

School for Sonic Memory

Marseille 2022 Residency Report

The project 'Alexandria: (Re)activating Common Urban Imaginaries' (ALEX) aims to take a fresh look at the relation between arts, heritage and urban life in the Mediterranean and in Europe, through the prism of the antic and modern cities of Alexandria, their creativity and cosmopolitanism. The project is supported by the European Union's Creative Europe program.

As part of the “(Re)activating Common Urban Imaginaries” project, Theatrum Mundi and Onassis Stegi are producing a pluri-disciplinary nomadic residency program exploring sound, memory and trans-Mediterranean resonances called the School for Sonic Memory. Together, and in collaboration with local artists, urbanists and researchers, the 6 participants will form a 'school' for sonic memory, investigating the ways that three cities across the mediterranean resonate with one another, how elements of a connected and conflictual past are made audible within them.

School for Sonic Memory

Partnering Organisations

Alexandria Project

Organised with the support of the European Union's Creative Europe programme, the project 'Alexandria: (Re)activating Common Urban Imaginaries' (ALEX) aims to take a fresh look at the relation between arts, heritage and urban life in the Mediterranean and in Europe, through the prism of the antic and modern cities of Alexandria, their creativity and cosmopolitanism. To do so, it relies on several tools shedding new lights on both Ptolemaic Alexandria and contemporary creativity: the setting up of nomadic artistic residencies between Egypt and Europe, the co-production of exhibitions in the cities of Marseille and Brussels, and Europe-wide forums and showcases staging contemporary creations in both northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean.

Based on these experiences, the project will also be an opportunity for partners, cultural sector stakeholders, researchers and public decision makers, to try and build a collective knowledge aiming at enriching the state of the art of heritage and cultural practices and policies in European and the Mediterranean cities.

Website: alexandria-urban-imaginaries.eu

Instagram : @Alexandria_Urban_Imaginaries

Facebook : @Alexandria Urban Imaginaries

Twitter : @Almaginaries

Youtube : Alexandria Imaginaries

Onassis Stegi

Onassis Stegi, the cultural hub of Onassis Foundation, is the place where contemporary culture meets aesthetics and science. The place where courageous, restless, daring Greek artists find the means to showcase their work; the place where international collaborations are nurtured; the stage on which the boundaries between science, art, society, education, learning and politics are renegotiated. Above all, Onassis Stegi is the space where questions are asked which feed the mind and spirit, which query givens, with this ideal ultimate goal: generating actions, interventions and ideas which shape and shake society.

The Onassis Stegi building hosts theatrical and musical productions, film screenings, art and digital shows, but its activities and central concept extend beyond the four walls of the center on Syngrou Avenue. Since 2012, the Onassis Foundation has acquired the Cavafy Archive with a view on providing free and open access to its materials, on promoting the Egyptian Greek poet C. P. Cavafy's work and the international character of his poetry and on bolstering education and culture through archival resources.

Website: onassis.org

Twitter : @OnassisStegi

Instagram : @onassis.stegi

Facebook : @Stegi.Onassis.Cultural.Centre

Twitter : @OnassisStegi

Theatrum Mundi

Theatrum Mundi is a centre for research and experimentation in the public culture of cities. We help to expand the crafts of city-making through collaboration with the arts, developing imaginative responses to shared questions about the staging of urban public life. Based in London and Paris, we work through performance, design, publishing, research and teaching with partners across Europe and the Mediterranean. Theatrum Mundi was founded in 2012 by Professor Richard Sennett. Its genesis is a series of conversations at both NYU and LSE, driven by a curiosity about the links between the crafts of performance and of city-making. Dialogue between artists and urbanists – expanding the scope of both – remains our core, and generates projects combining research and creative experimentation.

The organisation is supported by a network of collaborators, trustees, and advisors. Its intellectual approach is based in the work of Richard Sennett, who acts as chairman of the board of trustees. We receive core funding through a generous grant from James Anderson, and work with other funders on a project-by-project basis.

Website: onassis.org

Instagram : @cityastheatre

Facebook : @CityasTheatre

Twitter : @cityastheatre

Mucem

Mucem was designed to be a cultural hub for the city of Marseille, and great interest has been shown by its 10 million visitors since its opening. The museum's exhibitions have been noted for their quality, and the programme of conferences, concerts, projections – which are sometimes held outdoors – has met with resounding success among an extremely diverse visiting public.

Mucem is the project coordinator responsible for the overall management of the Alexandria project. It supervises the project implementation and monitors the fulfilment of the objectives and the final evaluation and reporting. Mucem's specific project activities include the organisation of seminars, conferences, lab meetings and workshops. It is also in charge of organising and hosting an artist residence and the main project exhibition. Mucem is also the lead in the dissemination and sustainability of the project.

Website: mucem.org

Instagram : @mucem_officiel

Facebook : @mucem_officiel

Twitter : @mucem_officiel



School for Sonic Memory Marseille 2022 Residency Report

Dates: 28 March - 2 April 2022

Various Locations

The aim of the third and final stop of the School for Sonic Memory (SSM) residency was to enable artists to deepen their understanding of the three Mediterranean cities they visited during the residency, giving them time and space to develop their own research beyond Marseille. Theatrum Mundi, with the support of our local partner MUCEM, worked with each resident to facilitate the connections with places and local actors, according to their individual needs and interests.

As well as continuing to explore water, along the mostly hidden Marseille canal and through hydraulic infrastructure of the Greek era, the residents followed more personal research trajectories through the city's layers of memory: dug into MUCEM's Centre de Conservation et de Ressources; searched alternative local resources such as the Mémoires des Sexualités archive; documenting unique acoustics and cultures. Joined by local residents Zoe le Voyer, Elena Biserna, and Sam Karpienia, they explored the Out of the Blue Map, enact a score for nocturnal walking, and hear a live performance of traditional Occitan music. On top of this research, a temporary studio by Archipel Community Radio popped up in Marseille, with an 18 hour broadcast bringing together residents and contributors with ideas from all the SSM cities, and streaming live via Berlin, Athens and Marseille.

The following document attempts to capture in an abbreviated manner the activities and discussions that took place during the week-long collaboration between nomadic and local residents in Marseille.

Participants included local and nomadic residents: Asmaa Jama, Onyeka Igwe, Hatem Hegab, Monai de Paula Antunes, Youmna Saba, Maria Sideri, Zoe Le Voyer, Sam Karpienia, Elena Biserna

Theatrum Mundi team: Andrea Cetrulo, John Bingham-Hall and Cecily Chua

MUCEM team: Emiel Nguyen, Guillaume Bureste, Enguerrand Lascols



Monday 28 March

10:30 - 14:00
Canal of Marseille walk

The Theatrum Mundi team, local and nomadic residents gathered at a cafe to catch up and make informal introductions. From here the group departed by train towards the outskirts of Marseille to follow a walk guided by John Bingham-Hall. The walk connected to John's recent explorations of the Marseille canal and its lesser known sections. The Canal de Marseille is a major source of drinking water for all of Marseille, the largest city in Provence, France. Its construction lasted 15 years and was directed by the engineer Franz Mayor de Montricher; the canal opened on July 8, 1849. The canal was a significant achievement of 18th-century engineering, combining bridges, tunnels and reservoirs over mountainous terrain. Until 1970, it was almost the sole water source for Marseille, and it still provides two thirds of the city's drinking water.

The itinerary included several stops along the way where John read excerpts from the Love Letter to the canal that he has been writing for Theatrum Mundi, which reflects on the prominent role that nature and more specifically, water, plays in the city. Some of the local residents had never visited this area and were pleasantly surprised to discover its existence.

16:00 - 17:00
Visit of the MUCEM workspace and Fort St Jean

The team at MUCEM invited the SSM to visit the designated space for production during the residency, as well as the outdoor space of the building, which faces the Mediterranean and has a privileged view of the city. The tour was guided by an architect who is part of the MUCEM team. The tour culminated with an introduction to the programme curators of the museum, Elisabeth Cestor and Cécile Dumoulin, where there was a chance to collectively discuss the potential contents for an event at the museum in 2023.

16:00 - 17:00
Group dinner
Courtesy of MUCEM

The conversation continued informally over dinner with Guillaume Bureste, Emiel Nguyen and Enguerrand Lascols.



Right: Live performance by Sam Karpenia

Below: Session with Radio Grenouille, John Bingham-Hall, Elena Biserna and Sam Karpenia hosted by Monai de Paula Antunes



Tuesday 29 March

12:00 - 06:00

The School for Sonic Memory radio show at Coco Velten

Nomadic resident, Monai de Paula Antunes, founder and producer of Archipel Community radio, set up and hosted an 18 hour radio show bringing together local and nomadic residents as well as Theatrum Mundi and other contributors based in Marseille and Alexandria. This proved to be an enjoyable and productive opportunity to amalgamate the intellectual work that the SSM participants have been doing and share it with a wider audience. The show was live streamed on Archipel Radio (Berlin), Radio Grenouille (Marseille), and Movement Radio (Athens).

Contributors to this broadcast beside the nomadic and local residents were: Léna Rivière (Radio Grenouille), Emma Bigé, Ghassan Salameh, Cy Lecerf Maulpoix, OzOz, El Salem, Ella Finer and Urok Shirhan.

The programme featured:

- Live readings and sound contributions from SSM nomadic residents titled Journey to the Monument; a conversation with Zoé Le Voyer who played sound pieces produced with the Calypso 36°21 collective; the iteration of a public reading by Elena Biserna and collaborators called Cérémonie d'écoute paienne

- A discussion between musicologist Dana Papachristou and anthropologist Yorgos Samantas on the possibility of a deaf-accessible radio, emerging from their fieldwork on the audibility of sound art and music within a School for Deaf and hard of hearing students
- A conversation and exchange of sounds on queer sound, memory and nightlife led by John Bingham-Hall
- A conversation between Yasmine Hussein and Andrea Cetrulo sharing thoughts and stories about Mediterranean mythologies and syncretism
- A live performance by Sam Karpenia; a live performance by Youmna Saba; a conversation with Alexandrian origami artist and everyday life collector oZoz about his Egyptian music collection
- A discussion with Radio Grenouille's Léna Rivière; and a broadcast of an Urok Shiran piece for The City Talks Back, Lovesong Revolution and another by Ella Finer titled her moon is a captured object.



Wednesday 30 March

10:00 - 19:00

Independent research and night walk with Elena Biserna

The day was left open for residents to carry their individual research. There was also a walk of the city planned by architect and architect Mohamed Gohar (who had already contributed to the programme in Alexandria) but unfortunately due to the weather circumstances it needed to be canceled. Instead, some residents decided to visit the Mémoires des Sexualités archives, which harbors a range of alternative histories of sexuality dating from 1978-2015.

The evening was occupied by a presentation by local resident, curator and researcher, Elena Biserna. Elena presented her work, which focuses on walking as a form of attunement with the city through sound and scores. As a collective exercise, she selected four different scores to be enacted by the group on the streets of Marseille at night.

Thursday 31 March

10:00 - 14:30

Research, talk and concert at MUCEM

Residents took the opportunity to individually meet up with local actors who contributed to their research through an exchange of knowledge: Youmna Saba met Egyptian musician Tarek Abdallah, Asmaa Jama shared a conversation with French Algerian artist focusing on decolonizing heritage, Dalila

Mahdjoub, and Onyeka Igwe visited the Alchimie parfumerie to source scents for a fragrance she will create.

In the afternoon, sociologist Constance de Gourcy presented the research she is conducting as part of the The Cargo project, which seeks to reveal through the prism of words, narratives and soundscapes, accounts of current Mediterranean migrations.

The talk was followed by a talk by local SSM resident Zoe Le Voyer, who introduced the group the work she does with the collective she forms part of, Calypso 3621. The presentation focused on their project Out of the Blue Map, a research programme interested in modes of knowledge production surrounding the solid and fluid territories between Morocco, France and the Netherlands. The presentation sparked an interesting debate among the residents around the ethics and responsibility of artists when portraying social realities like the issues that arise from migration.

The evening culminated with a concert by local SSM resident Sam Karpienia, who sings in Occitane, mixing medieval vernacular songs with contemporary pop and rock influences. His lyrics often invoke the figure of the bandit, the outsider and portrays the life of the working class in the region.



Friday 1 April

10:00 - 14:00

MUCEM's Centre de Conservation et de Ressources, future planning with MUCEM team and other activities

The curatorial team of MUCEM's Centre de Conservation et de Ressources opened its doors to for a private tour of the space and its collection. Starting at the library, the collection contains a broad selection of artifacts, some dating back to the 19th century, focusing on popular culture and everyday objects ranging from such religious talismans, cutlery and furniture to skateboards and theatre props. Its mission is to preserve these objects and it counts with acquisitions from both urban and rural settings in France and other places in the Mediterranean.

After the Centre de Conservation et de Ressources headed towards a nearby restaurant to discuss future plans for the SSM assembly in Biella in July 2022, and the 2023 event at MUCEM.

Other activities included: Visit to the MUCEM temporary exhibition (SIDA), a visit to the Cimetière Saint-Pierre (where Youmna Saba played her oud), as well as a visit to the Calanques, as well as Longchamps, and St Victor Abbey among others.

Overview of themes

Expanding on the core themes of the residency (sound as resonance and shared historical past, present and future imaginaries in Athens, Alexandria and Marseille) some of the threads that emerged during the residency week in Marseille were:

- Archives as ways of reconstructing subaltern experiences of the city (e.g. sexuality, gender, migration, class, religion)
- Popular everyday objects and songs as narratives of the city
- Being a citizen of the Mediterranean sea: trans-Mediterranean belonging rather than national identity
- Shared myths and religious beliefs as diplomatic tools conducive to cosmopolitanism)
- Expanded notion of sonic monuments
- Queer experience as infrastructures of care

The international project “Alexandria: (Re)activating Common Urban Imaginaries” is implemented by the partners Mucem (FR), University of Leiden (NL), Kunsthall Aarhus (DK), Undo Point Contemporary Arts (CY), Musée Royal de Mariemont (BE), Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels/BOZAR (BE), Ariona Hellas AE (GR) and Cittadellarte (IT), with the assistance of the associated partners Cluster (Egypt), Institut Français d’Alexandrie (Egypt) and Theatrum Mundi (UK).



**ONASSIS
STEGI**

**THEATRUM
MUNDI**

Bozar

Mucem

**INSTITUT
FRANÇAIS**
Egypte

CLUSTER

Point

Kunsthall Aarhus



Theatrum Mundi is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with the charitable aim of improving the understanding of cities through education and research. We think that collaboration with artists can offer city-makers — architects, planners, engineers, and urbanists — critical approaches to the way their crafts shape the public life of cities.

Our concern is for the ways the public lives of cities, in all their forms, are understood and designed. We aim to enrich these by engaging urbanists in co-production of knowledge, culture, and design, with artists, writers, performers, and scholars.

We convene practitioners and scholars in workshops, seminars, public events, and creative projects. We also publish independently and through other platforms. Established now as a charity based in London, our projects and programmes operate internationally with a wide range of partners.

Theatrum Mundi was founded at LSE Cities in 2012, as a series of conversations led by LSE Professor of Sociology Richard Sennett and Dr Adam Kaasa. It was established as a research project at LSE Cities through seed funding from Nesta, and at the Institute for Public Knowledge at New York University through a grant from the Mellon Foundation. After 5 years of incubation and through the kind support of colleagues at both NYU and LSE, it became an independent charity in 2017.

Credits
Text: Andrea Cetrulo
Design: Cecily Chua

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School for Sonic Memory is a Nomadic Mediterranean Residency programme focused on Sound and the Politics of Heritage. As part of the ALEX Creative Europe project coordinated by MUCEM, Theatrum Mundi and Onassis Stegi are producing a pluri-disciplinary nomadic residency program exploring sound, memory and trans-Mediterranean resonances.