this audio-visual mosaic, in *Starfighter*, Wolf Vostell critiques the defensive rearmament policies of West Germany, and the state's political and military alignment with NATO. Starfighter is the name of a fighter plane that was commercialized throughout the world in an effort to counterbalance the military power of the Soviet Union and its communist allies, linked with corruption in East Germany when it was revealed that government officials received bribes during related business negotiations. With weapons and infrastructure, military technology has the ability to create walls of defence and alleged protection which, in some cases, promote the interests of political strategy and commerce; these walls remain standing beyond the duration of the conflicts. Vostell's work recalls another historic conflict, that of the Cold War, also between two blocks divided by economic and defensive systems. Finally, Daniela Ortiz's *El Imperio de la Ley* [The Empire of Law] brings into focus the relationship existing

between colonialism and occupation (or usurpation) and the structures and architectures of power.

Kemang Wa Lehulere's *My Apologies to Time 3* (2016) turns old school desks into a series of bird cages connected with steel pipes. The work has to do with places of domestication, presenting the bird cages as micro-spaces that show the inherent tension between the idea of safety and that of captivity. The artist draws a parallel between the mimicry of the African grey parrot imitating human speech and the functioning of some educational institutions, pointing at the paradoxes of the relationship between education and indoctrination, or conduct and surveillance, which pivots on ideological instruments that condition thought and behaviour.

The work of Wa Lehulere, Halilaj, and M^a Jesús González and Patricia Gómez are informed by ideas that have much to do with the relations analysed by Foucault in *Discipline and Punish*. What connection exists between a bastion, a prison, and a school?

In a clear allusion to that suspension of lived time, Halilaj suspends his sculptures in vacuous space, which they inhabit with piercing poetry. The work materializes childhood memory, transforming traces left on blackboards after a bombing into iron sculpture. Signs and scribbles that will not return, but now rise up against forgetting; creation as symbol, bringing to us the forgotten wishes of the children who have lived through wars, exile and geopolitical conflict. Personally affected by the events in Kosovo, the artist works with free and abstract lines, far from nationalist and military rigidity.

The exhibition closes with three projects that hinge on the space/time dichotomy: a work that returns us to a municipal facility, specifically, to the old prison; a project begun in New York in 2020, and probably still in progress; and, lastly, an atemporal installation the speaks of the symbolism of barbed wire.

When a prison is abandoned, what remain of its inhabitants? The imprint of the time of imprisonment can generate a physical archive that contains the memory of the prison

and its inmates. These are the premises of the work of the duo González and Gómez in *Las 7 puertas* [The 7 doors] (2011), creating a testimony of those who are silenced behind the punitive walls of a jail. The time they lived there remains suspended, like the traces of Halilaj's work.

A contemplation of the symbolic force of barbed wire takes one beyond the wall of the border; it points directly at the wounds and the violence that we do not wish to acknowledge. It forces an understanding of the fact that the mere attempt of crossing the dividing line implicitly leads to stabs, blood, and, perhaps, death. Mounir Fatmi opens the debate around the elements that are still used in many border crossings today and makes manifest to the need to prohibit them if we wish to believe that we have a respect for life. From the moment in which we allow these materials to be used in public space, the issue is no longer that of a border between one culture and another, but that of the border between life and death.

Carried out during the lockdown in New York, Antoni Muntadas' *Closed/Locked* returns us to the contradiction and the paradox. In fact, we write these lines surrounded with masks, disinfectants, and curfews. We shut our doors to the virus, to the disease, but we do so with optimistic posters and notices: 'We hope to see you soon'. On the other hand, we seal and barricade our streets before the demands of the Black Lives Matter protests, as we do with respect to so many other demonstrations that defend other ways of doing things and an *ipso facto* transformation of the system. The fear of ideas is once again clearly revealed. How much longer will we require protection from critical voices and the ideas of others? How much longer will hearing a different position produce fear? After all, these are the motives buried beneath the foundations of all defensive architecture.

At a time in which museums have and should fully assume the function of serving as places of refuge and exchange, including practices of care and affect, a thorough consideration of the physical and mental structures that block the possibility of becoming a community is very much in order. We must

establish spaces of inclusion, presenting alternatives that encourage the multiplicity of micro-resistance, in order to check and put an end to the fragmentation of the social fabric at any latitude, in the structure of any system and architecture.

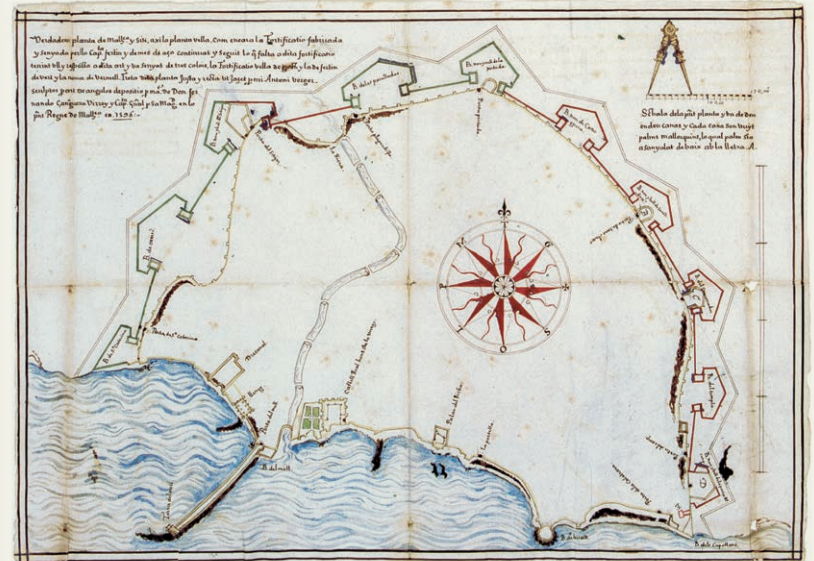
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Master of the Conquest of Mallorca, *Assalt a la ciutat de Mallorca i campament de Jaume I* [Royal Camp of Jaume I and the Assault of the City of Mallorca], 1285-1290. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya

Verdadera planta de Mallorca y siti axí la planta vella com encara la Fortificació fabricada y senyada per lo Capità Fertin (...). Treta dita planta justa y recta ut jacet per mi Antoni Verger (...), 1596.
Provenance: Consejo de Aragón, Leg. 985. Ink on paper manuscript, colour, 36 × 51 cm. Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte. Archivo de la Corona de Aragón





Leo Gestel, *Haven Palma* [Port of Palma], 1914.
Charcoal on paper, 100 × 92 cm. Es Baluard Museu d'Art
Contemporani de Palma, Serra Collection long-term loan



Jorge García, *Arquitectura de defensa I, II y III*
[Defence Architecture I, II and III], 2015. Painted iron
and polished stainless steel, 21 × 23 × 23 cm; 21 × 25 × 25 cm;
21 × 28 × 28 cm. Edition: 2/2. Courtesy of the artist



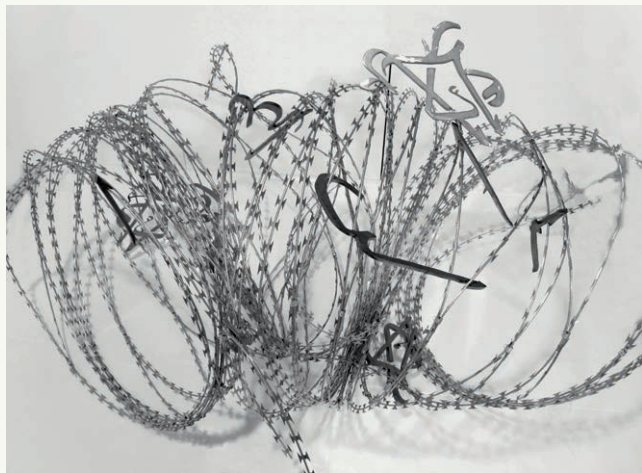
Roy Dib, *Mondial 2010, 2014* (video still). Video, single-channel, colour, sound. Duration: 19' 30". Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Tanit, Beyrouth

Lida Abdul, *War Games (what I saw)*, 2006 (video still). Video. 16 mm film transferred to DVD. Duration: 5'. Edition: 1/5. Es Baluard Museu d'Art Contemporani de Palma



Marwa Arsanios, *Who is afraid of ideology? Part II*, 2019 (video still). Video, single-channel, sound. Duration: 28'. Edition: 5+2 A. P. Courtesy of the artist and mor charpentier





Mounir Fatmi, *All that I lost*, 2019. Barbed wire and metal calligraphies. Dimensions variable. Edition: 1/5 + A. P. Es Baluard Museu d'Art Contemporani de Palma, collection of the artist long-term loan

Petrit Halilaj, *Abetare (Fook)*, 2015. Steel, 60 × 180 × 20 cm. Es Baluard Museu d'Art Contemporani de Palma, private collection long-term loan



Patricia Gómez and M^a Jesús González, *Las 7 puertas* [The 7 Doors], 2011-2013. Incision on iron doors / Detached wall surfaces on black cotton fabric, 2.80 × 17 m. Courtesy of the artists and Galería 1 Mira Madrid



Antoni Muntadas, *Closed/Locked*, 2020. 60 photographs printed on wood, 30 photographs measuring 29.7×42 cm each and 30 photographs 42×29.7 cm each. A newspaper with a selection of Muntadas' *Closed/Locked*, photographs, 2020, with fragments of texts by Beatriz Colomina. 21.7×42 cm each. Print run: 20,000 copies. Courtesy of the artist

WE ARE THE OTHERS

Fernando Gómez de la Cuesta

With his essays, Paul Virilio elaborated a body of theoretical work in which, along with other considerations, he argued that military projects and technologies become the essential elements driving history, conditioning and directing social behaviour and, more specifically, influencing architecture and urban planning, in their design and organization.¹ Undoubtedly, the very human act of designing and building any sort of habitable structure implicitly embodies many of the human desires and fears: a longing for protection, safety and refuge that materializes in rudimentary architectural endeavours intended to mitigate the cold, break the wind, keep us dry from the rain, prevent disease, preserve food, but also to serve as a defence from a direct attack of the enemy, dissuade the wild beasts, protect us from the other, to shelter us from everything that is unknown and instils fear.² From the prehistoric cave dug out with bare hands, from that precarious refuge

1. [Translator's note: the author of the text provides a brief bibliography of publications to consult in French and Spanish; titles of the same publications in English are listed at the end]. Virilio, Paul: "L'espace militaire". *Bunker Archéologie*. Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1975; "El inmaterial de guerra". *Un paisaje de acontecimientos*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1997; *Velocidad y política*. Buenos Aires: La marca, 2006. ["Military Space" in *Bunker Archaeology*; "The Immaterials of War" in *A Landscape of Events; Speed and Politics*].

2. "We know that, since its very beginnings, architecture is the materialization of a dramatic desire for protection and security, a response of panic with respect to the other whom, in our delirium, we see as destructive and always lethal [...] one of the most powerful manifestations of that fear of the other who is about to appear". Castro Flórez, Fernando. *Rosell Meseguer. Bateria de Cenizas. Metodología de la Defensa II*. Cartagena: Ayuntamiento de Cartagena. Concejalía de Cultura, 2005, p. 7.

built by accumulating rocks with the force of our arms and some rudimentary tool, our shelters have continued to evolve as all those dangers from which we wanted to keep safe mutate.

The basic typologies of constructions have undergone a process of expansion that has made them progress from the cave to a hut, cabin, house, until they turned into parts of a village, then a town; around them grew the fence, the barrier, the wall, always seeking a more protected location or a height from which to scrutinize the horizon in order to spot the adversary in time. Thus, castles rose up and the city extended within its walls, laid down with symbolic, intellectual designs,³ increasingly more elaborate, with their alures for surveillance, their sentry boxes as nodules of control and their towers, which also grew in size as military engineering advanced. That advancement brought with it the corresponding need to house military artifacts of greater bulk or repel increasingly heavier artillery, turning into defensive bulwarks, into those imposing bastions of arrogant, dissuasive silhouettes, erected at different strategic points to serve as a defence from equally powerful threats. It was a time in which protection was material, direct and forward, and danger was to be confronted with the greatest possible mass —the densest, the tallest, the hardest, the most difficult to overcome— that would prohibit physical access to the enemies and impede the reach of parabolic projectiles.

3. "Walls are architectural elements that characterized premodern cities and were so useful in the Middle Ages. In addition to their evident function of military defence and guarantee of a peaceful community, they satisfy the symbolic function of differentiation from barbarity. The foundation of the ancient city was laid on the myth of barbarians, and the wall is the architectural symbol that expresses the desire to 'keep out' an unbearable and savage sort of existence". In: Pardo, José Luis. "La ciudad sitiada. Guerra y urbanismo en el siglo XX". *Pensar, construir, habitar. Aproximación a la arquitectura contemporánea*. Palma: Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró a Mallorca, 2000, p. 124.

But new-fangled missiles and state-of-the-art war machinery were picking up speed, gaining height, expanding their possibilities, and attaining an all-seeing, aerial view, approaching the tyranny of absolute control.⁴ In the terms of dromology, so well-defined by Virilio, these were some of the causes that brought about "the gradual disappearance of ramparts and massive shields as well as the disintegration of combat formations into smaller, less vulnerable units. A dematerialization that has thus affected both the weapon and its display, the fort and the fortified town, the troop and the trooper".⁵ The things that frightened us, the fears we had trouble overcoming, began to lose their human scale, our panic was now different, and the increasingly more expansive defensive architecture underwent a reverse process of

4. "[...] many of the aerial views, 3D nose-dives, Google Maps, and surveillance panoramas do not actually portray a stable ground. [...] Just as linear perspective established an imaginary stable observer and horizon, so does the perspective from above establish an imaginary floating observer and an imaginary stable ground. This establishes a new visual normality —a new subjectivity safely folded into surveillance technology [...] In it, the former distinction between object and subject is exacerbated and turned into the one-way gaze of superiors onto inferiors, a looking down from high to low. Additionally, the displacement of perspective creates a disembodied and remote-controlled gaze, outsourced to machines and other objects". The author quotes from a Spanish edition [Steyerl, Hito. "En caída libre. Un experimento mental sobre la perspectiva vertical". *Los condenados de la pantalla*. Buenos Aires: Caja Negra, 2014, p. 15-16]; the translation quotes from an online e-flux journal publication: Steyerl, Hito, *The Wretched of the Screen* [<http://thecomposingrooms.com/research/reading/2015/Steyerl.%20Hito%20-%20The%20Wretched%20of%20the%20Screen.pdf>].

5. Virilio, Paul. "El inmaterial de guerra". *Un paisaje de acontecimientos*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1997, p. 177. The translation quotes from Paul Virilio, "The Immaterials of War", in *A Landscape of Events*, MIT Press, 2000.

concentration or introversion: they closed in on themselves, they were buried, bunkerised. Terror turned nuclear, cellular, the weapons of mass destruction turned atomic, chemical, biological, and survival no longer meant keeping out of the line of fire or clear of the explosion but rather, no more and no less than surviving the apocalypse, the holocaust, the extinction of the species, a diabolical process initiated by “the others” but that would affect “everyone”.

And yet, this conflict based on the politics of blocks of adversaries, of ones against others, of “good guys” and “bad guys”, of attack and defence, has always coexisted with another fear, a more intimate and internal one, a constantly advancing, distressing, veiled dread that has positioned itself as one of our primary preoccupations. At present, our principal fears are next to us, right by our side, they radiate from people who we know or live with. What happens when the savage brutality is not “outside” but “inside”? What about all those intramural fears that have to do with the indiscriminate nature of terrorism, of the massacre, the slaughter, of murder, rape, aggression, of infection, disease and its transmission?⁶ Again, our architecture and the urban planning that orders it reflect this change of sensibility with respect to our fears: the cities become more increasingly more orthogonal, more orderly and aseptic, the streets are wider, the light illuminates it all while the cameras record it, our houses turn into glass structures permeable to the gaze, on record, controlled. All

6. When the human species attained absolute and unquestionable supremacy, our doses of essential aggressiveness which, until then, were channelled through extra-species violence that was already useless to us, it changed orientation towards an equally useless intra-species violence. Man has turned into something worse than wolf to another man, given that this violence could lack utility. Only man can allow himself to be cruel, manufacturing artificial arms for which, given that nature has not produced them, there exist no natural mechanisms of defence. *cf.* José Luis Pardo, *op. cit.* [footnote 3], p. 125.

spaces that oblige us to exhibit our conduct, our behaviours, our acts, our very private lives.⁷

Historically an opaque architectural element, the rampart lacks the transparency required for the control and security to which we are submitted in this era of surveillance, a fault that results in a process of degradation involving demolition, thematic turistification or neglect.⁸ Mario Benedetti said, “oblivion is full of memory”;⁹ Fernando Castro Flórez has pointed out that “within these empty fortifications, in this ruinous memory, a disconcerting beauty appears: the possibility of inhabiting and meditating in the very places where everything was meant for the deployment of violence”.¹⁰ Owing to such ideas and to the fact that the material monumentality of these constructions have, in some cases, prevented their total destruction¹¹ —coupled with a certain

7. “Public order will reign if we are careful to distribute our human time and space [between the city and the country] by a severe regulation of transit; if by environmental standardization, the entire city is made transparent, that is, familiar to the policeman’s eye”. Written in 1749 by a French police official, and quoted by Paul Virilio, as included in: Portillo Aldana, Eloy. *Velocidad, tecnología, sociedad y poder en la obra de Paul Virilio y en su crítica*. Madrid: UPM. EUIT Telecomunicación, 2010, p. 22. The translation quotes from Paul Virilio’s *Speed and Politics*.

8. “As ruins, these fragments of a militarized order, are an allegory of worlds —we would almost say climates— built and then surpassed by the invisibilizing dynamics of history, which relegates and fatally and rhetorically condemns them to insignificance, to being meaningless; in the meantime, once they have been used at length for the task of dispensing death, they simply turn into the object of ill-considered demolition”. Flor, Fernando R. de la, *Blocao. Arquitecturas de la Era de la Violencia*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2000, p. 29.

9. Benedetti, Mario. *El olvido está lleno de memoria* [Oblivion is Full of Memory]. Madrid: Visor, 1995.

10. Castro Flórez, Fernando. *Op. cit.* [footnote 2], p. 13.

11. “Banal remnants, these works have taken on the basic consistency of slopes and are protected only because they are so difficult

sensibility, and the relative economic bonanza of only a few decades ago— rather than continue to languish between oblivion and ruin, some of these examples of military architecture have been recovered as spaces for art and culture. Turned into something like crypts for the preservation of ideas, block-houses for creative work, for reality, they give access to knowledge in an interaction with the visitors and the context itself, making it grow, researching, recording, visibilizing and expanding it.

This might look like a happy ending, a cycle that comes to an end for structures which were born for defence and have passed from hand to hand, from use to use, changing their content and functions, uses and missions. But, as we know, history does not consist of closed circles, but of open spirals with infinite ramifications that tell different stories; narratives that might run through similar places, but never do so in the same way. Now, new dangers await; threats reinforced by a pandemic that is changing our habits, our culture, our economy, our way of life, our social reality and, for the nth time, emptying these structures, strangling them with the incapacity to endow and maintain them, weakening their force, leaving them vacant, easily accessible for others with the slightest effort. Time will pass and those others will come; but we should never forget that we too have been the others. In truth, we are the others.

to demolish. Astounding examples of the blindness of an epoch to itself, these primitive works announce a new architecture founded no longer on the physical proportions of man but on his psychic faculties, an urbanism in which, the elementary analysis of social reality finally overcome, habitat can finally unite with the secret possibilities of individuals". The author quotes from Virilio, Paul. "Arqueología del búnker". *Acto*. La Laguna: Acto ediciones. Universidad de La Laguna, 2002, no. 1, p. 92. The translation quotes from Koolhaas, Rem, *Elements of Architecture*, Taschen, 2018.

PUIG DE SANT PERE, PALMA'S ANCIENT ACROPOLIS ON THE SEA

Jaume Llabrés Mulet

On the occasion of the opening of Es Baluard Museu d'Art Contemporani de Palma, the historian Aina Pascual and I carried out research work that was published by Promomallorca SL in 2004 under the title *El Baluard de Sant Pere i la Ribera del Moll*.¹ The book, the first edition of which is already sold out, presents an extensive historical review of the strategic point of the city that looks over the bay, the second acropolis of Palma. The first, as you might imagine, is the area occupied by the cathedral of Mallorca, the Almudaina Palace and the Episcopalian Palace, also known as Cal Bisbe.

The church of Santa Creu [the Holy Cross] rises at the highest point of Puig de Sant Pere, giving its name to the hill and the whole of its parish, quite small in the present day, although in times gone by it extended beyond the wall to Sant Agustí and Son Rapinya, to mention just two of the city's neighbourhoods. The temple's imposing volume continues to stand out above the landscape of this area of the city; seen from the sea, its presence competes with the Bastion of Sant Pere, even while the old bank of the pier has been completely changed by the successive twentieth-century extensions, and the harbour waters turned into an overcrowded parking area for all sorts of boats.

From the crypt to festive fires in the belfry

Santa Creu rises over a pronounced drop of the terrain; serving as the base for the apse of the church, at the lowest point of the site is the chapel crypt of Sant Llorenç, the most representative

1. Most of the historical data cited in this article is found in the book, illustrated with Donald G. Murray's photographs. [Translator's note: an approximate translation of the title would be *The Bastion of Sant Pere and the Pier Waterfront*].

example of the Cistercian gothic style in Mallorca. It is believed to have been built at the very start of the fourteenth century, and it consists of a square central space with a surrounding ambulatory which gives access to five chapels disposed in the shape of a fan, one of which communicates with the exterior portal. The heavy ribbed vaults are imposing but, rather than seeming oppressive, they give a sense of intimacy that surprises and envelopes the visitor. And yet the crypt is a shut off space that leads nowhere, although there are signs that it once continued: the blind and deteriorated rose window that once opened onto what was called the Costa del Fossar,² adjacent to the southern façade of the temple.

At the other end of the church is the impressive tower containing the main bell, dated 1371. The tower can be considered the purest example of the Majorcan gothic style owing to its characteristic square plan and the upper part, with two levels of paired pointed arches on every side; it is crowned with a stone pyramid with dentillated edges. This watchtower-belfry still dominates the centre of the bay area and, while it never served as a beacon with signal fires, we know that fires were lit in it during the city's *fiestas* and extraordinary celebrations. To avoid the propagation of the flames, these festive fires were lit in earthenware basins, and it is thus that the parochial archive contains a record of the purchase of four basins for the burning of torches on the belfry in the year 1732.³

Throughout the Middle Ages, the belltower competed with the tower of Porta de Santa Catalina, which was without any doubt the most solid and visible gate of the original city enclosure. We can still see it painted in some of the early seventeenth century views of Palma, at a singular position over the cliff, standing out owing to an imposing batter that served

as the base of the quadrangular tower. The gate of the same name stood underneath, at the top of the Carrer de Sant Pere; it must have been a portal with a semi-circular arch and notable voussoir work.

Returning to the church, it should be said that right before the northern façade—currently the location of the Can Sales library—stood the palace of the Bishop de Barcelona.⁴ Bishop Berenguer de Palou—who was present during the conquest of Mallorca in 1229—was the founder of the parish and he consecrated it in dedication to the Holy Cross, like the cathedral of Barcelona. We have no knowledge of what the bishop's gothic palace was like because nothing remains of it, although it is evident that it must have contrasted with the fishermen's neighbourhood that extended down the southern face of the hill, in front of what was once the Sant Pere Oratory, of which only the Renaissance portal is preserved on the street of the same name. Puig de Sant Pere was one of the humblest areas of Palma, with apartment blocks built with poor materials. Steeply rising streets such as Carrer de Ses Barques de Bou, Carrer del Forn de l'Olivera and Carrer de Les Corralasses open onto a little square popularly known as Ca na Rata, that has a view of the robust belltower.

A malveí to look at the sea

The elegance and grandeur of the Santa Catalina gate tower have faded since the sixteenth century, when the Renaissance walled area was designed in by two Italian engineers. Following the initial design by Giovanni Battista Calvi (1555-1561), Giacomo Palearo Fratin intervened designing the bastion in front of the Santa Catalina gate and tower. It was built rapidly

2. Costa del Fossar de Santa Creu, a passageway that existed in the seventeenth century, now inaccessible.

3. Nicolau Bauzá, Josep. *L'església parroquial de Santa Creu de Palma. Guia Històrico-Descriptiva*. Palma: Edicions Cort, 2002, p. 135.

4. We have the certainty that site of what is at present the Can Sales library was the location of the palace of the Bishop of Barcelona owing to a 1587 document preserved at the Arxiu del Regne de Mallorca [Archive of the Kingdom of Mallorca]. Pascual, Aina; Llabrés, Jaume; Oliver, Manuel; Ollers, Pere. *Can Sales Major*. Palma: Quaderns Arca, no. 12, 1993, p. 12.

between 1575 and 1578, which made it necessary to displace the gate of exit from the city further north, while the old gate now led inside the bastion.

The area of the fortification would be rebuilt on different occasions throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Vicenç Mut Armengol was the engineer who took charge of the west side of the fortification between 1640 and 1652. Given the final location of the Santa Catalina gate and bridge, further north, as well as the construction of the new wall, the bastion designed by Fratin was too low to connect with the wall. The idea of raising a new bastion on the site of the original one, superimposing the two, emerged in response. The new one, referred to as the upper bastion, kept the name of Santa Catalina or Porta de Santa Catalina, and the lower one was named Sant Pere, doubtlessly for the street that leads up to it. The ensemble occasionally received the name of *baluart de la Creu* or *de Santa Creu* [Bastion of the Cross or of the Holy Cross].

The final configuration of the bastion took shape when, in 1697, the military engineer Martín-Gil de Gaínza drew up a plan of the layout of the new sea wall.⁵ That plan increased the surface area of the lower bastion, that of Sant Pere, in such a way that the new elevation of the extension was prolonged to the corner of the upper bastion, that of Santa Catalina. The union of the two bastions, with its sentry box looking over the promenade, forms a tall bow, like a ship's, that dominates the area where the Torrent de sa Riera flows into the sea, making the bastion the most spectacular construction initiated in the sixteenth century of the entire area.

With respect to the construction of the wall, the term *malvei*⁶ frequently appears in books on the fortification of Palma preserved at the Arxiu del Regne de Mallorca [the Archive of the Kingdom of Mallorca]. The word is cited as

5. Tous Melià, Juan. *Palma a través de la cartografía (1596-1902)*. Palma: Ajuntament de Palma, 2002, p. 66-69.

6. A wall that does not reach the roof. [Translator's note].

follows in the Alcover-Moll dictionary: “Paret que no arriba al sostre? *Que dins quinze dies fassen sots pna de deu sous una mitjana-da o malvei a la dita paret*, doc. a. 1591 (Hist. Sóller, II, 817)”.⁷ Thus, in application to the wall, the word can only refer to the thick parapet between the exterior surface of the wall and the interior walkway. On the exterior, the walkway ground level is almost continuously marked with an stone moulding of a rounded shape, like an impost. In my opinion, *malvei* it is an unfortunate word for the wall: the views of the sea, the dock and the bay landscape are splendid between the Sant Pere Bastion and that of Príncipe, in La Calatrava, and they were even more splendid in past times, when the Portopí road ran through the lovely bank.

From a barracks to a museum

The eventual change of function from bastion to a barracks required the construction of new buildings starting at end of the nineteenth century, which resulted in the old military construction becoming visually “crushed”. The barracks designed in 1911 attempting a historical approach, with small, purely decorative, towers and battlements—which should never be catalogued as neogothic in style—had such a strong environmental impact that it spoiled the entire harbour landscape. The construction looked like an operetta set, typical of the decadent late romantic taste which endured until the early years of the twentieth century. In the end, an explosion in the early hours of 11 January 1963 was on the verge of destroying it all: some maliciously planted quicklime bombs burst the walls. A great part of the western wall and the characteristic southern corner collapsed, including the roofless sentry box. The bastion was saved from real estate speculation at a time when it was the property of a real property development firm,

7. Alcover, Mn. Antoni M.; Moll, Francesc de B. *Diccionari Català-Valencià-Balear*. Palma: Editorial Moll, 1980, p. 168. [Translator's note: the quoted text is a record of payment instructions to do with the said wall in archaic language].

interested solely in the land plot and not at all in the monument, when in 1964, the historic centre of Palma was declared an ensemble of historical and artistic value. At this time, the reconstruction of the fallen wall became obligatory.

Then came years of abandonment and confusion, until the municipal government of Palma completed the expropriation process in 1988. With the arrival of the twenty-first century, the bastion obtained the final distinction on turning into the site of the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Palma. A new building was constructed, and the monument was renovated under the architectural project of Luis and Jaime García-Ruiz, Vicente Tomás and Àngel Sánchez-Cantalejo (1999). The work was carried out between 2000 and 2003, and the new museum was inaugurated the following year under an agreement between the City Council of Palma and the Fundació d'Art Serra, signed in 1997. The Island Council of Mallorca and the Government of the Balearic Islands also joined the project.

The inauguration of the museum in 2004 initiated a new period, in which the passage from obsolete fortress to a citizens' agora was finally completed. Thus, although it was devoted more to surveillance and control of the bay than to battle, the construction had existed for centuries as a military space, occupied by the military men, and restricted to the population. In its new incarnation, the bastion that was a dead end of the top of the Puig de Sant Pere has been opened to the Plaça de la Porta de Santa Catalina and the Passeig de Mallorca, and communicated underground with the Passeig de Sagraera. The lower fort has turned into a public square that receives visitors, while the upper bastion is occupied by the new building containing the collections. Seventeen years later, a host of temporary exhibitions and other cultural and leisure activities allow us to enjoy a monument that is alive and open to artistic expression as the twenty-first century unfolds.

TESTIMONIES OF PEOPLE ASSOCIATED WITH THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OR THE FORMER MILITARY BARRACKS OF THE PUIG DE SANT PERE

[Reading a letter from Gabriel Fuster Mayans to his fiancée, handwritten at the military barracks de Sant Pere on 29 July 1936]. "Deep down, I recognize that if this went on for a long time, if we come out alive, we will all go mad or become neurotics[...] These times change one for the rest of one's life: one becomes indifferent and at the same time, optimistic, and stays calm. When you've seen death close-up, you will understand what I am saying; one gets used to the danger so much that without it, it is terribly boring".

Manuel Aguilera, journalist and historian

"Sometimes people would go off the rails when they heard the siren [...] Normally, a shelter should give onto two streets, that is to say, have two exits. And sometimes the exits were so near one another that, had we had the misfortune of a bomb falling, it would have buried us all".

Francisco Besalduch,
former neighbourhood resident

"For us, it was a special plaza. There was no other earthen plaza [...] We were fighting very consciously, because this heritage belongs to everyone".

Maria Bonnin and Antònia Andani,
neighbourhood activists

"When we went down into the cistern, well, we were all very surprised at what we found [...] It was fairly abandoned, and everything was thrown in there; if something were robbed, it would end up there [...] There was graffiti of the soldiers, who likely went down into the well with a rope and had drawn their name and the year".

Gabriel Bosch, the site manager
in charge of the construction work
for Es Baluard Museu

"I still have clients who were young women when they came to the first salon".

Lourdes García,
neighbourhood hairdresser

"A fishermen's neighbourhood, a working people's neighbourhood. There were carpenters, upholsterers, jewellery shops; there were three butcher shops and also horse-meat butchers. There were a lot of small businesses".

Paquita Capó and Toni Brotons, former
owners of the bar Can Martí (together with
Pedro Brotons and María Antonia Martínez)

"Many soldiers went to the La Paloma tavern. Because it was a typical post-war tavern. They served popular dishes that were filling and cheap. Because their clientele consisted of people of very modest means. People went hungry at the time. What people wanted was a filling meal".

Jaume Llabrés, historian

“There was a movement that defended the idea that the houses that were renovated here [...] should be for the people who had lived in the neighbourhood for longer than five years [...] That’s what we wanted to maintain; a united neighbourhood, a small-town neighbourhood where everyone knows each other, everyone helps each other, everyone... And that is what we, the neighbours’ association, wanted”.

Aurora Espina, chairperson of the Puig de Sant Pere Neighbours’ Association

“Those who ask me what these shelters were like are surprised to learn that they were basically very simple; there was no common room, it was a very simple narrow gallery”.

Bartomeu Fiol, an expert in air-raid shelters

[Speaking of the bastion of Sant Pere] “As adults, we prepared the floats for the procession of the day of the Three Kings, because it was very spacious”.

Baltasar Juan and Maria Jaume, neighbourhood residents

“It is a neighbourhood that suffered several epidemics at the end of the nineteenth century [...] Epidemics would start here because sailors arrived from elsewhere with someone sick among them; they would be infectious, and one of the first places in Palma where there was an epidemic was Puig de Sant Pere, in this area, next to the Shipyards”.

Joan March, neighbourhood resident and pharmacist

“We are the ones that built the great walls, the way we live. And what’s more, these large community areas are not fomented [...] The problem is that there is no participation, people don’t participate. There is nobody to blame, because... Because that is how it is [...] Individualism looms large”.

Micaela Llull, neighbourhood resident and family doctor

“The little seaplanes from Pollença, that the Germans and the Italians had, would go down to El Jonquet and go over what was the Jaume I building, almost touching it. And they would fly lower than the top of the wall, at the height of our balcony. So much so that we would come out to see them descend”.

Andreu Muntaner, born in the neighbourhood, and the proprietor of the Andreu Muntaner Archive

“In 1963, the General Plan for Palma allowed to build an exceptional building here [in the bastion of Sant Pere] [...] They wanted to isolate the bastion from the poor neighbourhood and create a green area here [in the environs of Carrer de la Pólvor], an area to isolate the ‘special regime’ zone from the poor neighbourhood. Although it had more to do with speculation than with defence”.

Joana Roca, architect



Listen to the full interviews here

*Memory of Defence:
Physical and Mental Architectures*

From 26th March
to 26th September 2021

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Graphic Design
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Print
Esment Impremta

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Museu d'Art Contemporani de Palma, 2021
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Acknowledgments

Archivo de la Corona de Aragón
Archivo Intermedio Militar de Baleares
Àrea de Cartografia. Institut Municipal d'Innovació (IMI)-Ajuntament de Palma
Arxiu Andreu Muntaner
Arxiu Municipal de Palma
Delegación de Defensa en Illes Balears
Galeria 1 Mira Madrid
Galeria Angels Barcelona
Galeria Tanit
mor charpentier
Museu de Mallorca
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Iñaki Buenvarón
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Joan Riutort
Margarida M. M. Rosselló
Maria Gràcia Salvà
Pepe Serra
Carme Serra Magraner
Juan Carlos Server Pastor
Catalina Solivellas

Our special thanks to the people who have participated in gathering testimonies that contribute to the memory of the Puig de Sant Pere:

Manuel Aguilera
Antònia Andani
Francisco Besalduch
Maria Bonnin
Gabriel Bosch
Toni Brotons
Paquita Capó
Aurora Espina
Bartomeu Fiol
Maria Jaume
Baltasar Juan
Lourdes García
Micaela Llull
Joan March
Andreu Muntaner
Joana Roca

In collaboration with



DL PM 00190-2021
ISBN 978-84-122542-9-7

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