SEVEN

Tortuous Routes
Four Walks through Villa Grimaldi

Prologue

This chapter invites the reader to accompany me on several walks through Villa Grimaldi and to think through the many issues this site (and others like it) raise in terms of memory, history, place, performance, trauma, witnessing, and political contestation. Villa Grimaldi is one of the most infamous of the 1,170 spaces used for torture, detention, and killings under the regime of Augusto Pinochet listed in the 2005 "National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture Report" or "Valech Report."[1] While it may be clear what the site is (former torture center) and what it's about (the atrocities committed by the Pinochet dictatorship), it's less clear who these spaces are for and what they actually do. Is it for the survivors, painful proof of the violence done to them? A reminder and warning for the local population? Or for those who know little about this terrible history? The sites ask something of us, the visitors. The visits, landscaping, audiotapes, video testimony, artwork, and resource centers attempt to transmit a sense of what happened there, to them, and at the same time engage us as coparticipants in the drama.

Here I trace four (of many) visits I made to Villa Grimaldi between 2006 and 2016. Why, I wonder, do I go, and why go back, again and again? I'm not from Chile. I had nothing to do with Pinochet's dictatorship. If anything, as a young adult living in Mexico City, I remember the Chileans who came to Mexico as exiles. We felt very proud of our make-believe democracy. And yet I go back.

How, and for whom, does a memorial site bring the past into presence?

Figure 7.1, a photo taken by Lorie Novak, shows the metal shards that the military tied to the bodies of their victims to weigh them down before dumping them in the sea in the Death Flights. The magnifying glass

7.1 Button from a victim of Pinochet's Death Flights, Villa Grimaldi, Chile, 2012. PHOTO: LORIE NOVAK.

focuses on a button ripped off the clothing on one of the bodies. I had not noticed it the first time I saw the shards. Nor the second. The button is small, and the magnifying glass unobtrusively positioned among the metal. For too long I didn't know what I was looking at. The *punctum*, as Roland Barthes puts it.[2] The detail that affects and "pricks" me. Plastic outlasts the human. But the button is also the *studium* that provides information. The material link to the disappeared person wearing the clothing. Evidence of atrocity. The photo, like my many visits, reminds me that I need to shift focus and attention in order to see, understand, and feel the drama of which I gradually, and begrudgingly, became a part. I understand repetition as form, through these walks, repetition as content, repetition as an affective response, repetition as a heuristic, repetition as a performance pedagogy.

Trauma as Durational Performance

2006: Pedro Matta, a tall, strong man, walked up to us when we arrived at the unassuming side entrance to Villa Grimaldi, a former torture and detention camp on the outskirts of Santiago de Chile. Matta is a survivor who

twice a month or so gives a guided visit to people who want to know about what happened there. Chilean colleagues thought I'd be interested in visiting the site with him. He greets us and hands me the English version of a booklet he has written: "A Walk through a 20th Century Torture Center: Villa Grimaldi, Santiago de Chile, a Visitor's Guide." I tell him that I am from Mexico and speak Spanish. "Ah," he says, his eyes narrowing as he scans me, "Taylor, I just assumed . . ."

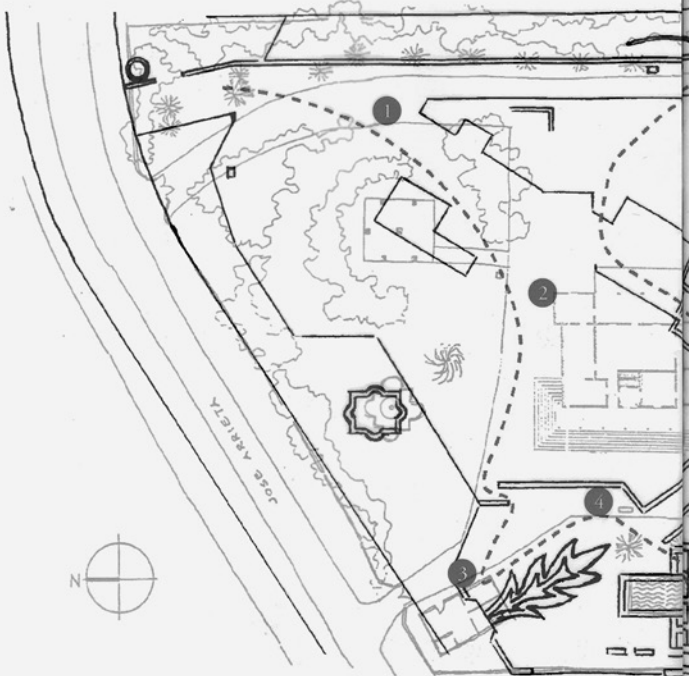
The space is expansive. It looks like a ruin or a construction site. There's some old rubble and signs of new building—a transitional space, part past, part future. A sign at the entrance, Parque por la Paz Villa Grimaldi, informs visitors that 4,500 people were tortured here and 226 people were disappeared and killed between 1973 and 1979. I take a photograph of the sign that explains that this place is simultaneously a torture camp, a memory site, and a peace park. Like many memory sites, it reminds us that this tragic history belongs to all of us and asks us to behave respectfully so that it might remain and continue to instruct. Lesson One, clearly, is that this place is our responsibility in more ways than one.

I look around; the place seems empty.

"This way, please." Matta, a formal man, walks us over to the small model of the torture camp to help us visualize the architectural arrangement of a place now gone: Cuartel Terranova. "Terranova" (new land) designated unexplored territories on ancient maps. Who knew the Chilean military was given to ancient scholarship? The mock-up is laid out, like a coffin, under a plastic, slightly opaque sunshade that in itself distorts vision (fig. 7.3).

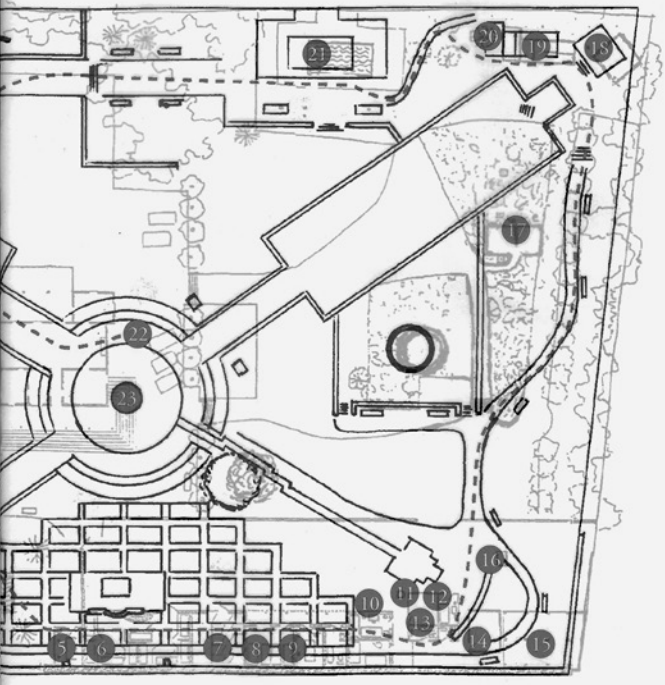
As in many historically important sites, the model offers a bird's-eye view of the entire area. The difference here is that what we see in the model is no longer there. Even though we are present, we will not experience it in person. So, one might ask, what is the purpose of the visit? What can we understand by being physically in a torture center once the indicators have disappeared? Does the space offer up evidence unavailable elsewhere or cues that trigger reactions in visitors? Little beside the sign at the entrance reveals the context. My photographs might illustrate what this place is now, not what it was. So, why? It's enough for now that we are here in person with Matta, who takes us through the *recorrido* (walk-through). Walking and talking, presumably, will bring the past into focus. Matta speaks in Spanish; it makes a difference. He seems to relax a little, though his voice is very strained and he clears his throat often.

Headquarters Terranova map



1. Memorial Plaque
2. Remains of a wall
3. Entrance gate
4. Site to unload prisoners
5. First torture chamber
6. Men's cells
7. Isolation cells
8. Women's cells
9. Second torture chamber
10. Male collaboration cell
11. Prison ward's shack
12. Third torture chamber

Park for Peace map



13. Bathrooms
14. Storage for confiscated goods
15. Site for hanging
16. Isolation and punishment cell
17. House for female collaborators
18. Tower (isolation, punishment and torture)
19. Photographic lab
20. Silkscreen room
21. Swimming pool
22. Parking lot (torture with vehicles)
23. Water fountain (symbol of life and hope)

The compound, originally a beautiful nineteenth-century villa used for upper-class parties and then weekend get-togethers for artists and intellectuals, was taken over by DINA, Augusto Pinochet's special forces, to interrogate the people detained by the military during the massive roundups. As thousands of people were captured, many civilian spaces were transformed into makeshift detention centers. The military appropriated sites identified or run by progressive intellectuals and left-wing movements—the Londres 38 torture center had been the office of the Socialist Party; the Center of Humanistic Studies at the University of Chile became the Communications Center for the military, and so on.[3] Villa Grimaldi, with its solitary confinement tower and cages for prisoners, was one of the most feared. One of the attractions of the villa for the military, Matta explains, was its proximity to a remote military airport controlled by Pinochet, head of the Air Force. It proved a convenient place to upload prisoners to the notorious night flights, during which their bodies were dumped into the sea, alive, weighted down with metal. In the late 1980s, one of the generals sold the place to a construction company belonging to the Pinochet family to tear down and replace with a housing project. Survivors and human rights activists could not stop the demolition, but after much heated contestation they did secure the space as a memory site and peace park in 1995.[4] Matta, among other survivors and human rights activists, has spent a great deal of time, money, and energy to make sure that the space remains a permanent reminder of what the Pinochet government did to its people. Three para-times and spaces, all nestled in and alongside each other, with three overlapping and interconnected histories, create this complicated space that even now has multiple functions simultaneously: evidentiary, commemorative, reconciliatory, and pedagogical.

The miniature detention camp positions us as spectators. We stand above the model, constructed like a toy theatre, looking down on its organizational structure (fig. 7.4). It was built, Matta told us, by students of architecture using his and other survivors' notes and plans. The main entrance to our top left allowed passage for vehicles that delivered the hooded captives up to the main building. Matta's language and our imaginations populate the inert space. He points to the tiny copy of the large main building that served as the center of operations for DINA—here the military planned whom they would target and how, and they evaluated the results of the torture sessions. Those

7.2 (facing) Map, in Pedro Matta, "A Walk through a 20th Century Torture Center: Villa Grimaldi, Santiago de Chile: A Visitor's Guide." Villa Grimaldi, Chile, 2006.

7.3 Model of Terranova, 2006. PHOTO: DIANA TAYLOR.

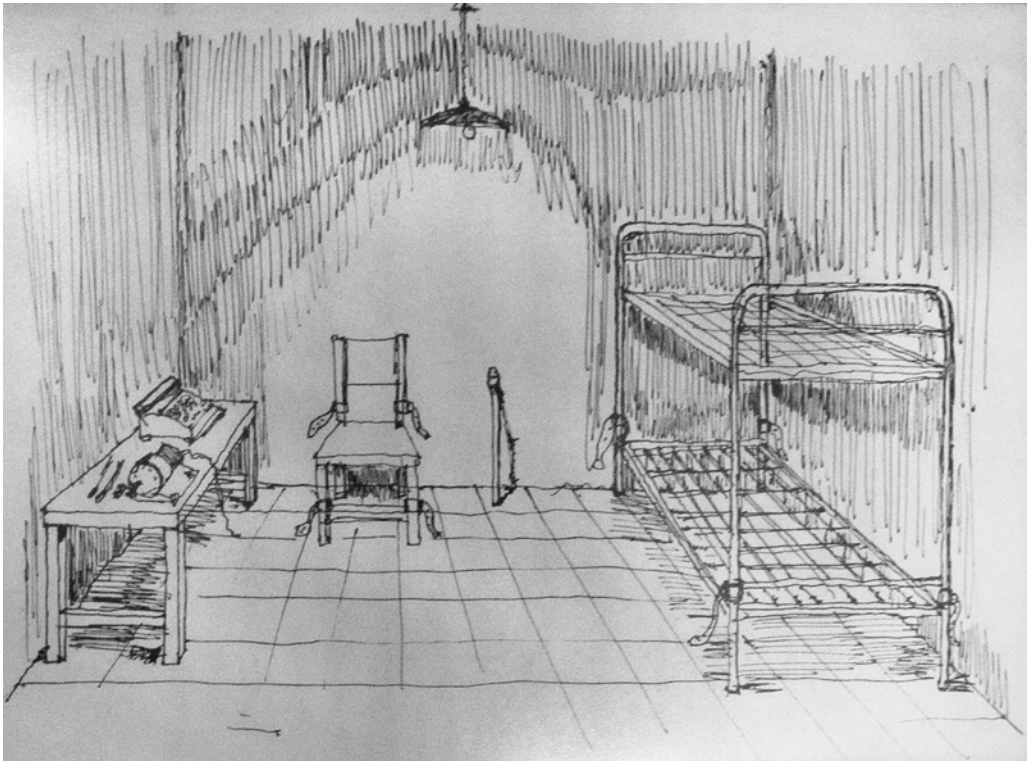
in charge of Villa Grimaldi had offices here, and there was a mess hall for officers. The space housed the archives, and a short-wave radio station kept the military personnel in contact with their counterparts throughout South America. Plan Condor, the transnational network of repressive military regimes operating in Latin America, in cooperation with the CIA, shared intelligence and helped persecute progressive leaders and militants on the run.[5] The model showed the small buildings that ran along the perimeter where prisoners were divided up, separated, and blindfolded—men there, women there.

Miniature drawings made by survivors line the periphery—hooded prisoners pushed by guards with rifles for their thirty seconds at the latrines; a hall of small locked cells guarded by an armed man; a close-up drawing of the inside of one of the cells in which a half dozen shackled and hooded men are squeezed in tightly; an empty torture chamber with a bare metal bunk bed equipped with leather straps, a chair with straps for arms and feet, a table with instruments (fig. 7.5). The objects reference behaviors. We know

7.4 Model of Terranova, 2006. PHOTO: DIANA TAYLOR.

exactly what happened there/here. Matta points to other structures. It is clear that the displacement offered by the model gives him a sense of control—he no longer needs to fully relive the image to describe it—he can externalize and point to it over there. The violence, in part, can be transferred to the archive, materialized in the small evidentiary mock-up. He is explicit about the criminal politics, and very clear in his condemnation of the CIA's role in the Chilean crisis. He blue eyes pierce me, and then he remembers I am not *that* audience—an audience, but not that audience.

Looking down at the model in relationship to the larger space, I see we are standing on the site of the main building, usurping the military's place. Looking offers me the strange fantasy of seeing or grasping the whole, the fiction that I can understand systemic criminal violence even as we position ourselves simultaneously in and above the fray. We are permitted to identify without identifying. We are not implicated except to the degree that we can understand the information transmitted to us by the mock-up and by Matta, our guide. This happened there, back then, to them, by them. . . .



7.5 Miniature drawing made by a survivor, Villa Grimaldi, 2006. PHOTO: DIANA TAYLOR.

Recounting performs the spatial and temporal displacement. The encounter, at this point, is about representation and explication of the facts. I take photographs, wondering how the tenuous evidentiary power of the photo might extend the fragile evidentiary claim of the model camp. I know what happened at Villa Grimaldi, of course, but wonder if being there helps me know it differently. Can I, with my camera, do anything to further make visible the criminal violence? The other violence, the economic policies that justified and enabled the breaking of bodies, remains safely outside the frame.

We look up and around at the place itself. There's not much to see of the former camp. The remains of a few original structures and replicas of isolation cells and a tower dot the compound, emptied though not empty—empty of something palpable in its absence. No history. No one responsible. Much later, activists planted rows of birch trees (*abedules*) to symbolize the fragile

and solitary condition of the ex-prisoners, along with their resistance.[6] With the camp demolished, Matta informs and points out, but he does not seem to connect personally or emotionally to what he describes. Some objects have been reconstructed and placed to support the narration—this happened here. A model wooden cell, one meter by two meters, demonstrates how four or five prisoners were forced to stand upright in a tiny space for extended periods of time. The armed forces called them Casas Chile as an ironic put-down of Salvador Allende's initiative to provide the poor with housing, small and cramped though it was. Matta told us that he learned to sleep standing up in one of those cells. I imagine some visitors must actually try to squeeze themselves in the tiny, upright isolation cell. They might even allow someone to close the door. Do performance pedagogies such as immersion and simulation allow people to feel or experience the camp more fully than walking through it? Possibly. Rites involving sensory deprivation prepare members of communities to undertake difficult or sacred transitions by inducing different mental states. The basic idea—that people learn, experience, and come to terms with past/future behaviors by physically doing them, trying them on, acting them through and acting them out—is the underlying theory of ritual, older than Aristotle's theory of mimesis and as new as theories of mirror neurons that explore how empathy and understandings of human relationality and intersubjectivity are vital for human survival.[7] But these reconstructed cells disconcert me. I am embarrassed to even think of entering in Matta's presence—he was subjected to this cruelty, not me. How can I pretend to experience what he did? Rather the opposite; the less I see intensifies what I imagine happened here. My mind's eye—my very own staging area—fills the gaps between Matta's formal matter-of-fact rendition and the terrifying things he relates.

Matta walks us toward the original entryway—the massive iron gate now permanently sealed as if to shut out the possibility of further violence. From this vantage point, it is clear that another layer has been added to the space. A wash of decorative tiles, chips of the original ceramic found at the site, form a huge arrow-like shape on the ground pointing away from the gate toward the new peace fountain ("symbol of life and hope," according to Matta's booklet) and a large performance pavilion. The architecture participates in the rehabilitation of the site. The cross-shaped layout moves us from criminal past to redemptive future. Matta ignores that for the moment—he is not in the peace park. This is not the time for reconciliation. His traumatic story, like his past, weighs down all possibility of future. He continues his recorrido through the torture camp.[8]

Matta speaks impersonally, in the third person, about the role of torture in Chile—one half million people tortured and five thousand killed out of a population of eight million. I do the math . . . one in sixteen. There were more tortures and fewer murders in Chile than in neighboring Argentina, where the armed forces permanently disappeared thirty thousand of their own people. Pinochet chose to break rather than eliminate his enemies—the population of ghosts, or individuals destroyed by torture, thrown back into society as vacant, ghastly presences would be a warning for others. This coming into absence is the unmaking of the world. Life in Chile devolved into one of silence, suspicion, and fear of public space. Matta speaks about the development of torture as a tool of the state from its early experimental phase to the highly precise and tested practice it became. Matta's tone is controlled and reserved. He is giving archival information, not personal testimony, as he outlines the daily workings of the camp, the transformation of language as words were outlawed. *Crimenes*, *desaparecidos*, and *dictadura* (crimes, disappeared, and dictatorship) were replaced by *excesos*, *presuntos*, and *gobierno militar* (excesses, presumed, military government).

As we walk, he describes what happened where, and I notice that he keeps his eyes on the ground, a habit born of peering down under the blindfold he was forced to wear. I see now that he's back in that terrifying, unreconstructed space. The shift is gradual—he begins to reenact ever so subtly as he retells, entering into a dark space in which we stand but cannot see. He moves deeper into the death camp. Pointing at an empty spot: "Usually unconscious, the victim was taken off the parrilla (metal bed frame), and if male, dragged here."[9] Maybe the lens of my camera will grasp what I cannot grasp. Looking down, I see the colored shards of ceramic tiles and stones that now mark the places where buildings once stood and the paths where victims were pushed to the torture chambers. As we follow, we too know our way by keeping our eyes on the ground: *sala de tortura* (torture chamber), *celdas para mujeres detenidas* (cell for detained women).

I follow his movements but also his voice, which draws me in. Gradually, his pronouns change—"they tortured them" becomes "they tortured us." He brings us in closer. His performance animates the space and keeps it alive. His body connects me to what Pinochet wanted to disappear, not just the place but the trauma. Matta's presence performs the claim, embodies it, *le da cuerpo.* He has survived to tell. ¡Presente! Being in place with him communicates a very different sense of the crimes than looking down on the model. Walking through Villa Grimaldi with Matta brings the past up close, past as actually not past. Now. Here. And in many parts of the world, as we speak.

I can't think past that, rooted as I am to place suddenly restored as practice. I too am part of this scenario now; I don't need to lock myself up in the cell to be doing. I have accompanied him here. My eyes look straight down, mimetically rather than reflectively, through his downturned eyes. I do not see really; I imagine. I *presenciar*; I presence (as active verb). Embodied cognition, neuroscientists call this, but we in theatre have always understood it as mimesis and empathy—we learn and absorb by mirroring other people. I participate not in the events but in his transmission of the affect emanating from the events. My presencing offers me no sense of control, no fiction of understanding. He walks through the Patio de Abedules; he sits on the semicircle that remains from the camp; he tells. When he gets to one of the original trees, used to torture prisoners in various ingenious ways, he acts out some of the hanging positions he and others endured. He suffered a permanent lesion in his shoulder, he told us, and his heart was affected. In front of where the torture rooms stood, he relates that the tortured body begins to release water from all its pores. Although completely dehydrated, the person cannot drink water because the remaining electricity in the body would electrocute him or her. It takes a few hours to de-electrify. And electricity, he continued, makes the body contract, so the torturers would tie the victim down with a leather strap. Prisoners were left with lasting damage to their spinal columns, and often their sphincters. When he gets to the memorial wall marked with the names of the dead (built twenty years after the violent events), he breaks down and cries. He cries for those who died but also for those who survived. "Torture," he says, "destroys the human being. And I am no exception. I was destroyed through torture." This is the climax of the tour. The past and the present come together in this admission. Torture works into the future, yet it forecloses the very possibility of future. Torture creates the "ruins yet to come."[10] The torture site is transitional, but torture itself is transformative—it turns societies into terrifying places and people into zombies.[11]

When Matta leaves the memorial wall, his tone shifts again. He has moved out of the death space. Now he is more personal and informal in his interaction with us. We walk and talk about how other survivors have dealt with trauma, about similarities and differences with other torture centers and concentration camps. He says he needs to come back. The walk-through reconnects him with his friends who were disappeared. Whenever he visits with a group who is interested in the subject, he feels he is doing what he wishes one of his friends had done for him had he been the one disappeared. He transmits. He keeps them ¡presentes! Alive. He's a living

7.6 "El pasado está lleno de olvido." PHOTO: DIANA TAYLOR.

monument, demanding justice, refusing erasure. His activism originates in the death space—now necropolitics from the dead that fight back. Afterward he goes home physically and emotionally drained, he says, and drinks a liter of fruit juice and goes to sleep—he doesn't get up until the following morning. His body still hurts from the torture, and he has developed debilitating aftereffects. We continue to walk, past the replica of the water tower where the high-value prisoners were isolated, past the *sala de la memoria* (memory room)—one of the few remaining original buildings, which served as the photo and silkscreen rooms. At the pool, also original, he relates one of the most chilling accounts told to him by a collaborator. At the memory tree, he touches the names of the dead that hang from the branches, like leaves. Different commemorative art and memorials for the dead have been installed by some of the political parties and organizations most virulently hit by the armed forces—the Chilean Communist Party and the MIR, the Revolutionary Left Movement, among others, line the periphery like small grave plots. Near the exit, a large sign with names

of the dead reminds us, "El pasado está lleno de olvido" (The past is full of forgetting) (fig. 7.6).

And of course, the ever hopeful Never Again (*Nunca Más*). He barely notices the fountain—the Christian overlay of redemption was the government's idea, clearly.

After we leave the site, we invite Matta to lunch at a nearby restaurant that he recommends. He tells us about his arrest in 1975 for being a student activist, his time as a political prisoner in Villa Grimaldi, his exile to the U.S. in 1976, and his work as a private detective in San Francisco until he returned to Chile in 1991. He used his investigative skills to gather as much information as possible about what happened in Villa Grimaldi, to identify the prisoners, and to name the torturers stationed there. One day, he says, he was having lunch in this same restaurant after one of the visits to Villa Grimaldi when an ex-torturer walked in and sat at a nearby table with his family. They were having such a good time. The two men looked at each other, and Matta got up and walked out.

Later a colleague tells me that Matta does the visit the same way every time—stands in the same spot, recounts the same events, cries at the memorial wall. Some commentators find this odd, as if the routine makes the emotion suspect. Are the tears for real? Every time? Is there something fake about the performance? Is Matta a professional trauma survivor? But the reenactment, I believe, is central both to trauma and to performance. Trauma, like performance, is known by the nature of its repeats, "never for the first time." We speak of trauma only when the event cannot be processed and produces the characteristic aftershocks. Trauma, like performance, is always experienced in the present. Here. Now.

Trauma, studies show, lays down new memory tracks. Neuroscientists suggest that these paths are physiological as well as material, fixed in the brain as a specifically patterned circuit of neurons. Being in a situation or place can automatically provoke certain behaviors unless other memory tracks are laid down to replace them.[12] A cue or trigger can suddenly send the mind to para-spaces and times, experienced as viscerally and immediately present. Various kinds of treatments, such as immersion therapy and virtual reality, aim to gradually and carefully expose people to the place or thing that traumatized them until they can separate out the cue from the uncontrolled emotional onslaught. For people trapped in the stairwells of the falling World Trade Center, for example, stairs may take on a terrifying dimension that makes it difficult, if not impossible, for them to use stairs or even take elevators. The therapy helps them internalize that the stairs

are not in and of themselves dangerous or life threatening. Moreover, they may be able to access the memories of the day when they choose to, without being overwhelmed and disoriented by intrusive thoughts and feelings. The old cues no longer automatically transport the person back to the traumatic injury.

For a survivor of torture, going back to the torture camp is a deliberate reentry into a painful memory path. Memory, we know, is linked to place—one clear reason why that place needs not only to exist but to be marked for the violence to be acknowledged. For any guide, routine serves a mnemonic function—people can remember certain events by associating them with place.[13] Through the recorrido, the act of walking, the body remembers. Matta, I believe, has been able to separate out some of the traumatic experiences from his daily life, choosing to encounter them and even allowing himself to feel them in safe settings such as these guided visits. These tours then give him a way to keep his past alive yet under control. A change in Matta's routine might well change the affect. But routine also protects against unexpected affect—survivors can often recall some aspects of their torment and not others—there are some places (literally and physiologically) where no one dares to go.

For Matta, both victim and witness, trauma is a durational performance. His experience does not last the two hours of the walk-through nor his many months of imprisonment—it has lasted years, since he was disappeared by the armed forces. His reiterated acts of leading people down the paths exemplify trauma and the trauma-driven actions to channel and alleviate it. As with the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, the ritualized tour offers him both personal consolation and revenge. Memory is a tool and a political project—an honoring of those who are gone, and a reminder to those who will listen that the victimizers have gotten away with murder. His tour, like the Mothers' march, bears witness to what gets spectacularized—a society in which judicial systems cannot bring perpetrators to justice—and what gets invisibilized: rapacious economic systems that disappear certain populations. Yet the walk-through, like the march, also makes visible the memory paths that maintain another topography of place and practice, not of terror but of resistance—the will not only to live but also to keep memory alive.

Matta has been instrumental in building the evidence, investigating and collecting documentation on what happened at Villa Grimaldi and other torture centers, such as the names of those detained there and those who worked there. He worked to preserve Villa Grimaldi as a memorial site. He helped construct the model; he wrote and published the booklet, "A Walk

through a 20th Century Torture Center." He has actively participated in creating the external material markers that designate this a dark site. He has led countless groups through the site and even prepared for a visit without him present. The book maps out every move; the brutal images in the margins make visible every practice: "Here the torture began. . . ." The book, given the nature of print media, tells the same story the same way every time. It outlines the path and numbers the stops: here people were tortured with electricity. . . . The numbers in the book—like a tour guide—align with the map. Actually, it's a double map—one layer shows the torture camp, while a semitransparent layer of onion paper outlines the peace park, with the pavilion, the fountain, and the numbered places of interest: "storage of confiscated goods" and "sites for hanging." A red dotted line outlines the recorrido exactly as Matta conducts it. This trace, then, is the trauma made visible in the archive, envisioned by Matta to outlast him and transmit meaning to those who come after to visit the space.

Being in the site with Matta, however, is a powerful affective experience—one of a kind for me even if it's a repeat performance for him. What does Matta's performance want of me as audience or as witness? What does it mean about witnessing and the quality of being in place? He needs others (in this case me) to acknowledge what happened there, to accompany him and carry on the struggle for the preservation of historical place and memory, that is, to become witnesses. "To witness," a transitive verb, defines both the act and the person carrying it out; the verb precedes the noun—it is through the act of witnessing that we become a witness. Identity relies on the action. We are both the subject and the product of our acts. Matta is the witness for those who are no longer alive to tell; he is the witness to himself as he tells of his own ordeal; he is a witness in the juridical sense—having brought charges against the Pinochet dictatorship. He is also the object of my witnessing—he needs me to acknowledge what he and others went through in Villa Grimaldi. The transitivity of "witness" ties us together—that's one reason he's keen to gauge the nature of his audience. Trauma-driven activism (like trauma itself) cannot simply be told or known; it needs to be enacted, repeated, and externalized through embodied practice.

Torture, of course, produces the opposite of witnessing—it silences, breaks personal and social bonds, and guts all sense of community and responsibility. No walking and talking with others allowed. Torture isolates and paralyzes both victims and bystanders, who are tempted to look away, turn a blind eye. Percepticide, I've called this elsewhere.[14] Better not see. It's too dangerous to see, to notice what's going on around us. This is why regimes

continue to practice torture even though they know that they receive no actionable information. It's inaction they seek. My job, as I understand it, is to take action (maybe with a small *a*, as opposed to inaction), to acknowledge the violence generated by our governments, to follow Matta in his reenactment, to make connections to the other events I know to be true, to write and teach about the place, or donate money, or bring other people.

Still, I can understand what Matta is doing here better than I can understand what I am doing here. I wonder about aura and worry about voyeurism and (dark) tourism. Is Matta my close-up—bringing unspeakable violence up as close as possible? If so, to what end? This too is multilayered in the ways that the personal, interpersonal, social, and political come together. Walking through Villa Grimaldi with Matta, the oversize issues of human rights violations and crimes against humanity—too large and general on one level—take on an immediate and embodied form. It enables us, to paraphrase Fredric Jameson, "to insert ourselves, as individual subjects, into an ever more massive and impersonal or transpersonal reality outside ourselves."[15] In our everyday lives, we have no way of dealing with violent acts that shatter the limits of our understanding. We all live in proximity to criminal violence—and though some of us have felt it more personally than others, this violence is never just personal. This is the strength and weakness of this kind of memorialization—it's so personalized and concentrated that it tends to focus just on the designated victims and space. But if we focus only on the personal trauma, we risk evacuating the politics. Standing there, together, bringing the buildings and routines back to life, we bear witness not just to the personal and collective loss but to a system of power relations, hierarchies, and values that not only allowed but required the destruction of others.

Matta, the booklet tells us, "feels a strong desire to transform history into memory." He makes the past alive for others through the performance of his recorrido. Yet trauma keeps the past alive in Matta as well—the future is not an option for him as long as Terranova continues to call him to that place. The future in fact might be a very different project. In the best of all possible worlds, the future would mean turning this memory into history, the testimonial walk-through into archival and juridical evidence, Matta's personal admonition into legally binding indictments against perpetrators, and visitors into motivated witnesses, human rights activists, and voters. Someone else, maybe someone who has never been tortured, would lead the tour, with or without Matta's guide. But that future is predicated on a past in which justice has been done and/or trauma transcended or resolved. That future

is nowhere in sight even though the arrow points us toward the fountain symbolizing life and hope. The tour does not offer us the end of traumatic memory or the end of performance. Looking downward, we follow Matta as he negotiates this transitional space between remembrance and future project.

Contested Presents

2012: I heard that the renovations on Villa Grimaldi had been completed under President Michelle Bachelet's government, herself a victim of detention and torture in Villa Grimaldi; her father a general killed by Pinochet. The space had been renovated and outfitted with an educational and resource center. An audio tour was available in several languages. It felt important to go back—this time without a survivor, to try to understand how presence and voice affected my understanding of the space. As before, no taxi driver knew anything about the place and finally, one simply dropped me off at the address on José Arrieta. The outside looked very different, more institutional though understated. Inside, the homemade sign at the gate, reminding me to behave, was gone. A steel plinth mapped out the timeline. Villa Grimaldi, I sensed, had been incorporated into the international memory site industry. Thus yet another layer had been added to the site. My photographs from my earlier visit suddenly took on new evidentiary significance. A lot had changed. I picked up the headphones and transmitter from a young woman at the new resource center and chose the tour in Spanish. The room contained books and charts giving information—listing the detention centers in Santiago and identifying some of the officers who worked there. As before, there was no one there, and I asked the person in the resource center if I might be allowed to look in the new buildings. She said there was no one to show me but, sensing my disappointment, she handed me the keys and asked me to lock up and bring them back to her after I was finished.

Even without the sign asking me to behave, or a survivor sharing his ordeal, the keys on the heart-shaped key ring made me feel very responsible. I put on the headphones and started my walk. The quiet, rhythmic voice of the unidentified female audio guide informs the listener that the "Peace Parque Villa Grimaldi stands on the site of a former secret center for kidnapping, torture, and extermination." Without knowing who was speaking, I assumed that the young, fresh voice had been untouched by the violence she was describing. This was a new generation. The instructions were clear

from the outset—move to the different points in the audio tour, marked on the xeroxed map.

Now the site is much more ordered. The paths are clearly marked and illuminated—some of the beauty of the nineteenth-century villa restored with the wading pools and multiple fountains. The site has been integrated, visually and politically, into the surrounding neighborhood. The neighboring houses are clearly visible. Their view of the park must be quite pleasant. What do they actually see? The torture site has been domesticated—the visceral pain I felt with Matta has given way to repose. This clearly transmits the sense of a different political moment. With the opening of the new Museum of Memory and Human Rights that same year, it appears that the contestation has given way to a time of acceptance and memorialization.

The recorrido followed the same route taken by Matta—the handmade model camp was gone, replaced by a new glossy and machine-made replica (fig. 7.7). Everything was brittle and white, as in a deep freeze. The model made visible the original structures on the site and those added to it over time when it became an official site. I recognized the structures, but not the feeling. It had been drained of color, sapped of its human history. It was a different kind of emptying than I had felt the first time I visited—the brutality of the demolition had been replaced by the negation of life itself.

Moving to the locked iron gate on my own, I stop to peer out the aperture. Now the designated stops are marked by plaques with the audio numbers and new tile markers, enacting the mandate both to fix in place and to update. But there are some new buildings, locked. I find the key and let myself in. The cases running the length of the cube-shaped building balanced on its side exhibit pieces of metal that the military had attached to the bodies they threw in the ocean so that they wouldn't float. For a long time I look at the exhibit and finally pay attention to a small magnifying glass positioned in an odd way. What is that? Finally I see it. The button accentuated by the magnifying glass offers proof, if any is still needed, of what happened to the bodies. In plain sight. How had it taken me so long to see it?

I keep walking. The crisp soft voice of the audio draws on a great number of testimonies and gives far more detail than Matta did. There are more dates, figures, facts. The separation of data into short bits makes sense, of course—supposing that the listener will have time to move from place to place. I wander as I listen and feel free now, without a survivor present, to walk into Casas Chile, and peer out the peephole. I take a photograph and wonder what I'm doing. Does the photo prove that I am here? Or that it was there? But where? This replica did not form part of the torture center

7.7 Model of Terranova, 2012. PHOTO: DIANA TAYLOR.

that I am ostensibly visiting, knowing full well that the detention center, and the objects, and the people are long gone. The audio conveys a break with the past—no para- about it. I continue on the designated path and listen. The segments are disturbing, not just in their content but in their fragmentation. They start and end abruptly—often after a particularly interesting or disturbing image.

Segment 5: Patio de Abedules—the men were allowed to sit on the bench in the open air for a few minutes a day under strict supervision. Because they could not see, they depended on their sense of smell and developed a secret code of sounds to communicate. The audio goes dead. Wait, say more!

Segment 6: Cells and torture rooms . . . the women's cells had a window painted over through which they could see the men being taken to the torture rooms. They could identify the men and their torturers. Next door to them was a room called the *parrilla* (or grill) where prisoners were stripped, bound to a metal bed, and tortured with electricity. End of section. No, let me down easy!

Next segment . . . the same controlled tone speaks of unimaginable brutality and describes a woman captive with a voice like Edith Piaf's who sang to drown out the screams of the torture. No, wait! Next segment . . .

Even when the guide cites specific testimony, there is no change in tone. As I walk, the voice points out the rose garden, planted in honor of female victims. Survivors had spoken of smelling roses at the compound. The women were raped there. So it seemed fitting to name each plant after a woman who died there. Again, the need to individualize terror.

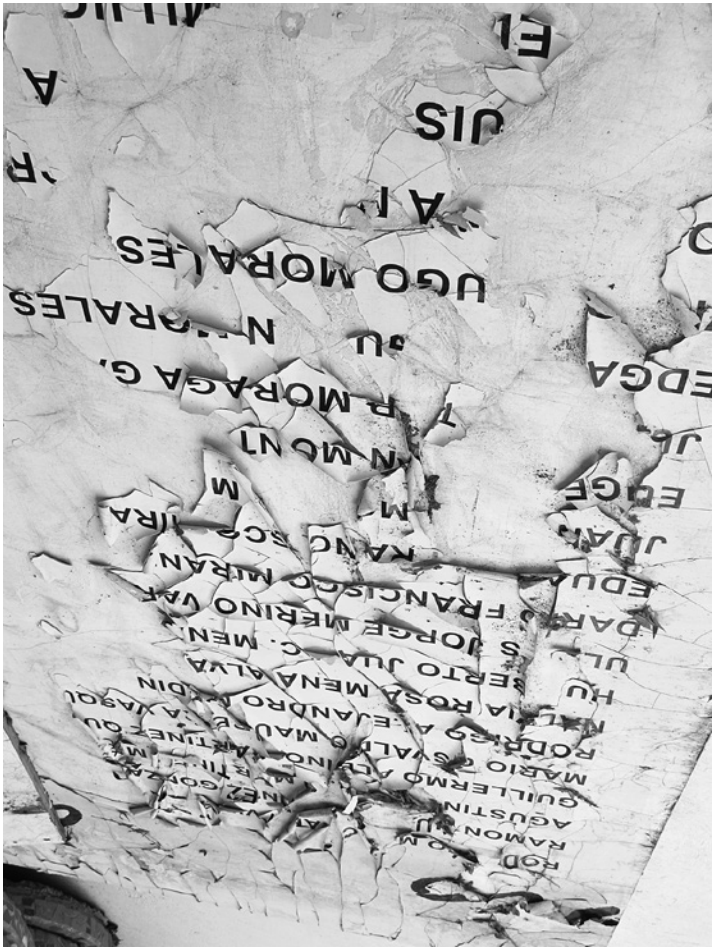
I fumble with the buttons on the digital recorder and feel silly with the headphones even though the site is empty. I get impatient as the voice tells me in a matter-of-fact way the political acts that led to the creation of this torture center. The details—the names of the generals, organizations, and so on—overwhelm me. I feel face to face with History, and I miss the human scale. The temporal and affective gaps expand. I feel tempted to pull the headphones off, but resist temptation. When the audio segment comes to an end, I pause, search the map for the next stop, and move toward it.

I take in the facts but the voice does not speak to me, and I find the disconnect between the tone and tale distracting. It's as if we could separate out the different moments, routines, and spaces. The pauses between segments too seem very different from Matta's recounting. His silences were full of memory. His face, body, mood transmitted his thinking processes and affective swings. I cannot identify the silences of the audio—they were simply blank nothing, not even tape. If forgetting and silence are full of memory, full of life, the audio has a hard time capturing that life. I felt dutiful, but not engaged, as I followed the voice around Villa Grimaldi. Walking and listening were part of a pedagogical exercise in Never Again.

I keep walking off on my own, peering around. Suddenly, I come across all the original handmade materials in a heap, under tarps, in a shed behind a building. The names of the dead have bled on the sign, reminding us that "forgetting is full of memory." Memory, now updated with the new model and signs, is also full of forgetting. Someone's memory-making labor has been superseded (figs. 7.8–7.9).

All at once I feel very alone as I continue the walk-through and, as before, wonder what I am doing there. If Matta needed me *presenciar* and *acompañar*, I realize now how much I needed him to experience Villa Grimaldi as a practiced place.

The voice without the body radically changes my experience of being in place. Alone, I do not respond, and (perhaps related) I feel less responsible. There is no "I" or "me" envisioned in this audio tour—no human being



7.8–7.9 Faded memories, 2012. PHOTOS: DIANA TAYLOR.

who challenges me or holds me in part responsible for what happened. The communicative pact is now between two unknowns whose reasons for participating in this project remain unexplored. Instead of bringing the past up close and making evident the networks that link us not just affectively but politically, the audio shuts (and locks) the gateway to that past. From a safe now, I enter into the land of long ago and far away. As I listen, I know this is the place things happened to "them," but I find it hard to connect or imagine.

What does this tour ask of me, the visitor? The voice thanks me for my visit. It explains that Villa Grimaldi is a material and symbolic trace of state terrorism under Augusto Pinochet. The explanation clearly lays out the criminal practice linked to neoliberal economic politics. It says that the visit is a look to the past. Still, "we hope" (says the unidentified voice) that it prompts reflection on the present and an impetus to halt human rights abuses throughout the world. If "I" am interested in knowing more, then please visit the web page, and so on. She also gives me a phone number.

I take the headphones and the keys back to the office and ask about the narration of the audio. The person at the desk said she thought they had chosen a well-known young actress from a telenovela (soap opera) with no direct ties to the violent past because they wanted the younger generations to identify. This, then, is no longer about Matta, and trauma, and justice deferred. It is about asking the next generation to understand their history. The multilingual audio tour also reaches out to international visitors. Here is the very future envisioned by Matta with his booklet, but he is nowhere part of this new post-survivor moment. Memory has been actualized, and now the battle lines have been drawn differently. With Bachelet out of office after the constitutional ban on sequential reelection, right-wing businessman Sebastián Piñera became president in 2010. Villa Grimaldi and the Museum of Memory had lost almost half of their operating budget. I spent some time talking with the woman in the visitor's office. Her father had been a prisoner at Villa Grimaldi. He never spoke of his experience, though he has come back to the camp/park/memory site a couple of times. The repose offered by the domestication of Villa Grimaldi and the lulling voice is not as untroubled as it seems. These are still contested spaces, contested presents, and contested pasts.

This Is Not the Place

In 2013 I once again returned to Villa Grimaldi, this time accompanied by a group of colleagues from the U.S., Turkey, and Chile who were part of the

Women Mobilizing Change project and wanted to experience the tour with Pedro Matta.[16] Teresa Anativia, a close friend and survivor of Villa Grimaldi, accompanied us. She and Pedro know each other, and the tour this time was less scripted as the two of them spontaneously recollected incidents that took place in various parts of the site. Teresa could speak far more directly to the things that women had experienced there. She had already told me some of the terrible things that DINA had done to her and her companions in that place, and she had told me too about the first time she and other survivors had returned after the space had been reclaimed.[17] They all met—about 150 survivors, she recalls, outside the site and entered together. Once inside, the priest José Aldunate locked the *portón* shut forever. Never again would someone come through that terrifying entryway. The survivors hugged and wept in silence. She recalls that everyone shut their eyes as they embraced their fellow survivors. They had never seen each other before. They had never heard each other's voices. "The silence at a reunion of the blind who had been together and had never seen each other," as she put it. They started to look around the space, covered with brambles and barbed wire, and recognized nothing. "We looked for those places and we couldn't find them. I know I will never find them," she concluded. Afterward, sitting there, I asked her if returning to Villa Grimaldi had upset her.

"No," she said. "This is not the place."

Then she added, "But my bones hurt."

The redesigned space, landscaped gardens, roses, beautiful trees, the water pools and pavilion had nothing to do with the place in which she had been tortured, violated, and denied her humanity.

That "place" remains in her; she carries it with her everywhere. As Charlotte Delbo, the Holocaust survivor, writes in *Days and Memory*: "I don't live with Auschwitz, I live next to it."[18]

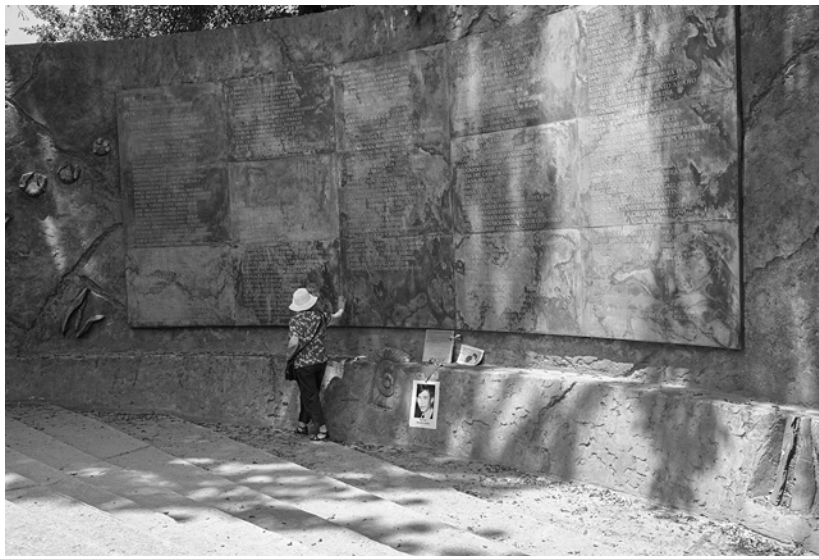
What then, does the renovated Villa Grimaldi do?

At one point, during the early years of the survivors' struggle to secure the space as a memory site, the place was probably intended, in part, as a place to externalize and put one's grief. They had lost an enormous amount in that place. A tortured woman lost the twins she was carrying. Teresa and Pedro both admitted to losing not only friends, but part of their own humanity—their ability to trust others. Their bodies changed, and they carry the pains and fractures induced by torture into their older age. The loss and grief that accompany disappearance and torture belong to that realm of invalidated grief. The Madres in Chile, like those of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, never knew if their children were alive or dead. The

government did not acknowledge their loss. How can one grieve under these circumstances?[19]

While those killed in Villa Grimaldi are named in the rosters of victims on the current Villa Grimaldi website and carved into the Memory Wall, survivors have no place. The 1991 Rettig Report, issued after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, listed only the cases of those disappeared and murdered by the Pinochet regime. The Valech Report, issued by the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture (2004–5), acknowledged those who had been tortured and detained, as well as children of the disappeared. The Chilean state used that list to make reparations to survivors, but the names and circumstances have been locked away for fifty years, as if to make sure no one is brought to justice. Torture and disappearance, we know, continue to affect the victims and their families for generations.

Places like Parque de la Paz Villa Grimaldi remind us of what happened within those walls, the unmaking of so many worlds for those who passed through Terranova. I cannot capture that place with my camera. Matta conjures the past site for others to see, and Teresa Anativia does not recognize it anymore, though she feels it in her bones. These memory sites transcend the violence and pain in search of peace and reconciliation. The park performs a restorative, world-making gesture. Its existence refuses the long-standing



7.10 Teresa Anativia at the Memory Wall, Villa Grimaldi, 2013. PHOTO: LORIE NOVAK.

official mandate to forget. Being in the park with them, I feel the power of place and its crucial evidentiary importance. I sense the pain they associate with it, and I accompany them for a little while on their very long journey toward justice, acceptance, and renewal.

Transmitting Trauma

Our Mobilizing Memory working group for the Hemispheric Institute Encuentro in Chile in 2016 decided to go to Villa Grimaldi, and I asked Pedro Matta to walk us through. Matta was incredibly helpful to me. He met with me several times and showed me his journals and the log books with the names of the military assigned to the different detention centers that he had investigated and compiled over the years. He asked to be paid for the walk through Villa Grimaldi. He is a survivor, but he's also a teacher and researcher of Chile's terrible past. I agreed.

Back in the working group, some participants objected to paying Matta. Why would a survivor charge to tell his story? Was that ethical? Is he a professional survivor? I stressed his importance as a researcher and teacher. Some participants decided not to go to Villa Grimaldi. After a back and forth with the rest as to how much we would pay him, some thirty-five of us met Matta at the gates. Teresa Anativia joined us.

The question, again, was what language he would speak. The group decided that he should speak in Spanish, and I volunteered to translate for the rest.

Again, we started at the new, shiny model with the explanation of how Cuartel Terranova had worked, and then we began the walk around the villa.

At first, the translation was easy—Matta transmitted facts, and so did I. Here this happened—back then, to them. All distanced, all third person. We walked to the locked entry gate, and then the first torture chambers. Gradually, as before, Matta's pronouns slipped. "They tortured them" became "they tortured us." The words gnawed into me.

"They tortured us," I had to say. "They strapped me down here, put electrodes to my genitals, to my temples, in all my orifices. My body arched with the shock. I was sweating so much I was at risk of electrocuting myself." As I said these words, my body began unconsciously to take on Matta's gestures and movements. His pauses became my pauses. My body became the medium. It happened gradually, imperceptibly, the further we got into the past that was not past, the torture that had never stopped or gone away. I lost the distance so vital to witnessing. Witnessing accompanies but does not take the place of the injured person. This was not walking and talking.

As my voice echoed his, I lost the sense of my own boundedness and emotional integrity.

Against my wishes, I began to embody the pain. I felt the words violating my body. My resentment and anger grew as I said the words. I felt forced to say them. Unlike Matta, I had no control over the words I used. Unlike those listening to him, I could not walk away. Suddenly, I had been deprived of agency. How did this happen? My anger increased. I felt like crying. Why don't these people learn Spanish, damn it? Let me stay outside, listening, taking photographs. He kept telling his story in a low, undramatic way. He used no adjectives, I realized now that the words were in my mouth. My senses locked down, focusing only on what he was relating. Translating became inhabiting, identifying with him and what he was recounting. I didn't want to be there. But maybe I was also channeling his feelings of not wanting to be there either.

Anger became my distancing device. At the end of the trajectory, I thanked Matta and handed him the money, promising myself I would never come back again. He might be a professional survivor, but I am not a professional witness.

And yet, of course, I am.

7.11 Diana Taylor translating for Pedro Matta, Villa Grimaldi, 2016. PHOTO: LORIE NOVAK.

Trauma in the Archive

It is not an exaggeration to state that future knowledge of this site will be available only through archival materials—the audio tour, the replicas, the memorial wall, the art pieces staged in the experiential practice that characterizes current memorialization practices. Villa Grimaldi now also offers virtual tours on its website.[20] We enter the space that has been set up in such a way that the archival objects might spark an affective reaction in the visitors. But it's hard for me to imagine that these objects will move someone who has not been involved in the practice, who has never been to the site, or who has no connection to what happened there. The punctum, or the prick, might emanate from outside us but it needs to spark something in the viewer/listener. Trauma lives in the body, not in the archive

The Parque de la Paz continues to be a highly practiced place. The violently contested history of spatial practices returns and disturbs the present. Memory is being constantly updated.[21] Personal testimonies become part of the historical narrative. On the evidentiary level, Villa Grimaldi demonstrates both the centrality and complexity of place in individual and collective memory. What happens to that space is tantamount to what happens to Chileans' understanding of the dictatorship: will people repress, remember, transcend, or forget? The warring mandates about the space rehearse the more salient public options: tear it down to bury the violence; build a commemorative park so that people will know what happened; let's get beyond violence by hosting cultural events in the pavilion; forget about this desolate place, forget about this sorry past; let's use this place to educate future generations.[22] Nowhere is there talk of justice or retribution.

The questions posed by these dark sites extend far beyond the fences built around them. The small model near the entrance is to Villa Grimaldi what Villa Grimaldi is to Chile, and what Chile is to the rest of the Americas: a miniature rendition of a much larger project. Over a thousand civic and public places like villas and gyms and department stores and schools were used for criminal violence under Pinochet. How do we know that the whole city did not function as a clandestine torture center? The scale of the violations is stunning. The ubiquity of the practice spills over and contaminates social life. We might control a site and put a fence around it, but the city, the country, the southern cone, the hemisphere has been networked for violence—and beyond, too, of course, and not just because the U.S. opted to outsource torture. I actually do always know what happened here/there and accept that this, like many other sites, is my responsibility. I do participate in

a political project that depends on making certain populations disappear. I am constantly warned to keep vigil, to "say something" if I "see something." Though I shirked responsibility when I first met Matta—the Mexican government had nothing to do with the Chilean coup—there is another layer. After years of my own self-blinding, I realized that the Mexican government under then-president Luis Echeverria disappeared thousands of young people, about the same age as I was then. Now that I live and work in the U.S., I know my tax dollars pay for Guantanamo, for torture in prisons and migrant detention centers and who knows what else. The walks remind me I just need to look closer, look again at *what* I see and *how* I see. The *how* determines the *what*. Something has been restored through the walks, with all their differences, that brings several of these worlds into direct contact. As the multitiered space itself invites, I recognize the layers and layers of political and corporeal practices that have created these places, the politics of historical transmission, the personal histories we bring to them, and the emotions that get triggered as we walk through them in our own ways. I experience the tour as performance, and as trauma, and I know it's never for the first, or last, time.