

Morire sopra la terra

Simona Bravaglieri

The Cold War in Italy has erroneously been considered something that belongs to other lands and borders. The presence of nuclear armament in Italy and the use of the land for storage is one of the proofs of this misconception. To what extent do we want the Cold War legacy to become part of shared memory? Assmann presented a paradigm of four models individuals or collectivity uses after traumatic pasts: dialogic forgetting, remembering in order to never forget, remembering in order to forget, and dialogic remembering. She argues that the pact of forgetting works only after mutual forms of violence between combatants or under or under the pressure of a new military alliance like the NATO (Assmann, 2009: 16).

Concerning the Cold War, one could advance that the violence has had symmetric (missing – in Europe) form, and the result is an asymmetric memory. It is often the case of the remembering in the context of online forums and amatorial musealized military sites, presented in a 'technostrategic' way (Cohn, 1987: 690), using technical details making violence completely invisible. This approach blights the possibility to reflect upon the social and political aspects of warfare and militarisation rather than influence future decisions, such as going to war again (Wendt, 2021: 2). The Italian position of complete unawareness on how military politics influenced our second afterwar make it unlikely to connect the consequences of going to war again or hosting foreign forces and weapons.

Against the collective action of 'dialogic ignoring', it could be helpful to look at physical remains inherited from this period through the perspective of individual initiative that singular people or entities can pursue through their memory, always balancing to reach symmetric and diverse memory.

After a site built for the Cold War in Italy is demilitarized, the military no longer exercises its power on the landscape. However, as Woodward underlined, the presence of the military in the perception of the place could last more than its tangible 'liberation'. The place then is left with a lack of protection, use, knowledge, or interest. Now is when many initiatives of (official

and unofficial) reuse in Italy have started to rise. In most cases, former military sites of the second half of the XX century are abandoned and welcome unofficial reclamation forms.

The re-appropriation processes of demilitarized places made at national, territorial, and local levels should be looked at, including the unofficial (and sometimes illegal) users of these abandoned spaces, the first who actively re-enter the space and re-gain power leaving traces (such as graffiti art) and layers of meaning. How to create a functional space in the community, immerse in the present spatial dynamics, instead of creating museums that re-construct the lost past? How to use art spontaneously created in these contexts to add value and reflect on their possible reuses? The research project (part of a doctoral thesis) opens a discussion about these questions, looking at a few cases of Cold War decommissioned sites in Italy which have been a place of new initiatives of reuses and musealization.

Discussing and making visible architecture and artistic processes around former Cold War military sites can contribute to negotiating the past, present and future needs of using public space which became available for civil uses in recent times and inserting them in the debate around the identification of ways to protect by law buildings of the second half of the XX century. The involvement of the local communities and different actors that reclaim these spaces plays a crucial role in acknowledging a controversial past connected to bellicose purposes and deepening the knowledge of the role of Italy in such a long period of conflict.

The following pictures represents ways of re-appropriation by different actors happening in former Cold War military sites in different Italian contexts:

- *Site Rigel*, Naz Sciaves, Brixen, a nuclear weapon store, a former 'special' storage for nuclear warheads, in function from 1960 to 1984, decommissioned, now used for a yearly music festival;
- *Nike site*, Bovolone, Verona, a missile site equipped with anti-aircraft guided surface to air missiles and functioning from 1959 to 2007, then decommissioned in 2018 and used by a sports association;

- *Jupiter site*, and Altamura, Bari, a missile site equipped with medium-range ballistic missiles, functioning from 1960 to 1963, decommissioned, privately owned;
- *West Star*, Affi, Verona, a Static War Headquarter, built between 1960 and 1966 and headquarters of the NATO 5th Allied Tactical Air Force until 1999, decommissioned;
- *Dosso dei Galli*, Brescia, an Ace High Tropo Scatter site, with the purpose of warning of ballistic missile attack, in operation from 1969 to 1995, decommissioned and now abandoned.

For more details on the identification of these sites please refer to Bravaglieri (2020).

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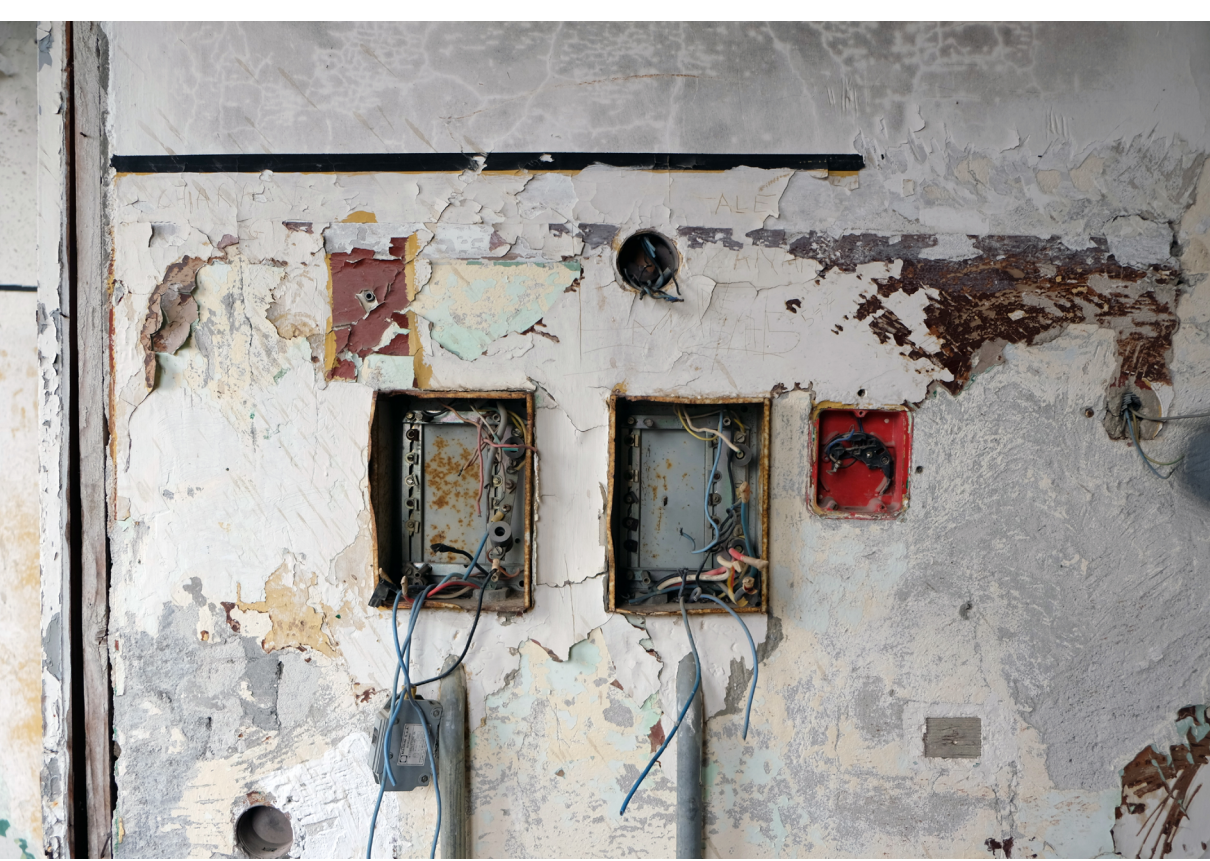
NO SMOKING
VIETATO FUMARE

NO	SI	NO	SI

COSA SI NASCONDE DIETRO
TUTTO QUESTO?











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She is also part of the editorial staff of the journal 'ANANKE, founded by Marco Dezzi Bardeschi, one of the primary references for the preservation debate in Italy since the end of the XX century. She spent periods of international exchange and visiting at the National Technical University of Athens, Uppsala University Campus Gotland, University of York and Chalmers Technical University, working in contact with researchers in art and architecture history, archaeology, heritage and gender studies. simona.bravaglieri@polimi.it