7th Global Conference: Visual Literacies – exploring critical Issues

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Theme: 4. Visual Literacy as an Interdisciplinary Overlap

Title: REcall Venice - Exploring disciplines of visual literacy through difficult heritage

According to James Elkin *visual literacy* is interpreted as material representations, which communicate knowledge and create insight through their visual appearance. On the background of the EU Cultural Heritage project *REcall*, we argue that visual literacy also can relate to interdisciplinary knowledge rooted in architectural environments.

Our paper takes departure in the project *REcall* that seeks to formulate a new role of the architectural environment based on invigorated research on the cultural landscapes of WWI and WWII.Based on interdisciplinary workshops employing creative approaches and tools; artists, architects and archeologists question the role of architectural environments when dealing with war heritage.

Today there are still traces left from WWII in the European architectural environments, traces that by visual literacy represent unpleasant memories. However, these visual literacies have shaped our environment, yet, slowly the collective memories are fading as the physical signs vanish. As time moves on, the visual literacies become merely fictive if nothing is done to preserve them, but what knowledge should be told?

Our thesis is that there is a link between war memories and cultural identity. Our paper deals with the difficult war heritage, and we explore how we can use visual literacy to move beyond the critical local context into general constructs, and further how visual literacy is connected to the visual thinking.

On the background of the REcall Venice projects, we advocate that new actions *recalling* the *visual literacies* might prevent knowledge from being forgotten. In order to communicate meaningful knowledge about the past with caution and decency, we explore how this recalling is based on the practical interdisciplinary process of “historicization” using the visual literacies rooted in the architectural environment to interpret and reconstruct history, facts, form and fiction. A curriculum design in, or across disciplines connected to and through visual literacy.

**Keywords:**

Visual literacies, architectural environment, interdisciplinary, art, archeology, cultural heritage, difficult heritage, collective memory