

SITUATIONS

An edited transcript of Artist Lucy Orta and
Archaeologist John Schofield discussing Greenham
Common

Wednesday 7 February 2007

Material City was a programme of interdisciplinary conversations and fieldwork led by Situations in partnership with Arnolfini and the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Bristol.

Greenham Common has an illustrious but controversial past, having served as a Royal Air Force base in World War II, and an American airbase for much of the Cold War. In this discussion, artist Lucy Orta and archaeologist and military heritage specialist John Schofield talked of their collaborative engagement with Greenham Common through their involvement with Common Ground, an interdisciplinary research group which set out to explore the site through archaeological survey and artistic intervention.

Art and archaeology came together to research the material culture and meaning of the Cold War landscape of Greenham Common, including the former airbase and the women's peace camps that encircled it as part of recent collaborative project, Common Ground. The camps represent an historic and highly effective protest that brought a new perspective to the peace movement beginning in 1981. The original Women's Peace Camp on Greenham Common closed on the 5th September 2000 after 19 years of persisting protest outside Greenham Common Airbase. One of the camps, at the base's main entrance, closed to make way for the erection of the Commemorative and Historic Site on the land where the camp was. The cruise missile shelters that formed the subject of their protest is now a scheduled monument.

In this lecture, artist Lucy Orta and archaeologist John Schofield described the very different geographical and intellectual journeys by which they arrived at Greenham. Their linked presentations each described parts of this journey, and their involvement in The Common Ground Research Group, a project, which involves artists, curators and archaeologists, to discuss architecture and contemporary art plus the idea of heritage, and how all of these research practices can contribute to understanding places of conflict.

Biographies

Lucy Orta

For Lucy Orta, art is a catalyst for social change. Confronted with the growing crisis of poverty, exclusion and dislocation in our society, her artwork incorporates elements of fashion, art and architecture, which she combines with social projects, performances, multimedia events, and educational and public debates. She has produced numerous interventions and actions putting on stage crucial themes of contemporary world: the community and the social exclusion, dwelling, mobility, sustainable development, recycling. Parallel and feeding into her practice Lucy also holds the first Rootstein Hopkins Chair of Fashion at London College of Fashion (University of the Arts London) and Phaidon Press published an extensive monograph on her work in 2003. She also founded the Master in Industrial Design 'Man and Humanity' at the Design Academy in Eindhoven (2002), to stimulate socially driven and sustainable design solutions in the form of alternative systems and products.

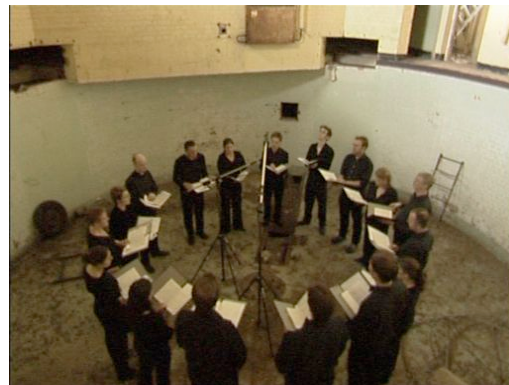
Dr John Schofield

Dr John Schofield is Head of Military Programmes at English Heritage and an Inspector in the Characterisation Team. He was formerly an Inspector with English Heritage's Monuments Protection Programme between 1989 and 2002, and was Acting Head of the Programme in 2000. After a PhD and subsequent research on prehistoric archaeology, John's current research interests are in cultural heritage, the recent past, military archaeology and issues related to social significance, memory and intangible heritage. He is also actively exploring connections between the historic environment, art and memory. With English Heritage he has coordinated a major programme of research into military heritage, much of which is now published in various journals and books. In the past few years he has contributed to conferences in the United States, Canada, South Africa and Australia. He is visiting Fellow in Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Bristol and visiting lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Southampton.

Conflict Situations – John Schofield

The Exmoor Singers performed madrigals on Orfordness in 2005, part of Louise K Wilson's *A Record of Fear*.¹ James Jarvis, the Singers' Musical Director, said of the experience:

*"The most striking impression when singing John Bennet's madrigal 'Weep, O mine eyes' in the centrifuge pit was sonic. Though hardly designed as a performance space, the room's cylindrical shape and reflective walls formed an extraordinary acoustic environment when the singers arranged themselves in a circle, facing into the centre: the sheer volume of sound that could be driven within this resonator by a few voices was overwhelming; the harmonic possibilities of the common chords could be exploited to the nth degree; and the dissonant suspensions had a searing effect. The physical symmetry of the situation meant that there was no room for passive listeners other than the central microphone, so that performers and audience became one entity; which made this, incongruously, the ideal madrigal room and added to the poignancy of the experience."*²



Photographs courtesy of Louise K Wilson

This then is Orfordness, and it is here that I begin my journey to Greenham Common – the focus of my conversation with Lucy Orta. We will each discuss the geographical and intellectual journeys that brought us to Greenham, and to the collaborative research programme that we are each involved with.³

I have chosen Orfordness as my starting point as it is here that formal recognition of the archaeology and cultural heritage of the Cold War really originates. It is certainly where my transition began, from being an archaeologist of the prehistoric period to the historic.

Much of the work we at English Heritage undertake on the former defence estate involves recording buildings and structures following their closure and abandonment.⁴ Some documents do exist for some sites, but often we are seeing these supposedly familiar structures as we would prehistoric remains: without documents to describe their purpose; and without the people that worked there telling us what it was like. But these architectural and archaeological recording

projects, creating a record before sites are demolished, cleared or redeveloped, are gradually evolving into something much broader and more inclusive, and as a result – I believe – something more intellectually instructive and more interesting. We are exploring new ways in which to question these places, to deconstruct their meaning and significance, to analyse their content, and to encourage people to approach them from different angles.

Archaeo-acoustics, for example, is an emerging field of research. Archaeologists studying prehistoric sites and especially burial monuments have tested their acoustic properties, their resonances, concluding that in some cases these confined spaces were perfectly suited to musical performance. For the Cold War, some artists are doing much the same thing, as *Record of Fear Illustrates*.

Orfordness is a most unusual place, both in terms of what went on there in the Cold War, and what happens today – a place where visitors can wander (almost) freely, where singers can perform, and which the owners, the National Trust, leave pretty much as they found it, a philosophy of neglect unfamiliar to the Trust, but appropriate to this 'other-world'.

Another film illustrates an earlier project by Louise Wilson at Spadeadam, near the Scottish borders, another staging post on my journey, and a significant project for English Heritage as this was the first time our survey teams, recording archaeological and architectural remains, worked alongside an artist to create a more rounded interpretation of what remains there.⁵

Spadeadam was previously a rocket testing establishment, now a low-flying range still occupied and used by the Royal Air Force. The film is part documentation but also a characterisation of this extraordinary place, with sound a significant component of its essential character.

Louise Wilson talks about the specially commissioned soundtrack by the band *:zoviet*france:* created partly from manipulated field recordings made on site: the edgy metallic scraping of gate locks repeatedly opened and closed; rattling buttons on old fuse boxes; a trout leaping for flies in a concrete water tank; and, in this extract, John Salton, a lone piper and former employee at the rocket establishment, performing a lament in and outside of one of the abandoned buildings. Another part of the soundtrack accompanies the closing credits.



Photograph courtesy of Louise K Wilson

It is no coincidence that some of the most talked-about and innovative projects developed in the emerging field of contemporary archaeology, involve contemporary artists working alongside archaeologists and historians.⁶ There is perhaps nothing surprising in this, given that archaeology and art have much in common. Each creates a documentation and an interpretation of the material world. We just do it slightly differently, and often for different reasons. And we present our results in different ways and in different places, generally to different audiences.

At Spadeadam, the artist and the archaeological survey team worked alongside each other. The archaeologists created a detailed field record, a map, of the physical remains of the site. The artist was interested in the process by which place can become heritage, and the performance practices of archaeologists in creating that transition.

Another element of Wilson's work at Spadeadam was oral history – here veterans (the so-called 'rocketmen') were interviewed by the artist, on camera and in the buildings where they originally worked. One referred to the camaraderie; another spoke of the functions of particular buttons and switches.

A priority in the heritage sector is to generate records, interpretations, narratives, that create for visitors and readers of text, an inhabited landscape; a place with people, and with memories and events. We try to make the past interesting and relevant. As archaeologists we are still learning how to do this, and we are learning how to work more with others to achieve this result. This becomes increasingly necessary as we move away from the view of a single, dominant narrative to one in which multiple narratives will co-exist depending on the visitor's social and cultural background and their personal experiences of a place. We have seen this at Orfordness, and at Spadeadam and in the former East Germany, at a barracks called Forst Zinna, used by the Soviet army's 57th Construction Battalion from the 1970s until its sudden abandonment at the end of the Cold War, the point at which a departing soldier – finally returning home – wrote 'Good bye' Forst Zinna on his barrack-room wall.

The film *Cood Bay Forst Zinna*, made by the visual artist Angus Boulton ends with this very personal inscription.⁷ Much of Boulton's recent work has involved recording places like this, in a way that creates far more of an experience than architecturally-inspired photographs of empty buildings could ever achieve. What makes these films stand apart is that you do virtually experience the place; you feel as though you were there. In the heritage sector we use the term characterisation now to describe the unique combination of characteristics that sets one place apart from its neighbours.⁸ This film is a particular, intimate and extremely powerful form of characterisation that does exactly that. It documents the characteristics of the place; what makes it different; what makes it unique.

My next stop also keeps closely to these principles, attempting to create a view of the contemporary past that documents and describes to a degree, but which above all challenges the visitor to re-question and re-analyse their views of their familiar world. This is a work in progress and unlike the previous three film extracts, is therefore raw and unpolished.

This place is RAF Coltishall in Norfolk, an iconic and celebrated RAF station which recently closed after sixty years service. It featured in the Battle of Britain, through the Cold War, and most recently in both Iraq Wars. It is a station with a history, and with a strong – perhaps unique – relationship to its local community. The closure of Coltishall was keenly felt.

Here we are looking to document the processes of drawdown and closure – to witness the management of change, the administration, the ceremonies and rituals, and the upheavals and traumas of moving away, both on the station and amongst local communities. Uniquely, the RAF granted us unlimited access to the base for the entire period of drawdown, meaning that we could create the documentation we desired.

The project involves several related pieces of work. One is to create a map of the base, documenting the historic processes of change, and how these are visible in the structured environment of the base as it survives today. This might help to inform future management needs. We also undertook our own photographic record, documenting the buildings 'then and now'. These complementary records demonstrate how useful it is to see the internal fittings and fixtures, including signage, in order to make sense of the internal spaces. But of most interest here is the invitation to three artists to work with us to create their own interpretations and insights into the processes of drawdown and closure. Two of the artists' work we have already seen – Louise Wilson and Angus Boulton. The other is Gair Dunlop.⁹

Building on previous work, Gair describes Coltishall as being, "A junction of the pastoral and the apocalyptic. As the last airfield connecting the RAF to its era of unambiguous heroism, its role in the self-image and identity of the military and East Anglian citizenry is iconic. With the emphasis now firmly on drawdown and the

role of the base being consigned to memory, I want to emphasise its atmospheres, tensions, and possible futures. There are fascinating issues of memory, identity, community and planning involved. The stillness of the airfield now, and the sounds of wind and nature without engine sound, will be placed with voice and archive material to make a meditative piece on time, passing threat, and current attitudes to war, peace and the 'rural'".¹⁰

In Gair's films we see some of the rituals associated with the base's imminent closure - mowing the grass, preparing for ceremonies, and taking official photographs.

And so to Greenham. Although the idea for a project at Greenham predates the examples I have described (making the journey a slightly chaotic one at times), the shape of the project has been heavily influenced by them all. I was involved in Greenham from an early stage, from pretty much the time of its closure. I was aware then of the need to record the base before it changed, and was involved in decisions about some key components – for example, the runways, the control tower, the technical site and the GAMA site, the place where cruise missiles were stored in their own separate and secure Alert and Maintenance Area. On a visit in 1999 I was unable to arrange access to GAMA, so decided to view it from the outside, through its perimeter fence. This fence was extraordinary in the sense that it could be read as one would a conventional archaeological site – it had a clear stratigraphy whose layers represented the actions of security staff and protestors. This fence was, in many ways, a front-line of the Cold War; the place where the real battles took place, involving air force personnel, security staff and bailiffs, local residents, the media and the peace women. And on this front-line at least, the scars of the battle could be clearly seen.



Photograph courtesy English Heritage

My thoughts were that if the fence can still be read in this way – its cuts, repairs and counter-cuts – then surely the peace camps should have archaeological signatures too. Our project is simply to document and interpret those places.

It is generally the case with these contemporary archaeological places and practices that there will be conflict and contested pasts that have to be negotiated. And it is not surprising that our straightforward plan for a field archaeology project beyond the fence at Greenham became a good deal more complex than we anticipated. But gradually we built a team that could accommodate and manage those complexities. Yvonne Marshall, in the Archaeology department at Southampton University, has experience of public archaeology programmes, and working with local communities. Sasha Roseneil, Professor in Sociology and Gender Studies at Leeds University has researched and written about Greenham, and lived there for some time.¹¹ We also drew on the artistic and videographic expertise of Kristin Posehn, then a doctoral candidate at Winchester School of Art – you'll see an example of her work shortly, and Paula Orrell, then working with Lucy Orta at the London College of Fashion and now Curator at Plymouth Arts Centre. We also engaged a local curatorial archaeologist, and a finds specialist. Lucy will describe her involvement in a moment.



Photographs courtesy of Kristin Posehn

To document these camps effectively, addressing the contested nature of the remains here, and exploring the often ambiguous connections between memory and place, we felt this had to be a trans-disciplinary study, in which fields of research (archaeology, ethnography, sociology and contemporary artistic practice) had to mesh with the interests and ambitions of members of the community. This had to be driven to a degree from the top down (in terms of securing grant, and project management), but also needed to work from the bottom-up, driven where possible by those most closely attached to Greenham – those most affected by it, and for whom this is a very special and sacred place.

One of the camps we studied was at Turquoise Gate, a small, discrete camp beyond the fence on a remote part of the airfield. Here we found artefacts and a fire pit. This is where a short piece of film was made, documenting a particular find and a feature, the mainstays of most archaeological projects, both made on a particular day in 2004.

The scattered artefacts we recorded here, alongside the missile shelters and aircraft hangars, and the ghost of a runway, comprise the archaeology of Greenham. What I have outlined here is the route by which I came to be here, as a prehistorian initially, a middle-class male employee of a state-run heritage organisation, questioning this place, a place I drove past every day for months on end whilst working on a field survey project in the nearby Kennet Valley, and a place which I was required to assess for protection as a monument of national importance. This is my journey; we'll now hear about Lucy's.

Lucy Orta

Generally I prefer to talk about the development of my early work *Refuge Wear*, *Body Architecture* or *Nexus Architecture*, and the transition from fashion designer to artist. It seemed a shame not to take a retrospective peek at some of these emblematic works, before introducing the subject of this evening's discussion. Even though the work has changed formally since the early days, the underlying premise to my practice remains the same.

It has been a personal struggle to create artworks that are both representational and operational. The art theorist Nicolas Bourriaud coined the phrase *Operational Aesthetics*, "*Aesthetic en Fonctionnement . . .*"

Key questions I have been asking over the last fifteen years are: How can art pave a new critical role faced with the growing problems in this world? How can it erase the contradictions between formal aesthetics and social function? What contribution can we as artists make to human, environmental and ecological development? How can artworks instigate and nurture constructive dialogue?

Galleries and museums represent just a fraction of the re-active and multi-layered research process that I have put into place with my husband Jorge and our studio team based in central Paris. Our work 'speaks' different languages within each context, be it within the confines of the white-cube or the wider community, the intimacy of the interior, or the playground of the public space.

Our artistic production and communication processes are drawing, object making, installations, workshops, intervention and events; conscious that the many forms cannot just represent a reality. On the contrary, they should be active, reactive and participative, as well as acting as trigger catalysts.

The context for my first body of work *Refuge Wear* in the early 1990s was the terrible economic recession, caused by the repercussions of the first Gulf War and the stock market crash. The first visual manifestation was a direct response to both the Kurd refugee crisis and to the social instability at that time. *Habitent* (1991/2) is a portable habitat that caters for minimum personal comfort and mobility for nomadic populations. 'Habit' implies a garment for meditation and spiritual refuge, 'in-habitant' suggests a human presence as an occupant for the dwelling.



Refuge Wear – Habitent, Lucy Orta (1992)
Photograph courtesy www.studio-orta.com

In this series I went on to explore further individual shelters in response to increasing situations of human distress and unsuitable social environments. The forms allow for a minimum space around the body, the notion of space being essential to the development of the individual.

As philosopher Paul Virilio has so often pointed out, the industrialisation of vision in the modern world has led to the over-dominance of images within our society. To be homeless in a media culture such as ours is therefore to be rendered invisible, to melt literally into the margins and framework of the city. "*Out of sight out of mind*" – this aphorism has a more pertinent meaning to those disenfranchised members of society who fall through this gap.

We staged *Refuge Wear City Appearances (Interventions)* from 1993 onwards to challenge that act of social disappearance and to render the invisible visible once more. Squats, railway stations, housing projects and subways became the arena for simultaneous interventions. The objects themselves as well as the subsequent interventions in the urban space act as a warning, an alarm bell or distress call to signal certain aspects of reality that the media ignore or simplify, before they leave it completely.

Meeting urbanist and philosopher Paul Virilio in 1994 was a significant turning point in my career. At the time his research was focused on the breaking down of the family unit and the reconstruction of the social link. He wrote, "*The precarious nature of society is no longer that of the unemployed or the abandoned, but of that of individuals socially alone.*"

I went on to create *Collective Wear - Body Architecture* (1994-2000), larger scale domes and collective tent-like structures that seek to promote the opposite of individual isolation. The surface skins of these enclosures are many membered, appendages or demi-bodies represent individuals within a community structure and evoke the complexities of sharing space.

The body of work *Nexus Architecture* (1993-2001) is regarded as a symbol of my practice. 'Nexus' denotes a link or bond, in this case, symbolic content is more important than functional. The work to date consists of groups of workers overalls, interconnected via a system of channels and zippers. The connecting elements are direct embodiments of the idea of social link, a 'social sculpture' worn in public spaces and used for ephemeral interventions in contextual locations.



Nexus Architecture Interventions 1993-1998, Lucy Orta (1993-1998)
Photographs courtesy www.studio-orta.com

During the interventions, performers and passersby become physically involved in the construction of each scenario which is filmed and photographed: climbing into the suits, zipping the Nexus, creating an unusual closeness, questioning interdependence by being part of it - physical and visceral. The recurring manifestations of the work create a poetical series of interrelated segments regardless of religion, sex, age or social status.

The social link is omnipresent in all aspects of our work. This connective sculpture *Life Nexus Village Fête* (1998) is a temporary social space, housing the local village fete. It takes the form of an interconnected tent village in a modular arrangement around a central hexagonal foyer axis. The radiating domes can be reconfigured according to the community's activities. *Life Nexus Village* is a temporary vector for community dialogue and collective activity and the villagers become participants, not passive recipients of yet another art show.

Bearing in mind these works, my encounter with John Schofield may seem out of place, and you may be asking what an archaeologist has got to do with 'fashion' or 'tents'.

Our friendship becomes more or less logical when we mention Greenham Common, and the association becomes evident when we reflect back on the protest occupation of the Peace Women, around the nuclear missile base, during the 1980's. The women were of course creating and living in makeshift abodes: tents, benders, huts and caravans, to name but a few of their dwellings that served as their home and encampment for a duration of ten years.

I was introduced to John through artist/curator Gavin Wade who was developing a research group in collaboration with local Newbury artists and Winchester College of Art. Their interest in the site began around 2003 at the time when the cruise missile shelters were scheduled as national historic monuments.

A series of artist's projects had previously been conducted on the site of the airbase, and when I became involved with the Greenham Common Ground Research Group in 2004, the territory of investigation had now extended beyond the 'hard' military evidence of the shelters and airfield to the ephemeral traces of the Peace Camps, as John has mentioned.

A very basic summary of the driving interests of the group were the investigation of the legacy of the Peace Camps and how to materialise the memory and significance of protest in the process of nuclear disarmament in a project which became known as 'Common Ground' - our tools were numerous: archaeology, art, photography, and social enquiry.

It is here that my path diverges. One would have expected me to respond with a proposal for a tent village installation, an encampment 'revisited', or reenact the 'Embrace the Base' - the most important of the demonstrations where 30,000 women linked hands to encircle the base on December 12th 1982. But as we all know, artists can be pretty unpredictable!

Six months prior to joining the Greenham Common Ground Research Group, I had the opportunity to encounter molecular scientists looking at communication on a genetic level and biologists working in embryonic cell development at the National Institute for Medical Research. What fascinated me was the process of differentiation whereby cells specialise and create powerful cells with unique functionality. Predicated from 'Dolly the Sheep' research in 1997, stem cell lines can now be purposely differentiated from one cell type to another. This 'energy transformation', whereby one cell becomes something completely different was the starting point for a new body of work, with an idea to apply this research to develop less transient artworks, and create forms, which are infinitely mutable or 'totipotent'.

The early research on transient architecture conducted throughout Refuge Wear, Body Architecture and Modular Architecture, reflected on the immediate layers surrounding the body. This new research would allow me to lead away from the scale and intimacy of the individual and into the context of wider socio-urban environment.

*"Cells are a part of the human body; they are at the origin of its being, its feelings, its emotions and its sufferings. Thus, they speak the language of the body. There are also cells of habitation. The relationship between people and their habitat is formed in this metaphorical cell. Living and being become a single and unique life experience."*¹²

Upon my visit to Greenham Common and after discussions with sociologist and former Peace Woman Sasha Roseneil and archaeologist Yvonne Marshall, it became clear that the most 'operational' manner that I could respond to the project would be to look beyond the contentious issue of the dividing fence, the emotional attachment of the artefacts in the ground, the collective ownership of the Peace movement, to search for an area for intervention between the military past and the serenity of the undergrowth and woodland, that was the former Peace Women's territory of intervention.

The space that most intrigued me during my site visit was the Control Tower, the highest control point overlooking the shelters and the surrounding common. As the tower currently lies vacant and its future is uncertain, it would be possible to transform this highly symbolic building into something with a renewed artistic potential. The proposal I presented to the group was a very sketchy idea to draw up plans for the Greenham Common Visitors Centre, a place where both histories and both sides of the fence converge, a space for the archaeology archive and for the data collected and for the oral histories to become public and available to the local community. The Control Tower became my space of intervention where I could investigate the potentiality, or 'totipotency', searching for a new life, a new body.

I can only reveal here the first sketch proposals for the site, and some related works in the series Totipotent Architecture. This year I will begin to develop the model for the visitors centre in the former Control Tower, inserting the organic dimensions of a new body into the existing architecture. The models will go through many phases of 'differentiation' leading away from the cell-like forms, before we conclude a habitable architectural proposal. And for sure the design will evolve through the intervention of the members of the Research Group during the process.



Totipotent Architecture – Study, Lucy & Jorge Orta (2004)
Photograph courtesy www.studio-orta.com

To conclude Cristina's analysis: *"The term 'cell' is also used to indicate political and social groups; groups of people cemented together by the same ideals, convictions and striking power. They represent a social context struggling for change. The historical, social and geographical context, that is to say the reality, in which the artist intervenes takes on a certain importance when it is the subject of vision; it is a 'cell', and in being so, is a part of the body."*¹³

A couple of exhibition deadlines are distracting my attention from Greenham Common right now, but they are in some sense related to art in the context of conflict and I would like present them for reflection. The first is a body of work that we conducted in response to the Iraq War *Fallujah* and the second deals with the issue of migration and borders: *Antarctic Village*.

Like Greenham Common, both these projects are works in progress, but you will have the opportunity to view the outputs of *Fallujah* shortly at the Institute of Contemporary Arts London, off-site location at the Truman Brewery 2nd May to 2nd June 2007.

Fallujah is a collaborative work with co-researchers Dr Jonathan Holmes (writer), Nitin Sawhney (composer) and Jorge Orta (artist), in the form of a play, a music score and a major installation of artworks that deeply reflect the social, political and ethical consequences of the Iraq war.

Inspired by Dr Holmes' script, taken from eyewitness accounts and interviews recounting the appalling atmosphere in Fallujah during the American invasion, and

our extensive Internet research, the artworks reflect on four overarching themes: the role of the political and media players, the plight of the civilians, the difficulties of medical staff and the horrors of war as seen through the eyes of the soldiers in combat. Our ambition is to develop four large-scale installations incorporating sound, objects and images and to transform army 'surplus', that this and other wars have left behind, into visual metaphors.

This new work builds upon my examination of the social bonds within communities and the relationships between individuals and their environments, in this case the experience of living in an urban environment while under the extreme conditions of war. What happens to the thousands of people whose livelihoods, homes and daily routines are permanently and irrevocably changed through acts of violence? How can one understand the experience of living through an invasion, which transforms an urban environment and its surroundings so that an entire citizenship becomes a flock of refugees?

The sculptural installations should fill the immense 6,000m² off-site gallery, and form a back drop to Jonathan's moving account of the invasion, and we hope portray the 'truth' of living in a city reduced to rubble.

Parallel to this major production we are currently finishing the final details of *Antarctic Village*. In 1995 my partner Jorge represented Argentina at the Venice Biennial. He presented a draft proposal for the Antarctic passport, and the creation of a new Utopian community in a project that became known as *Antarctic Village*.

This idea focuses on the area between 90°W and 150°W which is the only neutral landmass on earth, Antarctica. Signed by 12 countries in 1959, the Antarctic Treaty declares this sixth continent a scientific preserve, established freedom of scientific investigation, environmental protection, and banned military activity. This was the first Arms Control agreement established during the Cold War. *Antarctic Village* is a metaphor for a place that welcomes all: 'Nation of Mankind'.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 13 currently states that the inherent dignity of every member of the human race and their equal and inalienable rights constitutes the fundamentals of liberty, justice and peace in the world. However it does not mention the freedom to move or to cross borders. If we were to amend this article we could take into consideration the rights of the hundreds of millions of men and women removed from their native lands by economic ruin, war and political intimidation.

Article 13.3. EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO MOVE FREELY AND CIRCULATE BEYOND THE STATE BORDERS TO A TERRITORY OF THEIR CHOICE. NO INDIVIDUAL SHOULD HAVE AN INFERIOR STATUS TO THAT OF CAPITAL, MERCHANDISE, COMMUNICATION, OR POLLUTION THAT TRAVERSE ALL BORDERS.

In February 2007, we commence a new stage of the project, the installation of the first villages. On February 19 Jorge Orta and the Studio-Orta team will join the Hercules KC130 military aircraft on an expedition to the Argentinean Marambio scientific base on the Antarctic Peninsula, to actually build this symbolic encampment of over 50 dwellings.

Antarctic Village, stemming from the Dwelling and Connector series, is composed of dome architectures and bivouac sculptures. The aluminium membranes of the domes are encrusted with hundreds of flags, clothes and gloves, symbolising the multiplicity and diversity of people. The domes have been applied with hand silk-screen printed graphic inscriptions from the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

At the beginning of April, we have been commissioned to exhibit extracts from *Antarctic Village*, including the film in Ushuaia City, Tierra del Fuego Province as part of the 1st Biennial of the End of the World – Biennial del Fin del Mundo.¹⁴

2007 marks the start of the much-awaited 'International Polar Year', which will run until March 2009. During this period numerous international scientific experiments and expeditions will be conducted to gain a greater understanding of the roles the Polar regions play in Earth's weather patterns and environmental state. *Antarctic Village* is one of the first cultural projects of its kind to take place in Antarctica and underpins the ethics of the Biennale, to create a poetic North-South axis between Art and Politics, Poetry, Ecology and Technology and a proposal for the First Contemporary Polar Museum of Art, Technology and Environment of the End of the World, to be built in Ushuaia. "*Pondering, at the end of the world that another world is possible*".

I'd like to end here, full circle back to the origins of my research process the *Habitent*, and with our motto from one of the more upbeat of our collaborations "*Can't Stop*": [Can't Stop music video, by Anonymous Content for Red Hot Chili Peppers shown to audience].

End Notes

¹ Louise K Wilson 2006. A Record of Fear. See also Louise K Wilson 2006, 'Notes on A Record of Fear: On the Threshold of the Audible', *Leonardo Music Journal* 16, pp28-33.

² Ibid, p 120

³ www.greenhamcommonground.com

⁴ www.english-heritage.org.uk/military

⁵ Cocroft W., and Wilson L.K., 2006. In: *Re-mapping the field: new approaches in conflict archaeology*. Schofield, J., Klausmeier, A. and Purbrick, L. (eds) *Archaeology and art at Spadeadam. Rocket Establishment (Cumbria)*. pp15-21. Also, Wilson L.K., 2007. *Out to the Waste: Spadeadam and the Cold War*. In Schofield, J. and Cocroft, W.D. (eds), *A Fearsome Heritage: diverse legacies of the Cold War*. Left Coast Press. pp155-182

⁶ Schofield, J. 2006. *Constructing place: when artists and archaeologists meet*. eBook at <http://diffusion.org.uk/>

⁷ Angus Boulton 2007. Cood Bay Forst Zinna. In Schofield, J. and Cocroft, W.D. (eds), *A Fearsome Heritage: diverse legacies of the Cold War*. Left Coast Press. pp183-194.

⁸ www.english-heritage.org.uk/characterisation

⁹ <http://www.gairspace.org.uk/gairstream/index.html>

¹⁰ Personal email correspondence between author and artist, 2006

¹¹ For example, 2000. *Common Women, Uncommon Practices: the queer feminisms of Greenham*. Cassell.

¹² Orta L., Sanders M., Restany P., 1996. Essay by Cristina Morozzi in Orta L., Sanders M., Restany P., Lucy Orta, *Process of Transformation*. Published Editions Jean-Michel Place 1996

¹³ Orta L., Sanders M., Restany P., 1996. Essay by Cristina Morozzi in Orta L., Sanders M., Restany P., Lucy Orta, *Process of Transformation*. Published Editions Jean-Michel Place 1996

¹⁴ <http://www.bienalfindelmundo.com>

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The Common Ground Research Group

<http://www.soton.ac.uk/~kmp401/researchgroup.htm>

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