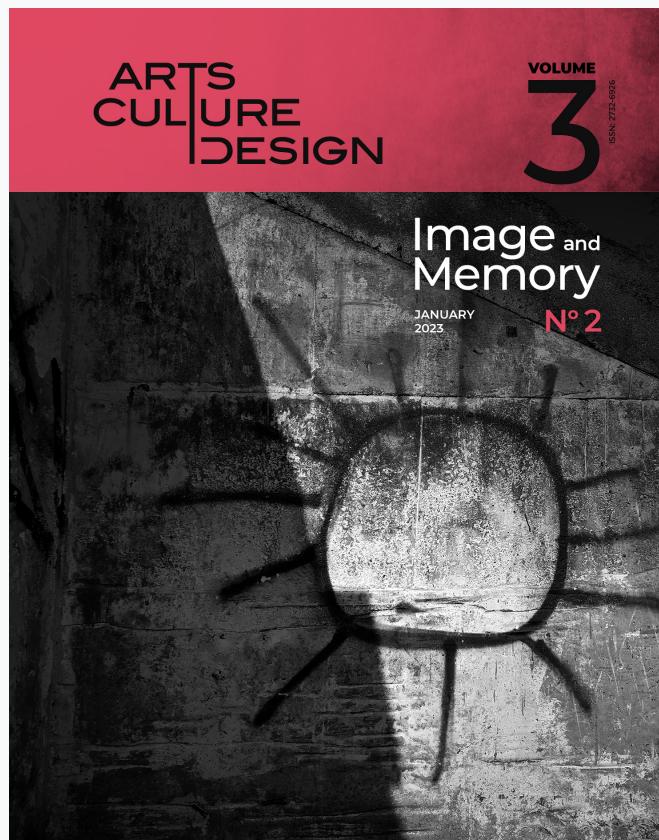


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Image and Memory



M[EMOR]YTH

Razvan Clondir

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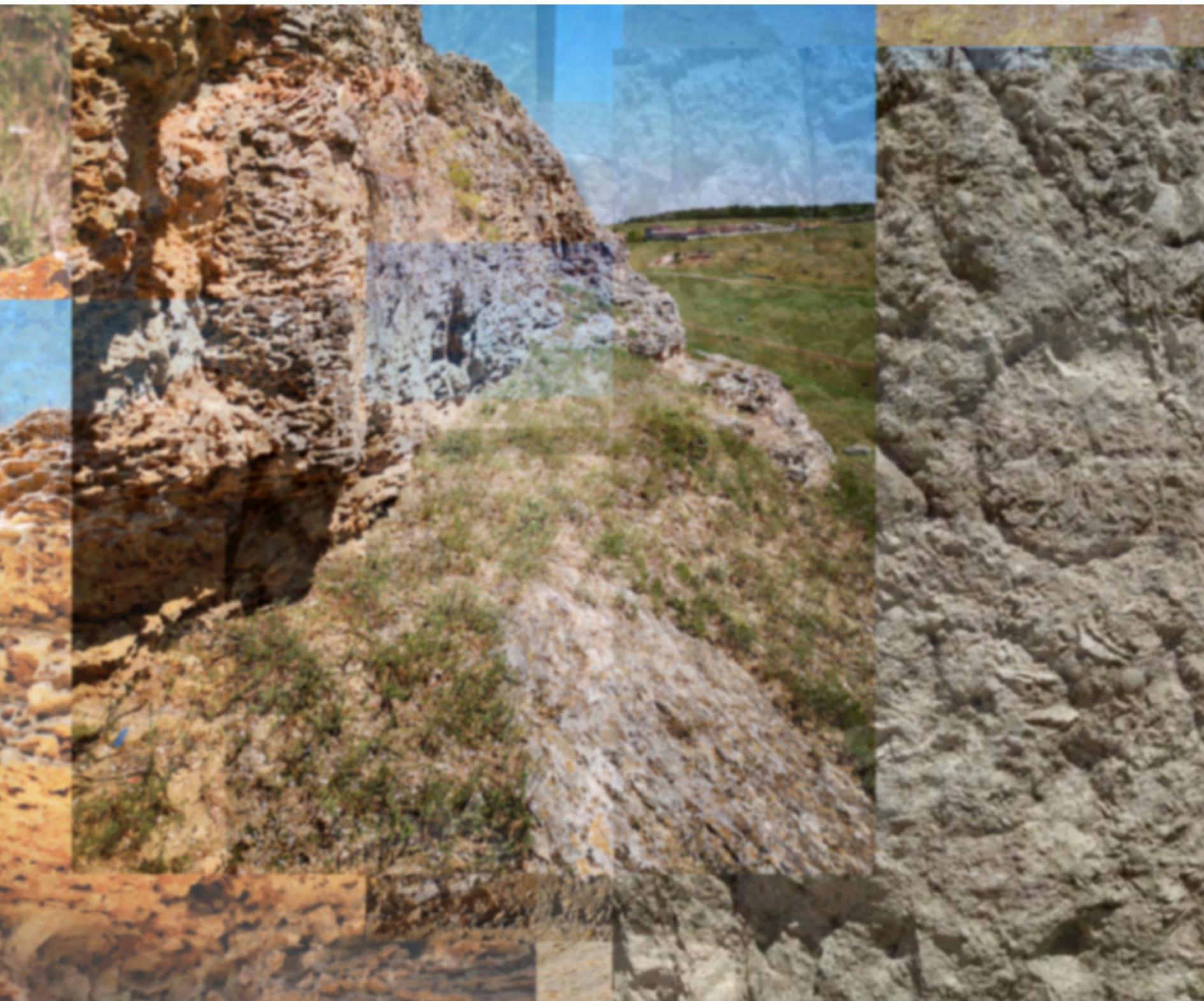
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PORTFOLIO

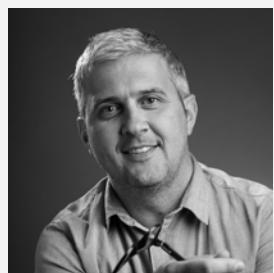
M[EMOR]YTH

IMAGERY & TÉKHNĒ TRACING
THE MEMORY OF TRAVELED PLACES

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M[EMOR]YTH

IMAGERY & TÉKHNĒ TRACING THE MEMORY OF TRAVELED PLACES

Abstract

The visual experiment proposed by my portfolio is the result of current technologies integrated into the creative process.

Keywords

spatial memory
real/digital
imaginary space
digital research
image & myth.

Using mobile devices, I capture static or video images, I record sounds. I can locate and set a multitude of technical parameters of the collected multimedia material; I can precisely locate the place where I take them. In the experiment, which I called "open work", I used all the technology-mediated information to create an application that would infinitely assemble the digital material input in order to create collages or fragments of physical space through digital memory.

Anyone can input the digital materials obtained in the same location in the application, each contribution is a personal vision of the place.

This portfolio is one of the many artistic outcomes of the experiment.



Journeys are always a valuable source of archiving. Either in the register of personal memory, subject to ongoing stratification and degradation, often revisited in multiple variations of the same story but with blurred details, like a palimpsest of personal experiences; or in a more faithful, more mechanized register of recollection through image storage technologies.

We are constantly gathering material of our passing through places. We travel through hundreds of remnants of our various travel experiences, trying to relive that time, that place, to remember that reality. That is how I relived the fact-finding visit I made to Dobrogea in 2020 as part of my PhD research. Today I can accurately set the latitude and longitude of the place, I can indicate with great accuracy the day, hour and minute of each archived photograph, the colour profile, the aperture, the exposure.

I am looking for specific textures, specific materiality. A documentary visit implies a purpose, an idea in the wake of which you try to discover something relevant to your research. The geography of the place hijacks my presence. I remember that it was very hot although the wind was blowing. I recorded this on video. But I don't remember why I felt the need to archive this...



Figure 1.
A texture of a rock, possible a former reef.
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Figure 2.
"Wind" / Capture from video recording.
Wind was a constant companion during the documentation trip.
© 2020 Razvan Clondir

There were spaces between the chosen photographic poses. I was not alone, I was with three other people, colleagues from the Doctoral Studies Department. I know this space was populated with conversations, but again I do not remember any of these, only my visual memory recorded another presence that the arid and curved vicinity of the place demanded me to archive.



Figure 3. "Presence". Any human presence become dominated by surroundings. © 2020 Razvan Clondir

The documentation must remind me of everything the body experienced on this journey: images, sounds, hapticity. As the reality of this space is constantly evading and reformulating, I am thinking of a way to re-assemble it in order to obtain as many "sequences" as possible, to activate my memory of these places. All the materials I have collected, all the archives of this place, all the questions about which frame to choose and why to store it find their place in the very technology I have chosen and with which I have created, exhibited, memorized. The memory of digital storage media, is that technological appendage without which oblivion can be laid over a complex human experience.

The space we travel through has its own time defined by tectonics. Our time here was defined by the purpose of this journey although slowly, imperceptibly we enter the other time: symbolic. Suddenly everything becomes an island in the middle of a torrid air, like a sea. We were treading on the remains of a feast that would have lasted a year of our lives. It was then that I realized I had crossed over into the mythological realm. I began to cry out in my dream: "Circe, where are you hiding?"



Figure 4.
"Leftovers from the celebration"
If Circe had found us, another year
would have passed...
© 2020 Razvan Clondir

Although I control the landmarks of the journey, in my memory the distances are intertwined, there are walls from the shore that I bring in the middle of a mythical sea. I remember their coolness, their support, but I've forgotten what I did here for seven years.

I have completely lost track of time in my attempt at reminiscence, the documentation visit now seems to have been longer. I have also forgotten Calypso.



Figure 5.
Walls".
The only cold place
I could found.
© 2020 Razvan Clondir

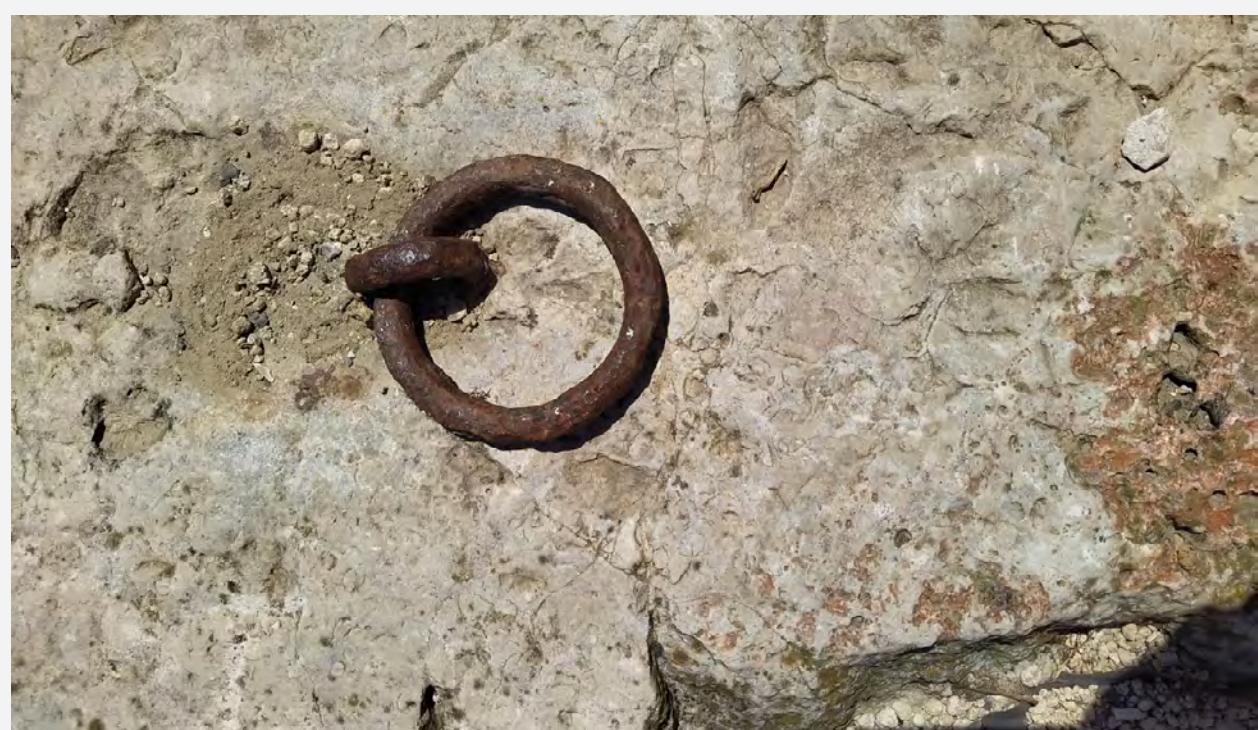


Figure 6.
"Iron ring" / Escaping Calypso.
© 2020 Razvan Clondir



*But I haven't forgotten the smell of goat.
The rough texture of the thick thread beneath the
belly of the herd, the only escape we had left between
the two worlds.*

*Only then did I see it as Polyphemus saw it.
It was there, immaterial, in my documentation of
materiality and textures.*

Figure 7.

"Becoming Odysseus." / Capture from video.
© 2020 Razvan Clondir

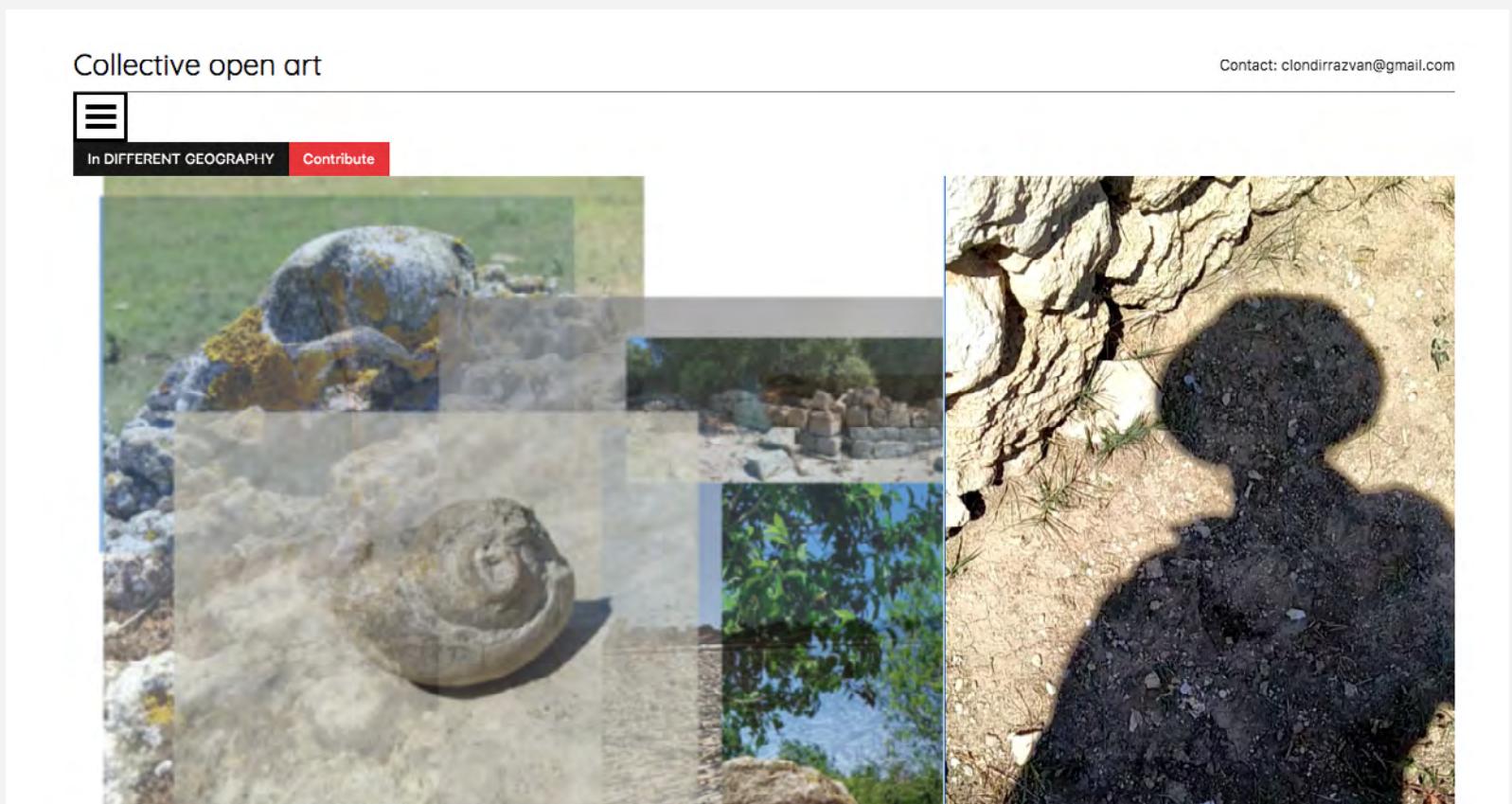


Figure 8. "Reassembled memory" / Experiment result screenshot from collective-art.ro. The application mixes photographic images, video, and audio recordings into a multi-layered digital collage. Each layer has a certain degree of transparency so you can see what's underneath. By losing transparency each layer can be highlighted.

I felt it in the salty breeze of that hot day in Dobrogea, when we were returning to the ship Argo with the other comrades... We let the arbitrariness of an artificial environment populate the affective imagery of the journey to Dobrogea. I gave it everything that impressed and moved me on this visit¹. As time and space blended, so did technology continually reassemble visual and sound archives to re-compose the state of that time in human memory. I have developed this application in the virtual space to replay, over time, the memory of the space we visited.

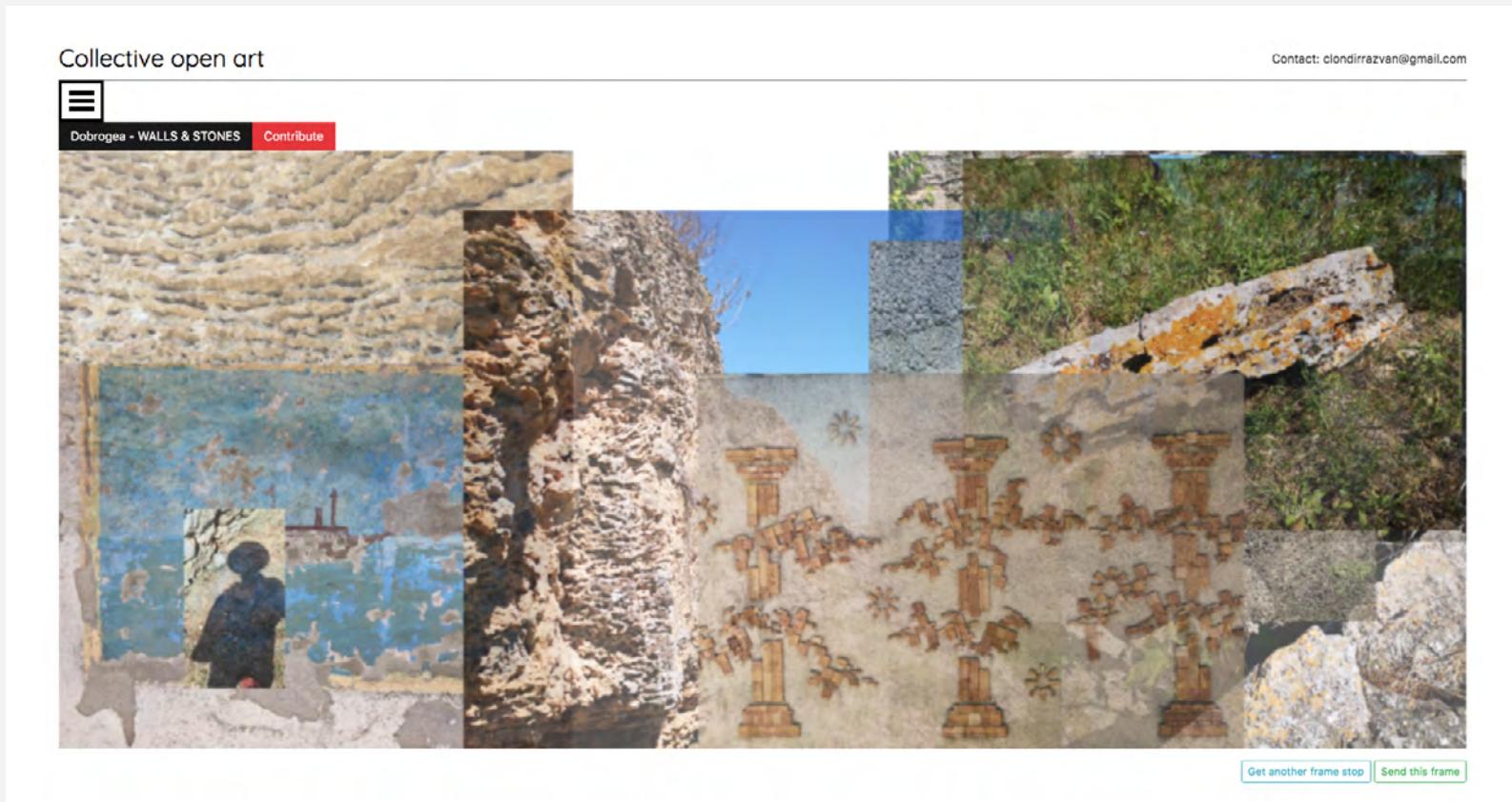
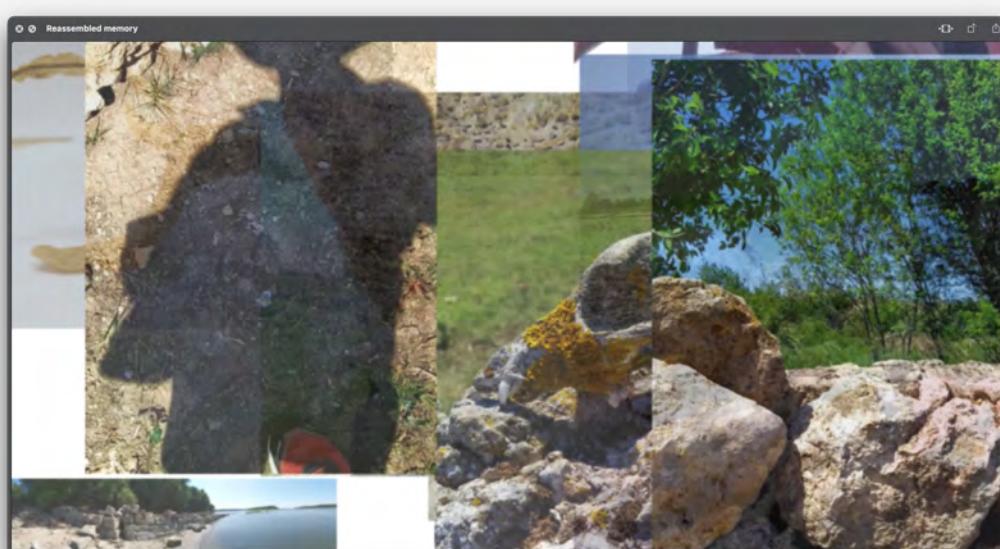


Figure 9. “Reassembled memory” / Experiment result screenshot from collective-art.ro. Each “sequence” is unique, unrepeatable and can be sent as a stand-alone capture in social media.



It is an experiment, a performance mediated through technology, in which I tried to fasten the emotional characteristics of the memory of a place. An odyssey told with contemporary narrative means, an exercise of transfer between real and imaginary, between facts and myths, a new kind of “orality” through which the story of the place can travel further, to another time of my own, an appendix of memory.

Figure 10. “Reassembled memory” / Experiment result screenshot from collective-art.ro.

The character of each sequence mimics the unique mode of the documentary visit experience, its ephemerality, even if it is archived. The result is an evocation of a place, a mood, emotions, which can be transmitted timelessly through technology.

1. The application collective-art.ro is an artistic experiment, part of the doctoral research investigating the boundary between digital media, open artwork via the Internet and crowdsourcing.