

Master Dissertation Brussels

2021-2022 - Harold Fallon

Postwar Memory in El Salvador

community based memorialization architecture in
Chalatenango, El Salvador

Commemoration in Las Aradas, May 2019



“During the Salvadoran Civil War (1980 - 1992), the US-backed Salvadoran government employed brutal forms of violent oppression, including dozens of civilian massacres. In many regions, the Salvadoran Armed Forces and their allied paramilitary groups employed a “scorched earth” tactic with the aim of diminishing support for the nascent leftist guerilla movements by terrorizing, displacing, or eradicating the entire civilian population.”

Fallon, H., Montulet, T., Grzyb, A. (2020). Guinda. Vesper, journal of architecture, arts & theory, 3 - wildness (fall winter 2020), 196-197.

Rio Sumpul, El Salvador



“The guinda was a continuous persecution ... a scorched earth operation and many of us saved ourselves by running, running away. Sometimes we hid under the brush, under the tall grasses, in the pastures. That helped, but the guindas were very difficult, very hard.”

Nicolas Rivera, survivor of several massacres (Arcatao, El Salvador, 2019)

Mapping Massacres, July 2018



“The Surviving Memory in Postwar El Salvador collaborative research initiative is an international partnership of survivors, scholars, artists, lawyers, museums, architects, community organizers, municipal governments, civil society organizations and mental health professionals who are committed to documenting the history of the Salvadoran Civil War (1980-1992) and preventing future violence. Using decolonial and participatory methodologies, our goal is to engage in high-impact, community-driven research projects, oral histories, and accessible knowledge sharing activities that approach historical memory work holistically through the intersections of justice; art, music, and theatre; intergenerational education; testimonies; mental health and healing; commemoration;(...)”

(source : www.elsalvadormemory.org)

From San José las Flores to Las Aradas, May 2019



“(...) the architectural design of the Sumpul Massacre Memorial Park at Las Aradas, the site of the 1980 massacre in which 600 civilians were killed by the Salvadoran Armed Forces and the paramilitary group, ORDEN. (...) The final design features a memorial park of Árboles de Fuego (Firetrees) that bloom red in May, a memorial of handmade ceramic tiles bearing the names of the victims, an open plaza and long benches to facilitate commemorations, a statue of Saint Romero, and a roofed structure with a large mural. The Sumpul Association is now actively fundraising to build the memorial, which should be completed in 2020.”

(source : www.elsalvadormemory.org) (construction has been delayed)

Community workshop Las Aradas Memorial, 2019



After the design of a Memorial for the Sumpul Massacare in Chalatenango (started in 2018, currently being realised), an ambitious extension of the project is now being developed by Western University (Canada) with KU Leuven and other institutions for a period of seven years. Regarding architecture, the project includes the design of two small museums, exhibitions, secondary memorial sites, trails, etc.

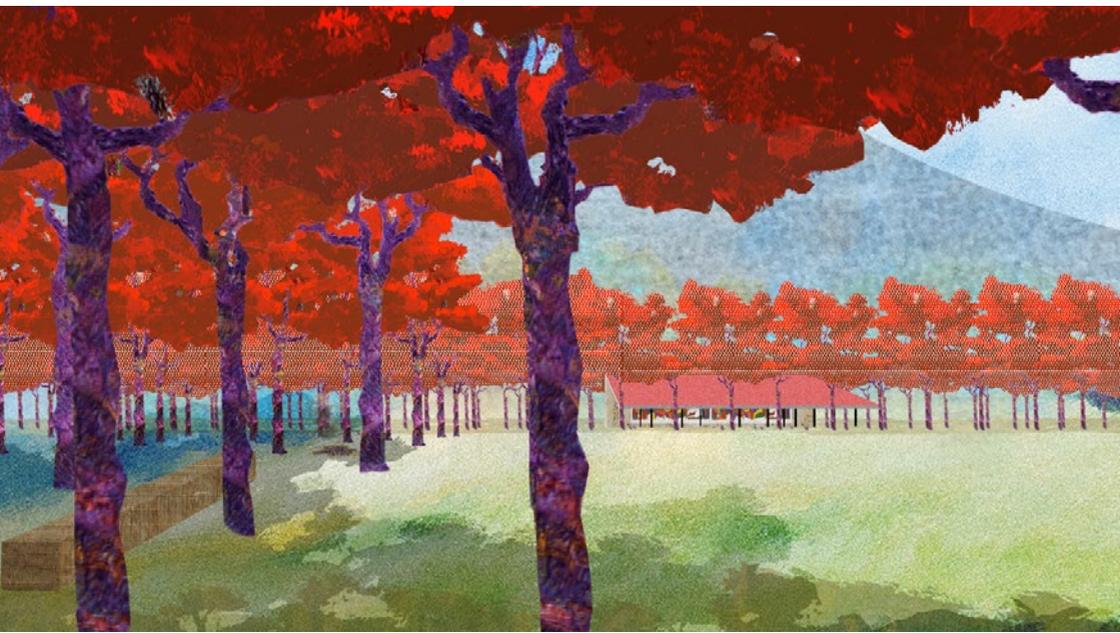
Rather than a single assignment, the Master Thesis consists in joining the team(s) in their efforts, resulting possibly in engaging in several smaller projects and identifying project opportunities.

Assamblea in San José las Flores, Nov 2019



The output of the Master Thesis will serve on the one hand as preliminary explorations and reflections for the development of design proposals in phases to come and on the other hand as reflection upon the first phase (2018-2021). The projects will be developed further by practicing architects involved in academic research. The output of the studio or part of it may be shared and even implemented without retribution other than the acknowledgement of participation.

Las Aradas Memorial Park, with AgwA



The Master Thesis includes theory investigation and design work. This may include historical background, construction techniques, economics of construction, participatory processes, new design proposals and project opportunities, research on ongoing projects (such as Las Aradas).

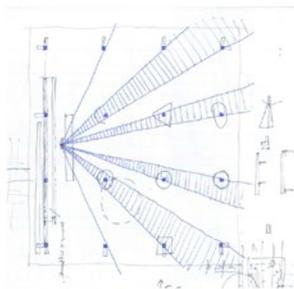
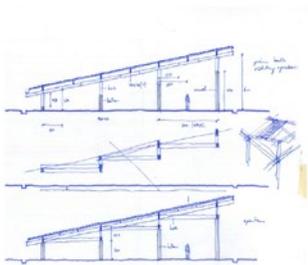
Las Aradas, Sumpul Valley towards Honduras



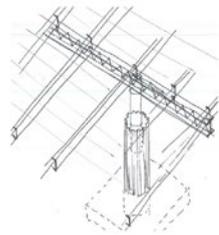
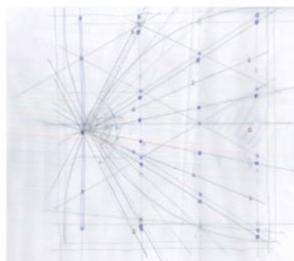
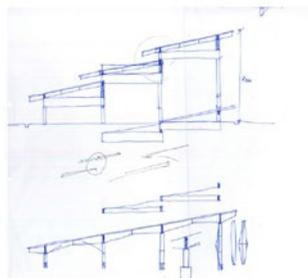
If sanitary conditions allow, the project may include the opportunity to travel to El Salvador engaging with the local communities, the physical and social context, and with the interdisciplinary team supporting the project. The cost of the travel may be partially covered by institutional funding (to be verified).

Security is a concern when travelling to El Salvador. In the framework of the project, local authorities and stakeholders provide a safe environment regarding the activities, transportation, housing, etc. Do not hesitate to ask questions about this.

Sketches for the roof at Las Aradas



metal truss structure
polices
Sergio Hernandez



Maximum three students.

Some knowledge of Spanish is recommended.

If you want to apply for this Master Thesis topic, please send a resume, portfolio and a short motivation e-mail to harold.fallon@kuleuven.be

more information :

<https://www.elsalvadormemory.org/>

<https://www.asociacionsumpul.org/>

<https://news.westernu.ca/2021/06/el-salvador-commemoration-grant/>

http://www.agwa.be/en/projects/1718_Aradas/221/

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumpul_River_massacre

GPS 14.163384356596607, -88.86196911457496

KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture
Campus Sint Lucas Brussels

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AgWA



Asociación Sumpul



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada ¹⁵⁰

2021-2022
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