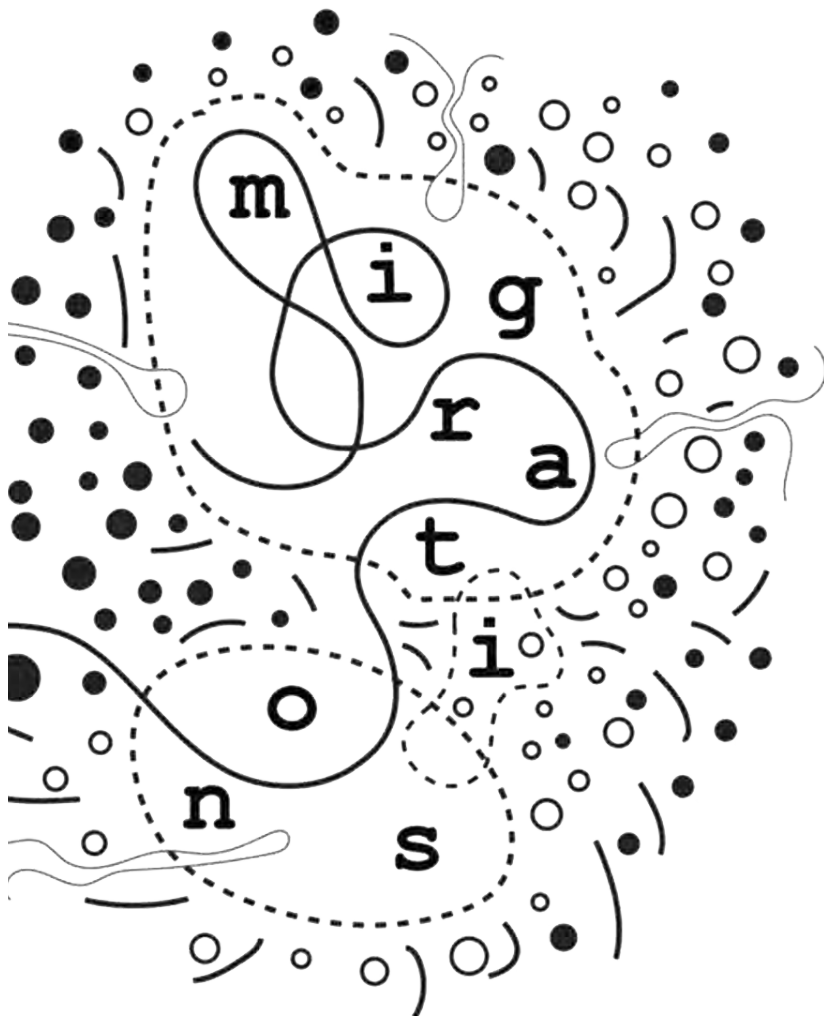


# Forced Migrations and Their Impact on Art and Visual Culture

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## Session 4



## Session 4

# Why Forced Migrations Matter for Art History and Visual Studies?

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“Forced Migrations and their Impact on Art and Visual Culture” was the title of the fourth session of the 35<sup>th</sup> CIHA conference, held in the city of São Paulo, Brazil, in January 2022. The conception of the session, however, dates back much earlier, but its realization was delayed by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. In its call for papers, published in 2019, the session proposed, as its general objective, to imbricate forced migration processes and their effects on art and visual culture, without indicating temporary or historical limitations. The venture was relatively successful, bringing together a total of thirteen speakers of diverse nationalities, who — in person or remotely — presented their current research. Most of the communications made in the occasion are now gathered in the present proceedings.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), forced migration is a general concept that refers to “a migratory movement which, although the drivers can be diverse, involves force, compulsion, or coercion”.<sup>1</sup> It is not an international legal concept, since it is recognized that forced migration implies a continuum of agency, rather than a “voluntary” versus “forced” dichotomy. In practice, however, the concept is commonly used to designate the movements of refugees and internally displaced persons (those displaced by problems within their country of origin), in which the mobility of ideas, beliefs, and faiths is also embedded.

Forced migrations may be induced by a variety of causes, and the most common of which are: (1) conflicts, such as in the case of wars (including civil wars), situations of generalized violence, and persecution on the grounds of nationality, race, religion, political opinion or membership of a

particular social group;<sup>2</sup> (2) disasters such as hurricanes, droughts, earthquakes, infectious disease outbreaks, etc., in which natural causes and human action are sometimes intertwined, as stressed by those who study current environmental collapse;<sup>3</sup> (3) issues related to “development” policies and projects,<sup>4</sup> which may include, e.g., large-scale infrastructure projects (dams, roads, ports, etc.), urban clearance initiatives, mining and deforestation.

Besides these causes, we would also recall the dire phenomenon of trafficked or smuggled people, those who are moved by deception or coercion for the purposes of exploitation. A well-documented example is the forced displacement of people from Africa to be enslaved in the Americas. In the period in which this slavery system operated, between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, more than 12 million Africans were captured and transported across the Atlantic Ocean to be sold as human merchandise.<sup>5</sup> The Atlantic slave trade had profound and longstanding consequences for the societies that were involved in it and, as we will see, was particularly relevant for the discussions that took place in the session.

Having occurred throughout human history and across a wide geographic spectrum, forced migrations constitute a heterogeneous phenomenon. Fundamental differences already become clear when we consider the diverse causes cited above. In the cases involving conflict, disaster or “development”, the pursuit to safeguard one's own life, or the life of the family or group of belonging, is still ultimately connected to the agency of those who migrate — in this sense, as pointed out by Edward Said, it would be necessary to differentiate between refugees, exiles and émigrés.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, in the cases of trafficked or smuggled people, after the previous act of their physical capture they are literally compelled to move, dehumanized, and converted into objects of exchange. During the session, we tried to be sensitive to how the heterogeneity implicit in the very concept of forced migrations impacts the aesthetic productions that were discussed by the speakers.

Forced migrations raise discussions of culture that have global implications, as they resonate with a variety of other concepts such as: diaspora, exile, globalization, hybridity, mobility, multiculturalism, transnationalism, or nomadism. Thus, from the conception of the session,

we believed that visual productions connected to forced migrations constitute a very rich source for art history. This is evident not only regarding representations linked to the phenomenon but also in the artistic production of the displaced people themselves.

Moreover, we believed that research on the topic could contribute to a reassessment of the canon and usual writing methods of art history. In fact, the complex migratory processes and their aesthetic counterparts discussed in the session raised major challenges for the discipline and forced us to critically reflect on its usual concepts and approaches.

A critique of art history's usual canon seemed to be one of the potential outcomes of this discussion. From the beginning, the session's topic encouraged us to establish a relationship at odds with the orthodoxies and to avoid and oppose the "thumping language of national pride, collective sentiments, group passions", as advocated by Said.<sup>7</sup> In addition, we were convinced that investigations on the art and visual culture connected to forced migrations are a privileged locus for — quoting an expression proposed by Kobena Mercer — "erasing and rewinding" the Western art historical narratives of the past centuries.<sup>8</sup>

Regarding art history's writing methods, research on the aesthetic dimensions of forced migrations can contribute to aligning the discipline with propositions made by several authors. We could recall here, for example, the idea of "mobility turn", considered by Saloni Mathur as an emergent paradigm within the 21st-century social sciences.<sup>9</sup> Or the more recent proposal by Burcu Dogramaci and Birgit Mersmann of a "migration turn", which positions discussions of migration as a pivotal theme in contemporary art history.<sup>10</sup> We could also recall the ideas of mobile or migratory aesthetics, and of a kinetic theory of the migrant image, advanced by authors such as W. J. T. Mitchell.<sup>11</sup>

If, as art historians, we wish to incorporate proposals such as these, we will certainly have to face difficult questions. Dogramaci and Mersmann already posed some of them: "Which theoretical concepts correspond to the procedural, performative, transnational, and transcultural migration movements and their artistic reflections? How can art history be written by focusing on instability, exchange, and cultural changeability, and not by drawing on national parameters?"<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the linearity of time is often

disrupted when dealing with migratory processes, and art history seems ill-prepared to deal with the conceptual turbulences that results from this.

All these questions may seem threatening to traditional art history. In effect, migrations in general — and forced migrations in particular — often involve conflictive and dangerous border crossings, displacements of people, ideas and objects, as well as resettlements of these in their places of reception, entailing a seeming disorder far removed from the comfort of canonical art history. But — and this was a fundamental point for us — these questions also point to powerful historiographical alternatives. As stressed by Dogramaci and Mersmann, the study of art departing from the primacy of motion implied in phenomena such as forced migrations requires “an anti-linear, multi-perspectival, and horizontal reconceptualization and reanonization of art history from a transnational or transcultural perspective (which also would have to include a historiography of migration in art)”.<sup>13</sup>

The papers presented in the session "Forced Migrations and their Impact on Art and Visual Culture" brought several indications of how we can work in this direction and possible answers to the questions raised above. Thematically, they could be grouped in different nuclei that we would like to outline. But simultaneously, the papers also presented several points of connection, some of which we highlighted in what follows.

The first point of convergence is related to the transatlantic slave trade, which has left an indelible mark on the Americas. This is attested by representations, objects, and the use of specific materials contemporary to the trade, as well as in more recent artistic productions. Many contemporary black artists, for example, use different artistic languages to reflect and make people reflect on the memories of enslavement, the forms of structural racism and inequality, and the symbolic and concrete violence that remains in action in the present.

We could say that these artists put into play specific politics and poetics of memories detached from the official and canonical ones. These could be dubbed as “underground or subterranean memories”, a concept coined by Michael Pollak who describes memory as the field of dispute between official (or national) memories, and those that persist in the marginalized sectors of society.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, for instance, the South

African artist Kitso Lynn Lelliot states: “The idea of memory is used as a vehicle through which to connect the personal experiential with broader historical narratives while at the same time disrupting the historicized canon of histories that were shaped over centuries on the Atlantic and have come to sit so firmly on my skin”.<sup>15</sup>

The papers by Emi Koide and Mauricio Barros de Castro explore this topic. Koide investigates the multiple possible meanings that can be articulated from the term “white” as color, and its material and symbolic power that translates into erased or denied aspects of colonial history in Brazil. The author focuses on the video *Whitewash* (2013) by the aforementioned Lelliot, and on a series of videos from the exhibition *Casa de Purgar* (Purging House, 2018) by the Afro-Brazilian artist Tiago Sant’Ana. Both artists explore the past to think about asymmetrical and racialized contemporary relationships as “specters”, showing the traumatic relationships between the past and the present. To do this, they make provocative uses of historical spaces linked to slavery. In most cases, such spaces have been reconfigured for other uses, which implied an erasure of their original meanings. Lelliot, for example, places her work in relation to the fort in the city of Salvador, in the State of Bahia, and the ocean, alluding to the slave trade. On the other hand, Sant’Ana uses sugar mills of the Bahia’s Recôncavo region as settings for his videos. These mills are now abandoned, in ruins, and his exhibition *Casa de Purgar* takes place in the Museu de Arte de Bahia, which in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the residence of the slave trader Jose Cerqueira Lima.<sup>16</sup>

Barros de Castro analyzes works by Eustáquio Neves, another Afro-Brazilian artist who refers to places significant to the memory of slavery, such as the Valongo wharf in Rio de Janeiro — port of entry for thousands of enslaved Africans. In his project *Valongo: Cartas ao Mar* (*Valongo: Letters to the Sea*, 2015-2016), Neves aims to recover part of the memory of enslavement for future generations and to reflect on Afro-Brazilian resistance. In some aspects, Neves’s works are close to those by Sant’Ana, analyzed by Koide: both artists emphasize the structural racism and persistent inequalities suffered by populations of African descent in Brazil. Moreover, like Sant’ana, Neves does not use images depicting violence to denounce these issues: rather, he produces works that imply a fine,

delicate, and thoughtful creative process. Departing from images mainly from his personal archive, the artist manipulates them using different techniques, and including stamps and texts linked to the idea of a letter — hence the title of his series.

The central point of Faya Causey's paper is amber, a fossil resin valued not only for its beauty but also for its medicinal and electrostatic properties, among others. These features have made amber a fascinating material: it is possible to trace its use from antiquity to the present day, and it demands research involving different disciplines such as history, archaeology, anthropology, art history, and sociology.<sup>17</sup> Based on archaeological finds in the cemeteries of the African Burial Ground, in New York, and in the aforementioned Valongo Wharf, Causey connects objects made of amber found at these sites to the process of enslavement and the African diaspora. Traditionally, the precious material served as a currency of exchange and was thus used in the transatlantic slave trade. But Causey also draws attention to the finding of objects such as beads and protective amulets at the sites, which allows us to infer links to Africa and African heritage, as well as the uses that diasporic communities gave to amber in the Americas.

Moving away from the slave trade, the papers by Nenad Makuljević and Tessa Murdoch nevertheless deal with forced migrations that also date back to the early modern era. Makuljević discusses the visual culture of the Sephardic Jews who, because they refused to convert to Catholicism, were expelled from Spain and Portugal in 1492 and 1496, respectively. Forced to migrate, many Sephardic Jews settled in the Ottoman Empire, especially in the cities of Istanbul, Thessaloniki and Sarajevo, where they gathered in minority communities. Since Islamic culture and customs were highly codified, Sephardic Jews had to adapt its rules. Referring to the concept of “mimicry”, Makuljević seeks to make visible the marks of this complex cross-cultural contact focusing on dress codes and religious architecture. In these modes of expression, it is possible to perceive the convergence of cultural models of the Ottoman Empire and persistent Sephardic memories, conceived still in the Iberian Peninsula.

Tessa Murdoch's paper refers to the forced migration of the Huguenots following the so-called Wars of Religion in the Kingdom of France

in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Initially, the Huguenots migrated to Protestant regions in Europe, but eventually also moved to European colonies in America, Asia and Africa. In this context, Murdoch focuses on the Rovere family (a name later anglicized as Revere), whose first generation of migrants included many artists, designers, and craftsmen.<sup>18</sup> Considering intra-colonial and international exchanges, the paper explores the impact of the arts of silver and gold developed by the Rovere family, pointing to the influence of their production on the decorative arts of the United States. Furthermore, by calling attention to the diaspora of the Huguenots in Brazil, Murdoch opens the discussion to new questions concerning the possible impact that this visual culture might have had in the country.

Two other papers collected in these proceedings — those by Rafael Cardoso and Irena Kossowska — center on modern artists who were themselves migrants. In these papers, some of the issues raised above reappear, such as the revision of the canon of art history. In fact, we believe that, when considered in relation to forced migration processes, the usual modernist canon is one that most demands such a revision. In this sense, we could recall authors such as Raymond Williams and Charles Reed, who drew attention to how the phenomenon of migration is constitutive of modernism. Pointing to the example of Guillaume Apollinaire, Williams showed how the “sociology of metropolitan encounters and associations between immigrants” was crucial for the formation of the *avant-garde* and its absorption into the dominant culture.<sup>19</sup> More recently, writing on “alienation”, Reed connected the Marxist critique of capitalism to the experience of exile and to *avant-garde* conventions, stressing how being alien, estranged or foreign is embedded in the very definition of modernism.<sup>20</sup>

But the cases of artists who are themselves migrants raise other significant questions. Can the mark of the places of origin or arrival be glimpsed in the works of these artists? How do they deal with both contexts in their artistic productions? As we have pointed out, forced migrations imply a traumatic experience, which can involve degrees of violence either by leaving the place of origin, by uprooting, or by the potential insecurity in the new places of residence. In this sense, how do artists deal with these traumatic experiences of displacement? In what ways do their productions

stage these traumas?

Rafael Cardoso discusses the work of European artists that, during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, migrated to Brazil. His paper focuses on painters such as the Russian Dimitri Ismailovitch and the Portuguese Maria Margarida Soutello, who turned their attention to representations of black subjects and racialized themes. Cardoso argues that these white European migrants developed a peculiar and ambivalent gaze upon Afro-Brazilian cultures, inflected by primitivism and ethnology, but also prone to empathy and self-identification. Characteristic of migrants, the condition of displacement and the double consciousness of artists such as Ismailovitch and Soutello channeled their gaze upon the legacy of African heritage in Brazil towards the reinvention of their own identities.

Irena Kossowska focuses her analysis on the Polish painter Józef Czapski, who witnessed the tragedy and violence of war both as a soldier and prisoner. After the end of the Second World War, Czapski settled in Paris where he developed his artistic career, wrote extensively in various publications and was an active member of the Polish émigré community. Kossowska equates the alienated figures depicted in Czapski's works with the artist himself. Moreover, he refused to adopt the vogue for abstract art, producing idiosyncratic work that did not participate in the major exhibitions of the time. The reception of Czapski's artworks "contain a possible key to understanding what it really means that social actions become cultural events through the process of symbolic construction, not simply through their own force".<sup>21</sup> In fact, based on Czapski's place of enunciation marked by traumatizing processes, Kossowska proposes that he and his works constitute a symbol of the experiences and fate of his equally displaced compatriots. This could be related to the idea, expressed by Jeffrey C. Alexander and Elizabeth Butler, that "the construction of collective trauma is often fueled by individual experiences of pain and suffering, but it is the threat to collective rather than individual identity that defines the kind of suffering at stake".<sup>22</sup>

Finally — but going back to the production of contemporary artists we started with — we have the paper by Nora M. Alter, who discusses soundtracks as witnesses of the trauma of forced migrations. Arguing that these soundtracks go beyond hypervisibilized daily images that often lack mediating and transforming efficacy, Nora analyzes the production of three artists: John Akomfrah, a British artist, theorist and curator of Ghanaian descent, who focuses his works on the forced migrations of Africans; Guillermo Galindo, a “Post–Mexican composer/artist”;<sup>23</sup> who executes musical performances playing instruments constructed with objects found on the border between Mexico and the United States; and Lawrence Abu Hamdan, a Jordanian-born artist, who explores and decodes the almost inaudible sounds of people confined in Syrian prisons, generating new, comprehensible, and — above all — disturbing records.

Like the works by Kitso Lynn Lelliot, Tiago Sant’Ana and Eustáquio Neves mentioned in the beginning, the soundtracks by Akomfrah, Galindo and Abu Hamdan are relevant to explore pressing questions such as the relationship between politics and aesthetics, mediums and mobility, socioeconomic disparity and emancipatory action. Such works seem to meet a demand stressed by T. J. Demos: “Today, what is needed more than ever are powerful and creative artistic expressions and interventions that join other movements for positive change, social justice and equality, working together toward the progressive re-creation of our common world”.<sup>24</sup>

Other topics discussed in the session “Forced Migrations and their Impact on Art and Visual Culture” — depictions of enslaved people, experimental curatorial practices, or the art of prisoners of war — also posed challenges to conventional narratives of art history, as well as to those of borders and belonging. The collection of papers presented in these proceedings certainly does not exhaust the theme of our CIHA’s session. However, we believe that it will contribute to the necessary and urgent expansion of research on the multiple relations between forced migrations and artistic production.

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# Poetics Of Specters: Dealing with Colonial Ruination and Whitewash

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to analyze and compare contemporary artworks about colonial history in Brazil, in which white as a color, material, and symbolic power is mobilized to reflect on the ruins of the imperial past in the present. The set of artworks chosen - the video *Whitewash History* (2013) by South African artist Kitso Lynn Lelliot and a series of videos from the exhibition *Casa de Purgar* (Purging House) (2018) by Afro-Brazilian artist Tiago Sant'Ana – have the location in Bahia, dealing both with colonial history and the Atlantic slave trade.

## **KEYWORDS**

Specters; Colonial Memory; Afrodiasporic History; Whitewash; Video Art

### Introduction

*Whitewash History* (2013) by South African artist Kitso Lynn Lelliot was shot in one of the oldest Portuguese Fort in Baía de Todos os Santos in Salvador city, revisiting Atlantic slave trade history in this colonial space turned into a museum haunted by the image of a woman. The word white and the color unfolds in multiple meanings; presence and aesthetic strategy allude to presence, as erasure, as the whitening and racial segregation policies in Brazil. From the solo exhibition *Casa de Purgar* (Purging House) (2018) by Afro-Brazilian artist Tiago Sant'Ana, we selected the series of videos *Refino#2 e #4* (Refining), *Passar em branco* (Ironing in white) and *Açúcar sobre capela* (Sugar over chapel), all of them were shot in the ruined old sugar mill from XVIII century in close to Paraguaçu river in Recôncavo da Bahia region. Recôncavo was one of the main pole of sugar cane production in colonial times. Both artists deal with colonial ghosts that continue to haunt the present - working in the location of Baía de Todos os Santos - bringing back erased or denied aspects of colonial history. In doing so, they seem to invite us to be with specters, as defended by Derrida, reworking politics of memories and also a possibility of what still is not or does not have form.

### Whitewash

We see a white screen where the video's title - *Whitewash History* - gradually becomes visible and readable to disappear and merge again in the white background. As the words fade, the white color that blinds us fills the screen while we hear a treble sound. A dazzling sensation invades us; an image that is out of focus and shaky takes form successively. The scene brings us to an experience of disorientation as someone who is lost or who wakes up in an unknown place. Slowly the blurred image of a frame in superposition to other points of view, where a square with a slot reframes the whiteness of the light, takes form. A fluctuating, drifting image seems to translate into a swinging boat sensation, the sea's oscillation. Or the seasickness and dizziness felt when arriving on land after a long boat journey. The video installation by Kitso Lynn Lelliot invites us to land in a place, just after a trip crossing the ocean, alluding to the Middle Passage, the Atlantic slave trade, and the

Afro-Atlantic history - in which 4,8 million enslaved Africans arrived in Brazil between XVI and XIX centuries<sup>1</sup>. The violent capture, the forced exile, the separation from their families, and the displacement marked the experience of enslaved Africans from different regions in the coerced journey to Brazil. The disorientation that marks the video's aesthetics suggests the sensation of loss felt by African men and women who survived the frightful and deadly crossing on the slave ship, disembarking in a strange land, reminding of this description by Smallwood:

Now that land not only lay far distant but had, more ominously, vanished from the horizon altogether, the ship's relentless motion pulled the captives ever deeper into temporal and spatial entrapment. The sheer scale of the unknown element disabled many of the cognitive tools supplied by African epistemologies, which attributed dangerous supernatural powers to the watery realm. [...] Here, their commodification built toward a crescendo that threatened never to arrive but to leave the African captives suspended in an agony whose language no one knew. [...] For African captives, it was their wholeness as fully embodied subjects that was at stake in the Atlantic setting. Entering the open sea signaled the end of one contest - whether captives would go into circulation as commodities in the Atlantic market - and the beginning of another - how captives would sustain their humanity in the uniquely inhumane spatial and temporal setting of the slave ship at sea<sup>2</sup>.

The sensation of disorientation, of being lost and dizzy through the succession of images, works as a leitmotif. The blinding white color is omnipresent. It plays with the scale and vastness, with the absence of reference. The camera movement alludes to constant seasickness after being in a long time in a boat, even on land. It might have been the experience of those African women and men forcibly removed from their homes. The texture of a stone wall becomes visible, revealing fragments of an old colonial architectural structure; a small window or slot frame the sea as the high-pitched noise ceases as the sound of the sea and waves invade the space.

When the camera stops floating from inside space to the outside, the bastion structure from a military fortification comes into view. The window reveals to be the spot of the gaze for defense against invasions of colonial territory in the past. Colonial borders, violent histories, and memories of slavery, the relation with the stranger, the politics of domination are evoked in the empty old fortification. It is the Forte de Santo Antônio da Barra at the Bay of All Saints in Salvador, Bahia State, which is the earliest military building in Brazil, the first construction dates between 1583 - 1587<sup>3</sup>. This strategic fort turned into a lighthouse in the XVII century. Nowadays, it belongs to the Brazilian Navy, and they remodeled it into a nautical museum where navigation routes, underwater archeological findings, and several ships and Portuguese caravel model reproductions are exhibited.



**Fig. 1.** Kitso Lynn Lelliot - *Whitewash History* (2013)

As a typical Portuguese colonial whitewashed building, the camera runs the fort's thick white wall so close that it becomes a white texture surface, a landscape where to walk. The unique perspective presented on the wall resembles a ground, white sand, giving a desert dimension. The fragment of the colonial fortress, the white as a color, the luminous clarity that almost

blinds us, and the connection to different meanings of the word whitewashing in the English language are raised. As the mixture of lime and water for whitening walls, concealing faults or mistakes, when someone from an ethnic minority is assimilated into the white and Western dominant culture. All this scope of meanings is part of Brazilian history. The Afro-Brazilians - even being the majority of the population - were reduced to enslaved forced labor, and the consequences of this violence are present and define contemporary social dynamics.

The slave trade was more extensive in Brazil than in any other place globally, and it was also the last country to abolish slavery. Brazilian colonial history is always whitewashed, concealed, or an official white narrative that erases or denies black and indigenous subjects' accounts. Denial of enduring colonial structure and system, denial of racism is constant in Brazilian history. For a long time, official history and discourses about Brazil embraced the idea of an absence of racism in a mixed nation<sup>4</sup>, celebrating the myth of racial democracy as a heritage of luso-tropicalism<sup>5</sup>. After the formal abolition of slavery, there was no integration of former slaves in a society characterized by structural racism. The racist and eugenic dominant international conceptions of the XIX century that naturalized differences and hierarchies of races became a belief in Brazil too. The local elites - aware of race's degeneration theory, considering the country's prevalence of mixed-race populations as an obstacle for modernization - implemented a national whitening (*embaquecimento*)<sup>6</sup> project in the XIX century. After the former abolition of slavery, this national whitening policy encouraged importing white Europeans as a new workforce in agriculture and industry to have a "civilized" modern country.

Whitening and whitewashing the history of racism and coloniality is a persistent mark in Brazil. This logic of whitening also imposed the code and white dominating patriarchal culture, often criminalizing black culture. In the 1930s, the miscegenation of race became celebrated as a national character, nevertheless at the same time denying all the persistent racism, exploitation, and sexual violence that formed the "racial democracy." Interestingly, the word "whitewash" in the Portuguese language in dictionaries would only

translate the meaning of whitening walls, “caiar.” But we could say that Brazilian history is a history of whitewashing in many layers from the past to the present. It is also essential to observe that the city of Salvador, where the fortress is located, has one of the largest Afro-Brazilian populations. As observed by Ana Lúcia Araújo, in Salvador, there are no clear spatial markers where enslaved Africans arrived so we can see this absence as a sign of oblivion or histories effaced from collective memory<sup>7</sup>. Lelliot’s work presents us with this erasure and spectral persistence in visual poetic form.

In Lelliot’s video, as the camera continues to wander through the surface of the whitewashed wall, the commentary mentions the word in Portuguese “saudade,” an untranslatable word, which would have a meaning close to nostalgia, “which also leaves between the past and the future, a remembrance and a looking forward too.”<sup>8</sup> Between the untranslatable other connotations of “whitewash” in Portuguese, and the untranslatable word “saudade” in English and other languages, memory, forgotten narratives, colonial ghosts seem to haunt the images, space, and time. There is a constant shift in multiple meanings, gaps left, lost memories, and issues that come back to haunt Brazilian colonial history and contemporary spaces.

The commentary in which we listen to the artist’s voice continues: “one does not know if it is dead or alive, if they are living in a distant place unknown in the world, across the waters [...] it may never return, there is still a slight chance, a small, a present possibility that it may.”<sup>9</sup> All the enslaved Africans who lived the forced displacement, lost in entirely unfamiliar territory, experiencing longing from the homeland, the sadness, the impossibility of return, the lack of freedom – long-time silenced stories in Brazil official narrative. While the commentary wonders about the specters, about those enslaved Africans who are maybe dead or alive, various old objects - pieces of shackles used in the slave ships, vases, and other fragments - found underwater in a display case in the museum are presented. Among these objects, it insists in details of shackles pieces used in slave ships. The item also appears in a red illustration poster in which an image of a black woman with a child emerges along with the shackles while we listen to the sound of chains moving. The woman seems to stare at us. The boat’s

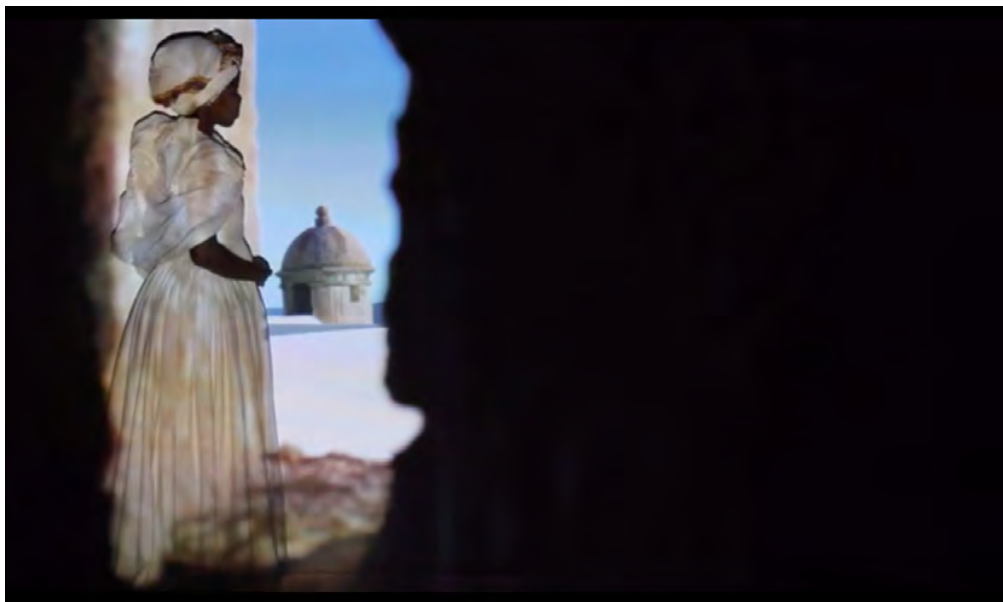
balance sensation returns through the camera's movement and alternating blurred images and focused ones, reproducing the dizziness. Just after a boat chimney shows up across the sky, the following sequence presents the museum space with illustrations and models of slave ships, details of a carved model with enslaved people with hands and feet chained in a confined cargo. It focuses on the details of the carved person figure enchained in a claustrophobic and tiny space, suffering, underlining the terrible conditions of the slave ship but also as an emblematic image of slavery:

Within every cargo, some were more physically and emotionally exhausted, some more nutritionally deprived, and some more vulnerable to illness than others. Conditions thus made the slave ship a deadly place, so much so that in Africa the language of death became part of the nomenclature for it. Slave ships were call "tumbeiros" in the eighteenth-century Angolan trade, for example, a term historians have translated as "floating tombs" or "undertakers."<sup>10</sup>

"Tumbeiro" is another word for slave ship in Portuguese, coming from "tomb," being used in Brazilian context as well, in which Angolan slave trade routes was one of the most important. Death as an endless horizon haunting captives in the Middle Passage. The image presentation mode repeats a disorientating regime of alternating fuzzy and focused images, the swing movement of a boat floating along with the sea's sound and the ship creaking.

We watch a museum visitor looking at a red panel in which there is one of the well-known illustrations of the slave ship from an overhead view where enslaved Africans are shown as black silhouettes crammed inside the boat. It is one of the popular images used in the abolitionist campaign in the XIX century, depicting the inhuman conditions of the slave trade. It has now been used in museums related to Afro-diasporic history, as in this part of the nautical museum in Salvador. But this panel's title also reveals the enduring whitewashing aspects of official or touristic spaces, as we read "Multiethnic City" related to the myth of "racial democracy" and denial of racism<sup>11</sup>. The black women's illustration with the child who stares at us is also part of this

panel. The carved model of the slave ship inside a glass case is in front of it. Suddenly, a ghostly woman walks through the space of the room. The museum's space reveals itself as an image, a projection of this space's image in a screen in which a woman, dressing in a white dress and clothes, also becomes a screen of projection, part of the image. The woman appears as a ghost image, a specter haunting this place, bringing memories, embodying forgotten stories and presences. The white dress reminds the "baianas" and the clothes used by Candomblé practitioners - an Afro-Brazilian religion which is also a cultural resistance. We will come back to this topic of white clothes later. She could be a formerly enslaved woman wandering and haunting the museum and fortress. Also, she evokes the black woman in the panel; maybe she wanders around the fort at night. But unlikely the former one, the ghostly woman in motion never looks back at us.



**Fig. 2.** Kitso Lynn Lelliot - *Whitewash History* (2013)

Later, a faint projection of contemporary urban traffic at night is perceived on a glass case with slave ships and caravel models. The sound of the sea and waves come back. It swings back to the outside of the fort. The fortress's landscape appears through an irregular aperture framing a bastion

and the sea, where the ghost of the woman reveals herself again, watching the ocean or waiting for something or someone to come. There is a contrast between the darkness that frames the luminous scene with the woman. Presenting superposed ghostly images, sometimes it seems to be an image of the woman who haunts as a specter over the fort's location, sometimes the opposite seems to happen, and the landscape appears to be a spectral presence as well. We hear wave sounds alternating or also juxtaposed with ship creaking sounds. The soundscape also reinforces the instability and the phantasmatic atmosphere.

It is symptomatic to consider that the fortress is now a nautical museum, supposed to be a public space of memory. Instead, it became a tourist spot, in which the Afro-Atlantic history is just a glimpse into the room of the caravels and slave ships. Interestingly, Farol da Barra, this popular spot known as a significant tourist attraction in Salvador, gradually reveals itself in Lelliot's video, and only through fragments, making the familiar uncanny. It transforms this location that is usually seen as a postcard landmark in the space of memory; it is re-inscribed through the audiovisual narrative created by Lelliot to its colonial history, past, and present. The artist uses the video and multiple projections as a ghost device or the perfect technology to deal with and present specters and ghosts. In the film *Ghostdance* (1983), about memory, spirits, and image, Jacques Derrida plays himself as a character, and for him, the film is a sort of science of ghosts:

To be haunted by a ghost is to remember what one has never lived in the present, to remember what, in essence, has never had the form of presence. Film is a "phantomachia." Let the ghosts come back. Film plus psychoanalysis equals a science of ghosts. Modern technology, contrary to appearances, although it is scientific, increases tenfold the power of ghosts. The future belongs to ghosts.<sup>12</sup>

*Whitewash* is a phantomachia in this sense. It presents ghosts and absent images, the denial and erasure of colonial past, lives, and stories of unknown enslaved subjects who come back to haunt the fort and the

spectator. The image seems to be the perfect sphere for the ghosts. According to Barthes, there is always a *Spectrum* in photography, presenting what is terrible in it, a sort of “return of the dead.” Concerning cinema and new audiovisual technologies as the video, it is Derrida who continues to affirm:

[...] contrary to what we might believe, the experience of ghosts is not tied to a bygone historical period, [...] but on the contrary, is accentuated, accelerated by modern technologies like film, television [...]. These technologies inhabit, as it were, a phantom structure. [...] When the very first perception of an image is linked to a structure of reproduction, then we are dealing with the realm of phantoms”.<sup>13</sup>

Using video projecting layers of images, images of images in *Whitewash* seem to work perfectly to address the specters and ghosts. Working with the appearances and the present absences in this colonial building is a way of opening the way to memories and other narratives. The projections and images puzzle us; sometimes, the woman is a ghostly presence on the screen that projects previously recorded images of the museum; at others, her apparition seems spectral. It is interesting to observe that this ghostly woman frequently appears in Lelliot’s other works. On other occasions, the fort and the sea also appear to be present, but in the end, they become projections revealing themselves as ghostly images. Or a haunting cinematic technology. As suggested by Derrida, the structure of reproduction is per se the confirmation of the phantasmatic experience of seeing projected images - absences that seems to be present, making possible the return of the dead.

### **Casa de Purgar**

Tiago Sant’ana’s solo exhibition *Casa de Purgar* (Purging House) (2018), curated by Ayrson Heráclito is composed of many works dealing with sugar, the history of plantation, and colonialism. The series of videos *Refino#2*, *Refino #4* (Refining), *Passar em branco* (Ironing in white) and *Açúcar sobre capela* (Sugar over chapel), all of them were shot in the ruined old sugar mill

Engenho Paramim from XVIII century in São Francisco do Conde close to Paraguaçu river in Recôncavo da Bahia region. Recôncavo was one of the central poles of sugar cane production in colonial times. As affirmed by Heraclito in the catalog<sup>14</sup>, purging house refers to the process of producing refined white sugar, turning cane syrup into different types of sugar, the brown sugar being considered inferior and the white sugar high quality. The hierarchy and classification of one of the main colonial export and extractive products replicate the Brazilian racial segregation since colonial times. The artist reworks the refined sugar and its white color in several meanings: the source of wealth, refining brown sugar into white, the Black enslaved workforce and the politics of whitening.

In *Refino#4*, the sugar covers completely illustrations of Black enslaved workers made by Jean-Baptiste Debret in a book. According to Sant'ana, he proposes an archeology of sugar. A pile of white sugar is gradually disassembled, a spoon removes little by little, revealing the image underneath. Both images on the book show African or afro descendants enslaved performing work; at the left, two of them are piling, and the image on the right is from a sugar mill driven by two workers. The exhausting work of sugar cycle production by enslaved Black workers created colonial wealth. The series of illustrations produced by Debret in Brazil is still often used as an accurate record of colonial times and enslaved workers, being present in many educational books, although it is often idealized or reproduces exotic bias. Interestingly, the image of the sugar mill shows an impossible action: the place in which the remains of the sugar cane should be exited is the one in which the entire cane is being put. As an inversion of the direction, in unconscious ways, the inaccurate record could also propose an inversion of time, of purging in other ways this violent history of exploitation.

In *Refine #2*, the sugar appears as a waterfall moving downward over, covering the artist's body in the ruins of the old engenho. In this performance, the white powder is falling continuously, sculpting time. In *Açúcar sobre capela*, the artist walks around in the ruins of a chapel of this colonial building with a sieve, covering the space with white sugar, which seems like snow. The work with the sieve performs an ancestral gesture, the

work of enslaved Black men and women in Brazil. *Passar em branco* (Ironing in white) shows the artists ironing white clothes repeatedly, echoing the domestic labor of colonial and present times. In Portuguese, the expression “passar em branco” means to overlook, to neglect an action or something. Slavery, institutional racism and colonialism are constantly being neglected in Brazilian reality. All these works bring a dimension of ruination, as proposed by Stoler, in which “imperial [and colonial] formations persist in their material debris, in ruined landscapes and through the social ruination of people’s life.”<sup>15</sup> Past colonial times still resonate and act on the present. The sugar ( and its white color) appear, invading spaces, ruins, images.



**Fig. 3.** Tiago Sant’Ana - *Refino 2* (2018)

The white color is usually considered a sign of purity and pristine, but Sant’ana works translate race hierarchies and systemic racism and the presence of sugar, a sweet product made by violent forced labor. On the other hand, as observed by Conduru<sup>16</sup>, there is not only one dimension of color and meaning in the artist’s work. It also brings purging and energies of movement from candomblé and Afro-Brazilian religions. In Afro-Brazilian traditions and as in many African traditions, white is the colour of purging, connected to

spiritual dimensions. Practitioners of African-Brazilian religions wear white cloth, but as stated by Picton and Mack “white cloth [...] is the ubiquitous product of West Africa looms”<sup>17</sup>. In Yoruba traditions, white is the color of Obatala (or Oxalá In Brazil). According to Renne<sup>18</sup>, white cloth is connected to the realm connections with spirits and ancestors and could used for healing and protection. In this sense, white clothes used by Sant’ana and Lelliot could be also the sign and presence of ancestors and spirituality.



**Fig. 4.** Tiago Sant’Ana - *Passar em branco* (2018)

In Lelliot’s work, white plays a sensational disorientating role, blinding us, bringing us the sensation of being lost. In Sant’ana, besides criticism of systemic racism, white and sugar could also be transformed into parts of a ritual of purging violent colonial history. It also connects us to the ghosts of African enslaved workers from the haunted ruins of the sugar mill.

For Derrida, the experience with the ghosts is necessary for us to learn to live, and a matter of memory and justice:

If it – learning to live – remains to be done, it can happen only between life and death. Neither in life nor in death alone. What happened between all the “two’s”

one likes, such as between life and death, can only maintain itself with some ghost, can only talk with or about some ghost [s'entretenir de quelque fantôme]. So it would be necessary to learn spirits. Even and especially if the spectral is not. [...] The time of the learning to live [...] to learn to live with ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company of the companionship, in the commerce without commerce of ghosts.[..] And this being-with specters would also be, not only but also, a politics of memory, of inheritance, and of generations.<sup>19</sup>

The philosopher proposes a “being with specters,” which resists ontology and metaphysics because phantoms can surround life and death; they cannot be located nor be controlled. They can appear and return at any moment. Accepting being with ghosts means also fighting for a politics of memory from the past and future, which is not and is yet to be. In this coming and going with specters, between living and dead, past and future, there is always a disjunction of the subject, a difference that resists totalization and an acceptance of the alterity. Those questions inhabit Lelliot’s and Sant’ana’s works, which present us with the possibility – even if it is a slight chance – of those who are dead or alive to return. It haunts us with a denied and silenced colonial and present history of enslaved women and men, and we do not know their names or stories. The woman in white, performed by the Lelliot, embodies one unknown life, her nostalgia, and her longing to come back through space and time. Sant’ana brings us to the ruination of the present, in which by one side colonial past is still acting in debris, but by the other, the performance opens a possibility of purging history. Also, it is about the present, about the justice to be made for those who were gone, of all those ghosts of the history of slavery in Brazil embodied in the continuous, ruinous, structural racism and endless debt to Afro-Brazilians of the past, present, and future.

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# Amber, Africa, and the African Diaspora

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## **ABSTRACT**

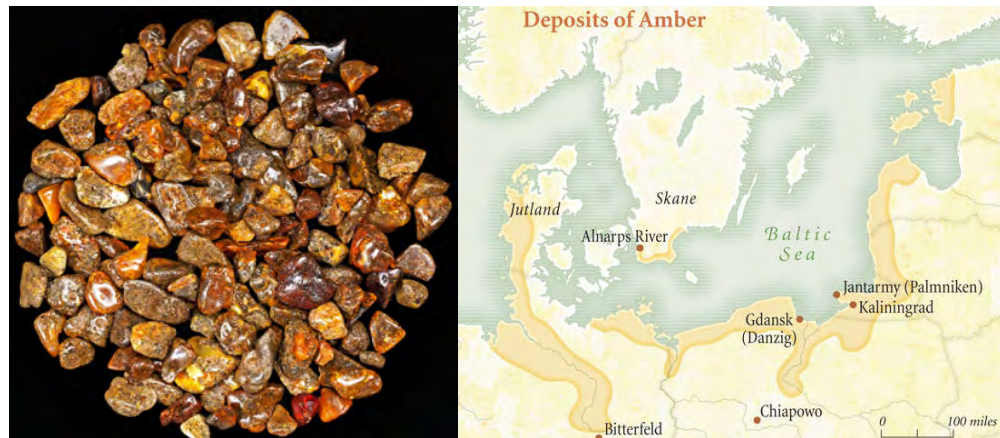
A small number of Baltic amber body ornaments excavated at two locations, both later registered national sites — the Rio de Janeiro Valongo Wharf Archaeological Site and the New York City African Burial Ground — provide critical evidence for the ownership and use (including burial) of the European-sourced fossil resin among enslaved people from Africa. Despite their tiny size and limited number, these beads and pendants are significant witnesses to the evolving picture of the four millennia-long trade, use, and value of amber in Africa and in the slavery-sourced African diaspora in the Americas.

## **KEYWORDS**

Valongo Wharf; African Burial Ground; Africa; Amber; Slavery

At the core of this paper is a small number of amber body ornaments: a single bead excavated in 1991 from a woman's grave in the African Burial Ground National Monument, New York City (in use from 1630s-1795 for both free and enslaved Africans) and a small number of beads and pendants excavated a decade later at the Valongo Wharf Archaeological Site, Rio de Janeiro, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site which was originally built for the disembarkation of African slaves in 1811, closed in 1831. The ambers are tiny but eloquent witnesses to the millennia-long use of European-sourced fossil resin in Africa and to the tragic story of the trade in enslaved people from Africa to the Americas. The function of amber in adornment, protection, and medicine throughout Africa and in African diasporic cultures is first documented in New Kingdom of Egypt.

Today, amber is still a much sought-after material for adornment, medicine, incense, religion, and uses we might call magical as well as for its remarkable inclusions of flora and fauna. It still functions in trade as a medium of exchange. What is at the basis of human usage of amber is the fossil resin's very nature, its appearance, touch, smell when rubbed or burnt and the significance of its visible inclusions of plant and animal matter. From earliest times, it was believed to have medicinal, magical, and certain religious properties. Amber could be traded in both raw form or turned into beads and pendants. Throughout history, amber's rarity and attributed beliefs about the substance have significantly contributed to its high value in trade, gifts, deposits, or dedications. Pharmaceutical cures and divine associations are documented throughout cultures from earliest times. Amber's inclusions of perfectly preserved floral and faunal have lent even more mystery and magic to this mysterious jewel. In ancient Greece, ancient Italy, in the Middle Ages through to the modern era, its exchange value has been compared to that of gold, silver, crystal, the finest silks, to frankincense and myrrh, and to various currencies.

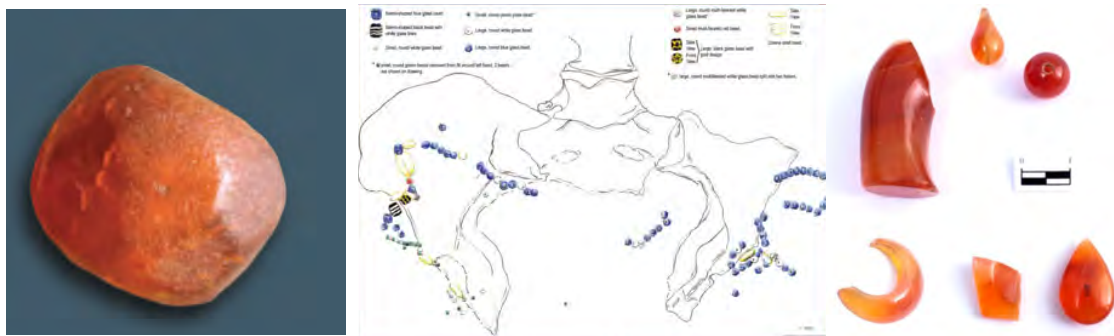


**Fig. 1.** Polished Baltic Amber Nodules (Private Collection. Photo: Author) and Map of Deposits of Baltic Amber (Causey 2011, map by David Fuller).

The first illustration includes polished pieces of Baltic amber, the variety of fossil resin imported into Africa by various indirect routes for the last four millennia, and also a simplified map that depicts the northern European amber source areas. This amber is geologically located in what is known as the Blue Earth layer of the upper Eocene, and thus 34—38 million years old. From antiquity into the nineteenth century, most of the fossil resin was found near the coast of the Baltic, often washed up upon the shore. The largest piece includes remarkably preserved fauna and flora. This over three millennia-long use of amber sheds light on the beads and pendants excavated in New York and Rio de Janeiro.

At left in Figure 2 is a tiny rounded and faceted bead from Grave 340, a well-preserved burial of a mature female, the only documented example of amber found amongst the 419 excavated graves of the African Burial Ground site. At right in Figure 2 is a group of worked ambers, beads and pendants disinterred from the Valongo Wharf area. Both the New York and Brazilian sites were professionally excavated under very tight deadlines because of intended building projects, both of them connected to national endeavors. In New York, a large United States Federal government center was to be built and in Rio, the project was connected to the 2016 Olympics.<sup>1</sup> In 2017, the

Valongo Wharf Archaeological Site was designated by UNESCO as a part of World Heritage.<sup>2</sup>



**Fig. 2** Left: Amber Bead from Grave 340, African Burial Ground, NY. (Photo: David Seckler). Center: Diagram of Deceased Woman’s Pelvis (Grave 340) with Amber Indicated in Orange. Courtesy of General Services Administration. Right: Amber Ornaments from the Valongo Wharf Site. (Photo: T.A. Lima et alia)

The New York bead was first brought to my attention by American historians and anthropologists in the United States knowledgeable about the Burial Ground finds following the 2012 publication of my book, *Amber and the Ancient World*. This led me to research on amber and Africa beyond my specialty in ancient art. With my antennae out for other ambers from sites connected to the enslavement of Africans, I discovered the first mention of the Volongo Wharf site finds in their first publications. These ambers are among the approximately 2,000 beads from the wharf site area.

Within a very short time after the two excavations had begun, both sites and their finds became the subject of considerable debate — about the disinterment itself; the methods, analysis, research, storage, intended publications and proposed displays. Since the time of the original excavations and the consequent scholarly publications, considerable critical press and contemporary debate in the origin countries have addressed the projects. Conversations in communities and timely responses have appeared in scholarly and popular presses. The deeply uncomfortable legacy of the sites continues to be articulated. Among the many issues still on the table is the need for a more encompassing discussion by descendant communities of any

future activity. Continued debate also concerns long-term display of the history and archaeology.<sup>3</sup>

The African Burial Ground is located in today's Lower Manhattan at what was formerly known as the Negro Burial Ground. Up to 15,000 Africans were buried there between the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century and 1795, when it was closed. Both enslaved and freed slaves were interred there since 'negroes' could not be buried in churchyards. Excavation was completed on a partial section of the burial ground site by July 1993. Despite the limited number of graves excavated, this section sample demonstrated that many of the human remains, of children, women, and men, were well preserved. Among these, Grave 340 stand out: the woman was at least 40 but perhaps as old as 60, the deceased's teeth were modified, and she was buried with 112 beads and cowrie shells in the form of a waist belt including the single bead of amber.

While some have suggested that the amber bead may have been acquired in North America, it is more likely that the bead had an African provenance.<sup>4</sup> In this author's opinion, the shape of the bead is comparable to many 18th-century faceted ambers made in Germany or London. It is significant that the deceased was interred with the belt positioned on the body as it was in her life, thus playing similar many of the same roles in ceremonies of death and post-burial: of wealth, status, and protection.

The excavation and primary publication of the Valongo Wharf were led by Tania Andrade Lima.<sup>5</sup> The Wharf, built in 1811, was adjacent to the biggest slave market in Brazil in what is today's port zone of Rio de Janeiro. This market operated from 1779 until 1831—the year in which the transatlantic slave trade was banned. By 1843 the site was covered over, and an embankment built. The work in 2011-2012 uncovered the old area and the ambers are amongst a range of small objects excavated from the two major dumping areas found at the site—finds which likely came from one or more kinds of deposits. The thousands of the small objects are today classified with terms such as jewelry, beads, ornaments, adornments, talismans, amulets, charms, or apotropaics. The finds are of a range of materials: blue and white glass beads, shells, corals, crystals (including chandelier elements and perfume lids), but also rock prisms, flakes, and cores, plant fiber and

copper rings, *figas* of bone or wood, animal horn, teeth and claws, crucifixes, coins, medals, rattles, and keys. The majority appear to have been originally worn on the human body, next to the skin, in the hair, or attached to garments.<sup>6</sup>

My thinking about objects of adornment have been much influenced by a range of archaeologists, historians, ethnologists, anthropologists. Jewelry and amulets are value-laden, and their forms and material qualities (the use of rare and exotic materials reflects labor, skill, and knowledge-intensive production) are powerful indicators of social identity. Permanent ornaments can endure beyond one human life and can connect their wearers to ancestors, thus playing a crucial role in social continuity—especially when we consider that such objects are imbued with an optical authority that words and actions often lack or carry messages too dangerous or controversial to put into words. In life, in funeral rituals, in the grave and in ritual deposits amber and other amuletic ornaments would have had a social function, solidifying a group's belief systems, and reiterating ideas about the afterworld. As I have proposed before, perhaps more than any other aspect of the archaeological record, body ornamentation is a point of access into the social world of the past. Ethnographers see body ornamentation as affirming the social construct and structure and, when worn by the political elite, as guaranteeing group beliefs. Interpretations of the meanings of body ornamentation imagery must consider how 'artistic' languages work to create expressive effects that are dependent upon the setting.

In my close look at the finds from Manhattan and Valongo, many scholars have aided in my understanding of the complexity of the material. Their work has greatly aided my study of amber in burials and in particular, of these Afro-Atlantic finds. To my Brazilian and American colleagues who have worked on the material from the two sites, I owe a great deal. I would also like to signal the work of James Walvin, who has contributed much to the fields of slavery and modern British social history. His 2017 book *Slavery in Small Things: Slavery and Modern Cultural Habits* was an especially important model, especially because of his focus on the cowrie shell. Two decades ago, my approach to amber in the ancient Mediterranean world was

enlightened by Roger Moorey, an Ancient Near Eastern specialist, who was among the first to ask critical functions of formerly interred material culture, objects frequently found in museum collections, and his insights relevant here: “Even if it may be possible to identify who or what is represented in a human-made object, that does not in itself resolve the question of what *activity* the object was involved in.”<sup>7</sup> And, by extension, we can inquire: what activity or activities occurred before burial?

At about the same time, I met Randall White, a prehistorian, who had opened up an especially wide view of objects of adornment from their earliest appearance in the archaeological record: “Much jewelry, especially if figured, belongs to a phenomenology of images, and it functions in ritual ways. It is part of a social flow of information and can establish, modify, and comment on major social categories, such as age, sex, and status, since it has value, carries meaning, and suggests communication within groups, regions, and often larger geographical areas.”<sup>8</sup>

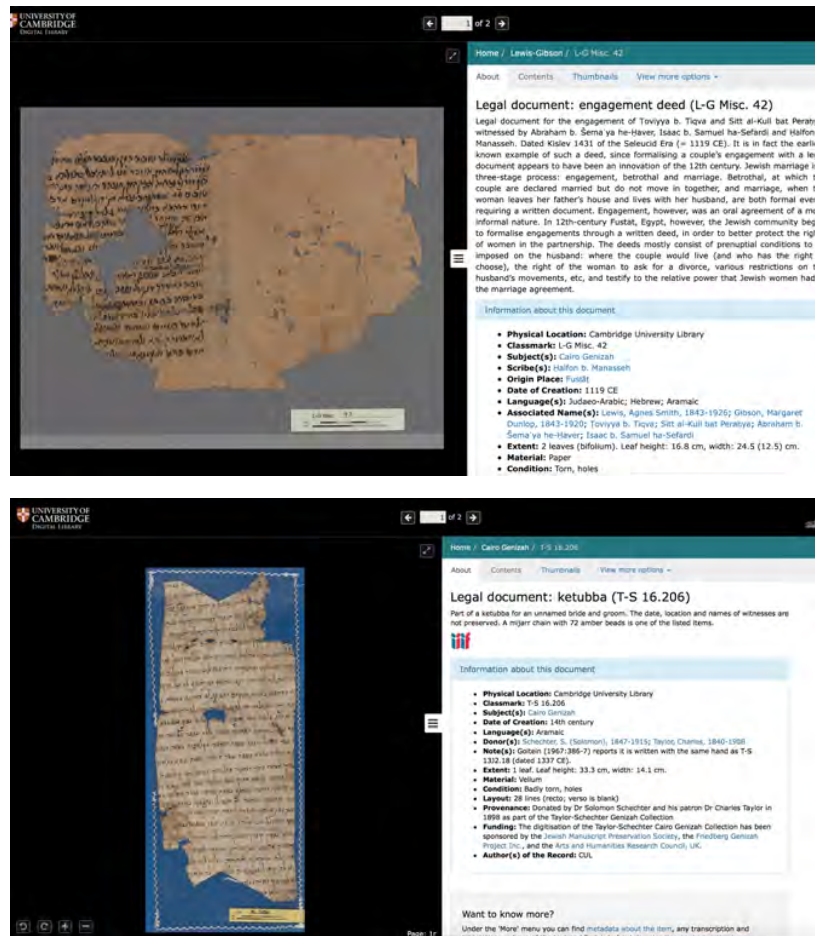
These two specialists, among others, led to my positioning that jewelry and amulets are value-laden, and their forms and material qualities (the use of rare and exotic materials reflects labor, skill, and knowledge-intensive production) are powerful indicators of social identity. Permanent ornaments can endure beyond one human life and can connect their wearers to ancestors, thus playing a crucial role in social continuity—especially when we consider that such objects are imbued with an optical authority that words and actions often lack or carry messages too dangerous or controversial to put into words. In life, in funeral rituals, in the grave, and in ritual deposits amber and other amuletic ornaments would have had a social function, solidifying a group’s belief systems, and reiterating ideas about the afterworld. Perhaps more than any other aspect of the archaeological record, body ornamentation is a point of access into the social world of the past. Ethnographers see body ornamentation as affirming the social construct and structure and, when worn by the political elite, as guaranteeing group beliefs. Interpretations of the meanings of body ornamentation imagery must consider how ‘artistic’ languages work to create expressive effects that are dependent upon the setting.

When did Baltic amber first appear in Africa? The jury is out about the evidence from ancient Egypt. There is some agreement about the painted tribute scenes in the New Kingdom Tomb of Rekhmire (that is, mid-second millennium BC) where strings of beads appear to be amber. But a text from the reign of the New Kingdom Pharaoh Thutmose III — is registered a delivery from Greece of ‘a great heap of amber which is measured by the *heket*, making 36.692 *deben* (about 3424kgs).’ Even today, at a time when amber is industrially mined, that is a great deal of amber! Another strong case for Baltic amber in Egypt was made by Professor Sinclair Hood: he identified a string of resin beads in Tutankhamun’s tomb as very as those of the Bronze Age Tumulus Culture of Central Europe. They have never been tested, but the size and forms are identical.<sup>9</sup>

With the establishment of Islam in northern Africa and the development of long-distance trade across the continent by merchantmen, amber, especially in the form of amber beads, but also as a raw material (to be used in medicine and incense), is reported as a trade good in the trans-Saharan trade by at least the 7<sup>th</sup> century of the Christian calendar. Amber from the European north was joined in trading and wearing with the beads from the glass-making centers of the Islamic world — which had inherited their traditions from ancient Near Eastern and Classical centers. Historians have noted the important accounts and documents that reveal a significant role for worked amber (mainly beads from Cairo) in North Africa as well as to the sub-Saharan from the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD onwards. This is assumed to be because of the preference for amber as the material for prayer beads. And amber in medicine and healing has an ancient and documentable history from this early date on the continent of Africa.

Until now, a large body of documentation for the use of amber in northern Africa has been untapped in regard to the study of the ancient resin: the mass of documents from the Cairo Genizah. From the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Jewish community of Fustat (Old Cairo) deposited at least 280,000 old and obsolete writings in a purpose-built storeroom in the Ben Ezra synagogue.<sup>10</sup> Such storerooms can be found in all synagogues and are intended to preserve any scrap of paper on which may be written the word

‘God.’ Sacred, such pieces of paper or parchment were — and are — considered too holy to discard. Eventually, such holy writings were intended for burial in the cemetery. Occasionally, though, this fate eluded these assemblages as was the case with the treasures in the Cairo Genizah.



**Fig. 3.** Two documents from the Cairo Genizah in the Cambridge University Digital Library site. Top: Engagement deed; scribe and couple named. L-G Misc. 42. Paper. In Judeo-Arabic, Hebrew, Aramaic. Dated 1119 CE. Bottom: Part of a ketubba (legal document) T-S 16-206. Vellum. In Aramaic, dated 1337 CE. Cambridge University Library. Part of a ketubba of an unnamed bride and groom. A chain with 72 amber beads is recorded.

These fragmentary manuscripts outline a 1,000-year continuum (870 CE to 19th century CE) of inhabitants of North Africa—Jewish, Christian,

Muslim—and comprise the largest and most diverse collection of medieval manuscripts in the world. They are written in various languages, especially Hebrew, Aramaic, Judeo-Arabic, and Arabic.

Among those that mention amber is a medical text, a leaf from a larger pharmacopoeia, that describes the preparation of a drug, including camphor, saffron, frankincense, wax, and amber.

At Figure 3, dating to 1119 CE, is one of the earliest examples of an engagement deed found in the Genizah; it mentions one amber ring and a portion of small pieces of amber. It is the earliest known example in the world of such a deed and is written in Judaeo-Aramaic, Hebrew, and Aramaic. At the bottom, in Aramaic, is a *ketubah*, a formal Jewish marriage contract of 1337 CE guaranteeing a bride certain future rights, including property. A string of 72 amber beads is mentioned.<sup>11</sup>

Dating much later are travelers' reports of the use of amber, both in North and sub-Saharan Africa. As Stanley Alpern outlines, beads were among the all-time most popular imports to Africa from medieval times on, and in strongly evidence in the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Once the slave trade unfolded, a new, tragic, and sobering story begins, one that is known through business records and other transactions: African, European, and New World. "Many billions [of beads] landed in barrels, case, and casks... Some came loose, but the usual rule was to prestring them and sell the strings in clusters or bundles."<sup>12</sup> It is to be remembered that over one-half of the exports to Africa in the slave trade were foreign goods transshipped through London and amber from the Baltic, Germany and later Sweden were among the cargo.

In this illustration (Figure 4) by Jean-Baptiste Debret of sixteen different enslaved women representing the diversity of African heritage in Brazil, made 1816-1831 and published in 1854, was part of a commission by the Portuguese court. In dress, jewelry, and hairstyle is of significant variety. Some of the jewelry elements are conceivably of amber.<sup>1</sup>



**Fig. 4.** J.-B. Debret, Negro Slaves from Different Nations. The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, The New York Public Library. New York Public Library Digital Collections.

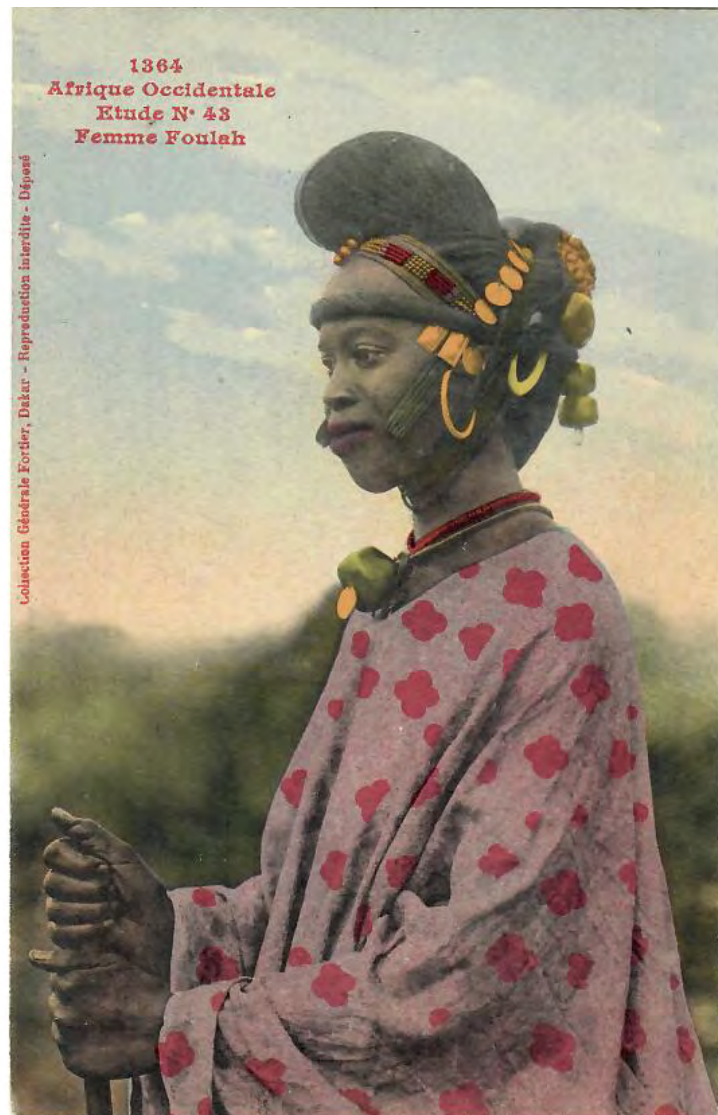
Senegambia is a case in point, and just one excavated burial site, Diakhité, (active from the 18<sup>th</sup> century until abandonment in the mid 19<sup>th</sup>) is illuminating. Marie-Joseph Opper and Howard Opper wrote in 1989, “Amber beads and faceted crystal beads were among the most expensive items in precolonial Senegambia.”<sup>14</sup> As the Oppers outlined, the bead evidence from the burial supports period reports such as the famous 1763-64 travel account by the Abbé Jean-Baptiste Demanet: “Yellow amber is a must...Coral and amber serve to make necklaces and belts for kings, their wives, and for all who can afford them. They interpret these necklaces and belts wide in the form of rosaries with beads of coral, amber, fine crystal and fancy glass

beads...”<sup>15</sup> And critical to our understanding of amber beads in Africa and the African diaspora is the Oppers’ reminder of cultural continuity from their above-noted essay: “As elsewhere in West Africa, the heirlooming of beads seems to have been a common practice at Diakhité...and such heirlooming of personal material continues to be an important cultural aspect among Senegalese women.”

Contemporary documents of the slave trade from Africa include significant information in bills of lading and memoirs. These are painful to read. One merchant reported receiving a male Negro in return for thirteen beads of coral, half a string of amber beads, 28 silver bells and three pairs of bracelets. Captain Canot, the notorious slave trader active in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, in his memoir, recounts a list of gifts presented at Timbo for slaves: Several packages of blue and white calicoes, ten yards of scarlet cloth, six kegs of powder, 300 pounds of tobacco, six muskets, two strings of amber, a gilded sword, and several packages of Spanish fly. Canot is also the first to describe another use for amber (one still popular today amongst the Fula), the decoration of a Fula woman’s hair, which was plaited all over her skull and then adorned “with amber beads and copiously anointed with vegetable butter, so the points gleamed with fire.”<sup>16</sup>

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Africa, especially in areas with significant numbers of travelers, photographic postcards of local inhabitants in “traditional dress” document traditional amber use, especially in French-speaking North African countries, Algeria, and Morocco, and in West Africa.

The early 20th-century postcard of a Fula woman illustrated here (Figure 5) exemplifies the role of amber in adornment.<sup>17</sup> This is just one more record of amber objects with possible connections to ancestors, objects potentially imbued with an authority, with a social function, a point of access into the social world of the past.



**Fig. 5.** Femme Foulah. Antique postcard. Private collection. Photo: Author

A necklace in the Smithsonian National Museum of African art is an exemplum of the many lives of amber beads.<sup>18</sup> This necklace, last worn by an Ait Atta woman in Morocco. As the museum notes in its online text, necklaces such as this “...were worn especially for weddings, but for other public gatherings, as well, a woman's beaded jewelry ensemble would have made a dazzling and impressive visual statement. It would have reflected, as well, a woman's status and the prominence of her family... since the beads were

usually old and reused for many generations. Indeed, women's jewelry from this region functions as portable wealth, as individual beads of coral, amber, and stone can be sold when a family needs money, something that is preferable to parting with an entire piece of jewelry.”

The contemporary marketplace (including online advertisements), popular photography and anthropological study substantiate traditional roles for amber. For example, among the Yoruba, amber is essential for the Orisha Oshun, whose worshippers and priests still today wear her distinctive amber beads. In contemporary Cuba, some of the necklaces used in the Afro-Cuban Rule of Santería need of amber beads. The necklace for Ochosi, Oxun, for example, ritually requires a single amber bead in the string. (Might this usage shed light on the single amber bead of grave 340 of the African Burial Ground?)

What stories do the small beads from the African Burial Ground and the Valongo Wharf tell us? Which uses did they embody? In which ‘activities’ were they involved at various points in their ownership, then in their burial, and since their exhumation? Might we consider them as miniature sites of memory? Do their uncovering and display allow them to continue to work, now, today, in new ways of sorrow and mourning, of remembrance and protection? Whatever the answers are to these questions, we cannot deny their continuing role as poignant witnesses to a complex past, to cultural and migrational trauma.

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## ENDNOTES

1. The discussion of the African Burial Ground is extensive. For an excellent encompassing assessment, see *The New York African Burial Ground Reports*.
2. For the Valongo Wharf site, the literature is also extensive. Sources consulted are in bibliography.
3. This debate continues in contemporary publications from newspapers to scholarly papers.
4. See, for example Bianco et alia.
5. Lima, 2013.
6. Lima et alia, 2014.
7. Moorey 2004, p.9
8. White 1992, p. 560.
9. Hood, Sinclair. "Amber in Egypt," in Beck, C.W. & Bouzek, J. (ed.) *Amber in archaeology: proceedings of the Second International Conference on Amber in Archaeology*, Liblice 1990: 230—35. Prague: Institute of Archaeology, Czech Academy of Sciences.
10. Ahern, p. 24.
11. Cambridge University Digital Library, Cairo Genizah section.
12. Opper and Opper, p. 16
13. Jean Baptiste Debret, *Voyage Pittoresque et Historique au Bresil* (Paris, 1834-39), vol. 2, plate 22, p. 75.
14. Opper and Opper, p. 19
15. Demanet, p. 126.
16. Conneau and Meyer, p. 179.
17. Postcard with inscription: "1364. Afrique Occidentale, Etude No. 43, Femme Foulah, Collection Générale Fortier, Dakar" (Private collection).
18. Smithsonian Institution African Museum of Art  
[https://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:nmafa\\_2003-10-2?q=amber+atta&fq=data\\_source%3A%22National+Museum+of+African+Art%22&fq=online\\_media\\_type%3A%22Images%22&fq=online\\_visual\\_material%3Atrue&record=2&hlterm=amber%2Batta&inline=true](https://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:nmafa_2003-10-2?q=amber+atta&fq=data_source%3A%22National+Museum+of+African+Art%22&fq=online_media_type%3A%22Images%22&fq=online_visual_material%3Atrue&record=2&hlterm=amber%2Batta&inline=true)

# **Alienated émigré in Paris: The Residue of the Trauma of World War II in the Art of Józef Czapski**

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## **ABSTRACT**

A series of images of an anonymous resident of Paris, lost in the whirl of life, in the labyrinth of streets and the underground, always lonely, preoccupied with his own thoughts, insensitive to fads and novelties. This is how I would describe the protagonist of the works painted in the 1950s-80s by Józef Czapski, a Polish émigré who settled in Paris after World War II. The alienated figure is the *alter ego* of the artist and the symbol of the fate of hundreds of thousands of Poles expelled from their country as a result of Nazi and Soviet occupation during WWII. The biography of Czapski himself (1896-1993) is the best exemplification of the forced migration caused by the dramatic political history of the twentieth century. An eyewitness to the war trauma suffered by displaced civilians, prisoners of war and soldiers, he described these experiences in his diary and in two books – *Memories of Starobielsk* and *Inhuman Land*. He complemented the verbal narrative with drawings, both of which conveyed a horrifying depiction of the war hecatomb. The burden of the wartime memories made his paintings idiosyncratic, yet perceived as a *passé* idiom in the context of the contemporary Parisian art scene. This case study emphasizes the peculiarity of Czapski's position, resulting from his mental inability to involve in artistic progressivism.

## **KEYWORDS**

Forced Migration; World War II; Art Criticism; Expressionism; Post-Impressionism.

### Solitude

A long series of images of an anonymous (male or female) inhabitant of Paris, a *flaneur*, a passerby lost in the hustle and bustle of metropolitan life, in a labyrinth of streets and metro stations or one confined in the interiors of railway wagons, cafés and bars, museum galleries and theatre boxes; always alone, deep in thought, immersed in themselves. There were also studies of an impoverished, disabled, elderly person, marginalised in society and helpless in the face of his/her misfortune.



**Fig. 1.** Józef Czapski, *Old Woman*, 1965, oil on canvas, 71 x 92,6 cm, National Museum in Kraków

The above depictions might be treated as descriptions of the main protagonist featured in the paintings executed from the 1950s to the 1980s by Józef Czapski, a Polish writer, columnist, art critic, and painter who – after the end of World War II, in which he actively participated – settled in Paris to

represent the interests of the Polish government-in-exile and to lobby for non-communist Poland. I will argue that this alienated figure, who was the point of focus in the narrowly-framed scenes of Czapski's paintings, is the artistic equivalent of the mental condition of the artist himself, as well as a symbol of the fate of hundreds of thousands of Poles exiled from their country during the Nazi and Soviet invasion in 1939, sent to labor camps in Germany and the USSR during the six-year-long occupation of Poland or following combat trails with the Allied forces. It is a token of the lives of those Polish emigrants who were deprived of the opportunity of returning to their homeland by the communist regime which Moscow imposed on the People's Republic of Poland in 1945.



**Fig. 2** Józef Czapski, *Lonely Woman*, 1979, oil on canvas, 92 x 50 cm, private collection

Nevertheless, it was not only the course of World War II that influenced Czapski's biography. The outbreak of World War I, the revolution of 1917 in Imperial Russia, and the Polish-Soviet war of 1919-1920 also left a mark on his life. Consequently, he became an eye-witness of the turbulent history of the 20th century, an emphatic observer of the suffering of dozens of thousands of civilian refugees and soldiers fighting on fronts. I hereby formulate the thesis that Czapski never freed himself of the war trauma, which was reflected in both his writings and historical journalism as well as in the sphere that can be found at the other extreme of objective historical narration – in the aesthetic experience, in the manner of comprehending the essence of painting, and in the expression of the art form created.

#### **A short biography of Czapski**

Czapski could share his rich, multifaceted biography with several people, at the very least.<sup>4</sup> Born in the Czech capital city of Prague into an aristocratic family (his mother, Josephine, derived from the Austrian family of Thun-Hohenstein, whereas his father, Jerzy, was a descendant of the Prussian counts of von Hutten), Józef Maria Emeryk Franciszek Ignacy Czapski (1896-1993) spent his happy and prosperous childhood in Priluki near Minsk (at the time the territory was a part of Imperial Russia, today it belongs to Belarus). He attended secondary school in Petrograd, where, in 1915, he undertook the study of law. As a subject of tsar Nicholas II, he was mobilized in 1916. In 1917 he enlisted in the First Krechowce Uhlan Regiment, a part of the Polish First Corps, singled out from the Russian army. However, under the influence of Tolstoy's pacifism, in 1918, he left the army ranks to start a religious phalanstère in Petrograd. Yet, the commune was ephemeral. The very same year saw Czapski resume his military service; however, by command's consent, he was not sent into combat. Instead, he was entrusted with the mission of finding these officers from his regiment who had gone missing in Russia. Therefore, holding a diplomatic passport, he covered considerable distances across the USSR territory, at the same time eye-witnessing the dramatic conditions in which the Russian population

lived. His mission was a fiasco, as it turned out that the officers he was looking for had already been executed.

Russian philosopher, writer, and poet, Dmitry Merezhkovsky – whom Czapski met in Petrograd – convinced him that one should fight for liberty by force of arms. Consequently, Czapski re-conscripted to the army during the Polish-Soviet War in 1919. He was awarded the War Order of *Virtuti Militari* – the highest Polish military honor – and promoted to the rank of second lieutenant in recognition of showing heroism in the Kiev Offensive in 1920.

With his taste shaped in the salons of affluent aristocracy, who relished art and music, Czapski began to pursue his dream of developing his skills as a painter in the 1920s. As of 1921, he continued the studies of painting – which he commenced at the School of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 1918 – at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow under the supervision of, among others, Józef Pankiewicz, the promoter of Post-Impressionism, who had just returned from France. In 1924, accompanied by a group of his students, who adopted the name *Komitet Paryski* [Paris Committee], Pankiewicz moved to the branch of the Krakow-based academy to Paris. He taught the students to venerate Cézanne and Bonnard and to show respect to the old masters, whose works they admired together in the galleries of the Louvre. These fascinations of the young years left a lasting mark on Czapski's artistic attitude.

Czapski returned to Poland in 1932; however, the outbreak of World War II interrupted the artistic career he had just embarked on. Re-mobilized, he was held captive by Soviets during the defensive campaign in 1939. Initially detained in the prisoner-of-war camp in Starobilsk, he was later transferred to the detention camp in Pavlishchev Bor near Smolensk and, eventually, to Gryazovets near Vologda.

In July 1941, the Polish government-in-exile in London and the Soviet authorities signed the Sikorski-Mayski Agreement, which provided for amnesty for the Poles who were held captive in the USSR. At the time, Czapski joined the Polish Armed Forces forming in Totskoye under the command of General Władysław Anders. However, a vast majority of the prisoners of war from Starobilsk did not conscript to the newly-formed army,

which aroused concern among the command. For the second time in his life, Czapski was entrusted with the mission of tracing the fate of those Polish officers who had gone missing. As general Anders's *chargé d'affaires*, Czapski traversed the Soviet territory from Moscow to Kuybyshev in the frosty winter of late 1941 and early 1942. He reached Soviet decision-makers in the NKVD [the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs] headquarters in Lubyanka and in the Gulag [a system of labor camps] central office in Chkalovo, Kazakhstan. To no avail. Why did this happen?

In March 1940, the Soviet secret police conducted mass executions, shooting 22,000 Polish officers, members of prison authorities, border guards, representatives of the judiciary, medical doctors, clergy, members of the intelligentsia, and landowners, who were held captive in prisons and detention camps in Starobilsk, Kozelsk, and Ostashkov. What saved Czapski from execution by firing squad was the intervention of the German embassy (Nazi Germany was USSR's ally until 1941), undertaken at the request of Czapski's mother's family, who was well-connected with several German families.

The fact that Poles were executed at Stalin's order was consistently concealed by the Soviet authorities as well as by Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. Germans, who discovered mass graves in Katyn in April 1943 while marching east, were accused of this war crime. It was as late as 1990 – the time of Mikhail Gorbachev's presidency – that the Russian authorities admitted that the annihilation of the Polish elite was one of the gravest war crimes of Stalinism. Never did Czapski have any doubts as to who was liable for the crime and exposed attempts at distorting this historical truth throughout his life.

While traversing the territory of the USSR, Czapski saw the enormous existential poverty and anguish of ordinary Russians. To compensate for the difficult experience, he wrote down his reflections on the history of European painting on the train from Moscow to Tashkent. Earlier, while imprisoned in Gryazovets, he resorted to art as an alternative world, a world completely different from the tragic living conditions in the camp. The camp authorities consented for the prisoners to undertake educational activities after a whole

day of grueling physical work. Within the framework of self-education, Czapski delivered, in French, a series of talks on Marcel Proust's prose, in which he was engrossed during his several-month sojourn in London in 1926.<sup>2</sup> To the extent to which it was possible, he used scraps of paper to sketch portraits of his fellow prisoners and scenes from camp life. Drawing restored in him the determination to survive and offered a mental escape. When treated for tuberculosis in camp hospital, he began to write the history of European painting from David to Picasso. Unfortunately, his notebook was lost.

### **Intimate diary**

In March 1942, while staying with the staff of Anders's army in Yangiyo'l near Tashkent in Uzbekistan, Czapski bought a black linen-bound notebook to resume the habit of writing an 'intimate diary' he started keeping in his youth. The pre-war volumes of the diary have not been preserved. By the end of his life, Czapski filled the pages of 278 such notebooks with casually rendered drawings of fragments of the reality he observed and regularly wrote accounts of everyday events. Today, they constitute an invaluable testimony to 20th-century events, both those constituting the 'grand narrative' of objective political history and the very personal ones, constituting the artist's 'minor narrative.'

Due to the pressure exerted on Stalin by British and American authorities, the undernourished, emaciated, decimated by diseases, and poorly equipped with weapons, Anders's army of over 75,000 soldiers as well as 37,000 members of the prisoners' families, who had been displaced to the heartland of Russia, were evacuated to Iran. As the head of the Department of Propaganda and Education at General Anders's staff, Czapski traversed the entire combat trail from Russia through Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, the Caspian Sea, Iran, Iraq, Palestine, and Egypt to Italy. He conveyed the picture of the war hecatomb in both his diary and the books published after the war: *Wspomnienia Starobielskie (Memories of Starobielsk)* (1944)<sup>3</sup> and *Na nieludzkiej ziemi (Inhuman Land)* (1949).<sup>4</sup>

Densely filled with hardly legible handwriting, verses on the pages of the diary adjoin or overlap with views of the streets of Tashkent, scenes of the army being transported by ship, or interiors of camp barracks – all rendered by means of a few lines – and, further, with images of Arabs and camel silhouettes, sketches of mosques, minarets, pyramids and desert landscapes, streets of Baghdad, Brindisi, and Taranto, and views of the Gulf of Naples.

In Loreto near Ancona, Czapski sketched Luca Signorelli's fresco, adorning the walls of Santa Casa di Loreto. Made amidst the turmoil of war, this escapist gesture was a manifestation of an attempt at 'suspending' time and imbuing the present with the past. Putting down roots in the past – whether those calming the troubled psyche or those arousing dark memories – will become an inherent part of Czapski's creative personality.

#### **Political connections and transcultural interests**

A resident of Paris since 1946, Czapski worked intensively on behalf of the Polish government-in-exile based in London (he was demobilized in 1948 with the rank of major). He had many contacts among both the French non-communist left, the political center, and conservative leaders. He would meet André Malraux, the Minister for Information – later appointed the Minister of Cultural Affairs – in the government of General Charles de Gaulle and de Gaulle himself, trying to convince them to support the Polish cause. Owing to family connections, it was as early as in the 1920s that he developed relations with the Parisian intellectual elite and met, among others, Jacques Maritain, François Mauriac, Paul Morand, and Daniel Halévy, who later helped him to move on the intricate political scene. He regularly cooperated with the *Kultura* [*Culture*] monthly, published by Instytut Literacki [Literary Institute], founded by Polish émigrés in Rome in 1946 and transferred to Paris in 1947. The magazine addressed politics and culture-related issues and was smuggled to the People's Republic of Poland. Highly esteemed as a writer, literary critic, war memoirist, and anti-Soviet dissident, Czapski became a moral authority for Poles in exile. However, due to law-abiding censorship, he remained unknown to a majority of the public in Poland until the early 1990s, a time of political breakthrough and transformation in East-Central Europe,

following the collapse of the Berlin Wall. In communist Poland, Czapski's texts were circulated as *samizdat*, for they expressed contempt for the Soviet regime and sympathy for the anguishing Russian nation, not to mention the relentless search for the truth about the Katyn massacre.

Czapski was both a patriot – far from nationalism and chauvinism – and a cosmopolite. Fluency in foreign languages – Russian, French, German, and English which he achieved at home and cultivated owing to considerable reading, as well as the paths of life, which led him to diverse geocultural zones, made him open to cultural variety and specificity. One of the many examples of this attitude was when, while searching for publications on Shia and Sunni Muslims in Teheran, he discovered the book by Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, *Les religions et philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*, which became his indispensable talisman. He subscribed to the concept of *atonie* (meaning a type of inertia). According to Gobineau, the condition of apathy, indifference, and helplessness was typical of the inhabitants of Central Asia governed by subsequent dynasties, who fought one another. Czapski will diagnose émigrés in post-war Paris with such an attitude.<sup>5</sup>

The paths of Czapski's peregrination led him to almost all continents: Europe, Asia, Africa, as well as North and South America. In 1950 he visited the United States and Canada, where he raised funds among Poles to subsidize the publications of Instytut Literacki. In 1955, he spent four months traversing the trail leading from Brazil, through Uruguay and Argentina to Venezuela, collecting money for the same purpose. During these journeys, he created chronicles of everyday events and situations in both drawing and writing. While in New York and Chicago, he would sketch workers, the urban poor, the homeless, factories, ports, skyscrapers, and museum galleries. „Only a gaze that refuses to falsify a difficult truth could extract beauty from these streets,” he remarked.<sup>6</sup> While in South America, he was fascinated with the diversity of ethnoses, exotic plants, colorful birds, and Brazilian Gothic. In the title of one of his books, Czapski described this abundance of visual stimuli as *tumult*. The full title of the book is *Tumult i widma [Tumult and Phantoms]*<sup>7</sup> and is a reference to Blaise Pascal's antinomy between *le tumulte* and *le repos* – confusion and calm, in which the latter part was replaced with

the notion of phantoms, understood by Czapski as fragments of the past looming from memory. However, he did not record the war upheavals and traumatic experiences – which seemingly faded away, superseded by current events – in the narrative layer and in the depicted motifs of his paintings. Instead, he subjected himself to visions, which were aroused by an accidental visual impulse and evoked emotions, and reminded him of the past. He explained his creative intuitiveness in the following manner:

“This primeval vision is grace. Everything you do will seem to be evil, for it is burdened with thought and will. [...] Never will we become equal to the vision that comes to us. When faced with it, we have to admit our misery.”<sup>8</sup>

#### **Czapski's *musée imaginaire***

Czapski resumed painting in the early 1950s, after a ten-year-long break, uncertain of his skills and searching for inspiration in the art of the old and contemporary masters. The diversified assembly of artists he considered to be his progenitors included: Goya, Rembrandt, Roualt, and Soutine, as well as Bonnard, Matisse, and de Stäel on the opposite end of the expressive range. However, self-irony saved him from derivativeness or emulation of the original models.

You must discover everything with your entire self under the brush, which may be 40 years after you had heard this discovery after you had understood and comprehended it intellectually, or even emotionally, but not in your work, not at the tip of your brush.<sup>9</sup>

Czapski transferred his imaginary museum to the pages of the diary, at the same time analyzing the opinions of the artists he considered to be his spiritual allies, owing to which he could conceptualize his artistic endeavors illustrated with miniature sketches of the works which had already been completed or which were intended to be rendered. An ardent opponent of abstraction in the visual arts, he appreciated the abstract painting of Nicolas de Stäel. Nevertheless, he was satisfied with the figurative turn the artist's late

art took. This is how he explained his objections to abstract art in 1985: “[abstraction is] the amalgam of what we call pure intuition with pure latitude.”<sup>11</sup> Having become acquainted with Cézanne’s concepts in his youth, Czapski strove to capture the essence of the phenomena observed.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, Czapski increasingly subjected his life to the imperative of painting, gradually resigning from political activity and journalism on behalf of free Poland and a free world. It is worth mentioning that, in 1950, he was a co-founder of the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Berlin. In order to focus to a maximum extent on art, he decided on radical self-restraint and withdrew into the intimacy of his studio room at Maisons-Laffitte (the seat of the editorial board of *Kultura* in the vicinity of Paris) as if he had retreated into monastic space. This was where he transposed onto canvas the succinct notes he hastily recorded in sketch books, heading towards synthesis through emotional condensation and formal asceticism. In his opinion, maximum concentration during the painting process enabled the evocation of ‘involuntary memory’ (he borrowed the notion of *memoire involontaire* from Proust) and brought one closer to the state of contemplative prayer.<sup>12</sup> “Look not beyond memory, the memory which shocked you – the rest is but an obstacle,” he recorded in his diary in 1961.<sup>12</sup>

### **A flash of sight**

Czapski referred to glancing at the vibrant fabric of current life, which liberated emotions, as a ‘flash of sight’, an ‘illumination’, or a ‘flight.’ To his understanding, the perspicacity of vision was inextricably connected with empathy. His review of Mark Tobey’s exhibition from 1961 confirms the imperative to be sensitive to socio-political and universal affairs.

All Tobey [...] is *grâce*, but the *grâce* of a person who has never been to war and who just passed by these fifty years. Yesterday’s *France Observateur* – sixty dead Arabs in the Seine River, Arab ghetto, persecution. This *grâce* of Tobey’s, this contemplation fuelled by religious syncretism (behaviorists, Zen), is comprised of a kind of

detachment from an essential part of our life, our globe.<sup>13</sup>

A plethora of Czapski's artistic output may be referred to as studies of solitude; overwhelming, incapacitating solitude, which – despite many contacts with friends and acquaintances in Paris, London, Geneva, New York, or Buenos Aires, he experienced acutely; the solitude in which phantoms of tragic past revived. Filling the pages of the diary with a volley of words, which overlapped with drawings, constituted an antidote to solitude.

The expression of solitude in my work is often commented on. Maybe it's true, but I never pose this kind of question. [...] I subjugate myself to daily life, to the discoveries I make seeing a table, a basket, a face in a window or a café. That's where I find the point of departure I call disinterested discovery, the joy of it! Maybe that's the solitude people find, this world apart.<sup>14</sup>



**Fig. 3.** Józef Czapski, *Lamp and a Sink (Self-portrait)*, 1959, oil on canvas, 80 x 100 cm, private collection

The verbal record of emotional amplitude, the dissection of one's own psyche, the polemic with oneself – particularly with regard to the reception

of philosophical thought and the exegesis of the creative process – found their equivalent in anonymous images of people who were solitary, mentally isolated, even while having other people around, equally alienated or living shattered lives. Frequently rendered as if observed indirectly, in a mirror, human figures almost lost their physical existence and were sublimated from corporeality. Deprived of identifiable physiognomic features through radical compositional cropping, they seem to be confined by objects. Fragmented figures ‘imprisoned’ between armchair backrests, silhouettes inserted into a spiral staircase, feet, and thighs moved to the edge of the frame, treated as a metonymic sign of a human figure – an art historian will easily identify these compositional schemes as borrowed from Japanese woodcuts and a continuation of the tradition of Degas and Bonnard.

**Fig. 4.** Józef Czapski, *Yellow Tables and an Ashtray*, 1957, oil on canvas, 65 x 54 cm, private collection



However, despite referring to Bonnard and Matisse, Czapski gradually departed from the *peinture-peinture* dogma, which implied purely chromatic

speculation. What is striking in his mature painting is condensed expression; therefore, his respect for Goya, Rouault, and Soutine shall not be surprising. He believed that inside him, there was a suppressed expressionist who persistently strove to capture the essence of pain.



**Fig. 5.** Józef Czapski, *Lonely Woman – Red Armchairs*, 1968, oil on canvas, 52 x 115 cm, private collection

### **Expression of the inexpressible**

“Painting is better, calmer after I have looked into the abyss,” he noted in 1988.<sup>15</sup> Afterward, he concluded bitterly: “The French stifled me.”<sup>16</sup> Wrongly so. The sediment of traumatic experiences became the essence of his art. In the context of the artist’s statements, the compositional effects and motifs he employed can be interpreted as the creation of artistic equivalents of human existence which cannot reach its full capacity in relation to the surrounding world. His studies of solitude can be interpreted as an image of a torn world, which – similar to his psyche – does not submit itself to integration. In his paintings, depicting forlorn railway platforms and empty café interiors, human existence is but implied, recalled from memory. The artist often quoted the words of Ludwig Wittgenstein: “If one makes no attempt to express the inexpressible, then nothing is lost, but the inexpressible is – inexpressibly – contained in what is expressed.”<sup>17</sup> This is how Czapski paraphrased Wittgenstein’s thought: “[...] it is about vision, it is about the

unconceived expression of unconceived feelings, it is an expression of a dark experience.”<sup>18</sup>

The patrons of Czapski's considerations were eminent writers, philosophers, and poets: Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Rozanov, Remizov, Proust, Simone Weil, Maine de Biran, Du Bos, Rilke, Hofmannsthal, Paul Valery, Malraux, Camus, Beckett, Huxley, and Cioran. On the pages of his diary, he created a type of a 'living library' and engaged in incessant 'dialogue' with the authors of the works described therein, commenting on their thoughts and deploying counter-arguments to their statements. He argued about the sense of suffering and infinite sacrifice for others with Simone Weil, for whose works he reached most often. This theme resonated best with his troubled psyche. In commentaries to Weil's notes, he asked: "Is this exclusivity of suffering, sole suffering, Truth?"<sup>19</sup> The last words he recorded in the diary shortly before his death, when he was almost blind (his sight deteriorated since the 1980s), were: 'Starobielsk' (just to remind: the POW camp in which he was interned) and 'Katyń' (the site of mass graves of Polish officers). Czapski found salvation from despair in the writings of mystics. "This background, this undertone, one must not forget about it and should carry it deep in the lining of one's consciousness in order to be able to live," he argued.<sup>20</sup>

This article is only intended to introduce Czapski. It is too concise to reflect the polyphonic nature of his personality. Its purpose is to emphasize the idiosyncratic nature of his creative output and, simultaneously, the marginal position he held on the Parisian artistic scene. He distanced himself from current artistic trends, which resulted from his mental inability to involve in artistic progressivism, and from constantly searching for the artistic idiom that would best convey his personality. "After finding myself in solitude, my will to live, to work, manifests itself in breathing again with my own breath, seeing again, breathing with the eyes," he wrote.<sup>21</sup>

Although his works were shown in Parisian galleries – Galerie Lambert, Bénézit, Jacques Desbrière, and Jean Briance – and his artistic output was regularly exhibited in Grabowski Gallery in London and Galerie Plexus in Chexbres near Lausanne, for many years he found himself outside

the mainstream exhibitions and beyond the art market. His paintings were purchased by relatives from the extended Austrian-German-Russian-Polish family or by affluent friends. It was only at the exhibitions in Switzerland – regularly held since 1973 by the art dealer Richard Aeschlimann, who befriended the artist – that buyers from the United States of America and Canada as well as members of the British royal family, began to show interest in Czapski's work. In Poland, most exhibitions of his art have been held after 1990. The only monograph dedicated to the artist's output and published in Switzerland during his lifetime was *Czapski – la main et l'espace* by Murielle Werner-Gagnebin.<sup>22</sup>

Distanced from the artistic mainstream, Czapski perceived himself as a painter who represented the obsolete post-Cézannesque era. Although he treated it as a manifestation of the instinct of self-preservation with regard to the commercialization and commodification of art, he considered his artistic attitude to be completely *passé*.<sup>23</sup> Wrongly so. His biography of an emigré exemplified a complex relationship between the historical and political context of art and the artistic vision, a relation that was far from being illustrative. Despite his incessant curiosity about the world and openness to the Other, despite his immense literary and artistic erudition, the essence of Czapski's art were the ghosts of the past whose impact escalated due to the impossibility of returning 'home', understood as the mental and emotional core of personality. "I think that painting is always a challenge and that my canvases contain a lot of darkness, like an inner gash, hundreds of times more than my relations with people do, even with those to whom I'm close," Czapski confessed in a letter to his friend, Ludwik Hering, who lived behind the Iron Curtain and with whom Czapski was engaged in a love relationship before the war.<sup>24</sup>

### **Modern amnesia**

In 1949, marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nazi and Soviet invasion of Poland, Czapski published in *Kultura* an essay titled *Szeptem* [In a *Whisper*], in which he reflected on modern amnesia:

“I sometimes think that man has no right to exist, that we are all alive only thanks to our thoughtlessness, our disloyalty, our unremembering. If we could remember for real and remember constantly, no one would be able to breathe, to stay alive,” he observed.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, his own writings – encrusted with literary and philosophical quotations – reveal an abiding memory of annihilation and demise. He ended *In a Whisper* with a bitter conclusion:

As we speak and write the most sacred words, even our memories of those who died take on the sleekness, the shine of inert, polished wooden objects, of tools of propaganda. All over this planet, we repeat words, words, words – and this gives us permission to think that we’re being faithful? On this anniversary perhaps it’ll be better to be silent and think. To see everything that we have lived through, to get to the bottom of things and not stop halfway, to not erect any rosy screens of fiction between ourselves and reality, to not tape up the wounds with optimistic band-aids, which only hasten the rot. To remain silent.<sup>26</sup>

For Czapski, painting became the silence concealing the profound interiorization of the trauma of war. He died in Maisons-Lafitte near Paris on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 1993, aged 96.

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# Images And Memories of Slavery in the Art of Eustáquio Neves

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## **ABSTRACT**

Eustáquio Neves is one of the most important Black Brazilian photographers, and a prizewinning artist recognized internationally. In 2015, he was invited to participate in the Foto Rio 2015, a traditional photography festival in Rio de Janeiro, in the southeast of Brazil. As a guest artist, Eustáquio produced an artwork based on the memory of slavery in Brazil, the country with the largest population of Afro-descendants worldwide. Eustáquio Neves's series of images on the memory of slavery in Brazil, entitled Valongo: Letters to the Sea, is the main focus of this article. The Valongo Wharf inspired the artist's work in Rio de Janeiro, considered the world's largest port of entry for enslaved Africans and recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The text also analyzes the artist's process of producing images through the manipulation of film photography.

## **KEYWORDS**

Memory of slavery; Contemporary Art; Valongo Wharf, Eustáquio Neves; Photography.

Over the last three decades, the memory of slavery has ceased to be confined to academic research. It has become an essential theme for artists in the Americas, Europe, and Africa, continents indelibly marked by the transatlantic slave trade (Araújo, 2018: 10). In the case of Brazil, as well as Eustáquio Neves, artists like Aline Motta, Ayrson Heráclito, Arjan Martins, Jaime Lauriano, Rosana Paulino, Tiago Santana, among others, have produced works that reflect forcefully on this traumatic memory. Given that the country was the last to abolish slavery and also received the world's highest number of enslaved Africans, the importance for these artists of recuperating this memory in critical form is clear. As the historian Ynaê Lopes dos Santos asserts: "Brazilian history is intimately linked to the transatlantic slave trade [...] According to the data from Slave Voyages, approximately 4.8 million men and women disembarked in Brazilian ports..." (LOPES, 2021: 14).

Eustáquio Neves – a self-taught photographer and artist, recognized in Brazil and abroad since the 1990s – has produced various works on the memory of slavery. The first of these, *Outros Navios Negreiros* (Other Slave Ships), was produced between 1999 and 2000. The second series, *Mascara de Punição* (*Mask of Punishment*), was created between 2002 and 2003. Finally, in 2015, Eustáquio produced a third series on the memory of slavery, *Valongo: Cartas ao Mar* (Valongo: Letters to the Sea).

Located in Rio de Janeiro's port zone, the Valongo Wharf is considered the largest port of entry for enslaved Africans worldwide. The historic site covers an area of two thousand square meters and was discovered in 2011 during urban regeneration works in the port zone. These works had taken over the region as part of the Porto Maravilha project, intended to revitalize the area, developed by the city council and begun in 2009.

The discovery, made by a team of archaeologists from the Museu Nacional in Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) coordinated by Tânia de Andrade Lima, relates to the history of the slave trade in the city. Thus: "Between 1758 and 1831, principally after 1811 when construction on the wharf was completed, around one million Africans disembarked in the Valongo Wharf area" (ARAÚJO, 2018: 10). During this period, Rio de Janeiro became the largest port of enslaved Africans on the planet. Due to its global importance as a place of

memory of slavery and the African diaspora, the Valongo Wharf was recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2017.

The Valongo Wharf's discovery and its subsequent recognition as a World Heritage Site in 2017 confirm the importance of Rio de Janeiro as an international site for the memory of slavery. Since 2015, many artists, mainly black Brazilians, have developed research and artworks about the Valongo Wharf and its legacy. This article is about one such black artist, Eustáquio Neves, and the images he has produced based on the memory of slavery, primarily the series *Valongo: Letters to the Sea*. According to the FotoRio 2015 catalog:

Letters are messages, notes left for the future. Like the bottles that desperate sailors threw into the sea containing their final stories. Eustáquio's 'letters,' made from the traces of living memories, give voice to the first protagonists of this tragic legacy that created our people and country and is, therefore, part of us all. (Guran, 2015: 34).

This article<sup>1</sup> focuses on the series by Eustáquio Neves entitled *Valongo: Letters to the Sea*, produced for FotoRio (the Rio de Janeiro International Photography Meeting) in 2015, and for the Museu Afro Brasil, located in São Paulo, where Neves also presented an exhibition of this series in January 2016. I analyze the process of producing images for *Valongo: Letters to the Sea*, therefore, enabling a dialogue between interviews with the artist and an image taken from this series, cited by himself in one of the interviews.

Eustáquio's images focused in his series on the memory of slavery denounced the inequality of Brazil, the structure of the racism in the country, and the "Contemporary Slavery" of the Black Brazilian population.

### **Valongo Wharf: discovering the memory of slavery**

When Eustáquio Neves disembarked in Rio de Janeiro, the Valongo Wharf had not yet been recognized as a World Heritage Site, but the process was already underway. The artist thus had the opportunity to read the bid dossier. "First, I

read the application file for the Valongo World Heritage bid, which was several pages long, to learn more about the history of the place” (Orlandi, 2018). The double position occupied by Milton Guran, director of FotoRio (who invited him) was, without doubt, the starting point for the invitation received by Eustáquio and the work he was commissioned to produce. As the artist pointed out:

That photo essay was commissioned in 2015 by anthropologist and photographer Milton Guran, director of FotoRio [International Photography Meeting of Rio de Janeiro], who at the time was on the technical committee for the Valongo Wharf Archaeological Site World Heritage bid. (Orlandi, 2018)

In Brazil, the archaeological discovery of the Valongo Wharf in 2011 definitively inserted the country in the Slave Route Project of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), which seeks to map and recognize the places of the memory of slavery throughout the world, based on the formation of diverse national committees spread across various countries.

Valongo Wharf’s application to become a World Heritage Site was launched on November 20, 2013, when Black Awareness was commemorated in Brazil. On the same date, the Valongo Wharf became the first place in the world to receive a UNESCO plaque as part of the Slave Route Project, which recognizes it as a heritage site for the memory of the African diaspora.

The enormous contingent of enslaved people and Africans who increasingly came ashore in Rio de Janeiro upset the then Viceroy, the Marquis of Lavradio. What disturbed him, though, was not the ‘trade in souls,’ but where they arrived in the city, in the busy Rua Direita, today Primeiro de Março Road. In a letter, he criticized “the terrible custom of the blacks, as soon as they disembark at the port, arriving from the African coast, entering the city along the main public ways, not only bearing innumerable diseases but naked...” (cited in Pereira 2013: 221). The Marquis did not seek an end to the slave trade. He merely wanted it removed from the population’s sight. For this reason, he decreed in 1774:

My decision is that when the slaves are unloaded at the customs house, they should be sent by boat to the place called Valongo, situated in a suburb of the city, separated from all contact and that the many stores and warehouses existing there should be used to house them. (Cited in Pereira 2013: 221-222)

This region, called Valongo, covered the present-day districts of Saúde and Gamboa. The Marquis of Lavradio's decree was put into effect some years later, in 1811, when the Police Superintendency of the City Court of Rio de Janeiro built the Valongo Wharf. The number of enslaved Africans brought to the city by the Transatlantic slave trade further increased the size of the Valongo construction. Most Africans who disembarked at Rio's port came from Central Africa, principally Luanda and Benguela on the Angolan coast.

The Valongo Wharf was deactivated in 1843 to make way for the Empress Wharf, built in honor of the Princess of the Two Sicilies, Teresa Cristina of Bourbon, who had landed in Brazil to consolidate her engagement to Dom Pedro II. In 1911, the Empress Wharf was landfilled to make way for the Praça do Comércio (Commerce Square). A century later, in 2011, Valongo resurfaced during a new urban intervention program, the construction works for the Porto Maravilha Project in the port zone. When he visited Rio de Janeiro to produce his work, the artist was able to see the renovations of the Rio de Janeiro waterfront, initiated by the city in 2011, in preparation for the 2016 Olympic Games. This experience provided Eustáquio with a critical view of the regeneration process.

I think there is a great contradiction. If, on the one hand, this revitalization is attracting visitors to an area that was once abandoned by public authorities, on the other, it winds up repeating past oppression. That is because most of the region's residents are ordinary, low-income people, and the local cost of living, such as rent, has risen sharply since then. So, this revitalization has turned into an exclusionary process (Orlandi, 2018).

Consequently, the artist produced images that did not seek to celebrate the Valongo Wharf as a tourist monument forming part of the regeneration project for the port zone. On the contrary, he developed a series containing a powerful critique of the current situation of Afro-descendants in Brazil. A hallmark of his work ever since he began to produce artistic imagery.

Eustáquio Neves was born in 1955, in the small town of Jatobá, in the state of Minas Gerais, located in the southeast of Brazil. The area is marked by a strong African heritage, the result of the exploration of gold and diamond mining that brought thousands of enslaved Africans to the region during the eighteenth century. Deeply influenced by this legacy, Eustáquio lives and bases his studio in Diamantina, a historic mining town.

His training in chemistry and the decision to still use an analogical camera even today became two fundamental dimensions of his work. In the dark of the photo lab, the artist manipulates diverse chemical elements and uses a range of different materials to produce his images. As Kimberly Cleveland observed, Eustáquio “incorporates his knowledge of chemistry in his photographic processes. Over time, this use of chemical manipulation and other physical interferences becomes a hallmark of his work” (Cleveland 2013: 89).

The use of the analogical camera contributed decisively to Eustáquio articulating his artistic process with a reflection on memory. As the artist explained, this approach allows him to mobilize another temporality:

...the time of memory, the time to manipulate the negatives to create the image [...] In the case of *Valongo: Letters to the Sea*, this is reflected even in the cotton paper used as a backing for the images. Since the 9/11 attacks have made it difficult to bring chemical materials into several countries, including Brazil, I emulsified a fair amount of paper during a trip to the Netherlands in 2008. This paper obviously suffered the effects of time over the years. It got smudged and stained, which in the end, reinforced the documentary idea of the photo essay. In addition, I'm not in a hurry in life, I think there's a time for everything, something I learned in the films of [Russian filmmaker Andrei]

Tarkovsky. I can't say I'll never work with a digital camera, but I run counter to the immediacy and exaggeration (Orlandi, 2018).

*Emulsification* is a chemical process involving the use of two immiscible liquids to maintain the cohesion of particular materials. By emulsifying the cotton paper used as the support for his images, given the difficulty in transporting chemical materials between airports of various countries after the 9/11 attacks in New York in 2001, Eustáquio connected the time of memory to the wearing of the material that he brought from the Netherlands in 2008 but only used in 2015 for his work on the Valongo Wharf.

In this way, the artist argues that using a film camera enables a relationship with time that avoids the immediatism of the image produced with digital equipment. Manipulation in the laboratory and his alchemic approach consolidate this process marked by another relation to temporality.

In this sense, given the difficulty of representing the memory of slavery through images produced in the contemporary world, Eustáquio's photographs are not concerned with representing the historical and tragic past. For this reason, although it did not happen in a premeditated form, the images from the series *Valongo: Letters to the Sea* were not produced at the Valongo Wharf. As he told me in an interview conducted for this article:

I went to spend a week in Rio, interviewing people and walking around to get a feeling of what the region known as Valongo was really like. I didn't take any photos there, I just talked to people, despite having taken a film camera, a video camera, I didn't photograph anything. I came back to develop this work here, in my studio, based on some archives that I had. I work a lot through the use of archives. I just needed to understand what Valongo actually was, what happened there, for me to be able to develop this idea. That's what happened, when I returned home in the plane, I already knew what I wanted to do. I arrived here and already thought of some archives. Because I understood that in speaking of Valongo, in speaking of this memory, it was a work in which I would be speaking too of death [...] because

many of the enslaved people who disembarked there arrived dead, the port zone became a mass grave, an open-air cemetery. It was from this idea that I worked on the *Letters to the Sea*. Thinking of this place with its burden of suffering, but thinking this idea and distributing this thought came from the earlier practice of placing messages in bottles and releasing them in the sea for others to find. So my message is called letters to the sea for this reason. It's a message to the present, so that people do not forget this history, because this history is still perpetuated in memory (Castro, 2019).

When I asked why he preferred not to produce images in the Valongo Wharf and the port region, the artist replied:

It's not a question of preference. I took all my equipment, but when I arrived there, I didn't feel the need. As I talked to people, I began to have ideas. I realized that the ideas I had didn't involve taking photos of people. I don't believe much in the cliché of the traditional photographer who walks around with a camera, afraid to lose an image that he or she is observing. I don't lose images, I recreate them. It doesn't enter my head something like: "I lost that scene, if only I had my camera..." I don't think like that, I think that the scene in question was so striking... I'll make something thinking about that scene (Castro, 2019).

The artist's detachment, his disinterest in apprehending the visible, and his aim of producing photographs through his imagination, recreating images that do not represent what was before his eyes, is the key to understanding Eustáquio Neves's series on the memory of slavery.

The intervention in images through chemical processes is another fundamental dimension in his production since it becomes clear that he has no intention to reproduce a document or seek a representation that can account for this past. After all, memory, as we know, is not history. It is not based on historical documents: on the contrary, it is a manifestation of the

present, which actualizes narratives about the past through a selection of remembrances.

Indeed, the idea of a memory of slavery that is actualized in the present through a selection of images and a contemporary critique of structural racism, the inequality imposed on the Afro-descendant population, and the capitalist exploitation of the black body was already present in his works on the theme made prior to the series on the Valongo Wharf.

In his first series on the memory of slavery, entitled *Other Slave Ships*, produced between 1999 and 2000, Eustáquio associates the black body transported and exploited in the slavery era with the contemporary mechanisms linked to a reality similar to the one lived by enslaved Africans in the past<sup>2</sup>. Setting out from his critical and aesthetic view of this reality, he establishes the concept of contemporary slavery. As Cleveland explains:

Many contemporary Afro-Brazilians are either often forced to travel daily on overcrowded buses and trains for work, or are incarcerated in overfilled jails. Neves linked these incompatible and sometimes unsanitary places – such as public prisons, hospitals, and urban trains – to contemporary ‘slave ships.’ (Cleveland, 2013: 94)

For this reason, the Portuguese word *carregado*, or ‘loaded,’ is repeated in several photographs in the photographic essay *Valongo: Letters to Sea*. According to the artist

... to show that those people, kidnapped in Africa and brought to Brazil against their will to work as slaves, were treated like cargo, like objects. But I also wanted to talk about contemporary slave ships, like suburban trains crowded with poor people, mostly black, who work in the city center, live on the outskirts of big cities, and spend three or four hours a day or more inside public transport (Orlandi, 2018).

The word 'loaded' emerged from a photo taken by Eustáquio of a train carriage, again to recall how black enslaved bodies were treated as cargo by the slave trade. In one of the most emblematic images from the series, it appears on a portrait of Neves, age 17, taken from an ID card:

When I returned to Diamantina, where I live, after digesting all that information, I decided to work with portraits of friends that I had taken in the past and even a self-portrait, actually an appropriation of a photo of me, taken at the age of seventeen, from an ID card. That's because, in my view, the history of Valongo is part of the history of all people of African descent in Brazil (Orlandi, 2018).

In the image containing his photo at the age of 17, the word *carregado* (loaded) covers the eyes of the artist like a black stripe. In this way, Eustáquio recuperates the practice of Brazil's sensationalist newspapers, which use this resource to partially cover the faces of young offenders, either imprisoned or dead, the vast majority of them black youths, which they regularly emblazon on their front pages and crime reports. As in all the other images from the series, the artist's portrait is framed by photos of tombstones from the baroque churches of Diamantina, which are also all numbered, explaining why the number 33 appears above his face. Below it, we can read 'Lote 770088,' a reference that refers to the black body as merchandise, another 'lote' to be 'loaded.' Another number that renders invisible the identity of subalternized subjects submitted in the past to Transatlantic enslavement and in the present to 'contemporary slavery'. Next to the word 'loaded' and at the top of the image, the artist has printed two stamps that evoke the rubber stamps that, in his words, aesthetically evoke "a time, a practice, letters, documents" that legitimized and authorized the slave trade through the bureaucratic apparatus of slavery. Images once more recreated by the artist. As Eustáquio revealed: "these stamps are the lid of a salt pot because there is also a kitchen in my studio. Because my work is very organic, whatever is around me becomes an instrument for creation." (Castro, 2019).



**Fig. 1.** Eustáquio Neves, *Valongo: cartas ao mar*, 2015. Photography on cotton paper, 110x160 cm. Source: Eustáquio Neves

### **Throwing letters to the sea**

Even so, it is in the darkroom, used to process and develop analog photographs, mixed with his knowledge of chemistry, that Eustáquio unveils his images. The artist perceives his works to be dedicated to a black population in Brazil that continues to resist, including residents of the port zone of Rio. In this region, where the Valongo Wharf is situated:

People are occupying these places still because they are resistant, despite this violent legacy of slavery; we survived that [experience], some with much joy, others with some melancholy, like in a bar where I met a guy who drinks everything. People there go about their work with dignity, raising a family; the suffering does not leave such a strong mark on the person. These are people getting on with their lives. (Castro, 2019)

Though never allowing the violent memory of slavery to be forgotten, Eustáquio does not try to recover this memory through images of pain, therefore: he prefers to recreate images that refer to the resilience and fight of the black people in a form resolutely critical of the structural racism and social inequality imposed on the Afro-descendent population in Brazil of yesterday and today. It is through the unavoidable legacy of the African heritage in the country and the 'examples of resistance' of the Afro-descendant population in Brazil that the artist constructs images launched in the field of art, principally, but also in the public sphere more widely, like letters to the sea.

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### Endnotes

1. This is a modified, revised and shortened version of my article Eustáquio Neves: images and memory of slavery in *Valongo: Letters to the Sea*. See Bibliographic references.
2. The second series on the memory of the slavery produced by Eustáquio is called *Mask of Punishment*. On this series, see Cleveland (2013). The third series is *Valongo: Letters to the sea*.

# Japanese POW Art in New Zealand

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper introduces artworks made by 850 Japanese prisoners of war (POWs) held in the Featherston POW Camp, Aotearoa New Zealand during the Pacific War (1941-1945). The men were captured during fighting in the Solomon Islands in 1942 and transported to New Zealand by American navy forces. The historical significance of the camp has been identified with a shooting in February 1943, in which 48 Japanese prisoners were killed, and the narrative of violence, misunderstanding and racism which accompanies it, but the artworks complicate this bias. About 400 works have been uncovered by the author to date, which represent the particular socio-geographical environment of the camp: an all-male territory, where comfort is often expressed in depictions of Japanese female entertainers, and familiar Japanese images, created in established 'traditional' pictorial grammars, which also suggest a nationalist aesthetic. Distinctive of the Featherston camp was a very active culture of commissioning and exchanging art for commodities and currency with the local population. Those artworks were gifted to those who showed kindness to the prisoners. Subtle resistances to hegemony expressed in some works reflect the highly asymmetrical power relations in the camp. In addition, items made to be used by the prisoners expressed familiarity, including mahjong sets, colorful *hanafuda* playing cards, and *geta* sandals, as well as depictions of Japanese landscapes that decorated the men's huts.

## **KEYWORDS**

Japanese Prisoner of War Art; Featherston.

Aotearoa-New Zealand is a surprisingly rich source of material to add to the increasing interest in art related to Japanese enterprises during the Pacific War. The small rural town of Featherston in the southern North Island hosted New Zealand's first ever Prisoner of War (POW) camp and, in fact, was the first in the British Empire to hold a large number of Japanese prisoners.<sup>1</sup>

The camp was established rapidly. Intense fighting between American and Japanese forces had taken place in the South Pacific's Solomon Islands in August 1942. The American military informed New Zealand authorities that captured Japanese were on their way to Wellington. On 4 September, the New Zealand War Cabinet hastily met, and selected a prison site at an old First World War training ground just north of Featherston. On 9 September, 115 New Zealand troops arrived at the camp, and the first Japanese prisoners disembarked at the Featherston train station on the morning of 12 September, by which time some tents had been erected. The urgency with which the camp was established, coupled with the New Zealand military command's inexperience in running a prisoner of war camp, resulted in amateur camp oversight in the first months at least. As Mike Nicolaidi noted:

the guards and administrative personnel [were] hastily recruited for a new and unfamiliar purpose. Many of the guards were men either not eligible on medical or other grounds for overseas service, or 18-year-olds too young to be officially sent away. They had received no special training for managing prisoners of war, nor had they been forewarned they were about to come face to face with the enemy on home ground.<sup>2</sup>

This unpreparedness resulted in a tragic massacre that occurred on 25 February 1943. A group of the POWs, since their arrival, had refused to join work parties arranged by their New Zealand captors. The matter came to a head when guards surrounded the prisoners in a courtyard, and following a 'warning shot' – which likely killed a man, provoking some stones being thrown by the prisoners – the New Zealand guards opened fire, killing 48 of their charges. One New Zealander was killed by a stray bullet. After this tragedy, a compromise regarding work parties was reached, and the Japanese

men remained at the camp until the end of December 1945, when the 800-odd surviving prisoners were returned to Japan.

The initial batch of detainees came from the Japanese labor force charged with building air bases in the Pacific. The next groups arrived in November and December 1942 and came from the military forces fighting at Guadalcanal. According to Army records compiled on the prisoners' arrival, the men came from extremely varied occupations at home, including peasants and farmers, auto drivers and carpenters, draughtsmen, and electricians. The list does not reveal an artist or sculptor, but there were a number of architects, as well as craftsmen such as stonemasons, shoe-makers, and a bamboo-basket maker. One prisoner claimed to be a brothel keeper. However, the veracity of these occupations is questionable: a translator at the camp, Keith Robertson, noted that 'when enrolling these prisoners of war, we were aware that for the most part, they gave us fictitious names'<sup>3</sup> so the men may also have provided false vocations. There was no correspondence between any prisoners and their families in Japan for the duration of their confinement in New Zealand. Although the site of the camp had been used for New Zealand army-training purposes during the First World War, no buildings remained in 1942, and the Japanese were housed in tents for the first months.

Construction on accommodation for the prisoners got underway immediately, and remnants from building work – offcuts of weatherboards and the like – were plentiful; the Japanese began crafting objects from these soon after their arrival. A furniture factory was later established, and remains from this were also used. The tent canvas and bamboo poles were also crafted into footwear and flutes by the prisoners.<sup>4</sup> Today, these items are to be found in public and private collections across New Zealand.

Immediate parallels can be found with the art made in contemporary Japanese-American internment camps, well documented in recent years by Delphine Hirasuna, including the use of scrap and found materials and hand-made tools.<sup>5</sup> However, a distinctive aspect of the Featherston camp was that, in addition to making objects for use and to beautify their living quarters, prisoners fashioned many objects for the purpose of trading with

guards, and occasionally as gifts. In contrast, scholarship has established that Japanese-American prisoners made art with the aim primarily of beautifying their surroundings, recording their experience, and improving their artistic skills. Initially at Featherston, items were bartered with the guards for cigarettes, and later for currency which could be used by the prisoners in the camp cafeteria.<sup>6</sup>

An undated letter (likely written in 1943) from a guard to his family confirms the use of tobacco as payment for Japanese-made items, and expresses his admiration for their work: 'The Japs [sic] do all sorts of arts and crafts for 'rolly-rolly' – cigarette tobacco – so if you have any spare packet tobacco send it down and I'll convert it into Jap [sic] paintings and carvings. Some of the things are really beautiful.'<sup>7</sup>

As this letter also illustrates, some works were made for order by camp personnel. Most obvious are sculptured reproductions of New Zealand military badges, which, judging by the large number surviving, were popular items with the guards. There is also an example of the camp padre, Hessel Throughton (1907-1985), supplying a photograph of his wife and small child, which was copied in colored pencil on paper by one of the prisoners.

Throughton arrived in mid-1943 and played a central role in formal arrangements for trading prisoner-crafted items, which until that time appears to have occurred on an ad-hoc basis. In July 1944, the Camp Commander, likely seeking to impress his superiors in Wellington with his organizational oversight at the camp, described the process as follows:

The P.W. are encouraged to employ their spare time in making carvings and mementoes from pieces of wood which are refuse from the furniture factory.

A channel for disposing of these articles is laid down and briefly it is as follows:

(a) The articles are valued in N.Z. Currency by the Works Officer, Lt Martin.

(b) The articles are then handed over to the Padre who displays and arranges for the sale of same at the valuation price.

(c) The proceeds are handed into the Pay Office and the pay ledger card of the P.W. concerned is credited with the amount received from the sale thereof.<sup>8</sup>

Art was also used to decorate the men's living quarters, as Jack Greig, a guard who spent most of his war at the camp, explained in an unpublished memoir, written in 1986, also noting the place of informal bartering in the art culture:

Apart from mah jong, the p.o.w.s spent [their] free time making articles for [loose] change, and also painting and drawing, at which they were adept. The most popular of these paintings, characters from Japanese drama and Mt Fuji, appeared on the walls of their huts.<sup>9</sup>

It is not surprising that many of the items crafted at the camp were based on Japanese art forms. For example, Greig noted:

Most of the prisoners were highly skilled in ikebana and also used knots of wood and natural roots to decorate their huts. They would polish and carve notices on these little works of art and place them on shelves above their beds. I also saw many of these carvings around the compounds.<sup>10</sup>

Broom and gorse, invasive exotic weeds in New Zealand, which prisoners initially were put to work to clear from the campsite, were used for ikebana: 'What they could create with a few sprigs of common gorse and broom was remarkable', Greig noted. Polished roots are also a traditional Japanese aesthetic form, with origins in early China. According to Grieg: 'They also showed great interest in New Zealand native trees and plants and were somewhat surprised at the lack of botanical knowledge displayed by some of the guards and camp staff.'<sup>11</sup> Although the vast majority of works made at Featherston are of Japanese subjects, a small number do depict New Zealand vegetation.

Carved walking sticks and other objects were decorated with pieces of paua (abalone) shell. The use of shells, including abalone, to decorate surfaces

(known as *raden*), is also a traditional art form that came to Japan from China in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

The primary material for almost all the Featherston artworks which have survived is wood, many painted with color. It makes sense that wooden items would survive over cotton, paper or plaster ones. These bulky objects also would have been difficult for the POWs to take home in large numbers. Although a newspaper reported in December 1945 that prisoners carried items made at the camp when they boarded a US ship at Wellington that conveyed them back to Japan, it would have been difficult to take many of these sculptures. They measure on average 20-30cm square, and 2-3 cm thick. By the end of the war, many items had already been traded with camp personnel, and had found their way into New Zealand homes.

Sources for the colors used to make the artworks were various organizations that made regular donations of comforts to the prisoners. For example, the Red Cross, No More War Movement, and Society of Friends regularly sent books, games, and art and craft supplies, including paints, to the camp. The carving tools were fabricated from scrap metal, such as wire, nails, and cutlery, detritus lying around the camp. An ex-guard I interviewed told me:

Off-cuts and that sort of thing ... it was all material that was either part of this joinery operation, or they were building new huts and things all the time anyway, so there was a fair bit of that. And things like bolts and nails and other bits of stuff they used to get and flatten and make all the tools they used for doing that artwork – would have been made out of stuff they found lying about.<sup>12</sup>

Some materials reworked by the prisoners were supplied by the army. Prisoners received 35 cigarettes a week, and the packaging was put to various uses, including hand-crafted books, such as an English-Japanese dictionary and book of songs, and playing cards. Early in the camp life, in December 1943, interpreter Capt. Ashton noted that, after playing cards donated by the Red Cross had worn out, 'P.O.W were doing the best they could with

homemade cards made from backs of cigarette packets.<sup>13</sup> Two complete sets of *hanafuda* cards are held in private collections; a very similar set made at Cowra POW camp in New South Wales, Australia, is held at the Australian War Memorial.<sup>14</sup>



**Fig. 1.** *Hanafuda* playing cards. Colour on cardboard, 5.3 x 3.4cm each. McKenzie family collection.

Materials for crafting objects were also gifted to the prisoners. For example, a local farmer supplied horse-tail hair for bows to be used with violins made by prisoners from the plywood of tea chests.<sup>15</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the subject matter of most of the items is drawn from Japan and Japanese culture. For example, a significant portion of the landscapes features Mount Fuji. The selection of the mountain as a subject is explicable: if the work was made for a foreigner, it is perhaps the most recognizable representation of Japan; for an internee, it was also a poignant sacred landmark and nationalist symbol.

The sculptures depict very few non-Japanese. Nearly all the Japanese figures – apart from the nudes – wear kimonos. As such, they are easily identifiable as ‘Japanese’ by a New Zealander, as well as nostalgic of Japan for the prisoners. Of all the sculptures representing Japanese people, only one is male, a *kabuki* actor with a paulownia flower pattern on his kimono (a pattern repeated in other objects), cherry blossom on his cape, *eboshi* courtly hat, and holding a *Hinomaru*-decorated fan.

The overwhelming predominance of representations of women at the Featherston camp reflects its all-male environment. Don McKenzie, a guard at the camp, in a letter home described the prisoners' reactions on encountering women:

Most of them hadn't seen a woman for three or four years, so when the WAAC [Women's Army Auxiliary Corp] drivers delivered us at the gate last week there was nearly a riot just to look at them and enough oohs and aahs to start a gale.

Female figures not dressed in kimonos are unrobed, such as women stepping out of the bath, a popular subject in Edo-period *ukiyo-e*. There are several portraits of female dancers. Figure 2 is likely intended as of a geisha or itinerant entertainer, carrying a samisen, with her girl assistant holding a drum. Of course, geisha would represent for the captive men the pleasures of home unavailable to them at Featherston. Like Mt Fuji, they are a very recognizable symbol of exotic Japan for New Zealanders.



**Fig. 2.** Entertainers in landscape.  
Colour on wood, 36.5 x 28.0cm.  
Courtesy of Featherston Heritage  
Museum

Most of the portraits that survived in New Zealand are not accompanied by any writing (if made for New Zealanders, there would be little point), but there are exceptions. On the reverse of a letter-opener, likely carved from a toothbrush, with a depiction of a standing woman on the front are the characters *Nihon musume* (Japanese girl). A colophon on a relief sculpture of a girl reads *suite sukareta nushi ja* (I liked her and she liked me).

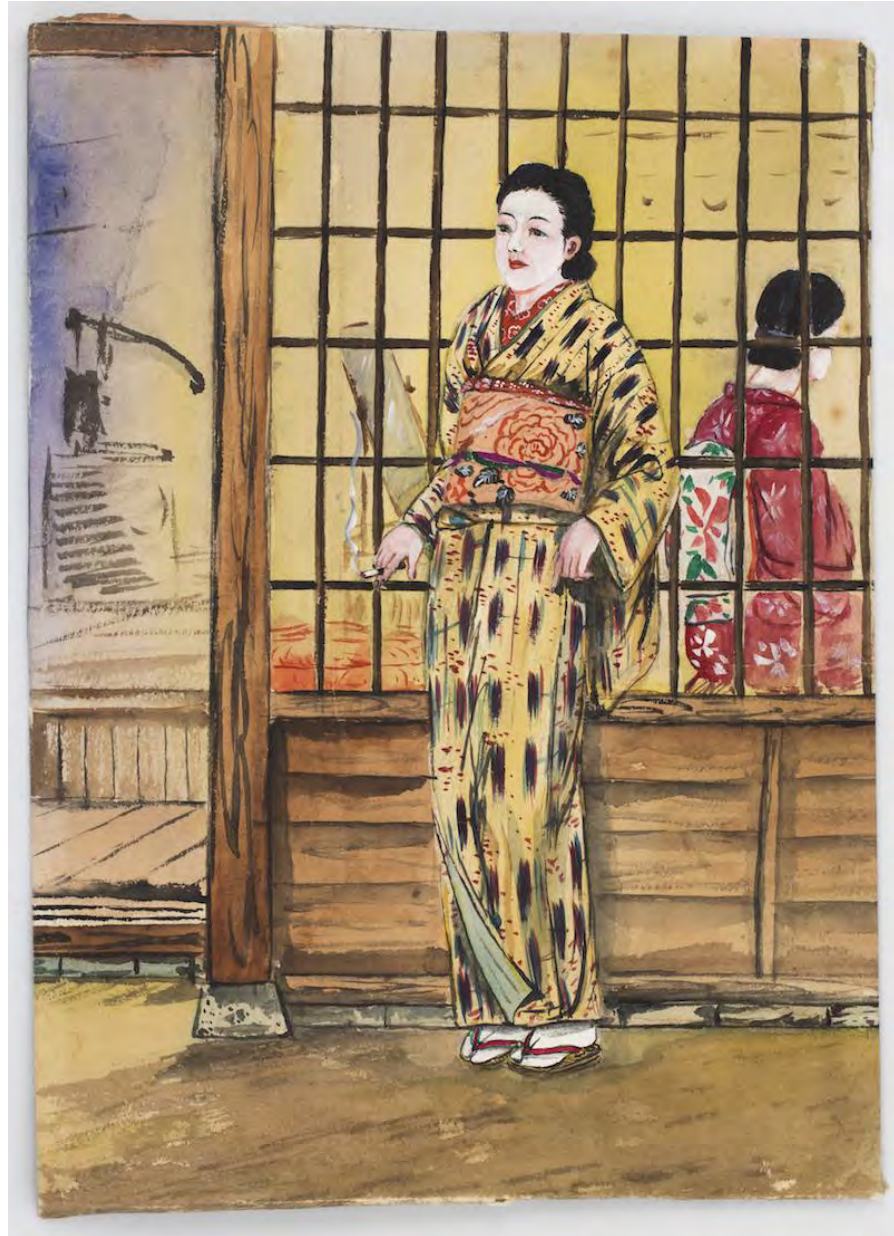


**Fig. 3.** Seated figure.  
Colour on wood, 33.0  
x 22.0cm. Courtesy of  
Featherston Heritage  
Museum

One of the more striking sculptures, Figure 3, represents a seated woman. Although technically less sophisticated than some images made at the camp, one can recognize attempts to apply conventions of pictures created in the *Yamato-e* tradition. For example, the room is represented from a high viewing point, meaning that we look down into the space, and the floor appears steeply sloping towards the viewer, creating the sense that the woman may slip off the bottom of the picture. There are also clear attempts to apply the traditional East Asian linear perspective, whereby the depth of space is indicated by lines diverging away from the picture plane. This can be seen in the flooring of the alcove, especially on the left side.

The woman's plain kimono parts to show her knee and inner thigh. The room in which she sits is quintessentially Japanese, with *tatami* floor, *chigaidana* shelving, and a *tokonoma* alcove with *ikebana* display. She holds a tobacco pipe to the side of her face, and the artist includes a tobacco tray (*tabako-bon*) on the floor before her. The scene suggests nostalgia for the Japanese homeland, and a yearning for the comforts of women. This could, in fact, be intended as a portrait of a prostitute – the luxury of the interior is unlikely to resemble a person's home, but may suggest the inside of a brothel. Her hair is composed in something like the traditional *Shimada mage* hairstyle, as used by geisha and prostitutes, and includes an elaborate hairpin. Women in the male entertainment industry used the padded wooden pillow on the floor beside her to protect their hair. In addition, prostitutes were known to wear red. It is difficult to read the image, but the artist may have attempted to represent a folded futon behind the woman.

Other similar images have survived from the Featherston camp, including Figure 4, a work on paper. The woman depicted in yellow smokes a cigarette whilst leaning causally against the lattice shop front, enticing potential customers. Smoking marks her out as from a low social class: smoking was not an acceptable social practice for young women in pre-war Japan.<sup>16</sup> A woman in red kimono sits behind the lattice shop front, which was used to display prostitutes in Japanese brothel quarters.



**Fig. 4.** Night scene. Colour on paper, 26.9 x 19.3cm. Courtesy of Aratoi Wairarapa Museum of Art and History.

Many objects were crafted for applied purposes. Where possible, comforts and etiquette of home was transferred to New Zealand. For example, geta were made to be worn outside and, according to Greig, 'inside the Japanese wore slippers made out of tent ropes and black and white towels which they had pilfered from their very first days when they were housed in tents.'<sup>17</sup> And the prisoners manufactured games for their own use. Greig wrote:

Life at the compounds at this early stage was dominated by mah jong. Every hut seemed to have a set – made in the compound by hand and foot. It was strange to see prisoner-carpenters sawing a 12 millimeter strip off a board guiding a homemade reverse tooth saw between two toes extended outwards, with the fast-moving saw almost touching the skin... The finished sets were very attractive.<sup>18</sup>

Some of the mahjong sets have small English letters written on the wind tiles to indicate the direction of the tile (e.g., 'E' for East, etc.), and some of the character tiles use Arabic numerals, or have the equivalent Arabic numeral written in the tile's corner. These sets with 'translations' were likely made by order for guards, for their use at home, or perhaps as gifts.

The Japanese prisoners gifted objects to favored people. For example, a relief sculpture of a castle was cut in two parts, so that the Japanese men could smuggle it out of the camp to give to a local farmer on whose land they worked and who had shown them particular kindness.

Items were also gifted within the prisoner community. Army archives holds a list headed: 'Carvings sent to Adachi, Wellington Hospital', and one of the items describes Figure 5. Junior Lieutenant Toshio Adachi was a central figure in the 1943 shooting, and was the first prisoner to be hit by a New Zealand bullet that went through his shoulder and killed the man behind him, which sparked the mass shooting. He was amongst the worst injured and spent several months in Wellington Hospital recovering. This sculpture was then on-gifted to a nurse at the hospital who displayed particular empathy for the injured men. Sister Dorothy Aldrich had grown up in a family with ties

to Japan – her grandfather was Englishman Arthur Aldrich (d. 1908), who became Secretary and General Manager to the Japanese Government Railways, 1875-1890s. He retired to New Zealand. Amongst the works uncovered to date, this is unusual, in having a dedication, written in pencil, on the back:

*Kigen nisen roppyaku san nen go gatsu, Dai Nihon gunjin Uerinton byooiin nyuuinsha ichidoo, Zoo Oodoreeji sama*

May 1943, All the soldiers of the Great Japan Armed Forces hospitalised in Wellington Hospital, To Sister Aldrich

The date, given using the Imperial *kigen* (or *kōgi*) system, in usage from 1873 until the end of the Pacific War, suggests a subtle resistance to captor culture. The slenderness of the female figure is accentuated by the lantern and bridge posts she stands between, samisen hanging at her side, and willow branches falling behind her. The reference is likely Yanagibashi – willow-bridge – an area of Tokyo known for its working geisha.

Art-making forms a role in war and prisoner life throughout history. Tedium is relieved, desires represented, and resistance to hegemony expressed. At Featherston, the tedium and dreariness of camp life extended to the personnel working there: the camp was known to guards as ‘Siberia’. Guard Ray Toomath told me: ‘Really, we hated the place. Nobody felt happy about being there.’<sup>19</sup>

And one of the camp interpreters noted after the camp closed: ‘Not in a technical sense, perhaps, but to all intents and purposes we, too, were prisoners of war...’<sup>20</sup> My conjecture is that the trading of prisoner-made art tempered the awfulness and tedium of camp life for not just the prisoners, but also the camp personnel, and for the vast majority of New Zealanders at the camp with no facility in Japanese language, and indeed the local population, it provided a means to engage with the enemy men on a human level, through appreciation for beautifully-crafted objects.



**Fig. 5.** Figure carrying shamisen. Color on wood, 33.0 x 21.0cm. Davies family collection.

New Zealanders' openness to Japanese-made objects followed decades of intense interest in Japan and its material culture, beginning in the 1880s with travel to Japan by wealthy citizens, and the wild popularity of

Japanese-made goods stimulated by international exhibitions, such as held at Melbourne, Australia, 1880-81. Japonisme in theatre reached New Zealand also, such as in performances of *Mikado*, first staged in Wellington in 1888. Perhaps most striking was the widespread vogue for Japanese plants, which filled nurseries and gardens across the country.<sup>21</sup> Such was the admiration in which Japan was held that, during the first decades of the twentieth century, an influential New Zealand intellectual argued that the Japanese population included Aryan blood, and New Zealand should encourage Japanese migration to increase the strength of the local populations.<sup>22</sup> Although New Zealand joined the war with Japan following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, appreciation for Japanese culture and its artefacts was firmly embedded in the New Zealand people. A story told by a Featherston camp interpreter, Keith Robertson, is poignant.

During the war, the small local Featherston School staged a fancy dress ball, and Robertson's daughter fell on the idea of dressing as Japanese. The prisoners assisted by sewing *tabi* socks, and making a wig from horse's tail, again donated by a local farmer. It was extraordinary enough that the girl dressed as a national of the enemy country, assisted by enemy prisoners, but even more perhaps that she was elected first prize for her costume.<sup>23</sup> An explanation for this, I believe, lies in the admiration New Zealanders held for the cultural artefacts of Japan after over fifty years of being exposed to the fashion for Japanese arts, plants, and Japonisme: a girl dressed in Japanese costume would likely be identified more with Madama Butterfly or Yum-Yum than the enemy in the Pacific.

The massacre of February 1943 has dominated what little discourse exists about New Zealand's Japanese POW camp. The art made by the Japanese men opens up productive new ways of thinking about the camp. It complicates public perception, as evidence of lively exchange between the prisoner and the local population adds human and humane motivations and actions to the camp's story, albeit in a wartime and prison environment. The prisoners crafted depictions of Japanese landscapes and people, and objects of play from their culture, as well as items of local significance made for order by men working at the camp, impressing their captors with their subtle

artistic skills and the beauty of their culture. The works are also cries of nostalgia – memories of home and its comforts and beauties, nationalist expressions of resistance to capture, and significant additions to the study of art produced by Japanese during a period of warfare and occupation.

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# Huguenot Diaspora and its Impact in the Americas: the British and Channel Isles as Springboard to the New World

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper focuses on the intra-colonial and international exchanges that typified the Huguenot diaspora. It will trace individuals from their places of origin to their new lives in the Americas and focus on Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston from 1680-1850. When Louis XIV, King of France, revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685, Huguenots (French Protestants) were no longer permitted to remain. Huguenot goldsmiths and jewelers who took refuge in the British Isles and the Channel Islands and their descendants born in Northern Europe came to America in small numbers in search of personal advancement. In Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, they did not form their own communities and were assimilated into the local population. Charleston, a planter society built on slavery, was different and Huguenot influence endured there for several generations.

## **KEYWORDS**

Huguenot; Silver; Gold; Pewter; Engraving.

### **New York and Philadelphia**

Although New York City, with one of the largest populations in the North American Colonies, had its own French church, its craft community was overcrowded. Immigrant craftsmen moved on to Philadelphia, which became the largest city in the colonies. Cesar Ghiselin (c. 1663–1733) is the first recorded Huguenot goldsmith working in the mid-Atlantic Region. Born in Rouen, Normandy to Nicholas Ghiselin and Anne Gontier, Ghiselin probably went to London as a teenager,<sup>1</sup> where, like his Huguenot contemporary in New York City, Bartholomew LeRoux, he was trained.

### **Philadelphia**

Ghiselin arrived in Chester, Pennsylvania, in October 1681, and the next year moved to Philadelphia. Ghiselin's silver was made in the austere English mid-17th century style, reflecting his London apprenticeship and the taste of his Anglo-Quaker clients; Philadelphia was a predominantly Quaker City. Surviving silver includes a porringer<sup>2</sup> engraved with the initials of Anthony and Mary (Jones) Morris made between 1684 and Mary Morris's death in 1688 and a tankard made for Barnabas and Sarah Wilcox prior to Barnabas's death in 1690. From Philadelphia, Ghiselin took out naturalization in England in 1698. By 1718, he had moved to Annapolis, Maryland, where he was paid in 1721 for twelve silver spoons as local prizes for horse races (none have survived). His Huguenot wife Catherine Reverdy (her family came from Poitou) died there in 1726. Ghiselin returned to Philadelphia and in 1732, made a communion beaker and an alms dish for Christ Church inscribed "The gift of Margaret Tresse spinston/ to Christ Church in Philadelphia." She was the daughter of vestryman Thomas Tresse.<sup>3</sup>

Ghiselin's 1730s probate inventory includes an early reference to a 'flattening mill' which with his 'draw bench' was valued at £2.15.<sup>4</sup> Robert Campbell wrote in 1747 that the goldsmiths' business 'required much more Time and Labour formerly than at present' when 'they were obliged to beat their Metal from the Ingot into what Thinness they wanted'; the newly invented 'Flattening-Mills... reduced their Metal to what Thinness they require at very small Expence'.<sup>5</sup> Flattening mills were expensive and scarce in England. Without one,

you made silver flat by taking the ingot, hammering it, reheating it, and hammering it again. You could spend a whole day hammering an ingot to get flat metal to work with. Ghiselin's inventory records a well-stocked and equipped workshop. 912 ounces of silver, and 85 dwt.(penny weights) of gold, together with silver chains, gold rings and buttons, coral and necklaces, paper currency, and a quantity of silversmith's tools. Ghiselin's personal possessions included a French folio bible and 'sundry small French books' valued at one pound.

Cesar Ghiselin's grandson William also qualified as a goldsmith. He advertised in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* November 14, 1751:

'William Ghiselin, Goldsmith, is removed from his late dwelling house in Second-street, to the house where the Widow Bright lately lived, a little below the Church, in Second St. where he continues his business as usual.'

The 1811 view of Christ Church shows the location of the Ghiselin family shop on Second Street.<sup>6</sup>

### **New York City**

Bartholomew Le Roux (c.1665-1713) was made a Freeman of New York City on arrival in 1687 a privilege only available to master craftsmen. As 'a young man from London' in 1688, he married Gertrude Von Rollegom, from the Dutch community.<sup>7</sup> Pierre LeRoux, married at Saint Martin in the Fields, London, in 1678, and registered with the London Goldsmiths' Company was probably a relative. Other London family connections may include John Le Roux (son of James Daniel Le Roux deceased) apprenticed to John Cossebadie, Huguenot silversmith of St Giles in the Fields, in 1717 and Alexander LeRoux, a watch-case maker in Dowgate Hill, in the City of London, in 1722.<sup>8</sup>

Bartholomew Le Roux introduced a French style to the Dutch tradition of silversmithing. His elegant sugar caster with its gadrooned borders, cast swags and delicate piercing, is close to examples made in Northern France.<sup>9</sup> But Bartholomew LeRoux also supplied silver in the local Dutch tradition. A brandy wine bowl with his maker's mark made for the wedding of Joseph and Sarah Wardel of Shrewsbury, New Jersey, is dated 1696. Bartholomew served as an assistant alderman on New York City's Common Council.

Like Ghiselin, the LeRoux workshop was continued by successive family generations. Two of Bartholomew's sons, Charles and John, became goldsmiths. Charles set up shop in New York and married Catherine Beekman in 1715. He served for twenty-three years as official silversmith to New York Common Council producing nine gold freedom boxes (boxes which contained the certificate awarding the Freedom of the City) including one given to Alexander Hamilton in 1735.<sup>10</sup> He worked in a cosmopolitan style. He supplied Patrick Gordon, Proprietary Governor of Pennsylvania, with a pair of double lipped sauceboats between 1725 and 1735 (Fig.1) which are similar to those being produced by London based Huguenot goldsmiths in the 1720s.<sup>11</sup> Charles also served as a Captain in the New York City Militia. He became free of New York City in 1739. Charles took over the family business in the mid-1740s; in 1745 he inherited the old family homestead at 27 Broadway. It is thought that he trained the first Jewish goldsmith Myer Myers in addition to his own son Bartholomew Le Roux II (1717-1763) and apprentices Peter Quintard (1690-1762, Huguenot) and Jacob Ten Eyck (Dutch); Peter Quintard was probably born in Bristol, England to Isaac and Jeanne Fume Quintard. He registered as a goldsmith in New York City in 1731, although he later worked as a ship owner and innkeeper. His apprentices included the Huguenot Peter David (1707-1755), later established as a goldsmith in Philadelphia. In 1737 Peter Quintard moved to Norwalk, Connecticut where he farmed yet continued his business as a goldsmith.<sup>12</sup>

Simeon Soumaine (1685-c.1750) was born in London the child of Huguenot refugee parents, Simeon and Jeanne Piaud Soumaine and baptized at the London French church in Threadneedle Street (founded in 1550) on 10 June 1685. Within four years the family emigrated to New York. Simeon may have trained there with Bartholomew Le Roux in the 1690s. Simeon in turn trained two fellow Huguenots, Elias Boudinot (1706-1770) and Elias Pelletreau (1726-1810). Soumaine marked a covered sugar bowl, made circa 1738-1745, for Elizabeth (Harris) Cruger, who arrived from Jamaica in 1738. Soumaine also produced silver in the Dutch tradition. Le Roux and Soumaine were both vestrymen of the Anglican Trinity Church in New York City, Le Roux in 1703 and Soumaine in 1711. Like other Huguenot merchants and landowners in the

colonies, they owned slaves. A slave owned by Soumaine confessed to his involvement in the Slave Rebellion, 1741, which attempted to destroy New York City. The culprits were hung or deported to the West Indies, although the fate of Soumaine's slave is unrecorded.<sup>13</sup>



**Fig. 1.** Sauceboats, a pair silver, Charles LeRoux, New York City, 1725–35, © Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of Daniel Blain, Jr.

Peter David (1707-1755) founded another dynasty of goldsmiths. Born in New York City, he settled in Philadelphia by 1736 with his wife Jane Dupuy; their son John was baptized that year. Peter David made a coffee pot and stand between 1740 and 1750 for the Logan family.<sup>14</sup> John David (1736-1793) eventually succeeded to his father's business and according to the *Pennsylvania Gazette* sold a variety of articles in gold and silver as well as importing paste jewellery, buckles and buttons. Peter David's grandson also named John David Jr (1772-1809) continued the business and formed a partnership with his uncle Daniel Dupuy senior, who moved from New York to Philadelphia with his brother-in-law Peter David.<sup>15</sup>



**Fig. 2.** The Gage Freedom Box, Gold, Otto Philip Daniel Parisien, New York, 1773.  
©Sotheby's New York City 2014

By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Huguenot churches in New York City were assimilated and the Huguenot collective identity was absorbed into the largely Anglican dominated community. But craftsmen of Huguenot descent were still coming to North America from Northern Europe. When he arrived in New York City in 1756, Otto de Parisien described himself as from Berlin. He worked as a goldsmith in New York City until 1797. Parisien made a gold freedom box (Fig.2) for presentation to British Lieutenant General Thomas Gage in 1773. Both the Le Roux and the Parisien boxes are engraved with the Seal of the City of New York (windmill vanes flanked by barrels with a beaver above and below, a royal crown above, with supporters – a native American with bowl, loincloth and feather crown and mariner in European dress with

sounding line). The box is inscribed SIGILIS CIVITAT NOV EBORAC (freedom of the City of New York). It was commissioned by the Court of Common Council of the Corporation of the City of New York on May 20, 1773.

The Mayor:

Communicated to this Board that General Gage Intends Shortly to Leave this province for Europe, & that as his Conduct has been Generally Approved of by the Inhabitants of this City, therefore proposed that this Board Should Address him & at the same time prefer him with the freedom of this Corporation, the Seal whereof to be Enclosed in a Gold Box.

On June 7, 1773, the Mayor and Board waited on his Excellency the Honourable Thomas Gage to make the presentation. The recipient responded with an equally elegant note of thanks ending:

I esteem myself highly honored by your enrolling my Name in the List of your Citizens and I accept your present with gratitude, as a Memorial of your Affections, and as such I shall ever carefully preserve it. It is my Ardent Wish, that your City may increase & prosper & that its Inhabitants may continue a flourishing & happy people, to the End of Time.

Gage left New York to return to Britain on leave, he had been on duty in the Americas for 17 years and enjoyed enormous popularity given his very successful administration of the 13 American Colonies. As there was a certain measure of doubt about whether he would return (George III had requested that he attend court for an audience, so everyone wondered whether it was the King's intention to confer a new appointment) the grateful citizenry wanted to convey their gratitude, and the freedom box had to be produced in a hurry before he boarded his ship. So much of a hurry, that the goldsmith was unable to come up with enough gold, so he and his wife melted down their wedding bands, to produce the last few ounces needed. <sup>16</sup>

Huguenot craftsmen also worked in pewter. Joseph Leddel Sr. (1690-1754) born in Plow Alley, Stepney, London to Thomas and Mary Leddel)

1690 came from Hampshire, England and married Marie Vincent in the French Church, New York in 1711. In 1744 Leddel moved from the sign of The Platter in Dock Street to the lower end of Wall Street with the same shop sign. Pewter marked by Leddel is preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Their son, also named, Joseph was, like his father, a specialist engraver.

In 1750 three silver objects were engraved with images recording the Stuart attempt to retake the British throne; the 1745 Rebellion. These include a beaker made in France (Fig.3) by Hughes Lossieux (1670-1743, working 1697-1722) in St Malo, which is engraved on the sides with a scene of the Devil leading the Pope and the Roman Catholic Young Pretender to the English throne (Charles Edward Stuart; 1720-1788), through the gate of death into the fiery mouth of Hell. Inscribed round the rim: 'Three mortal enemies remember / The Devil Pope and the Pretender / Most wicked damnable and evil / The Pope Pretender and the Devil / I wish they were all hang'd in a rope / The Pretender Devil and the Pope'. <sup>14</sup>



**Fig. 3.** Beaker silver, Hugues Lossieux, St Malo, France, 1707-8, engraved by Joseph Liddel, New York, 1750. © Museum of the City of New York

A can is engraved with scenes from the life of the Jewish patriarch Joseph, whose trials in Egypt could reflect the religious persecution that Joseph Leddel's parents had faced. A tankard dating circa 1725 is marked by Huguenot goldsmith William Vilant, born in New York City, who worked in Philadelphia. It is engraved with contemporary political figures, including Philip Stanhope, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Chesterfield, who in 1745, as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, mustered troops in support of George II and pledged a £50,000 prize for the capture of the Young Pretender, Bonnie Prince Charlie. The tankard was with the London silver dealer Lionel Crichton when it was published in 1929.<sup>18</sup>

### **Boston**

By 1685, there was an established Huguenot church in Boston. After 1715, when the young Apollos Rivoire emigrated from Guernsey, the church had Andrew Le Mercier (1692-1763) as pastor and its members included the prosperous Huguenot merchant families the Faneuils, the Mascarenes and the Bowdouins. By 1748 the Huguenot church had transferred its assets to the Congregational Church as the community had dwindled as a result of intermarriage.

Neil Kamil has drawn attention to the importance of manual skills in providing Huguenot immigrants with 'artisanal security'.<sup>19</sup> Boston goldsmiths and jewelers included James Boyer (c.1700-1741) son of the London-based Huguenot distiller Peter Boyer. The father was naturalized in May 1715 (he was resident in the parish of St Giles in the Fields).<sup>20</sup> The young James was apprenticed to the Huguenot Jeweller James Papavoine in Westminster in 1712. By 1722 James Boyer was established in Boston where he advertised in *The New-England Courant*

'This is to inform the public that Mr. James Boyer, Jeweller from London, living at Mr. Eustone's a dancing master in King Street, Boston, setts all manner of Stones in Rings & performs everything belonging to that trade'

Francis Légaré (c.1636-1711) was naturalized in England in 1682 with his wife and three sons (the eldest later settled in Charleston). Francis is listed in

the Boston tax documents for 1687. His 1711 probate inventory lists stock of gold and silver and farming tools, but no silver marked by him survives.

René Grignon (1652-1715) left London in the mid-1680s for Boston then moved on to Norwich, Connecticut as a ship's master and merchant. His French-style maker's mark is only found on two silver porringers one of which also has the mark of native-born goldsmith Jeremiah Dummer suggesting that Grignon was a retailer.<sup>21</sup>

Huguenot merchants established in North America commissioned silver from native-born goldsmiths. The teapot circa 1710 marked by John Coney,<sup>22</sup> who took Apollos Rivoire as an apprentice in 1720, is engraved with the coat of arms of Jean-Paul Mascarene (1684-1760), a soldier and politician, who was born in 1685 in the French province of Languedoc. He was smuggled out of France to Geneva and naturalized in England in 1706 and came to Boston in 1711. Other Huguenot Boston merchants included Peter Faneuil (1700-1743), whose family came from La Rochelle. Faneuil's 'handsome chariot' was imported from London as were his supplies of Madeira (a wine which traveled well) and his cookery books. Peter Faneuil gave the City of Boston the central marketplace Faneuil Hall, which opened in 1742. At home, Peter Faneuil used a London-made silver coffee pot.<sup>23</sup>

Apollos Rivoire (1702-1754) was born in Riaucaud, near Bordeaux, and on November 21, 1715, left France to join his uncle Simon Rivoire in Guernsey.<sup>24</sup> The record in the family bible written by his father reads: "Apollos Rivoire, or son, was born the thirtieth of November, 1702, about ten o'clock at Night and was baptized at Riaucaud, France, Apollos Rivoire, my brother was his Godfather and Anne Maulmon my sister-in-law his Godmother. He set out for Guernsey on the 21st of November, 1715." <sup>25</sup> His uncle sent the boy to Boston to learn the goldsmith's trade; in Boston Apollos was apprenticed in about 1720 to the goldsmith John Coney. By the time Coney died in 1722, Apollos had anglicized his name to Paul Rivoire. After Coney's death, Rivoire bought his freedom for about £40; Coney's estate's inventory records "Paul Rivoire's Time abt Three Year & half as pr indenture £30/0/0," with an additional record reading "Cash received for Paul Rivoire's Time, more than it was prized at, £10."<sup>26</sup> Apollos married Deborah Hitchbourn in 1729; they had 12

children, of whom the celebrated Paul Revere was the third. Apollos (known as Paul), advertised in *The Boston Weekly News-Letter*, May 21, 1730:

"Paul Revere, Goldsmith is removed from Capt. Pitts at the Town Dock to North End over against Col. Hutchinson."

When his father died in 1754, Paul Revere junior was too young to take over the business, so he enlisted in the army. He returned to run the family business in 1757, and married for the first time Sarah Orne – they had eight children.

Paul Revere became a Freemason in 1760 and joined St Andrew's Lodge with its Scottish affiliations. After 1764, they met at the Green Dragon Tavern, which became the headquarters for the Revolution.<sup>27</sup> Plans for the 1773 'Boston Tea Party' were made there and in the Old South Meeting House, the largest public meeting space in Boston City, attended by 5000 colonists, many from surrounding towns.

In November 1773 the merchant ship *Dartmouth* arrived in Boston harbor carrying the first shipment of tea made under the terms of the controversial Townshend Tea Act which bypassed colonial merchants. There were renewed protests against the tea shipments, on which duties were still levied. Revere, as a member of a coalition of tradesmen, organized a watch over the *Dartmouth* to prevent the unloading of the tea. He was one of the ringleaders on 16 December 1773, when 100 colonists with the cry 'Boston harbor a teapot tonight' dumped 342 tea chests from three ships the *Dartmouth*, the *Beaver* and the *Eleanor*, into the harbor.

The 1760s proved to be a demanding time for Paul Revere's business. When John Singleton Copley painted his portrait in 1768, Revere was near bankruptcy and was forced to take up dentistry to supplement his income.<sup>28</sup> That year Revere produced *The Sons of Liberty Bowl* made for the subscribers whose names are engraved round the rim. It commemorated the 92 Massachusetts legislators who on 30 June 1768 defied King George III's command to rescind a circular letter that summoned all the colonies to resist the Townshend Acts. The bowl is engraved with the *Magna Carta* and the Bill of Rights, Liberty poles and caps and John Wilkes' polemic *No.45 North Briton*. In volume 45 of this periodical, Wilkes, a radical British Whig,

denounced policies established by George III's ministers; Wilkes upheld the liberty of the press, defended his conviction for treason, and won his case after proving that his premises had been illegally searched.

The bowl was fashioned from 45 ounces of silver and was intended to hold 45 gills of rum punch. The Sons of Liberty traveled to the Governor's Mansion on 23 June 1768 and invoked John Wilkes with 45 toasts.<sup>29</sup>

From 1765 onwards Revere supported the opposition by producing political engravings including a print showing the arrival of British troops with loaded weapons and Royal Navy ships with their guns trained on Boston in 1768 (Fig.4), published in 1770. The print of the March 1770 Boston Massacre in front of the Old State House, in which five were killed and eight wounded, was published two weeks later. The victims included Crispus Attucks, who escaped slavery in Framingham in 1750 and called himself Michael Johnson to evade capture.<sup>30</sup> This is the best known of Revere's engravings and was widely copied in Europe and America.

Revere engraved banknotes which the congress used to pay the troops around Boston, bill heads and trade cards, but is best remembered today for his midnight ride 18 April 1775 from Boston to Concord to alert the American colonial militia of the approach of British forces before the battles of Lexington and Concord. Revere rode to meet John Hancock and Samuel Adams in Lexington, ten miles away, and alert others *en route*. He then rode on to Concord with Samuel Prescott and William Dawes. The three riders were captured by British troops in Lincoln. Prescott and Dawes escaped but Revere was returned to Lexington and freed after questioning. By giving the Colonists advance warning of the British Army plans, the ride played a crucial role in their subsequent victories.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1861 poem, *Paul Revere's Ride*, has shaped popular memory of the event. Twenty-four years later the sculptor Cyrus Dallin was commissioned to produce an equestrian statue of Revere riding to spread news and organize resistance. Cast in bronze in 1940, this is in the Mall behind the Old North Church, Boston, the city's oldest surviving church.



**Fig. 4.** A View of the Town of Boston in New England and British Ships of War landing their Troops, 1768, engraving published by Paul Revere after the 1770 Boston Massacre. ©American Antiquarian Society, Philadelphia

Paul Revere's technical experience as a silversmith was the springboard for his industrial output. Yet he continued to retail luxury goods such as the 1791 tea urn for Mrs. Hannah Rowe.<sup>31</sup> By 1788, Revere was interested in other metalwork. He constructed a large furnace to work with larger quantities of metals at higher temperatures. He opened an iron foundry that produced stove backs, fireplace tools, and sash-window weights. Revere became an entrepreneur and a manager, investing substantial quantities of capital and time in his foundry.

In 1794, Revere provided the copper sheathing to fortify the hull of the U.S.S. *Constitution* commissioned from George Washington; the largest and widest 44-gun warship ever built in America. The crew averaged 450 men. The ship was launched on Columbus Day 1797 and moored in the newly developed shipyard in Charlestown, as Boston became New England's premier maritime city. In 1802 Revere's Canton foundry produced copper

sheeting for the dome of the new Boston State House, designed by Charles Bullfinch. Revere served as Grand Master of the Masonic Ceremonies when Governor Samuel Adams laid the cornerstone of that civic building on 4 July 1795.

Revere identified the market for church bells in the religious revival that followed the war. From 1792 he became one of America's best-known bell casters, working with his sons Paul Jr. and Joseph Warren Revere. They cast the first bell made in Boston and ultimately produced hundreds of bells; many remain in operation.

In 1813, Joseph Warren Revere paid the American artist Gilbert Stuart \$200 for portraits of his parents in old age.<sup>32</sup> Paul Revere adapted his father's bookplate with the Riviere coat of arms by introducing a British Lion, a Gallic Cock and a militant American motto *Pugna pro Patria* (fight for your country). In 21<sup>st</sup> century Boston, Paul Revere's house, dating from 1670s, is the oldest structure to survive. Paul Revere's grave is in the Granary Burying Ground alongside fellow patriots General Joseph Warren, James Otis, Samuel Adams and John Hancock.

### **Charleston**

In contrast to the merchant dominated society of Boston, Charleston, South Carolina was planter country. It boasted the first French Church in the colonies and the son of its first Huguenot minister, Samuel Prioleau (Fig. 5) became a jeweller and goldsmith although by 1732 he was Colonel of the Troop of Horse Guards.<sup>33</sup> The account book of Nicolas De Longuemare, goldsmith and jeweller, records his business from 1703-1710 in the French Quarter of the City, although De Longuemare lived on a farm for several months every year in the Santee settlement where he had purchased 100 acres in 1685. His son Nicholas continued his father's goldsmith's trade.<sup>34</sup> Other Charleston goldsmiths included, from 1697, Solomon Légaré from Boston.<sup>35</sup> *The Gentleman's Magazine* described Charleston as having between 500 and 600 houses. most of which are very costly. Besides 5 handsome Churches'.. people 'are all rich either in Slaves, Furniture, Cloaths, Plate, Jewels or other Merchandize.' By 1770 the population was 11,000, half of which

was black; the city was the most important in the South and the fourth largest in British America.



**Fig. 5.** *Samuel Prioleau*, goldsmith of Charleston, South Carolina, pastel, by Henrietta Johnston, 1720. ©The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Winston, Salem

The French South Carolina Society was founded by Huguenot Lewis Timotheé who arrived in Philadelphia in 1731 and died in Charleston 1738. He anglicised his name to rid himself of the stigma then attached to those of

Huguenot ancestry. The society was a social and charitable organization consisting mainly of individuals of French descent.<sup>36</sup>

The Sarrazin family goldsmiths' shop at the sign of the 'Tea Kettle and Lamp, the corner of Broad and Church Streets' Charleston, advertised in 1764 imported fashionable domestic plate. The business was established by Moreau Sarrazin (1710-1761) and continued by his son Jonathan (d.1811). A large serving spoon, known as a rice spoon, marked by Moreau Sarrazin, is engraved with the emblem and motto of the South Carolina Society.<sup>37</sup> Advertisements for engraving on silver appeared in the *South Carolina Gazette* in 1741, for Francis Garden (brother of the London goldsmith Phillips Garden) who 'engraves in the best Manner any kind of Metal, Coats of Arms etc'.<sup>38</sup> Moreau Sarrazin advertised his similar skill in 1746 'Coats of Arms engrav'd on plate and sunk in Seals' and again in 1755 when Moreau & Jonathan Sarrazin affirmed 'We continue engraving coats of arms, and sinking seals according to heraldry'

Huguenot identity in Charleston was centered on the French church, established by 1688 and rebuilt in 1744, when the wealthy Huguenot merchant Gabriel Manigault (1704-81) whose father emigrated from La Rochelle, presented a new silver communion service, which unfortunately disappeared during the Civil War.<sup>39</sup>

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## Endnotes

1. Guillaume GHISELIN (Cheselyn, Gezelin, Ghilin, Gisseling, Guiselin) who was born in Rouen, was naturalized in London in 1682, and served as a Deacon in 1685-8; his brother Jean also served as a church officer. Their aunt Sara Gontier née Ghiselin and her eldest daughter were imprisoned, and her second daughter shut up in a convent when captured trying to escape from Rouen. [Lesens, 38]. Guillaume Ghiselin was a diamond cutter, see Edgar Samuel, 'Gems from the Orient: The activities of Sir John Chardin (1643-1713) as a diamond importer and East India merchant', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society*, XXVII (1997-2002), 357]. Information kindly shared by Robin Gwynn in May 2019. Another Cesar Ghiselin, a Loriner, took apprentices in London in 1720 and 1735.
2. Philadelphia Museum of Art
3. <https://christchurchphila.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/F268A9C8-7560-4E79-B796-705127532195>; <https://christchurchphila.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/3BoB549E-37FB-44A5-8853-938126907290> accessed 20/12/21. The alms-plate is 9 inches in diameter and

- the beaker is 4 inches high; both are stamped on the bottom C G in a rectangle surmounted by two crude pointed stars. They are illustrated in Lindsey, *Worldly Goods* 1999, 184, 182d.
4. Gillingham and Ghiselin, *Cesar Ghiselin*, 244-259
  5. Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, 141-2
  6. Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent  
<http://www.philadelphiahistory.org/collections/special-collections/>
  7. David Barquist, 'Huguenot silversmiths in colonial New York and Philadelphia', 62-3
  8. Paul de Lamerie's mother was born Le Roux, her family was from Rouen. Payment of duty for apprenticeship of John Le Roux is recorded on 10 July 1717 in the *RDPAI*, 1710-1811; Alexander Le Roux is listed by Heal, *The London Goldsmiths 1200-1800*, 194
  9. Barquist, 2008, plate 33, p.62
  10. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Atwater Kent Museum, Philadelphia
  11. Compare the sauceboats marked for Ann Tanqueray acquired by the Huguenot Museum and the V&A in 2018.
  12. Barquist, 65-66
  13. Butler, *The Huguenots in America*, 1983, 176
  14. Lindsey, *Worldly Goods*, 1999, 176, 189 no.210
  15. Barquist, 65-66
  16. Sotheby's New York  
<https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2006/americana-no8158/lot.184.html>  
accessed 10 April 2022
  17. Barquist, 2008, 66-67 citing Skerry and Sloane, 1992, 490-99
  18. Jones, 'An Old American Silver Tankard', 1929, 264, 268-269
  19. Kamil, *Fortress of the Soul*, 2005, 1-2
  20. [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Page:Notes\\_and\\_Queries\\_-\\_Series\\_12\\_-\\_Volume\\_6.djvu/61](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Page:Notes_and_Queries_-_Series_12_-_Volume_6.djvu/61).
  21. Wees, 'Huguenot Goldsmiths in colonial Boston and Charleston', 772-3
  22. Teapot, silver, John Coney, Boston, *circa* 1710, engraved with the coat of arms of a prominent Huguenot immigrant, Jean-Paul Mascarene, 19.2 x 21 cm., weight 18 oz. Bequest of Alphonso T. Clearwater, 1933 (33.120.526). © Metropolitan Museum of Art 2007.
  23. Wees, 77-8
  24. Apollos Rivoire's uncle Simon was a surgeon, Nash ed., 'Directory of Huguenot Refugees on the Channel Islands 1548-1825', 295. Simon Rivoire was described as 'Mons Le Docteur' when he married Anne Le Marsiau (Marsault) at St Peter Port, Guernsey, 23 September 1701. They had four sons Pierre (1703) Simon Pierre (1705) William (1706) and Jean (1708-1711).
  25. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollos\\_Rivoire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollos_Rivoire)
  26. Fischer, *Paul Revere's Ride*, 374
  27. E.J. Stebleckie, *Paul Revere and Freemasonry*, Boston, 1985
  28. There were French precedents to combining goldsmithing and dentistry; two generations of the Pilleau family, Huguenot goldsmiths from Le Mans, had offered this speciality alongside supplying domestic silver in London from the 1690s to the 1750s.
  29. Fairbanks, 'Paul Revere and 1768: His Portrait and the Liberty Bowl', 2001, 135-151.
  30. The depiction of the fusillade is inaccurate. Captain Thomas Preston's men were not in formation. Although this was engraved by Revere and included the inscription, "Engraved, Printed, & Sold by Paul Revere Boston", it was modeled on a drawing by Henry Pelham, John Copley's half-brother, colored by by Christian Remick and printed by Benjamin Edes.
  31. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City. Recorded in Revere's ledgers, on April 20, 1791, as a debit charged to Mrs. Hannah Rowe for a silver urn weighing 111 ounces; the earliest and largest of three known tea or coffee urns by Revere
  32. His mother Rachel Walker became Paul Revere's second wife in 1773, five months after the death of Sara Orne; Rachel also bore eight children of whom only five survived infancy.
  33. Butler, 1984, p.108
  34. Wees, 2008, 79-80

35. Second generation Huguenot goldsmiths included Andrew Dupuy, Benjamin Motteux, Isaac Peronneau and Daniel Tezevant. They were joined mid-century by Lewis Janvier and James Courteonne both trained in London.
36. Cohen, *The South Carolina Gazette*, 1953
37. Wees, 2008, p.80
38. Cohen. 1953. Francis Garden advertised in March 1741,
39. Eastman et al, *The Huguenot Church in Charleston*, 2018