VISIBILIZING VULNERABILITIES

THE TEMPORALITY OF "AWARENESS RAISING" MEMORIALS AND THE MAKING OF THE ALWAYS-ALREADY LOST

by

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Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Gender Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary

2016

Abstract

This thesis takes as its focus three artworks produced in Europe between the summer of 2015 and the Spring of 2016 that all intend to respond to, and raise awareness of, the crisis of forced migration and the deaths which have occurred therein: "Chinese dissident artist," ("Artist Ai Weiwei Poses as Aylan Kurdi" 2016) Ai Weiwei's re-enactment of the image of drowned Syrian Kurdish toddler, on the Greek coast, (Feb. 2016) and his subsequent installation of 14000 orange life jackets, on the columned façade of the Konzerthaus in Berlin, (Feb. 2016) produced in connection with the Cinema for Peace fundraising Gala (Feb. 15, 2016) and British artist Jason deCaires Taylor 's *The Raft of the Lampedusa* (Feb. 2016), an underwater figurative sculpture installation off the coast of Spain, depicting Libyan refugees in a raft wand walking along the ocean floor. While not all of these artworks have embraced the description, I argue that all three are projects of memorialization and assert that as highly visible international projects they function, at once, as artworks, humanitarian projects, and memorials. I situate my interdisciplinary analysis at an the intersection of literature on feminist scholarship humanitarian visualities, on nationalism, and cultural studies of memorials in nationalism. I ground this investigation in a theoretical framework of visuality and the politics of aesthetics, as addressed by Jacques Rancière, and discourses of biopolitcs as originated by Michel Foucault and addressed by Giorgio Agamben and Elizabeth Povinelli, and in tension with Judith Butler's recent work on mourning and grievability. I argue that as internationally visible artworks that memorialize an ongoing condition of precarity, in "real-time", these projects, in their particular materialities, visualities and temporal constructions, produce specific and often troubling political effects, in opposition with their stated intentions.

Acknowledgements

This project is in some ways, a long time coming, and in others, touched by the failings that always necessarily attend any address of the immediate, as the art subjects in the coming pages, themselves, demonstrate. I began my career in art as both a student of School of the Art Institute of Chicago and in public art administration, working as the project liaison and Fine Art Specialist of the U.S. General Service Administration's "Art-in-Architecture" national public art program. The phrase "art and politics make strange bedfellows" will be familiar to many, government and art is an even more peculiar pairing. Vacillating between the work of critique as a student and the fascinating, if sometimes uncomfortable, world of governmental policies and practices and art gave rise to a persistent interest in the various relationships between these two strangest of bedfellows.

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Teri Kapsalis, Greg Bordowitz, and Joseph Grigely in particular fostered my curiosity and love of theory through their own enthusiasm and entertained many of my early and less formed questions. Adelheid Mers did all this and taught me how to think through administration as a political practice and widened my world view and my work beyond what I thought possible. I owe a great debt to time spent in the Visual Culture Department of New York University under Nick Mirzoeff as chair, where I had the opportunity to study with Arjun Appadurai and Marita Sturken, who's insights are foundational to much of the work that follows here, and Shireen K. Patell, whose first directed my thinking towards aesthetic practices in relationship to human rights. As always, I owe a debt of gratitude to my dear friend and colleague Rustem Ertug Altinay who's encyclopedic knowledge and shared passion for

memorialization, nationalism, and cultural memory has proved an assurance of sanity and community when often such things were rare in my circuitous path to and through this project.

City University of New York, Hunter College and in particular Cynthia Hahn offered me the opportunity as a young curator to consider thinking on objects and absence in art as social performances that reappear in this work. Additionally, the opportunity to work on a project through the Zeit-Stiftung Ebelin and und Gerd Bucerius,Institute's "History Takes Place" Istanbul, afforded me the time and space to begin explorations about vulnerability and authenticity in politics and art. In particular I would like to thank organizers Anna Hofmann, Jane Bartels, and my colleagues and particularly the insights of J.B. who supported my working through the article that arose from that program and lead me to this one.

Among my friends and family; Seung-Min Lee's gift for speaking truth to power astounds me second only to her kindness. I owe an unrepayable debt of gratitude to Isaac Zunk and family for my survival from cancer and everything I have been able to do since. I am thankful to my family, particularly Art Greiser for his many forms of rescue, and for his inspiring and boundless commitment to communication and ethics in his daily political life, and to Richard Greiser who is undoubtedly the most honorable man I know and who has always encouraged me to trust myself and take risks, even when he disagrees. I am in ceaseless gratitude to my paternal grandparents who fled fascist Italy, and struggled through a laborious and loss laden process of migration that took decades. I dedicate this effort as always, to my mother, Adrienne, without whom none of my accomplishments could have been possible, who never shirked an opportunity to ask hard questions and who taught me first and foremost to seek justice in the world.

I am grateful to Central European University for supporting my study and offering a stimulating and inspiring community in which I been grateful to participate over this incredibly

short academic year. I am deeply thankful to the Gender Studies Department and to friends and colleagues made therein who offered their support, humor, intelligence and insights, as well as care-taking and cake baking in the final days thesis work. Anna Wodika, Tegiye Birely and Meriç Çağlar for helping me find my footing in migration studies literature, and my supportive writing partners, Sara Snitselaar for her metronomic working schedule management, and Deirdre Gaine for her boundless enthusiasm. In addition I have been very lucky to have had access to the faculty of C.E.U., within and without the department. I am grateful to Prem Kumar Rajaram, who's thoughtful insights and ethical commitments have been a welcome beacon, on an often dark road, and to Boldizsár Nagy who's incredible ethical and intellectual commitment to refugee law is unshakeable and contagious, and to Hyaesin Yoon whose passion for theory and enthusiasm for the intellectual leaps of others is exemplary.

Finally, but far from least, I extend my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Hadley Zuan Renkin, for his patience with my decidedly un-anthropological writing style and process, his continued support, his unwavering pedagogical passion and commitment, and for always having that *one* more theorist to consider; and to Elissa Helms for her support during a period of physical trial, lightning fast intellect, her humor, and for going above and beyond her already incredible efforts to foster the migration study group without which this thesis may never have been written.

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Introduction

> There will be no public act of grieving (said Creon in Antigone). If there is a "discourse," it is a silent and melancholic one in which there have been no common bodily condition, no vulnerability that serves as the basis for an apprehension of our commonality: and there has been no sundering of that commonality…(Butler 2006: 36)

Mourning or grieving, as Butler poses it in her application of Creon's edict, noted above, to contemporary ungrievable deaths, is seemingly equated to inclusion within a community. The bodies of the exiled are, as that of Antigone's brother Polyneices, cast out, left unburied beyond the walls of the city; ceremonies and memorials for the exiled dead, forbidden. In practice, however, it does not always follow that the excluded of a given community, are merely cast out. Though their bodies may remain exiled beyond the gates, the excluded dead, are often, nonetheless, pressed into cultural labor as images and ideas. This thesis is a troubled inquiry into the work the excluded dead are made to do, how, in their absence, they are put in service of communities from which they are denied inclusion through their own memorializations, and how art as a significant form of contemporary memorial practice participates. In specific, this thesis takes as its subject of analysis recent artworks which have taken the form of memorials in the name of "raising awareness" of forced migration, and the life or death precarity of those involved, and moves to ask how these artworks as cultural products and "technologies of memorialization" (Sturken 1997) in "real-time" figure the refugee as an absent, yet persistently visual, corporeality (Rajaram 2002a) and thus work in ways beyond, and often against, their stated political intentions.

Although widespread untenable conditions have lead to escalations in forced migration for decades, the realities have remained largely ignored by Western media. In the summer of 2015, the migration of hundreds of thousands of people from countries including Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq

and Pakistan, Libya, to Europe through what has been called "the Balkan Route"[1] suddenly became the focus of international media attention, in part due to a number of highly visual and visualized events. Among these was the sudden encampment of thousands of asylum seekers in Keleti Train Station in Budapest, Hungary. Local and international media and Hungarian politicians repeatedly presented the events at Keleti to be the result of too little advanced notice for proper preparation and too much demand too suddenly, the vast numbers of people traveling through, and ultimately, forced to stay in Keleti station were described as a sudden "wave" or "tide" that overwhelmed the city, unawares (Feher 2016). Counter to the positioning of refugees as an as an ecological event threatening Europe, were seemingly daily reports of deaths in transit including the discovery of a lorry that had been abandoned on the side of the road in Austria, holding 71 people who had died of suffocation en route from Hungary, but mostly. Repeated incidents of drowning deaths of asylum seekers crossing from Turkey to Greece in small ill equipped boats and rafts, often by cover of night in hopes of avoiding border patrol guards, were reported in the press with images of the dead on beaches. Among these deaths, and perhaps the most visible, was that of the young Syrian Kurdish toddler, Alan Kurdî[2], discovered on the beach in Bordrum, Turkey where he, his mother, and brother had departed from just minutes before drowning. All of these events became known to previously unaware or uninterested audiences through images, shared on social media platforms, reprinted in newspapers, and posted and reposted on websites by both right-wing anti-immigration and humanitarian groups and pro-refugee individuals alike to argue their disparate positions.

[1] Roughly speaking, the Balkan route, includes a maritime crossing from Turkey to Greece and then follows up through the Balkans, Hungary, and Austria, with Germany often as the final destination. This route was commonly used in summer of 2015, until its subsequent closure, by individual states, including Hunagry, constructing fences, increased policing by FRONTEX (Frontières extérieures for "external borders") of coastal borders, and the E.U. Turkey Deal. "Frontex | Western Balkan Route").

[2] While many of the articles cited will spell his name "Aylan Kurdi" I will throughout this thesis use the Kurdish spelling, Alan Kurdî. Also, I have elected not to include images of his death here.

This thesis is concerned with three specific artworks, all produced or installed between 2015-2016; "Chinese dissident artist," ("Artist Ai Weiwei Poses as Aylan Kurdi" 2016) Ai Weiwei's re-enactment of the image of drowned Syrian Kurdish toddler, on the Greek coast, (Feb. 2016) and his subsequent installation of 14000 orange life jackets, on the columned façade of the Konzerthaus in Berlin, (Feb. 2016) produced in connection with the Cinema for Peace fundraising Gala (Feb. 15, 2016) and British artist Jason deCaires Taylor 's *The Raft of the Lampedusa* (Feb. 2016), an underwater figurative sculpture installation off the coast of Spain, depicting Libyan refugees in a raft wand walking along the ocean floor. The two authors of these three artworks have declared that they were produced to "raise awareness", or act as a "reminder of the collective responsibility of our now global community" ("Amazing Underwater Museum"), and all three have been highly visible in international media and have received a great deal of public attention. In the coming pages, I assert that all three of these artworks, as internationally visible "awareness raising" projects, are grounded in and shaped by practices of humanitarian imagery, and that additionally, all three projects utilize visual and material strategies of memorialization in their focus on the lives of refugees lost at sea in unsafe passage. I read theses artworks through and in tension with, critiques on humanitarian imagery, existing literature on memorialization, and theoretical work on the politics of mourning. I do not dispute that these artists intend their artworks and actions to "raise awareness" of human rights violations and possibly even directly criticize the securitization policies which produce the conditions of unsafe passage for asylum seekers; it is nonetheless, my intention to question how such artworks, in following the logic of humanitarian imagery that visibilizes the (bodily) vulnerability of (generalized) refugees, function beyond, and against their stated intentions.

I argue that through their temporality and deployment of particular visual and material strategies drawn from other artistic and historical projects of memorialization, these projects may produce exactly the figure of human rights which permits the continuation of these particular policies, while allowing a liberal democratic international community produced through the process of mourning to maintain their sense of their own moral good. Criticisms of humanitarian imagery, biopolitical analysis, particularly, Giorgio Agamben's notion of *homo sacer* and Alexander Weheliye's notion of "flesh," as well as Judith Butler's understanding of "grievability", offer the means by which I consider how these actions which intend to criticize political policies of exclusion may, if not causally, nonetheless intrinsically and co-constitutively, reproduce them, specifically through the use of memorial. While Foucault did not officially address memorials in great detail, he did speak to the political force of memory: "since memory is an important factor in struggle (really, in fact, struggles develop in a kind of conscious moving forward of history), if one controls people's memory, one controls their dynamism" (Foucault 1975: 25).

Plot of Chapters

Chapter 1. begins with a few notes on visuality as it applies to this project and then addresses my methodological approach. In an effort to resist reproducing the decontextualizations common among the projects in question, Chapters 1. and 2. work to locate this project, and the artworks themselves, politically, historically and academically in broader discourses on visuality and cultural practice. Throughout Chapter I. I survey existing literatures from distinct disciplines that have engaged questions of visuality in human rights, beginning with Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* and Susan Sontag's critical response to that text, *Regarding the Pain of Others,* where Sontag suggests that images of atrocities and the emotions they (supposedly) evoke, do not

function to produce the political actions Woolf imagines. Drawing on both Woolf and Sontag's understanding of images of atrocity, later, in Chapter II., I extend this to literature on visualized vulnerabilities. Additionally, I site my work as rooted in theoretical frames that have conceived of the "politics of aesthetics," particularly Jacques Rancière, (2004, 2007) and Agamben's application of biopolitics and his particular contribution of the figure of *homo sacer* to conceptions of the refugee (1998). In addition, I also outline existing literature on memorials as a practice of "cultural memory" and a political "technology of memory," as suggested by Marita Sturken in reference to Foucault (Sturken 1997, 13).

In Chapter II., "Vulnerable Bodies and Sovereign Nations," I trace the genealogy of the relationship between the expansion of nation-states, the emergence of an international refugee regime and the production of the legal figure of the refugee. I draw on the work of Gil Loescher and those who critically engage his work, including Prem Kumar Rajaram. I consider specifically the concept of "vulnerability," as it has been used both colloquially in media and as a term specific to the legal status determination of refugees currently practiced by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and argue how this term, and its applications in relationship to the already gendered and racialized concept of the nation, is itself always gendered and racialized, as will later be significant in my analysis of artworks. I draw upon foundational academic literature on the concept of the nation by Benedict Anderson and Craig Calhoun, as well feminist responses, which have interrogated and furthered these concepts, including work by Spike V. Peterson, Anne McClintock and Nira Yuval Davis. I engage feminist and postcolonial criticisms that have addressed vulnerability, and victimhood as a gendered and racialized term of inclusion for refugees and the particular ways it has been visualized and in turn, visualizes the refugee, drawing on the important work of Liisa Malkki.

Having briefly outlined the historic and discursive contexts in which the artworks I consider have been produced, in Chapter III., I analyze the individual artworks and the particular visual and material strategies of memorialization strategies they deploy in reference to broader cultural practices in order to frame this discussion of contemporaneous artworks. I address the particular temporalities of these memorial artworks and draw upon recent literature on other immediate memorializations (MacDonald, Mcdowell, Mechoulan), in order to question how memorials produced in "real-time" uniquely and problematically function. I pay particular attention to how these memorializing artworks enact "technologies of memory" (Sturken 1997) in the production of communities.

In my conclusion, I work to consider how both the temporal terms and the material and visual strategies in these artworks–as memorials for the dead excluded from the nation–construct the figure of the refugee they claim to be working for, referring back to the previous chapter's understanding of a gendered, bodily, visibilized vulnerability. I consider how these memorials function biopolitically within the temporality of "late liberalism" as described by Elizabeth Povinelli (2011) allowing for professed ideologies and sentiments that run counter to their own legal practices and policies.

Chapter I.

Section 1.1: On Visuality

Essential to the concerns of this thesis, and the methodologies that guide it, is an investment in the politics of the visual and a commitment to critical analysis of visual materials and the question of what and how we see. Multiple and, at times, overlapping terminologies for the visual and and the study of visual cultures appear in different contexts throughout this thesis; "visuality", "visibility", "sensible". These terms have particular disciplinary and methodological histories and significances, which I flag as they are addressed. "Visuality", for instance, is not merely about what is available to the eye, but drawing on Hal Foster's definition, refers to the ways in which vision is constructed: "how we see, how we are able, allowed or made to see and how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein" (Foster 1988: ix). Related to visuality and the social construction of what and how we see is Jaques Rancière's notion of the "sensible", as not only what is available, but what we are constructed to sense (2004, 2009). Additionally, "visuality" and "visualize" as terms of visual cultural analysis, are themselves rife with tensions and entangled in the history of oppressive Western regimes' will to power. As a term, visuality was coined by problematic historian Thomas Carlyle, whose vision of the "great man" was as dependent on the control of visual narratives as it was on his sexism and racism. As a key word for visual culture, Nick Mirzoeff writes that "visuality" is "both a mode of representing imperial culture and a means of resisting it by means of reverse appropriation" (2006: 54), similar entanglements with histories of power attend many of the terms, and the methodologies

central to visual study.

The postmodern era, it has been posited, is increasingly "ocularcentric" (Jay 1993), as our knowledge of the world is itself increasingly experienced and articulated first and foremost in images. The artworks considered here are experienced as international events because of their dissemination on social media: Ai Weiwei's reenactment was initially seen through the newspaper whose photographer took the image, and then social media platforms of those who shared it; Jason deCaires underwater sculptures are largely inaccessible to but a very few, aside from video representations disseminated through AJ+ Media; only Weiwei's columned Konzerthaus installation was available to direct contact, and even here the artist signed the piece with a "hashtag" for it to be tagged and shared through instagram. The crisis of forced migration, of displacement, and detention is itself an instance of visuality, of what is seen, and what is unseen, and by whom. The deaths of the summer of 2015, which the artworks I address responded to, were presented as highly visible individual incidents disarticulated from the largely unseen "crisis"–not of migration, not of movement, but of the detention, confinement and the making invisible of millions of people. That the bodies of dead refugees are what become visible, and how, and why and for whom, is the political crux of this inquiry.

While Foucault concerned himself with how we are *seen*, and the productive effects of surveillance on the subject–the ways in which our being seen produce us–he addressed less how and what we *see,* and how that seeing produces us as much as it does who and what we see. Rancière, who is central to the theoretical framing of this project, has argued against the opposition between the "passive" spectator and the "active" participant, suggesting that looking is itself an active engagement (Rancière 2009). A biopolitical reading of images wedded to Rancière then takes as its point of departure, seeing and looking as *active*, as a productive cultural act. This thesis, and the

visual semiotic analysis it works to produce, is invested in the very productivity of what and how we look, and how we understand that looking. Visuality is here understood and read in tandem to gender, as a category of analysis, drawing on Joan Scott's understanding wherein gender is not necessarily the specific subject of inquiry, but rather forms the ways in which questions are posed and addressed in analysis (1986). As a "subject" gender appears here in the representations of and discourse on refugee bodies, how it is discussed and erased, to various ends. As a category of analysis gender runs though my understandings of vulnerability and how it is understood as gendered, not only in direct relationship to the specific bodies and how they are read, but how humanitarian imagery and discourse consigns refugees to a "visual corporeality" (Rajaram 2002a), and is itself an act of "feminization" (Hyndman and Giles 2011).

Section 1.2: Methodology

In this thesis, I engage with three central art works. I address these artworks on several overlapping levels: as objects, as images, and as narratives. I approach this semiotic visual analysis, through a multilayered process as detailed by Gillian Rose (2001: 16-18), beginning with a consideration of the "sites" of the artworks–sites of the production of the image, of the image itself as a site, and the site of distribution or "audience", considering in each of these their various "modalities", including technological (as in what apparatus was involved, camera, etc), compositional, the formal content and composition, questions of color choice etc. Compositional modalities form decidedly less of my investigation, except where particular compositional choices work to locate an image in relationship to another or are working to produce a particular effect. Finally, modalities of the "social", which broadly refer to the social interactions that produce and are produced by an image, inform the majority of my focus and are the basis of my argument. Additionally, this project is

committed to reading these artworks not as art objects merely, or even as "political art" strictly, but art which, because of its unprecedented international visibility, functions as a cultural event in an international (but not unlimited) "public square" (Archey 2016). This project then is an interdisciplinary endeavor of reading these three artworks, with and through diverse bodies of literature and theoretical frames–and conversely utilizing them as themselves ciphers through which to read broader cultural contexts. I consider these artworks through discourses on human rights and humanitarian visuality and the memorial in national identity building. I have elected not to expressly analyze these artworks through art historical theories, which typically privilege the artist's intentions and are therefore not of explicit interest to my inquiry into their social and political implications. I address art criticism and art historical discourses in so far as they contextualizes the artwork's conceptualizations and receptions within one sphere of discourse, conditions their production, and offers insight into the visual and material logics and strategies they utilize. I draw briefly on theories of "the real" in contemporary art (Foster 1996) and traditions of "indexical objects" (Hahn 2010), and reenactment as an artistic practice (Arns 2005).

My analysis is, like the memorializations these artworks are enacting, is being produced contemporaneously to the subjects considered. As such, there is no academic literature yet existing on the specific artworks in question. This project, like its subjects, is grounded in the recent ongoing past of "real-time" visual representations and responses. In framing the visual scape from which the artworks I look at specifically emerged, I draw upon news media images, social media responses, and other artworks and art/activist projects which have appeared from between the summer of 2015 through May of 2016. The projects I focus on have all been made highly visible on multiple platforms, much of it online and intended for an international audience. Additionally,

with few exceptions, my source material is drawn from either Western or English language versions of international media outlets. My sources of visual (re)presentations of these "public" artworks range from mainstream media to online art criticism journals, to the personal social media accounts and websites of the artists in question, as well as those audience members who have reproduced these images, either in support or in criticism of the projects in question. It is significant that all of the art projects addressed here have been covered by AJ+ Media, a division of Al Jazeera Media operating out of San Francisco, which produces video and digital media directly for social media platforms Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram. AJ+ is skewed toward a young, international, largely Western influenced audience, (it is currently available in English, Spanish and Arabic, but was launched in English) with access to digital media apps and devices, what AJ+ themselves call "the connected generation." Their media mission is as follows:

> AJ+ is a global news community for the connected generation. We highlight human struggles and achievements, empower impassioned voices, and challenge the status quo. We bring you the stories that are shaping our world. Do you ever laugh, cry, get angry or inspired? You'll fit right in. (AJ+ YouTube)

As noted here, AJ+ posits themselves as "global"–it is to the same community of well educated, "global", socially conscious, and emotively engaged people that the artworks I am considering here have addressed themselves. This thesis is then particularly focused on these audiences as the subjects being produced as a community through their participation, or spectatorship of these memorials.

Section 1.3: Existing Literature

This thesis situates itself at, and attempts to mark in its subjects of inquiry, a point of intersection between disparate existing literature, and works to perform as a project of synthesis–drawing

together multiple discourses in the consideration of artworks as cultural events which have not previously been addressed as such in existing literature. As I draw from multiple bodies of literature, each chapter, and at times subsection of this thesis, includes an introduction to the existing literature in the area of that chapter's academic references. What follows here is best understood as a road map of the multiple bodies of academic literature I aim to draw together in applying them to these artworks.

The artworks analyzed in this thesis have all individually been identified by the artists who have produced them as "awareness raising" projects, which is to say they are images, objects, and events designed to educate and stimulate action on behalf of others. The artists have, I assert, thus situated their artworks within the discursive visual language of humanitarianism. Rather than reading these artworks primarily through existing literature on the use of aesthetic and performative practice specifically within social movements then, as much of the work on activist art has done, this thesis works to draw together multiple disciplines and areas of research in considering memorialization. I want to distinguish these artworks from other forms of political art or aesthetic politics as humanitarian in nature due to their wide visibility and presentation of the plight of "others".

One key theoretical framework that informs this thesis and will be more closely addressed in the following section is the discourse of thought on visuality and aesthetics of politics. Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*, a widely regarded foundational essay on the political value of images, offers a point of entry in my theoretical framework. In her epistolary essay, Woolf writes specifically of images of the Spanish Civil War. She describes images delivered to her weekly and asserts that photographs–as visual evidence of the atrocities of war, and in particular, the effects of

war on domestic spaces and the bodies of civilians–produce an undeniable emotional effect on an audience. Woolf suggests that women, who she claims are removed from the making of war, particularly feel the effects of these images. Inaction, she asserts, follows either from the benefits of participation in war, in the case of men, or a lack of awareness of atrocities of war, in the case of women. Visibility, then for Woolf, is directly related to action. Following the release of images from Abu Ghraib Susan Sontag's *Regarding the Pain of Others*, a critical response to Woolf, Argues that the emotional effects Woolf cites, of "horror and disgust", or more specifically, the sympathy that follows, are in fact, not necessarily productive of action, but that instead may produce apathy. I engage these two texts in my theoretical framework, in relationship to French philosopher Jacques Rancière's work in *The Politics of Aesthetics,* where he suggests that the *kind* of images which are available to a given population, and how they are understood as subjects within them, is instrumental to the political potential engendered therein.

Visuality, and its political significance and application as specific to human rights, humanitarianism and the refugee regime in particular has been widely addressed across multiple disciplines. Susie Linfield has written in *Cruel Radiance* (2010) that human rights images are particularly problematic in so far as rights can not be visualized, only their absence can be represented through images of people who have had them stripped away, human rights imagery, she suggests is by nature characterized as a *lacuna,* absence made visible. (2010: 37). More critical of humanitarian and human rights imagery, Liisa Malkki, in her essay "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism and Dehistoricization", associates humanitarianism with an objectification of refugee experience; asserting that refugees are dehistoricized and depoliticized through images of bodily suffering which render them mass mute visualities so that they may be seen as "universal victims" of "bare humanity" in order to evoke empathetic pity (Malkki 1996:

388). Following Malkki, Prem Kumar Rajaram in his work on humanitarian postcards sold by the United States Committee for Refugees (USCR) and Oxfam, has suggested that this corporeality does not only silence refugees as political actors, but that humanitarianism and humanitarian images in particular "commodifies" images and experiences of refugees by producing images of suffering subjects as a means of raising funding (Rajaram 2002a). Drawing on the work of both Malkki and Rajaram, Erin K. Baines in her *Vulnerable Bodies* (2004), further considers, through critical feminist International Relations, how gendered ideas of bodily vulnerability have been applied and reproduced within United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) and international non-governmental organization (INGO) policies, procedures and funding, often effectively producing a climate of competitive vulnerabilities, where asylum seekers are judged not by their conditions and circumstances but those conditions as comparative to others. I apply this literature to discourses about the nation-state as bordered in order to see how vulnerability, and particularly, gendered, visual, and visible, bodily vulnerability is a imagined as a conditional term of admittance for refugees.

Important to the artworks at the center of this thesis is a move from literature around the direct photographic depiction of bodies and visual corporeality, to strategies of how the body is presented in memorials ,particularly through its absence. Benedict Anderson has written in his work on nationalism, *Imagined Community,* that memorials are of specific significance in the production of nationalism, noting the Western tradition of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a memorial of absent bodies, as a particular cultural practice and site of "ghostly hauntings of national imaginings" (Anderson 1983: 9). Marita Sturken in her specific analysis of particular memorials in the United States (specifically the Vietnam War Memorial and the NAMES Project AIDS Quilt)

has that "cultural memory" and the ways in which memory is articulated in complex relationship to the nation and to distinct subjects of memorial. Sturken suggests, drawing on Foucault and important to my application of her thinking, that memorials are a "technology", rather than a "receptacle" of memory (Sturken 1997: 9) and as such are always a process of forgetting as much as remembering. Michael Bernard-Donals in his work on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, draws out how indexical objects as evidence of bodies and histories work both "metonymically" and "synecdochically", to both promise access to a history, and productively interrupt that circuit (2012). Sturken as well addresses objects as substitutes for absent bodies, as they appear in the AIDS memorial quilt, as it was produced in the midst of the AIDS crisis, specifically drawing out the importance of objects which represent the individual in order not only to speak to a body, and its death, but to a life lived, in order to build a community for both the bereaved and also those who may well share the same fate. In addition to objects and monuments, reenactment as a form of embodied memorial has been addressed by both cultural theorists and art critics and curators alike. Important to my considerations here are distinctions made between the cultural practices of reenactment which seek to close the distance between the reenactor and history through affective experience as discussed by Ian McCalman and Paul A. Pickering, in their *Historical Reenactment, from Realism to the Affective Turn* (2010), among others, and the importance of the image and its production of a form of "distance" in art applications of reenactment as understood by Inke Arns, in the catalog essay for her exhibition of the same name, *History Will Repeat Itself* (2005).

Section 1.4: Theoretical Framework

This project is grounded theoretically in both cross-disciplinary debates on the visuality or more aptly, aesthetics of politics and humanitarianism and in the theories of biopolitics and biopower as first posited by Michel Foucault. As with disparate literatures from which I analyze the artworks that stand at the center of this project, I work to weave these two theoretical branches together in order to understand the political work these specific visual representations and cultural practices enact, and to see memorialization, as these artworks deploy it as a form of biopolitical discursive technology. In the following section I survey some of the key debates in these theoretical frames as they will later pertain to the larger project that follows. Throughout the coming chapters this position will help to ground future arguments and situate questions which arise from primary materials. I will begin with one of the most foundational texts on the visuality of atrocity and the expectations of political action as it has been articulated in Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas,* which addressed the images of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), the first to be "witnessed ("covered") in the modern sense: by a corps of professional photographers at the lines of military engagement and in the towns under bombardment" (Sontag 2003: 21).

Woolf's *Three Guineas,* published in June of 1938, was written to address larger questions of the rise of fascism but was was framed as a reply to a letter she received from a lawyer and friend, left unaddressed for three years, asking, "How in your opinion are we to prevent war?" (Woolf, 3) Almost immediately in her reply to the likely apocryphal letter, Woolf tells us that the question is unique, possibly in all of history as it is a letter posed to a woman, by a man. She begins with what she calls "the gulf" in experience between the man and herself, and the "difficulty in communication" this gives rise to, which she suggests may be evidenced in how they understand, and, significantly how they "feel" about a series of images that represent war. Woolf first

introduces a number of images of soldiers, dressed in regalia, to assert that for men, war, whatever else it might be, is "a profession; a source of happiness and excitement; and...an outlet for manly qualities..." (Woolf 1938: 7). Having thus stated a commonly accepted belief of war's masculinity, men's ease with violence, and women's "natural" aversion to it, an assumption which will reappear throughout this thesis, Woolf goes on to consider images of violence. She writes:

> Let us see then whether when we look at the same photographs we feel the same things. Here then on the table before us are photographs. The Spanish Government sends them with patient pertinacity about twice a week. They are not pleasant photographs to look upon. They are photographs of dead bodies for the most part. This morning's collection contains the photograph of what might be a man's body, or a woman's; it is so mutilated that it might, on the other hand, be the body of a pig...
>
> Those photographs are not an argument; they are simply a crude statement of fact addressed to the eye. But the eye is connected with the brain; the brain with the nervous system. That system sends its messages in a flash through every past memory and present feeling. When we look at those photographs some fusion takes place within us; however different the education, the traditions behind us, our sensations are the same; and they are violent. (Woolf, 1938: 10).

Woolf goes on to say that although both she and her epistolary interlocutor experience "horror and disgust" (Woolf 1938: 10), the emotion that strikes her, is different because of her position, as a woman, as one who does not "make war." It is men she suggests who do so almost entirely unto themselves. In this vignette and in the pages surrounding Woolf articulates many of the assumptions at the heart of humanitarian visualities; images are "facts," emotion, horror in particular, in response to innocent death is "humanizing" in the sense that is somehow universal, located somehow *before* our political positioning, even as the responses to it are decidedly gendered. Perhaps most significantly, this "horror" should instill in the viewer a position as witness and a responsibility to act.

This claim has been criticized by many theorists of visuality, not the least Susan Sontag in her book *Regarding the Pain of Others*. Describing Woolf's response to photographs of the Spanish Civil War, Sontag writes:

> Not to be pained by these pictures, not to recoil from them, not to strive to abolish what causes this havoc, this carnage—these, for Woolf, would be the reactions of a moral monster. And, she is saying, we are not monsters, we members of the educated class. Our failure is one of imagination, of empathy: we have failed to hold this reality in mind. But is it true that these photographs, documenting the slaughter of noncombatants rather than the clash of armies, could only stimulate the repudiation of war? (Sontag 2003: 8)

Writing in response to the release of images from Abu Ghraib, Sontag asserts that despite their shock and horror, the images released did not in effect change the course of U.S. interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. She does not suggest that the images failed produce the emotional responses, the "horror and disgust" imagined by Woolf, but rather that images may well indeed produce an emotional response but that it may may produce an effect distinctly different to the one Woolf imagines. Strangely, Sontag does not address the specific affect of "horror and disgust" as Woolf herself calls them directly, but rather, the sympathy and, responsive action that she, asserts Woolf connects them too. She suggests that sympathy may produce a kind of self righteous apathy; "so far as we feel sympathy, we feel we are not accomplices to what caused the suffering...[o]ur sympathy proclaims our innocence as well as our impotence" (Sontag 2003: 102). Sympathy, does not, as Sontag states, necessarily stir action.

Both, Woolf and Sontag from their distinct positions on the subject here, are concerned, with emotive responses, and though neither explicitly uses the term, with affective experience - for Woof, "horror and disgust" and for Sontag, sympathy or empathy - and the possibility of political

action**.** The logic that horrific images incite emotion, and therefore a connection to the depicted, and at least potentially, action on their behalf, which Woolf posits and Sontag refutes, prevails in the dissemination of images of death and victimization of refugees. Shock, sympathy and empathy, will reappear in writing on humanitarian imagery and in relationship to ideas of vulnerability, as noted in the following chapter, by Liisa Malkki, Prem Kumar Rajaram and Erin Baines, alike. Additionally, many of artworks addressed herein are themselves described, in terms of "emotional" impact, and are read through specific theories which are grounded in "affect" or the "affective turn", as in McCalman and Pickering's treatment of reenactment. The 'affective turn' initially issued from within media, gender and cultural studies in the 1980s. Affect is often troublingly equated simply to "emotion" in colloquial usage, but is more nuanced, and intimately tied to embodiment, as both "of the body" and productive of "bodily knowledge" (Sedgewick 2003); psychologist Silvan Tompkins who initially identified nine basic affects, identified them as the biological portion of emotion, and detailed the corollary bodily expression of each (Tomkins 1962). Affect, though "of the body," also manufactures bodily knowledge", and is intrinsically tied to social relations. Affects may be both productive of connections and means of distancing ourselves from one another. Sontag repeatedly replaces Woolf's term of "horror and disgust" with "sympathy" or "empathy". Disgust is included among Tompkins' initial nine affects as productive not of connection, but of differentiation. While not included in Tompkins' initial nine affects, "sympathy" has been addressed by contemporary affect theorists, including Anna Gibbs, who connects sympathy to mimicry and mimesis, wherein both deception and processes of deteritiorialized becoming with an other are possible (Gibbs 2010: 196).

Moving from Woolf's suggestion that images of horror, and even the experience of empathy with those depicted will necessarily incite action, I want to leave aside affect for a moment in order to address questions of images in particular. At the base of Woolf's assertion is a relatively unexamined notion that images are indexical of bodies. The emotions here are not framed specifically as response to images *as* images, but to the "facts" they represent indexically, images are not considered as images as such. Sontag in her response to Woolf, posits that in part, images fail to work as Woolf imagines, because we have become inured through too much exposure, images, and images of horrific events, she argues are ubiquitous and therefore fail to shock. While Sontag address images as images, rather than as indexical representations, she stops short of addressing them within the realm of the "aesthetic". To consider images, especially those of tragedy and horror, in terms of the "aesthetic" may ring initially perverse or cynical, due in part to associations of the aesthetic with beauty, or importantly to this thesis, art, and therefore configured "outside" the realm of the political. It is central to this project to consider how the aesthetic functions *as* political. As philosopher and theorist Jacques Rancière has suggested it is not that images, or more broadly, as he considers it, the aesthetic, are themselves apolitical, but rather, it is the question of what specific aesthetic forms, what certain kinds of images, do politically that is significant, that might be effective in producing a shift in perception. If, affect theory asks how horror, disgust or even sympathy produce concern or investment, Rancière's questions of what he calls "the sensible" ask instead how images can shift how a viewer sees, or "senses" the world and the subject of the images in question. In the introduction of *The Politics of Aesthetics*, editor Gabriel Rockhill describes the crux of Rancière's project as follows: "those who have no name, who remain invisible and inaudible, can only penetrate the police order via a mode of subjectivization that transforms the aesthetic coordinates of the community...", the aesthetic, the

visible, or more accurate to Rancière, the "sensible" is essential to the intellectual and political intelligibility of peoples denied such (2004: xiii). Rancière however, cautions, in his later work, *The Emancipated Spectator* that the causal relationship of visibility to mobilization can not to be assumed, there is not a 'direct road from intellectual awareness to political action' (Rancière 2009: 75). For Rancière images of the kind that usually appear in documentation of wars and other atrocities, the particular kinds of images that Woolf imagines will incite action and that Sontag suggests produce apathy, are flawed not in their inability to produce an affective response, but in their inability to shift given roles or perceptions, to shift an aesthetic regime. In a 2007 interview with Fluvia Carnevale in Artforum he responds to a statement by Jean Luc Goddard on his film, *Notre Musique*, in which he says that the Israeli has the epic, while the Palestinian has only the documentary:

> Godard said ironically that the epic was for Israelis and the documentary for Palestinians. Which is to say that the distribution of genres--for example, the division between the freedom of fiction and the reality of the news--is always already a distribution of possibilities and capacities: To say that, in the dominant regime of representation, documentary is for the Palestinians is to say that they can only offer the bodies of their victims to the gaze of news cameras or to the compassionate gaze at their suffering. That is, the world is divided between those who can and those who cannot afford the luxury of playing with words and images. Subversion begins when this division is contested...(Carnevale, Rancière 2007: 263).

For Rancière then it is in the possibility of engaging not only with images, but in the possibility of genre that there lies the possibility for the necessary shift, the "redistribution of the sensible," that is essential to make the inaudible, heard, and the invisible seen in ways beyond the given perceptions within systems of the sensible, such that even those images which mean to inspire emotion or action do not merely reproduce known subjectivities and therefore, according to

Rancière, the very political systems by which those subjects are made insensible. Thinking through affect, perhaps, then the question is not whether, as Sontag suggests, images fail to affect us, but that perhaps, affects as they exist within the social, are reproductive of the sensible as it is defined. Lauren Berlant, foundational to theories of affect posits that 'the politics of intimacy', riding on the back of the 'affective turn' has 'usurped the public sphere as a space for social antagonism and struggle, reducing citizenship to personal acts and values, and reframing nationality as a question of feelings and traumas'.(Macalman and Pickering 2005: 6)

Considering, as Rancière suggests, that power, or as he calls it, "the police order" is invested in controlling the borders of the sensible, I here want to move to link these theoretical considerations of images of lack, of victimization and vulnerability, to the second of my theoretical frames, which does not explicitly address representation but is instead concerned with how power frames and conditions bodies and subjects. The theory of biopolitics as introduced by Foucault, asserts that where monarch ruled political systems located power in the sovereign, and in his body in particular and publicly punished a political subjects body for a particular criminal act; as modern political systems moved away from monarchies, power was dispersed in and through the bodies of political subjects, such that the discipline and control of those bodies became the concern of the state. Whereas the earlier model extended control over the bodies of its subject by "making die or letting live" The modern state became invested in processes of "making live and letting die" (Foucault 1979: 138).. Essential to Foucault's explication of how biopolitics and biopower work is his understanding of "technologies" are social practices that are inevitably implicated in (and reproductive of) power dynamics, divided, though, not without overlap, into:

> "...(1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings,

> symbols, or signification; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self" (Foucault 1988: 18).

Building on, and at times arguing against Foucault's theory of biopolitics, or "the growing inclusion of man's natural life in the mechanisms and calculations of power", Agamben, who it could be argued, focuses primarily on "technologies of power" aims to draw out the ways in which democratic societies become totalitarian states. Key to the sometimes notable contentions between Agamben and Foucault, is that much of his basis is drawn also from Hannah Arendt, in particular his work on the figure of the refugee as connected to the figure of *homo sacer*. According to Agamben, modern democracy is "haunted and shadowed by the figure of *homo sacer,"* or the figure who can be killed (or, if we think through Foucault, left to die) without punishment, but can not be sacrificed. In order to articulate how homo sacer "haunts" modern democracy, Agamben, draws upon the political history of ancient Greece wherein linguistically, "life" was divided into two terms, reflective to two spheres - the social or political, *bios;* and the animal, *zoe*. *Bios* was not a given for many and was fundamentally available only to (some) men. Looking to the Roman city-state, Agamben introduces the figure of *homo sacer,* or sacred man. As "sacred" *homo sacer,* is defacto located outside of political life. He can not be sacrificed because he has already been designated as external to the community. As a political exile, *homo sacer*, is not himself *bare life* or *zoe*, but is related to both, that is to say, the natural-ness of *zoe* or *bare life*, is not at all natural– *homo sacer* is the figure who has been *actively* stripped of his political life, or *bios,* and made *bare life*, or *zoe.* As a figure then we can imagine *homo sacer* as outside politically life, but paradoxically *produced* juridically and politically (Agamben 1988).

Neither Foucault nor Agamben particularly engage in aesthetics or visuality per se; Agamben is particularly invested invested in the juridical as it pertains to the figure of *homo sacer,* and Foucault, though he mentions "technologies of signs", does not linger on the subject; Rancière for his part, though his understanding of the "police order" he notes is connected to Foucault, has leveled criticisms both at Foucault's understanding of politics within biopolitics, and at Agamben's suturing to Foucault to Arendt (Rancière 2010: 94). Despite this inherent tensions, in the spirit of commitment to synthesizing connections, I will work to consider as this project progresses over the coming pages, how Rancière's notion of the "sensible" might come to bear on the biopolitical, and vice versa. I consider memorials, and the particular visual and material terms of the memorialization projects addressed in the following pages, as instances of overlapping political "technologies" and draw specifically on Marita Sturken's application of "technology" to "technologies of memory" (Sturken 1997: 10) as not only a "technology of the self" as she often positions it, but also a technology which produces their audience, but also the refugees they aim to memorialize as particular figures within the biopolitical regime of humanitarianism.

Section 1.5: Limitations

Even in the best of cases art and politics form an uncomfortable, and often suspect, alliance, one which similarly troubles any writing aiming to analyze instances of their interaction. There comes from both art and activist sides alike criticisms that too much of a presence of one in the other somehow questions the legitimacy or authenticity as either - too much of the political in art, it is often suggested, makes for "bad art" and too much art in political actions - particularly in the case of the possibility of capital gains, either monetary or cultural - draws criticisms of motive. This project intentionally finds itself in the most extreme of these uncomfortable unions - artworks

which seek international visibility, and do so on claims of political intent while utilizing a precondition of the artist's cultural capital to do so. I do not not address in particular the debates of these works as either "effective" political actions on their intended terms, nor as "good" or "bad" art, specifically. Instead, I have selected these projects precisely to consider the sort of cultural and political discursive work internationally visible "awareness raising" art may do, distinct form its maker's claimed intentions, be they either political or artistic.

As a project focused particularly on internationally visible artworks which claim to speak for an international political event - a troubling flattening in its own right - and that often seek this visibility through specifically Western or Western skewed transnational art and media contexts, I am myself limited to Western media, or international media conglomerates with English versions, as I note in my methodology. In addition to the limitations of my source materials, much of my analysis of these actions and events are themselves referential to Western academic and art historical contexts and canons. This will notably limit the perspective from which interrogations of projects' in question, are posed, and will therefore frame and limit what questions I pose and address. This project would of course benefit from those interrogations, but due to the limited scope of the subjects in question, and their context within European constructs of international visual and humanitarian discourses, this thesis remains bound within those limitations. Additionally, as my focus is on how internationally visible artworks function, I can not give central focus to other, often politically valuable, forms of aesthetic political actions which are currently or have been contemporaneously enacted internationally by activists, advocates and artists both as allies and as refugees or asylum seekers, themselves. Some of these actions and projects appear here in brief, to challenge the visual strategies and executions of those projects and their producers

who are my focus here, but to give them the attention they deserve as central subjects of analysis would require a greater period of time and more individuated model of study than was possible for this project. It is my hope to continue the work of this thesis in greater detail and bring a more central focus to particular aesthetic political projects and actions which critically offer alternatives to some of the problematics of the works which form the central the subject of this particular thesis.

Section 1.6: Contributions

This project, as previously stated, is situated in the interstices of several distinct conversations. Through bringing these significant bodies of knowledge to bear on a close reading of these particular artworks this project aims to contribute not to one field, but call to consider artworks in their social and cultural function in relationship to other kinds of imagery. I work to articulate what I think, and will argue, is a new era of international political art, wherein international artworks work in similar ways as have historically more national, state produced projects, to constitute an international late-liberal "national" subject, which maintains liberal humanitarian values while it enacts various forms of violence through what Elizabeth Povinelli calls an "economy of abandonment" (Povinelli 2011). In attempting to draw these together in the analysis of the art works in question, I work to shift analysis of how political artworks "work" by moving away from common models of efficacy assessment which evaluate artworks along the stated intentions of their authors, to instead consider how art, particularly large scale public political art, might be producing entirely different, and more troubling political cultural effects as they come to exist in ever widening spheres of consumption.

Chapter II. Visibility, Vulnerable Bodies, and Sovereign States

> ...refugees are consigned to their body. That is, they are rendered speechless and without agency, a physical entity, or rather a physical mass within which individuality is subsumed. Corporeal, refugees are speechless and consigned to 'visuality': to the pictorial representation of suffering and need. One of the central effects of this consignment is the 'commodification' of refugee experience. (Rajaram 2002b: 251).

Section 2.1: Introduction

Vulnerability as a concept is regularly deployed both by right-wing nationalist anti-immigration/anti-refugee groups and by liberal governmental discourses, humanitarian organizations, and advocacy and activists groups working for refugee protections, alike. In this chapter I briefly trace, the genesis of the international refugee regime, and examine its establishment in tandem with the expansion and consolidation of the nation-state system in Europe in the 20th century, as addressed by Gil Loescher, in his "Origins of the International Refugee Regime" (1993). I ground my later discussion of vulnerability in this history in order to consider how, along with the nations-state, the early 20th century also produced the expansion of nationalism as cultural form, and how nationalism as a gendered project of ethnic/racial homogenization configures outsiders as invaders and instantiates the need for vulnerability as a conditional term of acceptance. Drawing on the work of foundational nationalism theorists' Benedict Anderson and Craig Calhoun as well as feminist nationalism scholarship in the field from Anne McClintock, Nira Yuval-Davis and Spike V. Peterson, I consider "the nation" as a racialized and gendered project of inclusion and exclusion in which "vulnerability", and visible vulnerability in particular, is configured as one of the only means by which of acceptability. I draw here from a significant criticisms of the visual vulnerability, or victimhood of refugees, addressed by Liisa Malkki as well as Prem Kuar Rajaram and his criticism of regimes of protection. In addition to

questions of the efficacy and political limitations of claims to vulnerability, the terms by which this required vulnerability is able to be "sensed", in Rancière's term, are themselves limited by racialized and gendered understandings and applications of the term, and therefore, it has been argued, (Baines, 2004) is inequitably available, producing a system of competitive vulnerabilities. In Chapter 3. I consider how this vulnerability, is invoked in and structures the artworks I analyze and the terms on which they are represented, and how they are understood and experienced.

Section 2.2: Expansion of the Nation-State and the Birth of the International Refugee Regime

> Refugee phenomena, refugees and those events that culminate in people called 'refugees', are understood as problematic aberrations before the norm of a territorially-confined political and ethical life. In this conception refugees are understood in ways that reinforce the taken-for-grantedness of the international system of sovereign states and the constrainment of the constitution and boundaries of the 'political' and the 'ethical'" (Rajaram 2002: 9).

As Prem Kumar Rajaram writes above, not only does the "refugee phenomena" or what has elsewhere been referred to as the "international refugee regime" (Loescher 1993) take the system of sovereign states as a given, but the two are concomitantly entangled. Benedict Anderson has located the emergence of the nation-state as we understand it, and the notion of the "nation" along with it towards the end of the eighteenth century (Anderson 1983: 4); exile and displacement are conditions as old as time immemorial but the specific legal frameworks which constitute the position of "refugee" as a modern political and legal status within the current international refugee regime, initially arose to address the mass displacements, statelessness and persecutions that resulted from the dismantling of former heterogeneous multinational empires and the "formation, consolidation, and expansion of the state system" (Loescher 1993: 34). Along with the signing of

treaties and the redrawing of maps to delineate new sovereign states out of the former Habsburg, Romanov, Ottoman, and Hohenzollern empires also came the expansion of the practice of closed borders. As Craig Calhoun writes in "State, Nation and Legitimacy," in great part what distinguishes the modern state from the heterogeneity of empires is that "states, by contrast, policed borders, required passports, and collected customs duties" (Calhoun, 1997: 68). Bordered sovereignties were homogenizing projects explicitly invested attempting to make territorial borders conform to and impose ethnic, racial and linguistic differences, resulting in mass displacements: "as nations redefined their borders and identities and the 'unmixing of peoples' was imposed on sometimes reluctant populations, millions of people were rendered stateless" (Loescher 1993: 34). These suddenly stateless people who were no longer welcome, suddenly marked as outsiders in territories were they had lived, sometimes for generations, were pushed back and forth across borders as neighboring states freely violated their own concepts of sovereignty in order to push the stateless out of their own counties. In 1920, humanitarian organizations who had been addressing the displaced independently, headed by the International Committee of the Red Cross "prevailed on the League of Nations to create international machinery for dealing with at least some of the refugees" (Loescher 1993: 35), creating the first international organizational regime to address refugees. In the years following World War II, the term "refugee" was institutionalized in the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and much of the present system was established.[3]

[3] The 1951 convention initially imposed temporal and geographic limitations, specific to World War II and those displaced by the persecutions of the Holocaust which were later removed by the 1967 New York Protocol. Article 1 of the 1951 UN Convention, as modified by the 1967 Protocol, a refugee is defined as a person who 'owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.'

Rajaram, among others have criticized Loescher's framing of the regimes of protection as essentially benevolent in their address of refugees as a "problem" produced by individual nations, while neglecting to consider how the regime itself might itself be imprecated. Rajaram writes:

> Loescher's argument takes the regimes of protection largely innocent and neutral conduits regimes of protection as largely innocent and neutral conduits of a concern about the security and humanitarian problems posed by refugees (rather than instrumental *enactors* of 'refugees' as particular sorts of security and humanitarian problems; an enactment that serves to shore up the grounds of state-centric political discourse). (Rajaram 2002: 84)

From its inception the regime did not merely address the needs of the stateless, but, by the very terms on which it did so, might additionally be understood to have produced the terms on which the admittance of refugees must be argued for, while maintaining, as Rajaram intimates, the legitimacy of the state, which enacts exclusion. "Refugeeness" as a legal status of extreme exception worked from its inception to paradoxically validate state sovereignty within a then emerging international community of governance. While the foundational contract of the current regime, the 1951 Geneva Convention specifically calls upon the signatories to offer protections to those who are unable to avail themselves of such protections in their home countries because of threat of persecution, the terms nonetheless functionally legitimize the existence of sovereign states control of their borders barring extreme situations, represented in the refugee as the figure o**f** "exception." The burden to demonstrate one's "well founded fear"[4] and thus "deservingness" as a an extreme case of vulnerability falls upon the refugee themselves.[5] The configuration of the refugee as specifically helpless - not only allows for his admittance, in an extreme enough

[4] See previous footnote, definition of refugee according to Article 1 of the 1951 UN Convention and, as modified by the 1967 Protocol

[5] Refugee status determination (RSD), is officially the responsibility of an individual state, but is often conducted the UNHCR. In both cases RSD depends on interviews wherein refugees must make claims for recognition and demonstrate need.

circumstance, but also works towards legitimization, and reconstitution of the value of the state; again Prem Kumar Rajaram:

> The image of the refugee as a person displaced from the protective confines of territoriality, an unfortunate creature stuck in purgatorial circumstances, conditions forms of therapeutic state-centric response. Through processes of repatriation or resettlement the refugee is reintroduced into the family of nations. This depiction of the refugee problem (of the refugee as a particular sort of problem) depends on 'territorialized' notions of home, culture and identity. The refugee is lost, 'in limbo' (Malkki 1995: 9; citing Walzer 1970: 146), and helpless: without citizenship her plight is not to be characterized as merely culturally or physically precarious, she is without help, without the means to call on the protective agency of a state. As the bestower of identity, and its corollaries of autonomy and dignity, the state's relation to the well- being of its individual citizens pre-empts or defines in its terms other avenues of assistance. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees thus has as its principal strategies repatriation or resettlement. In effect these are premised on reintroducing the lost refugee back into the fold of a state. (Rajaram 2002: 247)

Referring back to Giorgio Agamben's definition of the figure of *homo sacer* and the concepts of *zoe* and *bios* to frame the paradox of the refugee as a stateless figure who reaffirms the state in terms of biopolitics, under the biopolitical regime, all citizens of the state are always *zoe,* biological life, who have been "given" the rights of *bios*, by the state. These rights, may be revoked at will under the argument that it is for the protection of the citizenry as a whole. Agamben suggests that this process, the "state of exception," wherein a person is stripped of their rights and the figure par exemplar of *homo sacer* is that of the refugee. Citing Hannah Arendt's work on refugees:

> The paradox from which Arendt departs is that the very figure who should have embodied the rights of man par excellence-the refugee-signals instead the concept's radical crisis. "The conception of human rights," she states, "based upon the assumed existence of a human being as such, broke down at the very moment when those who

> professed to believe in it were for the first time confronted with people who had indeed lost all other qualities and specific relationships-except that they were still human (Agamaben, 1998:126).

For Agamben "the refugee is the limit concept that calls into question the fundamental categories of the nation state" (Agamben 1998: 134). It follows that, human rights, the rights of the stateless and the refugee, as such, are less the process by which the state "protects" the stateless, than the very discourse by which the modern democratic state establishes that the biopolitical subject does not, at least in and of himself, have "rights to rights". Rather, the state has merely given those rights; the retractability of those rights under the "exceptions" seen in the case of refugees, is always the condition upon which they are given. The refugee as figured under international refugee law, from its inception, then, as a complex figure who must demonstrate his desperation as a means recognition and as terms of admittance and as a means of gaining legal status as either a "refugee" or a "recipient of subsidiary protections", but whose very existence, as an exception, that proves the rule, reaffirms the legitimacy of the borders they have to cross. This paradoxical position has been called the 'paradox of the representable refugee' by Nevzat Soguk writing on U.S./Mexico border relations:

> As suggested, the very refugee or migrant bodies, which, while at first undermining, for instance, a state's ability to produce the claim that it is in control of its proper territories/borders, at times also become a source of re/presentation for the state(ism) whereby the state(ism) poses itself as an ontological necessity (being). I shall call this situation the 'paradox of the representable refugee'. (Soguk 294).

Section 2.3: Race, Gender, and Visible Vulnerability in the Nation

As noted earlier, in addition to the specifics of legal structures which determine the rights and responsibility of sovereign states the self-same historic period also as part of this procedure, gave

rise to the expansion and consolidation of notions and practices of "the nation" as what Benedict Anderson has called an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1993). In listing the features of the rhetoric of the nation, Craig Calhoun notes that one of the key features of the nation's self imagining as a community is "common descent or racial characteristics" (Calhoun, 1997: 4) The mass expulsions and persecutions that arose alongside the expansion of bordered sovereign states, but also, more specifically resulted out of the assertion that those borders should also delineate "the nation", as a cultural project of the production of a racialized and ethnic homogeneity. The nation-state suggest the nation as a particular cultural form and practice then is determined by the marking of racial difference and the production of "otherness" and the policing of the entry of "others". Feminist scholarship on the nation has articulated the project of the nation as a fundamentally gendered one along with, and in relationship to its being a racialized one. Catherine McClintock writes: "[nationalism is...constituted from the very beginning as a gendered discourse, and can not be understood without a theory of gender power", borders and their policing will be a notably gendered endeavor (McClintock 1993: 63). McClintock goes on to further suggest ways in which participation in the nation as both a political and a cultural project is gendered, and alongside racialized difference is understood temporally. She suggests, drawing on Johanne Fabian's work, *Time and the Other,* that secular imaginings of the nation within "Tree of Time" hierarchizes 'nations', placing some ahead of those seen as insufficiently modern allowing that "inconvenient discontinuities are ranked and subordinated into a hierarchical structure of branching time - the differential progress of 'racially' different nations mapped against the tree's self evident boughs, with 'lesser nations' destined, by nature to perch on its lower branches" (McClintock 1993: 66). These rhetorics are tangled with temporal conceptions of gender within the nation. McClintock articulates, "women are represented as the atavistic and authentic

'body'...[m]en by contrast, represent the progressive agent of national modernity (forward thrusting, potent and historic)" (McClintock: 66). George Mosse, who has done significant work on nationalism as it relates to gender, sexuality and race, suggests that the notion of modernity, and with it "respectability", further articulated these hierarchies; he writes in *Nationalism and Sexuality,* "nationalism and respectability assigned everyone his place in life, man and woman, normal and abnormal, native and foreigner; any confusion between these threatened to chaos and loss of control" (Mosse, 1985: 16). This assignation, was articulated through and around bodies, with particular tasks and modes of practices assigned accordingly. Spike Peterson, relatedly, conceives of nationalism as not only gendered but concomitant with, and dependent upon, heterosexism. According to Peterson, the desired internal homogeneity within secure borders which defines the nation and sets it against the history of empire,[6] is "purchased at the price of institutionalizing difference" (Peterson, 1999: 35), not only differences *between* nations but also within the nation, and explicitly for Peterson, between genders within the nation. According to Peterson's description of the system of binary signifiers within the unification of heterosexism and nationalism, "nature-as-female transmutes to *nation-as-woman,* where the "Motherland" is a woman's body and as such is ever in danger of violation - by 'foreign' males/sperm" (Peterson 1989: 48). It is against the notion of the nation as feminized "mother" that gendered conceptions of nationalism frames the crossing of borders as a violation, as an invasion.

Drawing on the work of Liisa Malkki, Prem Rajaram writes that the refugee, specifically, is always "confined to their body" and "consigned to visuality" (Rajaram 2002, 251). While Rajaram articulates this position in criticism of depoliticizing effects of humanitarian images of

[6] cite and add this earlier

helplessness, I am here interested to apply it to gendered, racialized, European right-wing anti-immigration rhetorics which cast asylum seekers as invaders, as a masculine threat - always posited in opposition to the figure of refugee as "helpless", "lost" or vulnerable and quite often articulated through images of bodies. In her article, "Men at the borders: Gender, victimhood, and war in Europe's refugee crisis" Elissa Helms describes the highly visual terms on which anti-refugee paradoxically position male refugees, as either cowards who have failed to perform as men, or as masculine threats to the nation:

> So those who oppose the entrance of people from Syria, Iraq, and other war zones accuse the migrating men of being cowards, shirking their duty toward family and country by not fighting (especially in contrast to Kurdish women who have taken up arms), or else of being too active, having been a member of one undesirable military formation or another. Images circulate on social media of "terrorists" caught among the migrants with photos of the men in military uniform being the sole proof necessary. Other images show men with visibly muscular physiques overlain with sarcastic captions meant to expose them as frauds ("These are the helpless refugees?!"). Damning, too, are images and footage of male migrants protesting, confronting border guards, or escaping camps—showing initiative and thus posing potential physical and political threats (Helms, 2016).

These rhetorics oppose maleness, or masculinity, to vulnerability. Following the gendering women (and with them children) always as atavistic, in McClintock's terms (and potential victim), and men always as agent actors of the political, the male refugee is assumed unacceptable as such, without particular interventions. Drawing on the work of Liisa Malkki, Helms states that "the notion of the refugee as deserving victim is invariably feminized, portrayed as indistinguishable masses of suffering, brown-skinned, largely female, 'Third World' victims at the mercy of warring factions, passively waiting for Western help." (Helms, 2016).

In order to produce a space of possible terms of inclusion against this rhetoric, while upholding the paradigms of nationalism, humanitarian advocacy groups and in INGOs are tasked to publicly articulate the vulnerability of refugees, producing the kinds of images of victimization, and "feminization" that, as Malkki, echoing terms Agamben uses, without directly engaging them, argues are depoliticizing, dehistoricizing, in favor of presenting a "universal" victim":

> The visual conventions for representing refugees and the language of raw human needs both have the effect of constructing refugees as a bare humanity- even as a merely biological or demographic presence. This mode of humanitarianism acts to trivialize and silence history and politics - a silencing that can legitimately be described as dehumanizing in most contexts. And yet the mechanisms involved here are more complex than that. For one might argue that what these representational practices do is not strictly to dehumanize, but to humanize in a particular mode. A mere, bare, naked, or minimal humanity is set up This is a vision of humanity that repels elements that fail to fit into the logic of its framework. (Malkki 1996: 388)[7]

Both Malkki and Rajaram, assert that the visualization of refugees by humanitarianism appears on terms of victimhood, "bare humanity," and "corporality" already marked by its very "naturalness" as feminine. This then might here be thought of, and I will later argue in relationship to art, is a "technology" by which refugees, in the name of their protections are as Malkki suggests constructed, or in Foucauldian terms, "produced" as "bare humanity", or following Agamben, as *bare life,* or *homo sacer*, in the name of their protections. In addition to these theoretical arguments of Agamben in specific and biopolitics in general, Wendy Brown has articulated the central failure of rights claims arise from their basis in what she refers to as "injury", drawing on Nietzsche's critical theory of *ressentiment*. In her book *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*, on the system of "protectionism" is specifically applied to feminism, but useful here to

[7] The disparities between the uses of "bare humanity" and "bare life" in Malkki and Agamben's terms are worth parsing but are unfortunately beyond the scope of this project at this time.

consideration of human rights claims in general, she writes "to be 'protected' by the same power whose violation one fears perpetuates the very modality of dependence and powerlessness marking much of women's experience across widely diverse cultures and epochs" (Brown 1995: 165). Drawing on Wendy Brown, Jo Doezema, in her address of humanitarian and governmental interventions on behalf of "Third World" sex workers has furthered this argument as to suggest that not only does a system of protectionism perpetuate dependence, particularly on the state, and thereby legitimates the power which not only protects but harms, but also that appeals to protections often facilitate arguments in favor of detention and securitization, stated to be for the benefit of those who have been identified as vulnerable victims (Doezema 2001: 38). Doezema specifically notes instances whereby women who are offered "help" but choose not to accept the specific restrictions that come with it are often detained in an attempt control or rehabilitate them. Similar arguments have been readily voiced for the increase of FRONTEX patrols of the waters between Turkey and Norther Africa and Europe, the E.U. Turkey Deal, and increased legal ramifications for those who offer aid to refugees in transit, either by sea or land, who may now be tried as "smugglers". (FRONTEX)

Section 2.4: Conclusions:

The preceding chapter has framed vulnerability as a term within gendered, racialized understandings of the nation, wherein it delineates a term of inclusion, or at the least appeals to inclusion under protectionism. Vulnerability is, if not necessarily, then at least, often articulated, and both evidenced and opposed through visual "corporeality" denoting the refugee as Malkki writes as "bare humanity" This visual corporeality is simultaneously a term of possible acceptance into systems of protection and one which silences, depoliticizes and erases the specificities of asylum seekers and displaced peoples. In the following chapter which focuses on the specific

artworks, the bodies of refugees are notably absent, and the artworks evoke this absence through various visual and material memorializing representations, indices and embodiments. Gender, as I previously discussed appears in various ways here: from the dehistorisized "naturalizations" of Taylors sculptures of strong men and bare-breasted and pregnant women, to the varied forms of replacement and erasure in Ai Weiwei's works; his "surrender" of his own male body to replace another, to his evocation of undifferentiated masses of the dead, as indicated by uniform lifejackets. Despite, and even through the visual and material strategies that produce this absence, however, the refugee is nonetheless prominently featured as a corporeal and visual body.

Chapter III. The Limits of 'Awareness-raising' with the Dead: Absences, the Temporality of Memorialization, and the Making of the Always-Already Lost

Section 3.1: Introduction

On January 30th of 2016 the *Washington Post* printed a now infamous image of Berlin-based Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei. In the perfectly professional black and white image Weiwiei is posed limp, face down on the rocky beach, recreating the image of Alan Kurdî, the three year-old Syrian boy whose body washed up on beach of Bodrum, Turkey, on September 2nd of 2015. Through countless reprints and social media reposts the image of the toddler became an international symbol for tragedy of lives lost to the precarious crossings undertaken by asylum seekers forced coming from Syria. The image of Weiwei face down on the beach was taken by the photographer of *India Today* as part of an interview on the artist's then upcoming participation in the India Art Fair, for which it was to be printed, hung and presumably sold. At the time the photograph was taken Weiwei had been running his nomadic studio on the Greek Island of Lesbos, a noted point of arrival "hot-spot" for those entering Europe from Turkey via crossing the Mediterranean, where the photographer from *India Today* came to interview him. Weiwei had been using his social media feeds to chronicle his experiences with asylum seekers and volunteers on the shores of Lesbos for some months in an effort, he has said, to bring attention to the crisis through his international visibility. He has said he wanted to use the photo op as a chance to "raise awareness" and "show solidarity" ("Artist Ai Weiwei poses as Aylan Kurdi"). Indeed, the action had roots in other international collective reenactment protest performances that were held on beaches in both Moroccan city of Rabat and Gaza in the days following the boy's death ("Gazans

Commemorate Aylan Kurdi in Gaza"). Two weeks after his photograph appeared he installed 14,000 life jackets he collected on the columned facade of the National Konzerthaus in Berlin, along with an inflatable raft like those many have taken across the Mediterranean, emblazoned with the hashtag: #SAFEPASSAGE, as part of the 2016 Cinema for Peace Gala. The Gala later produced a number of images, again via instagram, of selfies depicting celebrities wrapped in the gold heat blankets which are regularly given to refugees suffering hypothermia and shock.

In this chapter I will analyze these art works and events which aim to raise awareness of, and by extension support for, those engaged in forced migration, using visual strategies which I assert draw on practices of memorialization. In addition to Ai Weiwei's above mentioned projects I will be looking at an underwater figurative sculpture installation by Jason deCaires Taylor. In reading these projects and their media representations, I identify distinct memorialization strategies at work including; monumentalization, aggregate, indexical objects –those objects which stand in for the body and reenactment, as an embodied, performance which also (re)produces an image. I consider these particular instances within art and cultural histories of of these strategies, and where apt, in relationship to political art events and actions. I draw upon critical engagements with reenactments in popular culture and as a specific artistic strategy of embodiment and examine scholarship on sculptural and material strategies of memorialization. In connection with the work of the previous chapter, while the specific "awareness raising" artworks focused on depart from the direct imaging of the body of a victim, common to humanitarianism as addressed previously by Malkki and Rajaram, I argue that they nonetheless rely upon it, configured as a corporeal absence. Throughout the consideration of each of these strategies, and more pointedly in the final section of this chapter I am additionally concerned with the temporality of these memorializations, of what it means and

what political effects it may incur to produce memorials in"real time" as the conditions of death continue.

Section 3.2: Memorialization and the Nation

> No more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers. The public ceremonial reverence accorded these monuments precisely *because* they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them, has not precedents in earlier times...void as these tombs are of identifiable mortal remains or immortal souls they are nonetheless saturated with ghostly *national* imaginings (Anderson, 1983: 9).

> ...the embodiment of memory (and its perceived location in objects that act as substitutes for the body) is an active process with which subjects engage in relation to social institutions and practices...The memorial is perhaps the most traditional kind of memory object or technology." (Sturken 1997: 10)

Benedict Anderson, in his work on nationalism, notes some to the ways in which nationalism, as a particular cultural form, is articulated in and through visual cultural technologies. In addition to his focus on printed media, and the commodification and increased literacy that accompanied it as central to how the nation as an imagined community was able to conceive of itself, he also suggests that one of the most significant ways in which the nation imagines itself is though memorials. Significant to the works considered below, and to Sturken's quote above, is memorial's tense entanglement with bodies and embodiment. Anderson notes that the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, is specifically void of bodies, or those who's bodies may be contained there in are left nameless. It is through this emptiness, he suggests that such memorials are saturated with "ghostly national imaginings" (Anderson, 1983: 9). Sturken points out that absent bodies are embodied through memory and memorial practices, or located in objects. The three artworks considered

below configure the body as central and do so in ways which particularly draw attention to the absence of the specific bodies in question.

The material on nationalism addressed in the previous chapter, and as it is referred to by Sturken in her work on memorials, considers "the nation" as it is often understood, as synonymous with the nation-state. Due to the largely international character of interested actors and the characteristics of these artworks and media responses to them, ideas of "nationalism" are here understood, and applied to extend to the larger supranational community of European Union, and at times beyond it. As Yuval-Davis writes of literature and conceptions of nationalism which collapse "ethnicity" and "nationality" and "nation" and state" – it fails to "take into account...that the state can extend beyond the boundary of the nation, so that the nation-state form may be replaced by a supranational structure as, for example, potentially lies in the the European Community" (Davis, 1996: 4). Davis disarticulates the nation from the nation-state. As the artworks I am considering throughout this thesis are presented as "international", but occur within Europe, in response to what has often been troubling referred to as the "European Refugee Crisis" (Rajaram 2016), I draw upon Davis' extension of the nation to apply ideas of how the nation articulates itself through memorials to the larger E.U. community. The E.U. in particular poses unique difficulties within the frame of the modern state and nationalism as dependent upon discursive and administrative needs of a given moment or issue, the E.U. at times behaves as a state itself (protecting external borders) and at others enacts and reinstantiates internal differentiations and contestations. Within this slippage of statehood and nationalism the community that is produced, and codified through practices of mourning and memorialization is also defined and redefined, as is the refugee who these memorials take as their subject.

In addition to Davis' extension of theories of the nation, beyond specific territorial borders, I understand the artworks presented in the coming pages through, and at times in tension with Marita Sturken's concept of "cultural memory"(1997). Sturken coins "cultural memory" which she defines as "memory which is shared outside the avenues of formal historical discourse yet is entangled with cultural products and cultural meaning" (1997: 3). Importantly, she articulates this as a differentiation from "historical memory" in order address what she sees in American culture of memorial as a shifting sense of the imagined community of the nation:

> "Cultural memory reveals the demand for a less monolithic, more inclusive image of America. For this reason, it has often intersected with contemporary battles over identity politics and political correctness. Questions of who is sanctioned to speak of particular memories are often raised, and issues of difference and exclusion from the 'imagined community' of the nation come to the fore." (Sturken 1997: 13).

Sturken additionally tensely engages affect theorist Lauren Berlant's notion of the "national symbolic", and sees it as working in tension to her own understanding of "cultural memory", asserting in part that "cultural memory" specifically allows for, as her subjects, both controversial memorials indicate, the possibility of practices which work both in "opposition and in concert with a concept of the nation" (Sturken 1997: 13) Berlant's "national symbolic" follows more a line of thinking wherein practices defined as such are, if not in concert with then at least affected by the nation:

> "transforms individuals into subjects of a collectively held history. Its traditional icons, its metaphors, its heroes, its rituals, and its narratives provide an alphabet for a collective consciousness or national subjectivity. . . . This pseudo-generic condition not only affects profoundly the citizen's subjective experience of her/his political rights, but also of civil life, private life, the life of the body itself." (Sturken 1997: 13, Berlant 1991: 20)

Both of these theories are significant to the ways in which I assert the memorials addressed below function. These projects, and their (after)lives on international social media, assert themselves to be, in the tradition of humanitarian discourses, invested and interested "humanness", beyond territoriality and as AJ+ media, who has digitally disseminated all of three of these artworks, themselves note, they address a "global" community. The artworks exist in a kind of tension between assert and "aesthetics": they work to assert themselves in opposition to territoriality and call for global responsibility, but in utilizing strategies of memorialization in order to do so, they reproduce aesthetic and material models of national cultural practices.

Section 3.3: Strategies of Memorialization

The following subsections detail each of the projects' distinct material and visual strategies of memorialization and relates them to historic precedents in art history and and cultural practice, in order to suggest how they may be seen to function. As previously noted via Anderson, the absent, or at least unnamed, body, is productive of the memorial, as distinct from the grave. Cultural memorial practices are nonetheless organized around bodies, as are artistic strategies borrowing from these practices, either for political ends or merely aesthetic ones. Sturken notes, the body, symbolized, embodiment, or located in an object substitute is fundamental to memorials. The following projects all, in one form or another, work to materialize that absence. I address the artworks through three categories of memorial practice; monumentalization, where the horrific is made either heroic or sublime; reenactment, the embodied restaging or reperformance of an event; and aggregation of indexical objects, where amassed objects stand-in for absent bodies in order to indicate scale of loss through materializing statistical data. In the following section, I work to

connect these material and visual strategies to theories of memorialization, and consider their biopolitical impacts.

Section 3.3.1: Monumentalization: Sublime Bodies of EcoArchitecture

> The sublime traditionally contrasts the beautiful; it is associated with the unrepresentable, a masculine monumental scale, which is beyond human comprehension (Kaplan 2007: 7)

The monumental form of memorial, wherein the dead are idealized and presented as heroic and death is reframed in relationship to the sublime, is perhaps the most "traditional" of strategies addressed here. By traditional I mean to suggest, drawing on Sturken and Berlant, that as a practice, it is rarely enacted in opposition to the nation. Sturken notes in her chapter on the Vietnam Memorial, that one of the forms of protest against Maya Lin's recessed architectural representation of loss, was a cry for a more traditional, heroic, figurative monument. Additionally, and not unrelated, contemporary art's running flirtation with the use of memorial and counter-memorial strategies, has not extended in quite the same extent to monumentalization, as it has to other forms, particularly - indexical objects and reenactment. While the reasons and implications for this could be explored in detail, briefly, this is due in part to the deep historical uses by the state, and the contemporary investment in, and exploration of, what has been called "the real" (Foster 1996), and its affective reach. More often when deployed, monumentalism, is utilized ironically or directly mockingly. As such, Taylor's work is positioned, to an extent "outside" contemporary art discourses, in contrast to Ai Weiwei's position as "art world elite". Necessarily, this produces some degree of inequity in my treatment of these two artists' work, Weiwei situates his practice within strategies and discourses have been much more readily addressed by those who write on counter-memorial and contemporary art alike, and as such I discuss it greater context. Where Taylor's work does align with scholarship, is in relationship to its' ecological "post-human"

context, a field which I am at present new to, and can not address as closely. As noted earlier, both of artist's works have been digitally disseminated by AJ+ media.

Fig.1. *The Raft of Lampedusa*

Jason deCaires Taylor's *Raft of the Lampedusa* is almost exclusively known through it's digital representation. AJ+ media released a YouTube video of the work in February of 2016 (AJ+ YouTube "Underwater Sculpture Park"). In the short video, soft piano music plays as the camera catches the central form of the sculpture, a concrete cast of an inflatable raft, heavy with bodies, as it lowered through the impossibly turquoise water; the camera pulls back to pan countless figures "walking" along the ocean floor and circle the raft, now static on the ocean floor. Taylor's *Raft* enacts both a formal aestheticizing of figurative subjects, and the invocation of the sublime, through the work's installation within a landscape, both visual strategies common to traditional monuments. Installed in February of 2016 off the coast of the Canary Islands, the title refers to the Italian island of Lampedusa which has been a point of destination for many people seeking to enter

Europe from Libya. Numerous rafts have capsized and many people have drowned or frozen to death in recent years trying to make the journey in often too small boats and rafts ("Dozens of Migrants Freeze to Death Trying to Reach Italy" 2016) The title is, additionally a citational nod to Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa,* (1818) a Romantic painting. depicting the horrific aftermath of the wreckage of the French naval frigate Méduse. The incompetence or callousness of the captain in his less than robust efforts to search for passengers of the ship following the wreck resulted in the deaths of all but a scant few of the 147 set adrift; the painting depicts the survivors mingled with dead,[8] and gestures toward the stories of murder and cannibalism survivors resorted to in their madness and starvation. Géricault's painting of a "the helmless raft of the Medusa" has been read as metaphor for the failing of modernity "wherein there are no heroes anymore, but only victims" (Geisen 2004: 160). The dead and the aimless drifting of the raft is a vindication of their abandonment.

Taylor's *Raft of the Lampedusa* echos *Medusa,* quotes not only the title of the Géricault, but also the composition, though to a notably less violently. The figure draped across the side of Taylor's inflatable raft is a direct compositional quotation of one of the figures of the dead on the *Medusa,* though his position is ever so slightly distinct, as to suggest sleep, rather than death. The dead, as is often the case in monuments, are markedly absent, as such from Taylor's depictions. Instead these are bodies are frozen in time, in a seemingly languid moment before their deaths; a young girl hangs her arm off the edge as if to reach into the water they are already beneath, a bare chested woman covers herself with her hands, another woman, pregnant, holds her stomach and rests her head on the shoulder of the man beside her, an older man sits on the edge of the raft, patiently, his hands folded in his lap. Taylor has not addressed decision directly, but he has asserted that the project was not in fact intended as a memorial:

[8] Notably, Géricault spent months studying bodies of the dead and dying in hospitals and morgues to produce.

> Drawing parallels between the abandonment suffered by sailors in [Géricault's] shipwreck scene and the current refugee crisis, the work is not intended as a tribute or memorial to the many lives lost but as a stark reminder of the collective responsibility of our now global community. (Taylor, Facebook 2016)

Fig. 2. Théodore Géricault
Le Radeau de la Méduse 1818–1819

While Jason deCaires Taylor may indeed aim to raise awareness, or act a reminder of international responsibility, and unlike Weiwei who freely uses the terminology of memorials when talking about many of his projects, and may not have intended to produce a memorial as he claims, but it would be difficult to argue that the work does not, regardless of these intentions, practically function as such. Aside from his material choice of figurative sculptures to actual scale (cast from models), set in vignettes, itself evocative of statuary common to memorials and cemeteries, and his direct noting in the title of specific deaths, another of the artist's previous works, *Vicissitudes*, has largely been regarded as a memorial project. *Vicissitudes* was installed on the bottom of the Caribbean sea off the coast of Grenada in 2007 and depicts children standing in a circle, facing outward holding hands. Though the artist initially denied it, *Vicissitudes* has largely been written

about and understood as a memorialization of the lost lives of people who died en route or were thrown overboard ships carrying them to the New World and into the mouth of the slavery trade. On the subject Taylor has said that the artworks, however unintentionally:

> It was never my intention to have any connection to the Middle passage...Although it was not my intention from the outset I am very encouraged how it has resonated differently within various communities and feel it is working as an art piece by questioning our identity, history and stimulating debate.(Taylor, Facebook)

Jason deCaires Taylor, a self proclaimed scuba diver and environmentalist has focused on the environmental aspects of his several underwater installations - as concrete sculptures made from pH neutral stone, the artworks discussed here are part of a larger project intended to create artificial scaffolding to support coral regrowth and thus support other sea life. His earliest work lacked the echo of memorialization in favor of depictions of stereotypical waste and excess of Western consumer culture. Video updates installations the bodies in *Vicissitudes* overgrown by the non-human ecosystem then now support, the concrete of which they are constructed is often cracked and broken as the coral takes root.

Vicissitudes, and by extension of temporal imagining, *The Raft of Lampedusa,* configure their subjects, the enslaved and refugees respectively, as bodies disappeared through death at sea reproduced in their absence as concrete stand-ins, made from the casts of other bodies. They become tombs to "Unknown" and unnamed dead, remade as nature. However, distinct from Anderson's tombs Unknown Soldiers, they do not represent the ghosts of the nation lost in valor. Instead, however much the work intends to speak to responsibility, materially the bodies are reconfigured as part of the earth – returned to the sea, naturalized and installed in their watery home - in reference to his sculptures Taylor has said, "once we submerge them they don't belong

to us anymore" (TED Talk). Susan Smillie, writing for the Guardian in conversation with art critic, Jonathan Jones writes this:

> "It's strange," he concludes. "There's a sort of dreamlike, redemptive poetry to it." If you consider that the sea is already a museum littered with artefacts and remnants – wrecks of Carthaginian ships, ancient Greek statues depicting heroes, warriors and gods) – it begs the question: what will future generations make of our modern world as imagined by Taylor? Passive viewers of television, people taking selfies, this benighted raft of the hungry and hopeless. "Maybe he's dreaming of a time where humans have been left behind, a nature that's survived us," offers Jones. "We might be the forgotten ones." (Smillie 2016).

Jones' troubling identification of the *Raft of the Lampedusa,* as "redemptive", relies on a complete dehistoricization and depoliticization of the Libyan refugees depicted. Not only are they configured, in Malkki and Rajaram terms as "hungry and hopeless", but in his projection of Talylor's imagination, they are reconfigured in the future perfect as already ahistoric, primordial representations of "humanness", after humanity. In both Taylor's and Jones' statements, there is the hint of the desire for abandonment, for the forgetting that accompanies narratives of redemption in memorials, he extends himself, in his imagined backward looking experience of the sculptures, into a future, where they are already configured as past, their deaths no longer recent, as suddenly further away.

Section 3.3.2: Reenactment: Replacing Bodies, Affecting Tragedy

Fig. 3. "Artist Ai Weiwei Poses as Aylan Kurdi for India Today Magazine."

Ai Weiweis's instagram image of his reenactment of the photograph of Alan Kurdî has been reposted countless times and has met with diverse responses form the art and migration rights activism communities alike; from "regrams" calling the action or image "powerful", a statement of solidarity, to criticisms of the image as misguided or in poor taste, at best, to cynically opportunistic and exploitative, at the worst. Writing for the *The Washington Post* from New Dehli where the printed photograph was being exhibited as part of the photograph was included in an exhibition entitled "The Artists" hung as part of the international India Art Fair, Rama Lakshmi posted the story on January 30th. In her opening the author declared "the heartbreaking image of a

dead 3-year old Syrian refugee who was drowned in the Mediterranean sea last year just got a huge artistic tribute" (Lakshmi 2016). Conversely art critic Karen Archey criticized Weiwei's activism, and particular the inclusion of the photograph in an art fair, for sale in *e-flux* online art journal, She states:

> Ai's brand of activism is uniquely commercial, and thus uniquely spurious--Ai is gaining both cultural capital and money from the refugee crisis. Rather than placing his work in the public square (why isn't Instagram enough?), Ai turns time and again to the gallery, department store, or art fair. (Archey, 2016)

As Prem Rajaram notes in his criticism of Oxfam humanitarian postcards; one of the effects of the consignment of the refugee to corporeal visuality is the "commodification of refugee experiences" (Rajaram 2002: 131). The capital gains, both cultural and monetary, suggested by the sale of the image, are not unique to art alone, but are often the conditions of visuality in humanitarianism. That said, as Archey herself writes, "art and activism make strange bedfellows", and there are problems which are unique to that uneasy union, particularly in looking at an artist of Weiwei's visibility and bluechip status. First his works will always, if he puts them up for sale, occupy the dubious position of being both a luxury good and a cultural product or event. This conflict particular to the political art object as a good is doubtless of unique interest and not insignificant to the consideration of human rights regimes as tied to capital, however an analysis of this kind is beyond the scope of this project at this time. Of greater interest to this study, is the question of visibility. Whereas a humanitarian fundraising post card has an essentially limited audience, Weiwei's project, particularly as disseminated through news and social media, has an international visibility– to such a degree that the image on instagram may be thought of as existing in, as Archey writes, a sort of international "public square". As such it has become, beyond its value as an object commodity for sale, a cultural event, and the "public square" in which it exists is a

neoliberal,Western, transnational one, the same global community to which AJ+ addresses itself. As such I take as my focus here what work the image does, not as a commodity, or even as static object of art, but as as cultural event, a series of actions utilizing the framework and historical references of art, which produced an image, widely disseminated. Archey herself goes on to disentangle, and then perhaps retie the image/object from the process of its production:

> Further, while Ai's work is a misguided act of solidarity, the artist fails to consider that by posing as Alan Kurdi, he effectively suggests that the image of a dead three-year-old isn't sufficiently shocking to us, that we need instead an image of a middle-aged, wealthy and powerful man to confer the real tragedy of the refugees' plight. (Archey 2016)

Archey's, statement that Weiwei's trespass is largely a failure to consider how the work will be understood, is significant here to questions of how we can understand the disparate stated intentions of such a gesture and the political and cultural work it ends up doing beyond and often in opposition to, the artist's presumed better intentions. In considering the various ways in which reenactment has been understood as a practice, an affective experience, and a process of image production we can situate Weiwei's action/image, in relationship to other forms of reenactment. In order to do so, I have left aside the image as object commodity to be addressed at another time; further, with the intention of considering Weiwei's "misguided solidarity" I want to temporarily disarticulate the image from the actions which produced it. Literature including works by Peggy Phelan, and Ian McCalman and Paul A. Pickering offer insight into contemporary cultural practices of reenactment outside of the production of art images, and allow us to consider the action as a affective performance. Later, returning to literature on reenactment as a particular contemporary strategy in in art curators and critics Inke Arns and Robert Blackson I will consider the distance, or difference between the affective gesture of re-enactment for the performer and the image it may produce, reproduce and (re)disseminate.

Reenactment as both an academic subject and a practice, has become increasingly present in the late twentieth and early twenty-first-century, in popular culture as historical reenactment and "living history", as well as strategy within art and even political action. In its most simple terms, what distinguishes reenactment"from other forms of repetition, such as theatre, is its source in, and point of tension with, "the real". In their book, *Historical Reenactment, from Realism to the Affective Turn,* Ian McCalman and Paul A. Pickering are invested in rethinking both the motivations and the affects of reenactment in its move from the "real", to the "affective". This notion of "shift" or "move" is problematic if taken as absolute or chronological; and the authors themselves caution that that is not their intention, suggesting instead, a distinction between "the literal recreation of the past" and "the yearning to experience history somatically and emotionally – to know what it felt like" (2010: 6). Their suggestions is itself not unproblematic, as the notion of something "being" "real" is often defined in relationship to feeling. For the kinds of cultural historical reenactments McCalman and Pickering, and their contributors discuss, "the real" manifests as an investment both in material "authenticity" (i.e. appropriate costumes made from, and by, historically accurate materials and techniques) and mimetic representations of specific historic events, whereas the "affective turn" speaks more to "unscripted" parts, reenactments not tied to recreation of any particular event, but rather to an improvised, experiential engagement. The affective desire, is to "narrow the gap between past and present so that we might touch it..." (McCalman and Pickering 2010: 8). Through such an understanding reenactment emerges as not merely as an attempt to describe history, but an affective gesture toward a perceived haptic knowledge through "embodied" experience, however much it is also a fiction. In her book, *Performing Remains, Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment,*Rebecca Schneider notes

from her initial visits to reenactments, that a central element of reenactments was the desire for embodied experience, as a form of knowledge: "I observed participants putting themselves in the place of the past, reenacting that past by posing as if they were, indeed, soldiers and civilians of the 1860s... ", in order to produce an event that some "hope will touch the actual past" (Schneider 2011: 9).

In her introduction to *History Will Repeat Itself,* art critic and curator Inke Arns describes this desire to touch the past as a closing of distance. She writes:

> Re-enactments eliminate the distance, constructed as safe, between the historical event and represented by the media and the present, between performers and audience. The re-enactment transforms representation into embodiment, distanced indirect involvement into - sometimes unpleasant - direct involvement, and through this turns the passive reader or observer into an active witness or participant. (Arns 2005: 59)

According to Arns, artistic practices of re-enactment work to close distance not only between the reenactor and the image or event through the performers own embodiment, but also between the "passive"[9] viewer and the performer, presumably because of their own connection to the body of the performer, and by extension then, between the audience/witness and the image/event. It remains troublingly unclear in Arns work precisely why or how the performers body, seen in a video or image of a performance, would be more accessible to the audience for affective identification than would be an original. It is on these on these same troubled suppositions then that Weiwei's reenactment asserts itself. In the interview for *India Today* which produced the image, Weiwei describes his motivations as follows:

[9] importantly this distinction between the passive view and the active participant is addressed explicitly by Rancière in his work *The Emancipated Spectator,* (2009) which works to challenge the assumption that "looking" is itself a passive act. Similarly Claire Bishop has argued against the facile assumption that "participation" in art is necessarily an "emancipated" position, and one of greater political value (2012).

> I was standing there and I could feel my body shaking with the wind—you feel death in the wind. You are taken by some kind of emotions that you can only have when you are there. So for me to be in the same position [as Kurdi], is to suggest our condition can be so far from human concerns in today's politics. ("Artist Ai Weiwei poses as Aylan Kurdi").

According to the above narrative, Weiwei echoes the affective understanding of reenactment as a cultural practice, and intends to situate his as a spontaneous result of an emotional impetus, a memorial gesture which seeks to close distance through the use of his body, and does not specifically address the production of an image. Despite, Weiwei's narrative of sudden emotional impetus, the image is not merely the resulting documentation of a bodily gesture, and it cannot, even with his narrative guidance, function as one. Footage of the production of the image included in the *India Today* article shows a whole team of workers and assistants around Weiwei as he lies in proximate position on one of the silver and gold colored foil blankets given to refugees by volunteer to stave off cold and shock. He shouts to the photographer to be sure to "take it from the same angle"("Artist Ai Weiwei poses as Aylan Kurdi"). It is not clear if the blanket was photoshopped out of the final image or if it was pulled from beneath him before the image was taken, but in either instance, but in either instance it points to a stark difference between Weiwei's reenactment of the Kurdî image and others, by artist/activist groups in multiple countries on September 8th as a mass solidarity action. Videos and images of the actions on beaches of Gaza and Rabat Morocco show activists with their faces pressed into the sand, the water washing up their cheeks with the tide, their bodies in an unrestful position. Frequently in Gaza activists also hold signage with images of Kurdî and other drowned children, returning the focus to the individual dead. ("Gazans Commemorate Aylan Kurdi in Gaza").

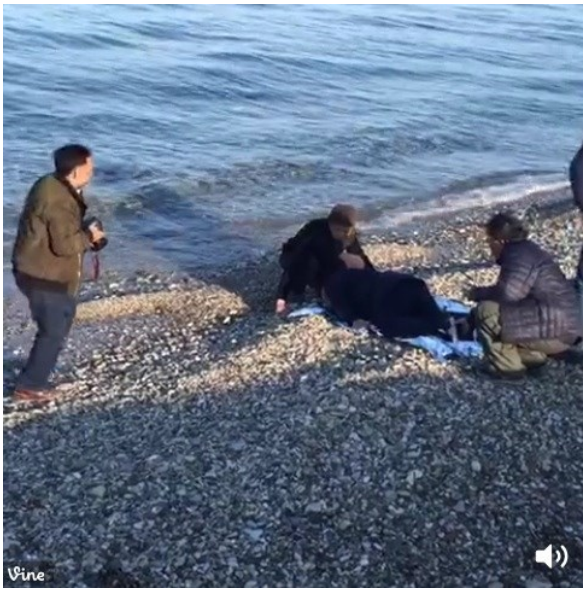

Fig 4. "Artist Ai Weiwei Poses as Aylan Kurdi for India Today Magazine.

Fig. 5. People lie on the Gaza beach to commemorate Aylan Kurdi, the three-year-old boy dressed in shorts and a red T-shirt, and 12 Syrians who drowned in the Aegean Sea after two boats filled with refugees en route to Greece sank, in Gaza City, Gaza on September 8, 2015.

As strikingly different as these images are from the canniness of Weiwei's perfectly photographed reenactment, it is tempting to suggest that the failure, or maybe even the violence of Weiwei's project is rooted in it's distance from those reenactments, that seem to so much more closely enact

his narrative in their impetus, and urgency. It is not central to the concerns of this project to consider his project as insufficiently sincere because his discomfort was not real, or because the action was not spontaneous, or even that in the video of its production it somehow lacks the solemnity of those protest actions or even of his own narrative. It is, rather, more significant to consider what work that narrative, of sudden affective compulsion to corporeally reproduce an image of a dead child as an act of connection or mourning does as a construct within an artwork, and how that narrative functions as a cultural event, tied to an image, regardless of its veracity. It is through this narrative, that Weiwei positins this work as a memorial, rather than specifically as an artwork.

Fig. 6. Images of artist/activists dressed as Alan Kurdi, reenacting his image as part of an international "tribute" on September 8th, in Rabat, Morocco.

In addition to her description of the necessary "closing" of distance through embodiment, Arns defines the fundamental aspect of art instantiations of re-enactment as their paradoxical relationship to the distance between the original image and the viewer. She states that the "...erasure and simultaneous creation of distance are two key mechanisms in the contemporary practice of artistic reenactments, which often coexist in the same artwork" (Arns 2005: 59). The

distance produced, she argues is a productive distance; one that works to expose all formal histories as mediated, constructed and in flux. Art reenactments of the sort Arns addresses, are to a degree always counter-memorials, or counter-histories. It is explicitly through the production of images that this productive distance is created. The images of art reenactment, play with the "real" and ideas of authenticity.

As an intervention in existing historical narratives, the distance produced offers a potential space of new imaginings of history. Distinct from Arns' understanding of art reenactment's necessary second move, that of producing distance, Weiwei's narrative of his image relies specifically, solely invokes the initial move of closing distance. This then produces an image, the narrative of which, as a "documentation" of an emotive gesture, as a representation of something "real", in so doing the artist marks the work as intentionally, specifically memorial in nature. The distance he claims to close, by the action, is the distance between "our condition" and "human concerns", as he peculiarly articulates; and between himself and the the boy. If we follow Arns' earlier logic that reenactments, shift the position of the viewer from "passive" spectator to "active" participant or *witness,* which indeed aligns with Weiwei's stated intentions, the reenactment then is also meant to close a distance between "us" and Kurdî, or at least original image of the boy. Archey's criticism of Weiwei's work is that in replacing the body of the boy with his own, Weiwei suggests that the distance between "us" and the image would be closed by our more immediate identification with the body of the artist over that of the dead toddler, or as she says, the gesture "suggests that the image of a dead three-year-old isn't sufficiently shocking to us, that we need instead an image of a middle-aged, wealthy and powerful man to confer the real tragedy of the refugees' plight." Weiwei's persistent narrative of the image as documentation of a moment of impulse, suggests that rather than seeing his body as a replacement body, or as a more valuable

one, he sees himself, and however troublingly, by extension his audience, in the moment of the gesture, in the moment of, as Archey says, a "powerful man" putting himself in "the same position" as a refugee child. Through his narrative he suggests this action as gesture toward embodied understanding, specifically through a form of surrender. Whatever Weiwei actually felt or whatever his affective narrative intends us to understand he felt in the moment of laying down, as a surrender of power and agency, in "solidarity", of in as Gibbs suggests as mimetic reach toward deterritorialization, the image that results, does very different work as an image where it may well draw attention, in an almost celebratory fashion, to precisely those possessions he suggests he's abdicated in the moment.

In addition to the question of what distance Weiwei's reenactment either closes or intends to close, there remains the troubling question of its temporality; one, if not *the* distance closed in most re-enactment art works is temporal. The embodiment of reenactment intends to "touch" history drawing it closer from the past as a removed place in time. Weiwei's reenactment however was produced less than six months after the death of the child, and Kurdî's image had hardly disappeared from the media by the time Weiwei reenacted it. The image had, however, been used and reused in numerous reiterations such that original responses of shock and horror; was replaced by other rhetorics - right-wing organizations, claims via youtube videos websites that the image had been "staged" in order to garner the sympathies of liberals, Charlie Hebdo's satirical, if not wholly cynical invocation in stated service of the hypocrisy of media's fickle representations of refugees, and the E.U.'s ongoing practices of exclusion in the face of repeated claims of horror and shock of images of Kurdî and others. Less than a month before Weiwei's image was produced the French cartoon Charlie Hebdo had released an inflammatory cartoon depicting both the dead

toddler and an imagined adult incarnation of the boy, cast as one of the men who had assaulted German women on New Years Eve (Meade 2016). It could be argued that in this light, Weiwei's action was experienced, as he suggests himself, as an attempt to reconnect with the tragedy, now made the material of countless debates, on a bodily level, and to reproduce and therefore return attention to an image that had already been re-articulated and used in many other iterations since its initial release, on the terms of it is initial horror, under the assumption, that, as we repeatedly see in humanitarian visuality, it is in this moment - of the bodily emergence of the horror and tragedy of political situation, that we find sympathy and political possibility.

While, as previously noted, Weiwei explicitly does not address the production of distance in his image as an artistic reenactment, Arns argues that this second effect is perhaps *the* condition of re-enactment. In this instance, the gesture and the resulting image Weiwei produces does not so much criticize the structures of historicity, as it does enact them. As a subject of re-enactment the image becomes one of an historic event, the image of the original event is itself pushed into a past even while it is remade in the present. It is not inconsequential as well that the image itself is something of a re-edit, or that the particulars of his selection of what to reenact and how to present is a decontextualization. Taken by a Turkish photographer the image of Kurdî that appears as the subject of Weiwei's reenactment was one of many of a series of images which also included a Turkish official. While there were indeed images of the boy alone, or images media released were cropped to focus on him exclusively, the selection of this particular image, removed from a series, as his subject of reenactment not only literally removes the official, but decontextualizes the event in relationship to the state. Like many gestures of the memorialization I will look at, the focus remains on the body, and on the decontextualized cause of that body's death or precarity, the

water, the a beach. In this case, even more painfully, the image was reproduced on the coast of Greece, the destination of the boat that carried Kurdî, who's body was washed up on the shore of Bodrum, where they had departed from mere minutes earlier.

Section 3.2.3: Aggregate Indexes: Empty Life Jackets, Absent Bodies

> Rather than a symbol (an arbitrary sign arbitrarily assigned a meaning) or an icon (a likeness or representative sign), relics are most like the third category of Peirceian sign theory, the index. The index, most simply put, acknowledges the irrational human belief in the lingering power of contact...the indexical sign does not represent full presence but effectively points to or indicates the real and the present because it gives evidence of one-time contact or somehow maintains an adjacency to that which it represents" (Hahn 2010: 13).

Two weeks after his photographic reenactment of the image of the death of Alan Kurdî Ai Weiwei had 14000 bright orange life jackets strapped around the columns of the facade of the Konzerthaus in Berlin. Along with the lifejackets, the installation included a black inflatable raft boat of a variety many people arriving to Europe by crossing the Mediterranean have used and which Weiwei procured along the lifejackets from "authorities on Lesbos" along with the jackets. This was not Weiwei's first project to utilize the large scale installation of uniform objects as representative of bodies. In 2009, In 2009, Ai Weiwei created a large 10x100m installation, made out of 9000 children's backpacks, installed on the facade of the Haus der Kunst in München Germany. Each backpack in *Remembrance* represents a child lost in the earthquake that took place in the Chinese province of Sichuan in 2008. As Sturken writes "the presence of bodies is essential to the production of cultural memory" (Sturken 1997: 12). But for Sturken, as in this project, the body, as absent can equally be represented though objects. Sturken does not evoke Pierce by using the term "index" to describe these objects in relationship to bodies, but her explication of what the

objects *do,* speaks to Hahn's read of the term. She notes of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, that aside from the form of the quilt itself recollecting the body, many of the panels incorporated individual items of clothing from the deceased which functioned as indices of the lost, declaring their presence through absence: "the empty clothing speaks loudly of the absence of the bodies of the AIDS dead" (Sturken 1997: 12).

Fig. 7. Installation on the facade of the Konzerhaus in Berlin, Feb 2016.

In recent years, a number of contemporary critics and historians, have theorized that the value of the "real" object as authentic material, is not unrelated to the mysticism of the medieval relic, where the material, either of the body directly, or a personal affect, such as clothing, of a saint, was seen to contain and transport some heavenly quality of that saint. Cynthia Hahn writes in her work on the haunting of relic's haunting of contemporary art, *Objects of Devotion and Desire*, that "[r]elics achieve distinction above all by being 'collected' and honored" (2010: 9). Weiwei may or may not have acquired the life jackets as used by refugees in crossing, but the narrative, (Aj+)

asserts that these are in fact "real" objects, not purchased as representations, but rather collected cast off goods, objects which have participated in the transit of refugee bodies, now standing in for those bodies that did not survive the journey.

In addition to the indexical of the relic, both Weiwei's memorials and the NAMES Project both echo practices regularly utilized in both historical museums and memorial museums. In historical museums objects, artifacts, and images function as metonyms to historic events. Not unrelated to the indexical in practical function, in the metonymic sense of history, objects, images, and artifacts (the detritus of history) stand in for and represent the the object of history" (Bernard-Donals 2012: 419). Memorial museums, often utilize the metonymic in representing historic deaths. Bernard-Donals describes a pile of thousands of shoes which had been collected from Majdanek, Poland, transported to the United States and installed in a glass case in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), as an attempt to demonstrate authentic evidence or a "metonym for the Holocaust" (Bernard-Donals 2012: 418). "We think of fragments as effects of events, we can trace them back to the cause...(they are) seen as the manifestation of the event that produced the need to tell the story" (Bernard-Donals 2012: 420). The metonym, a a means of history making and telling, he writes, is always a question of the part, the fragment standing in for the whole, where contact with the particular, for instance the shoes, or an article of clothing in the NAMES Projects quilt, shifts to the whole, the Holocaust, or the AIDS crisis.

Both Sturken and Bernard-Donals, suggest, on their own terms, a potential "second" move in their respective memorial subjects. Bernard-Donals suggests, drawing on Hayden White, the "synecdochic" in connection to the the metonymic. If the metonym is a "way into" a larger event, a

whole accessed through the fragment. a fragment, a promise of a clear path from "contact" to then the synecdoche is an interruption. Whereas the metonym, as a part representing a whole - suggests the whole can be known, the synecdoche, is always itself a fragment *as* fragment. The synecdoche produces a "part-to-part" relationship, which Bernard-Donals suggests, forestalls the viewer's sense of being able to "know" another persons experience, by interrupting that move with, perhaps, seemingly smaller, seemingly personal connections. He returns to the shoes, writing:

> ...the shoes, as those who have seen them...can tell you, are really just a pile of misshapen leather, a mass. And yet, if you look carefully, you can distinguish one object from the other. The shoes are mismatched–I couldn't see a pair in the hundreds upon hundreds of shoes on display–but you can distinguish men's shoes from women's; you can see smaller sizes that must have be children's shoes... You can distinguish shoes that represent a higher style than others, and you begin to wonder, "Why did this woman wear high heels during the transport, or were they in her luggage; and if they were in her luggage, where did she think she was going?" In other words, the vasteness of the mass of shoes gives way to another way to see them, as individual objects..." (Bernard-Donals 2012: 427)

Sturken does not follow on the same terms as Bernard-Donals and specifically name this interruption of the move from part-to-whole representation, but she does similarly point to the significance of individual objects, and the kind of direct relationship they produce, as a challenge to seeing the whole of the AIDS crisis in the Quilt, in terms of deaths alone. Writing one the clothing quilt again, she says: "Whereas the Vietnam Memorial emphasizes lives lost, the AIDS Memorial Quilt emphasizes lives lived...Individuals are often symbolized in a literal way by their images and artifacts of their lives, their favorite activities or places..." (Sturken 1997: 188). Whereas both the shoes of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and in the clothing of the NAMES Project, indicate specific individuals, through evidence of wear or specifically chose

articles of clothing that suggest not only death, but "lives lived," Weiweis lifejackets, as well as the backpacks, speak more to statistical loss. Bodies lost are suggested as bodies only, echoing through their absence, the "masses" of "bare humanness" of which Malkki speaks in humanitarian imagery expressed, in Bernard-Donals terminology, metonymically, rather than synecdochically. Weiwei's lifejackets, like reenactments, his own included, rely on the assumption that "experience" can be gained through "contact" with indexical objects as material "facts" and that that experience, is a kind of knowledge. Rancière's notion of the limitation of the "documentary" as a mere presentation of the dead is of particular value here. The kinds of questions Bernard-Donals asks in looking at the shoes in the USHMM and the expressions of lived lives of love and connections expressed in the AIDS Memorial Quilt, speak to a kind of possibility for narrative, even with memorial expressions of loss. The question, of course still remains, on what level is even a synecdochic experience politically valuable?

In concluding this section I return to my point of departure, to Butler's estimations of greivability and her assertion that some lives are "more grievable than others", that one of the effects of being designated as "outside" of the state, as Agamben's *homo sacer*, and by his own application of the term, the refugee, is that not only does a life become killable without punishment, but is also denied (public) grieving.

> I am referring not only to humans not regarded as humans, and thus to a restrictive conception of the human that is based upon their exclusion. It is not a matter of simple ontology, but an insurrection at the level of ontology, a critical opening up of the question, What is real? Whose lives are real? How might reality be unmade? Those who are unreal have, in a sense already suffered the violence of derealization. What, then, is the relation between violence and those lives considered as 'unreal'?...If violence is done against those who are unreal, then, from the perspective of violence, it fails to injure or negate those lives since those lives are already negated. But they have a strange way of

> remaining animated and so must be negated again (and again). They cannot be mourned because they are always already lost or, rather, never "were," and they must be killed, since they seem to live on, stubbornly, in this state of deadness….(Butler 33)

Butler asserts that the means by which the state marks its borders and its terms of inclusion and exclusion are evidenced and produced in those lives it deems greivable and those it marks as unreal, and therefore, not only destined for death but unmournable in their (inevitable) deaths. Looking at the artistic strategies deployed by many of these "awareness raising" projects read through Butler, it is not surprising that gestures echoing visual strategies of mourning/memorialization have come forward as acts of presumed activism which claim solidarity with, or the intention to raise awareness for refugees, as a presumed act of "inclusion". Butler addresses the value of the body as a point of connection through Lacan's understanding of the face as that which calls us to see one another as human, as in-common, based on a shared vulnerability. However, she also states that "vulnerability is always articulated differently, that it cannot be properly thought outside a differentiated field of power and, specifically, the differentiated operation of forms of recognition" (Butler, 44). Butler's suggestion that mourning does not occur for certain lives, read in tension with Povinelli, and through the artworks and their strategies addressed in the previous pages, emerges as simultaneously true and not. Particular strategies and their materiality, temporality and visual logics, point to the multiple and divergent ways in which mourning, or at least memorialization, as such goes beyond a set of practices and can function in ways counter to the commonality she suggests it produces. Certain visual strategies which make claims toward visibility or awareness, particularly on the grounds of vulnerability, specifically "corporeal", as a point of "in-common-ness", are in fact erasures of the very specificities of the lives of those bodies as more than such. Recalling Agamben's note on *zoe*, Agamben himself notes that *zoe,* in Greek, lacks a plural (1998: 1). *Zoe* has no plural, because it has no specific singular,

no individual. The figure of the killable, the ungrievable, the *homo sacer* is perpetually rendered as, if not already en masse, then at the least replaceable, interchangeable, reducible to a number among many.

I am suggesting that, perhaps paradoxically, within the visual work of liberal models of memorialization as they appear in human rights awareness raising endeavors a(n unintentional) technique of *homosacerization* emerges specifically through the erasure of the (specific) body, of the individual refugee (both living and dead) and his/her representation as (dead) body through replacement by various signifiers, in order to demonstrate "humanness". Significantly this eraser, as artists assertions of intending to raise awareness or call attention to attest, occurs specifically in the name of visibility. Flesh is erased in order to produce a figure in-common, the "human" of human rights. Through the erasure of specific bodies via their replacement with other bodies, or indexical signifiers, the individual, troublingly racialized through flesh becomes "human" body, becomes instead symbol or statistic erased of specificity via its replacement with an other object, material, or, as in the case of Ai WeiWie, another more "sensible" body as its symbolic representation. Thus it is rendered "identifiable" as merely human, that which human rights suggests we can ethically connect to - absent the specificities which are elsewhere marked as threatening, other. However, in so doing what remains to be represented is not the life of *bios*, and not even perhaps, *zoe*, but *bare life*.

In addition to the erasure of specificity, these artworks evoke and reproduce the condition of the "always-already lost" through their specific temporality. Art and activist projects, which despite assertions, deploy visual strategies of memorialization in "real-time" as many very much alive

bodies are still en route across the mediterranean might, against the better intentions of the artists, figure the subjects of the rights claims they mean to be staking as not only mere bodies, but dead bodies, or bodies unto death only.

Conclusion: Immediacy and Erasure Memorialization in "real-time"

> ..the AIDS Quilt functions as a memorial constructed in the midst of a war... (Sturken 1997: 185)

> The quilt raises the question of the purpose of mourning. For whom do we mourn when we mourn? The foregrounding of the needs of the living and the creation of a community through the quilt point to mourning not simply as a process of remembering the dead and marking the meaning and value of their lives but also as an attempt to create something out of that loss...We mourn not only for the dead but for ourselves" (Sturken 1997: 199)

What do these visual strategies of memorialization produce, and on what terms? As memorials, they function to produce or reproduce in their audiences, as "active spectators" communities through their participation in those memorials (Sturken), additionally, as cultural technologies within what Martin Jay calls the "scopic regime" and Rancière calls the "distribution of the sensible", they also produce and construct their subjects in relation to that community. As the two above quotes from Sturken suggest, mourning is a productive act; who is memorialized, how and by whom, determines the kind of community produced in the process; no less significant, is the question of *when*; this section focuses on the question of time. Of the temporality of the artworks produced.

In Sturken's assessment of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, the immediacy, the "in the midst of-ness" of this memorial to a war as it was waged, was productive of a space of coming together, both physically and figuratively as organized around the quilt. People who had been divided, by "rhetoric, identity, the politics of disease, and the struggle for life" were given not only the space

to mourn in common, but to build futures, relationships, possibilities, and importantly to shirk the stigma of AIDS and AIDS death(Sturken 1997: 185). Following both the AIDS crisis and 9/11 significant scholarship has emerged to critically engage memorials which address either extremely recent deaths, or in the case of AIDS Memorial, ongoing. Reemergent here, is the question of who is mourned, by and for whom? Following is a brief survey of some of the ways that accelerated memorialization has been understood. In the following I will read these thoughts on the temporal along side ides of biopolitics and Wendy Brown and Elizabeth Povinelli's ideas of neoliberal protectionism and abandonment.

In the years since 9/11 there has been a marked increase in the speed with which official and vernacular memorials are erected after sudden deaths. In her assessment of the recent rush to memorialize specific to the the 9/11 memorial, Janet Donohoe, distinguishes impromptu memorials erected by friends, and family, at the sites of deaths, from formal national memorials. She suggests, that the immediacy of impromptu memorial, belie a desire for the individual erecting it to maintain a connect to the dead. By contrast, in the case of "national" or "regional memorials, the rush to memorialize reveals a desire for immediate closure, whether to release us as a nation or a community from the pain of tragedy, or to allow us to control the way a tragedy is understood in the future..." (11).

This question of the future, or the present seen as a past from the perspective of an imagined future, is significant to the function and implications of the memorials I have addressed thus far. Elizabeth Povinelli, in her *Economies of Abandonment,* asserts that the current era, which she distinguishes from neoliberalism, coining the term "late liberalism" is specifically temporally situated in its relationship to death and suffering. She calls our perspective the "future anterior",

wherein we are always working to assess the sacrifices of the moment – deaths, losses, failures – from an imagined future perspective, in order to support the compulsion to endurance. She begins her exploration of what she coins the late liberal era and its distribution of life and death, with Ursula Le Guin's suffering figure of the child of Omelas; a child upon whose known suffering the happiness of the entire community depends. The child in the broom closet is her point of entry in discussing how late liberalism which she distinguishes from Foucault's notion of neoliberalism, makes sense, and even justice of the violences it allows. Working in tension with Foucault, by noting that "neoliberalism has not merely mimicked the move from *faire mourir ou laisser vivre* to 'faire' vivre et 'lesser mourir'", but that is has "resuscitated faire *mourir* into its topologies." Drawing on Wendy Brown, she states that in neoliberalism the market is "not a self perpetuating machine, but rather the result of aggressive policies". and these policies do not merely allow death, they produce it. The current techniques of state killing she notes, are not what Foucault described of the earlier era, these are not public executions, but are, rather, hidden affairs where:

> Secret agreements are made to remove the body to be tortured far away from public sight and scrutiny. Moreover these new semipublic and secret ways of making die have their counterpart in market disciplines. Any form of life that is not organized on the basis of market values is characterized as a potential security risk.

Within this system, as her opening reference suggests, "sacrifice" is configured – from the future anterior position – as a means by which these practices are not only made to make sense, but also to appear "just". What she articulates as "memorialized denial of suffering" (44) is, for Povinelli an aspect of the technologies of killing, or at least of their making sense. She states

> For instance, insofar as killing can be narrated in the future perfect, it can become a way of giving; violent death becomes sacrifice and ceases to be scandalous. Indeed, by denying the present perfect of suffering and death, we can make suffering and death something to strive for, celebrate, and memorialize" (Povinelli 2011: 167)

While I would not move to suggest that memorializations of refugees, suggest death as something to "strive for" or "celebrate", and here Povinelli speaks specifically to deaths in war, as narrated by the Bush administration. However, her positioning of the significance of "tense" or temporality and memorials to the continuance of systems which routinely produce or, reverting to Foucault, at the least, allow, for death and suffering is deeply important to the project I have aimed to articulate here thus far. While she notes the value of "memorialization", she does not expound on any particular instances or generalized practices. As my in previously stated commitment to pull together threads from both Foucault (and biopolitics in general) to Ranciere's project of considering the distribution of the sensible, the preceding pages of analysis of the artworks addressed here, on the terms of their aesthetics, is invested in articulating the material and visual "how" of the memorial production of a forgotten figure of an anterior future, or in Butler's term the "alway-already" lost. Returning to Weiwei and the question of what we distance and what distances we close when we reenact, we might understand his action as a reverse of the chronology of Arns' assertion that art reenactments first act to close a distance through embodied contact and then produce a productive one in order to open a space of criticism. What may instead be at play in the immediacy of Weiwei's reenactment, and possibly by extension all of the memorials considered here, is that in having no temporal distance to close - as an almost immediate memorialization in real time; by enacting a strategy intended to close a distance of time, instead produces a temporal distance. The events are, by the actions of the memorialization, relegated to a future past, where, as Jones' says they may be "redeemed".

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Image Appendix

Fig.1. *The Raft of Lampedusa*, one of Jason deCaires Taylor's extraordinary undersea sculptures in the waters off Lanzarote. Photograph: Jason deCaires Taylor
Smillie, Susan. Drowned World: Welcome to Europe's First Undersea Sculpture Museum. *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 2016. Web. 01 June 2016.

Fig. 2. *The Raft of the Medusa,* 1818, Louve Collection.

Fig. 3. India photographer Today Rohit Chawla
"Artist Ai Weiwei Poses as Aylan Kurdi for India Today Magazine." *: India, News*. India Today, 1 Feb. 2016. Web. 02 Feb 2016 http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/artist-ai-weiwei-poses-as-aylan-kurdi-for-india-today-magazine/1/584804.html

Fig. 4. Jayaraman, Gayatri. Twitter (@Gayatri_J), 1 Feb 2016. (still from *Vine* video tweet. Accessed from "Artist Ai Weiwei Poses as Aylan Kurdi for India Today Magazine." *: India, News*. India Today, 1 Feb. 2016. Web.
http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/artist-ai-weiwei-poses-as-aylan-kurdi-for-india-today-magazine/1/584804.html

Fig. 5. People lie on the Gaza beach to commemorate Aylan Kurdi, the three-year-old boy dressed in shorts and a red T-shirt, and 12 Syrians who drowned in the Aegean Sea after two boats filled with refugees en route to Greece sank, in Gaza City, Gaza on September 8, 2015. September 08, 2015| Credit: Anadolu Agency
http://www.gettyimages.in/galleries/photographers/anadolu_agency

Fig. 6. Images of artist/activists dressed as Alan Kurdi, reenacting his image as part of an international "tribute" on September 8th, in Rabat, Morocco.
"Group of People Reenact Drowned Syrian Toddler Image: Tribute or Gimmick?" - Middle East - International - News - *Catholic Online*. N.p., 10 Sept 2015. Web.

Fig. 7. Image of the Konzerhaus in Berlin, Feb 2016. Photo credit Carolin Getz.