Performing Memory in Art and Popular Culture

Edited by
Liedeke Plate and Anneke Smelik

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This volume pursues a new line of research in cultural memory studies by understanding memory as a performative act in art and popular culture. The authors take their cue from the observation that art and popular culture enact memory and generate processes of memory. They *do* memory, and, in this doing of memory, new questions about the cultural dimensions of memory arise: how do art objects and artistic practices perform the past in the present? What is their relationship to the archive? Does the past speak in the performed past (or do we speak to it)? To what purpose do objects 'recall'? And for whom do they recollect?

Here authors combine a methodological focus on memory as performance with a theoretical focus on art and popular culture as practices of remembrance. The essays in the book thus analyse what is at stake in the complex processes of remembering and forgetting, of recollecting and disremembering, of amnesia and anamnesis, that make up cultural memory.

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An Introduction

Liedeke Plate and Anneke Smelik

> Memory projects itself toward the future, and it constitutes the presence of the present.
>
> *(Derrida, 1986, p. 57)*

> Memory remains a future act: not yet recalled, if also never yet forgotten.
>
> *(Schneider, 2011, p. 22)*

'REMEMBERING REMEMBERING'

Imagine the everyday experience of compiling a shopping list. Cottage cheese is on the list. And smoked salmon, six bottles of wine, three pairs of socks—fifteen items in total. Usually, we write them down on a piece of paper, checking while we walk down the aisles of the local supermarket. But what if we want to train our memory and remember the list by heart? That is what Joshua Foer learns in *Moonwalking with Einstein* (2011). He uses the *loci* method of the *ars memoria* that was already recommended by Cicero in ancient Rome and described by Frances Yates in *The Art of Memory* (1966): translate information into images and situate them in an inner space, the 'memory palace'. Foer creates his memory palace by taking a space in mind that he knows well, the house he grew up in, and puts a vivid image of each item in a room. He conjures up the image of cottage cheese as a full bath with model Claudia Schiffer splashing around in the white stuff. The salmon is figured as a huge fish across the keyboard of the piano, and the three pairs of luxurious cotton socks hang from the lamp, brushing softly against his forehead. He then imagines walking through the house, retrieving the cottage cheese with the supermodel in the bath, the fish on the piano, the socks hanging from the lamp, thus flawlessly remembering all fifteen items on the list. Foer gets hooked by the *loci* method, starts training his memorial capacities, and a year later he is the winner of the yearly USA Memory Championship in New York.

Foer's subtitle, *The Art and Science of Remembering Everything*, betrays a deeply rooted desire in Western culture: to remember everything and forget nothing. Or, as Viktor Mayer-Schönberger so expressively puts it: 'Humans yearn to remember, although they mostly forget' (2009, p. 92). This desire takes on a particularly pressing, indeed existential, form in the case of disabled people like the late historian Tony Judt. Diagnosed with ALS in 2008, Judt soon was trapped in an immobile body. To recollect the stories he found himself mentally composing during long, lonely and sleepless nights, he similarly resorted to the age-old mnemotechnic device, referring himself to a 'memory chalet' (for he 'had no desire to construct palaces in [his] head' [2010, p. 6]) as a means to 'create, store, and recall' (p. 10):

> Each night, for days, weeks, months, and now well over a year, I have returned to that chalet. I have passed through its familiar corridors with their worn steps and settled into one or two or perhaps three armchairs—conveniently unoccupied by others. And thence, . . . I have conjured up, sorted out, and ordered a story or an argument or an example that I plan to use in something I shall write the following day. (p. 7)

The scenes from Foer's *Moonwalking with Einstein* and Judt's *The Memory Chalet* encapsulate a few of the themes that we wish to explore in our book *Performing Memory in Art and Popular Culture*. They show, first of all, that memory is a performance. Memory is work—creative work—doing or carrying out the act, 'the embodiment of retrieval' (Dudai, 2002, p. 190). Second, whereas memory is embodied performance, it is fully mediated. Memory does not function in a vacuum but needs a medium to be trained, shared and transmitted. Third, these contemporary recaptures of *ars memoria* demonstrate how memory is connected to spatiality, because the *loci* method visualises striking memories by locating them in the space of a house, palace or chalet, or theatre. The orientation of imagined objects within space points to a veritable 'theatre of memory', to recall the title of Raphael Samuel's volume on retro culture (1994). These three elements of memory—performance, mediation and spatiality—are brought together in this introduction.

Performing Memory in Art and Popular Culture looks through the prism of performance at the much-debated notion of cultural memory by analysing how cultural practices such as art, literature and media perform the past in the present. In our previous book, *Technologies of Memory in the Arts* (2009), we defined cultural memory as the things and the ways in which a culture remembers. Here, too, we focus on the cultural dimension of memory, taken as both the *what* and the *how* that a culture remembers. This time, however, we wish to explore the ways in which art and popular culture constitute performative acts of memory generating an experience of the past in the present. Memory needs to be understood as an effect of

a variety of institutionalised discourses and cultural practices. As Maurice Halbwachs points out, 'It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories' (1992, p. 38). Yet, if memory is social and cultural, it is also performative, making the past present in ways that can be experienced, generating a knowledge of the relationship between past and present that is oftentimes troubling, other times comforting. *Performing Memory in Art and Popular Culture* therefore engages with memory as an embodied act grounded in the here and now, generating memory in the act of performing it. In her introduction to *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (1999, p. vii), Mieke Bal defines cultural memory as the process of linking the past to the present and the future, thus identifying practices as crucial to understanding how memory works. The focus of our book is on the 'act' of memory, not its 'theatre' or 'palace', inquiring into the processes of making, constructing, enacting, transforming, expressing, transmitting cultural memory through art and popular culture. As Diana Taylor reminds us, 'to perform' is a verb (2003, p. 14). It is 'to do something, e.g. a piece of work', as the dictionary states. The notion of 'performing memory' thus presupposes *agency*.

Agency is perhaps not what we usually relate to memory, as personal memories seem to happen or even befall us, much like Marcel Proust was overcome by memories of his youth when the sweet smell of the madeleine cake dipped in the hot tea reached his nostrils and the pastry melted in his mouth. This kind of *mémoire involontaire*, as Proust called it, could not be further removed from the *ars memoriae* of ancient times or from Joshua Foer's memory training in recent years. And yet, as Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* testifies, even involuntary memory, once it has been conjured up, becomes subject to recall, reworking and representation. Proust's involuntary memory set into motion a process and production of active memory that resulted in the seven volumes of *À la recherche du temps perdu*. His novel shows that memory is hard work. Performing memory can thus be understood as an act of memorialisation. The focus on agency and on the act of remembering helps us to understand memory—or its representation in art and popular culture—as fundamentally processual and dynamic.

Contemporary studies of cultural memory indeed emphasise that memory 'require[s] the active agency of individuals and publics', in the words of Michael Rothberg. He continues: 'Such agency entails recognizing and revealing the production of memory as an ongoing process involving inscription and reinscription, coding and recoding' (2010, pp. 8–9). Memory, then, involves agency. Perhaps memory is even an act of identity formation that serves to narrate and produce the self, as Paul John Eakin suggests in his wonderfully evocative book *Living Autobiographically* (2008). Memory bridges the gap between the lived past and the imagined future. Eakin points out that we do not remember the past as such, but it is the

self *performing* the act of recall (2008, p. 163; our emphasis). He learns from André Aciman that such a performance of memory not only grounds the present in the past but also helps to orient us towards the future. Individual memory is understood as an act of the self to retrieve its traces in the past in order to anticipate the future. While memory may start as an involuntary event, it can turn into an act of active remembrance, even into a practice of remembering the act of memory itself. Eakin quotes Aciman: 'he was not just remembering. He was remembering remembering' (p. 163). Aciman actually refers to the poet William Wordsworth, but he could equally have been referring to Marcel Proust; they are both writers whose work embodies the agency of a practice of individual memory. The point here is that memory practices are intimately connected with making, with narrating, telling and writing—in short, with the act of creation. As Gilles Deleuze put it in his book on Proust: 'It is no longer a matter of saying: to create is to remember—but rather, to remember is to create, . . .' (2000, p. 111).

Of course, in a book on cultural memory we do not dwell on the interiorised experience of involuntary memory but rather explore the traces of the past as they are actualised in the present through practices of commemoration and remembrance in art and popular culture. In this book, then, we take our cue from the observation that art and popular culture enact memory and generate processes of memory. We thus move beyond the traditional psychoanalytical distinction between 'two contrasting ways of bringing the past into the present: acting out and remembering' (Connerton, 1989, p. 25), seeing them instead as a continuum. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney observe that memory is performative rather than reproductive: 'It is as much a matter of acting out a relationship to the past from a particular point in the present as it is a matter of preserving and retrieving earlier stories' (2009, p. 2). Similarly, Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree and Jay Winter state: 'remembrance is performative. It is an activity, something that happens in time and place, and that on every occasion when we come together to do the work of remembrance, the story we fashion is different from those that have come before' (2010, p. 7). By understanding memory as a *performative act* in art and popular culture, we want to explore cultural practices and traditions that have hitherto not yet been studied as meaningfully related to each other. As acts of creation, memories (what the Germans call *Erinnerung*) are not static, to be deliberately retrieved or inadvertently recalled. Instead, they are dynamic and changeable, the result of an active process of memory as the act of remembrance (the German *Erinnern*) or as the capacity to remember (the German *Gedächtnis*) (cf. Erll, 2005, p. 7; the English language unfortunately does not make the distinctions that Germanic languages do between memory as process and memory as product). As such, art and popular culture 'do' memory, and in this doing of memory new questions about the cultural dimensions of memory arise: how do art objects and artistic practices perform the past in the present? What is their

relationship to the archive? Does the past speak in the performed past (or do we speak to it)? To what purpose do objects 're-call'? And for whom do they 're-collect'?

By addressing such questions, the authors in this book take remembrance in art and popular culture as a practice that negotiates memories for the social field. As we saw earlier, Maurice Halbwachs argued that memory functions within a social context and is therefore framed by it. Jan Assmann (1992; 1995) has elaborated that cultural memory has normative and formative powers, since it serves to actively construct the identity of social groups from families to nations, which in turn 'socially mediate' (1995, p. 127) individual memory. Memories are thus shaped by their social, generational and cultural context. As many have pointed out, they are also informed by their medial and technological frameworks (see, for example, Huyssen, 2003b; Rigney, 2005; Plate and Smelik, 2009; Erll, 2011; Garde-Hansen, 2011; Neiger et al., 2011). This can be illustrated by the family photo album, a technology or cultural form that is rapidly becoming obsolete but that, in the twentieth century, mediated personal and cultural memory in very specific ways (Hirsch, 1997; Humm, 2003; van Dijck, 2007). Or by the knot in the handkerchief: not so long ago, before disposable tissues became the preferred device for blowing one's nose, people would make a knot in their handkerchief to remind themselves that there was something they needed to recall—not *what* they needed to remember but *that* there was something they should not forget (see also Terdiman, 1993, p. 16). The knot in the handkerchief functioned as an *aide-mémoire*: it helped 're-membering remembering'. And with the advent of mobile cell phones with 'memory' capacity, people have stopped remembering their friends' phone numbers. What all these examples make clear is that it is imperative that we understand memory historically, as an effect of a variety of institutionalised discourses, cultural practices and technological artefacts.

At the cultural level, art and artistic practices most explicitly engage memory as re-presentation. In *Present Past* (1993), Richard Terdiman forcefully makes the case for memory as representation, explaining memory's activity as follows: 'A content of some sort is registered, with whatever fidelity the registering system can manage. Time passes. A representation appears, responsive to the content previously registered. What has happened is memory. Whenever anything is conserved and reappears in a representation, we are in the presence of a memory effect' (p. 8). Such an understanding of memory as registration, as the meaningful, interpretable trace or inscription of an absent because bygone referent, has long dominated cultural analyses of memories as interpretations of the past. It zooms in on the text, image or sign that is the object of analysis yet leaves out of focus the specific agents, institutions and contextualised processes of remembrance that make the memory happen. Instead, in this volume we seek to understand memory as an embodied and localised practice. Such a move is part and parcel of a broader paradigm shift in cultural memory studies, from a linguistic to a

performative turn. The difference is not only one of focus, shifting attention from the memory trace to its act—the event of memory, its happening. It also implies an epistemological, even ontological shift, from memory as the trace of what once was to memory as the past's present moment.

Memory is always re-call and re-collection (the terms are frequently used as synonyms), and, consequently, it implies re-turn, re-vision, re-enactment, re-presentation: making experiences from the past present again in the form of narratives, images, sensations, performances. Foregrounding the *work* of memory, the active labour of remembering and of forgetting, brings the focus on its creative aspect and functions theoretically to push representation beyond its borders as just representing meaning. After all, we may recall, the word 'représentation' in French means performance as well as representing or being represented. In *Performing Memory in Art and Popular Culture*, we therefore wish to link this productive understanding of memory to the multilayered notion of performance.

PERFORMING MEMORY

In the wake of Paul Connerton's pioneering work on bodily practices as performative memory in *How Societies Remember* (1989), in which he 'argue[s] for the importance of performances, and in particular habitual performances, in conveying and sustaining memory' (p. 104), cultural memory studies have embraced the notion of performance. The title of our book echoes Freddie Rokem's intentionally ambiguous title from 2000, *Performing History*, referring to the historical events as they were performed in the past, to the historical event as a form of performing like some kind of 'drama' and to the theatre performances of historical events (2000, pp. 5–6). It also resonates with Tilmans, van Vree and Winter's *Performing the Past* (2010). The multilayered understanding of 'performing' points to the time lag between the *now* of the performance and the *then* of the historical events (Rokem, 2000, p. 6). Performance, in the sense of a theatrical or artistic live show, partakes in its very live-ness of the here and now, with the physical presence of actors or performers displaying their skills before an audience (see Carlson, 2004). We will come back to the pivotal dialectics between the time and space of the events 'then' and the time and space of the performance 'now' that is implicit in the hybrid notion of performing memory, but first we want to briefly sketch the history of the concept of performance.

The concept of performance, and of performance studies, is notoriously riddled with complexities, sometimes to the point of irritation. As an interdisciplinary field—involving terrains as diverse as anthropology, philosophy and linguistics, theatre studies, and even business and management discourse—its categories are leaky, its borders porous and its terms constantly slipping away (cf. Carlson, 2004, pp. 205–6). Not only did a

new cultural practice of performance art polemically break onto the stage, but there was also a veritable 'theory explosion', as Jon McKenzie calls it (2001, p. 38), providing new methodologies and critical theories following the activism of the 1960s. In a recent article, José Medina claims that 'the performative turn' has been more groundbreaking than the linguistic turn, 'calling for interdisciplinary collaborations that reach beyond the boundaries of philosophy' (2010, p. 275). Marvin Carlson writes in the conclusion to the second edition of his *Performance. A Critical Introduction*: 'Performance by its nature resists conclusions just as it resists the sort of definitions, boundaries, and limits so useful to traditional academic writing and academic structures' (2004, p. 206). He then proceeds to write an 'anti-conclusion' to this book on an 'anti-discipline'. Yet, he lists some clear characteristics of performance. First, performance entails a display of skills demonstrated to an audience by a trained or skilled human being (2004, p. 3). Second, the display of skills involves patterned behaviour—someone pretending to be someone other than oneself, which brings consciousness to the performance (p. 3). This is what Richard Schechner has famously called 'restored behavior' (1985, p. 35), which is the 'as if' factor of 'showing doing' (Schechner, 2006, p. 28). A third way of understanding performance is the notion of achievement, to successfully act up to one's potential. Jon McKenzie (2001) has further explored this normative aspect of performance in the three paradigms he distinguishes: organisational, cultural and technological performance.

As we work in this book with the concept of 'performing memory', we want to take from anthropology the notion that humans, either collectively or individually, have the agency to shape themselves in their behaviours and beliefs. People, we believe, are—at least to some extent—agents in their own drama (Taylor, 2003, p. 7). They narrate and perform their selves (Eakin, 2008, p. 84) and are, in Zygmunt Bauman's words, 'artists of life' (Bauman, 2008). In chapter 10, Louise Wolthers's discussion of the genre of history painting underscores the importance of art for such identity performances. She analyses contemporary art that embodies collective and politically affective visions of the past while critically addressing ideas of imagined communities.

The anthropological idea that humans create and construct their own reality is, of course, fully consonant with contemporary philosophy of language, which is yet another important source of inspiration in thinking through performance, or the 'performative'. Noam Chomsky's (1965) distinction between 'competence' and 'performance' remains fully relevant (cf. Dudai, 2002, p. 189). Above all, the work of J.L. Austin has been seminal here. The performative in language refers to a situation in which '*by* saying or *in* saying something we are doing something' (Austin in Bial, 2007, p. 177; original emphasis). In other words, by pronouncing the words we perform an action, as when we apologise by saying 'I apologise' or adjourn a committee meeting by stating 'the meeting is now adjourned'. Derrida

further radicalised this notion of the performative nature of language in his theory of deconstruction. For Derrida, all speech is 'iteration', a repetition of what has been said before. The citational quality of language brings it close to understanding language as performance, where meaning is forever deferred while differences unfold in the endless repetitions of language (Derrida, 1982).

Judith Butler (1988; 1990; 1993) takes up from both Austin and Derrida to bring the performative quality of language into our everyday lives, more specifically to rethink our gender and our bodies as something that are not given but rather as something that are performed. She insists that our sex is not something that we are and our gender is not something that we have but that these are social constructions constituted through performative acts. With Austin she states that the performative act is not merely theatrical but that it enacts and produces the gender that it performs. With Derrida she then argues that these performative acts need to be repeated time and again in everyday life. It is in this very citationality that a window for change and agency can be opened, because every repetition implies the possibility of making a difference. Butler's important intervention of allowing political agency into the theoretical notion of performance or, rather, performativity has singlehandedly created a new field of studies around gender and performance (see e.g. Goodman, 1998). Her understanding of identity as a practice involving repetition brings memory into the process. In a sense, the performance of gender is a performance of memory. In chapter 11, Wim Tigges addresses precisely this issue of gender, memory and performance. Inquiring into the possibilities of the genre of fantasy to re-engender the cultural memory of myth and history by telling mythical stories through female characters, he argues that, by performing alternative versions of traditional accounts, the action-fantasy television series *Xena: Warrior Princess* opens opportunities for 'correcting' memories of mythological as well as (pseudo) historical events.

Our book deals with practices of art and popular culture and therefore the field of theatre studies may give the most important clues to the study of performance. Performance art became an accepted art form in the 1970s, although it has historical roots throughout the nineteenth century, as RoseLee Goldberg describes extensively in the first history of performance art that she wrote in 1979 and expanded twice, in 1988 and 2001. Performance art as it developed from the 1960s on is known for its avant-garde roots and its radicalism in favouring the transgressive. The anti-establishment aesthetic of performance art is marked by two aspects: the presence of the performer's body and the liveness of the event. The body takes centre stage in performance art. Whether in Valie Export's Actionism, Marina Abramović's harrowing work, between Bruce Nauman and Karen Finley, and from Orlan to Stelarc, to name just a few, the boundaries of the human body are explored from every possible angle, within and without, from extreme pain to ecstatic pleasure. The radical foregrounding of the body that was and still is so

prominent in the practice of performance art aligns it deeply with the activism of the 1960s and its follow-up in the body politics of feminist and black postcolonialist theory. Again, there is an important link to philosophies of performativity, especially where feminist thinkers like Judith Butler (1993) and Rosi Braidotti (2011) have called attention to the corporeal dimension of performativity, to the body that speaks or, rather performs in and through speech. Feminist performance art even became a veritable genre by foregrounding the body most explicitly (see Schneider, 1997; Jones, 1998). The focus on issues of embodiment is thus part and parcel of performance art as well as performance theory: 'there was an attempt to pass from product to process, from mediated expression to direct contact, from representation to presentation, from discourse to body, from absence to presence', as McKenzie states (2001, p. 38).

The notion of performance, then, can be understood as embodied behaviour that privileges body over speech, presence over absence and praxis over product. Diana Taylor claims that she is not so much interested in what performance is as in what it allows her to do in memory studies, which is to challenge the preponderance of writing and revalorise embodied, expressive culture as a form of knowledge. For her, the importance of the concept of performance is first and foremost its emphasis on an 'embodied praxis and episteme' (2003, p. 17), 'a way of knowing as well as a way of storing and transmitting cultural knowledge and identity' (p. 278). This is close to Paul Connerton's notion of 'incorporating practice', designating a habitual memory in which 'the past is, as it were, sedimented in the body' (1989, p. 72). This he contrasts with 'inscribing practice' involving storing and retrieval devices such as print, records and computers and requiring 'we do something that traps and holds information, long after the human organism has stopped informing' (p. 73). Because traditions and memories are stored in the body (as in Proust's madeleine) and through mnemonic methods (as in Foer's memory palace), we can understand cultural memory as an incorporating practice that is performed time and again, building repertoires of embodied memories that allow for 'choreographies of meaning' (p. 20). Dance is, of course, such an art form of embodied memories. In chapter 9, Timmy De Laet inquires into the memory of the body by looking at the ways in which experimental contemporary dance explores and sometimes bridges the gap between the present and the past. Analysing the strategies of re-enactment that those who choreograph these dances use, he argues that in these performances, the body of the dancer functions as a living archive. His analysis bears out Taylor's claim that embodied performance is multicoded, not only producing many layers of meaning, but also involving different roles for spectators, participants and witnesses (2003, p. 49).

The other important characteristic of the theatricality of performance is its liveness. For Peggy Phelan (1993), liveness is the aspect *par excellence* that gives performance its radical edge and its sense of 'realness'. It is the here and now of the live event that defines performance art. As she phrases

it, 'Performance's only life is in the present' (p. 146). However, liveness is also one of the most debated aspects of performance. Philip Auslander, for example, expresses his fatigue with the 'clichés and mystifications' (2008, p. 2) of the live as magic and real, in hostile opposition to mediatised events as 'secondary and somehow artificial reproductions of the real' (p. 3). Indeed, media have penetrated not only our daily lives but also the practice of performance art. In her third edition of *Performance Art*, Goldberg (2001) includes a chapter on the 'Media Generation': 'Raised on twenty-four hour television and a cultural diet of B movies and "rock 'n roll," performance artists in the 1980s interpreted the old cry to break down barriers between life and art to be a matter of breaking down barriers between art and the media, also expressed as a conflict between high and low art' (2001, p. 190). Liveness is no longer antagonistically opposed to mediatisation, but they are 'parallel forms that participate in the same cultural economy', that is, in a fully mediatised culture (Auslander, 2008, p. 5). As Auslander argues, there are no longer clear-cut divisions between the live and the mediatised.

Although Auslander's views were controversial when his book first came out, in 1999, by now the notions of mediation, remediation and premediation have fully entered the field of cultural studies of memory. For example, in her assertion that embodied memory is live, Diana Taylor equally opens up to the view that the mnemonic systems of embodied memory, what she terms 'the repertoire', no less than 'the archive' of written documents, are mediated (2003, p. 21). And in her book on re-enactment, Rebecca Schneider fleshes out the paradoxes of performativity in crossing media and disciplines as well as time and space. She claims that the function of 'theatrical reproducibility', the replay function of time-based art, brings time again and again out of joint (2011, p. 16). The following sentence shows the hallucinatory function of the media in the events they transmit, either live or performed, for us to watch: 'We are passing the time by witnessing the passing time of doubling, redoubling, tripling, re-tripling, cross-, multi- and hyper-citational events' (p. 23). Performance and the media alike mediate cultural memory for us. In chapter 7, László Munteán explores the inextricable confusion of the real and the virtual in the highly mediatised attacks of September 11, 2001, by tracing the history and representations of the famous photograph of the 'Falling Man'. He contends that the image has become a 'tabooed icon' that epitomises the 'hyper-citational event' of 9/11.

As we argued in *Technologies of Memory in the Arts*, while it is an advancement to understand memory as always already mediated, we can push the argument even further (2009, p. 16). Not only is memory shaped by media, but media are also shaped by memory. Media technologies structure our process of remembering, just as remembrance affects the way in which we make use of media devices. Focusing on digital media, Andrew Hoskins maintains that mediated memory needs to be seen 'as something created when needed, driven by the connectivities of digital technologies and media,

and inextricably forged through and constitutive of digital social networks' (2009, p. 92). Mediated memory thus results in concrete objects, products or performances, as well as in networks, which people employ and connect for negotiating the relationship between self and society, between personal and cultural memory. If we understand the medium as a process and not as a thing, we can argue not only that it re-mediates but that the medium itself also remembers. Or, to put it differently, if the past is always already mediated, then media by necessity re-mediate. Mediated memory products can so be understood as having a double mnemonic layer—that is, as being both the cultural and the medial remembrance of something.

It seems then that the live aspect of performance brings home the embodied as well as the mediated nature of cultural memory. There is yet another important consequence of the liveness, the very present-ness, of the act of performing cultural memory. It blurs the boundaries between past and present, by bringing the past to and in the here and now. As Mark Franko and Annette Richards write in their introduction to *Acting on the Past*: 'If performance is understood as "restored behavior," as fundamentally repetitive or reiterative, (though the memory it retraces need not be authentic), it necessarily brings back the past to unsettle the present' (Franko and Richards, 2000, p. 2). Performance is then the point of encounter, where the 'then and now punctuate each other' (Schneider, 2011, p. 1). Schneider makes a lot of this function of performance to 'trouble linear temporality' (p. 30): 'Time is decidedly folded and fraught' (p. 23), because in performing memory, 'the sense of past as past', even though it may be available only as re-enactment, can be touched upon.

We know from trauma theory that the past is, 'so to speak, tattooed on the present' (Le Roy et al., 2010, p. 253). Or, as Ben Highmore writes in his essay in this volume, 'Rather than overcoming the past, the complex work of time—to create and destroy, to sustain and deplete—is the horizon for any possibility of life.' Cultural trauma unsettles chronological time; the traumatic event is always both behind and before us. Le Roy, Stalpaert and Verdoodt claim that the disturbing presence of the past in the present is the subject of the performing arts and cinema that are concerned with memory and trauma. Thus, Klaas Tindemans explains in chapter 4, the gap between remembering a painful and tabooed memory—of collaborators in the Second World War—and performing that dramatic experience on stage requires careful and creative use of dramaturgical devices. Aesthetic strategies are here used to evoke and produce cultural memory in a work of art, rendering visible that which escapes us in the passing of time.

The complicated convolution of time is, of course, key to memory studies. Aleida Assmann postulates two modes of cultural memory: institutions of active memory, like the canon, preserve the past *as present*, while institutions of passive memory, like the archive, preserve the past *as past* (2008, p. 98; original emphasis). Directors of contemporary costume films seem well aware of this fact. In chapter 12, Elise Wortel and Anneke Smelik

show, in their analyses of costume drama, how such postmodern films wilfully escape any attempt to 'correctly' represent the past. Rather, the films open up the past for the spectator by creating an intensive and affective performance of history. Philosophers also doubt whether memory can ever adequately access the past: 'the past's being *as past*' escapes memory, Deleuze claims (2000, p. 57; original emphasis). Deleuze takes it even further by following Bergson's *Matter and Memory*, stating that not only the past escapes us but also the present: 'For if the present was not past at the same time as present, if the same moment did not coexist with itself as present *and* past, it would never pass, a new present would never come to replace this one. The past as it is in itself coexists with, and does not succeed, the present it has been' (2000, p. 58; original emphasis). And Derrida equally wonders what it is to think the present in its presence, only to answer that the difference between presence and the present 'remains forgotten' and that the trace of the present gets lost; it can merely be erased as 'the trace of the trace' (Derrida, 1982, pp. 23 and 24). Yet, as Franko and Richards point out, 'Traces may fade completely, but marks tend to remain, like scars, yet without immediate reference to the present' (2000, p. 5). The essays gathered in this book inquire into the traces, marks and perhaps even scars of the past as they are performed in literature, cinema, television, dance and art. Ben Highmore, for example, discusses, in chapter 5, the art works of the British artists Nigel Henderson, Magda Cordell, Eduardo Paolozzi and William Turnbull, whose focus on the materiality in their art seems to defy the spectral and scarified qualities of their recollections of traumatic events during the Second World War.

The idea that the past and present coexist spells out to us the essence of the concept of the performance of memory as we explore it in *Performing Memory in Art and Popular Culture*. Through our exploration of 'performance' as a methodological framework, we put the study of cultural memory within the paradigm of the 'performative turn'. Combining a methodological focus on memory as performance with a theoretical focus on art and popular culture as practices of remembrance helps us to understand cultural memory as a process of dealing with the past in the present that is embodied and mediated, linking a present to a past and to a future. Inviting a reconsideration of the persistence of the historical past in the present, this book centres not only on nostalgic or 'presentist' aspects of cultural memory but also on its historical and historicising—as well as its utopian—facets. Perhaps when the past is performed in the present it opens up to a politics of possibility where we can imagine alternative futures. As Jacques Derrida wrote: 'Memory stays with traces, in order to "preserve" them, but traces of a past that has never been present, traces which themselves never occupy the form of presence and always remain, as it were, to come—come from the future, from the *to come*' (1986, p. 58; as usual, Derrida plays with words here: future is 'avenir' in French, and to come is 'à venir').