



AEME 2019 workshop: critical event studies

‘Rituals, like all social conventions, must be at some point be invented...’

(Rothenbuhler 50:1998)

Death, design and the funeral event

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In this workshop, we will:

- Explore current ritual elements of the 21st century funeral in post-Christian society
- Contemplate the dynamic between an ongoing need for collective ritual and the evolution of '*deadly individualism*', deeply personalised funeral experiences (Singleton 2014)
- Consider experience design and death contexts in events education

when asked to consider funeral or death rituals, what might we think of?







JESÚS MIGUEL GALINDO
7 DICIEMBRE 5 DE 2011
EL NO HA MUERTO, VIVE
EN NUESTROS CORAZONES
R.I.P.

ALMA
DE ROSALBA
FLORICA
MURRAY
N. 1928
F. 2003
M. 10/10/2003
M. 10/10/2003
M. 10/10/2003
M. 10/10/2003
M. 10/10/2003

MIGUEL ANGELO
DE JUAN A
ESPINOZA
ALICIA DE LA
ESPINOZA
PENELOPE
M. 1968
F. 1998
M. 10/10/2003
M. 10/10/2003
M. 10/10/2003

Ritual...



'changes of condition [deaths] do not occur without disturbing the life of society and the individual, and it is the function of the rites of passage to reduce their harmful effects'

(Van Gennap 13: 1909 / 60).

...and the invention of tradition

‘The problem facing all who celebrate rituals in a fast-changing society is how to combine relevance to changing circumstances with the sanctity of tradition’

(Wilson, cited in Rothenbuhler 46:1998).



“I remember my first nine night, my grandmother’s. The women were there, in their white head scarves and robes, doing the kumina, dancing for the spirit. You see them at nine nights, women from the poca churches, the revivalist churches, the ones who believe that they can interact with the dead. All I could think was when is the food! Laid out in front of me were these traditional Jamaican dishes, curried goat, white rice and rum, lots of rum, lots – and the strongest rum too. But it’s only served at midnight, and first to the dead.”

A. Steele, 2019

Death ☕ Cafe

Nothing marks the community of the living like the sharing of food and drink

(Bernard Cretaz, founder Cafe Mortel)

Figures

Fig 1. *butter lamps, Kathmandu* by rubber bullets 7.11.09

Fig 2a. *Kane Kwei Carpentry Workshop, Accra, Ghana* by David Stanley 06. 04.15

Fig 2b. *Ghanain Coffinmaker Ataa Oko, his third wife, with his coffin in the shape of a battleship* circa 1960 in Regula Tschumi, "The buried treasures of the Ga. Coffin Art in Ghana", p137, Benteli, 2008

Fig 2c. *Fantasy coffin, Artist: Paa Joe (b. 1945, Ghana), late 20th century; made of wood and paint* by catface, 29.11.09

Fig 3. *New Orleans: Grand marshall and band at funeral procession for photographer Michael P. Smith* by dsb nola / Derek Bridges

Fig 4. *Cemetery at Leon Guanajuato, Mexico during Day of the Dead* by Tomas Castelazo 02.11.12 www.tomascastelazo.com/ Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 3.0

Fig 5. *Towers of silence - Zoroastrians Dakhmeh (graveyard), Yazd, Iran* by Ggia 02.01.11

Fig 6. *Funeral of Fr Alan James Fudge in Westminster Cathedral* by © Mazur / catholicchurch.org.uk 02.09.11

Fig 7. *Death Cafe logo* by Phil Cooper of Petit Mal 31.03.14

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