

*History Is What You  
Carry with You  
By Luísa Telles*

Windolf's work circulates from the volume to the interval, and between the tangible object and the immaterial gesture. By adding time and mobility as factors to her artistic practice, the artist produces a series of performances that set her most recent works in motion. She brings pieces to be worn together with intimate life stories to be told, along with walks in the streets that unfold them.

In *Meet the Memory Person*—a performative monument, Windolf creates dialogues with the audience through city walks in which the viewer is not only a participant but may also become a collaborator. Inviting the spectators to rediscover historical sites of exile in Munich, and to reflect on their relevance for today, the *Memory Person* referred to in the title is embodied by different performers. They encourage us to weave, join, fit together and build under-represented narratives by contributing with personal memories, memorabilia and life stories of creative persons.[1]

This performative monument wears an assemblage of fabrics that hold words and objects produced collaboratively with refugee artists and residents of the district, as well as quotations in several languages added by the audience. While looking at the living monument's different forms and shapes, the viewer discovers words blending in and forming poetic statements about exile.[2] The performance sheds light on stories that were built under violent geopolitical, social, and ecological injustices. Tackling places that are not comfortable to be in, since they are products of oppression, in Windolf's work we see a vivid monument in-the-making in which remembrance becomes a form of resistance.

The *Memory Person* embraces a hybrid identity, neither unitary nor stable, which means that the performance is constantly shifting and being reshaped. By inviting expatriates to bring into form their experiences, the artist is interested in this space where many cultures collide and merge, recovering forgotten histories and unveiling the contradictions of neoliberal globalisation.[3]

In order to do this, could textile be the most suitable medium, symbolizing one of the few things one can carry upon one's own body when migrating? Just as the clothes we carry, the layers of our histories are built from what we manage to take with us.[4]

And here we can find a great symbol for that: the Taschentuch (handkerchief). Worn

on the head or carried in one's pocket to wipe their tears, this versatile small piece of fabric is what we see merging with the figure cast by the artist. Shown in the exhibition along with video records of the performance, the sculpture presents itself as the abstraction of the textile cover the Memory Person carries on their body.

In a dialog with the past and present of the city of Munich, navigating between different references and cultural symbols of a globalized world, this floating cloth shaped in bronze is there to be inhabited by multiple imaginary bodies. Crossing borders created due to social injustice, legacies of colonialism and capitalist violence, the nomadic garment carries with it the psychic, social, and cultural terrain that we inhabit and that inhabits us.[5]

What Windolf presents us in the exhibition Global Munich. In Perspective are multiple layers of histories yet to be worn and, above all, shared.

#### References

**[1]** *The performance was located in the Giesing quarter, a former worker's district in southeast Munich, in areas where migrants congregate. The performative monument interweaves different movements of exile and migration in the past and present, for example of participants who had to escape their homelands and migrate to Munich or are in the process of doing so, as well as the ones who had to flee Munich, especially during Germany's National Socialism period.*

**[2]** *Carrying words through their bodies and telling stories of places within the city and beyond, the Memory Person is inspired by Karl Valentin's Reklamemensch, one of the 'Munich originals.' This series of photographs portrays outstanding public characters in Munich's subculture in the 18th and 19th centuries. The 'Reklamemensch', a peddler, interacted with his fellow citizens via small objects given to him on his way.*

**[3]** *Anzald.a defines this space as Nepantla, a Nahuatl word meaning "a constant state of transition". Gloria Evangelina Anzald.a (1942–2004) was a scholar of Chicana cultural theory, feminist theory and queer theory. For more, also see Anzald.a's Borderlands = La Frontera: The New Mestiza (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987).*

**[4]** *As once said by writer Michael Ondaatje, "History is what you traveled on, and take with you". Michael Ondaatje, The Cinnamon Peeler: Selected Poems by Ondaatje (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1997).*

**[5]** *These thoughts are rooted in Ursula K. Le Guin's story of human origin, which redefines technology as a cultural carrier bag rather than a weapon of domination. Ursula Kroeber Le Guin (1929–2018) was a writer known for her science-fiction writing, high fantasy works, and essays. See Le Guin, The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction (Terra Ignota, 2019).*