

BODY MEMORY (Keha Mälu)

Director: Ülo Pikkov

Estonia 2011 | Ani. | 9 min (colour, 35mm)



Synopsis

What can an old apple tree tell us? What mysteries are hidden in his roots, gnarled over time? Does he remember the serpent and the lost Paradise? Our body remembers more than we can expect and imagine. It remembers the sorrow and pain of our predecessors. It keeps alive the stories of our parents and grandparents as well as their ancestors. But how far back is it possible to go in your bodily memory? The stop-motion animation *BODY MEMORY* takes as its central concept the idea that our body remembers, not only individual experiences, but also the sorrow and pain of our predecessors. A powerful visualization of subconscious processes and the hidden horror of deportation. Inspired by historical events: the Soviet deportations from Estonia in the 1940s.

Abstracts

Choreography of confinement in *Body Memory*

Yutian Wong, San Francisco State University

Using choreography as a conceptual framework involving movement vocabulary and syntax and examining the spatial relationships between bodies, this analysis focuses on the ways in which the movements of the animated characters in this film effectively evoke a sense of dread and confinement.

From concrete horror to symbolic significance in *Body Memory*

Edvin Vestergaard Kau, Aarhus University

Body Memory confronts the viewer with a tale of deported people's experience of hopelessness and terror. In this article, I engage with the film and analyse elements of its concrete cinematic practice, in order to investigate how it achieves symbolic significance and universality.

Perception of sound in/as *Body Memory*

Iben Have, Aarhus University

This article begins with a phenomenological description of the perception of the soundtrack in *Body Memory*: what is heard and what do the sounds express. Inspired by cognitive semantics, it then continues to present this perception as linked to the listener's body memory.

Into what future?

Ruth Barton, Trinity College Dublin

This analysis of *Body, Memory* will discuss the significance of the railway track. I argue that, just as Pikkov's string figures embody memory, so his train lines function as cinematic *lieux de mémoires*, evoking at once the technological hopes of modernity and their part in humanity's destruction.

Apple trees and barbed wire - Estonian memories of Soviet occupation in *Body Memory*

Jakob Ladegaard, Aarhus University

Body Memory treats collective memories of World War II and the Soviet occupation of Estonia. The article argues that the film's attempt to negotiate national and international perspectives on this issue echoes the difficulties of integrating Eastern European historical experiences in a contemporary European memory culture dominated by Holocaust studies.

The return of the animated dead in *Body Memory*

Vlad Dima, University of Wisconsin-Madison

This essay explores the depiction of memory, death, trauma, and bodies in order to argue that the physical and historical limits are erased. Memory and trauma are imprinted in the physical body but they transgress the normal limitations, death included, as we witness the return of the animated/living dead.

Unraveling the body without organs in *Body Memory*

Nicole Richter, Wright State University

The primary source of terror in *Body Memory* emerges from the lack of materiality underneath the unraveling body. Using Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the "body-without-organs" this essay discusses the biopolitical implications of representing the body as an assemblage of string.