Empathy for the `Other´: Neglected Finnish Ethnographic War Photography from Occupied Soviet territory

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Abstract

This article examines a series of unsettling images from the Finnish Continuation War (1941-1944) and the memories of the war that these photographs construct for contemporary Finns. We argue that these images can be viewed through Alison Landsberg's (2004) notion of `prosthetic memory´, which underlines how visual media enable the acquisition of vivid memories of past events. The paper outlines how these long-ignored photographs narrate unexamined dimensions of World War II in ways that transform how Finns in particular remember the war. The images illustrate a neglected Finnish occupation of Soviet territories and the treatment of Russian civilians under Finnish rule. We argue that the images can provoke empathy for their experiences and therefor challenge traditional and nationalist Finnish war interpretations.

Keywords: Photography, conflict, empathy, prosthetic memory, World War Two, Finland, East Karelia

Introduction

In this paper, we examine Finnish World War Two army photography and its potential to shape how contemporary people "remember" the Finnish experience of the war and fashion heritage narratives for the war. We focus on Finnish Information Company photography from East Karelia, an area that Finland occupied in the Soviet Union during the Continuation War in 1941-1944. The occupation has been largely ignored in heritage discourses that tend to adapt to a patriotic view of the war. The neglect of the photographic collection from East Karelia reflects an unwillingness to address uncomfortable histories and the issues surrounding the occupation.

Since the end of the war the image collection has been maintained by the Photography Department of the Finnish Defense Forces and situated in the archives of the Military Museum in Helsinki. The images were digitized and published in an online gallery in 2013 which has increased their visibility in the media for instance (https://sa-kuva.fi). The decision to digitize the images for the public was informed by the `unique cultural value´ of the collection and the act was done to `treasure the memory of Finnish war veterans and provide information for generations to come´ (Anygraaf Oy 2013). This statement illuminates the patriotic values the images are expected to serve.

Research focusing on the propaganda aspects of the collection has been published (Kleemola 2016) but no attention has been yet paid to their role in the museum context. As has been the case outside Finland, photographs `are seldomly afforded object status´ in the museum space and do not often capture the attentions of heritage scholarship (Edwards and Mead 2013, p. 21). The images on focus in this paper have only been illustrated in the Military Museums permanent exhibition and in one touring exhibition, both of which will be discussed in this paper.

The photographs evoke embodied engagements with the occupation landscape and historical events that contemporary viewers have not experienced themselves. Arguing for a way of seeing media technology and photography as `sensory prosthesis´, this paper highlights how photography can artificially allow access to pasts and histories otherwise experientially and materially unavailable (Hamilakis 2013, p. 24, Piccini 2015, p. 4-5). We borrow from Alison Landsberg's (2003, 2004) concept of `prosthetic memory´, which she has coined to illuminate the mnemonic qualities of popular film, and through this theory, this paper discusses World War II photography and its ability to provoke a contemporary bodily experience and remembering of lost materialities and traumatic or effaced wartime experiences.

We start this paper by addressing the politics surrounding the production of these images, and the memory of the wars. We will then argue for the images as prosthetic memories and examine how such images provoke embodied and empathic perceptions of experiences that have been effaced in historical narratives. Empathy works as a suture that bridges memories of different groups together and has import implications for memory politics. We examine the potentiality of the images to create more democratized memories of the war for an audience whose heritage discourses center of patriotic views of the past.

The Information Company Archive

The extensive collection on focus in this paper entails about 160,000 photographs from all the Finnish conflicts related to WWII. Nine Information Companies (IC henceforth) were formed in the summer of 1941, at the outset of the Continuation War, to represent the war to Finnish citizens and global audiences sympathetic to Finland. The IC units operated under the command of the Finnish military and documented nearly every aspect of the war. Compared to other military photograph projects, the Finns' is unusual given the rather vast guidelines on what to photograph, and especially their mission in East Karelia. Alongside their standard images of Finnish soldiers' battle poses and various battle scenes with different guns in action, for instance, the Finnish photographers recorded ethnographic material from the occupied East Karelia as demanded by their commands (Kleemola 2016, p. 40).

The IC photographers portrayed East Karelia as a Finnish territory, both culturally and geographically. A little less than 10,000 images depict various aspects of the occupation, mostly the historic Karelian landscape and the Karelian people. The images tend to paint East Karelia as a tranquil and idyllic place, almost devoid of war. However, because of the photographer's broad range of topics and the vast number of images, one finds rather interesting exceptions to the norm. These images can challenge contemporary nationalist commemorations given that they illustrate the racist tones present in the photographer's project that counter the views of Finland as a victim of Soviet aggression. They illustrate the occupation for what it was – not a defensive measure as Finns often understand it, but a war of conquest. The collection at hand is perhaps not traditionally perceived as a difficult archive given its propagandist purpose and the tendency to mitigate violence. The aim of this paper then, is not to focus on the `representative´ but to give an alternative reading of the images illustrating East Karelia. By paying more attention to the marginal, museums could construct exhibitions that examine the occupation more critically.

Discovering and Forgetting Finnish `Tribal Lands´

The Politics of Occupation

Finland's participation in WWII began in 1939 when the Soviet Union attacked the country, commencing the so-called `Winter War´. Avoiding complete annexation after this brief conflict, Finland had to cede territories to the Soviet Union, including Finnish Karelia, located along the southeastern border of Finland. Finnish Karelia formed a little less than 10 percent of Finland's land area but was home to over 400,000 people who subsequently had to be relocated elsewhere in Finland. The loss of the Karelian territories and the unprovoked attack of the Soviet Union embittered the Finnish people, and when Finland joined forces with Germany in the summer of 1941 the opportunity arose to reclaim Finnish Karelia. The `Continuation War´ (1941-1944) thus began with the joint offensive of Nazi Germany and Finland – with their compatriots' help, Finns reclaimed the ceded area. However, they also crossed the old Finnish border and occupied areas that have never been a part of Finland. The Finns anticipated joining Soviet East Karelia to Finland if their German co-belligerents defeated the Soviet Union. Soviet East Karelia is situated further east of Finnish Karelia and stretches to the north along the Finnish border (Figure 1). It is territorially much larger than Finnish Karelia and prior to the Continuation War, an estimated 470,000 people

lived in East Karelia, the majority of whom were Russians (Hyytiä 2008, p. 57, Silvennoinen 2012, p. 382-388).

Insert Figure 1 about here

Though East Karelia was never actually part of Finland it was still perceived as an idealized tribal home of the Finns and place of origin of Finnish culture. Its `Finnishness´ was ideologically rooted in 19th-century Finnish nationalism and the narratives of the Finnish national epic, *Kalevala*, that were supposedly situated in East Karelia. Between Finnish independence in 1917 and World War II a variety of nationalist forces attempt to unite East Karelia with Finland and persistent interest in annexing East Karelia undoubtedly influenced the decision to occupy Russian territory during the Continuation War (e.g., Laine 1982, p. 33-41, Tepora 2014). Finnish Karelia and East Karelia together formed a mythic entity and Finns thought they had a claim on Karelian cultural heritage at large. In arts and sciences, *Karelianism* blossomed and aspired many works that are still today considered part of a `golden era´ in Finnish art. Both the Finns and the Russians have battled over the ownership of Karelia, and this has also taken place on a symbolic level over the custody of its culture. Karelian museums were looted, and the Soviets took objects from Finnish Karelian museums and Finns collected material from East Karelian museums and churches (Takala 2012; Pimiä 2007).

The IC photography project reflects the ethnographic eye of the Finns and attempt to legitimize the occupation. The photographers captioned their own images and the captions have been archived alongside the images and are also visible in the online gallery. The descriptions they attached to each photograph emphasized the similarity of the landscape in Karelia to the Finnish landscape, and the daily command in September 1941 specifically demanded landscape photographs from several East Karelian villages (Kleemola 2014, 2015, p. 119, 2016, p. 244-246; IC-59768). The images and the motivations behind the photographs reflect the need to justify the occupation and the proposal to unite these territories with Finland, for the foreign and domestic audiences alike (Kleemola 2015, p. 117-118, 2016, p. 246).

The historical view of Karelia as purely Finnish influenced the treatment of locals under Finnish occupation and most importantly, Russian-ness had to be eradicated from the area. Stalin had forced a migration of Russians to Karelia prior to the war and the Finns viewed them as unwanted peoples. The decades preceding the Continuation War in Finland were characterized by contempt for Russians characterized by stereotypes and fear of Bolshevism that were inevitably magnified by the Winter War. For instance, the negative attitude towards the Soviets is evidenced by numerous images in which the photographers mention the `filth´ and `stench´ of Russians (IC-pictures 24967, 33986-33988, 57443, 90666; Kleemola 2016, p. 240).

The occupation of East Karelia lasted three years during which time the Finns established a military administration in the occupied area. The goal was to improve the living conditions of the Finnic people in the impoverished area and prepare it for annexation. The area was to be properly subjected to Finnish culture and language, and the Russian civilians were interned during the occupation with the intent of relocating them elsewhere. This planned ethnic cleansing never actualized and the internees were eventually freed from the camps. The occupation came to an end in the summer of 1944, when Finland secured peace with the Soviet Union in the face of an inevitable German defeat. Finland subsequently ceded both the occupied territory and Finnish Karelia to the Soviet Union in the Moscow ceasefire in September 1944. East Karelia was hence severed from the country both literally and figuratively as the occupation had no place in post-war memory politics.

Post-War Commemoration

Prior to the 21st century few researchers had focused on the Finnish occupation of Karelia (but see Laine 1982, Kulomaa 1989, Seppälä 1989), and writer Marja-Leena Mikkola (2004) was among the few popular writers who touched upon the topic and wrote about the experiences of interned Russian children during Finnish occupation. Mikkola had gone to Petrozavodsk, Russia for the purpose of studying and writing about wooden chapels and was faced with a history that she had been completely oblivious about and later had to research. She was genuinely surprised when the locals started sharing their experiences of Finnish occupation. This example illustrates the Finns' tendency to ignore aspects of the Continuation War that are much more problematic in a nationalistic framework than the events that unfolded during the preceding conflict, the Winter War.

The Winter War has been viewed as a unifying conflict with the small country fighting off an enormous Soviet enemy. Remembering Soviet invasion, though, was marginalized in Finland during the postwar era, when Finnish politics reflected Soviet influence and Finnish self-censorship (Kinnunen and Jokisipilä 2012, p. 450-451). Any published content referencing the wars had to be adjusted as to the post-war political atmosphere and could not harm the relationship with the former enemy (e.g., Korhonen 1973, p. 3). Underneath the political façade, nationalist sentiment undoubtedly existed but it was not until the Soviet Union collapsed that a new patriotic view was cultivated in popular memory. Since then, the nationalistic story turned to emphasizing the struggles of the little bullied nation (e.g., Herlin 1998, Soikkanen 2007; Kinnunen and Jokisipilä 2012). More uncomfortable aspects of WWII, including Finnish occupation, have been discussed in research since the 2000's but heritage narratives tend to dismiss such accounts (e.g., Hyytiä 2008, Westerlund 2009, Silvennoinen 2012, Salminen 2013, Näre and Kirves 2014, Kleemola 2016). The occupation of East Karelia has perhaps been deemed as irrelevant because of the tendency to emphasize the Soviet attack and the Winter War, i.e. the victimhood of Finns. Conventional patriotic views of the wars risk being undone by the East Karelian images and they have yet to be utilized more productively in museums.

Prosthetic Memories – Photography and Empathy

Empathy has been the `hot topic´ in recent heritage contributions discussing dark histories (e.g. Bonnell and Simon 2007; Smith 2011). A few have even examined the role of visuality and empathy in museums (e.g. Markham 2019; Edwards and Mead 2013). Opinions vary on empathy's effectivity and, certainly, it has its limits when it comes to provoking action on contemporary issues and inequalities. However, as Jane Lydon (2016, xiv) aptly asks, what, then, should we replace empathy with? Photography has already been asked to work to elicit empathy in various difficult topics such as colonialization, racism, and the Holocaust, most notably since the 90s' (Rosenhaft 1997; Lehrer, Milton and Patterson 2011; Edwards and Mead 2013; Markham 2019;). It is of course crucial that exhibitions attempting to elicit emotion be grounded in their specific context and be backed up by explanation of the political conditions that produced war (Savenije and Brujin 2017; Cercel, Parish and Rowley 2019). We argue, that despite its limits, empathy is still a valid way to illuminate various difficult and neglected histories. What we contribute to the discussion is firstly a viewpoint into a difficult history that Finnish museums have barely touched at all. Secondly, by utilizing Landsberg's (2004) theory, we focus on the images themselves as museum objects, and the mechanisms they use to provoke empathy.

The photograph enmeshes itself in the memory of individuals and enables encounters with the past that are outside our experience yet felt in affective and physical senses through the provocation of an image. Freud (1982 [1930], p. 39) was the first to reference the idea of photography as an artificial extension of memory, and since then several theorists of photography have touched upon the idea of photography as a `prosthetic´ technology that extends memories and fuses a visual image with our existing sensory memories (Lury 1998, Hamilakis et al. 2009, Bate 2010). Alison Landsberg (2003, 2004), who coined the term `prosthetic memory´, argues that cinema is a

`sensuous and bodily´ experience that promotes a sense of identification with the portrayed individuals. Photography has been thought of in similar terms given that it enables embodied encounters with scenes from the past, hence the viewers come to acquire memories that fuse with their own sensory archive. (e.g., Buck-Morss 1992, Hirsch 2001, Landsberg 2004, p. 8-9; Edensor 2005, Witmore 2006, Hamilakis et al. 2009, Hamilakis 2013, 2015, p. 139). The prosthetic memory usually results from trauma and becomes so deeply felt that it is embodied in much the same way as a genuine experience. Landsberg (2003, p. 149) argues that like `an artificial limb, these memories are actually worn on the body; these are sensuous memories produced by an experience of mass mediated representations´. She also emphasizes that a prosthetic memory magnifies empathetic responses: `Because they feel real, they help to condition how an individual thinks about the world, and might be instrumental in generating empathy and articulating an ethical relation to the other´ (Landsberg 2003, p. 149). The inclusion of the experiences of `the other´—in East Karelia, the local Russians under Finnish occupation—is key due to the shallow nationalist ideology that Finns often associate with World War II. Images in East Karelia can potentially improve public self-understanding and a more democratized memory of the war.

While Landsberg (2003, 2004) focuses on the prosthetic memories derived from cinematic visuals, we argue pictures and a host of heritage objects and mediated historical representations can produce an experiential encounter with the past. Cinema does indeed engage viewers more intensely since viewers are essentially `locked in´ the experience and are positioned to identify with the characters. Although arguably very different from the cinematic experience, photography is also capable of producing empathy in viewers, and we discuss the specific visual strategies that have such potential. Photography has the ability to move viewers, to give them a point of view that is compelling and allows contemplation on the experiences of `the other´ which is essentially, what makes an empathetic prosthetic encounter (Landsberg 2004). Photographs act as a memory technology by attaching a memory of something that has been `severed´, which in this case is the wartime East Karelian landscape that is otherwise effaced from contemporary Finnish historical imagination.

Architecture as a Way of `Othering´

The IC photographers took thousands of idyllic landscape photographs in East Karelia, mainly depicting Karelian houses, graveyards, chapels and the people residing in the area. The East Karelian landscape was the result of centuries of multicultural blending of Russian, Karelian, and Finnish influences, and there are photographs in the IC-collection that illustrate Russian cultural heritage, but they represent a very small portion of all the photographs, which aimed to emphasize the parallels between the Karelian and Finnish ways of life. The IC photographers in only a few instances photographed Russian architecture, and their photo captions were distinguished this from the `beautiful Karelian architecture´ by mentioning its `Russian-ness´, often using the term `russky´ [ryssä] (Figure 2).[1]

Insert Figure 2 about here

Architectural style was used to identify the cultural distinctions in East Karelia during the occupation (Hyytiä 2008, p. 62, Kirves 2014, p. 336-337), although Karelian buildings were highly influenced by Russian architectural style (Sihvo 1998, p. 325). The Finnish ethnographers despised Russian materiality, arguing that `the Russkies cannot produce anything but uninhabitable houses and travesties made in bad taste´ (Kirves 2014, p. 337). The IC photographers struggled to distinguish the Karelian houses from the Russian ones since they did not have a proper understanding of these ethnic distinctions (Laine 1982, p. 104-115, Pipping 1978, p. 218), but the

[1] e.g., IC-pictures 61573, 89241-89244, 71019, 43975, 45563, 45622, 58765, 107513, 82501, 74373–74379, 77278–77279, 97111 and 97112.

tenuous nature of these ethnic differences and the denigration of Russian civilians is rarely problematized in public representations. A book of the color images, called `Sodan värit´ (`*Colors of war´*) featured several images of the scenes of occupation, including a photograph of houses in the village of Kosmajärvi (JsDia012, 073, 074, 166, 170, 254 and 449, Keskinen and Pekari 2000). The IC photographer has identified the structures as "Russian's" but in the book the buildings were labelled `Karelian´ and the ethnic categorizations were not discussed in the image caption (JsDia073, Keskinen and Pekari 2000, p. 104-105). An exhibition based on the book of the colored IC-images was arranged in the Helsinki art museum (2000) and various Finnish provincial museums (2015-2018). Called `*The Colors of War´*, it focused on color pictures from the Continuation War. None of the exhibitions featured the image with the houses in Kosmajärvi, failing to address the ideological issues of occupation.[2] It illustrates the tendency to deem the occupation irrelevant, whether through conscious choice or simply by overlooking the image.

Insert Figure 3 about here

The black-and-white images identify various buildings' affiliation with Russian-ness and they make the landscape look quite aesthetically uniform. Rather than otherness, the black-and white images illustrating civilian architectural aesthetics actually invoke sameness and they contradict the photographer's intentions. In a very few instances, the photographers created very aesthetically striking depictions of the material culture of non-Finnish peoples, of which an image from a Ukrainian village is a perfect example (Figure 3). Large pines frame the view and the sunny atmosphere invites the viewer to assume the photographer's embodied gaze (Hirsch 2001). The intriguing architectural style is appealing and the road in the foreground draws the viewers towards the village instead of away from it. Ukrainians were also deemed unwanted in the Finnish appropriation of East Karelia and these photographs and their striking aesthetics can defamiliarize the `othering´ of the Finnish gaze. Such aesthetics has the ability to connect viewers emotionally to a history that is cognitively at a distance from their own stance as contemporary Finns (Landsberg 2004, p. 47, 106). Therefore, the images hold great potential for narrating the occupation and its racist policies in museums.

The Landscapes of War – Between Tranquility and Destruction

The senses play an intrinsic role in how photographs are viewed, experienced, and remembered. There are numerous landscape images from Karelia, and in addition to the ones portraying the material culture of Karelians there are scenic views from all four seasons with less identifiable historical features. To the wartime Finnish audience, these aesthetic images would have reproduced the mythical imagination of East Karelia as a Finnish territory. As IC photographer, Pauli Myllymäki has stated: `It was natural that we did not picture war realistically. The IC activities were about propaganda, glorifying war and painting it in beautiful colors for the home audience…´ (Väänänen 1959, p. 264-265, Kirves 2008, p. 15, our translation). These pictures do not simply represent the past; rather, they enable `an opening in time´ (Emerling 2012, p. 166-167) that affords the ability to envision oneself in the landscape. In places the collection looks like anything but wartime representation, and these images essentially convey a sensorial reaction to the landscapes portrayed. For example, a Finn can identify with the familiar East Karelian landscape and details like the scent of the familiar European Birdcherry tree on a sunny day or a winter day 30 degrees below Celsius (Figure 4). Photographs `*produce* affect in the viewer, speaking *from* the body's sensations, rather than speaking *of*, or *representing* the past´ (Hirsch 2001, p. 15). These images break the norm of conflict representation and place the viewer in the landscape in a particularly

[2] All information about the exhibition content was received from personal communication with the staff at the museums in question: Samuli Fabrin, 2017, from the Militaria Museum in Hämeenlinna, Satu Ståhlberg, 2018, from the South Karelia Museum in Lappeenranta and Leila Stenroos, 2018, from the Rosenlew Museum in Pori.

effective way. The senses transport viewers into times passed and open up the possibility of transference and the acquisition of prosthetic memories.

Insert Figure 4 about here

Part of the experiential character of the images come from unexpected ruptures that can affectively convey the realities of war. The photographs have been digitized and published in an online gallery and the way that the gallery is structured reveals unexpected contradictions between the context of war and an apparently tranquil East Karelia. One particular set of images from Nurmoila, a village in East Karelia captures quite dramatically the reality of war and illustrates how these pictures in the gallery move the viewer between destruction and peace. The images taken in June 1942 begin with peaceful-looking views of a boy's summer camp, but in the next instant, the houses in the village are burning as a result of Soviet bombing.[3] Similarly to cinema, photography can move people and `engage their bodies´, in this case by pairing the peaceful and nostalgic images with scenes of horror (Landsberg 2004, p. 13). These juxtapositions bring the experience of constant threat and danger vividly apparent to the modern viewers. Both the locals and their occupiers of course shared this reality and the viewers are able to acquire the prosthetic memories of those who were looking at the landscape and acquire empathy for the circumstances to which Finnish occupation subjected local communities. Such arrangements illustrate the potential of pictures to engage and move viewers in the museum space.

The Internment of Civilians – Empathy and `the Other´

We argue that images can evoke emotionally felt encounters with people from the past, but Russians in occupied East Karelia are represented in a distinct range of ways. Russians for the most part do not appear in the IC photographs except for a few images referencing forced labor activities.[4] Some of the images in the *Sodan Värit* book illustrated ethnically Russian people, but the Russians' ethnicity is not necessarily specified in the captions. For instance, a 1942 photograph (IC-picture JsDia074) depicts Russian women in forced labor activities referred to as anonymous `women from Olonets,´ but the nature of their activities is not specified as forced labor (Keskinen and Pekari 2000, p. 98-99). The few images that reference the Finnish relocation and concentration camps mostly illustrate Russians who are smiling or otherwise seem well.[5] One image even appears in the book and in one of the subsequent museum exhibitions illustrating a Russian man dancing in an apparently joyful relocation camp (JsDia267; Keskinen and Pekari 2000, p. 128-129). Although the scene may depict a real un-staged event, the image offers a shallow imagination of the Russian occupation experience (Figure 5). The image was taken in late summer 1942 during a period when mortality peaked in the Finnish camps (Laine 1998, p. 236, Westerlund 2008, p. 51).

Insert Figure 5 about here

Finns imprisoned many civilians and people of Russian descent in East Karelian concentration camps, where over four thousand prisoners died under Finnish control (Laine 1982, p. 346, Westerlund 2009, p. 150). The majority of the population in East Karelia were Russians before the Continuation War broke out, with about 86,000 people living in East Karelia after the Soviet evacuation in 1941 (Seppälä 1989, p. 34, Hyytiä 2008, p. 57, 63). Approximately 25,000 of those people were held in Finnish concentration camps (Laine 1982, p. 119, Westerlund 2009, p. 149-

[3] The images can be found using the search word "Nurmoila", pages 27 and 28 of the online gallery where the images have been published in http://sa-kuva.fi.
[4] E.g., IC-99429, 50706-50707, 105960-105965, 60145-60147, 106648-106649, 79179-79180, 79183, 90855-90859, 157274-157319.
[5] For a variety of camp images see IC-pictures 79179-79180, 79183, 90837-90849, 90855-90859, 151424-151425, 106979-106985, 90976-90982, 102797, 100380-100386, 27800, 151424-151425.

150). There were some twenty camps in various towns in East Karelia, and eight of them were located in the city of Petrozavodsk (Westerlund 2009, p. 148). There were different camps for the "politically unreliable" people, the Ukrainians and unreliable Finnish peoples and so-called `western nationalities´ (Westerlund 2009, p. 149). The Finnish camps were not extermination camps but still had a relatively high death rate of about 17 percent. The deaths of prisoners are commonly attributed to wartime food shortage, though Westerlund (2008, p. 63, 2009, p. 150-151, 400) has argued that most died as a result of combined factors, such as neglected healthcare and food supply, proper housing, and disease. The Finns distributed lower food quantities to the Russians, Ukrainians, and other `non-nationals´ in comparison to the `national´ Karelian population, which undoubtedly influenced the higher death rates of Russian civilians (Hyytiä 2008, p. 58-67, 245-252).

To utilize visual strategies in exhibitions is essentially about helping viewers acquire a more lasting and `deeply felt memory´ of historical events (Landsberg 2009, p. 222). The most accurate place for such displays would perhaps be the Military Museum in Helsinki given it is a key museum dedicated to depicting wartime events and curates the IC photographic archive. The Finnish museums' tendency to avoid referencing the occupation with emotionally compelling visuality is also illustrated by their permanent exhibition. Although the treatment of Russian civilians under Finnish rule is mentioned on a video clip describing the occupation, the Russian civilians' starvation in the Finnish camps is attributed to wartime food shortages and not the result of occupation policy. The exhibition also avoids creating an affective response with the plight of the internees by including footage of Karelian civilians, who were not imprisoned at all but are rather smiling and preparing food. The video footage does not make the distinction about who is being illustrated and such visual strategies can easily lead to confusion about the experiences of Russians and mislead perceptions on the Finnish camps.

There are no images in this collection of actual abuse, such as beatings or executions, which was attested to by postwar oral testimonies (Seppälä 1989, p. 75-84, Mikkola 2004, Westerlund 2009, p. 161-163, Asplund and Asplund 2011). While few emotionally compelling images have been introduced to the public, the image taken by Galina Sanko of a Finnish internment camp in Petrozavodsk after Soviet liberation has been featured in several studies dealing with the Finnish occupation, including the cover illustration of Mikkola's 2004 volume on the experiences of the interned children. The image conjures up an imagination of the horrors of camp life, an iconography that is especially powerful due to the visual link with the German camps and the portrayal of children behind the fence further serves to demonstrate the atrocities of Finnish camps. Hannah Arendt (2013, p. 669) states that the images illustrating concentration camps have misled our perceptions of them since the images showing emaciated victims were not what they looked like, because people were gassed to death systematically, not starved. Arendt (2013, p. 669) suspects that the effect of seeing images of live people suffering is perhaps more compelling than images of deceased people.

Insert Figure 6 about here

One image taken by an IC-photographer in Petrozavodsk in May, 1942 during a Danish press visit breaks with the photographic evasion of the East Karelian camps with a photograph illustrating people behind the fences of a concentration camp (Figure 6). The image includes four children, one presumably in a mother's arms, and the other three are standing by the fence with several adults beside them. The IC image is crucially different from the Sanko image. While most people will recognize the visual link with the images of emaciated people behind the fences of concentration camps, these images were captured by their liberators. Sanko's images were staged, taken a few weeks after the Finns left and the viewer knows that the people portrayed made it out alive. The particular potency of the IC photograph then, comes from the knowledge that it was taken by the

Finns themselves at a time when conditions were particularly poor, and the people photographed in the concentration camp in Petrozavodsk are still waiting to be freed. Whether that came through death or the liberating Soviet army is unanswered by the image alone. The strength of a photograph when compared to cinema or other experiential media is that the images freeze their subject in an enduring moment, which in the case of the Finnish internment camp images marks suffering. It is the having-been-there of photography, its long acknowledged evidentiary force that makes it a weighty material presence in a museum (Barthes 1977, p. 44, Barthes 1984b, p. 106-107, Edwards 2001, Hirsch 2001, Landsberg 2004, p. 135).

The setting of the picture can move the viewer across the length of the fencing, and provoke `a kinetic, spatially embodied experience of the view´ (Edwards 2001, p. 114) that is deeply compassionate because of the viewers' inability to transcend the boundary of the image and open the gate of the camp. The photographer keeps his distance to the people behind the fences and hints to the impersonal and perhaps distasteful way he would have encountered them. While Landsberg argues that photography functions to distance viewers from the people depicted, it is actually precisely the distance, and the inability to access that snapshot in time, to intervene in suffering, that makes it compelling (Landsberg 2004, p. 124, 127, 133; Hirsch 2001, p. 21-22). The image demands the viewer's own imagination regarding the fates of these prisoners, contributing to the persuasiveness of the encounter (Barthes 1984a, p. 51-72, 1984b, p. 38; Landsberg 2004, p. 128-129). This image is not `more authentic´ than the image of the Russian man dancing in the camp but in terms of provoking empathy this picture will have a stronger connotative force. `The experience of empathy requires an act of *imagination*—one must leave oneself and attempt *to imagine* what it was like for that other person given what he or she went through.´ (Landsberg 2009, p. 223, our emphasis). The visual link with concentration camp imagery and the associated feelings will then likely make this a particularly powerful, empathetic encounter that resists the distance imposed by xenophobic ideologies distancing the Russians from Finns (Landsberg 2004, p. 37-38).

Conclusions

Contemporary Finnish museums have illustrated unproblematized versions of troublesome histories and adjusted their visual politics not to challenge the cultural visioning of the past. Yet the Finnish IC images encourage a quite different imagination of one critical period in the war that challenges a host of heritage narratives. These images ideally will promote a reflective and empathetic perspective that will produce a more democratized memory of the past. Memory acquisition in the new age of technology relies on experiential modes of knowledge that foster responsibility and empathy (Landsberg 2004, p. 130). While photography is traditionally categorized as factual knowledge, we hope to have contributed to the appreciation of images mechanisms that trigger vivid memories of a past erased from heritage discourses. Primarily because of technologies that can produce empathy, these encounters are accessible for audiences despite their ethnicity or nationality (Landsberg 2004).

Photographs have become objects in their own right in heritage discourses and while images can be a powerful tool in distorting memory, it can be argued that the same power that distorts memory can alter them to gain a self-critical perspective on historical complexity (Edwards 2001, p. 4, Hamilakis 2015). Our aim then has not been to deny the abuses and misuses of photography, but to explore images from a theoretical perspective that acknowledges their equally powerful capacity to create compassion. Finnish museums could utilize this material more productively.

To remember the Finnish occupation of East Karelia in all its traumatic complexity is an ethical act and the images have the potential to shape how we view the war and especially how Finland often imagines itself to be a victim of the war. Prosthetic memories are `privately felt public memories that develop after an encounter with a mass cultural representation of the past, when new images

and ideas come into contact with a person's own archive of experience´ (Landsberg 2004, p. 19, 83). Viewers become `sutured´ into history in a particularly effective way (Landsberg 2004, p. 14) that has the ability to affect contemporary Finns' subjectivity and deconstruct existing heritage narratives.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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