

Institution: Goldsmiths, University of London		
Unit of Assessment: 32: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
Title of case study: 'Counter forensics' and award-winning curatorial practice leads to state accountability in Germany: The Halit Yozgat case		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2016-2018		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Professor Eyal Weizman	Professor of Spatial & Visual Cultures	2005-present
Christina Varvia	Lead Researcher	2015-2020
Nicholas Masterton	Researcher	2017-current
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016-2018		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact <p>Halit Yozgat was murdered by neo-Nazis in Kassel, Germany in 2006. A German secret service agent was present at the time of the killing, but claimed that he was not a witness; police and courts accepted his testimony. In 2016, Forensic Architecture (FA), a research agency based in the Visual Cultures department at Goldsmiths, was commissioned to investigate the murder.</p> <p>New evidence presented by FA contradicted the agent's claim and was used by the Yozgat family's lawyers, reviewed by two parliamentary inquiries, presented in a 'citizens tribunal' and via 20 exhibitions internationally. FA's work has raised public awareness around this specific case, impacted German society's wider reckoning with the 'far right', tangibly benefitted Yozgat's family, and immigrant communities and anti-racism activists across Germany and raised cultural awareness of state culpability and the use of counter forensics and curatorial practice to challenge injustices.</p>		
2. Underpinning research <p>In 2006, Halit Yozgat was shot dead in an internet café in Kassel, Germany by members of a neo-Nazi group known as the National Socialist Underground (NSU). Their exposure in 2011 led to a five-year criminal trial and a nationwide reckoning with what became known as the 'NSU Complex' – structural racism that systemically ignored the experience of Germany's immigrant communities, typified in this case by uncomfortable connections between police, spies, and the neo-Nazi underground.</p> <p>In 2016, an alliance of civil society organisations known as 'Unravelling the NSU Complex' commissioned FA to investigate Yozgat's murder [3.1]. The questions at the heart of the case were particularly accessible by FA's research methods, developed by its founder-director Professor Eyal Weizman [3.2]. Technically, the approach is founded upon architectural tools, including using 3D digital models to arrange and examine media evidence. Theoretically, the approach is based in 'counter forensics', turning the tools of forensic investigation back toward the actions of the state, and 'open verification', developing evidentiary material in an open, explanatory and 'socialised' fashion. Together, these approaches unpick the claims of state</p>		

agents in relation to acts of violence, and show their weaknesses and contradictions, in alliance with the communities affected by that violence [3.3].

FA examined open-source documents from the police investigation, including the computer login times of every customer in the café, and a video of the agent, Andreas Temme, re-enacting his route out of the café. Temme insisted he had left the café before the killing and had not witnessed it. In 2006, the police and courts took his word.

To interrogate whether Temme could have been lying, FA reconstructed the café as a digital model, and as a physical 1:1 scale model installed at Berlin's House of World Cultures (HKW) gallery. Login data and witness testimony narrowed down the moment of the shooting.

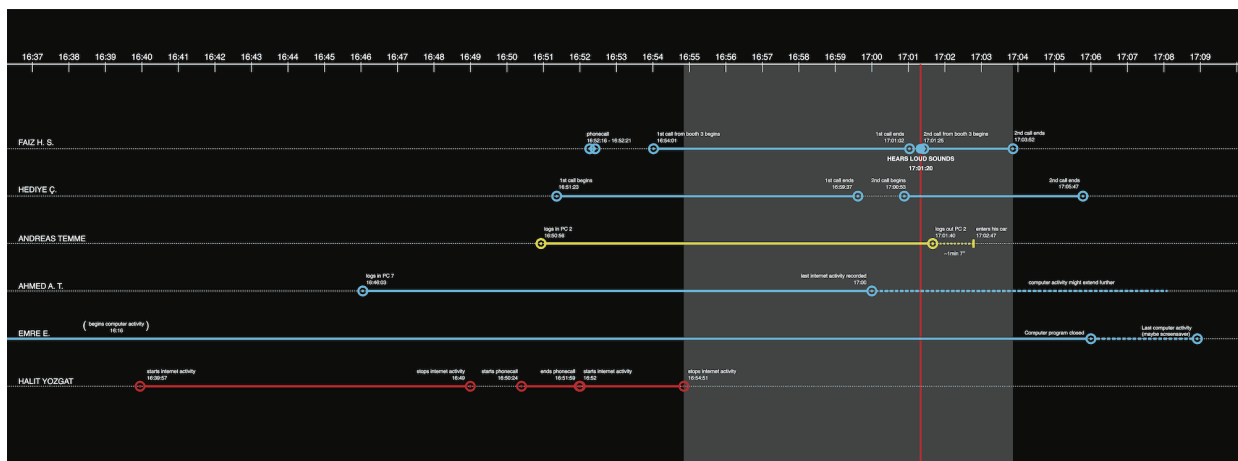


Image [1]: Using the login times of every computer in the café, FA demonstrated who could have been present at the time of the shooting.

The models became venues for synthesising analysis; FA reconstructed the movements of individuals, and overlaid them with evidence from fluid dynamics experts (from HazeLab at Imperial College) and audio forensics specialists, to determine whether Temme would have seen the murderers, heard the gunshots, or smelled the gunpowder [3.4]. FA precisely tested the audibility of gunshots in the space and simulated the distribution of odorous gunpowder to determine a 'threshold of detectability'. FA concluded that Temme was present at the time of the murder, and would have heard the gunshot, smelled the gunpowder, and seen Yozgat's body as he exited, according to the route he claimed to have taken. Temme's testimony, therefore, was false.

In 2017, FA's findings were presented at Documenta14, a major international art exhibition, held in the town in which Yozgat was killed [3.5]. Sharing findings publicly is critical to FA's practice: not only is FA mandated to disseminate its methodologies, in pursuit of a robust civil society capacity for forensics, but Weizman also notes similarities between forensics and curatorial practice, which share concerns around knowledge production, the presentation of ideas, and the arrangement of evidence and objects [3.2]. In this way, FA's exhibitions have a political function, raising public awareness of injustices and empowering civil society to pursue state accountability, while merging cultural practice with investigative process changes the role of both: cultural institutions become spaces of forensics (following the Latin *forensis*, 'pertaining to the public forum'), and curatorial activities carry weight within legal environments. The Case of Halit Yozgat featured in FA's award-winning exhibition 'Counter Investigations', at London's ICA [3.6].

3. References to the research

- [3.1] Eyal Weizman et al, [The Murder of Halit Yozgat](#), Forensic Architecture, (2017) accessed 17 November 2020 [Website] Available online/on request.
- [3.2] Anselm Franke and Eyal Weizman (eds.), *Forensis: The Architecture of Public Truth* (Sternberg Press, 2014) [Book] Available on request.
- [3.3] Eyal Weizman, *Forensic Architecture: Violence at the Threshold of Detectability* (Zone Books, 2017) [Book] Submitted to REF2.
- [3.4] Eyal Weizman et al, [77sqm 9:26min, Counter investigating the testimony of Andres Temme in relation to the Murder of Halit Yozgat in Kassel, 6 April 2006](#), 2017, Forensic Architecture, accessed 17 November 2020 [Report] Available online/on request.
- [3.5] Forensic Architecture, [77SQM 9:26min](#) at Documenta 14, Forensic Architecture, accessed 17 November 2020 [Exhibition] Available online/on request.
- [3.6] Forensic Architecture, [Counter-Investigations: Forensic Architecture](#), at the Institute for Contemporary Art, 2018, accessed 17 November 2020 [Exhibition] Available online/on request.

4. Details of the impact

The investigation has had three main areas of impact. Firstly, the evidence challenged the state's account of Yozgat's murder. Secondly, it has raised the public's awareness of the 'NSU Complex' and the culpability of the German state, proposing concrete new techniques to interrogate that culpability. Thirdly, the investigative process has informed new modes of curatorial practice in the cultural and creative sector through a series of award-winning exhibitions that have resulted in a wider understanding of how civil society groups can use FA's techniques to challenge injustices.

Impact 1: New evidence challenges the state narrative

FA's findings demonstrably changed public and professional opinion about the state's culpability concerning the NSU case [5.1] [5.3] [5.4]. This has benefited the Yozgat family's pursuit of justice and accountability (though more remains to be done), as well as immigrant communities in Germany and other victims the NSU, and activists and political figures who seek to challenge systemic and institutional racism and the violence they perpetuate [5.3].

In 2017, the family's lawyers attempted to present FA's evidence before the court in the trial of the remaining members of the NSU. A technical error by a third party ultimately excluded the contribution, but the work was referred to specifically by the lawyers of the group's victims in their closing arguments, and in two parliamentary processes [5.1] [5.2]. In Hessen, following the presentation of FAs video report to the inquiry committee in August 2017, a senior member of that committee admitted to the existence of more accurate records of the login times from the internet café (referred to above; and explained in detail in *The Intercept's* report [5.4]). These had been contained in a previously undisclosed 2008 federal police report and, as a result of FA's work, were released into the public domain, providing the general public with a more precise picture of what had occurred that day.

These references and engagements underscore the significance of FA's contribution not only for the family of the victim, and their ongoing quest for accountability, but also for political parties in Germany including Die Linke, and advocacy groups connected to the case who gained a better understanding of its complexity [5.2] [5.3].

Impact 2: Exhibitions raise public awareness of state culpability

FA's investigation, and its coverage in media and cultural spaces, contributed to the enduring value of tribunal events around Germany that gave activists and civil society groups a forum to highlight how immigrant communities experience structural racism and racist violence in modern Germany. FA's investigative approach continues to be cited by those groups [5.3].

The work of FA is often disseminated via art exhibitions including the Documenta14 exhibition in 2017 [3.5] which was attended by 850,000 people and gave FA's findings and techniques substantial exposure. Interest in the case and FA's work was reflected in media coverage both in Germany and internationally [5.4]. Subsequent increased public scrutiny, supported by subsequent exhibitions such as Kunsthau Nuremberg's 'The Labyrinth: An exhibition on the NSU Complex' (2019) placed FA's work, and the NSU killings, in the context of far-right violence in modern Germany. This has not only exposed critical questions pertaining to a racist murder, but also offered new possibilities for civil society's investigative capacity.

Lawyer Andreas Schueller, Director of the International Crimes and Accountability Programme of the Berlin-based legal NGO the European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR) confirmed the significance of FA's exhibitions. Quoted in *Icon* in 2018 he stated:

'For us, it's incredibly powerful because we are mostly lawyers whose work never leaves the printed page [...] It also benefits the family and wider immigrant community who have been exposed to racist violence, as the exhibitions publicly acknowledge the suffering and represent an opportunity for them to open up and receive some form of closure' [5.5].

Impact 3: ICA Exhibition challenges artistic and curatorial convention

The case was also part of a major exhibition of FA's work at London's ICA gallery [3.6].

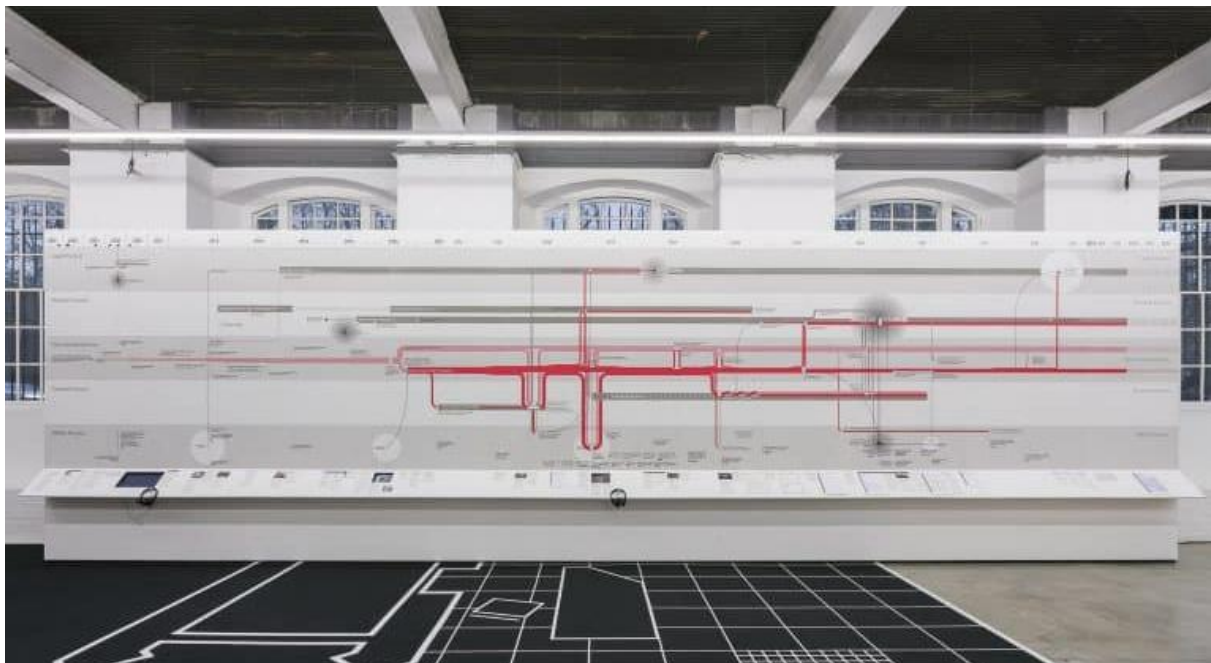


Image [2] FA's work 'The Killing of Halit Yozgat' exhibited at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts.

The ICA exhibition won the Design Museum's overall Design of the Year award and first prize in the digital category in 2018. Judges commended FA for inventing 'a new paradigm in the search for the truth'. Writing for RIBA Architectural Review, Pamela Buxton acknowledged FAs

'hugely important work for NGO's, charities and citizens groups by enabling them to challenge official narratives in the quest for truth' [5.6].

Commenting on the artistic and curatorial impact of the ICA exhibition, Stefan Kalmar, ICA Director, stated:

'What Forensic Architecture propose is a different language. It's a different set of tools to understand the world and change perspectives. Is it art, journalism, documentary film-making, or architecture? Maybe it's all of the above or maybe it's a new art form' [5.7].

In 2018, Forensic Architecture was nominated for the Turner Prize, and praised by the jury for: 'developing highly innovative methods for sourcing and visualising evidence relating to human rights abuses around the world, used in courts of law as well as exhibitions of art and architecture' [5.8].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5.1] Examples of impact of FA's work on professional and political opinion of the case of Halit Yozgat's murder and the association of Andreas Temme to that incident, as seen through media reporting on the case; i) Joerg Haentzschel, '[NSU-Mord: Modernste Methoden werfen neue Fragen auf](#)', *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, April 2017; ii) Pitt von Bebenburg, '[Forscher verteidigen Einschätzung zu Temme](#)', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, September 2017; iii) Soren Kittel, '[Britisches Forscherkollektiv rekonstruiert auch NSU-Mord](#)', *Morgenpost*, July 2018 [Retrieved 17 November 2020: Grouped Source]

[5.2] Translated extract from the second national parliamentary 'NSU inquiry', and the Hessen state parliamentary inquiry, '[Beschlussempfehlung und Bericht](#)', pp 1286-88

[5.3] Statement by member of Society of Friends of Halit and NSU Tribunal

[5.4] Examples of widespread interest in FA's work and its conclusions across media, politics, and culture, as seen through media reporting; i) Holland Cotter, '[Documenta Kassel: Using Art as Their Witness](#)', *The New York Times*, June 2017; ii) Philip Oltermann, '[Architects seek to debunk spy's testimony in neo-Nazi murder trial](#)', *The Guardian*, April 2017; iii) Hili Perlson, '[The Most Important Piece at documenta 14 in Kassel Is Not an Artwork. It's Evidence.](#)' *ArtNet News*, June 2017 [Retrieved 17 November 2020; Grouped Source]

[5.5] Andreas Schuller quoted in Alice Bucknell, '[Forensic Architecture: The Threshold of Visibility](#)', *Icon*, April 2018, [Retrieved via the Internet Archive, 17 November 2020]

[5.6] Pamela Buxton, '[Architecture helps hold the guilty to account](#)', *RIBA Journal*, March 2018, [Retrieved 17 November 2020]

[5.7] Stefan Kalmar, ICA Director quoted in Elizabeth Fullerton, '[Political, forensic, hi-tech: how 'research architecture' is redefining art](#)', *The Guardian*, January 2019 [Retrieved 17 November 2020]

[5.8] Turner Prize Jury, 2018, quoted in Tom Ravenscroft, '[Forensic Architecture shortlisted for Turner Prize, 2018](#)', *dezeen*, April 2018 [Retrieved 17 November 2020]